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Contents

Contents

A Sentence Is Not a Complete Thought: X-Word Grammar

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Abstract

X-Word Grammar provides an editing technique for students that is more reliable than trying to identify sentences as complete thoughts. A sentence is redefined as "a group of words that can be turned into a yes-no question with no words left over; starts with a capital letter, and ends with a terminal punctuation mark." Twenty auxiliary verbs play a key role by moving around the subject of a sentence to identify the correct structure of a sentence using both visual and oral means. Stressing editing skills, teachers can use X-Word Grammar as a means to simplify sentence punctuation, address verb endings, carry out other tasks in editing and evaluating writing.

Keywords: X-Word Grammar, Editing sentences, Grammar instruction, Punctuation, Writing, Assessment

1. Introduction

A sentence is not a complete thought. For years the standard way of describing sentences was in those terms. Grammar books have grown a little more cagey, but the fact remains that we need a better way to train students to identify a sentence and be able to explain it back to us in concrete terms. The terms need to be based in the sentence itself and not in some abstract realm called "thought." As I point out to my "Applied Linguistics" graduate students, I know people who write eloquent sentences and haven't entertained a complete thought in years. Teaching the declarative sentence needs to be practical and functional. With talk of "thoughts," students are mystified. Deprived of a working tool that they can manipulate with confidence, they come to see grammar as an arcane subject best left to English teachers.

2. Thought versus Structure

2.1 The Definition of Sentence as Thought

What is a complete thought? A complete thought does not have to be a complete sentence; for example, when a disgruntled baseball fan yells out from the bleachers, "Ya, bum, Ya!" I would call that a complete thought. If I utter the phrase, "Fiddling while Rome burns," everybody in the planning session knows what I'm talking about, and in some fairly exact degree of specificity. How can the sentence "It is true." be a complete thought when I don't know what the "It" is? By definition a pronoun stands in place of a noun, and I have no clue as to what that noun is. Based on that argument, I want to avoid abstract answers that deal with ideas. What is meant by a "complete thought" ends up being, by guesswork, the subject and predicate of a sentence, but that doesn't give a complete description either. I need to give prospective teachers a defining method that is based on structure and moves actual words and symbols around mechanically. I want the students to be able to do the same thing quickly. The less thinking, the better; the more mechanics, the more I can see the system replicated by users without having to negotiate thinking or creativity. Thinking and creativity are important, but they need to be put in the most helpful relationship with Edited English that we can employ. I use X-Word Grammar--the subject of this article, because its application from structural linguistics, specifically Tagmemics, gives me a very simple way to use it. The term Edited English is used specifically because the system is best used in relation to editing. X-Word Sentence Grammar gives me a structural tool that I have been using since I first encountered it in Columbia Teachers College courses taught by its creator, Robert L. Allen, in 1975. Does it help? I wish I had a nickel for every student that looked at me after a class in it and said, "Why didn't anybody tell me this before?" I would work no more.

2.2 X-Word Grammar

X-Word Grammar is based around twenty X-Words, better known as auxiliary verbs. In families, they are [am, is, are, was, were], [do*, does,* did*], [have, has, had], [may, might, must, can], [could, would, should], [will, shall]. Among their characteristics are that they go to the front of a normal declarative sentence to make yes-no questions, they combine with verbs to tell time, and they carry negatives (n't), and they are tied to various verbs to make verb phrases. They also identify conditions in other ways, but the functions already named are the ones that are most important to us.

Especially important is the use of X-Words to make yes-no questions. We can use that structural characteristic to identify what a sentence really is, and we can teach "the sentence" without mystifying abstraction. Before I go further, however, I want to give one caveat. X-Word Grammar was never intended to be a sentence generator to teach creative writing. X-Word Grammar is an analytic system that students can apply to test sentences already written. Student use is more guided by spoken English and oral English training to supply the initial text. That way, students and teachers can use the advantages of learning to write freely without any system but their ideas. Only after an initial creation, often called zero drafting, does the X-Word Grammar system come into play. It serves as an editing benchmark. A mechanical system replaces the reading over and over of ideas that seemed valid to the student whether or not the structure satisfied Edited English expectations. It also serves as a tool to critique sentences and predict reader response the way I teach it.

3. X-Word Grammar as an Editing System

3.1 The Definition of a Sentence

A sentence in Allen's X-Word Grammar system is defined by three parameters. (1) It begins with a capital letter. (2) It ends with a terminal punctuation mark. (3) In between the capital letter and the terminal punctuation mark it must have a group of words that can be turned into a yes-no question with no words left over. One of the great class-room advantages of this definition is that a little drilling on capital letters and terminal punctuation marks can be used to take much of the anxiety out of the learning process. The students drill on those identifications, master them in minutes, if not seconds, and have completed 66% of the instruction on what a sentence is. The other 34% is not much more difficult. Even graduate students love being told they have completed two-thirds of the work in the first minute.

According to this system, sentences are lineal. They are not trees, either ascending or descending, nor are they constructions with slant-lines and platforms. Instead, they are a series of positions which are filled by various words and constructions. Working from this "slot-and-filler," "position-construction" perspective, we can test the sentence itself, with the capitol letter and punctuation.

In the following analysis, my line 1 is the whole sentence. My line 2 is just the words with the markers left out. Lower lines are places where I analyze phrases and various constructions until I have accounted for every word in the sentence. The underlayer of the sentence is the yes-no question with no words left over.

To make the example visual is not hard.

    1. My students will write wonderful sentences.

    2. my students will write wonderful sentences

Did the sentence begin with a capital letter? Yes, the letter was the capital letter "M." Okay, let's take that away.

Did the sentence end with terminal punctuation? Yes, it used a period (.).

Now my students have got 66% of the sentence identifiers in place. Even my graduate students laugh at the simplicity of this system, by the way. It always starts with fail-proof components--a natural confidence booster.

The underlayer is the part that has to turn into a yes-no question with no words left over.

    3. my students will   write wonderful sentences

    4. will my students   write wonderful sentences

    5. X   [S]   X   <-------[P]

      will [my students] ____write wonderful sentences

      ___[my students]   will   write wonderful sentences

We can box the subject with X's every time. There are no words left over, and the sentence sounds right. Those are two natural tests for students who have some verbal drilling in saying sentences. From that level we can go further by breaking down each larger chunk into individual words, eventually accounting for everything. After having done this on model sentences with my students, often chanting in unison, the students can then take some of their own sentences and test to see if they are sentences. Some say that they have to change the sentence to make it work. This is a valuable editorial recognition, and they should then keep the revised sentence and replace the previous version with it.

3.2 Systematic Identification of Subjects as Editing

A second and important value, to being able to identify the subject mechanically "without thinking," can also come into play. Instead of being in a position where I have to tell a learner that s/he is wrong, I can say, "No, stop thinking!" Telling students they are smart as a way of correcting them turns out to be a very popular teaching device. I will then teach them to do the task mechanically, without "thinking." The subject of a sentence is often said to be what the sentence is about. Such is not the case. In the sentence "It is true that rain is falling." The sentence is about rain. The

subject box, however, is filled with "It." "It" is the subject of the sentence as far as structure will lead us to the subject. Then what is "rain"!? "Rain" is what almost all of my students pick out when asked to circle the subject. "Rain" can now clearly be labeled as the TOPIC. By separating the idea from the structure, I now have a way to teach my students to consider how their sentence might work on a reader. Do they want to put the topic and subject together? Rain is falling. Do they want to "postpone" the topic, split it off into the predicate, and hold the reader back? X-word grammar students have a way of chunking a sentence meaningfully, assessing its possible effect on a reader, and making their own decision. At the most basic level, they are learning about style. The subject slot/position never moves. It is always between the X's. The topic, on the other hand, can go anywhere, and the student has varied choices concerning what filler/construction goes between the X's.

3.3 Editing rather than Writing as the Point of Application

An important caution that is central in using this system is that it is an EDITING system. If the student starts the initial writing from the grammar structure, sentences and overall sentence patterns will become wretchedly stiff and wooden. as we formulate thoughts, we do not normally constrain them that way. First of all, the existence of a manageable editing system allows the students to free-write or zero draft, running with ideas. Structure and grammar should be taught after that, as the next process, after the zero draft is committed to paper so that there is something to edit. Most readers probably see how this makes writing a little less terrifying. When starting out, the system is fail-proof. Grammar and structure can be delayed. I heavily emphasize this point and find that participants up to the level of corporate managers are grateful to be set free. In fact, they are so freed that they may not blurt out at the next cocktail party, "You're an English teacher. Oh, boy, I better watch my grammar."

3.4 Simplifying Punctuation

A third benefit of X-Word Grammar as a model for analyzing sentences is that punctuation is now made simpler. Semi-colons are easy. A semi-colon goes between two yes-no questions to tell a reader they are related, but it doesn't tell the reader how. "Comma-and" is the same as a semi-colon, except it tells the reader that the second sentence is added on to the first. "Comma-but," "comma-so," and "comma-for" are described similarly. We can even make a grid. By extension we can also teach "Semicolon-however-comma," "semicolon-nevertheless-comma" and other sentence joiners.

<div align="center">

SXP [;] SXP

SXP [, and] SXP

SXP [, but] SXP

SXP [; however,] SXP

SXP [; nevertheless,] SXP

</div>

and as many more as I wish. This is a teaching device I add on to Allen's original system, and it works.

Taught this way, the constructions identified above are all the same, and being uniform, only one rule has to be remembered. This deployment often brings the "why didn't anybody tell me this before?" moment from my adult learners. I have done all this without mentioning "clauses" and "phrases." This system is plain English, unlaced with technical terms.

3.5 Other Advantages: Identifying Fragments, Explaining the Verb System

Teaching other aspects of punctuation and sentence structure is built around the basic definition, as well. One obvious question is, "What if a word is left over? An example would be "If all my students will write wonderful sentences." Can we say "Will if..." "If will..."? It looks and sounds strange, and is especially obvious when spoken aloud, which is the best way to introduce would-be editors to this form of analysis. Drilling a behavior is much more effective with many kinds of terrified grammar students than is the expectation that they will find their way through the cognitive forest of clause and phrase terminology, compound, complex, and confusing as it is.

A word left over is another opportunity to begin teaching writers style and what it means to be a true creative writer who can make editorial changes. Take another phrase "Because the semi-colon struck fear into their hearts." An oral test of this phrase by students yields "Did* the semi-colon strike fear into their hearts?" "Yes, the semi-colon did* strike [or struck] fear into their hearts. Some students choose another X-Word, which is also a successful transition. Now, we have to capture what the responders actually said, as opposed to what was written. They instinctively eliminate the extra word "because," again, without thinking. Saying "Because did" or "did because" does not work, and the students can hear it. A number of other forms also show up, like gerund phrases, which can be taught as "one-and-one-half sentences": two predicates sharing the same subject. The half sentence in front has to be walled off with a comma so that we can see where the subject starts.

Three invisible X-Words offer another important teaching point. Some sentences have no visible X-Word. An example is, "My student writes wonderful sentences." I now have the opportunity to introduce students to the analysis of verb endings. Three X-Words disappear, but they are there, all the same, hiding behind the verb. [DO*-DOES*-DID*] are the three disappearing X-Words. When they appear the tail comes off the verb and goes on the [DO*-DOES*-DID*]; when they disappear we can bring them out again by making the sentence into a yes-no question. Out they pop:

My student <u>writes</u> wonderful sentences. [DOES* + verb]

    X   X

Does   my student ____ write wonderful sentences? [write has no s now]

____   My student does write wonderful sentences.

The s-ending and the simple past tense are very much simplified as mechanical requirements. What if DO* has no ending to show? The question form will bring it out. The common declarative sentence responds very well to this sort of analysis. Verbs represent a larger system that is also helped by employing the 20 auxiliary verbs as the center of the editing system. ESL learners get a much simpler explanation of the s- and -ed endings. As for the invisible tail on the DO, at least we have a concept that encompasses it and a way to find it using oral means or visual means, depending on how far the capabilities of our student-editors have progressed.

Longer sentences, of course, require more complex chunking breakdowns, but still adhere to the same system. Gerund phrases fit easily into this system. Longer and more complex registers of time in verbs also need more explanation, but one thing is certain. Time in a sentence is recorded in X-Words and verb endings, so any system that emphasizes the use of X-Words has already placed this area at the heart of the mechanics of the sentence.

4. Closing Considerations

4.1 Effects on Style

X-Word Grammar was widely used in the New York City school and college systems during the early 1970s with positive results. In fact, the Hunter College-CUNY O.W.L is based on X-Word Grammar. Unfortunately, the system seemed radical, abandoning conventional teaching. I started using the system and working on it while job hunting. One college, although wanting to hire me, did not extend an offer because they were afraid to commit to the new system. So be it. One skeptic wrote an article in which he claimed the system made student writing stilted. He claimed to have found "objectively" that X-Word Grammar students wrote less creatively than non-X-Word Grammar students by pairing two classes, one using X-Word Grammar. The skeptic "experimenter" turned out to have been teaching the system as a writing system to shape the very first words on paper. Of course the X-Word Grammar writers did what he asked. He was teaching them to write subjects and verbs over and over to form their essays. Needless to say, he got what he was teaching. He was not teaching the regular grammar that way. Unhappily, one of the more distinguished journals at the time published this subjective pseudo-scientific comparison. Since the journal declined to print any of a number of very lucid responses, his misapplication stood. It was a grave disservice to the language-teaching community.

4.2 Assessment: Counting Sentence Structures to Measure Student Progress

A better way to judge the system would have been to count structures, which I did in a case where a holistic reader had dropped a remedial college freshman from a rating of 2/9 to 1/9, the lowest available, in the course of a semester. Counting structures and sentences revealed that the student had written twice as many words–over four hundred as opposed to just over 200, and had increased the number of sentence attempts from 12 to 17. The number of errors had remained the same between the two tests, however, and those errors tended to cluster at the front of the essay. The student's writing had advanced considerably– not "improved," but <u>advanced</u>; without a comparison to see what had actually happened, there was no way to objectify the changes. X-Word Grammar structures, however, provided an easy way to count. The problem lay elsewhere. When the student used more sentences, it became more apparent that s/he had little to say, but that was not the fault of the grammar. That problem was caused by a lack of training in ideas and vocabulary. Objectifying our assessment using X-Word Grammar tools would have enabled us to develop a plan to build advance on advance until a much higher level of edited writing was accomplished. The student was identified not as someone who had progressed, but rather as a failure. I think, as teachers, we owed that student a fairer form of assessment.

5. Summary

X-Word Grammar offers us potential because of its tight focus on operative language through the twenty auxiliary verbs. Almost any aspect of sentence formation can be approached from this direction. As an editing tool, it allows student editors to distance themselves from the text without "putting it in a drawer for two weeks." Instead, they can look in the subject box to see if a concrete word appears. They can evaluate punctuation as a means to an end in telling a reading about relationships through linking words. Finally, it also has potential as an alternate way of measuring writing change.

Texts using X-Word Grammar as a teaching system included Robert L. Allen's *Working Sentences* –a remedial English text--and Alice Deakins' *The Tapestry Grammar*–a very useful and complete ESL teaching system. Both are now long out of print, but, when my own "Applied Linguistics" students have not snapped them up, copies of Deakins show up in Amazon or A-Libris for no more than two to five dollars. Bonny Hart maintains an X-Word Grammar site at CCNY which contains Jim Lyndon's *X-Word Grammar Exercises for Students of English as a Second Language* featuring 27 chapters which can be downloaded as PDF files. See <ccnyliteracy.PBwiki.com/Xword+Grammar+Intro+and+Book+(pdf)>. X-Word Grammar should be returned to our toolbox for teaching students how to manage sentences. The objectivity X-Word Grammar will bring to the editing process will help us teach our students how to edit writing, and it could help us be able to concretely describe how they do it. Both are worthy benefits.

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Approaches to Translation of Chinese Publicity Materials

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Abstract

Chinese publicity materials are the windows for foreigners to know about China. There has been some problems in the translation for publicity materials both made by the enterprises and government departments. Especially for the growing international communication, the dispute between Chinese and its foreign counterpart is increasingly coming into being because of poor translation. Thus, how to translate Chinese publicity materials and whether you can translate them well have great impact on image and interests of China and its enterprises. This paper intends to discuss culture differences and the differences of language forms, some translation strategies or approaches, translation principles and so on. The paper pays much attention to the efficient information transfer in translation. Feasible methods have been proposed from different aspects in this paper, so that we can improve translation performance in order to convey information effectively and facilitate international communication.

Keywords: Chinese publicity materials, Culture differences, Language forms, Approaches, Information transfer

1. Introduction

Publicity materials, by which China can show herself to foreigners, are all-inclusive. Advertisements, tourist publicity materials, products catalogue lists, functional directions of products, publicity volume for attracting foreign enterprises, project brochures all belong to them. Publicity materials also include handbooks which are to introduce organizations or corporations, brochures for students' recruitment of universities and colleges, the notes to present a place, a local produce, historical personnel, romantic stories, and so on. Sometimes they are in the form of pictures and diagrams. According to the linguistic function, publicity materials can be divided into five types, which are directive function, referential/informative function, phatic function, expressive function and aesthetic function. In this paper, we will specially talk about directive function and informative function, which refer to tourism guidebook, user's manual, the advertisements to introduce some products and so on.

In China, so many publicity materials appear due to high economic development. However, different translators have different opinions when translating them into English. Sometimes foreigners even can not know what the exact meaning they are. So some translation strategies or approaches will be discussed in the paper. In addition, the aims of publicity material are to introduce onesself and transmit information what foreigners needed. So the informative function is the principle in translation, so that information transmission and international communication will go smoothly.

Last but not the least, different nations have their own culture background, so they have different thoughts about value and different language forms. In translating Chinese publicity materials, we should not only pay attention to words translation, but also should take these differences into consideration in order that foreigners can get the exact information. And a satisfactory outcome will reach after the careful study on the topic. Then the following discussion is especially directed to its exploration accordingly.

2. A Brief Introduction of Translation Strategies of Chinese Publicity Materials

2.1 The Introduction of Translation Approaches

In accordance with what has been argued, this paper will set forth several translation approaches later. As far as these approaches are concerned, different translators may adopt different methods, and there are so many ways to translate Chinese publicity materials. Here the writer just expound upon some methods which are the most important and used frequently.

The aims of translating Chinese publicity materials are to let more and more foreign people know about China, to convey information and to stimulate international communication as well. Thus, all the approaches proposed in this paper, different from the ordinary ones, are just for these purposes. This part focuses on different aspects of publicity materials translation. The approaches that we commonly take are to add some information if necessary and delete

information which are not needed, the reliance on word formation patterns, explanation and translation on the basis of deep understanding of the original, or translation and edition.

2.2 The Use of Word Formation

First of all, we inquire into the translation of some new words which have come into being in recent years, and new words with new translations. Under these situations, sometimes, we will take the use of word formation into account, or resort to another new ways to translate them. For instance, we prefer to say "the anti-humanity, anti-society, anti-science nature of the cult" when we translate the sentence "fan ren lei, fan she hui, fan ke xue de xie jiao ben zhi", rather than "the nature of the cult is to against humanity, against society and against science." The main point or what the author really wants to emphasize is lost in the second version although there is no mistake in grammar. There are some other instances, "tong yi de duo min zu guo jia" we prefer translating them as "unified multi-ethnic group" to "unified country with many different nations". When we see "shi yong fang bian" in an advertisement, we usually say "it is very convenient to use". But in the version of publicity material, we'd better say "user-friendly" to make foreigners feel new and accept easily. When it refers to some other new words appeared in tourism, we may use compounding to translate them. Examples as: "ke ji lv you", we use "science-theme tourism" instead of "scientific and technological tourism". Meanwhile, we can adopt blending to translate some newly appeared words. We can see the author use "ecotourism" to annotate "sheng tai lv you", and it is good for using "ecological tourism". And the word "infotainment"(information + entertainment) is used to translate "yu le xing jie mu xin wen" in publicity materials.

In addition, we have been accustomed to using "construction" to translate "jian she" in the before. Take "yi jing ji jian she wei zhong xin" as an example, the translation used to be "to take on economic construction as the central task". But now, we are inclined to use "reconstruction" instead of "construction" according to the need. Such as "jian chi yi jin ji jian she wei zhong xin"(We will continue to focus on economic reconstruction). And sometimes, "jian she"is not translated under any other circumstances. The example is "da li jia qiang jin shen wen ming he she hui ming zhu jian she"(We should make great efforts to improve socialist spiritual civilization, democracy and legal system). Let us look at another example "lian zhengj ian she". This phrase has been translated as "construct clean politics" before, which is not appropriate just now. "Politics" is always used as a derogatory term, as "office politics" refers to the competition and struggle in the office. So it is translated as "build a clean and honest government" in the publicity material now.

2.3 Explanation

In the opinion of experts, no matter how successful the Chinese texts are, if translated into English literally, they will not be easy and smooth translations and sometimes make foreigners feel confused. (duanliancheng,1990) In China, there are so many new phenomenon and issues that people just use concise and comprehensive words in order to convey information conveniently, such as: "shaohuang", "dafei", "yanda","sanpei"and so on. As for foreigners, they probably do not know what they are pointing to. We should explain information in detail so that they can understand what they are driving at. Sometimes, translators translate Chinese into English, adding explanations with Chinese alphabet or phonetic spelling.

When we talk about a place for tourism or introduce Chinese culture which Chinese people have already had at their finger tips to foreigners, we'd better add some words for explanation .In a publicity material there is a sentence:

(1) Linbianyouyidong,jiaobailongdong,chuanshuo<baishezhuan>debailiangzicenzaizhelixiulian

Near the forest is the White Dragon Cave which is said to be the very place where Lady White, the legendary heroine of the story of the White Snake, cultivated herself according to Buddhist doctrine. (Songxiaochun,2002)

2.4 Edition before Translation

Translators resort to the method of edition before translation due to so many factors. Edition means to deal with, add, delete, edit or rearrange the sentences of the original material after the author deeply understand them, and then translate them into the sentences or forms which are acceptable to foreigners on the basis of their psychology, interest and habits. So what is the most important, translators must have a good understanding of the original passage, and then edit the materials. Only in this way can translators transform the source language to the target language, so as to eliminate cross-culture misunderstanding and let readers get what they needed so that information can pass on effectively. Let us look at the following examples.

(2) Zai zhong guo yi ti dao kong zi, shang zhi bai fa cang cang de lao ren xia zhi tian zhen you zhi de wan tong, wu ren bu zhi wu ren bu xiao, ren men wei le ji nian ta, zai xu duo di fang dou jian you ji si ta de si miao,tian jin ye bu li wai)

This is a typical Chinese expression, before translating it, we may readjust it like this: kong zi zai zhong guo jia yu hu xiao, zai zhong guo xu duo di fang bao kuo tian jin zai nei dou jian you ji nian ta de si miao) The translation is as follow: Confucius is a household name in China Temples in memory of him could be found everywhere in China. Tianjin is no exception.

(3) ban sui zhuo gai ge kai fang de jiao bu, 21 you er yuan zou guo le 13 nian de fa zhan li chen, jing guo quan ti zhi

gong de nv li, ta men lian xu qi nian bei ping wei qu ji jiao yu gong zuo he quan mian gong zuo guan li you xiu dan wei; 1997-1999huoshiweishengxianjindanwei;1997-1999 you duo ming qing nian jiao shi zai jiao yu huo dong ping bi he you xiu bi ye lun wen ping bi zhong huo jiang.

In this material, the information makes readers confused. If we do not edit or delete information that are not needed, understanding will be interrupted. Translation should be like this: The 21ˢᵗ kindergarten has been a success since it was set up 13 years ago. For 7 consecutive years, it has been given various honorary titles by Hedong District. From 1997 to 1999 it was commended by the municipal government for its hygienic conditions. The young teachers, doing well in various contests, have won many awards. (wangzuoliang,1984)

After all, we must keep it in mind that we should be loyal to the original, no matter how we translate all these publicity materials. So we use above different techniques like explaining, paraphrasing, literally interpreting if necessary, replacing and borrowing to represent translations of publicity materials.

3. The Study of Information Transfer in Translating Publicity Materials

Publicity materials are the medium by which information can be conveyed quickly and clearly. In order to speed up international communication, the most important thing in translating is information transfer. So information is the theme in each publicity material. Meanwhile, failure in conveying the intended message in the translation of advertising discourse from Chinese into English may be caused by differences between the two cultures. To avoid such failure, the authors argue, the first thing interpreters must do is that they need to have a good understanding of cultures represented by both source language and target language to eliminate cross-cultural misunderstanding. Thus, translators will know what information is needed and what is unnecessary so as to do some transformation. For example, after presenting many nice dishes, the Chinese hostess always say, "fan cai bu hao, qing duo bao han"(Please bear with these poorly prepared dishes). It's generally acceptable to Chinese people that the hostess says this to express her modesty and welcome. All Chinese guests may then admire her cooking. However guests from Britain might end up thinking, "Am I not good enough to get well-prepared dishes?" To avoid this uncomfortable situation, the translation should be, "These are the best dishes I'm able to prepare, enjoy yourselves." Therefore, different cultures and different translations transfer different information. Translators should take different factors into account.

In short, different forms have the same purpose, that is, to convey information. The author will dwell on message transfer in this part.

3.1 The Approach to Translation of Publicity Materials with Diagrams

Publicity materials with diagrams or pictures can easily express ideas, especially for introducing locations. The translator should integrate different information and then translate them into the form which can be accepted easily by readers. Look at the sentence in brochures for attracting foreign investment.

3.2 The Approach to Translation of Publicity Materials in Abbreviated Form

Many publicity materials are complicated, while translating, we just need to translate them in abbreviated form, that is to say to translate the key words or main ideas as the title or topic to grasp the key link. Moreover, we can briefly outline the material. So readers can get the information conveniently. Let us move on to the following advertisement that aims to introduce a corporation. The content of the material is so long and complicated that even Chinese can not get the needed information quickly, let alone foreigners. While translating, we'd better use words as a title or topic at the beginning of each part on the basis of the foreigners' habits, in order that the content can be clear and straightforward. So the foreigners can get the important and needed information quickly rather than spend too much time in going through the whole material. In the following example, the translator use "stated", "located", "research and management staff", "business area and capacity" and "business belief" as the key words at the beginning of each part in this publicity material.

3.3 The Translation of Oral Language and Words with Chinese Cultures

As for oral language, figure expressions, parallel structures and antithesis, they are used to strengthen effect and have no real content. Sometimes, it will cause misunderstandings to foreigners if they are not translated appropriately. We need to deal with the information properly in order that people can obtain the exact information and information can be conveyed effectively.

3.4 Information Transformation in Translation

Because each individual society has its own common knowledge and each language has its own dimensions and custom, translators must tend to seek the most proper information in the most appropriate form for readers to appreciate. In order to achieve this purpose, information transformation is needed, in addition, some supplementary method is necessary. (zhang mei fang,2000) Only in this way can the original information be conveyed to the readers.

There is a Chinese saying, "qiao fu nan wei wu mi zhi chui", the better translation of which should be "It is clever wife

that can cook a meal without material." There are contradictions in the culture of diet, in China, "mi" refers to rice while in foreign countries it also includes flour, bread and so on. So we choose "material" to be as the best word to convey the information.

In China, we always prefer to use repetitions and emphasis to get better effect, which are complex and long-winded for people speaking English. On the contrary, they resort to simple and effective words. The translator adopts the phrase "vice versa" according to English language convention to convey information effectively.

6. Conclusion

All in all, in the translation of publicity materials we should pay attention not only to the words, but also to the information transfer. All the publicity materials are translated for the purpose of conveying information. By ways of case analysis, the study shows that control of information supply in the target text and conveyance of the source text's implication are two ways in English translation of Chinese publicity language. After illustrating typical examples, this paper clarifies different aspects of approaches to translation of Chinese publicity materials. Therefore, all the efforts mentioned are aimed to improve the C-E translation for international communication so as to speed up the development of China.

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Explorations into the Essence of English—Chinese

and Chinese—English Translation Based on Relevance Theory

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Abstract

The relevance theory is a cognitive pragmatic theory considerably influential in the West in recent years, though its impacts have gone far beyond the limits of pragmatics. Translation ranks among the disciplines most influenced by relevance theory, which has drawn attention of Chinese scholars in the past decades. However, the impacts of relevance theory on translation in China are far from being strong with inadequate relevant documents. Relevance theory has not only revealed the essence of translation and the subjects of translation study, but also falsified the untranslatability and the principle of equivalence; relevance theory can also help translators to accurately understand and convey the intentions of the source communicators and cater for the cognitive context of the recipients of translation.

Keywords: Relevance theory, Translation, Essence, Cognitive context

Forewords

The relevance theory is a comparatively new theory in pragmatic study which attempts not only to answer philosophical questions related to communications but also to supply explanations of psychological phenomenon in the process of understanding of listeners. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, D. Sperber and D. Wilson put forward the relevance theory in a systematic manner and defined the relevance principle as the general principle of human communicative activities in their *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (1995). The relevance theory deems verbal communication as a suggestion-inference process and proposes from the prospective of cognitive linguistics that communication is cognitive activity conducted in accordance with certain laws of inferential reasoning (Miao Xingwei, 1997). As translation is a process of inferential reasoning involving the mechanism of the brain and thus a form of verbal communicating behavior (E. A. Gutt, 2004), the relevance theory can be employed to interpret and guide translating activities and therefore put an end to the never-ending controversies among various schools over translation theories and principles.

1. Fundamental concepts of relevance theory and translation

1.1 Relevance theory

The relevance theory was first proposed by French linguist D. Sperber and British linguist D. Wilson in 1986, which can be defined as is the relationship between proposition and context, the fundamental feature of proposition and the proposition as it is related to context. This definition can be understood with two implications: first, congregation of contexts refers to a conceptual paragraph with definite theme of which relevance is a chain of meaning; second, a proposition itself is relevant and serves as a section of the chain of meaning.

1. 2 Translation theory

Translation in essence is the translation of meaning. "Translation means translating meaning." (E. A. Nida) Translation aims at conveying faithfully the ideas, emotions, styles etc expressed in one language with another language. Despite the tremendous impacts of the criteria of " faithfulness, fluency and elegance" proposed by Yan Fu on the modern translation practices and theoretical study in China, a deep and thorough examination reveals that such criteria prove inadequate in providing specific and practical guidelines. Therefore, the criteria of "faithfulness, expressiveness and closeness" proposed by Prof. Liu Chongde are gaining acceptance in recent years, by which the translators should strive for closeness in verve of the source text and simultaneously endeavor to achieve closeness in translating words, sentences and paragraphs, so as to make the translated work and the source text alike both in form and in style. How then, can translation meet the above criteria? What is the interrelation between the relevance theory and translation?

2. Exploration into the interrelation between relevance theory and translation

Before the birth of relevance theory, theories on translation were numerous, though none of them seem to have caught a complete glimpse of translation, and the definitions accordingly presented are invariably one-sided to certain extents, some even inconsistent in their arguments, and the various concepts on translation were like blind people feeling an elephant, each holding a separate part without understanding the whole. The relevance theory, by contrast, provides a unified theoretical mode to translation and supplies a unified interpretation of various translating activities without causing self-contradictory inconsistency.

2.1 Revealing the essence of translation

The relevance theory regards translation as a two-round communicating process of ostension-inference jointly participated by three parties, namely, the writer of the source text, the translator and recipient of the target text. In this two-round communicating process the translator plays a dual role as the relayor of message. In the first round, the writer of the source text is the communicator and the translator is the recipient. The translator is supposed to fully understand the source text so as to deconstruct the source text in the process of ostension-inference with the writer of the source text. In the second round, the translator is the communicator and the reader of the target text is the recipient. In this process the translator conveys the message of the original communicator to the recipient of the target text by inferring the cognitive structure and context of the recipient and selecting codes comprehensible and acceptable to the recipients. The success or failure of the tri-party communication hinges on whether the translator can find the optimal linkage between the writer of the source text and the recipient of the target text.

2. 2 Revealing the objects of study in translation

The objects of study in translation have always been an issue much debated in the academic field. Early translators focused mainly on the "outcome", i.e. the translated text by analyzing the source text and the target text, finding the similarities and deviations between the two, making comparisons and finally evaluating the translated work. This is a static object. E. A. Gutt argued that understanding in this way has severed the integrity of translating process. If a thorough study is to be made on translation theory, the process of translation will have to be analyzed, and the complicated psychological process of the translator be explored in the course of his translating work. Between the source text and the target text, the translator is faced with numerous options of equivalence in his translating process and has to go through an immensely complicated process of inference in which the brain mechanism and psychological factors play a vital role. Gutt insists on studying translation with relevance theory. The relevance theory looks upon communication from the perspective of capacity rather than from conduct and attempts to illustrate the role played by information-processing mechanism in human brain in interpersonal communications. Therefore, relevance theory emphasizes definitely on the study of the process of translating activities. The process in which the translator finds the optimal relevance is equivalent to the process of translating activities.

2.3 Resolving the problem of untranslatability

Translation concept based on relevance theory holds that translation is a subordinate concept and a variety of verbal communicating activity. The success of failure of communication hinges on whether or not the message and intention of one party of the communication is recognized and accepted by the other. As is mentioned before, translation in essence is a two-round communicating process of ostension-inference in which codes, proactively selected by communicators, are merely an instrument for conveying messages. In other words, different wordings can be employed to express the same intentions and achieve the same communicating effects. The messages possible to be conveyed by the graphic feature of scripts do not matter too much as they merely illustrates the basis of word-formation and do not affect the generally recognized connotations they stand for, or, in other words, codes of whatever categories are characterized with the same instrumental functions. Based on this, we can safely conclude that nothing is untranslatable, and anything can be translated in certain aspects, to certain extents and in certain manners. Such a concept of translation has undoubtedly provided solid theoretical ground for the translation of strong cultural contexts, particularly the translation of poetry.

2. 4 Discarding the principle of binary equivalence

As the achievement of study in contemporary Western linguistic fields, the principle of equivalence has been regarded as the central concept of translation theory and the criterion in judging quality of translated texts. However, be it formal equivalence, dynamic equivalence, semantic equivalence, communicating equivalence, dominant equivalence, recessive equivalence, document equivalence or instrumental equivalence, the equivalence is merely superficial, and in fact equivalence is unattainable and equivalence in the real sense is impossible. Therefore, "equivalence" is not an effective concept in translation theory. The relevance theory holds that since translation is a form of communication, the absolute equivalence in the output and understanding in verbal communications is impossible, let alone the equivalence in the second round of output and understanding in verbal communications. Ten thousand people translate *Hamlet*, and there would be ten thousand translated versions of *Hamlet*. By contrast to static descriptions in previous translation theories,

the translation theory in the framework of relevance theory has adopted a dynamic way of interpretation. In the process of translation, the cognitive structures and cognitive contexts of the communicator of the source text, the translator and the recipient are highly unstable, constituting a dynamic process. The effectiveness of translation is determined by the convergence between relevant factors. To achieve the organic integration of the effectiveness and faithfulness of translation, the translator will have to try to maximize the convergence while minimize the divergence and seek to reproduce the contexts and intention of communication of the source text.

3. Inspirations from Relevance Theory on English-Chinese and Chinese-English Translation

3.1 Understanding and conveying the intentions of the source text communicators accurately

Translation is more translation of "intention" than translation of "meaning". "Meaning" refers to the intention of the source text communicators. From the perspective of relevance theory, the translator should not only convey the informative intention, but also convey the communicative intention of the source text in order to achieve the success of the communication of translation, and the communicative intention is to be given priority when it is not possible to succeed in conveying both. To fully comprehend the communicative intentions of the source text, a translator in the first place is expected to have a solid command of the source language, profound understanding of the differences in syntactic structure, lexical order, ways of expression, etc between the source language and the target language, and the ability to infer the communicative intentions of the writer of the source text from phonetic, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects and other clues of communications. Besides, the translator should learn the setting of communication, context, social and cultural background, etc. In case the purpose and effects of communication cannot be achieved by semantic translation, the translator may break away from the source text and be flexible enough to make pragmatic adjustments with appropriate translating strategies.

3.2 Understanding the cognitive context of the recipient of translated text

After thoroughly deconstructing the source text, the translator is supposed to select appropriate codes to reproduce the communicative intentions of the writer of the source text to the recipients of target text in accordance with the cognitive context of the recipients. Translation is a cross-cultural and cross-lingual communicative activity, and the recipients' understanding of the translated work is subject to the difference in cognitive setting. There being unavoidable cultural conflicts or cultural schema default between the communicator and the recipient of translated text, communicative barrier is inevitable if the translator bases his understanding on his own cognitive habits. Therefore, the translator should make a correct prediction of the cognitive context of the recipients to ensure that they can correctly comprehend the informative and communicative intentions of the communicator of the source text. By addition, footnotes and other translation techniques, the translator can add up to the cultural schema default of the recipients so that they can recognize the pre-set pragmatic messages in the source text and find the best relevance of codes and contexts, thus obtaining a correct comprehension of the source text.

3.3 Abiding by the principle of cognition

Verbal communication is carried out in two models-code model and inferential model. The code model deals mainly with the meaning of sentences with the understanding that the realization of communications is subject to mutual knowledge, which is different from shared knowledge. Shared knowledge, as the term suggests, refers to the knowledge shred by both parties of the communication without impacts by contextual hypothesis and is static; mutual knowledge, however, requires both parties in the communication to update their knowledge and gain knowledge of the contextual information constantly with the changes in the contents of communications, and therefore is highly dynamic. However, in practices of verbal communications, it is practically impossible to know all the relevant messages of the other party, and thus the second model of verbal communication is called for: inferential model, which regards verbal communication as a process of mutual understanding featuring cognition-inference. "Mutual understanding" means that party A will try to convey to party B his messages as clearly as possible, and party B will understand the meaning and intentions of Party A upon hearing the words uttered by party A. Communication is successful only if mutual understanding is achieved. Based on the above, the communicative outlook of relevance theory maintains the following: verbal communication involves two models, i.e. code model and inferential model, and in a strict sense the inferential model (the mutual understanding model of cognition-inference) is the primary model whereas the code model is affiliated to the inferential model. The cognitive principle in inferential model is essential in relevance theory, which holds that "man's cognitive inclinations are in conformity with relevance to the maximum extent". (Sperber & Wilson, 1986) As a pragmatic communicative activity, translation naturally shares the characteristics of common lingual communications, and therefore is similarly characterized by code model and inferential model. The author of the source text and the translator constitute the parties of the first-round communication, and the translator and the recipient of the translated text constitute parties of the second-round communication. Being different in their cognitive structures and cognitive contexts, they would call up different contextual assumptions from their respective cognitive contexts based on different optimal relevance for the inferences involved in the process of "mutual understanding". Relevance theory holds that the stronger the innate relevance in the texts, the fewer efforts the readers would have to make in their

inferential attempts to achieve greater contextual effects; contrarily, the readers would have to exert more efforts of inference to achieve better contextual effects if the innate relevance of the texts were weak. However, in terms of creation and translation of texts, a good text should present the optimal, instead of the greatest innate relevance to the readers. "Optimal" implies enabling the readers to achieve the best contextual effects with insignificant efforts in inference. In fact, the strength of relevance in texts is closely related to the social function, intention of creation of the texts and personal style of the author and the translator. For example, for the practical texts with the aim of conveying messages and information, employment of accurate words and presentation of maximum relevance are the essential guarantee for the success of the communication of the texts; by contrast, for literary works with profound connotations and thought-provoking effects, e.g. poetry and fictions, the author/translator is expected to present the optimal relevance in their handling of words to convey their messages implicitly so as to provide the readers margins for adequate imagination and inference and thus create the "beauty of implicitness". Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the principle of optimal relevance and the cognitive pragmatics are effective angles to study translation theory.

4. Conclusion

Relevance theory is highly interpretive of translation, the "most complicated phenomenon in the history of the universe". By providing a unified theoretical framework to translation, relevance theory settled the disputes going on for years in the sphere of translation study, acquainted people to a thorough understanding of the essence of translation, and contributed to more scientific, rational and effective studies of translation theory. To sum up, relevance theory can effectively explain translation activity and guide translation practices, and the translator must fully comprehend the communicative intentions of the source text communicator, correctly predict the cognitive contexts of readers of translated text, and provide explanation and appropriate cognitive information in order to match the intention of the source text and the expectations of the readers of translated text and to achieve success of communications.

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Motivation and Attitude in Learning English among UiTM Students

in the Northern Region of Malaysia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe the relationship between the students' motivation and attitude and their English Language performance. The subjects were the part two students from three UiTM campuses in the Northern Region. The research tool used was in the form of a questionnaire. The mean scores analysis of the motivation and performance revealed that the students were more extrinsically than intrinsically motivated when learning English. However, the one-way ANOVA test showed that there is no significant difference. To test the students' attitudes and their performance, the Spearman Rho Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient was used and the analysis revealed a significant correlation between attitude and achievement. The one-way ANOVA also showed that there is a significant difference. The mean scores was used to find out whether there is any difference between the respondents of different gender and their attitude in learning English. The results showed the existence of significant difference.

Keywords: Extrinsic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Overall Motivation, Attitude Variable, English Language Performance

1. Introduction

University Teknologi MARA (UiTM) is one of the tertiary institutions in Malaysia that offers various English courses to its students. At the diploma level, semester one students of any discipline are required to take a course called Preparatory English or better known as BEL 100. It consists of six contact hours per week which is equivalent to three credit hours per semester. This course is aimed at improving students' proficiency level and designed to prepare them

for Mainstream English Courses at UiTM that covers Grammar, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. By the end of the course, students should be able to use the skills acquired in the respective components in communicating effectively. The lack of interest among UiTM diploma students in learning English has become a major concern among English Language lecturers because the students are supposed to excel in this subject since the medium of instruction in UiTM is English.

There have been many studies conducted to identify the factors that contribute to the decline of students' academic performance. Lunn (1971), Nooman (1976), Levine (1980), White (1982), Astone and McLanahan (1991) had documented the relationship between the social economic status (SES) and school achievement. The studies done by Koh Boh Boon (1976), Rumberger (1983), Walberg (1985) and Stevenson (1987) reported that parental involvement has a significant relationship with the students' academic achievement.

However, to the researchers, the students' orientations, attitudes and individual personal characteristics are more of their concern since they believe that these students may have been influenced by certain factors or developed certain kind of attitudes. Furthermore, studies done by Adnan (1985) and Nor Azmi (1995) on daily rural school students revealed that there is a significant relationship between the students' attitudes and their English Language achievement. If the UiTM students were tested on their attitudes and motivation toward learning English Language, will the same results prevail?

There have been some opinions that if a student does not feel the need of acquiring the second language to function either within or outside his/her community, most probably this student will have a negative attitude and will not be interested in learning the language (Baker, 1988). By focusing on attitude and motivation, the researcher is not trying to denigrate the importance of other variables, but rather to allow for a more detailed, focused look at both.

The objectives of this study are three-folds, namely to identify the key motivating factors for learners, to investigate the extent the learners' attitudes towards English affect their performance and to investigate if there are any significant differences among the groups studied.

2. Method

A correlational research design was used. The motivation, attitude, and personal characteristics variables, as measured by a self-report questionnaire, function as the independent variables and the English Language performance, measured by the UiTM Preparatory English (BEL100) examination result, as the dependent variable (Figure 1).

2.1 Sampling design

The subjects were 139 students from the Perlis Campus, 248 from the Kedah Campus and 233 from the Pulau Pinang Campus. The selection criterion used in attaining the samples was to choose those students who had just received their BEL100 examination result regardless of their status whether as the first timer or repeater for that particular paper.

2.2 Questionnaire

The research instrument used in this research was in the form of a questionnaire. All subjects were asked to complete a questionnaire that comprised questions on personal characteristics, motivation and attitudes. The instrument was adopted and adapted from Gardner and Lambert (1972) so that it is more appropriate, intelligible and meaningful for the sample concerned. The reliability test of the instrument produced a Cronbach Alfa of 0.757, which was satisfactory and acceptable.

2.3 Data analysis

The data collected were computed and analyzed using the SPSS 12. Each student's score on the questionnaire was matched to his or her BEL100 examination grade. The statistical procedures used in this study were the descriptive statistics – mean and standard deviation scores, frequency and percentage, t-test, Spearman Rho Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient, and ANOVA.

3. Results

3.1 English language performance

Out of 620 respondents, 18.7% of the respondents received an A, 53.2% of the respondents received a B, 27.9% of the respondents received a C and only 0.16% of the respondents received a D. Based on the percentages, most respondents received a B grade for BEL 100 and out of the three campuses (Kedah campus, P. Pinang campus and Perlis campus), only 1 respondent failed. It can be said that the respondents from the Northern region campuses have good English language performance.

In terms of the distribution of BEL 100 result according to program, out of 9 programs (DIA, DBS, DIB, DPA, DIDE, DIM, EE, EM, EC), the highest number of respondents who received an A came from the DBS program (31.3%, n=31), followed by the respondents from the DIA program (27.45, n=20). The respondents from the DIDE program has the lowest number of As (7.1%, n=3). This shows that generally, respondents from the DBS program are the best compared to the respondents from the other programs.

In terms of the respondents' family income, 118 respondents came from low-income families (RM 500 and below), while 83 respondents came from high-income families (RM1501 – 2000). Out of 116 respondents who received an A, 31.9% came from high-income families (RM1501 – 2000). 10.3% of the respondents came from a family with an income range of RM 1001 – 1500 and RM 501 – 800. Majority of the respondents who received an A came from a high-income family (RM 1501 and above). Out of 173 respondents who received a C, 28.9% came from a low-income family (RM500 and below). Only 1 respondent received a D and he/she came from a low income family.

Out of 116 respondents who received an A, 77 (22.38%) respondents were female while only 39(14.13%) respondents were male. 209 (60.76%) female respondents and 121 (43.84%) male respondents received a B. As for the C grade, majority of the respondents were males, n=115(41.67%). The respondent who received a D was a male. It can be concluded that female respondents did better in BEL 100 than their male counterparts.

3.2 Motivation in learning English

The mean computed for Intrinsic Motivation is 2.915 and the mean for Extrinsic Motivation is 3.429. Therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents are more Extrinsically Motivated than Intrinsically Motivated in learning English.

The means of Extrinsic Motivation and Intrinsic Motivation for both male and female respondents are almost the same which are $M = 3.44$, $M = 3.44$ and $M = 2.90$, $M = 2.93$, respectively. Hence, it can be concluded that the respondents of different gender do not differ in their motivation in learning English. The results also revealed that the means of Extrinsic Motivation for both male and female are higher than the means of Intrinsic Motivation.

The one-way ANOVA was used to test the significant difference between gender and the motivation in learning English revealed the critical value of $F = 2.70$ (at alpha $= .05$). For the Intrinsic Motivation versus gender, $F = .059$, Extrinsic Motivation versus gender, $F = 1.627$, and for the Overall Motivation versus gender, $F = 1.46$. The obtained values are less than the critical value of F, thus, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation and Overall Motivation and gender.

From the data computed, the means for Intrinsic Motivation and Extrinsic Motivation of the respondents who received an A (high achievers) for BEL 100 are $M = 2.92$ and $M = 3.46$ respectively. As for the respondent who received a D for BEL 100, the means for Intrinsic Motivation and Extrinsic Motivation are $M = 2.00$ and $M = 2.50$ respectively. From the values, we can conclude that the respondents who obtained an A (high achievers) are more extrinsically motivated in learning English compared to the respondent who obtained a D (low achiever).

3.3 Correlation between motivation in learning English and their English language performance

The Spearman Rho rank-order correlation coefficient statistical test was used to find out whether there exists any correlation between the independent variable and the dependent variable. There is a very weak relationship between Intrinsic Motivation and English language performance, which is -.020. The one-way ANOVA test was used. The critical value of F at alpha = .05 is 2.70. The obtained F value for Intrinsic Motivation versus BEL 100 is 1.63, which is less than the critical value. Thus, it is justified that there is no significant difference between Intrinsic Motivation and English language performance.

The same conclusion can be made for Extrinsic Motivation and English language performance. This is due to the computed value for the correlation test which is -.043 and the obtained value of F for the one-way ANOVA, 2.39.

There is no significant difference between Overall Motivation (Intrinsic Motivation and Extrinsic Motivation) and English language performance. This is based on the computed values for the correlation test and the one-way ANOVA, -.034 and $F = 2.60$ respectively. It was proven in this study that the influence of motivation is not a direct one.

3.4 The respondents' attitude in learning English and their English language performance

The Spearman Rho rank-order correlation coefficient test showed there exists a significant correlation (alpha = .01) between the attitude in learning English and English language performance, which is -.152. The obtained F value from the one-way ANOVA test is 6.66, which is greater than the critical value. This further justifies that there is a significant difference between the attitude in learning English and English language performance. Even when the mean scores of the respondents' attitudes were computed (respondents who received an A, M = 3.06, respondents who received a B, M = 2.99, respondents who received a C, M = 2.93, respondent who received a D, M = 2.80), it can be concluded that the respondents who obtained an A (high achievers) have better attitude in learning English compared to the low achievers.

3.5 Attitude in learning English between male and female

The mean for male respondents is 2.95, while the mean for female respondents is 3.01. Comparing the two means, the female respondents' mean is slightly higher than the male respondents'. Therefore, the female respondents have slightly better attitude in learning English compared to the male respondents.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation does not have a direct influence on students' English

language performance due to their very weak relationship. In addition, the students' attitude does affect their language performance.

Based on these findings, the English teacher should generate a conducive class environment to enhance language learning and to promote positive attitude in learning. Educators should also motivate the students during the first meeting by encouraging them to learn English, frequently reminding them of the importance of mastering English; to attain their personal goals such as to further studies, travel abroad, prepare for the working world and be able to access the world of ICT. The administrator should introduce the study skills programs to the students especially the new ones to develop positive attitudes, to boost their self-esteem and change their perceptions of learning English. This is due to the fact that some of the respondents are not aware of the purpose of learning English and learn it because others are learning and it is required in the system. A mini survey to identify the students' attitude and perceptions of learning English during the first class should be conducted to prepare the educators as what to expect from the students in their language classes.

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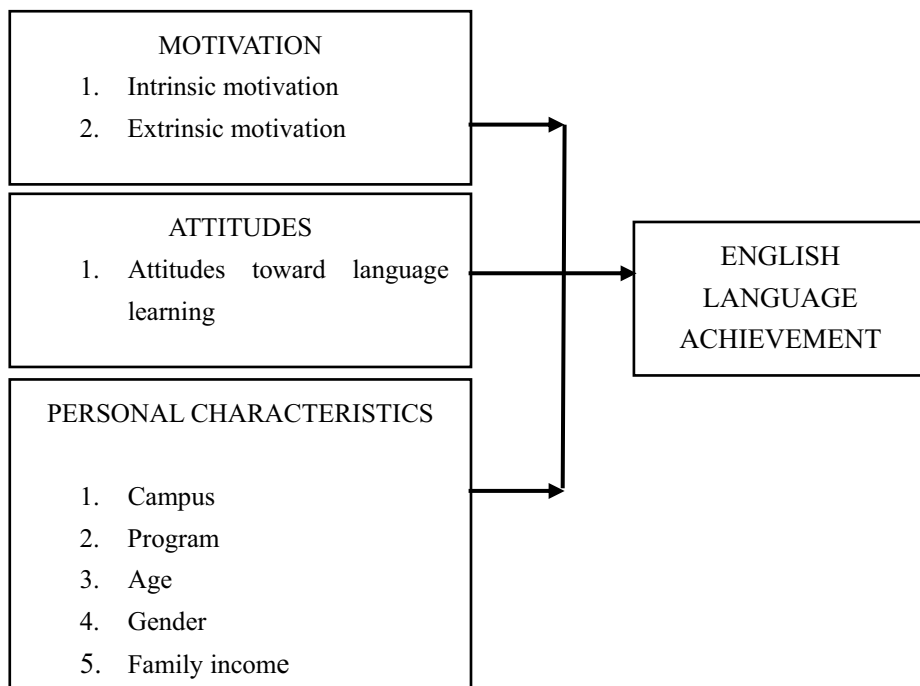
INDEPENDENT
VARIABLES

DEPENDENT
VARIABLE

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework - The proposed model shows the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable.

The Multimodal Literacy in the Combination of Online Self Study
New Era Interactive English and Oral Class

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Abstract

Adopting multimodal discourse analysis and multimodal literacy theories, this paper discusses the application of Online *New Era Interactive English* (Viewing, Listening & Speaking) in Guangdong University of Business Studies. It is found out that the combination of online *New Era Interactive English* and oral English class can stimulate students' autonomy and passion for learning. It's important for students to improve their ability of using multimodality and multimodal literacy and for teachers to design the pedagogy.

Keywords: Multimodal Literacy, online learning, New-era Interactive English

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of modern science and technology, human beings have already entered the era of multimedia in which we encounter language as well as visual images, music, sounds and so on in our daily life. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) note that we are now living in a multimodal society which makes meaning through a combination of semiotic resources. Visual images, gestures and sounds often accompany the linguistic semiotic resources. It is necessary for us to understand the rules of meaning-making in multimodal discourse. Linguistics that focus on mono-modality, must work with other fields of research, such as visual communication studies and media studies because multimodal research is interdisciplinary. If we limit discourse analyses to only the linguistic aspect and ignore the non-linguistic features such as graphs and images, we will ignore the diversity of meaning. As one of social semiotic, language is inseparable from other social semiotics. Discourse that contains only one modality is called monomodality, while discourse that contains more than one modality is called multimomdality. Multimodal discourse analysis (Here refers to MDA) which started during 1990's has become a heated topic in discourse analysis. According to Jewitt(2006:3), it shows that 'all modes have been developed as sets of resources for making signs and it focuses on the ways in which modes are combined and designed to make meaning'. The traditional way of literacy which focuses on reading and writing is not enough. Education is being transformed from the traditional teacher-student-textbook model to more complex forms of multimodal literacy. Software designers as well as educators develop these new forms of discourse. Students are expected to transform different modes and semiotics resource into understanding and use, while teachers are only part of the process. One mode needs other modes to transfer information, so every mode as a semiotics resource contributes to the meaning expression. Therefore it's important for us to understand multimodal literacy under the pedagogical environment.

2. Research Purpose

How the combination of Online Self Study *New Era Interactive English* and Oral Clas*s*, such as the design and use of image, sound, writing and movement and other modes contributes to the construction of school knowledge and potentials for leaning.

3. Research Means

3.1 Leaning environment:

From September, 2007 to July 2008, Guangdong University of Business Studies has set up three laboratories on Sanshui campus and Guangzhou campus. There are teachers on duty who are responsible for helping students and teachers online settling problems for students. Teachers set different goals and assignments for students of different proficiency, and give suggestions for leaning contents. *New Era Interactive English* (Viewing, Listening&Speaking) include three

parts: online course CD-ROM, companion book with CD-ROM, group and private study using a Companion book with audio cassette.

3.2 Research Objects:

The Students of 2006 of Guangdong University of Business Studies, take an intensive reading English class every week, using the book of *College English(Integrated Course)*, published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, in 2002. Students are equipped with basic techno-literacy but they don't use this literacy critically. Half of the students take another oral English while at the same time the other half go to the lab to take independent online study, using *New-era Interactive English* . Next week they change turns. So the number of students participating in oral class is limited to 25 to 30 people.

3.3 Theoretical framework:

Kress (2001), all the modes, including the visual, gesture, action, and vocal, as well as languages are formed into social semiotics during the use process, and have experiential meaning potential. Mode maker can make a choice among the meaning potential net. Kress (2004) focuses on design, thinking that social semiotics are transformed under such a cycle of production, distribution and articulation and interpretation. All mode resources are social meaning, and belong to specific culture. The designer according to the complicated information of multimodal modes (language, color, fonts, etc.) chooses the meaning potentials to attract readers. To readers, information gain is a process of choice. Only after readers transform information can it be turned into knowledge. If design is carried under a specific context and if there are many ways of expressing information, we need to consider which mode is best and which mode can best meet the needs of designers and users, which mode together with other modes make meaning. We need to compare the mode functional specification of each mode, and compare it with that of other modes.

According to Hu (2007), Hosonova, Multimodal discourse analysis focuses on the following questions: (1) Research the difference among modes because they have different functional specialization, therefore different modes are suited for expressing different information types. (2) According to the interactivity of different modes, we research their relationship, whether they are dependent or independent, or compliment, whether one mode increases or decreases information given by other modes. (3)The ultimate purpose of multimodal literacy is not only to gain information but also to transform the information under another context. Kress (2001) talks about the following pedagogical issues: (1) the different functions of modes in classroom, such as what kind of texts used by teachers, the interactivity between teachers and students, (2) different relationship between modes, (3) the information between modes.

Images: According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), images, like language, realize representations of material reality , that is Representational metafunction; it also has the interpersonal interaction of social reality ,such as relations between viewers and what is viewed, that is interactive metafunction;and it has Compositional metafunction, that is how images cohere into textual compositions in different ways. Images have meaning-making resources and have their unique meaning-making potentials. The Representational metafunction is about "What is the picture about?" There are two kinds of structures: narrative structure and conceptual structure. The narrative structure is characterized by the presence of a vector while the conceptual structure features the absence of a vector. The Interactive metafunction is about the relations among all the participants involved in the production and viewing of an image (that is, the creator, the represented participants and the viewer), and answers the question "How does the picture engage with the viewer?" The four basic features include: contact (point of view), social distance, attitude and modality. The Compositional metafunction deals with the way in which the representational and interactive elements are made to relate to each other, the way they are integrated into a meaningful whole. There are three systems: (i) information value, (1)Given and new: the information value of left and right (2) Ideal and real: the information value of top and bottom (3) Centre-margin layouts (ii) salience, that refers to semiotic prominence, such as an element's size, color contrasts, tonal contrast, (iii) framing

Color: It offers resources for making meaning with and principles for the organization of these resources. It includes four features: grey scale, saturation, modulation, differentiation and hue. The concept of modality which comes from linguistics and refers to the truth value or credibility of statements about the world is equally essential in accounts of visual communication. There are eight visual markers of naturalistic modality, including color-saturation, color-differentiation, color modulation, contextualization, representation, depth, illumination and brightness.

Sound: The four basic features include: social distance, such as its volume and sound quality; sonic interaction, such as monologic or dialogic: sound time which organizes speech, sound-effect and music; sound quality is whether a sound is tense or lax, loud or soft, rough or smooth, etc.

Movement and gesture: The Representational metafunction is realized as follows: there are two kinds of structures: narrative structure and conceptual structure. Who or what is acting and who or what they are acting on is central to the analysis of movement and gesture in classroom interaction. Movement and gesture can be symbolic, such as the head nod can mean approval. The Interactive metafunction is realized by distance and angle between people as they interact,

The Compositional metafunction is realized by cohesion through rhythmic repetition of gestures and movements.

Gaze: What a person is looking at and how they are looking at is meaningful. It is a sign of attention or lack of it, a sign of respect or lack of it. The ideational meaning is shown that gaze can be directed or non-directed. The interpersonal meaning is through the semiotic resource of attitude (angle) and the length of time, the stability of gaze can be steady or fluctuating.

The Interaction of modes: In order to know how these resources realize meaning and how modes interact in a communicative event, first we need to study how mode work together to realize ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning. Secondly we study the functional specialization of modes.

Multimodal literacy is a term first coined by Jewitt & Kress (2003) to encompass all the different ways in which meaning can be created and communicated in the world today. They think that (2003:17), 'design refers to how people make use of the resources that are available at a given moment in a specific communicational environment to realize their interests as makers of a message/text.' Multimodal literacy is involved in learning through image, animated movement, writing, speech, gesture, or gaze.' The effect of these modes on learning is explored in different sites including formal learning across the curriculum widely. Because Kress(2001:35) believed that 'language alone cannot give us access to the meaning of the multimodality constituted message; language and literacy now have to be seen as partial bearers of meaning only', he posited that the true focus of the researcher must change from linguistics, to semiotics. Gu (2007) thinks that if students just get information from one mode and don't transform it into another mode, it's called monomodal literacy, such as reading a book by visual mode. However the ultimate purpose of English learning as a foreign language requires students to speak or write English under different contexts, so there is mode transformation.

3.4 Procedures

Tutor supervision and system supervision
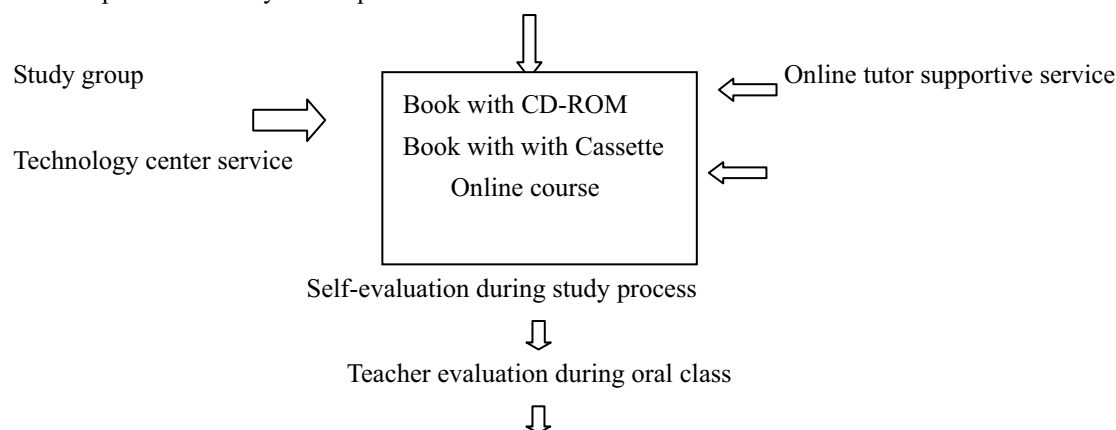
Fig. Course Design

4. Results and Discussion

Firstly, with the technology and tools students can read or write. Students can take a test from *New Era Interactive English online* system and then according to their scores they make a personal study design. Then after each unit, they take a self-test and see the result. Based on the score, they can make adjustment. It's helpful for students of different proficiency because they can decide the way of learning, the speed of learning. At the same time, students can get supportive service from tutors online or from other channels. According to Lu (2006),according to 'Input-output' theory, online self-study together with oral class provides a congestive way of 'input-understand-output'. *New Era interactive* English books(viewing, Listening and Speaking part) provide rich visual, aural , flash etc multimedia, and online-dictionary, phonetics, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehensive reading, so that students have enough input. During the online course, students get information mainly from visual and aural mode, by taking listening part exercises, and pronunciation exercises with the help of teaches on duty and online teachers. On-line discussions makes student engaged more than traditional discussions, and students are able to use transcripts online to develop writing ability. The Use of the internet can augment student autonomy, enhance motivation, improve the quality of group work, and increase teacher-student relationships. Asynchronous forum discussion activities may provide opportunities for discourse development in Language learner as a second language and also increase willingness to communicate.

Secondly, during the oral class, teachers use *Companion Book,* which includes four parts: Part A (Further Study of the Vocabulary and Usage). Part B (Extended Listening). Part C (Your Turn).Part D (Supplementary Discussion Board or

Chat Activity).Before the oral class, students are expected to finish PartA,PartB, while during oral class, teachers focus on Part (C). Teachers usually lead in the dialogues with the video which contains visual, aural, and language modes, then according to the speaking part exercises, organize students to form groups and let them practice dialogues after the conversation patterns from the lead-in Part A and Part B. At the same time, students can deepen their memory by reading the modal dialogues in the book. Students are required to transform visual, aural, and language modes into speaking. After each practice, at least one group will be chosen to demonstrate it; teachers will encourage them to use action or gestures modes to cooperate with their conversation. It is found that the more actively students use actions, gestures, the more progress they will make. In order to shorten the distance between students, Teachers often leave the platform and go into them and encourage them with gaze mode or actional mode. Through practicing on oral classroom, students can internalize the knowledge got online, and in the end they can speak and write.

At last, after practicing oral English, teachers assign students to finish Part D, which includes mainly collecting materials, writing on relevant topics, and making preparation for the next topic. Therefore, students' visual, aural, actional, and gesture modes can be strengthened through writing mode. Therefore by this means, after students have finished one unit in the multimedia online lab, teachers can go online and check the performance of each student, such as how much they have done and their scores. Then teachers can evaluate their performance in oral class by using the task activities of Part C 'speaking part', such as giving presentation or demonstration to understand others and to express themselves with specific focus, giving feedback to students and helping those in difficulty. Teachers' online supervision and offline class activities can make up the disadvantage brought by the lack of self-discipline and lack of cooperation online. Guo (2008) thinks that teachers in multimedia age should play a multifunctional role too, such as a provider of information and a user of multimedia before class, during class as a director, online answering questions as a counselor, after class, evaluating the proficiency as a quality supervisor.

5. Implications:

The combination of New Era Interactive English online and oral class is a Blended courses for adult learners. It provide information that is up-to-date and well organised, clear learning objectives for each element, courses that are suitable for different students of learning styles, guidance, chances of application , feedback on their work and appropriate assessment.

New Era Interactive English online can stimulate students' passion for learning. Students have to make study plan by themselves and set their goal and a weekly assignment. Otherwise they can't participate in the classroom activity because teachers no longer just impart information. Instead, instead students carry a practice with specific purpose. After a semester, independence, initiatives and the ability of independent learning can be established. Oral class under multimodal environment can prevent students from the visual-brain cognitive monomodal literacy which is called the dumb English learning in China. It urges students to take multimodal transformations, such as visual-aural to speaking and movement, gestures. They have a choice of teaching styles.

When we carry this project, there are some hurdles from the electronic teaching department, because it thinks that it takes too much management and resources. This misunderstanding results from the lack of understanding of online education. Participants are exposed to a wide range of modes and media, and these modes and media are used in cooperation with each other. The contents of *New Era Interactive English* focus on a football player, Nick, who is involved in a scandal. It is too far away from Chinese college students' life and it can't attract their attention. Students sometimes do not understand that they must take more responsibility for their learning in a blended course and they should not be too passive.

Suggestions: 1.Out of the difficulties of management and supervision, our school doesn't provide *New Era Interactive English* service on line to the whole school for students and teachers to use it at any time and at any place. It's limited to multimedia online labs. Therefore, it's suggested that *New Era Interactive English* on line be provided on campus website, and at the same time, supervision on students should be tightened. 2. Because desks and benches are fixed in oral classroom, it's suggested that movable chairs and desks should be provided so that actions mode can be fully developed. 3. The number of students of Oral classroom should be limited. 4. Teachers should employ design to combine multimodal elements into coherent communication.

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On the "Voter Awareness" in Kafka's Novels

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Abstract

"The Bible" stressed the Jews are God's voters. The "voter awareness" infiltrated into the souls of all Jews. Kafka was a Jewish writer. The national consciousness from the deep soul affected his creations. This paper probes into the voter awareness interpreted in Kafka's novels from three aspects: voters wandering at alien lands, adhering to the promised lands, and keeping watch to the belief temple.

Keywords: Kafka, Voter awareness

Franz Kafka (1883-1924) was a Jewish writer who wrote novels in German. He was crazy in Jewish culture and writing novels. He expressed his Jewish complex completely in his novels. The images of The Bible were common in his novels.

In Kafka's novels, the hosts were mostly wandering in alien lands. They frequently thought of their hometowns and retrieved the warmness and happiness in hometowns. But they resisted the desire for coming back to hometowns and insisted in striving on alien lands. These stories were not composed as will but coming from the national complex hidden in the writer's heart and Kafka's intensive Jewish consciousness. Similar story frameworks are in accordance with the "voter awareness" in The Bible. By combining together with the voter awareness in The Bible, this paper tries to interpret the deep meanings of stories in Kafka's novels from three aspects: voters wandering in alien lands, adhering to promised lands, and keeping watch to the belief Temple.

1. Voters wandering in alien lands

What are "voters"? The Bible stressed that Jews are voters of God. The voter awareness infiltrated the souls of Jews. The hosts in Kafka's novels are representatives of Jews. We can find relevant proofs in his novels.

Hosts in Kafka's novels have simple names, and even just has a name "K". It has aroused researchers' interests ever. Why is a host named as "K"? We can explore the origin from the development history of Jewry.

It is well known that since Rome ruined the Temple in A.D. 1st century, Jewry lost their country. They had to wander around the world, but nowhere was their home. This situation has maintained till on May 15th, 1948. After disappearing more than two thousand years, Israel relives in Palestine. Jews suffered a lot during more than two thousand years. "The act issued in 1872 requires Jews give up their family names and take Germany names. At that time, many Jews picked up the names of animals and birds. The surname 'Kafka' was maybe selected by Kafka's ancestors in late 18th century or given by the state. 'Don't be surprised by Jews disliking their names', said Joseph Ross, 'for Jews, names mean nothing, because those words are not their names …… but necessary codes. Their real names were selected according to The Biblical Law on the Sabbath and religious festivals, namely their first Jewish names and the first words of their fathers' Jewish names.'(Kafka, p8)"

In the suffering history, Jews have been deprived of rights of names according to their family names and conventions. Names based on rules regulated by others are meaningless. They are nothing but codes. To know this history background will help us understand why the host in the novel is named as an English character.

Here, the symbol K shows its popularity. It is not a code of one people but a representative of whole Jewry. Brod, a bosom friend of Kafka, has said: "Besides writing human tragedy, Kafka is especially good at writing his suffering nationality and the homeless and wandering Jewry. (Franz Kafka: A Bibliography, p132)" Hosts in Kafka's novels are images combining Jewish culture and Kafka thoughts, and souls of national spirits. They represent that the whole nationality seeks for cultural root and requires for living rights.

Many common characteristics are displayed in these hosts. One is that: they left their hometowns and wander in alien lands.

In Kafka's first novel Amerika (Kafka's original title was The Man who Disappeared), Karl Rosman, a young boy at nineteen, has been exiled in America by his parents because of committing mistakes. Then, he strived for living in an alien land.

Kafka has never come to America. What he described in the novel were merely his imaginations, which endows America with symbolization in a sense. America directly associates with the voter awareness of The Bible. Maybe that was an important reason for why Kafka put his host in America. "The foundation of America is similar to the experiences of Israel described in The Bible. (The Literal Interpretation of The Bible, p14)" As we know, the early colonists in America were mostly Puritans who suffered from the religion in Europe and British. They have ever compared their transfer to the great move of Moses and Israel from Egypt to the promised lands, guided and protected by the God, where it is the world of voters. The wide and rich lands and the wonderful natural conditions in North America are the blessed lands obliged by the God. Kafka arranged the host, Karl Rosman, of his first novel come to America, where the host suffered a lot and grown up in hardness.

From Karl, all hosts in Kafka's novels were leaving their hometowns without any exception. In The Trial, Joseph K is a successful bank manager who struggles in alien lands. Although he has been charged by the court, he dedicated to his causes and refused to come back to hometown and hide himself. He devoted himself to the exploration of the case and sought for the final solution. In Kafka's last novel The Castle, K left his hometown either. He came to the village beside the castle and tried hard in order to enter the castle.

These descriptions in novels are in accordance with the voter awareness in The Bible. Jews are voters of God. Every Jews holds this idea in the mind. As you know, in The Bible, Abraham helps his son Isaac to marry a girl. In this story, Abraham thinks that to marry a girl from the hometown to Isaac is not allowable, what may cause such a result that his son will come back to the hometown at last. They should not come back to hometown because Abraham signed a contract with the God. He promised to live in the promised lands one generation after another and the God will especially bless the offspring of Abraham, ensuring their prosperities and strengths. That is the lifelong cause of Abraham and the great undertaking of Israel. To come back to hometown or not is the primary issue concerning whether be loyal to the God or not. If Isaac comes back to hometown after the marriage, Abraham betrays the God. His lifelong cause will fail. Abraham's strong voter awareness and his thought that Israel should leave the hometown and come to promised lands and live there forever are always accompanied with the Israel. "No matter what it is Abraham, Moses, or Christian, to come home means a betrayal to the God." Therefore, The Bible has a theme that emphasizes on leaving the hometown and going for alien lands. "Afterwards, following the God and living in promised lands turn into the promise of Israel, from Abraham, to James, to Moses, to the God, the main contents of a contract with the God, and also the aim of their struggles one generation after another. (The Literal Interpretation of The Bible, p92)" Therefore, no matter what it is Karl Rosman, Joseph K, or K, they were wanderers who left their hometowns. In their minds, there are thoughts or impulses to come back to hometowns, but no actions. They all insist to the promised lands.

2. Adhering to promised lands

To adhere to promised lands means struggles. What they suffered are difficulties and frustrations. Then, what it is supports their perseverance?

"The superior 'voter awareness" of Abraham deeply rooted in The Bible is vital. The Bible extremely emphasizes on nationalism. According to its primary theme, the God picked Abraham and his clan, the Israel as the especially blessed target. Although the God often punished the Israel due to their treasons and crimes, the God promised to help the Israel overcome enemies and be more prosperous than other nations. (The Literal Interpretation of The Bible, p14)" Therefore, in all Jews' minds, no matter what difficulties they have, they will be saved by the God finally. So, no difficulty can beat them. In front of difficulties, they will never give up.

These thoughts are completely showed by images in Kafka's novels. It is also these thoughts that support their actions.

Karl comes to America by himself. He lives a hard life. Sometimes he thinks of his hometown and his parents, but he has never thought of coming back to home. He adheres to live in America. No matter what he does, as an elevator waiter, or depends on others, he tries to survive.

In The Trial, although Joseph K is in a troublesome case, he still refuses to accept his uncle's suggestions. He has not seen his mother for a long time and he wants to come home to wish his mother a happy birthday. In his mother's eyes, no matter how serious K suffers, K will never give in. At last, K does not come back to his mother or hide himself in hometown. He bravely takes the responsibility of himself and seeks for the solution.

In The Castle, as the host K were pursuing for the way into the castle, he has always thought of his hometown. When he fell in real sexual relationships with Frida, he felt like: "As if he was lost or came to a strange place where nobody has ever reached. At that place, the air seemed to be different with his hometown. People may feel it hard to breath due to the strangeness. However, the strange and ridiculous air made him walk forward. (The Complete Novels of Kafka, p42)" It was a kind of confusion as K came to a foreign place that was far different from the hometown. And it is hard

to survive there. Although the hometown turned into a sweet place, he preferred to stay and to survive.

In The Castle, whenever K thought of the hometown, a church appeared. It is also an inspiring and profound phenomenon. In the novel, the first time to mention the hometown is at the time when K himself walked toward the castle. He stared at the castle and walked forward. As he came close to the castle, he felt disappointed and thought of his hometown, which was not inferior to the castle. In his heart, he compared the steeple of the church in his hometown with the steeple at that hill. The steeple in his hometown stands there upright, becoming thinner and thinner gradually from the bottom to the top, red tiles on the roof. It is a man-made building. In contrast, the steeple at that hill is a dull round structure, seemingly drawing by a timid child on the blue sky. It seems like an ill resident who is supposed to be in an obscure room but stand out of the roof and show himself to others. The hometown and the castle respectively refer to the reality and the sky. The meanings are clear. As K left his hometown, although he yearned for the hometown, he was more adhering to his development in alien lands. It was a new world where K persists in for certain purpose.

The second time to mention the hometown is at the time when K walked hard toward the castle again. He walked together with Barnabas, but he could not judge where he arrived or was arriving. His minds were at mess. He frequently thought of the hometown, where there was a church at the center square, around by tombs and high walls. He has ever wanted to climb up the wall. Although he hurt himself, he climbed the wall after all. The sense of being success made him enjoyable all the time. Like walking on the way to the castle, this sense gave him a great power. Therefore, he swore that he never give up no matter how hard the way was.

The hometown, church, and walking toward the castle are images in Kafka's novels. By exploring these images, we can recognize the mind of Kafka and understand the meanings of his novels. That is in accordance with the point that voters adhere to the promised lands in The Bible. K, as a spirit of Jewry, stands for the mind, the wisdom, and the behavior of Jews. He is the voter of the God. In his mind, he always thinks of the hometown, and especially the church, where he gets the spiritual support. As he walked toward the castle, what appeared in his mind were the hometown and the church. The hometown means he is the voter of the God and lives in alien lands. The church means he always remembers his promise to the God: no matter what difficulties he was in, he would be loyal to his responsibilities and obligations and struggles at the promised lands. Difficulties are all over the world and beliefs are always accompanied. The castle is the belief temple that supports his faith, where the faith of Jews is there.

3. Keeping watch to the belief temple

Kafka was interested in Jewish history and culture and Hebrew. No matter how he described his identify as a Jew, we can confirm the status of Jewish consciousness in his mind. This Jewish complex has been accumulated more and more and reflected in his works.

Kafka was always longing for Jews' holy land Palestine. At that place, although Jews' Temple has been ruined twice, all Jews were dreamed of building up the third Temple. No matter where they live, they desire for coming back to the "promised lands" blessed by the God. "As they (Jews) build houses, they always leave a corner for later decorations in order to memorize the ruined Jerusalem; as they hold a wedding, they will break a glass in order to remind people of no pleasures before the construction of holy Temple; after the death of a Jew, people try every means to take a parcel of earth from promised lands and berry it in the tomb, what means he or she finally slept in the promised lands; as they pray, they always say: 'wish to come back to Jerusalem next year'. During the long wandering time, they missed the holy land Palestine all the time and dreamed of the holy city Jerusalem, desiring for rebuilding their holy Temple. (A Short History of the Jewish People, p4)"

As Kafka confirms his identity as a Jew, he desires for the holy city more and more. In letters he wrote to his girlfriend Felice, he has mentioned many times that he wanted to go to Palestine for a travel. Kafka has lived in nursing homes for many times during his life. But he has always hoped to live on his own ------ as a gardener, a binder, or a waiter in Palestine. In an interview, Kafka's last girlfriend said that they had dreamed of moving in Palestine and starting a restaurant, where the girlfriend as a waitress and Kafka as a waiter. In real life, Kafka did dream of quitting the job and going for Palestine. He has ever said: "Spiritually, to travel in Palestine seems like a cashier traveling in America by appropriating a great amount of public money …… Seduction is waving, but an absolute impossibility talks again." "If I want to live, I must do something radical. Then, I hope I can go to Palestine." (Kafka, p272) The stronger and stronger desire for Palestine, the one impossibility after another, and the haunting Jewish complex make the Jewish consciousness occupy the center of Kafka's heart and penetrate into the words of his novels. Kafka's novels are full of his thoughts over the whole Jewry's fate.

In the Amerika, the host Karl came to the promised lands. What in front of him were not Canaan with milk and honey but an alien land with hardships and difficulties. To survive was the primary issue. After experiencing a series of struggles, he joined in the Oklahoma showplace. It was a magic place. It welcomes and takes every job hunter in as if the God accepts every devotee. In this great family, Karl and other members went together toward the aim. No matter how hard the road would be, they were on the way excitedly.

In The Castle, K claimed him as a land surveyor. While "in Hebrew, this word is similar to another word 'Messiah' in form, it reflects the understanding of Kafka to Messiah doctrine. (A Short History of the Jewish People, p265)" K came to a village. He was confused by the castle and barriers in front of the way into the castle. These conceptions have the characteristics of Kafka fable. Although people explain it in many ways, none of them interprets the meanings of the novel completely. Nicholas Murray in his Kafka says: the experiences of K can be taken as Jews' fate. If so, can not the castle be taken as the holy city or holy temple of Jews? K has never given up though he could not see the real castle. In the novel, the author mentioned the host's misses of hometowns for many times. Even though, it could not change the will of K. The belief and power of K entering the castle were from the idea from The Bible that the God would always bless the wills of voters and the superior attitude as Abraham "voters", which were also the source that supported Jews' continuous struggles. The endeavors of K were rightly in accordance with the "promised lands" idea in Jewish consciousness.

In The Bible, Palestine is the promised lands of Jews blessed by the God. Although Palestine is not the early residence of Jews, as voters of the God, they must be loyal to the God and the promised lands all the time, like their ancestor Abraham. In The Bible, voters have always been blessed by the God after experiencing hardships. However, in real life, after leaving the hometown, K has not been blessed by the God. Still, K adhered to the castle and kept watch to his belief temple.

On May 15th, 1948, after disappearing for more than two thousand years, Israel appeared in Palestine and became the third Temple in Jewish history. However, Kafka who had died on June 3rd, 1924, did not witness the re-foundation of Jewish state. Like the K in his novel, although he tried every means in order to enter the castle, he failed. Therefore, in a sense, the castle means Palestine where Kafka had wanted to go but never could. The castle stands for the holy temple in Jews' mind. Only because of its holiness, can it deserve a man to pursue and struggle for all the life.

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Paragraph Boundaries: Examining Identification and Production Performance of Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of Iranian EFL students' proficiency level on their ability in identifying paragraph boundaries of unparagraphed expository texts and in producing paragraph boundaries in their own L2 expository writings. Further, this study seeks the correlation between advanced and intermediate learners' ability to identify and produce paragraph boundaries. On the basis of their scores on the general proficiency test of Michigan, intermediate and advanced EFL students studying in the English department of University of Isfahan participated in receptive and productive tasks. The results of data analysis indicate that proficiency is connected with paragraph perception, a fact more observable in productive performance; at advanced levels, students seem to be more skillful in the appropriate boundary placement. Moreover, identification performance has a positive medium correlation with production in the case of both advanced and intermediate groups of EFL learners.

Keywords: Paragraph, Paragraph boundary, Identification of paragraph boundaries, Expository writing, Topic

1. Introduction

In order to divide up a lengthy piece of writing into chunks which could be comprehensible to readers, the writer is often forced to depend on some vague intuitive notions about where one part of a written text ends and another begins. Partitioning of complex discourse into paragraphs might occur as a result of diverse reasons. There has been controversy over which specific cues are guidelines to help the writer set one chunk of discourse off from the rest. There could be varying degrees of change in semiactive consciousness. The most primary reason is mentioned by Chafe who believes: "Writing makes use of paragraph boundaries, associated at diverse levels with changes in semiactive consciousness: changes in space, time, character configurations, event structure, and/or modes of consciousness" (Chafe, 1994, p. 300). Clyne (1987) investigated paragraph structures in English and German. He concludes that English and German writers have different styles of paragraph organization. In addition to cognitive constraints which are universal, there are some culture-specific differences arising from typological differences between languages and among writers of different languages. Given the fact that paragraph organization skill is a universal cognitive one and develops in most part through one's trainings in one's L1 writing programs, the assumption in this article is that Iranian learners have to invest more in order to learn the trends used in English paragraph segmentation. Persian is a language whose writers' perception of paragraph is less a logical semantic representation of thought and more a board of related ideas small enough in size for the ease of processing. From the point of view of Persian writers, the structure of a paragraph is simple and fairly unconscious which is determined mainly by paragraph size, so much as educated Persian writers prefer to divide their written discourse when the size of the unit is sufficient for mental processing. This fact is observable clearly when we examine some genres such as informal friendly letters written by Persian educated individuals in which paragraphs often correspond to the condition of size as a major issue rather than displaying the conditions for coherence.

Studies on written paragraphs have been mostly prescriptive dictating to writers how their writing should be segmented into paragraphs, not at observing how they actually do it. Based on recommendations of most of paragraph writing

books for the use of topic sentences, each new paragraph should be a point of topic shift. But, when it comes to practical usage, it is no longer as simple as that. While topic shifts often correspond to paragraph boundaries, not all paragraph boundaries indicate a topic change (Sporleder & Lapata, 2004). The important question to consider is: Are readers capable to reinstate paragraph boundaries, when boundaries have been removed, with a fair degree of accuracy higher than chance? Regardless of typological differences attributing to cultural variation across languages, there are two aspects to paragraph segmentation: a) style which reflects optionality when decisions at minor breaks are to be made and as a result of differences in genres of writing which demand varying stylistic preferences, and b) cognitive constraints indicating necessity when genres of writing require expository or explanatory units in which breaks are likely to be more semantic and logical. Agreement on paragraph structure shown in tasks involving identification of boundaries indicates that texts are structured logically according to mental constraints and that students have developed the skill required; and skill in recognizing breaks in pieces of coherent texts develops with Persian individual's greater proficiency which can potentially make up for the lack of the same required training which they did not develop in their L1 writing programs. Such breaks are facilitated with, in addition to one's pragmatic judgment of the rhetorical structure of the text as a hierarchical unit based on some general information from types of context, paragraph insertion cues including repeated content words, pronoun coreference, and the use of discourse markers. On the other hand, boundary placement depends in part on the author's style and taste, in the sense that some breaks might not be predictable and might vary from writer to writer (Genzel, 2005).

The present study focuses on a) the effect of EFL proficiency on paragraph boundary identification and production skill, and b) the correlation which might exist between the ability to identify paragraph boundaries and the ability to produce them.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Thirty-one intermediate and thirty advanced EFL students were chosen from among one hundred ninety-seven junior and senior students majoring in English translation and literature of University of Isfahan based on the results of a Michigan language proficiency test (Table 1). Having assumed that sex is not a variable effecting in the results; the data of the study were collected through the participation of both male and female students. The age range was from 21 to 25, with an average age of 22.4. Students were all Iranians, having come from different cities with an educational background common among all of them. Students who knew a third language by being bilingual, who had lived in English speaking countries, or those who had done a degree in an overseas university for at least a semester were screened out. The only variable in focus was proficiency level which could divide participants into two homogeneous groups.

2.2 Instruments

2.2.1 General proficiency test

Michigan proficiency test consisting of 30 Grammar, 30 Vocabulary, 20 cloze, and 20 reading comprehension questions, was administered in 80 minutes. The number of participants who took part in the test was 197 attending different courses in the English department, so we had to attend four classes for data collection. The ones selected for our purpose were those who were judged to be intermediate by the result of their achievement test, and advanced if their score was higher than the average, two standard deviations above the mean.

2.2.2 Passages

Expository passages, about familiar topics and with a fairly equal degree of difficulty, were chosen to be used in collecting identification data. Two were taken from *Paragraph Development* (Arnaudet & Barrett, 1990) and the third one from *Becoming a Writer* (Wong, Glendinning, & Mantell, 1987). Both are sources used as guides for developing practical EFL writing skills representing accurate paragraph organization.

2.2.3 Writing topic for eliciting productive performance

For collecting production data, an expository topic was taken from *paragraph Development* (Arnaudet & Barrett, 1990). The topic for the writing task demanded that in one session students write whatever they could about the advantages of being able to use a computer. In order to prepare a relaxing atmosphere and for the students to be able to display their full capacity in writing, they were allowed to use a dictionary, take their time as much as they wished to organize their thought and feel free to interrupt their writing for having a brief rest. The topic chosen was, according to the judgments elicited from experienced writing instructors, familiar for the students to write about.

2.2.4 Procedure

First the proficiency test was administered in an 80 minute session. The second stage was administration of the paragraph boundary identification test which involved comprehending three authentic expository passages. Participants were exposed to the unparagraphed versions and were asked to identify the location of paragraph boundaries (Appendix

1). The time duration needed for the identification task was not more than 35 minutes; students completed their writing task in a period of 90 minutes. They were encouraged to limit their texts to four or five paragraphs, so that they ended up with texts having almost the same length. The procedures of data collection and analysis were examined for adequacy and validity in a pilot project the details of which are not mentioned here for brevity.

2.2.4.1 Paragraph boundary identification scoring schemes

The passages selected from writing manuals all contained five paragraphs. The first was about comparing American and British English which contained two paragraphs, the second, living styles of Americans, with three paragraphs, and finally the third, sources of power, with three paragraphs. Participants were given the unparagraphed versions of the passages and were asked to reinstate the boundaries. For each correct paragraph boundary placement, they would receive 1 point, so the scores ranged from 0 to 5, and then equaled to a scale of 0 to 100. In order to be objective, subjects did not receive any points for identifying optional boundaries.

2.2.4.2 Paragraph boundary production scoring schemes

The rating scale was based on Pongsiriwet's (2001) discourse scale, Bailey and Brown's (1984) analytic scale, and Cheng's (2003) multi-trait assessment scale which was modeled after the Michigan writing assessment scoring guide. They were adopted to fit the purpose of the study. The rating scale applied for the purpose of data analysis considers 10 writing features in the examination of written passages (Appendix 2).

In addition to the examination work that we did on the produced passages, two EFL university professors were asked to duplicate our assessment; their views were used as a measure taken for higher objectivity. A meeting with the two raters prior to rating the compositions was held for clarification of how to apply the rating scale. The raters assessed the compositions at their leisure and returned them after completing their assessment. For each participant, an average score was calculated, turned into a scale of 100, and was taken as the paragraph boundary production score. The results of the analytic examinations did correspond with additional holistic measurements.

3. Results

Inferential statistical measurements were applied to discover if differences reveal theoretical significance. Details of data analysis are discussed in the following section.

3.1 The results of data analysis: is the role of proficiency reflected in the receptive task?

The first hypothesis reads: there is a significant difference between the performance of intermediate and advanced EFL students in identifying paragraph boundaries. In order to investigate the hypothesis, an independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare paragraph boundary identification (PBI) scores for intermediate and advanced students (Tables 2 and 3). The assumption of equal variances has not been violated in this case. Therefore there is no theoretically significant difference in the performance of intermediate as apposed to advanced group considering paragraph boundary identification scores. The magnitude of the difference in the means is small (Eta squared= 0.001711).

3.2 The results of data analysis: is the role of proficiency reflected in the productive task?

The second hypothesis predicts there will be a significant difference between the performance of intermediate and advanced EFL students in the production of paragraph boundaries. To examine it, the second independent-samples t-test was run to compare the boundary production scores (Tables 4 and 5). In the independent-samples t-test output box, the variances for the two groups are not the same. There is a statistically significant difference in the performance of intermediate and advanced groups considering paragraph boundary production in expository written texts. The Eta squared statistics (0.0736605) indicates a large effect size.

3.3 The results of data analysis: do the receptive and productive performances compare?

The third hypothesis predicted correlation between identification and production of paragraph boundaries across the two groups of EFL learners. To be able to verify the third hypothesis, two separate Pearson correlations were run. The first one was conducted to explore the relationship between identification and production of paragraph boundaries among advanced participants of the study (Tables 6 and 7). There is a positive medium correlation between scores gained in paragraph boundary identification and production tasks, with an intermediate level of paragraph identification ability being associated with an intermediate level of ability in accurate production of paragraph boundaries among advanced participants. The relationship between identification and production of paragraph boundaries among intermediate participants was also investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Tables 8 and 9). There is a positive medium correlation between scores gained in paragraph boundary identification and production tasks, with an intermediate level of paragraph boundary identification ability being associated with an intermediate level of ability in accurate production of paragraph boundaries.

4. Discussion, implications, and conclusion

A long time ago, Koen, Becker & Young reported that often the degree of agreement with which readers identify paragraph boundaries in unparagraphed prose passages depends to a significant extent on both formal as well as semantic cues (1969). In their study, Sporleder and Lapata (2004) observed, in judging paragraph segmentation, the least agreement existed for some genres including fiction, news, and parliamentary proceedings. Bond and Hayes (1984) compared participants' performances who had to reinstate paragraph markers in a 17-sentence unparagraphed text on the basis of their own definition of the paragraph and discovered that segmentation differed in many ways from the initial author segmentation. Stark (1988) obtained similar results in a study in which university students had to reinstate paragraph boundaries into three unparagraphed texts. A mean score of accuracy was computed which revealed that agreement was only above the chance level. Readers reported that they responded mostly "to topic changes or to the introduction of new topics" (Stark, 1988: 284).

Several studies could be mentioned in support of the claim that L2 proficiency exerts an effect on L2 writing ability (Whalen & Menard, 1995; Sasaki, 2000; Woodall, 2002; Cheng, 2003) and accordingly on the quality of written paragraphs (Pennington & So, 1993; Rowshan Zamir, 1995; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Ryu, 1997; Cheng, 2003). These studies underline the importance of acquiring a certain threshold level of L2 proficiency in order to utilize effective writing strategies required for creating well organized paragraphs. Sasaki and Hirose (1996) investigated factors that might influence Japanese EFL university students' skill in writing expository paragraphs (e.g., L2 proficiency, L1 writing ability, writing strategies in L1 and L2, metaknowledge of L2 expository writing, past writing experiences, and instructional background). They reported that among all variables, L2 proficiency explained the largest portion (52%) of variance observed among L2 writings.

A number of studies have been carried out on the correlation between various aspects of productive and perceptive proficiency; they report a low to a moderate correlation between the two (Shanahan, 1980; Stotsky, 1983; Flahive & Bailey, 1993, cited in Kroll, 2003). Shanahan (1988) suggested that hardly was the correlation observed to be as high as 0.60. Improvement in perception leads to an improvement in production, and an improvement in production leads to an improvement in perception.

There are a number of important issues to consider dealing with the findings mentioned above. The potential factors which effect students' perception of paragraph organization are several, three of which are essential and worth a mention. One major interfering factor is students' L1 writing conventions, as mentioned earlier. It is assumed that Persian writers are less topically oriented compared with native English writers; paragraphs are spaces on blackboards in the writer's mental system. When the board is filled with sentences which are semantically related, then another board should be ready to be filled out: another paragraph. How much is it the decision to have logical organization compared with black boards filled with writings? We assume for Persian writers paragraphs are reflections of one fairly small size board of sentences which are semantically as well as pragmatically related; this understanding is the major reason for paragraph divisions. Paragraphs are often less likely to be units in the sense of logical organization. This fact makes Persian EFL learners predictably different from English native writers, in the sense that they could grow, for the first time, the ability to think organizationally logical in their EFL productions. This effect can leave us with prototypically acceptable writing production results which are often less than perfect bearing in mind the high proficiency level of the EFL learner. We observed differences between the two groups of writers, the higher the proficiency and exposure to the English language, the better the ability to discover the logical organization. Consequently, lower level students did face relatively greater difficulty in the tasks given to them.

The second issue to consider here is that writing skill is not a matter of proficiency in English as an FL, organization of thought is in parts a universal cognitively oriented development; in the sense that students' organizational ability in L1 can definitely be reflected in their organizational ability in L2, in our case EFL. So writing a well paragraphed piece of text is dependent on some organizational ability which can be developed concurrent with general cognitive development involving greater world knowledge, ability to think and organize ideas into logically understandable units through applying contextual input. This skill is not language-specific, rather it is a universal skill developable by general intellectual practice and training. Having taken into consideration that Persian is culturally more a language of approximation rather than absolute precision, Persian students need to work harder to develop the skill of organizing paragraphs as skillfully as native English writers do. This fact is demonstrated in the weaker outcome of intermediate students' writings compared with more competent high level proficiency participants in our study who demonstrated a fairly acceptable understanding of paragraph divisions as per instructions by EFL paragraph writing books.

The third factor which is relevant and can affect results of such a study is text type. Different genres of texts require different organizational styles. Narratives vary in the sense that change of paragraph happens with change of character, scene, or time; while, in journalistic writings, one might see paragraphs as long as a whole sentence, and that's the style part of organization of discourse. Breaks in paragraphs are reflections of pieces of news related to a topic separated because of emphasis and attention which small units can attract; this is a different definition of paragraph organization

from the one taught in writing instruction textbooks. In expository writing, on the other hand, organization is more likely to be logical, and in paragraphs with an explanatory nature, it is the semantic hierarchy of ideas that are logically related, less is it the writers' stylistic preferences.

What is emphasized in this study is that paragraph writing books are instructions for logical structures mostly utilizable in expository and explanatory writings. They are guidebooks for writing ideally about issues which are logically classifiable. We can design studies to see how Persian writers, whose native language is not a similar one with English when paragraph development is concerned, compare to English native writers. The three factors, namely the students' L1 conventions of paragraph development, the cognitive non-language specific aspect of paragraph development, and finally the most problematic and interfering one which is the stylistic optional aspects as a result of text types in different genres of language are worth greater research. The style of the writer is a reflection of optionality when breaks are not major as opposed to obligatory; therefore, some breaks are more predictable compared with those which are less predictable and more stylistically oriented. What is implied from these assumptions is that writing instruction guides a) require to deal with texts of varying genres, b) need to take into consideration the fact that some EFL students with different L1 backgrounds need greater training than assumed by writers, and c) should make a distinction between that part of writing ability which depends on students' general intellectual development and the part which is dependent on the ability to use linguistic cues and discourse markers as signs of cohesion.

In sum, EFL Proficiency is strongly connected with Persian writers' paragraph perception ability, a fact more observable in productive performance. At advanced levels, students seem to be more skillful in the way they decide on appropriate paragraph boundary placement as a consequence of EFL writing instruction. Identification has a positive medium correlation with production of paragraph boundaries among both advanced and intermediate groups of EFL learners; this is true when expository paragraphs are used containing major obligatory breaks. The development of skill in L2 boundary production and boundary identification skill is, to some fair degree, correlated, although in production students have a better chance of revealing their skill of creating breaks. In a task involving reading the expository passage and judging the breaks, students' comprehension success might affect their performance, this problem is not effective in a productive task in which students enjoy the freedom of choosing the structure of their written units.

In conclusion, the motivation for this study was the assumption that educated Persian writers who are EFL learners need to be trained to overcome the difficulty of writing organizationally accurate paragraphs to the standards acceptable to English, a skill which they did not develop fully while getting more advanced in L1 writing. The major finding regarding this assumption did reveal that advanced learners of English had developed a fair degree of skill required for organizing acceptable English paragraphs, a skill that is not required by their L1 which considers paragraphs as related ideas in the size of small boards of sentences semantically related rather than a hierarchy of semantically related ideas with a clear logical organization.

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Appendix 1: A sample of paragraph boundary identification test

Read the following passage and put a check mark (✓) where a new paragraph should get started.

Since we Americans are a blend of people from many countries, we have a very short history which can properly be called American. Therefore, it is hard to find characteristics which apply to all Americans. We combine many extremes from many different cultures. Nevertheless, we can make some generalizations. Our main characteristics include individuality, a combination of idealism and practicality, materialism, and a lack of parental influence, all of which permeate our lives. We Americans value individuality. Our country was founded by strong individuals, and we do not like to be forced into conformity. Therefore, we insist on having a great deal of freedom to behave very much like most other Americans, and we are suspicious of those who do not conform. Hippies are individualists, for example, but most Americans do not like them. By the same token, we consider ourselves very faithful to the laws of our country, but there are few among us who would not break one if it was felt that no harm would be done by doing so—such as by exceeding the speed limit or failing to report informally-received cash income on tax forms.   Secondly, we Americans are both practical and idealistic. We place great value on doing things for ourselves, for this is what our pioneer forefathers were forced to do. Many foreign visitors are surprised to find that many couples of comfortable means do their own yardwork, their own housework, their own repairs. On the other hand, we are very idealistic: we think we have the best political, social, and economic system yet devised, and we therefore expect everything to go smoothly. As a result of our idealism, we are easily disillusioned. This is why so many marriages end in divorce—young couples' expectations from marriage are often unrealistically high. Similarly, it helps explain the dissatisfactions and protests of many young people, and even older people who enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world.

Appendix 2: Paragraphing rating scale for scoring written compositions

Please circle the number that reflects the degree to which you agree with the statement about the composition.

4 = Strongly Agree   3 = Agree   2 = Disagree   1 = Strongly Disagree

4 3 2 1 A. The beginning section is effective in introducing the subject.

4 3 2 1 B. The ideas in the composition are relevant to the topic. (Essay addresses the assigned topic.)

4 3 2 1 C. The ideas are well-related to one another. The essay is clearly and logically ordered without digressions. The Ideas are concrete and thoroughly developed.

4 3   2 1   D. Arrangement of material shows plan (could be outlined by reader).

4 3   2 1   E. New information is introduced in an appropriate manner.

4 3   2 1   F. Supporting evidence is sufficiently given for generalizations.

4 3   2 1   G. The writer's overall point of view is clear.

4 3   2 1   H. The division of paragraphs is justifiable in terms of content relevance.

4 3   2 1   I. Transitions among paragraphs and ideas are smooth and effective.

4 3 2 1 J. The conclusion section is logical and complete. The ending gives the reader a definite sense of closure.

Appendix 3: Sample written composition: advanced

Discuss the advantages of being able to use a computer.

Welcome to the virtual world of computers. Nowadays, computers have become another member of families, just as TVs have become such-they are cared for, and even fed, however, with electricity. And though one may not know how it has become his child, he can't dispense with it. Nevertheless, there are still those who consider it as a mere tool, and nothing more. Now the question is what good it can offer to us.

The first thing which flashes in ones mind is that it can make every work done faster and more convenient, these two are correlated: the faster, the more convenient, and vice versa. Advantages of computers range from writing this very essay to sending a spacecraft into space. By learning how this set of 0s and 1s works, one can speed up his work and thus save time and money. Yet this may also turn into a disadvantage, as the saved money might be used to wander around during the saved time.

The other advantage shows itself when the computer is connected to the internet. This simple connection makes the world so small that it takes one a blink of eye to start communication with not only one, but several persons simultaneously. Data, which range from some information to help writing an essay (not this one, of course!) to co-working with one's colleagues at home, can also be exchanged from every online computer across the planet. Yet again, there are problem. One is that this virtual closeness may affect one's desire to have a face-to-face communication. The other maybe that due to this massive amount of available information, one may forget that he's to find the answers to his own questions, not the answers of others.

Other merits could be fittingly mentioned, but by a deeper look, most of them are other aspects of those suggested above. So this little kid is now fully grown up, and its abilities can be of much help, both for good and bad guys.

Average score: $\dfrac{35}{40}$

Appendix 4: Sample written composition: intermediate

Discuss the advantages of being able to use a computer.

Many years ago, **so**meone who could simply read and write was called a literate person**,** but little by little as technology made a great jump forward, a literate person is defined as someone who has the ability to speak English and use computers.

Theses days computers are found everywhere in all aspects of human life. You can't find a house not having a computer since most tasks are done with computers.

There are two opposite ideas; some believe computers hinder people from their work while others think they help to do jobs easily.

Computers save much of our time, money, and energy. That's why human forces are replaced **by** computers in most companies. Data and Information are easily processed and protected. We can pay our bills by using computerized systems so that we don't have to go out and spend a lot of time and money. We can buy all our products through internet system and introduce our products to the world. So computers play an important role in everyday life.

These were some advantages of computers. Of course, it doesn't mean there aren't any disadvantages. Sometimes computers can even hurt people's lives in some ways.

Average score: $\dfrac{18.33}{40}$

Table 1. Descriptive tabulation of the Michigan language proficiency test results

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total score	197	23	92	61.73	15.3069

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of paragraph boundary identification test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PBI Advanced PBI	30	74.0000	19.75715
	31	72.2581	22.90701
Intermediate PBI			

Table 3. Independent sample t-test for paragraph boundary identification test

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
PBI Equal variances assumed	1.102	.298	.318	59	.752
			.318	58.245	
Equal variances not assumed					.751

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of paragraph boundary production test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PBP Advanced PBP	30	92.5000	11.65229
	31	83.3226	20.40488
Intermediate PBP			

Table 5. Independent sample t-test for paragraph boundary production test

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
PBP Equal variances assumed	11.840	.001	2.147	59	.036
			2.166	47.988	
Equal variances not assumed					.035

Table 6. The mean score and SD of the scores gained in both identification and production tasks: advanced participants

	Mean	Std. Deviation
PBI	74.0000	19.75715
PBP	92.5000	11.65229

Table 7. Pearson correlations of the identification and production of paragraph boundaries among advanced participants

		PBI	PBP
PBI Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)		1 .	.502** .005
PBP Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)		.502** .005	1 .

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 8. The mean score and SD of the scores gained in both identification and production tasks: intermediate participants

	Mean	Std. Deviation
PBI	72.2581	22.90701
PBP	83.3226	20.40488

Table 9. Pearson correlations of the identification and production of paragraph boundaries among   intermediate participants

		PBI	PBP
PBI Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)		1 .	.468** .008
PBP Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)		.468** .008	1 .

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Notes

Note 1. PBI: Paragraph Boundary Identification

Note 2. PBP: Paragraph Boundary Production

An Empirical Study on the Comparison between Strategies

on Oral English Classes and Writing English Classes

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Abstract

Nowadays, English writing and speaking have received more and more attention at home and abroad. Both scholars and educators have done research on second language learning, especially the learning strategies to facilitate the learning and teaching of English. Among all the branches of English, speaking and writing rank to the most important compared with others.

The present study aims to find out the correlation between the use of speaking and writing strategies of students with poor English. As their English is poor, they have to employ mother tongue to help their speaking and writing of a second language. The subjects of the present study are students in a vocational institute, who wan correlation t to go abroad after two or three years' study there. Therefore, they have strong motivation. This paper investigated the correlation between their language proficiency levels and their use of strategies and found that these two are closely correlated with each other. Besides, the present study also discussed the correlation between different categories of strategies of speaking and writing, and the results show that cognitive, meta-cognitive, social strategies of speaking and writing are closely correlated. All of these give significant implications to the teachers and investigators of second language learning.

Keywords: Second language acquisition, Speaking strategies, Writing strategies, Correlation

1. Introduction

1.1 The brief description of the study

"Language learning strategy" is a popular term nowadays in the field of applied linguistics. Experts both at home and abroad have done researches on the various branches of English, like speaking, listening, writing and so on. As for foreign language learning, speaking and writing are considered to be the most basic and important, so the teaching and learning of these two branches have received much of the attention both from the learners and researchers.

The present study mainly concerns with the correlation between the speaking strategy and the writing strategy used by the first year students in Shandong Commercial and Technical Institute. The subjects are a special group of students as they had got low marks in the college entrance examination and after three years' study, most of them will go abroad for further study. Therefore, their English is really very poor and they have their own language learning and using strategies, especially in terms of speaking and writing owning to their particular characteristics.

As an oral English teacher of these students, the author has found that their speaking strategy is closely related with their writing strategy as when they are speaking, what the usually do is to write an outline or even a short paragraph to remind them what they are going to say, so the writer conducted a research to find out the relation between their use of strategies.

Among the empirical studies on language using strategy, most of the researches are done to find out the strategies used for either speaking or writing, however, not so many researchers investigated the correlation between the strategies of the two. Furthermore, almost all the studies put their emphasis on the normal college students rather than such a special group of students with poor English performance. On account of little exploration in this aspect, the present thesis, inspired by a large number of previous studies, attempts to make the empirical exploration on assessing the relationship between the speaking strategy and the writing strategy to shed some light on our English teaching for those whose English are not so good.

Altogether the whole thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One briefly introduces the significance of the paper and sketches the main structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two presents a review of the main theories and empirical researches in the field of speaking and writing strategy.

Chapter Three illustrates the methodology of the thesis. It states the research questions, the subjects, the instruments data collection and data analysis.

Chapter Four is the analyzing chapter. With the aid of statistical software SPSS, it demonstrates the correlation between speaking strategy and writing strategy.

Chapter Five discussed the implication of this study for language teaching and learning as well the limitation of the thesis.

2. Literature Review

The study of learning strategies has seen an "explosion of activity" in recent years (Skehan 1991:285, cited in Ellis, 1999:529) and it is not a new topic in teaching and learning researches. In this chapter, the main findings of this research will be examined, and firstly a number of definitions of language strategies and various frameworks of classifying language strategies are offered to us and then it will review the historical studies of language strategy in general and speaking and writing strategy specifically. Finally, there is a summary and evaluation of these studies.

2.1 Theoretical background

2.1.1 Definitions of language strategies

Language learning strategies refer to all kinds of strategies employed by language learners for efficient learning. However, there has not been an agreement on the definition of this term since various definitions have been given from different perspectives. Ellis (1999:529) says that the concept of strategy is somewhat fussy and it is not easy to tie down. He has listed come classical definitions of the experts, such as Stern (1983), Weinstein & Mayer (1986), Chamot (1987), Rubin (1987) and Oxford (1989) in his book (1999:531).

According to Ellis, these definitions reveal a number of problems. First, it is not clear whether they are to be perceived of as behavioral or as mental, or as both. A second problem concerns the precise nature of the behaviors that are to count as learning strategies. And a third problem is whether learning strategies are to be seen as conscious and intentional or as subconscious. A fourth problem concerns whether learning strategies are seen as having a direct or an indirect effect on inter-language development. Therefore, it is difficult to give a clear definition to language learning strategy and some experts such as Ellis chose to list the feathers of it rather than just give one definition to it to make it easy to understand.

2.1.2 Classifications of language strategies

Researches into what learners do to learn a language has resulted in the identification of specific strategies and in attempts to classify them in some way. As the definition of language learning strategy, researchers do not share the same criteria to classify learning strategies adopted by learners. Thus their classifications of language learning strategy vary a lot.

According to Rubin (1981), strategies can be divided into two primary groups and then a number of subgroups. One of the primary groups consists of strategies that directly affect language learning, including clarification, monitoring, memorization, guessing, inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning and practicing. And the other primary group consists of strategies that contribute indirectly to language learning.

Wenden (1983) examined the strategies that adult foreign language learners use in order to direct their own learning. Her focus, therefore, is on what O'Malley and Chamot call meta-cognitive strategies and then identify three general categories of self-directing strategies.

O'Malley (1985) distinguished three types of strategies that are the basic framework of language learning strategy in many researches, including meta-cognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies, which is well recognized in the last decades.

Finally, Oxford (1990) distinguishes strategies between direct and indirect strategies and she further explains the relation among different strategies according to O'Malley's classification.

2.2 Historical researches on language learning strategies

The representatives of early language learning strategy studies are Rubin, Naiman and Stern. As one of the most influential researchers, Rubin tried to identify the learning strategies employed by the "good language learner" while learning a second language by means of classrooms observation, interview and questionnaire. The framework developed by O'Malley and Chamot, Cohen, and (in particular) Oxford, provide a basis for studying which strategies or combination of strategies are effective in promoting language learning.

Nowadays, two classification schemes are more frequently adopted (Chen Xiao- Tang & Zheng Min, 2002:35-36). The first one is that according to the role that strategies play in the learning process, there are cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, affective strategies and communicative strategies. The second one is that according to areas of language knowledge and language skills, there are strategies for learning pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and

strategies for developing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

2.3 Historical studies on the speaking and writing strategies

2.3.1 Historical studies on speaking strategies

The empirical studies on oral English learning strategies are mainly around five topics, respectively, the relationship between learning strategies and the oral English proficiency level, like Huang & Van Naerssen; the varieties of communication strategies used by students, like Chen Siqing; the relationship between English proficiency level and the communication strategies, like Shen Guohuan; factors influencing the use of communication strategies, and the effectiveness of the training of communication strategies (Wen Qiufang & Wang Lifei, 2004).

It is worth noting that almost all these studies are concerned with the university students rather than some special group of learners, like adult English learners or students with poor English who entered the university with special purposes or some other reasons.

2.3.2 Historical studies on writing strategies

Researches on English writing mainly involves five categories, that is, writing theories, writing processes, text, affecting factors and pedagogy. In the past decade, scholars and educators sue different methods such as thinking-aloud, questionnaire, text-analyzing and case study to carry out a large number of empirical and experimental researches. The role of L1 in L2 learning has always been the focus of many researches (Guo Chunjie & Liu Fang, 1997; Wen Qiufang & Guo Chunjie 1998; Wang Wenyu & Wen Qiufang, 2002), and they studied the process of L2 writing of Chinese students by the method of thinking-aloud to determine the function of L1 in L2 writing. Besides, other researches also discovered that Chinese students tended to use informal expressions in their writing and this tendency weakened with the growth English proficiency. It was concluded that the most prominent problem of L2 writing in China was that students' English was poor, so most of them wrote with the help of L1.

2.3.3 Evaluation and summary

From the above we can see that the previous studies on English speaking and writing are mainly focused on the correlation between the language competence and the English proficiency and influencing factors, and the subjects are mainly university students. However, for some special group of students, like those who got low marks in the college entrance examinations but entered the university for special purposes, such as going abroad, their English is poor. And the writer found that when the teacher asked them to have a group discussion or prepare a speech, what they usually do is to write a small composition and then read it out. So, there is some correlation between their speaking and writing strategies. Based on this hypothesis, the writer conducted this research and wanted to find out some useful information and implication to the teaching of these students.

2.4 Transfer of native language

Language transfer has long been a controversial topic in applied linguistics, second language acquisition and language teaching for many years. Within the last few decades, its importance in foreign language learning has been reassessed several times. Now, the study of language transfer has again become a hot issue in SLA.

Language transfer, in the learning theory of psychology, refers to the influence of a learner's previous linguistic knowledge, mainly that of native language, on the learning of a new language. In terms of its functions, facilitation or interference, language transfer is further dichotomized into positive transfer and negtive transfer. in language learning, if transfer makes learning easier, or helps second language learning, it is positive transfer; if a patter of rule in first language results in an error or in appropriate form can regarded as the result of negtive transfer in interference (Ringbom, 1987:58)

3. Methodology

3.1 Research questions

The main purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between the speaking and writing strategies. It is designed to answer the following questions:

(1) How do the speaking strategies correlate with the writing strategies for those whose English is poor but want to learn well for some special purposes.

(2) Is there any correlation between language proficiency and language strategy use by the students?

(3) To what extent do the speaking strategies correlate with the writing strategies?

(3) Is there any correlation between different writing strategies and their corresponding categories of speaking strategies?

3.2 Subjects

The participants of the study are 50 first year college students in Shan dong Commercial and Technical institute. They are a special group of students as they didn't do well in the college entrance examination, some even got the lowest

marks, so their English was poor but they wanted to go abroad when they graduate from the university. Among the tests collected, 43 are valid, and the other four are excluded because some of the participants forgot to write their identity numbers and others missed some terms of the questionnaire. Of the remaining 43 participants, they are from the same class, so the learning environment is also the same.

3.3 Instruments

The instrument used in the study includes two questionnaires, one is about English speaking strategies and the other is about the writing strategies. And then an oral English test.

The questionnaire about speaking strategies consists of two parts, the background information and a modified version of Oxford's ESL/EFL SILL which was translated into Chinese.

The questionnaire about writing strategies has the same structure as the speaking strategies to make it easy to analyze. Besides, although there are various classifications of strategies, both the two questionnaires about speaking and writing are classified according to the same criteria, therefore, it is easier and better to analyze the correlation between them.

Then, the writer had an interview with three students of the subjects, and asked them what they usually do when they are preparing for speaking. All of these three students told that they employ the strategies of writing first, as they usually write what they want to say and then translate them to oral English.

Finally, an oral test is given to them as their final oral English examination, that is, the learning result of a term. Combining the questionnaires and the oral test, we can between understand the relationship between these two kinds of strategies.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

After the scoring of the data, all the raw data were put into the computer for statistical analysis, and the software utilized to process the data was SPSS 10.0. As the purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between speaking strategies and the writing strategies, Pearson correlations are the dominant techniques for the statistical analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents us the results or answers put forward in the past chapter. As is mentioned above, the main techniques used in this paper are t-test and correlation, so this chapter is organized according to the questions.

4.1 Correlations between language proficiency level and the strategy use of the students

4.1.1 Correlations between language proficiency level and the writing strategy use Table 1

Insert Table 1 Here

Table 1 shows us that language proficiency level is closely correlated with the use of writing strategies. The Pearson correlation is .409 and the significance is 0.006, which means that there is close correlation between language proficiency level and the use of writing strategies.

4.1.2 Correlations between language proficiency level and the writing strategy use

Insert Table 2 Here

Table 1 shows us that language proficiency level is closely correlated with the use of speaking strategies. The Pearson correlation is .311 and the significance is 0.043, which means that there is close correlation between language proficiency level and the use of speaking strategies.

To sum up, language proficiency is closely related to the strategy use. Students with high proficiency level tend to use more language strategies than those with low proficiency level. Therefore, teachers had better organize those students who have high language proficiency level to share their experiences with those who have low proficiency levels. This is more effective than teachers teach them.

4.2 Correlations between the use of speaking strategies and writing strategies

Insert Table 3 Here

As we mentioned above, the subjects of this paper are students whose English is very poor, and when they speak English, what they usually do is to write what they want to say and then speak. Therefore, there are some similarities between their speaking strategies and writing strategies. From table 3, we can see that their writing strategies are closely related to their speaking strategies. In a sense, their oral English is a part of their writing in that they speak what they have written. The significance of correlation is 0.000, which means the close relation between these two.

So, the teacher of such kind of students should improve their basic english proficiency level, and then combine the teaching of writing and speaking together at the beginning, which is good for their initial learning of English.

4.3 Comparison between different categories of writing English and their corresponding categories of spoken English

Insert Table 4 Here

Insert Table 5 Here

As is shown from the above two tables, among all the categories of language writing and speaking strategies, cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies of writing and speaking have close correlations, which means that there are similarities between students' use of different categories of speaking and writing strategies. As for affective strategy, there appears no significant correlation perhaps due to the overall low proficiency level of all the students. Therefore, teachers should take this into consideration when they teach writing and speaking.

4.4 The results of the interview about the use of strategies

The writer interviewed ten students before they had their final oral examination. All of them told that they firstly write what they want to say, in English or Chinese. We should note that what the students wrote here is not a simple outline, but almost all the sentences or key words of the sentences as they said that they just do what they usually before they write something. As their answer is almost the same, here the writer only gives two answers which can represent all the others' ideas.

Question: how do you usually do when you prepare your speech? What is the difference between speaking and writing of English?

Subject: I usually write what I want to say on papers, in which I can read them out to prevent forgetting them. Because my English is not good, so I always write them in Chinese, and then translate them into English by using a dictionary or ask the teacher or classmates for help. Speaking is speaking out what we have written, but writing is just putting your ideas on the paper.

Subject 2: I usually write in Chinese what I want to say, but only the beginning and the end of the whole. As for the middle part, I usually write the key words or phrases, and then when I 'm speaking, I can organize them into sentences. There are no other differences between speaking and writing but one is in written form and the other is in oral form.

In short, almost all the subjects think that oral English is just speaking out what they have written, and they have not recognized the major differences between these two cognitively separate branches of learning. Therefore, they do not know the difference between them lies in different registers, that is, one is mainly spoken language and the other is written language. This can also explain why all of them write what they want to say first and then read them out as their oral English.

5. Conclusion and Implication

5.1 Limitations of the present study and recommendations for further research

Although this study was designed to examine the correlation between oral English strategies and writing strategies employed by a special group of students whose English is poor and gained some useful information from it, the limitations of this study should not be ignored.

Firstly, the sample is relatively small and the proficiency and background of the subjects are various. Therefore, it may fail to present the general situation of the large number of all learners with such background.

Secondly, the way the writer processes the data from the two written questionnaires is not rigorous which may influence the result of the study.

Thirdly, some specific strategies in the questionnaire may fail in representing the strategies that the subjects use. They use other strategies which are not included in the present questionnaire. If so, the result of the study may not objectively express the real situation of the strategy use.

5.2 Major findings and implications for language teaching

This paper investigates the correlation between the use of oral English strategies and the writing strategies. From this study, we can see that there is close correlation between the different uses of these two kinds of strategies.

Firstly, we can see from the present study that language strategy use is closely related to language proficiency level, therefore teachers of writing and speaking should pay great attention to improve the overall English proficiency level if these students' English is poor. Only in this way, these students can use the strategies more effectively, and then improve their speaking and writing achievement.

Secondly, as their English is quite poor, they tend to employ translation as one of the most useful tools when they want to speak or write something. Even for those whose English is quite well, it is common for them to use mother tongue to learn a second language. Besides, this study also proves this fact. Then what the teachers should do is to combine the teaching of writing and speaking together. Nowadays, it is well known that mother tongue plays both a positive and a

negtive role in second language learning, and the role of it in second language learning is in hot dispute. However, here, for the teaching of writing and speaking to those whose english is not so good, it is good for the teachers to make good use of mother tongue. This is also why the writer wants to compare these two different cognitive branches of learning.

Thirdly, as for the teaching of writing and speaking, teachers can first give students a topic for them to discuss or compose, and then ask them to think out or write an outline, and then speak what they write to the whole class, and finally, ask the students to write a paragraph or a small composition to help them recognize their shortcomings of the previous speaking, like mistakes or errors, which is more effective for both of their writing and speaking. However, when their language proficiency improves, the teachers should avoid such kind of teaching and then teach these two different branches of learning separately.

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Table 1.

Correlations

		Scores at Entrance exam	Writing trategies
Scores at Entrance exam	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.409
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.006
	N	43	43
Writing strategis	Pearson Correlation	.409	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.
	N	43	43

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2.

Correlations

		Scores at Entrance exam	Speaking strategis
Scores at Entrance exam	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.311
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.043
	N	43	43
Speaking strategis	Pearson Correlation	.311	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	.
	N	43	43

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

Table 3.

Correlations

		MEANKOU	MEANXIE
MEANKOU	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.673*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	43	43
MEANXIE	Pearson Correlation	.673*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	43	43

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 4.

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	KRENZHI & XRENZHI	43	.448	.003
Pair 2	KBUCHANG & XBUCHANG	43	.491	.001
Pair 3	KQINGGAN & XQINGGAN	43	.246	.112
Pair 4	KYUANREN & XYUANREN	43	.767	.000
Pair 5	KSHEJIAO & XSHEJIAO	43	.589	.000

Table 5.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	KRENZHI - XRENZHI	7.216E-02	.4746	7.237E-02	-7.39E-02	.2182	.997	42	.324
Pair 2	KBUCHANG - XBUCHANG	-.4302	.5844	8.913E-02	-.6101	-.2504	-4.827	42	.000
Pair 3	KQINGGAN - XQINGGAN	-.6076	.7656	.1167	-.8432	-.3720	-5.204	42	.000
Pair 4	KYUANREN - XYUANREN	7.649E-02	.3777	5.760E-02	-3.98E-02	.1927	1.328	42	.191
Pair 5	KSHEJIAO - XSHEJIAO	1.000E-01	.5695	8.684E-02	-7.53E-02	.2753	1.152	42	.256

Focus on Form in College English Teaching

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Abstract

Many college English teachers lay emphasis on language meaning instead of language forms in order to satisfy the need of new college English curricular, change the present situation of "dumb-and-deaf English" and improve the students' communicative competence. This approach upgrades the fluency but slows down accuracy, which results in inter-language fossilization. Focus on form in college English can improve both the fluency and accuracy of English language, which are crucial for the learners of English to improve the communicative competence. This paper objects to finding out the practicability of focus on form, the process of practicing focus on form and the effectiveness of the process.

Keywords: Focus on form, Communicative competence, Interaction

1. Introduction

For college English teaching, the College English Curriculum Requirement" has opened up a greater scope to encourage the implementation for a communication-oriented teaching approach in this language program. It views language proficiency as a whole and especially stresses cultivating the learner's oral ability. The requirement is practical and useful and probably helps solve the "dumb-and-deaf English" problem. It demonstrates a stronger determination and shows greater encouragement to develop a communication-oriented curriculum than ever before. But the present college English teaching is far from satisfactory, especially in the aspects of English listening and speaking abilities. It has not reached the goals of the Requirements. The reasons for this may be multidimensional, but the teaching methodology is an important factor.

2. Focus on forms and focus on meaning

Focus on forms is a traditional way that the teachers draw students' attention to grammatical forms and linguistic forms. In college English teaching, teachers focus on the explanation of the words, sentences and the main idea of the text by translation. After having understood the different forms in the text, the students have no chance to practice speaking and listening. The problem of focus on forms is to lay emphasis on language knowledge teaching than students' comprehensive abilities of using foreign language. The present "dumb-and-deaf English" problem results from the widespread use of this traditional grammar-oriented method. Students became almost "structurally competent but communicatively incompetent". Language forms is only one component of the overall language knowledge native speakers possess and thus, communicative competence should incorporate sociolinguistic and contextual competence as well as grammatical competence.

Focus on meaning is a student-centered teaching method, which transfer the students' attention from focus on the grammatical or linguistic forms to focus on meaning in output. Focus on meaning, which is simply based on the notion of communicative competence, asserts that the primary objective of a second or foreign language program must be to provide language learners with the information practice and much of the experience needed to meet the communication needs in the second or foreign language. The past two decades have witnesses a shift of emphasis in foreign language teaching and learning from traditional focus on forms to focus on meaning. In contrast to traditional structural approach, some studies suggests (e.g., Maley 1986; Littlewood 1981) that focus on meaning is characterized by its concentration on language use and appropriateness, focus on fluency, learner-centeredness and integration of language skills.

Focus on meaning views language as a tool for communication, insists that inter-action speaking activities in classrooms be instances of real communication, and ensures that students have sufficient exposure to the target language. All these would develop in students an ability to use English for communication. This student-centered teaching encourages active learning via student involvement. Students are encouraged to think about and experiment with language, with the teacher providing guidance, supervision and encouragement. While teachers direct and facilitate learning, students themselves have ultimate responsibility for their own progress.

3. Focus on form

Recently there has been a call for an integration of focus on forms and focus on meaning in the second language classroom, that's focus on form. Long(1991: 45-46) suggested that one way to encourage accuracy is through the concept of focus on form that target student's accuracy and focus on form "overtly draws students" attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose over-riding focus is on meaning or communication." He stressed the need for a focus on form to be enmeshed in communicative activity and motivated by communicative need. The use of focus on form instruction in the classroom allows the teacher to instruct students to both accuracy and fluency. It emphasizes the accuracy of language forms in communicative classrooms.

If learners acquire the target language only through focus on meaning instruction which stresses the need to foster communicative competence before the mastery of accurate language forms, they will run the risk on "fossilizing" errors. These fossilized errors, or errors that have become ingrained language habits after prolonged usage are extremely difficult, to subsequently eliminate. Thus it is impossible for language learners to achieve high levels of accuracy or native--- like proficiency if their exposure to the target language is limited to those that occur only in natural contexts. According to Long (1991), focus on form refers only to those form-focused activities that arise during, and embedded in, meaning-based lessons; they are not scheduled in advance, as is the case with focus on forms, but occur incidentally as a function of the interaction of learners with the subject matter or tasks that constitute the learners' and their teacher's predominant focus. It occurs just when he or she has a communication problem, and so is likely already at least partially to understand the meaning or function of the new form, and when he or she is attending to the input. Later Long and Robinson (1998) admitted that both planned focus on form and incidental focus on form could work in classroom teaching. But it should be a need for meaning-focused activity into which an attention to form is embedded. So the difference between focus-on-forms in traditional ways and the focus-on-form is that the latter occur in communication.

4. Focus on form and focus on forms

Sheen (2002) argued that focus on form and focus on forms revolve around the degree to which teachers need to direct learners' attention to understanding grammar whilst retaining a focus on the need to communicate. Focus on form refers to drawing students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose over-riding focus is on meaning or communication (1991). Focus on form derives from an assumed degree of similarity between first and second language acquisition positing that the two processes are both based on an exposure to comprehensible input arising from natural interaction. Focus on forms is equated with the traditional teaching of discrete points of grammar in separate lessons. It is based on the assumption that classroom foreign or second language learning derives from general cognitive processes, and thus entails the learning of a skill, hence its being characterized as a 'skills-learning approach'.

Zhang (2007:38-38) did research in oral English teaching which aimed at improving students' communicative competence and found that one big obstacle in improving spoken English is that the oral practice in the classroom is imitation and repetition, the demand is low, the students have no enthusiasm; or the students are demanded to have further discussion about some topics which need more expressions than they have. Both result in failure for lack of forms in target language to use. Though his research is on collaborative learning, the problem he found in teaching is similar with the researcher's problem, which proved that this research is useful. Some researchers (e,g. Ellis, 1999; Long,2000) found that form instruction is most effective when it is focused on raising learners' awareness of how a structure is formed, what it means, and how it is used rather than on practicing drills for accuracy.

In the classroom it is not easy for teachers to design interactive activities. Cameron (2000:26) suggested that if the demand is too high, the learners will find the task too difficult, they're not likely to finish it as will as they can, using what they know to complete the task but not using the language intended. Thus learning goals are not achieved.

The aim of English teaching is the communication between teachers and students, students and students, and is not just teachers teaching and students learning. In the teaching, the action of students is guiding by teachers. The limitation of teachers' talking demand teachers to better their input, and the input must be comprehensible. The output of students is just a kind of their experience and feeling. Teachers should deal with these differences in a correct way in order to give them more opportunities to show their own thoughts and opinion. Focus on meaning is an effective way to improve students' fluency while neglecting the accuracy in communication, which will influence the process towards target language. Focus on form is practical and effective in college English teaching and learning in improving the students and it should be applied in college English teaching and learning to improve students' accuracy as well as fluency.' communicative competence. Focus on form need to take place in a cultural atmosphere that allows students to actively participate in daily activities. Thus, administrators, teachers, parents, and students would need to feel some degree of comfort with letting students be active participants---and sometimes leaders---in the content and manner in which they study.

5. Conclusion

The aim of focus on form is to make learners to sue language to do things and experience language through using it.

Without basic linguistic structures, there is no way to achieve this aim. Therefore, tasks need to be designed and relevant support activities can be chosen to make the use of structures easier. Perhaps, it is a little hard for students to make sure of the relationships between linguistic forms and communicative functions, so the teachers need to design a variety of tasks to increase students' awareness of approaching language from using and practicing.

In China, the traditional way of teaching English cannot meet the communicative demands the changing society, and in language teaching, it is not enough to teach only grammatical structures or syntactic structures, for this cannot develop learners' communicative competence automatically. Therefore, with applying focus on form in input and focus on meaning in output, the students have more competence during the communication compared with the traditional teaching approach. More students can speak more fluent and more accurate English, because they are given more opportunities to exchange the ideas and opinions with others. Meanwhile, this approach creates more authentic communicative environment, in which students can practice meaningful contexts in the process of speaking tasks.

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Teachers' Code-Switching in Classroom Instructions

for Low English Proficient Learners

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Abstract

Due to the alarming signals of declining proficiency level among English Language learners in Malaysia, this study set out to learn more about the learners' perceptions of the teachers' code-switching in English Language classrooms. The objectives of this study were to investigate a)learners' perceptions of teachers' code-switching, b)the relationship between teachers' code-switching and learners' affective support   c) the relationship between teachers' code-switching and learners' learning success and d) the future use of code-switching in students' learning. The study investigated 257 low English proficient learners attending Communication 1 proficiency course in a public university in Malaysia. A set of questionnaire containing 20 items using 5-points Likert-type scale was administered to measure the presence of code-switching in classrooms, the affective support and the learning success. The study proposed two hypotheses and the hypotheses were tested using Pearson product moment correlation analyses. The study found that learners perceived code-switching as a positive strategy due to the various functions it has. There are significant relationships between (1) teachers' code-switching and learners' affective support and (2) teachers' code-switching and learners' learning success. Learners also showed favourable support for future code-switching in the English classrooms. It is strongly believed that teachers' code-switching is an effective teaching strategy when dealing with low English proficient learners.

Keywords: Code-switching, Teaching strategy, Affective state, Psychological support, Learning success

1. Introduction

English as a second language status in Malaysia has been complemented through wide use of English in the social setting as well as the education setting. Teaching of English has been greatly emphasised by the government through its ministry. In classroom practice, teachers have been instructed to teach high quality English in English Only classrooms. The second or foreign language learning can only accept the presence of high quality input in the classroom for learners' acquisition. All language classroom input must be in the target language an effective model of language use can ensure that the intended learning was successful (Chaudron, 1988; Krashen, 1988; Chi, 2000; Cook, 2001). Classroom instructions, therefore, are the most valuable experience for learners because of the limited exposures to sufficient comprehensible input from the natural environment they might get.

Hence, the declining level of English proficiency among students has brought about the need to find out how to tackle the issue. Teachers, consequently, have been employing code switching as a means of providing students with the opportunities to communicate and enhancing students' understanding. Furthermore, code switching helps to facilitate the flow of classroom instruction since the teachers do not have to spend so much time trying to explain to the learners or searching for the simplest words to clarify any confusion that might arise. According to Norrish (1997), teachers code-switch when the level of English used in the textbook or to be taught is beyond the learner's ability or when the teachers have exhausted the means to adjust his speech to the learner's level.

There are concerns regarding the falling standards of English and this can be seen from the use of English among students, including university students (Asmah, 1992). The STAR dated 23rd January 2007 reported that approximately 36,000 university graduates of 2006 could be identified as low English proficient, that is considered to be either "very limited" or "limited" English users. This phenomenon is very alarming indeed. Similarly, a significant number of low English proficient learners have to attend various English proficiency courses offered by the university during the normal semester as well as the semester break.

Awang Had Salleh (2003) has earlier expressed great concern over Malaysian learners' needs to become proficient English users in order to access knowledge and information available in English as well as to be able to communicate successfully, thus suggesting the important position the students may hold in the future. This study therefore was initiated to investigate learners' perceptions of teachers' code-switching in English language classrooms and its relationship to the learners' affective support and learning success among a group of low English proficient learners enrolled in Communication 1 English proficiency course at the university.

A number of researchers (Lai, 1996; Cole, 1998; Critchley, 1999; Schweers, 1999; Burden, 2001; Tang, 2002; Greggio & Gil, 2007) have argued that code switching can be a useful tool in assisting English language teaching and learning process. Others (like Skiba, 1997) see an opportunity for language development because code switching allows the effective transfer of information from the senders to the receivers. Though the development is minimal and slow, it is still a positive indication of the learning progress. Tien and Liu (2006) states that low proficiency students considered code-switching in their EFL classes as helpful towards gaining better comprehension especially when providing equivalent comprehension as well as giving classroom procedures

This study adopted a similar stance on the issue, particularly, when a classroom of multilingual learners has access to a common language. In Malaysia, learners have access to a common language. Malaysian learners have mastered the National Language, Malay, from their unlimited exposure inside and outside class, thus allowing the use of Malay in code-switching. Since Malay is understood by the learners of varying backgrounds, teachers through code-switching would be able to ensure the transfer of intended skills to the learners is done effectively.

Ellis (1994), Cook (2001), Richards & Rodgers (2001) and Widdowson (2003) who have been researching second language teaching and learning claim that, although exposure to the target language can ensure success, the exposure may not work in every classroom. It has been argued that English Only classroom would only lead to frustration since the input is incomprehensible to the learners (Lai, 1996; Brice & Roseberry-McKibbin, 2001; Widdowson, 2003).

Code-switching should not be considered as a sign of defect in the teacher. Instead, it is a careful strategy employed by the teachers. Code-switching should be allowed whenever necessary with some learners in specific situations (Schweers, 1999; Chick & McKay, 1999; Burden, 2001; Dash, 2002; Tang, 2002). The literature reviewed has indicated the various positive and facilitating functions of code-switching approved by both the teachers and learners such as explaining new vocabulary, relaxing the learners, explaining grammar, talking about class tasks and assessments and establishing contact with learners.

The objectives of this research are:

1) to determine learners perceptions of teachers' code-switching,

2) to determine the relation of teachers' code-switching and learners' affective support,

3) to determine the relation of teachers' code-switching and learners' learning success, and

4) to identify the future use of code-switching in students' learning.

2. Methodology

Prior to the actual survey, the questionnaire was pilot tested and the Cronbach alpha calculation approved the reliability of the instrument with a reading of .810. The actual study involved a random sampling survey of two hundred and ninety-nine (299) students taking the English Communication 1 proficiency course were selected through random sampling. All of them belonged to the low level proficiency group of learners. The students possess MUET Bands 1 and 2 when they first registered for their undergraduate programmes.

2.1 Instrumentation

The questionnaire focused on (1) the various situations the respondents believed code-switching can be used beneficially, (2) the provision of affective support in their learning, (3) the extent of learning success due to the use of code-switching in the classroom, and (5) the future use of code-switching. The questionnaire was adapted from Schweers' (1999), Tang's (2002) and Burden's (2001) studies. The questionnaire was modified to include a 5-point Likert-type scale, instead of a Yes-No answer type. This scale provides finer scale value for statistical analysis purpose.

The analysis also covered testing for correlation between variables. All the Likert Scale options have been assigned with a value ranging from 1 to 5. For Part B, 1 refers to 'almost never' while 5 refers to 'all the time' while for Parts C and D, 1 refers to 'strongly disagree' while 5 refers to 'strongly agree'. A cumulative response value of Part B was correlated with the cumulative value of Part C and Part D. These analyses were done using SPSS software version 12.0.

2.2 Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the research are:

H1. There is a significant relationship between code-switching and learners' positive affective learning state.

H2. There is a significant relationship between code-switching and learners' learning success.

3. Results and discussion

Overall, students confirmed that code-switching was used widely to perform these functions. Nearly three quarters or 74.7 percent of the respondents indicated that code-switching was used when the teachers were checking for understanding. A total of 73.5 percent of the respondents indicated that the teachers code-switch when explaining difficult concepts.

Besides that, a total of 72.7 percent of the respondents acknowledged that code-switching was used when the teachers were explaining the meaning of new words. More than 71 percent (71.2) of the respondents also acknowledged that code-switching was used when teachers were elaborating on matters pertaining to classroom management. The analysis also showed equal number of respondents, that is 70 percent acknowledged that teachers code-switched when making the learners feel relaxed and when explaining the differences between Malay and English grammar.

In addition, 68.9 percent of the respondents indicated that code-switching was used when teachers provided explanations on grammatical aspects or items as well as on the class tests to be administered. Also, a total of 68.1 percent of the respondents confirmed that code-switching was used when establishing contact with the learners. The function for which code-switching was least used was when teachers were giving instructions to complete tasks; the figure was 64.6 percent. It can be seen that code-switching was used by the teachers to perform various classroom functions. These results are similar to the various classroom or pedagogical functions in which code-switching can be best used as discovered by other researchers (Schweers, 1999; Burden, 2001; Tang, 2002).

3.1 Code-switching and learners' affective support

Overall, learners' perceptions of the presence of psychological support brought about by the teachers' code-switching were positive. When asked if they appreciated their Communication 1 teacher's use of code-switching, based on Table 1, 69.3 percent of the respondents indicated that their teachers' code-switching has made them enjoy their Communication 1 classes. Next, nearly sixty-nine percent (68.5 %) of the respondents also indicated that they felt satisfied with their learning due to the switch while sixty-eight point one percent of the respondents expressed that they were feeling more comfortable with the lessons when teachers code-switch.

Another finding is that 64.6 percent of the respondents indicated that code-switching has made them feel less tensed while 52.1 percent of the respondents acknowledged that their teachers' code-switching has assisted them in feeling less lost during the lesson.

In analysing the learners' perception of the relationship between teachers' code-switching and learners' positive affective support in learning, the result of the product moment correlation analysis (Table 2) indicated a significant correlation, $r = 0.592$. Hence, the more teachers code-switch the stronger is the learners' affective state. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between teachers' code-switching and positive affective learning state.

The study found that code-switching helped learners to enjoy their learning due to their ability to comprehend the teachers' input. The comprehensible input also allowed them to feel less stressful and to become more comfortable to learn. Once they are comfortable with the environment, without any unnecessary anxiety (Lai, 1996; Schweers, 1999; Chi, 2000; Burden, 2001), the learners are able to focus and participate in classroom practice and activities more successfully. Thus, the presence of psychological support makes learners feel more relaxed when learning the language. When they feel that they can follow the lesson, and not feeling lost, they would look forward to learning more English.

In short, teachers' code-switching is important in providing a psychologically conducive learning environment for the learners (Lai, 1996; Schweers, 1999), providing a strong foundation to learners' affective satisfaction. Exposure to code-switching at the early stages of learning allows learners (1) to gain a head start towards effective and successful learning and (2) to gradually become users of the target language (Lai, 1996; Cole, 1998; Schweers, 1999; Chi, 2000; Mattioli, 2004).

3.2 Code-switching and learners' learning success

The overall findings are shown in Table 3. Generally, the respondents perceived that code-switching has helped to ensure that they achieve their intended success due to a high percentage of respondents who were undecided in their choice. The respondents were most united when indicating that code-switching has helped them understand difficult concepts faced in their learning.

Of a total of 257 respondents, 72.4 percent of the respondents indicated that code-switching has helped them understand new words, 71.6 percent of the respondents perceived that code-switching has assisted them in understanding any difficult concepts contained in the lesson while nearly Sixty-nine percent (68.8 %) of the respondents also perceived that teachers' code-switching has helped them understand the grammar being taught. Some 67.7 percent of the respondents acknowledged that their teachers' code-switching has assisted them in learning English in the classrooms

and 67.3 percent of the respondents perceived that they were able to carry out any task assigned by the teachers when teachers code-switched.

Students perceived that their learning success was also related to the teachers' code-switching. The result of the analysis (Table 4) showed a significant relationship between teachers' code-switching and learners' learning success as indicated by the value of r = 0.620 thus indicating learners' satisfaction towards their learning. Low proficient learner can now comprehend the subject matter as well as the classroom activities they engage in.

This justifies the novel role of code-switching in enhancing learners' psychological state when attending their English lessons. Later, this would be translated into becoming more involved and responsible in their learning (Cole, 1998; Schweers, 1999; Chi, 2000; Mattioli, 2004). The anxiety-free classroom atmosphere encourages them to participate more actively in the classroom activities. Therefore, learning success requires successful provision of comprehensible input to ensure learners understand the intended content, covering new concepts, skills and vocabulary which would consequently translated into successful execution of tasks (Schweers, 1999; Chi, 2000; Tang, 2002).

In summary, learning success reflects the learners' ability to use English effectively as a result of learners' understanding of teachers' input generated through learners' successful completion of tasks or activities designed by teachers. An English Only classroom, therefore, cannot always ensure comprehensible input. Hence, code-switching by the teacher should be considered a form of teaching strategy. This form of classroom instructions fulfils the communicative aspects of the syllabus and teaching approach, by way of achieving the transfer of meaning as desired by the teaching (Skiba, 1997; Cook, 2001; Sert, 2005).

3.3 Future use of code-switching in the classroom

The analysis of learners' support for the teachers' use of code-switching in the classroom showed that over 68 percent of the respondents indicated that they would support teachers' code-switching not only in their Communication 1 classroom but also in other English classrooms with slightly over half of the respondents (50.3 percent) indicated that future code-switching would help them understand teachers' instructions and learn new words. They generally indicated that code-switching helps the learners to understand the classroom instructions, helps the learners to understand meaning of words and, ultimately, helps the learners to improve their English.

The students who opposed any future use of code-switching argued that such strategy would not help students to improve their proficiency. They also believed that English class has to be English Only. Besides that, they indicated that to teach students to learn English, teachers need to communicate in English. Despite their non-approval of future code-switching, this can be taken as a signal that they have developed sufficient level of proficiency that resulted in their rejection.

The use of code-switching is also dependent on the type of learners involved in the learning. The study has explored low English proficient learners and the results indicated that these learners approved the teachers' code-switching. This corroborates the findings of Lai (1996), Critchley (1999), Schweers (1999), Dash (2002) and Greggio and Gil (2007) that code-switching might be a helpful strategy to use in low proficient classrooms as well as the intermediate level classrooms (Critchley, 1998; Tang, 2002; Januleviciene & Kavaliauskiene, 2002).

Though the study showed favourable conclusions, there are some limitations to the study. The first is it investigated only low English proficiency students. A study on intermediate or advanced English proficiency groups of students might produce different responses since students with varying level of proficiencies would have mastered different linguistics skills and so would have required less amount of or even no code-switching from the teachers. Secondly, the results are only perceptions from the students. The actual relationships between the variables may be different than the outcome of the study. However, one positive aspect of this is that students possess the understanding that they have managed to participate successfully in their class activities which would be translated in the form of future examination success, all because of their teachers' code-switching.

Thus, in ensuring that learners possess the necessary affective support and that they succeed in their language learning, teachers can code-switch between English and Malay systematically to perform the appropriate functions. Teachers, nevertheless, need to be reminded that code-switching is a measure or a strategy to ensure transfer of comprehensible input from the teachers to the learners. Systematic use of code-switching to serve certain functions can ensure learning success. Code-switching is not an allowance for teachers to use Malay excessively whenever they want to. Code-switching should be considered as a strategy and not to be taken as a teaching method.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the results indicated that the learners have a positive perception of teachers' code-switching in the ELT classrooms. The study concluded that:

(1)   Teachers' code-switching serves various functions in the classrooms.

(2)   Teachers' code-switching is significantly associated with learners' affective support.

(3) Teachers' code-switching is significantly associated with learners' learning success.

(4) Learners support future code-switching in ELT classrooms.

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Table 1. Code-switching and Learners' Affective State

		Disapproved %	Not Sure %	Approved %
1.	It helps me enjoy my lesson.	24.5	6.2	69.3
2.	It helps me feel satisfied with my learning.	23.3	8.2	68.5
3.	It makes me feel comfortable to learn.	24.5	7.4	68.1
4.	It helps me feel less tensed.	22.1	13.2	64.6
5.	I feel less lost during the lesson.	34.7	13.2	52.1

Table 2. Correlation: Code-switching and Affective Support

	Cumulative mean value	Pearson *r*
* Code-switching	38.2179	*** 0.592
** Affective Support	17.4319	

* Range 10-50

** Range 5-25

*** $P \leq 0.01$

Table 3. Code-switching and Learners' Learning Success

		Disapproved %	Not Sure %	Approved %
1.	It helps me to understand new words.	19	8.6	72.4
2.	It helps me to understand the difficult concept.	18.3	10.1	71.6
3.	It helps me to understand English grammar.	20.3	10.9	68.8
4.	It helps me in learning the English language in the class.	20.2	10.9	67.7
5.	It helps me carry out the task successfully.	20.2	12.5	67.3

Table 4. Correlation: Code-switching and Learning Success

	Cumulative mean value	Pearson *R*
* Code-switching	38.2179	*** 0.620
** Learning Success	18.1946	

* Range 10-50

** Range 5-25

*** P ≤ 0.01

Improving Speaking by Listening Cultivating English Thinking and Expression

------ Probe into the Teaching of *Business English Listening*

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Abstract

The comprehensive listening curriculum occupies an important position in elementary teaching stage for English major. How could we arrange the listening class better? Considering the characteristics of comprehensive listening curriculum for English major, teachers can help students improve speaking by listening, cultivating their thinking and expression abilities. By this way, teachers can make the business English curriculum exert its effects completely, realizing the goal of proper communications and interpersonal connections.

Keywords: Listening, Speaking, Thinking, Expression, Communication

At the turn of century, the success of holding Beijing "Olympic Games 2008", and the triumph of fulfilling manned spaceship "Shenzhou VII" symbolize China's prosperity of economy and the progress of science and technology, showing the improvement of China's overall national strength. With this situation and background, foreign language teaching tends to be more important. Inspired by the diligent and exploring spirits, people who are engaged in foreign language teaching should reconsider the teaching and probe into the problems in teaching practice, driving and deepening the reform of teaching for English major. In recent years, because lots of colleges and universities pay attentions to English teaching, students gain more progresses in English generally. And many colleges open ESP (English for special purpose) curriculum and business English. However, we should realize that the language abilities of students are unbalanced, especially for students majored in English in science, engineering, agriculture and medical University or college. Although most of them can reach the basic level in English reading, writing, and translating, they are not good at listening and speaking very much. Quite a lot of graduates are incapable of business communication in English.

Along with the development of foreign exchange in China, it is urgent to cultivate lots of high-quality talents who are accomplished in business English. English listening and speaking have important utility values in today's economic construction, culture, and education fields. They are important factors for expression of thinking and ability of intercommunication. At the information times, world science and technology, and economic revolution change quickly. College students are important backbones for industry, agriculture, defense, science and technology in future. Their English abilities should not stop at understanding English articles by reading or with the help of dictionaries. They must make best use of English, as a tool, to know about the latest dynamics of world science and technology, and, at any time, to be ready in communication. In addition, they should be capable of manipulating English exactly, effectively, and properly. New situations pose higher requirements for today's college students, and also bring about greater challenges for professionals in English teaching.

Considering self practices in teaching, the author will offer several measures concerning how to arrange listening training for English major in classes, improving speaking by listening, and cultivating students to realize effective intercommunication by English thinking and expression.

1. Enhancing the way for listening and speaking ------ reading, reciting, dictating, and retelling

Languages are mainly used for listening, speaking, reading, and writing in intercommunication. Listening and reading are input competence, and speaking and writing are output competence. Among these the listening and speaking competence tends to be more important in human communication and daily life. The primary language of human being develops from listening and speaking. During the period without letters, the only way for intercommunication is speaking. Statistical data show that as adults are in communication, who spend 45% of time in listening, 30% in speaking, 16% in reading, and 9% in writing. It illustrates the effects of listening and speaking effectively. Skilled reading is the base of speaking, and reciting is one of important ways for speaking. Reciting based on reading is an inevitable part for English listening and speaking. Similar to imitation, it is an important way to master language materials. It can help students to memorize words, and cultivate the listening, speaking, and reading competence. Besides, it is an effective way to cultivate the language intuition and to express thinking in English. Dictation is a comprehensive training method. The dictation of short articles can help students to exercise some primary language skills, such as the skill of distinguishing or differentiating different elements and tones, the skill of spelling words, and the skill of employing glossary and grammar. In teaching, we should ask students to listen and memorize more regular sentences, excellent dialogues, paragraphs, and some classic works, and dictate, retell, summarize, and generalize some sentences and paragraphs in listening, what can improve students' thinking and expression competence. If students persist in these practices and form a habit, they will pump out these phrases, sayings, and sentences naturally. Once being understood and absorbed, these language materials will be mastered firmly and employed freely by students.

2. An organic combination of intensive listening and extensive listening

In business English listening training, we should arrange and create special scenes for business negotiation, trade contract, marketing, and international finance. In order to hear the important data, characters, events, and time clearly, and master the general idea, students must integrate languages and specialties and apply them into practices. To combine intensive listening and extensive listening together, and realize trainings by turns, we can arrange intensive listening or extensive listening respectively, and practice intensive or extensive listening in turn, on one hand. On the other hand, we can separate an article or a scene into different sections, some for intensive listening and some for extensive listening. One important point is to make students understand the aim in listening, and know what information they should seize, and ask students make timely responses, such as selecting graphics, and filling out tables. To design some activities and imitate some scenes in business activities, such as filling out tables after listening, and spot drilling, which can drive students to accomplish some high-level cognitive activities, such as processing, organizing, and sorting the information obtained in listening.

The materials for intensive listening should be selected carefully, which should be easier than materials for reading, with less new words, clear records, standard tones, and slow speed. Listen in one material repetitively and take notes on details. After the listening, retell the material or answer relevant questions orally. As for materials for extensive listening, students can listen no more than three times, and no interruption in listening. Do not pay more attention to individual word or phase, in case of affecting other parts. No matter what it is intensive listening or extensive listening, we should practice each of them step by step. What's more, we can encourage students to spend at least half hour everyday in training their listening competence, and persist in it.

3. An organic combination of emotional teaching and specialty knowledge

Emotion, as an important part of psychological activities, is the attitude experience of people toward objective facts. Arnold & Brown (1999) think that an extensive emotion includes feelings, senses, moods, and attitudes that restrict behaviors. Emotional factors are a compounding of a group of complex psychological factors, which are uncertain and changeable. Positive emotions can create a psychological state that benefits for the study, while negative emotions will affect the normal exertion of study potentials. Emotional factors associate with learners' motives, self-respects, worries, and controls. In listening teaching, teachers should create a favorable condition as much as possible to motivate students' language knowledge and non-language knowledge to participate in understanding, and make students to give oral or non-oral responses. Pay attention to training good qualities such as students' competence of self-study, independent thinking, and self-confidence. Most students could not speak English well due to psychological timidness. In listening classes, teachers should encourage students actively and point out their merits. Even for very small progresses, teachers should offer their praises timely, which will give students a sense of achievements. Teachers should observe and coordinate the relationship between different psychological factors in purpose, and help students build up confidence and overcome inferiority, inspiring students with emotions. Secondly, as for mistakes in speaking, it is not necessarily for teachers to correct them thoroughly. If these mistakes do not affect normal communication, teachers should allow their existence in speaking. After all, mistakes are necessary steps toward success. By turning negative factors into positive factors, teachers can motivate students' enthusiasm for speaking to a great degree. By this way, all students will participate in the listening class actively though their personalities are different. The atmosphere in class will be relaxed.

4. Blending special cultural background knowledge in business listening and speaking training

Different nationalities have different cultures and conventions. Their logical thinking and language habits are different. In communication, people may find it is hard to understand each other. Listening means not only to understand the literal contents of words and sentences, but also the deep and implied meanings. For example, in China as we come across acquaintances, we usually say: "------ Do you go for a walk? ------ Do you repair your car? ------ Do you wait for somebody? ------ Did you have lunch?" Or we just ask: "------ Where will you go?" In English, these questions seem to be stupid. Since you know what I am doing, why do you ask again? As for the last question, Englishmen will regard it as an interference with their privacy. Their reply may be: "Mind your own business!" "That's none of your business!" "I'm going to meet my girlfriend, so what?" Another example: as Chinese say hello to elders, they may congratulate their health. Elders will feel happy as they hear this kind of compliments. However, if we translate the compliment into English directly, it turns into: "You are in such an old age but you are still in good health!" How do elders in England and America respond to this sentence? First of all, elders in England and America do not like the word "old". Secondly, the word "but" may hurt their feelings. They may think: "I am so old that I should not be in good health." Or "It's abnormal that for people of my age to be still in good health." Therefore, the compliment for elders in China seems to call somebody "old bastard" in England and America.

Due to different living habits and aesthetic values, Chinese usually pass the time of day differently with English and American. In communicating with foreigners, we should be careful. If we want to master English and manipulate it freely, we must firstly understand the culture of English-speaking countries. In listening trainings, teachers should introduce these countries' histories, traditions, and living habits, including literary quotations, original idioms and background knowledge, to students, which can help students express their thoughts more exactly and properly in communication with foreigners.

5. Creating and imitating real content of situation, and supply conditions for thinking and expression

The phase "content of situation" is firstly advanced by Malinowsk, a Polish human linguist. It includes scenes and contents, and also teaching, asking, explaining, answering, and retelling in English in classes. In order to realize an integration of thinking and expression, firstly we should create a nice language atmosphere by imitating real business scenes and selecting excellent listening materials. At present, listening materials in most colleges and universities are arranged in advance. In a sense, students almost can not know about the real communication between foreigners from English-speaking countries. As a result, they can not understand foreign movies, news, and interviews. Therefore, teachers should supply students with practical intercommunication scenes to improve their thinking and expression.

Teachers should select real materials for listening carefully. And these materials are not for students at an initial stage. Sophomores can take these materials step by step, such as some materials for specific scenes, including a meeting with foreigners, business negotiation, and marketing, and news, TV interviews, and materials about English-speaking countries' culture, economy, and society. Meanwhile, teachers can arrange students to watch spot business scenes, English teaching videos, and world classic films. By this way, it can not only effectively enhance students' language sensibility, improving their English thinking and expression, but also expand their visions and understanding toward western culture and economic background, benefiting for the improvement of their comprehensive competence. On one hand, teachers should provide students with an environment for listening and speaking in classes. What's more important, teachers should integrate the class training with extensive out-of-class training together, encouraging students to participate in "English Salon" and "English corner" organized by schools ,department and classes, plays for sorts of business scenes, English speech matches, English intellectual contests, English debate contests for college students, and English poetry recitations held periodically. In these activities, students can obtain more opportunities to practice English. By arranging this kind of activities, teachers should consider college students' intellectual factors and growth needs, inspiring students' motives and enthusiasm for learning to a big extent, and helping them to realize an organic combination of specialty knowledge and languages. In addition, teachers can ask students to listen to college English broadcasting and make best use of language lab and network resources, improving speaking by listening, thinking and expressing thoughts in English, and extending the scope of intercommunication in English.

In a word, the teaching of listening for business English should follow three principles: That is, intercommunication, step by step, and practice. In listening trainings, teachers should instruct and influence on students' thinking to learn all listening skills imperceptibly, and motivate their enthusiasm and subjective initiative. It is not easy to arrange listening classes effectively. Teachers and students should cooperate with each other in order to realize a positive effect. Based on continuous exploration and summarization, listening classes will become more effective gradually, which will improve students' English thinking and expression competence significantly.

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2+2 Program for Teachers' Performance Appraisal in China

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of the 2+2 Alternative Teacher Performance Appraisal System that has been implemented in Shanxi province in China. A mixed research design was used to evaluate the program. Six high schools and a total of 78 teachers (13 teachers in each school) in Shanxi province were selected. Three of the schools participated in the 2+2 program while another three served as the comparison. The results showed that 2+2 program significantly improved teachers' professional performance, enhanced teachers' collaboration, and increased the feedback between the peers.

Keywords: Teacher performance, Teacher evaluation, Collaboration, Feedback, Teacher education

1. Introduction

1.1 Educational system reform in China

Reform in the Chinese educational system has been occurring over the past two decades. Largely, the central government and its ministry of education have been trying to change organizational structure and curriculum by legislative order and standardized tests based on the assumption that improvement in schooling would inevitably follow. Beginning from the mid-90s, local governments have exercised their authority and the influence to change teaching practice by educational policies. Much of their focus has been on teachers' professional development coupled with rewarding and promoting policies. However, all these restructuring efforts and systemic reform of schools have created limited success in initiating many positive changes at the school level. Teachers' attitudes, performances, and competencies have not been changed much as has been expected by those educational reformers on all levels (Shanxi Research Center for Secondary Education, 2001).

1.2 School culture and 2+2

School reform cannot succeed without changing the school culture. Researchers (Eisner, 1992; Fullan (1994) and Fullan (1996); Sarason (1995) and Sarason (1996)) have identified the need for change in school culture to occur before lasting instructional change can take effect. Changing an individual teacher's attitudes and performance, which is grounded in inquiry, reflection, and experimentation, is the root of changes in school culture.

The school culture of teacher isolation is one major inhibitor of school improvement. It is clear that the daily routines of schools provide little time and few opportunities for teachers to interact and share ideas with each other, and teachers are not empowered to exert influence on each other's improvement process of teaching practice. No system exists for peer support in pursuing professional growth and instructional improvements. The 2+2 Alternative Teacher Performance Appraisal System (2+2) is designed to help change the current school culture reflected in teacher isolation, and build a positive and productive relationship among teachers (LeBlanc, 1997).The 2+2 serves as a channel for teachers to value one another and contribute to each other's job performance. The premise is that the extent to which teachers engage themselves in others' instructional activities offers opportunities to value others' strength as well as weakness, determines in large measure the capacity that can be established and built upon a climate of mutual understanding, trust, and commitment to one another and the organization.

1.3 Teacher performance evaluation and 2+2

Teacher evaluation as currently practiced in most Chinese schools is flawed. Administrators usually give teachers periodic evaluations or appraisals on their classroom performance. But activities of this nature do not happen often. When an evaluation does take place, the evaluation report consists of so many things that a teacher can hardly determine where to begin with improvements. Educational evaluation in China indicated that teachers tend to be confused when too many things come up for them to consider, and it is still harder to change too much at one time (Shera, 1992). In the current process of evaluation, teachers play a very passive role. So most teachers tend to resist evaluations and appraisals for the simple reason that they are often troublesome and not very helpful (Shera, 1992). The

evaluators know very well about this. For all the practical purposes, the ratings must be completely positive and non-discriminating that makes it non-significant in helping teachers improve their job performance (Shera, 1992).

1.4 The 2+2 alternative teacher performance appraisal program in Shanxi

Shanxi province, located in the northwestern part of China, has a population of about 30 million people, of which over five million are receiving primary and secondary education (Shanxi Education Commission, 2000). To provide adequate education and training for such a huge population is an extremely hard task for the province government, but it is an ultimate aim that is being pursued consistently. Serious consideration is given to issues concerning educational reform and school improvement (Shanxi Education Commission, 2000). In order to help those inexperienced teachers to grow, many schools set up projects to have experienced and qualified teachers to work with their colleagues and peers who are regarded as professionally under-qualified. Instructional experts from outside of schools are also included to assist in their professional development activities. In Shanxi province, the provincial government has been funding various school-based professional development projects for years in order to improve teaching and learning. One major initiative of the province's educational reform package is the 2+2 Alternative Teacher Performance Appraisal Program (2+2).

1.4.1 Background of the 2+2 program

The 2+2 protocol was first developed by Dwight Allen in Namibia in 1994 while he was working with completely untrained teachers who had little access to trained supervisors. He then transported the protocol to China in 1995, while serving as the Chief Technical Adviser of the educational programs funded by the United Nation's Children's Fund (LeBlanc, 1997).

The purpose of the 2+2 is straightforward. It is designed to maximize professional interactions, decrease teacher isolation, and increase meaningful feedback that will lead to improved   instructional performance (Shanxi Research Center for Secondary Education, 2001). The essence of the 2+2 protocol is a series of regular classroom observations by teachers and administrators. The observer visits a classroom and makes two compliments and two suggestions for improvement or change. The premise of the 2+2 protocol is simple. It is a shared belief among those 2+2 users that there is no such thing as perfect teaching that nothing can be changed or improved; and there is no such thing as teaching so bad that nothing about it can be complimented. Teachers need frequent feedback to grow professionally. The 2+2 appraisal system was designed to provide more opportunities for teachers to give and receive feedback, because multiple feedback from peers will assist teacher in gaining an appreciation for innovative and diverse approaches used by other teachers (Beerens, 2000).

The 2+2 program is an experimental alternative to the province's teacher performance appraisal system, in that in most Chinese schools, an average teacher gets feedback only once or twice a year from the administration. With 2+2, marginal teachers, new teachers, and lead

teachers are expected to experience more observations (Shanxi Research Center for Secondary Education, 2001). Based on frequent peer and administrator observation, the 2+2 program was developed to provide more frequent, less formal feedback to teachers. The protocol was designed to help reduce teacher isolation and increase feedback, hence to foster a collaborative culture that will lead to an exchange and implementation of successful instructional strategies and better performance.

1.4.2 Purpose and research question

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the 2+2 Alternative Teacher Performance Appraisal System on the teachers' performance in classroom and teachers' collaboration. Research questions included:

(1) How has the program impacted on teachers' professional performance?

(2) How has the program impacted on teacher's collaboration?

(3) What kind of feedback was provided to teachers who participate in the 2+2 program?

(4) How did teachers compare "2+2" with the traditional teacher performance appraisal system?

2. Methods

2.1 Research design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design in which six key urban high schools were selected by the Central Office for the Program's Implementation from 43 provincial key high schools and randomly assigned to either the 2+2 (intervention) group or the comparison group. The research questions were addressed by employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

2.2 Setting

There are 9988 schools located in urban and rural areas in the Shanxi province (Shanxi Education Commission, 1999). Five hundred and fifty-six of them are senior high schools. Currently, about 200,000 teachers are in service of the

secondary education, of which about10,000 are high school grade one teachers (Shanxi Education Commission, 1999). The high school sizes range from 300 students to 3000 students with a mean of 1668 (Shanxi Education Commission, 1999). There were 43 provincially nominated key high schools because they all met the following requirements and standards set by the provincial government in 1983: (1) all teachers must have a bachelor or equivalent degree; (2) the school must have an enrolment of about 600–800 students; (3) the school must have a decent school building that can provide enough room for its students; (4) the school must have standard science laboratories for all of its students; (5) there must be a sports ground in the school which includes a 400 m track; (6) the achievement level of the students in the school must be the best among the schools in the county or city (Shanxi Education Commission, 1999).

2.3 Sample

Non-random sampling selection was employed. Six urban high schools were selected by the Central Office for the Program's Implementation from the 43 provincial key high schools to participate in the program. These schools were selected because they shared some common characteristics in terms of their size, students' achievement level, and teachers' educational background. All of these six schools have a student population of about 2000, which are very much like the other provincially nominated key schools. Each of those six project schools has 13 first grade (equivalent to 10th grade in the United States) teachers including four Chinese language teachers, two math teachers, three English teachers, two physics teachers, one chemistry teacher, and one social science teacher. Each of these schools has one lead teacher on the first grade teaching faculty. Among these six schools, three were randomly assigned to the 2+2 group, which resulted in 39 first grade teachers participating in the 2+2 program. The other three schools (39 teachers) still maintained their traditional teacher evaluation and appraisal system.

2.4 Measures

2.4.1 Teacher professional performance

Teacher professional performance was defined as a teacher's demonstration of skills or competency in class with an emphasis on teachers' ability to perform instructional tasks. In the current study, teacher performance was measured by Shanxi Teachers' Performance Measurement Scale (Shanxi Research Center for Secondary Education, 1997). The scale was developed by a panel consisting of 10 educational experts from three teacher education institutions in Shanxi province in 1997 to determine the professional performance level of the Lead Teachers for the 21st Century Shanxi Province Training Program (LTTP) candidates (Shanxi Research Center for Secondary Education, 1997). It has been used by most of the school districts in Shanxi since then to appraise their teachers' professional performance. Based on the pilot use of the scale, a review meeting of the same 10 educational experts who developed the scale was held in summer 1997, and several minor modifications were made to address its content validity considering the relevance of the elements measured in the scale (Shanxi Research Center for Secondary Education, 1997).

2.4.2 Teacher collaboration

Peer interaction and collaboration was measure by five open-ended questions in the 2+2 Program Response Survey. The survey was developed by the researcher based on the 2+2 survey created by LeBlanc (1997) to investigate how the 2+2 program has been implemented and how the participating teachers perceive the program. The five questions were designed to inquiry the frequency of interactions and collaborations between the teacher and his/her peers in 1 month prior to the survey. Questions content included frequency of discussion regarding instruction. related topics with peers; frequency of preparing lessons with colleagues, frequency of asking colleagues for assistance; frequency of colleagues asking for assistance, and frequency of colleagues coming up to discuss instruction-related topics.

2.4.3 Teachers' experience of 2+2

To gather complementary information regarding teachers' perceptions, expectations, and evaluation of the 2+2 program, structured interviews were conducted in winter 2002, with the 39 participants of the program. This information regarding to teachers' experience of 2+2 was collected by asking two of the 10 questions conducted in the interview. This two open-ended questions asked "how do you compare "2+2" with the traditional teacher performance appraisal system?" and "how did you benefit from 2+2 program?".

2.5 Administration of measures

This study was reviewed and approved by University's Institutional Review Board. Teacher's professional performance was assessed prior to (September 2001) and after (October 2002) the implementation of the program. The central office of the program hired five external professional evaluators to observe all the 78 participants' classroom teaching and evaluate their performance level. The evaluators were trained to use Teacher Performance Rating Scale to assess teachers' performance in classroom. Before the class began, the evaluators entered the classrooms without advance notice to the teacher. During the observation, the evaluators were required to remain quiet and as less intrusive as possible. At the end of the class, each evaluator completed the assessment individually and returned it in a sealed envelop to the principal of each school after the completion. Teacher's collaboration and interaction questions were

completed by all the teachers prior to (September 2001) and after (October 2002) the implementation of the program. The surveys along with instructions were distributed to each of the teachers in a sealed envelop either by mail or in-person. The principal of each school was responsible for collecting the completed surveys and returning them to the program manager. All the completed surveys were kept in sealed envelops. Teachers' experience of 2+2 program was assessed by focus group interviews. Interviews were conducted by the current researcher with his assistants in the three high schools participating in the 2+2 program in October 2002. Using a semi-structured interview protocol, the researcher arranged three meetings with the participating teachers, one meeting in each of the three intervention group schools, at the conclusion of the program to discuss their experience of implementing 2+2 program. The duration of the focus group interviews ranged from 2 to 3 h. These interviews were audio-taped and transcribed.

2.6 Data analysis

2.6.1 Quantitative data

Descriptive analysis was used to examine the frequencies, distribution, central tendency, and dispersion for each of the variables. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was employed to compare posttest scores of the intervention group and comparison group controlling for the pretest cores. The main independent variable was the group membership (2+2 intervention or comparison group), while the dependent variables were teacher performance scores, frequency of feedback, and frequency of teacher collaboration practice. Correlation analyses were performed to examine the relationships between number of feedback received and teacher performance.

2.6.2 Qualitative data

Content analysis was employed to analyze the compliments and suggestions the teachers had provided on the 2+2 observation forms. Purposive sampling was used to draw sample from the 3314 collected forms. Altogether 350 forms were selected by teachers' teaching major, year of teaching and gender. A process of categorizing and/or labeling of the 2+2 compliments and suggestions across cases were utilized. Compliments and suggestions were analyzed separately.

Compliments and suggestions were tentatively assigned to a category. Ascompliments/suggestions were found unfit in a category, a new category or subcategory was created. Categories were revised, as compliments/suggestions were reviewed and assigned to categories in an iterative back and forth process.

Content analysis was also used to analyze the focus group interview. Individual responses to each interview question were examined, compared, and coded. The coding process itself was a "cut and paste" iterative process whereby conceptually similar responses were grouped into categories. Thus, responses from different teachers to each question were grouped together under categories that emerged from the distribution of the responses themselves after thorough reviews of the data.

Insert Table 1 Here

3. Results

3.1 Teachers' characteristics

Altogether there were 78 teacher participants in the current study. There were 25 (32.1%) male teachers and 53 (67.9%) female teachers. Fifty six (71.8%) of them were 40 years old or younger and 12 (28.2%) aged 41 years or older. Forty (51.3%) had 3 years or less teaching experience, 19 (24.4%) had 4–10 years teaching experience, and another 19 (24.4%) had 11 years or more teaching experience. No statistically significant differences in terms of the change of teachers' performance and collaboration prior to and after the program were observed among gender, age, and teaching experience groups (all $p>0.05$).

3.2 Program impact on professional performance

ANCOVA was used to analyze the data. The results revealed a significant difference between groups on the posttest total performance score while controlling for the pretest total performance scores ($p<0.001$, Table 1). The pretest total score of professional performance for the 2+2 group was 154.41 (SD=23.78) and the posttest score was 185.14 (SD=25.28). The pretest score of professional performance for the comparison groups was 152.57 (SD=30.73) and the posttest score was 147.85 (SD=31.30).

ANCOVA tests on each of the nine functions also revealed that 2+2 group teachers had significantly higher posttest scores for most of the functions except the chalkboard skill while controlling for the pretest scores ($p<0.05$). The Bonferroni adjustment was used to adjust the probability level for families of hypotheses (i.e. the probability level for the nine comparisons on teachers' professional performance is 0.05/9=.0056). After the adjustment, the differences remained statistically significant ($p<0.0056$). The mean scores on each of the nine functions were obtained by dividing the total scale score by the number of items of the scale. The descriptive statistics by subscale are presented in Table 1. As is shown, the professional performance of the teachers in the 2+2 group had improved from "at standard" (3.97) to "above standard" (4.75) while that of the comparison group remained at "at standard" (3.91 to 3.79). The top three

functions of teachers' performance on the improvement list were monitoring of student performance, communicating with students, and facilitating instruction.

3.2.1 2+2 visitations and professional performance

Results show that 2+2 classroom visitations were positively related to professional performance improvement for the teachers in the 2+2 group. The improvement of the teachers' performance for the 2+2 group was measured by calculating the difference between the pretest and posttest total scores. The improvement ranged from –20 to 98 with a mean of 27.71 (SD=28.22). The total visitations completed by each individual of the 2+2 group teachers ranged from 80 to 118 with a mean of 84.97 (SD=7.48). Pearson's correlation showed that there was a significant positive relationship between the improvement of teachers' performance and the number of 2+2 visitations (r^2=0.35, r=0.592, p<0.01). The more visitations a teacher had made, the more improvement had been found in his/her teacher performance.

3.2.2 Teachers' perceived benefit of 2+2 on performance

The teachers mentioned various benefits that they perceived from the 2+2 program for their performance. A majority of the 38 teachers participated in 2+2 indicated that 2+2 program benefited their performance by providing more chance to observe other teachers' performance (90% of the teachers), more opportunities to learn from other teachers (80%), and more opportunities to discuss instructional affairs with colleagues (60%).

3.3 Program impact on teacher collaboration

ANCOVA showed that the teachers in the 2+2 group experienced far more collaboration than the comparison group across all of the pertaining items (p<0.05) after program implementation (Table 2). The Bonferroni procedure was used to adjust the probability level for families of hypotheses, (i.e. the probability level for the four comparisons on feedback is 0.05/5=0.01). After the adjustment, the scores of all the collaboration categories remain significantly higher in 2+2 group than in the comparison group (p<0.001).

3.4 Feedback provided to teachers who participate in the 2+2 program

Even though all the teachers in the 2+2 group filled out the form, not all respondents were able to generate two compliments with two suggestions on each form. Altogether 688 compliments and 616 suggestions from the 350 forms were available for analysis, each of which was assigned to a category and recorded on a coding form. Aggregate results were calculated and are represented in Table 3. The top three categories that the teachers' compliments focused on were facilitating instruction (30.4%), instructional presentation (17.8%), and providing reinforcement and feedback (15.3%). The top three categories of teachers' suggestions focused on were facilitating instruction (30.6%), instructional presentation (14.9%), and communicating with students (12.7%).

Insert Table 2 Here

Insert Table 3 Here

Being considered highly related to improvement of teachers' performance, suggestions caught more attention of the researcher than did the compliments and most of them were productive. The suggestions given on facilitating instruction focused on using more modern technology such as video and audio, and computer-assisted activities. Suggestions about instructional presentation addressed the oral presentation ability of some teachers and called for more training on this skill.

Suggestions pertaining to communication with students reflected concerns on how to meet all the students' needs and encourage them participate in the communication, especially among inactive students.

3.5 Teachers' comparison of "2+2" with traditional teacher performance appraisal system

The majority (60%) of the teachers in 2+2 group expressed their strong preference of the 2+2 to the traditional teacher performance evaluation system. A typical response is like a math teacher's statement below: We finally have found an appraisal system that is not so complicated and threatening. Before, seldom would you have a colleague come in and observe. Administrators and outsiders occasionally came to watch us teaching. They were always very critical and picky. They would give us a long list of things that we should improve on which were very often too confusing to handle with. 2+2 is simple and effective. It is meant for us ordinary classroom teachers. You do not have to know a lot of theories before you practice it. An additional six (20%) agreed that 2+2 is a better alternative than the traditional teacher performance appraisal system. They proposed that 2+2 stand side by side with the traditional teacher performance appraisal system to help teachers to improve instruction. One teacher stated: 2+2 can be a substitute of the traditional teacher performance appraisal system. It is easier to practice and less time consuming. It is especially a better tool for teachers to appraise each other's performance. Not a lot of training is required before you can come into a classroom to do 2+2. It is better to evaluated teachers with traditional system as well as 2+2. Five (17%) teachers indicated that 2+2 is quite another thing. It is a mistake to compare it with other teacher evaluation systems. They proclaimed that 2+2 does not share those characteristics of an appraisal system. It was depicted that 2+2 is not a system

to appraise teachers' professional performance. It can never indicate how well a teacher performs in class. No matter how well you do things or how badly you teach your students, the feedback is set to be two compliments vs. two suggestions. Only one teacher regarded 2+2 as worse. She complained that: 2+2 distracts students' attention and waste teachers' time. It is another new method that carries a fancy name, but with no positive effect. It is so hard to focus on real teaching when you have to pop in and out of other's classroom so often. Your own teaching is frequently disrupted. You can never expect to do serious observation with 2+2.

4. Discussion

4.1 Professional development

The findings indicated that the 2+2 program made a significant positive difference in the way how teachers perform in class. After exposure to the program, the teacher in the 2+2 group performed better in all of the nine functions that were measured by the evaluators. This result adds new knowledge to conventional wisdom on teachers' professional performance.

Conventional wisdom holds that improvement of teachers' professional development relies on practices such as participation in teacher workshops, special training, additional college course or advanced degrees, frequent participation in in-service meetings, as well as being a member of teachers' organizations, networks, or unions (Pelletier, 1995). Traditional approach to teachers' professional development has formal courses and in-service seminars as the central components which are considered like a voice coach giving advice to a singer whom he or she has never heard sing (Eisner, 1992). Teachers are not often consulted on what type of assistance they need, adding to perceptions that professional development is a waste of time (Guskey & Huberman, 1995). Although the need for professional development is apparent to those who study school improvement, effective professional development is not taking place in most schools. Reasons for the failure of many teacher professional development activities to produce long-term change are well documented (Goertz, Floden, & O'Day, 1996). Summarizing these reasons, Miles (1995) strongly criticized traditional one-shot professional development courses, characterizing them as opportunities for active engagement, being able to demonstrate a link between theory and practice, including time for reflection, and modeling exemplary practice. Over the last several years, Gordon (2004) has conducted a national study on outstanding school-focused professional development programs. He found that even though each of the professional development programs had a different focus, the programs shared several common characteristics. These characteristics are similar to those identified in a long line of research and literature on effective professional development (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Guskey, 1998; Norton, 2001; Richardson, 2000; Sparks & Hirsh, 2000; Wood, 1993). The characteristics are strong leadership and support, collegiality and collaboration, data-based development, program integration, a developmental perspective, relevant learning activities, and professional development as "a way of life". (Gordon, 2004). The 2+2 program shares many of the characteristics identified as for effective professional development. Evidence documented and analyzed in this study points to the conclusion that 2+2 helped teachers to improve their professional performance. Not limited to the traditional approaches, the 2+2 program addresses the interaction between teachers, and teachers and the administrations. The key components of the 2+2 program, two suggestions and two compliments, come from observation and require collaboration. The improvement on the performance is the result of observation of each other's work, and the collaboration of peers. However, note that the performance improvement was observed right after the completion of the program, whether the change will sustain in the long run is still a question. Moreover, other factors such as knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and intentions should be taken under consideration if 2+2 intents to serve more than an appraisal system and help teachers to improve their professional performance.

4.2 Teachers' collaboration

The teachers in the 2+2 group experienced collaboration much more than the comparison group across all of the pertaining categories after the program implementation. The implementation of 2+2 represented a fundamental change in the way the teachers interacted with colleagues.

Teamwork develops through observation and communication (LeBlanc, 1997). In the fields of education, no one opposes sharing information, developing common goals, collaborating in planning and implementing programs, and sharing responsibility for the achievement of quality services for students. Collaboration is compatible and congruent with the goals of all organizations devoted to educating students, helping people, and facilitating change. Teacher collaboration has been generally applauded for its potential in improving the working lives of teachers, reducing teacher uncertainty, enhancing teachers' professional self-image, and promoting collegiality and school learning (Kain, 1996).The idea that teachers should cooperate, communicate effectively, and be "team players" has been discussed, advocated, and accepted by educators and human services professionals for a long time (Hudak, Hogg-Johnson, Bombardier, McKeever, & Wright, 2004). Not until the major reform efforts beginning in the 1980s did collaboration begin to be seen as one of the critical goals of educational reform (Legters, 1999). Teacher collaboration then has been generally applauded for its potential in improving the working lives of teachers, reducing teacher uncertainty, enhancing

teachers' professional self-image, and promoting collegiality and school learning (Kain, 1996). Studies of teacher collaboration in schools have revealed associations between collaboration and outcomes such as collegiality (Stevenson, 1987), increased productivity and expertise (Brandt, 1987), improvement of teaching practice (Crandall & Loucks, 1983), teachers' perceptions of increased learning opportunities (Rosenholtz, 1989), improvements in school climate and teachers' sense of efficacy (Leggett & Hoyle, 1987), and teachers' preference for collaborative structures (Holly, 1982).The 2+2 program supports the contention that collaboration is a critical part of education. The 2+2 system is a new framework for teachers to collaborate. It offers opportunities for teachers collaborate in improving their instruction by observing each other's teaching, then giving and receiving feedback.

4.3 Recommendations for future 2+2 practice

Strong leadership and administrative support contributed to the success of the program. The participating teachers expressed satisfaction with the principal and administrators for their role in organizing program activities. Leaders established an atmosphere of support and trust, offered incentives and rewards for program participation, and provided sustained moral and material support. It is a common reality in most Chinese schools that the principal has so many other priorities that he or she spends little time in classroom observation. However, it is recommended, as the teachers indicated, that the leadership should conduct 2+2 themselves to serve as role models by participating fully in the program. One of the major complaints the teachers had about the program implementation is that the orientation period was too short. A lack of full understanding of the 2+2 system was felt by a number of participating teachers. They experienced difficulty in composing the two compliments and the two suggestions. They felt that they were thrown into the water before they could learn to swim. It is recommended that longer and more systematical orientation training should be conducted prior to the implementation. Variations in the age, gender, teaching experience, and subject area of the teachers may have an effect on the program implementation and outcome. During the interview sessions, more enthusiasm was exhibited by the younger teachers. Senior and experienced teachers tended to give more and detailed responses. It is recommended that the program should develop certain component to address the age/experience difference between teachers.

5. Conclusions

Although this study has limitations, the findings generated provide valuable information to the limited body of knowledge regarding the 2+2 alternative teacher performance appraisal system. It calls attention to the teachers' collaboration, peer visitations, and feedback and their influences on teachers' professional performance.

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Table 1. Comparison of the teachers' professional performance

	Items	2+2 group			Comparison group		
	Pretest Change	Posttest	Change		Pretest	Posttest	
Preparedness for instruction**	2	8.15	9.48	1.33	7.66	7.02	−0.64
Mean score		4.08	4.74	0.67	3.83	3.51	−0.32
Management of instruction time**	3	13.10	14.61	1.51	11.95	11.66	−0.29
Mean score		4.37	4.87	0.50	3.98	3.89	−0.10
Management of student behavior**	5	19.84	23.00	3.16	18.41	17.84	−0.57
Mean score		3.97	4.60	0.63	3.68	3.57	−0.11
Instructional presentation*	11	43.77	52.08	8.31	44.56	43.59	−0.97
Mean score		3.98	4.73	0.76	4.05	3.96	−0.09
Monitoring of student performance**	3	11.33	14.43	3.10	11.46	10.64	−0.82
Mean score		3.78	4.81	1.03	3.82	3.55	−0.27
Providing reinforcement and feedback	5	18.97	23.10	4.13	19.23	18.39	−0.84
Mean score		3.79	4.62	0.83	3.85	3.68	−0.17
Facilitating instruction**	5	18.23	22.47	4.24	18.12	17.56	−0.56
Mean score		3.65	4.49	0.85	3.62	3.51	−0.11
Communicating with students**	2	8.02	9.89	1.87	8.28	7.97	−0.31
Mean score		4.01	4.95	0.94	4.14	3.99	−0.16
Chalk board skill	3	11.94	14.29	2.35	13.10	13.15	0.05
Mean score		3.98	4.76	0.78	4.37	4.38	0.02
Total **	39	154.41	185.14	30.7	152.57	147.85	−4.72
Mean score[a]		3.96	4.75	0.79	3.91	3.79	−0.12

*$p<0.01$.**$p<0.001$. Mean score (based on the Professional Performance Scale Criteria): 1. unsatisfactory, 2. below standard, 3. at standard, 4. above standard, 5. well above standard, 6. superior.

Table 2. Comparison of collaboration in 1 month (*n*=39)

In 1 month	2+2 group group		Comparison	
	Pre Post	Post	Pre	
	Mean Mean	Mean	Mean	
	SD	SD	SD	SD
I discuss instruction-related topics with my peers.*	1.81	7.62	2.10	2.31
	1.09	1.25	0.60	0.61
I prepare lessons with my colleagues.	1.75	10.86	1.92	2.05
	0.65	1.32	0.74	0.83
I ask my colleagues for assistance.*	1.69	10.95	1.38	1.51
	1.51	1.62	0.49	0.56
My colleagues ask me for assistance. *	1.44	4.56	1.54	1.56
	0.84	0.99	0.55	0.60
My colleagues come up to discuss instruction-related topics with me.	2.03	8.82	2.28	3.00
	0.56	1.27	0.60	0.92

*ANCOVA (*p*<0.001)

Table 3. Responses in compliments and suggestions categories

Categories	Compliments		Suggestions	
	n	%	*n*	%
Preparedness for instruction	47	7.1	34	5.8
Management of instructional time	38	5.8	39	6.6
Management of student behavior	23	3.5	21	3.6
Instructional presentation	117	17.8	88	14.9
Monitoring of student performance	26	4.0	65	11.0
Providing reinforcement and feedback	101	15.3	59	10.0
Facilitating instruction	200	30.4	181	30.6
Communicating with students	78	11.9	75	12.7
Chalkboard skills	28	4.3	29	4.9
Total	658	100.0	591	100.0

The Predicaments of Language Learners

in Traditional Learning Environments

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Abstract

Some of public universities in developing countries have traditional language learning environments such as classrooms with only blackboards and furniture which do not provide conducive learning environments. These traditional environments are unable to cater for digital learners who need to learn with learning technologies. In order to create conducive language learning environments for digital learners, it is imperative to understand the ways digital learners learn at public universities. This knowledge enables public universities to provide appropriate learning environments for digital learners so that they will be able Knowledge Workers. The paper investigates the effective language learning of digital learners at public universities. Furthermore, this paper discusses suggestions to construct these traditional language learning environments to effective language learning environments for digital learners.

Keywords: Traditional learning environments, Public universities, Digital learners

1. Introduction

It is a norm in most classes to find learners doodling, playing games and fiddling with their mobile phones, whispering to their friends and simply looking bored. On the contrary, they look vibrantly alive when the lesson ends. When tested on their understanding of the lesson, most of them face difficulties with higher-order thinking tasks. Will they be prepared to be global knowledge workers?

Learning theories, instructional methods and technologies revolutionize higher education in the Digital Age. Nevertheless, in developing countries, some of the public universities retain traditional learning environments such as classrooms and lecture halls only equipped with whiteboards and OHP projectors which are totally in conflict with the new knowledge. According to Bransford (2000) and Weigel (2002), the designs of these learning environments only support traditional oral content delivery via lectures which discourage learner-centered engaged learning. Physical environments like classrooms discourage active learning as physical characteristics of learning environments influence learners' cognition and behavior as conducive environments facilitate learning.

Teaching in the Digital Age is no longer telling and learning is no longer listening (Kop et al, 2004). Yet, in most public universities, faculty members teach in a two-hour lecture. During lectures, learners cram the information by memorizing and recalling information rather than utilizing advanced higher-order thinking which causes learners to fail to complete higher-order thinking tasks (Lemke, 2003; Weimer, 2002). Unlike learners at private universities, learners of public universities have limited facilities and possess historic classrooms to be shared with a large number of learners. These universities have many traditional classrooms with only white boards and OHP projectors, few laboratories and a few technology-enhanced rooms which are to be shared with thousands of students and hundreds of faculty members. Goolam Mohamedhai, the then Vice Chancellor of University of Mauritius (2002) in his speech on how globalization affects higher education in developing countries worries about the social gap between students from public universities and students of private universities. He stresses on the importance of funds which are needed by the public universities to have adequate resources and retain good faculty and satisfactory academic facilities for teaching and research.

The ideal learning environments for digital learners are rich learning environments that enable and support learners to learn independently and collaboratively, regardless of their preferred learning styles. Learners have sophisticated classrooms to support e-learning and skills training activities which activities can be archived for later reference. Learners have personal computers that have a wide bandwidth high-resolution network connection, full-motion imaging and video streaming to and from the video server system, digital media, digital video, collaborative video conferencing, cameras and microphones. Thus, learners experience learning in new and diverse formats. Furthermore, learners and faculty members are able to collaborate in more authentic ways. These learning environments are usually found in private universities which differentiate learning in private universities and public universities. Failing to foster this kind of learning needed by digital learners would fail to prepare them to be able knowledge workers. Thus, it is imperative to foster the kind of learning needed in the Digital Age. The objectives of this paper were to investigate the effective language learning ways of digital learners at public universities and to add suggestions to construct these traditional language learning environments to effective language learning environments for digital learners.

2. Literature review

Future knowledge workers will have no assurance of predictability or simplicity.   As future knowledge workers, they need to recognize and understand hidden patterns by forming connections between sources of information and creating useful information patterns with the help of distributed learning networks and communities of practice. In the Digital Age, learners are responsible for their own learning. Learners need more than listening, writing, memorizing and recalling as they assume the roles of investigators, researchers, thinkers and problem solvers. Siemens (2005) proposes that there are many significant trends in learning in the Digital Age. Many learners are expected to change their careers into different professions in their lifetimes, so informal learning will play a major role in learning. Hence, it is imperative to treat organizations and individuals as learning organisms. Siemens (2005) emphasizes that learning in the Digital Age occurs outside of learners' primary knowledge and within the organizations. So learners need to recognize, evaluate and synthesize connections, patterns and knowledge. By involving themselves in communities of practice or groups of practitioners, learners share information and develop their expertise in a particular domain of knowledge.

Seely Brown and Duguid (1996) emphasize that communities are the actual creators and conveyors of knowledge that enrich learning for university students. Digital learners need community as they learn by sharing and figuring out ideas with others. Learning for digital learners is through collaborative efforts (Layton, 2000). Brown (2002) suggests that learners learn from situated learning. A lot of learning depends on distributed intelligence which is resulted from situated learning and cognitive apprenticeship. An effective learning technique for digital learners is group studies where members depend on each other to interpret meanings. This method of learning supports the constructivism approach that argues that people learn best by doing as opposed to by taking instructions from others (Tapscott, 1998). Learners will be more involved and enthusiastic in learning if they could learn by their own "discovery".

By taking an active part in the learners' own learning, learners have a sense of ownership and commitment to learning process and learning will be more meaningful to them as it increases learners' autonomy (St. Louis, 2006). St. Louis (2006) cites autonomous learning as the ability to control one's learning (Holec, 1981) and the learners' psychological relations to content and process of learning, their capacity for critical reflection, detachment, decision making, and independent action (Little, 1991). Salaberry (2001) emphasizes on the ability of technology in enabling instant and individualized feedback in language learning as recent technologies are contextualized.

Thinking and learning in the Digital Age are defined and shaped by technology. Due to vast information, the ability to look for knowledge is vital for digital learners. By understanding the reality of knowledge workers, learning at higher education must prepare learners to be productive knowledge workers by including technologies in the curricula such as the inclusion of multiliteracies curriculum (The New London Group, 1996). Digital learners expect learning is as a series of active, interesting, fun activities and has instant gratification. So, when they encounter traditional learning environments and traditional learning instructions, they switch off their learning mode. Layton (2000) states, "Digital children are more independent, more intellectually open, more tolerant, and more adventurous than most 20th-century children. They hold strong views and expect instant gratification." The instant gratification that these digital learners want cannot be accommodated by traditional learning settings.

Gee (2003) advises educators to learn from video games designers in capturing the learners' interest by employing several strategies such as a context with necessary information, tasks given to learners are within the range of their capabilities, tasks that require creative problem solving and learners learn to use their sense and emotions through empathy towards virtual characters in the games. Dede (2005) believes that with the existence of multi-user virtual environment (MUVE), `neo-millennial' learning styles will influence learning in the Digital Age. Based on "mediated immersion," these learning styles include multiple media fluency which requires learning through collectively seeking, sieving and synthesizing experiences. It emphasizes on active learning through real and stimulated experiences which require frequent opportunities for reflective learning.

3. Suggestions for learning for digital learners in traditional environments

It is imperative to ensure learning at public universities accommodate the current learning styles of digital learners. The following are several suggestions on how to foster engaged learning and how to turn these traditional learning environments to enriched learning environments that are conducive for digital learners.

3.1 University Level

It is imperative that public universities regard themselves as learning organizations. Therefore, the climate for life-long learning must be supported and fostered by encouraging the faculty members, staff and students to participate in any learning activities that promote life-long learning such as collaborations and researches. Public universities must encourage informal learning through involvement of distributed learning networks, communities of practice and other technology-enhanced collaborative learning environments within universities and other universities.

3.1.1 Be innovative in the use of technology

Public universities must be innovative in the use of technology as they are educating technology-savvy learners. In order to use technology effectively in teaching and learning, public universities need to invest in people (faculty, staff and students) and technologies. Staff should be sent for trainings to use the latest technological gadgets and students should be involved in tasks that require them to use the latest technologies. In relation to that, public universities need to include their students' feedback on the effective ways to educate these digital learners. In addition, public universities need to utilize their existing technologies and the traditional teaching approaches to design new instructional methods and new curricula for their learners. Public universities must have comprehensive technology plans to incorporate technologies into curricula. This is done by training high-level digital fluencies like multimedia graphic designs, general computing concepts, information literacy, word processing, presentations, spreadsheets, database management and web authoring to staff and faculty members. In addition, faculty members should be provided with consulting services in implementing technology in their classes.

3.1.2 Emphasize on the libraries and digital libraries

Public universities must ensure that their libraries and digital libraries are the souls of their learning communities. Libraries of the public universities could collaborate and share online resources. When information and resources are pooled, libraries can become a common access-point to learning materials. Thus, faster and more efficient access to information can be made. The role of libraries is not only as collectors of resources but also more that of a knowledge navigator or a facilitator of retrieval and dissemination of information and resources.

3.1.3 Provide e-learning spaces

Public universities must provide more learning spaces for learning communities such as providing wireless networking environment to encourage active learning. The bandwidth of communications should be increased by increasing the internet access to off-campus resources and intranet capability so that faculty, staff and students can be connected together. On the other hand, public universities can collaborate with private universities as private universities have sophisticated learning spaces and technologies, while the private universities can utilize the expertise and experiences of the public universities.

3.1.4 Develop Personal Learning Environments (PLE)

Public universities must develop Personal Learning Environments (PLE) that enable learners to reap benefits of learning in the digital era; a learning which is life-long, informal and accommodate different styles of learning. Learners learn with one another yet they manage their own learning as they participate, integrate and contribute to their growth as learners. Public universities must revamp their assessments and evaluation. It is unfair to evaluate digital learners on their performance in traditional assessments such as paper-based assessments. Assessments should be treated as tools of learning that enable learners to learn better and foster love towards learning.

3.1.5 Implement generic benchmarking

Public universities should investigate the feasibility of using generic benchmarking instead of competitive benchmarking with direct competitors such as other universities. Generic benchmarking involves organizations which are indirect competitors but share similar procedure, practice and culture (Doerfel and Ruben, 2002). By benchmarking other successful private practices results in public universities becoming more competitive and relevant to their students and workforce. Thus, the policy makers of public universities need to identify potential successful practices and strategies to implement generic benchmarking in their organizations.

3.2 Faculty Members

3.2.1 Implement collaborative teaching

Collaborative teaching among faculty members must be encouraged as the faculty members learn to take risk and grow wiser. Faculty members could teach different components of the same subject or teach the same subject together.

Learners learn the importance of collaboration from their lecturers as collaboration is the essence of learning in the Digital Age.

3.2.2 Implement collaborative learning

Collaborative learning among university undergraduates promotes authentic learning as knowledge workers collaborate with others when they work. By simulating an event that resembles an authentic situation, learners not only learn decision-making and evaluating skills, but they also indirectly learn about culture and society. Spelleri (2002) states that junk mails, coupons, store advertisements and flyers are cultural information about society which enables learners to learn more about the society. Hence, instructors at public universities may be able to manipulate these materials which are rich in cultural content for their teaching materials. Collaborative activities in designing flyers for a particular activity in the campus require communicative skills, thinking skills, problem-solving skills and writing skills. Further activities such as digital storytelling could be used to document the process of the project and the report is disseminated through printed media and digital content in forms of mms or e-mail.

3.2.3 Foster collaboration across disciplines

Fostering collaboration across disciplines such as interdisciplinary teaching must be implemented as the learners are aware of the connections of the different disciplines. In language teaching, instructors need to integrate technical terms of a field with the general vocabulary of English. For example, English is taught to future accountants by teaching the technical terms used in Accountancy which determine the relevancy of English.

3.2.4 Encourage learners to utilize their gadgets

Learners should be encouraged to utilize their gadgets like hand phones with cameras, videos and laptops in their learning activities to improve language learning. In teaching about environmental awareness in a language class, an instructor may instruct learners to use their gadgets to create digital content blogs, podcasts, digital storytelling or electronic portfolio as evidence of their understanding. Moreover, learners may be able to utilize their handheld devices such as their phones to download mobile dictionaries.

3.2.5 Design stimulating lessons

Lessons should be designed to motivate learners by understanding their extrinsic and intrinsic motivating factors. Authentic materials such as job interviews and meetings can be used to encourage them to learn. The context and content must be relevant to learners. In addition, learning activities should consist of multi-step tasks that have intrinsic feedback and delay judgment. Instructors can manipulate technology for entertainment like video game consoles to provide interactive contents to the learners such as `Who Wants to be a Millionaire.'

3.2.6 Assume less traditional roles

Faculty members should assume less traditional roles as they are no longer knowledge dispenser but knowledge architect and designers (Kopp et al., 2004). Instructors need to revolutionize the teaching and learning practice by becoming actively involved as facilitators who teach learning strategies on learning unfamiliar content. They should also be independent learners of media and information fluency as they are invaluable skills for the 21st century knowledge workers. By training learners to possess digital fluency, it would enable learners to manipulate technological tools to construct meaning and understanding of their learning. For instance, instructors should train students to write in weblogs instead of journals. In addition, learners need to be given the opportunities to construct their podcasts or vodcasts instead of oral report. They too should be encouraged to do digital storytelling instead of traditional storytelling and participate in simulated worlds in Second Life . These activities may improve the faculty members' technological, media and information fluency. It should be stressed that in order to teach these digital learners, instructors need to constantly improve these skills.

3.2.7 Involve actively in social networking sites

Faculty members should be actively involved in social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Friendster with their peers and learners. They need to be familiar and creative with the technological tools and different types of media and they should also be able to interpret different types of information (Jukes, 2004).

3.2.8 Implement tutoring system (Peer Teaching)

Tutoring system (Peer Teaching) among learners should be implemented as by teaching the others, it is the faster way to understand a concept. In order to teach, learners need to plan their teaching which requires them to revise and check their own understanding. Hence, they understand the subjects better. By presenting their own independent learning to their peers, it would enable them to enhance not only their confidence in their learning but also their communicative skills.

3.2.9 Provide training to learners

Learners should be provided with trainings like digital video production, website design, online research, information analysis with spreadsheets and databases and networking. The trainings enable learners to prepare themselves with the reality of their present learning styles and future workplace demands. Such learning provides engaging learning environments to the learners and at the same time increases their employability skills.

4. Conclusion

Keeping abreast with the latest technology outside the classroom and implementing it inside the classroom is a challenge to some public universities as they need to equip learners with knowledge that they need to face the reality of working world upon graduation. The recent trend indicates that universities are no longer providers of knowledge but as purveyors to knowledge. As Resnick (2002) points out, "… we need to transform curricula so that they focus less on "things to know" and more on "strategies for learning the things you don't know." As new technologies continue to quicken the pace of change in all parts of our lives, learning to become a better learner is far more important than learning to multiply fractions or memorizing the capitals of the world."   As for public universities, adaptation to the latest technologies should be made by utilizing the existing technology, the current traditional settings and the community so that learners gain the reward of a life-long learning.

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Probe into the Internal Mechanism of Interlanguage Fossilization

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Abstract

Interlanguage fossilization is normal for second language acquisition. It is also a hot for studies on theory of foreign language acquisition. Many reasons cause the interlanguage fossilization. This paper probes into the internal mechanism of interlanguage fossilization from five aspects, namely the physiological aspect, the psychological aspect, the cognitive manner, the cultural difference, and the cognitive emotion. In a perspective of teaching, this paper advances possible solutions for overcoming the fossilization phenomenon in foreign language teaching.

Keywords: Interlanguage fossilization, Internal mechanism, Foreign language teaching

1. Introduction

Interlanguage fossilization is normal for second language acquisition. It is also a hot for studies on theory of foreign language acquisition. Therefore, studies on the fossilization phenomenon have aroused more and more attentions from the second language acquisition field. Domestic theoretical researchers in foreign language field spend years of studies in observations and researches, and find that: in China foreign language learners basically follow a mode in second language acquisition. During the middle school stage, learners accumulate the foreign language knowledge (sounds, grammars, and glossaries) stably and regularly. Their foreign language competences realize constant and steady improvement. In colleges, after achieving more progresses during the first two years, their foreign language studies enter a plateau period gradually. Afterwards, their foreign language competences stay in a stagnant state. The so-called fossilization appears. It includes temporary fossilization and permanent fossilization. As for foreign language learners in colleges, their language fossilization is mostly temporary. The fossilization is caused by both external reasons and internal reasons. Compared with some external factors, such as language environment, teaching methods, and textbooks, the author thinks that the internal factors, such as learners' physiology, psychology, cognitive manner, and cognitive emotions, impact on the fossilization more. Chinese students learn foreign languages in class where it is a non-native language content of situation. Suppose they take same textbooks, what affects the language fossilization more is the learners' internal mechanism. Therefore, this paper tends to discuss the fossilization phenomenon in perspective of interlanguage internal mechanism and how to avoid the fossilization.

2. Interlanguage and interlanguage fossilization

Interlanguage, also named as transition language, is a linguistic system between the native language and the target language, used by foreign language learners. It differs from the native language and the target language, but has the features of both. It takes the native language as a starting point and approach the target language step by step. In 1972, Larry Selinker, an English psychological linguist, issued a paper titled *Interlanguage*, which has established the position of "interlanguage" in studies on the second language acquisition.

"Language fossilization" is common in the second language acquisition process. This concept was advanced by Selinker, An English linguist, in 1972 in his paper *Interlanguage*. According to his definition, "Fossilization is linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular native language will tend to keep in their interlanguage relative to a particular target language, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation or instruction he receives in the target language". Later, Selinker (1992) explained the fossilization further: "Fossilization includes those items, rules, and sub-systems that second language learners tend to retain in their interlanguage while in the process of acquiring a particular target language, and that will only be eliminated with considerable effort, for the majority of second language learners, regardless of explanation or instruction." It shows that the interlanguage fossilization is a phenomenon that the language learners make no further progress in interlanguage development toward the target language, and become permanently fossilized, in spite of the amount of exposure to the second language. If the temporary interlanguage fossilization can be solved timely and properly, learners can make progresses in target language learning. Otherwise, it will lead to permanent fossilization.

3. The internal mechanism affecting interlanguage fossilization

Since Selinker advanced the interlanguage concept, the phenomenon of fossilization has always become hotspot in

second language acquisition studies. Reviewing domestic and foreign linguists' studies, the internal mechanism for the formation of language fossilization mainly focuses on five aspects, namely physiology, psychology, cultural difference, cognition, and feedback.

3.1 The critical period hypothesis of language acquisition

Lennerberg (1967) and Lamendella (1977) are main representatives for the "age theory. From an inspective of physiology, they argue that different ages and external environments affect the second language acquisition competence differently, which form the critical period of language acquisition. According to Lennerberg's "Critical Period Hypothesis", the best period for language acquisition is before the youthhood. Along with the rise of ages, the unilateral function of brains makes the natural language acquisition disappear. This hypothesis has been well illustrated by India "the son of wolf", and American Child Janine. Once passing the youthhood, language learners' nerve system for second language acquisition that locates at the left brain will be restricted, which will make second language learning more difficult, causing the interlanguage fossilization.

3.2 Study tactics and intercommunication tactics

Selinker explains the reasons for interlanguage fossilization from the psychological aspect. Second language acquisition and native language acquisition have different psychological bases. Ellis (1994) further points that interlanguage is a process of generating the cognitive, dynamic, and systematic "psychological grammar". It shows that the result of language exercises is caused by the potential cognitive mechanism. People's language acquisition competence is natural. It is not for one specific language. As the linguistic system of certain language is completely internalized, the thinking mode will be fixed correspondingly. The psychological bases for second language acquisition and native language acquisition are different thoroughly. In other words, the acquisition mechanisms are different. For example, as learners can not express their meanings rightly in second language, they will make best use of assistant ways, such as gestures, to continue communications. Another instance, "simplification" is a study and intercommunication tactic used frequently by learners in China: Learners use one verb to stand for verb phase, demonstrative pronoun for definite article, and simple sentence for complex sentence. Researchers show that language learners usually adopt these tactics in order to accomplish fluent communication. Sometimes they realize the defects of these tactics. However, since the defects would not affect understanding, learners prefer to adopt these tactics later. Step by step, it will cause the fossilization of language.

3.3 Cultural difference

Schumann' researches on foreigners who are immigrants in America show that the second language acquisition is always affected by the language and cultural environment surrounding the learners. Differences of cultural environments give the second language learners a kind of social psychological distance. The greater the distance, the smaller the chance of learners achieving success in second language acquisition is. According to this theory, the degree of second language learners accepting the culture of target language, namely the degree of second language learners adapting to social ideas and psychological ideas, determines whether second language learners achieve successes and reach the admirable level. Schoumann thinks that since the form of pidgin language is similar to the fossilized interlanguage, reasons for them are similar. Therefore, in a sense it is the social distance that restricts the use of language, which causes the fossilization of second language (Huiyuan Chen, 1999).

3.4 Positive and negative feedback modes

Ellis (1994) agrees that intercommunication transfers information as well as emotions. Feedbacks may have positive, neutral, or negative psychological effects on parties in intercommunication. Different responses will exert positive, neutral, or negative enhancing effects at different degrees on second language learners. That is another reason for the formation of fossilization. In other words, it is "intercommunication pressure", which is especially common among foreign language learners in oral communication. As speakers are in an extremely tight or relax state during the intercommunication, they will make lots of mistakes in speaking. As a result, they may come back to a "degradation" state that is an expression of fossilization.

3.5 Barriers in cognition process

From the characteristics of second language input, Krashen points that the small quantity and poor quality of target language input, an absence of a full consideration of the learning interests of learners that damages learners' enthusiasm in learning, and emphasizing too much on the input of target language but neglecting the training of language output skills, will cause the formation of interlanguage fossilization (Littlewood, 1984).

4. Avoid the phenomenon of interlanguage fossilization

We analyze the internal mechanism that causes the formation of interlanguage fossilization above. In author's opinion, the fossilization of interlanguage is caused by improper teaching and learning to a great degree. Therefore, how to solve the temporary fossilization in teaching and learning as much as possible, making the interlanguage more close to target

language, is an inevitable task of each foreign language teacher. Here, the author puts forward suggestions in four aspects.

Firstly, improve the quality of learners' language output.

Input is important indeed, but without output, the input can not drive the internalization of language knowledge effectively. Therefore, after ensuring students' normal contacts with target language, foreign language teachers should improve the quality of target language input, namely interests, diversities, and difficulties, what can help to enhance the challenges in learning, and avoid such a condition that learners use some familiarized expressions and grammar structures frequently by means of certain intercommunication skills and tactics. Therefore, teachers should make detailed researches in advance, estimate students' familiarization to the second language exactly, know their requirements and interests, and design challengeable and acceptable exercises and tasks for students, reducing or avoiding the phenomenon of language fossilization objectively to a great degree.

Secondly, appropriate cognition feedback and emotion feedback.

In Ellis' opinion, the best options for avoiding language fossilization are positive emotion feedbacks and negative cognition feedbacks. Positive emotion feedbacks encourage learners to continue the language trying, while negative cognition feedbacks indicate that learners should make necessary changes and adjustments. Then, incorrect or questionable expressions stay in an unstable state that will urge learners to improve their words. According to this theory (theory of feedback nature / interaction), in order to avoid the fossilization of language, teachers must master the balance between learners confidence in the second language and the linguistic development. In class teaching, teachers should control the teaching and teaching feedbacks, giving students encouragements spiritually, making them keep trying in learning the second language, and imposing strict requirements for students in the linguistic form aspect.

Thirdly, pay attention to learning the target language culture.

In teaching, teachers should instruct students correctly and cultivate students with right attitudes toward the native language culture and the target language culture, shortening the distance between them, and paying attention to learning the target language culture. In author's opinion, teaching can affect students' motive in learning at certain degree. For example, the teaching that strays away from the content of culture and situation and focuses on linguistic forms will not inspire students' integrated motive or homogeneous motive undoubtedly, while the teaching that intakes the target language culture will instruct students to desire for more knowledge concerning the target language culture. Meanwhile, teachers should emphasize on comparisons between Chinese culture and western culture, absorbing the cultural differences into the teaching of language knowledge purposely, and making repetitive comparisons between two languages. For example, given people visit patients, compare "Drink plenty of water" with "I hope you get better soon"; given people come across somewhere, compare "Hello, have you had your meal?" with "Hello, a nice day, isn't it?"; given people see an elder get out of a car, compare "Be careful!" with "Are you ok?". Only by means of repetitive comparisons, learning by comparing, and comparing in learning, can students enhance their culture sensitivity, accomplishing the objective of exercising the second language exactly.

Finally, cultivate students with positive and correct self-recognition competence. After all, students are the subjects in learning. Experiments show that the higher the learners evaluate their competences and the higher their expectations are, the higher their achievements will be. In order to break up the fossilization of language and drive the development of second language learners' linguistic competence, learners must improve the standards for themselves and keep in studying hard continuously.

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For "Translation and Theories"

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Abstract

Translation studies stem from comparative literature and contrastive analysis. It involves the transfer of messages between two different language systems and cultures, and Munday (2001,p.1) notes that translation 'by its nature' 'is multilingual and also interdisciplinary'. Translation subjects are the texts in various publishing forms for different levels of reader; moreover, the language systems, linguistics, communications studies and cultural studies are also involved in research subjects, which all contribute to the difficulties of translation fulfilment.

Keywords: Translation, Theories, Structure, Expression

1. New translation category

Vinay and Darbelnet carried out a comparative stylistic analysis to describe translation shifts thought the term 'shift' was first used by John Catford in his A linguistic Theory of Translation (1965). This model is developed from taxonomies by proposing detailed lists of the categories for describing small linguistic changes in a specific translation pair.

Translation shifts = small linguistic changes occurring in translation of ST to TT (Munday,2001,p.55)

The categorization of translation procedures given by Vinay and Darbelnet is very comprehensive. There are two main translation strategies, direct and oblique translation, covering all together seven concrete procedures. Direct and oblique translation in some degree are correspondent to literal and free translation respectively, one of the difference for their theory from the theories in 'pre-linguistics period' (Newmark,1981,p.4) is that Vinay and Darbelnet use detailed categories to substitute for macro-level's literal and free.

2. Direct translation

2.1 Borrowing (Vinay and Darbelnet,2004,p.129)

The SL word is transferred directly to the TL (Munday,2001,p.56).

eg. Sandwiches – sanmingzhi

Clinton –kelindun

Chinese characters is completely different from English letters, though direct transfer of the SL word is impractical, the SL will normally be changed into fixed Chinese characters with similar pronunciation. The application of this strategy is also a common way to bring new culture factors into native combination.

eg. shaping – shaping (the exercise for helping women to keep beautiful figures);

party – party; Lancôme–Lancôme

This is a new rising situation in translation studies, due to the development of education in country of target culture and the economic globalization as the prerequisite. For keeping the unanimous genre in some kinds of texts, translator should adopt this "original translation" method to translate words for the achievement of textual equivalence rather than translate these words into TL. Considering the skopos in a translation or in the action of translating, for a functionally adequate result, translator adopts 'absolute foreignization' to retain the exotic sociocultural style in the TT is reasonable.

The advantage of borrowing strategy is that it brings an original connotation to the word in TL. Chinese language create a new word by means of pronunciation, nevertheless, this method avoids misunderstanding to use other words without full equivalence in Chinese. As the spread and the acceptance of this new word, its signifier in Chinese form will at last acquire the original concept of SL, which is just like the creation of this word in signifier of SL form in the country of source culture.

2.2 Calque (Vinay and Darbelnet,2004,p.129)

It is a strategy to 'borrow' the SL expression or structure and then transfer it in a literal translation.

eg. Science-fiction – kehuan [lit. 'science fiction'];   White-collar – bailing [lit. 'white collar']

Calque is 'a special kind of borrowing', so, as borrowing strategy mentioned above, it has the same influence on the enhancement of cultural integration. However, sometimes this translation strategy will cause difficulties in conveying messages in the TL. A translation phrase jijiedewenhou[lit. 'Compliments of the Season'] can be found on the greeting card of China, which is from French calque Compliments de la Saison. Because of the culture gaps between China and France, Chinese people will be confused by odd translation. Why the greeting is for the reason of season? Hardly can people of target culture understand the relationship between 'season' and greeting. Considering to the aspect of pragmatics, this strategy fails to achieve the equivalent response in the TT.

Pragmatics is the study of language in use. It is the study of meaning, not as generated by the linguistics system but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a communicative situation.

(Baker,1992,p.217)

The transfer of the expression of SL in literal way brings about gaps between the coherence and presupposition in pragmatics. Coherence refers to 'receiver's expectations and experience of the world' (p.219). Presupposition refers to 'the knowledge the sender assumes the receiver to have or which is necessary in order to retrieve the sender's message' (Munday,2001,p.98). If the information within the boundary of coherence exceeds that of presupposition, the target reader can not get the message in the TT, though this strategy is applied by using literal translation word by word. The first time when the word qijiandian [lit. 'flag warship shop'] came out on an advertisement in China, I wondered it was so strange for a shop to sell ship flags in city centre. Until recently I found the phrase flagship Harrods (the main department store of Harrods chains in London), I had not realized that qijiandian was a odd translation from English, which means the most important shop among the chains. Before using the calque strategy, translator should make sure that the coherence of translation has pragmatical effects in target culture, or translation will fail to deliver the message of ST.

One of the advantages of calque strategy is the application to implicature, another concept of pragmatics, which is defined by Baker (1992,p.223) as 'what the speaker means or implies rather than what s/he says'. The meanings of the implications in the ST may cause difficulties for the translator, because the author of the TT is liable to give his real meanings for a special intension by using patterns which seems to be irrelevant. If the translator transfers the expression form of ST into another form in the TT, this translation faces the possibility of register change. Hence, keeping the original expression form in literal translation is relatively a safe way.

2.3 Literal translation (Vinay and Darbelnet,2004,p.130)

A 'word-for-word' translation. It is a translation strategy used 'most common between languages of the same family and culture'.

Chinese is a language transferring message by parataxis while English and most other modern languages in the world are in the nature of hypotaxis. The expression forms of the language of parataxis are very loose, and in most situations the arrangement for the segments of language are arbitrary. Such kind of language as Chinese is developed from the traditional expression patterns involving complex combinations of morpheme or phrase units, and it can be also arranged in written form by writer's train of thought to complete the whole sentence. In contrast, English demand formal principles to lead sentences, which can be called 'grammar' for the language of hypotaxis. As to Chinese, there are only what can be called basic rules to linguistic patterns instead of comprehensive grammar studies in English and French.

Kernel sentence described in Chomsky's generative-transformational model, which is a universal feature of human language, is the most basic part in language structure. 'Literal transfer' (Nida and Taber,1969,p.39) is the first one of the three stages for transferring message in the TL from kernel level to surface level. Although literal translation in English-Chinese translation is uncommon as a result of the dramatic differences for their language systems, it is still a preferable method for the translation of kernel sentences.

However, say Vinay and Darbelnet (1995,p.34) that literal method is 'unacceptable' in these occasions:

2.3.1 it gives another meaning

 eg. The couple lead a cat and dog life. –Zhedui fuqi zongshi zhengchao.

[lit. 'The couple always quarrel.']

To convey the original message to the target text is the basic and main aim of translation. If translator explains this sentence in a literal way, the translation means in target culture that the couple is very poor and humble in a living condition like vagrant cats and dogs. Translation involves a process of decoding and encoding of language units. Before

the second half of the twentieth century, translation topics focused on the debate over the word-for-word and sense-for-sense principles. The theories in that era neglect the practical effects for communication and the culture basis of the target text as well as the source text.

Nida (1964,p.159) developed these two terms as 'two basic orientations':formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence is concerned that 'the message in the TL should match as closely as possible the different elements in the SL', which is closely oriented towards the ST structure. Dynamic equivalence takes 'the principle of equivalent effect as its basis. When formal and dynamic equivalence are incompatible in translation, dynamic equivalence should be taken into first consideration because it gives 'the closest natural equivalent to the SL message'. Although there is no an objective standard yet to measure the equivalent effect, at least Nida's theory takes culture expectation into consideration. 'The closest natural equivalent to the SL message' is the goal of dynamic equivalence. Hence, the TT 'lead a cat and dog life' should be translated in SL as the meaning of 'quarrel'.

2.3.2 has no meaning

eg. The storage time is made small. – Chucun qixian biande henduan .

[lit. 'The storage time is made short.']

eg. couch potato –dianshiyinjunzi [lit. 'TV-addict']

In Chinese the word xiao[lit. 'small'] can only be used to describe the volume and dimension, while in English this word can also be used to describe time span instead of 'short'. The language patterns are different from country to country; literal translation thus makes the translation illegible to target readers. When there is rhetoric in translation, literal translation usually fails to give target reader the information of the ST. The way to translate metonymy and metaphor is different from the way to translate simile. Because simile contain such words as 'like', 'as' and 'as if', the target readers can receive them as symbols of rhetoric. However, in some texts by translating metonymy and metaphor in a literal way the TT is incomprehensive for the dramatic shifts of meaning, eg. 'couch potato'.

2.3.3 is structurally impossible

eg. Chunshui biyu tian [pronunciation:tian],Huachuan tingyu mian [pronunciation:mian] –

The spring water is bluer than the unclouded sky,

In a painted barge listening to the rain I lie.

Literal translation is unsuitable to be used for literary works, especially for the translation of poetry, which is the field emphasizing usually the creation of a new independent poem. Poems convey authors' expression by individual style and pronunciation in a certain form. Both lexically and grammatically, the information given in TT by literal translation is what can be called the explanation of the poem but not a work in literary style in target culture. Translation is more a process of explanation, interpretation and reformulation of ideas than a transformation of words. Newmark (1988,p.72) points out in the filed of the translation of poetry 'a translation can be inaccurate, [but] it can never be too literal'. The most important reason for translator abandoning of literal means is to keep the genre of the work.

2.3.4 does not have a corresponding expression within the metalinguistic experience of the TL

eg. hulu (A traditional paper-made decoration hung outside the door in Tomb-Sweeping Day of China)

The difficulties of literal translation are sometimes caused by linguistic or referential context. Translator could hardly find a correspondent word in TL because the words in any certain language are initiatively created as its cultural tradition or experience. In this case translator may as well to create a new word in TL according the rules of pronunciation and give an explanation for this word.

2.3.5 has a corresponding expression, but not within the same register

eg. jiaozi:Traditional food in Spring Festival of China, made of flour or starch with vegetable or meat stuffing, and it has standard shape designed by fingers.

Dumplings:1.Small ball of dough steamed or boiled. 2. Baked pudding made of dough filled with fruit.

Register covers a variety of elements according to House's model (1997,p.108). There are three variables in the first category of the model:field, tenor and mode. The social action is one of the references in the categories of field. Although these two subjects convey the similar linguistic message, dumplings lose the cultural information in register. In Jakobson's description, translation 'involves two equivalent messages in two different codes', however, he points out that 'there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code-units' (Jakobson,1959,p.114). From the view of linguistics, the relationship between the signifier (the spoken or written signal) and the signified (the concept signified) is formed by arbitrariness, and the divergence of the equivalence is objectively existed between the signifier of one language and the signified of another language.   The achievement of the correspondence of word in field of contrastive linguistics is properly one reason for the translator to apply the word without equivalence in the TT. The word jiaozi is often

translated into dumplings due to the similarities of the appearance of them, though they are in fact of no denotative equivalence. In order to avoid the ambiguity of translation, translator can either adopt pronunciation method and create a new word as jiaozi or translate jiaozi as Chinese dumplings.

3. Oblique translation

3.1 Transposition (Vinay and Darbelnet,2004,p.132)

The method involves 'replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message'.

eg. noun – adjective:The blockage was a success. – Fengsuo chenggongle. [lit. 'The blockage was successful.']

eg. preposition – verb:I found it by radar. – Wo liyong leida zhaodaole ta. [lit. 'I used radar, and then I found it.']

This strategy can also be found within a language, 'I give him a kiss' is semantically no difference from 'I kiss him' though the word 'kiss' is changed from a noun into a verb. According to Vinay and Darbelnet, the first expression can be called the base expression, while the converted form of 'kiss' as a verb is called the transposed expression. As a result of the divergence of language systems between SL and TT, this strategy to altering words without semantic change is undertaken probably most common and even sometime necessarily by translators. From a stylistic point of view these words are of different value in TL, and translators will face the possibility of changing the genre of the translation text. Baker (1992,p.167) compares nominalization and verbal forms in his 'thematic and information structures'. An inherent problem is that thematic structures meet different genre conventions in different language. The verb-inflected languages, such as Portuguese, Spanish and Arabic, often place the verb in 'theme' position. On account of the incompatibility to structure between different language systems, keeping balance of information dynamics related to textual function is still a dilemma in thematic structure. However, it is necessary that when adopting transposition the translator has the awareness to the 'relative markedness' of the words in the ST and pays attention to the meaningful choices made by the author.

3.2 Modulation (Vinay and Darbelnet,2004,p.133):refers to 'a variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view'.

eg. God knows. – Meiren zhidao [lit. 'No one knows.']

eg. The length of A is three times less than that of B. –B de changdu shi A de sanbei. [lit. 'B is three times as long as A']

Modulation can be adopted when, though literal or transposition translation results grammatically correct utterance, the patterns of TL in the TT are considered as abnormal or awkward. The application of this skill demands very much the translator's capacity to mastering bilingual languages. Chinese is a very flexible language in pragmatics, and there are always several different expressions for the same idea, for example

Ta feichang yonggan. [lit. 'he is very brave'] and Ta sihao bu danqie [lit. 'he is not coward at all']. However, not all the word in English has a unique equivalent word in Chinese; both 'borrow' and 'lend' are translated as one Chinese word 'jie', thus modulation is ineffective for ambiguity when translating 'I borrowed him a book' and 'He lent me a book' in Chinese.

3.3 Equivalence (Vinay and Darbelnet,2004,p.134)

It refers to a strategy to describe the same situation by 'using completely different stylistic or structural methods' for producing 'equivalent texts'.

eg. spend money like water – huijin rutu [lit. 'spend money like earth']

eg. They are as different as chalk and cheese. – Tamen youzhe tianrang zhibie.

[lit. 'They are as different as sky and earth.']

eg. He was like a cat on hot bricks before the exam. – Kaoshi qian ta jide xiang reguoshang de mayi.

[lit. 'Before the exam he was like an ant on a hot pan.']

Equivalence is not only useful but also necessary in translating idioms and proverbs. This strategy is viewed as a type of modulation and 'a linguistic sub-discipline of pragmatics' (Armstrong,2005,p.152), which is concerned with the use of language in different cultures. For example, in Chinese 'east wind' means the wind in spring, while England is located in the west hemisphere, so that it must be changed into 'west wind' for foretelling that spring is coming. One country's history and culture affect the language used in this country very much. As the first example I made, there are two different words for describing extravagance, because English people live in islands while Chinese people live on the Asian continent, so the most common matter in their eyes are respectively water and earth. If translating these words and phrases simply in a literal way without any consideration to the idiom or proverb patterns in different cultures, the translator will give the TT ridiculous and even contrary information.

The change in stylistics is another kind of application to equivalence. Language used in one style often has a contrary meaning against what seems to be its literal meaning. The basic function of the sentence 'Would you mind closing the window?' is a request for information; however, this general question in stylistics will be translated in Chinese as an imperative sentence 'Qing ba chuangzi guanshang' [lit. 'Close the window, please.'].

3.4 Adaptation (Vinay and Darbelnet,2004,p.134)

It refers to a method 'used in those cases where the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TL culture'.

eg. Lovely weather, isn't it? –Chifan le ma? [lit. 'Have you finished your meal?']

Rather than operations on linguistic level, this strategy focus on phenomena or practices that are absent in the target culture. In a literal translation, Chinese people will be surprised why people always talk about weather like a meteorologist when they meet each other, while the English people will have the doubt whether the speaker has an intention to invite me for dinner. Although these expression patterns are irrelevant and strange to people from other cultures, both sentences in the example above can be translated as 'how do you do?', and by adopting this method an equivalence of the same value is created in both ST and TT.

4. Application of Theory

There are five steps given by Vinay and Darbelnet for moving from ST to TT (p. 30):

(1). Identify the units of translation.

(2). Examine the SL text, evaluating the descriptive, affective and intellectual content of the units.

(3). Reconstruct the metalinguistic context of the message.

(4). Evaluate the stylistic effects.

(5). Produce and revise the TT.

The unit of translation is a 'unit of thought' as well as a 'lexicological unit' but also. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995,p.21) define it as 'the smallest segment of the utterance whose signs are linked in such a way that they should not be translated individually'. Some problems can be found in practical translation with this model. Firstly, the boundaries between units may be multiple, and there are several ways to divide the units into small or longer segments of thought, thus in this occasion the units between the TT and the ST fail to be equivalent. Secondly, the aim of Vinay and Darbelnet's strategies is to describe the process of translation; however, their model in fact focuses on the translation product due to the basic and crucial step for identifying units, which are based on the taxonomy of linguistic approaches. Lastly, shifts themselves are on the micro-level of translation, there is an uncertainty concerns how to deal with the register of the text.

5. Conclusion

Translation study is a new-developing academic subject, and due to its complexity and variety, a universal theory was difficult to be found in the past fifty years. The complexity of realization of pragmatics even determines that the translation theories can only be evaluated as ever-imperfect standards. Toury (1995,p.84) warns against 'the totally negative kind of reasoning require by the search for shifts', and without the consideration of higher-level discourse or the effect the changes might have on the reader, Vinay and Darbelnet's model is mainly proposed for describing the changes that occur in a specific ST-TT pair, which highlight the liability to make error, failure and loss in translation. However, Vinay and Darbelnet's classic taxonomy remains the most comprehensive categorization of differences between a pairs of languages, and it still has profound influences on a wide range of new-developing translation theories.

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The Communicative Ability of Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak's Graduates

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Abstract

This study explores Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Sarawak graduating students' oral proficiency, focusing on grammatical accuracy. Oral proficiency in English has always been the benchmark of language proficiency, and in the context of UiTM's language teaching curriculum, efforts to enhance students' oral proficiency are implemented through various languages proficiency-based and ESP courses. A small corpus of group discussions was analysed to identify and classify grammatical errors and other performance factors in students' oral communication. The analysis was carried out using text analysis software used in corpus linguistics (Dagneaux et al, 1998, Scott, 1996). The software was used to classify grammatical errors into general categories such as grammar, word, lexical, formal, style, lexico grammar and register. It was found that the students who took part in group discussions displayed frequent lexical, grammatical and formal errors. Also there was much evidence of performance phenomena such as hesitation, repetitions, incomplete structures and redundancy. This provides evidence that, despite many years of ESL input, some UiTM graduating students still seem to require a great deal of practice with basic grammatical structures. The practical implications derived from the findings of the study suggest that teachers and curriculum developers ought to help students develop

their proficiency in English language learning by giving them ample opportunity to use, produce and practice English language structures or sentences through simulated situations in various immersion activities in class and outside the classroom as well as introducing consciousness-raising techniques to sensitise learners to the various forms and meanings of structures used in everyday conversation in English.

Keywords: Graduating students, Oral proficiency, Grammatical accuracy

1. Introduction

Universiti Teknologi MARA Malaysia (UiTM) is one of the nation's rising tertiary institutions with 'an international reach', and is in fact the largest university in Malaysia. UiTM is currently on the move to be one of Malaysia's premier universities with world class status in the not so distant future. Thus it is crucial for UiTM and its extensive branch campus network to brace itself for the new challenges facing the global academic and professional community which necessitate mastery of English as the world's 'lingua franca', and the development of social communicative skills. In this respect, UiTM has laid down the necessary groundwork to ensure that it produces future graduates who are not only competent in their subject matter, but also highly-skilled communicators, possessing a high level of oral proficiency, and being able to function conversationally in any context. A majority of current students in UiTM completed both their primary and secondary education in the national language, Bahasa Melayu (Malay). They have also gained formal exposure to English for ten or more years prior to their tertiary education. These are students who are the products of an English language curriculum that places emphasis on communicative skills, meaning the majority of them do possess some general proficiency in the language. Despite their years of exposure to English, many of them do not fall into the category of a reasonably proficient user of English, much less a highly-proficient one. Even though they may achieve reasonably 'high' overall scores, ranging from B to A- in their semester exams for English, there still remains much to be desired with respect to their real performance in the oral domain, i.e., the aspect of oral proficiency.

Young (1995) defines oral proficiency as the "ability to speak the language in a skilled way based on several components which are categorized under communicative competence." Communicative competence according to Sheng (2000) is knowledge that students have to acquire in order to be proficient in the language. Gaudart (2003) defines oral proficiency as the ability to handle with confidence, accuracy, clarity and precision, a large number of communicative tasks; to participate in most informal and formal exchanges on a variety of concrete and familiar topics, to narrate and describe all major uses. Finally Jernigan (2007) refers to oral proficiency as the ability of a speaker to use the language appropriately in given contexts for spoken communication. In addition, Scarcella and Oxford, (1992) said that effective speakers have a variety of abilities which include grammatical competence, strategic competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence. This study, however, will only look at grammatical competence. Savignon (2001) also defines grammatical competence as sentence level grammatical forms, the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological features of a language and to make use of these features to interpret and form words and sentences. To Savignon, grammatical competence is not linked to any single theory of grammar and does not include the ability to state rules of usage. In other words, one demonstrates grammatical competence by using a rule in the interpretation, expression, or negotiation of meaning.

Oral proficiency in English has always been the benchmark of language proficiency, and the Malaysian Ministry of Education has over the years made repeated calls to teachers to improve the standard of English among students especially with regard to oral proficiency. Hymes (1971) who coined the term 'communicative competence' stated that knowing a language is more than just knowing its grammar. He further stated that there are culturally specific rules of use which relate the language used to features of the communicative contexts. For example, the ways a person speaks or writes to communicate to close friends may not be the same as those used to communicate with professionals. One of the recent measures taken is the conversion of the medium of instruction used in the teaching of mathematics and science, from Malay to English in all national schools. In the context of UiTM's language teaching curriculum, efforts to enhance students' oral proficiency are implemented through various language proficiency-based and ESP courses. The primary objective of this research is to determine the level of oral proficiency of final semester first degree students in UiTM Samarahan, Sarawak by focusing on grammatical accuracy. Cummins (1994), however, cautioned that just being able to talk socially is insufficient. The necessary skill needed is 'Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency' which takes much longer than basic interpersonal communication to develop, which is usually about 5 to 7 years. Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency skills are those that are necessary for literacy obtainment and academic success. It enables students to have academic, analytical conversation and to independently acquire factual information. The learner can use the information to make relationships, make inferences and draw conclusions (Cummins, 1994). Thus, producing effective speakers who are able to use the language for personal communication as well as for academic attainment is the expected and intended outcome of communicative competence. Errors made by learners give us better insights into the process of language learning and they are now regarded as a very important tool for diagnostic purposes in language teaching. Maros *et al*. (2007) conducted a study on the interference effect of Malay on essays written in English by form one students in Malaysia. Their findings show that despite having gone through six years

of learning English in school environment, the learners are still having difficulty in using correct English grammar in their writings. Botley *et al* (2005) also provided support for the value of learner data when they identified a number of systematic effects of 'language transfer' (Odlin, 1989) in a corpus of argumentative essays written by university-level students in Sarawak and Sabah, Malaysia.

The main purpose of this study is therefore to investigate the level of oral proficiency among a sample of final semester first degree students in UiTM Sarawak, Kota Samarahan Campus, by focusing on grammatical accuracy, particularly grammatical errors that are made in the course of an oral discussion task. The specific objectives of the study are three-folds, namely (a) to provide empirical data on students' oral performance and communicative ability, particularly grammatical accuracy at tertiary level, (b) to investigate the students' level of grammatical accuracy in terms of a wide range of grammatical features such as verb tense, noun number, subject-verb-agreement and others, and (c) to derive statistical data on the students' grammatical accuracy from a mini-corpus of oral discussion transcripts.

2. Methodology

2.1 Sampling design

The sample utilized in this study comprised 20 randomly-selected final year students from the Accountancy and Administrative Science faculties at UiTM's Samarahan campus near Kuching, Sarawak. A purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting the sample for this study. A complete list of all the final semester degree students from the Accountancy, and Administration Science was obtained from the respective Heads of Program.

2.2 Instrumentation

All the 20 students were placed into five different groups comprising four members, and asked to participate in a group discussion task in English. The group discussions followed the MUET speaking format with minor adjustment in terms of duration. All the groups were given the same topic on current issue for discussion. The students were asked to undergo two stages of the discussion. In the first stage, the students made individual presentations based on the selected stimulus, and in the second stage they were asked to discuss in groups the stimulus presented. See Appendix A for details of the stimulus used for the group discussions.

The entire group discussions were tape recorded and orthographically transcribed verbatim to provide the mini-corpus used in this study.   Afterwards, the transcripts were subjected to a detailed error analysis using the UCL Error Editor (Dagneaux *et al*., 1998). This software is used to manually analyze the grammatical errors by general category. The Editor makes use of a detailed error typology which allows errors to be classified into a number of mainly lexical and grammatical categories.

Using the UCL Editor to select a category from an onscreen menu, the analyst can use the computer to automatically insert a 'tag' or code into the soft copy of the transcript, along with an indication of the target word or phrase. The Error Editor recognizes several error domains such as **G** (grammatical, **L** (lexical), **X** (lexico-grammatical) **F** (formal), **R** (register), **W** (syntax) and **S** (stylistic).   These codes can be combined together and with others to form error tags.   A full list of the error tags is included in Appendix B below, and Appendix C shows an extract from one of the tagged transcripts. For instance, errors involving singular or plural nouns can be tagged **GNN** (Grammatical Noun Number). The tag, in parentheses, precedes the error, and a suggested target, enclosed in '$ $', can be inserted afterwards, as in the following example from our corpus: Because for me the, the public. They have so many (GNN) burden $burdens$ (Transcript 1). Finally, in order to obtain statistics concerning the distribution of error categories in the five transcripts analyzed, the Wordsmith Tools concordance software (Scott, 1996) was used to count the error tags in each transcript. The numerical data was then tabulated, as will be seen below.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Transcript analysis

The data analyzed in this study consisted of five oral discussion transcripts. The composition of these transcripts in terms of wordage is shown in Table 1. To obtain these counts, only the utterances made by the students were counted, and the header information, and utterances made by the researchers, was excluded. The word count also includes repeated words, and fillers such as 'ah' or 'erm', as these are considered important for the objectives of this study. Now that we have shown the number of words in the sample, let us look at the distribution of errors, in order to provide some insights into the extent of oral and grammatical competency of the students under analysis.

Table 2 below shows the frequency scores for all of the error categories, realized as error tags, identified in the five transcripts. The figures are shown for each transcript for completeness (Columns 2 to 6), but no attempt is made in this analysis to compare transcripts, as there is not enough data to make statistically meaningful comparisons at this stage. Note that the raw scores in bold type in Column 7 are supplemented by the normalized frequency scores per 1000 words (Note 1), in bold in Column 8 on the right, in order to give a slightly sharper picture of the distribution of the most common error categories.   Furthermore, please note that the grey bar in the middle of the table marks a cut-off point

of >= 10 errors, to distinguish the most frequent error categories more clearly from the least frequent ones. Table 2 reveals many observations about the grammatical errors made by the students in our study.   The first thing we can say is that fairly basic grammatical errors, such as noun number (GNN), lexical choice (LS), subject-verb agreement (GVN) and verb tense (GVT) are among the most common errors identified in the five transcripts.

Let us illustrate this with some examples from the transcripts.

(2)   We have all know that the prices of basic (GNN) necessity $necessities$ such as food have been increasing.

(3)   Believe that we have known the (LS) task $reason$ why we are here today

(4)   Because all of this food necessity (GVN) are is controlled by the government

(5)   Then they should (GVT) caught $catch$ them and whichever like that

This is in line with the generally-held perceptions of members of the research team, and also reflects findings from Botley et al's (2005) work on a large corpus of UiTM student essays, where these classes of error were among the most frequent, especially GNN and GVT. However, one interesting observation is the high frequency of WM (missing word) and WR (redundant word) errors identified in this data.   Here are some examples to illustrate:

(6) The government also should (WM) be more strict in taking actions against the sellers

(7) The workshop (WR) it 0 should contain (WM) $a session$ about how to spend accurately

(8) They just (WR) buy buy buy it.

These three examples illustrate the common phenomenon of missing out words or other sentence fragments from the utterances.   The suggested targets are of course those judged as appropriate by the analyst, which introduces an element of subjectivity which is unavoidable in this kind of analysis.

When it comes to the examples of redundancy, these examples show two kinds of redundancy commonly identified in the data.   The first kind is simple inclusion of material that adds nothing to the meaning of the utterance, or that which may fall into the category of 'overuse', as with example (7).   The second class of redundancy is simple repetition of words or phrases, which is most likely evidence of nervousness or the use of an online self-repair strategy of the kind commonly found in spoken data (Biber et al, 1999). Therefore, to sum up at this stage, the data reveals that many basic grammatical and lexical errors are very frequent in the data.   These error categories are of the kind that should in theory have been ironed out during the normal course of a decade's worth of formal English language instruction.

Furthermore, if we look at the normalized scores per 1000 and 100 words, we can see this in stark detail. Table 3 below shows that the 979 errors identified in the 8,326 words of the sample translates to 117.58 errors per 1,000 words, and 11.76 errors per 100 words.   We can also extrapolate from this that *on average*, there are almost 196 errors per transcript, more than 120 errors per 1000 words and just over 12 errors per 100 words.   This adds up to a seriously high rate of errors identified in a relatively small corpus of 8,326 words and just five transcripts.

3.2 Communicative ability

Now that we have drawn a picture of the grammatical competence of the students under analysis, we will finish this section with some comments about the communicative abilities of the students, as displayed in the transcripts.   The previous section provided some evidence of performance phenomena that are most likely spawned from the spoken, online nature of the interactions being studied, for instance the high frequency of redundancy, and missing words in the data. However, how did the students fare as fluent communicators?   One thing that emerges from the transcripts is a preponderance of dysfluency, hesitation phenomena, self-repair and incomplete utterances of the kind discussed in detail in Biber et al (1999:1052-1066), and which are commonly found in spoken discourse.

Biber *et al.* (1999: 1048) pointed out that, because spoken language takes place in real time, placing limitation on the memory of a speaker, there is a need for speakers to plan their utterances online, in effect as they are going along. This would explain the apparently messy, incomplete and hesitant nature of spoken transcripts at first glance, which distinguishes such data sharply from more well-planned and structured written discourse. In the data analysed in this paper, there is plenty of evidence of the kinds of performance phenomena described by Biber et al in their excellent account of the grammar of spoken English conversations. We will discuss the most obvious and seemingly common examples below.

(a)   Hesitations.

Here are some examples of hesitation, taken from Transcript 1, with the phenomena in question rendered in italics.   As we see, there is an overlap with repetition and in many cases, what is tagged as WR can also be seen as hesitation: A very good afternoon to all of you and to the examiner. *As for my, as for my topic*, it is to suggest the government control the prices of basic food items which is the best way to keep food prices down. And thirdly is, the rate poverty index is

still high in our country, so we should know that the income of families in our country *is still, is still far from, is still far from the rich.*

(b) Filled pauses

Here, a speaker often uses verbal fillers such as 'ar' or 'em', as we can see from this long extract with many examples of such filled pauses: this is because, first, basically because objective of having such workshop is to educate the consumer on how to save money and spend wisely…ar.. and then..ar… beside that ar…through workshop em… ar.. the consumer association can give information, the dos and don'ts ar… in order to, to…but I mean, for example buy necessary, buy necessary things instead of er… buying unuseful things. Ar… for example, ar…, example, the consumer should buy em… the necessities such as rice, vegetables, that is, that is for the specific period. For instance, ar… if the person ar… if the person ar… is to purchase too much vegetables, maybe they are certain period, the vegetables will get… will get…. will get…will get…ar… unfresh… or cannot be, cannot be eat, cannot be use or cook.

(c) Repeats and reformulations.

Some examples of repetitions are tagged as redundant utterances in the previous section.   However, according to Biber et al (ibid), many examples of repeats reveal a speaker starting an utterance only to start it again in a different form, as we see in these examples: The side effect of this plant a… this campaign where the after..ar   evening they make gardening, so this can make they more healthy. So you know that the public will, I mean they will agree to the policy presented, presented by the government. Here, a speaker self-repairs while he or she is speaking, in effect reformulating or repeating what he or she is planning to say. This is done because the speaker does not have the time to formulate a complete idea in real time. The level of grammatical accuracy manifested in the students' oral performances, can also be answered clearly and definitively by stating that the level of grammatical accuracy seems to be quite low, at least if we measure this by frequency of errors. There are certainly some students in the sample who manifested fewer errors than the others, but on average, the data reveal a desperate need on the part of the students to undergo further remedial help on basic grammatical rules and structures in English. The state of the students' communicative ability is harder to answer definitively based on the data analyzed. However, we can say that despite the presence of the usual array of performance dysfluencies in the data, there is evidence that the students know how to communicate in groups fairly effectively, follow the rules of turn-taking and generally speak on their given topic with a good level of relevance. This is a tribute to the formal nature of the situation they are in and to the training they would have received by their lecturers. However, more work clearly needs to be done, on a larger number of students, before we can make any concrete statements concerning the communicative abilities of UiTM graduating students.

To sum up, we can see that the transcripts show plenty of evidence of the linguistic and communicative 'messiness' usually found in spoken discourse.   However, this is hardly surprising given that, firstly, the speakers are forced to plan and often to re-plan their utterances in real time, secondly, they are being subjected to a stressful examination situation and thirdly, all of them are non-native speakers of English.   All of these restrictions place a serious load on the speakers' memories and cognitive capacities, which would not be the case if the students were writing essays.

In the students' favour, the transcripts do show that the speakers are fully aware of the basic rules of conversation, including turn-taking, which is in evidence here. In fact, this analyst experienced some surprise at the seeming lack of interruption phenomena and overlaps often identified in spoken conversations.   This may be the result of the rigid, highly structured nature of the task, in which the students had to firstly give an individual presentation of their case, and secondly had to participate in a four-way discussion. Also, there may be cultural reasons why students do not interrupt their peers, and perhaps their lack of confidence may also play a part.

Our study was delimited to studying only students' actual or current level of oral proficiency in terms of grammatical accuracy involving a small sample of student population, i.e. 20 final semester Bachelor degree students in UiTM Sarawak. The mini-corpus comprises five oral discussion transcripts, and the total number of words in the corpus is 8,326 words. This relatively small sized sample may affect the external validity of any conclusions arising from this research. We are aware that a more in-depth study could be conducted in the future to ascertain factors which affect students' oral proficiency and how these factors influence different groups of L2 learners. However, we believe that the small number of students can still provide sufficiently relevant pilot data to yield significant findings on the students' level of oral proficiency and grammatical competence and the findings will therefore have some internal validity.

4. Conclusions

This paper set out to derive empirical data on UiTM students' oral performance, particularly grammatical accuracy and communicative ability. This was carried out by a detailed computer-aided analysis of a mini-corpus of oral discussion transcripts using an existing typology to classify grammatical and lexical errors into different categories. Therefore, it can be said that we have achieved all of the objectives set out above in Section 1.4. As for our research questions, we have shown that the most frequent grammatical errors made by students seem to be the most basic, and most anticipated

errors such as noun number, subject/verb agreement and verb tense, and that these are the very categories that Malaysian students often have difficulty with, given the structure of the L1, Bahasa Malaysia.

Another finding was the high preponderance of performance-related errors such as missing words and word strings, as well as various redundancies and performance phenomena such as repeats and reformulations. These may or may not be due to the spoken, online nature of the speech situation, which is common to all spoken discourse where the speaker does not have the time or memory capacity to plan utterances properly. However, it may be speculated that the high frequency of WM errors – where words or strings are missed out from an utterance or clause – may be related to the learners' interlanguage (Selinker, 1972), or the state of their knowledge of the L2.   We would require further research to arrive at more concrete conclusions on this matter.

Finally, it would appear that the problems, where they occur, are not with communicative ability per se, but rather with grammatical competence and particularly grammatical accuracy. It is hoped that these findings will show the way toward better and more effective ways of improving the grammatical ability of UiTM students of English, so that the error counts in future research of this kind can fall towards zero.

It is recommended that n order to enhance the learners' grammatical competence as far as oracy is concerned; they should be given ample opportunity to use, produce and practise English structures or sentences through simulated situations. This can be done by getting them involved in various immersion activities in class and outside the classroom. Another objective of having these activities is to build the students' confidence in using the language. English language classes should immerse the students in the language-based activities such as presentations, group discussion, open discussion, debates and drama.   They should also be encouraged to carry out activities outside the classroom such as conducting interviews and gathering information for documentaries. Last but not least, it would be for teachers to introduce consciousness-raising techniques to sensitize learners to the various forms and meanings of structures used in everyday conversation in English.   Reducing teacher-student ratios in English language classes may also help to improve focus and concentration during the learning process.

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Table 1. Word Counts

Transcript	Number of Words
T1	1786
T2	1271
T3	1733
T4	1972
T5	1564
TOTAL	**8326**

Table 2. Error Frequencies in Group and Individual Presentations

Tag	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	Raw TOTAL	TOTAL Per 1000 words
GNN	27	26	41	55	26	**175**	**20.87**
WM	14	28	43	43	47	**175**	**20.87**
WR	40	11	25	40	44	**160**	**19.22**
LS	24	13	24	41	28	**130**	**15.61**
GVN	23	15	10	13	16	**77**	**9.25**
GVT	8	2	14	14	17	**55**	**6.61**
GA	10	0	6	13	6	**35**	**4.20**
GP	7	8	6	9	2	**32**	**3.84**
S	0	0	9	6	7	**22**	**2.64**
WO	6	0	1	2	9	**18**	**2.16**
GWC	1	0	7	6	4	**18**	**2.16**
FS	4	5	4	4	0	**17**	**2.04**
LP	2	0	2	8	0	**12**	**1.44**
FM	1	2	3	0	2	**8**	**0.90**
R	0	0	5	0	2	**7**	**0.84**
GNC	1	0	0	0	4	**5**	**0.60**
LSF	0	0	3	0	2	**5**	**0.60**
SU	0	1	0	2	1	**4**	**0.48**
XVPR	0	2	1	0	1	**4**	**0.48**
SI	1	0	0	0	2	**3**	**0.36**
XVCO	1	0	0	2	0	**3**	**0.36**
XNPR	0	1	0	0	1	**2**	**0.24**
GVM	0	0	0	1	1	**2**	**0.24**
LCS	0	0	0	0	2	**2**	**0.24**
GADJCS	1	0	0	0	0	**1**	**0.12**
GADVO	1	0	0	0	0	**1**	**0.12**
XADJPR	1	0	0	0	0	**1**	**0.12**
GADJ0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**	**0.12**
GVAUX	0	0	0	1	0	**1**	**0.12**
LCLS	0	0	0	1	0	**1**	**0.12**
XNCO	0	0	0	1	0	**1**	**0.12**
GVV	0	0	0	0	1	**1**	**0.12**
TOTAL ERRORS	*173*	*114*	*205*	*262*	*225*	*979*	*117.58*

Key:

FM: formal/morphological error, **FS**: spelling error, **GA**: Article misuse, **GADJCS**: Adjective error, **GADVO**: Adverb error, **GNC**: Genitive/possessive error, **GNN**: Noun Number error, **GP**: Pronoun misuse, **GVAUX**: error involving

auxiliaries, **GVM**: verb morphology error, **GVN**: Subject Verb Agreement (Number Concord), **GVT**: Verb Tense error, **GVV**: Error involving passive/active voice, **GWC**: wrong word class, **LCLS**: logical connector error, **LCS**: Subordinating Conjunction error, **LP**: lexical phrase misuse, **LS**: Lexical choice, **S**: Style (foreign-sounding or garbled utterance), **SI**: Style (incomplete utterance), **SU**: Style (unclear utterance), **WO**: Wrong word order, **WR**: Redundant word/string, **WM**: Missing word(s), **XADJPR**: adjective complementation error, **XNCO**: noun complementation error, **XVCO**: verb complementation error.

Table 3. Normalised, Raw and Average Frequencies

Transcript	*Number of Words*	*Number of Errors*	*Errors per 1000 words*	*Errors per 100 words*
T1	1786	173	98.86	9.68
T2	1271	114	89.69	8.96
T3	1733	205	118.29	11.83
T4	1972	262	132.86	13.29
T5	1564	255	163.04	16.30
Average	**1665.2**	**195.8**	**120.55**	**12.012**
OVERALL	**8326**	**979**	**117.58**	**11.76**

Notes

Note 1. Calculated by dividing the raw score by the total number of words in the corpus and multiplying by 1000.

Hardy's View on Love and Marriage

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Abstract

This paper ranges widely to track of the evolution of Hardy's view on love and marriage, and analyzes two reasons why this unique view developed: one is Nature; another is Time.

Keywords: Hardy, View, Evolution, Reason

1. Introduction

Hardy's life overstretches two centuries. He is a giant standing on the joint of the Victorian Era and the twentieth century. He witnesses the existence and disappearance of the beautiful idyllic life on Wessex land, undergoes the impact between the patriarchy and the new capitalism, and confirms the course that capitalism declines from advancement into corruption. From a youngster without any experience to a rebel who makes a display of his opposing abilities to society, Hardy goes through too much change together with English society. This unusual experience also impels the evolution of his view on love and marriage.

2. The Development and Evolution of Hardy's view on Love and Marriage

2.1 Songs for the Pastoral Love in Wessex

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Bockhampton, on the seaside of Dorset County in the southwest of England, was a beautiful village with pastoral landscape. It is far from the world of industry and maintains ancient traditions with a presentation of quiet grace and tranquility. Growing up in this natural and picturesque environment, he was much influenced by the traditional life style and the cultural atmosphere and nurtured by the country people's virtues of diligence, simplicity, kindness and unselfishness. Since childhood Hardy had formed a kind of thought and mood of love for nature as well as for these people. In his early novels, he praises his birthplace in a style full of romantic color and he extols the excellent virtue of these country people with his heart and soul. This is also Hardy's most important theme in his earlier novels.

In the long span of his writing period during the early 1870's, Hardy sings the praises of the perfect and romantic love and marriage to a considerable extent because of his having been sentimentally attached to his homeland and his zeal for the simple country life. *Far from the Madding Crowd* depicts the ideal Wessex love life. In this novel Hardy praises the beautiful love through much rough experience between Oak and Bathsheba. Hardy makes some comments when he mentions this novel, "This combination, this friendship between two who have the same interests, was made by chasing the same aim, unfortunately, it is rarely attached to the love of males and females, for they commute not in their working time, but in their playing time. However, only in this happy place where it may happen, this total friendship could prove it is love, strong like death, no fire can put off, no flood can drown. Comparably, the one usually called desire disappears at once like steam."(H. Lea, 34) From these words we can distinctly perceive Hardy's high praise for this love.

However, not all the readers treat *Far from the Madding Crowd* as a pure comedy, despite the fact that the story ends in a happy reunion, but Hardy portrays Bathsheba, the female protagonist with plenty of tragic factors. Bathsheba is a beautiful, zealous and ambitious girl who longs for and goes after freedom and has a great idea, but the weakness hidden in her character, such as vainglory, indiscreet activities, and so on, leads her to tragedy. So, although Bathsheba often seems self-confident and decisive and daring to do anything she has promised, she still has to do everything according to the rules she herself, others and the society have set consciously or unconsciously.

Far from the Madding Crowd reaches to the peak of Hardy's pastoral novels, but just at this moment, the more Hardy senses the life of reality, the more life tragedies he notices in patriarchal society which used to be serene and simple--the decline of traditional order, the impoverished condition of small-scale peasant economy, the attack of evil power, and the frustration of pure and honest country people, etc. At last, his eyes which used to be longing for sunshine and flower turn rather dim and his songs of aspiring sweet tomorrow disappear. The appearance of *Far from the Madding Crowd*

still continues to use an old love story which is about the feeling entanglement of a certain males and females. However, the difference from Hardy's former novels such as *Under the Greenwood Tree, A Pair of Blue Eyes,* etc, is apparent. Although from this story one might hear the pastoral songs and smell the expressive romanticism, in Weatherbury Farm there could not be miracles any more--it is really far from the madding crowd, but tragedies still takes place, just like in the crowded metropolis. The novel ends in a perfect love reunion, but the atmosphere is pervaded with tragedy throughout the novel. The readers can feel all kinds of tragic factors. The conflict between the character and the environment displays its talent for the first time. Predestination and the idea of tragedy also have an inkling, and many sides, such as the tragedy connotation, the art style and the character figure, etc, are all the beginning of novels full of tragic consciousness.

2.2 Appreciation to the New Capitalism

When Hardy amplifies his fine artistic imagination to sing high praises for his lovely patriarchal society, capitalism in Britain gradually developed itself. From the end of the 1870's to the middle of the 1880's, following the absolute superiority of capitalism in politics and economy, the power of the capitalist class permeates into the country quickly. The patriarchy in Wessex is shaken unexpectedly, and many love and marriage tragedies are performed on the life stage. Although Hardy still stands for the conventional patriarchal view at that time and makes these love tragedies so miserable and reveals endless sympathy and pity, as an austere author of realism, he never attempts to paint pretty pictures about the reality in his works. He always faithfully details the certainty of love tragedy.

The thoughts, feelings and experiences of the protagonists in Hardy's novels are all superior to the people around them contemporaneously. In *Jude the Obscure,* Jude and Sue sigh when they are in passionate love. They wish they could be born fifty years later. Hardy thinks if fifty years later Jude and Sue live together on the basis of true love, it will accord with the tide of time and be accepted by the public opinion. Therefore, to the society of that time the love of the protagonists is rebellious. Their love tragedy is a contradiction between their respective pursuit for ideal, love and marriage and a failure in attaining it. Eustacia, the heroine of *The Return of the Native* expresses her strong will and fervent wish of pursuing love happiness, but this will and wish run contrary to the deep-rooted traditional view of love and marriage of the people in Egdon Heath. Hardy presents this woman with an advanced mind. When she stays with those people who have the conventional mind, her activity seems so unusual. Her unconventional nature is the origin of this mind. In Eustacia's eyes, Egdon Heath is a prison that puts fetters on her love happiness, so she often prays to God to bestow a great love upon her. The heath is a symbol of the old tradition. It demands its people to act in line with the traditional custom and morality, so it cannot bestow love and comfort on Eustacia. Eustacia attempts not to obey the traditional love and marriage under the background of Egdon Heath in Wessex, so she has to be an immolator of normal love view and choose death. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy also describes the love tragedy of Henchard. As Henchard's view of love still represents the tradition of patriarchal society in Casterbridge, he cannot compete with the new capitalist class who has fresh view of marriage, so his tragedy takes place. In this novel Hardy's view is that the love and marriage of new capitalist class will eventually defeat the old and decayed love and marriage of patriarchal society.

Eustacia is typical of Hardy's characterization during this period, and is at once a much disputed figure. One view is that she is a character of Flesh because of her frivolity, dissoluteness and vainglory. This conclusion is drawn from her character and experience: Eustacia admires the pragmatism and the hedonism, and builds fantasies for the high society's showy life of the capitalist class. As she comes from another big city, she is unable to adapt to life here upon her arrival. And between her character and both the natural and the societal environments, a conflict grows up inevitably, even the people of the heath curse at her as being a witch. Besides, Eustacia's love is so easy and indiscreet, and void of morality. She keeps dating with a hypocrite called Wildeve secretly. She knows it is not true love, but still plays this game that means nothing. Later, when she hears that the young dealer Clym is coming back from Paris, her heart of pursuing vainglory beats hard again. In her opinion Clym is sure to know everything about Paris and he can bring her good luck, so before they meet she has been in love with him. She dreams when they are married, she could persuade Clym to go back to Paris again. However, the reason why Clym returns is just he is tired of city life and decides to spend his life nestling in nature's arms placidly. The strong disappointment makes Eustacia go back to Wildeve again after marriage and continues to date with him secretly. Once, when Wildeve is in her house, her mother-in-law comes to pay a visit, Eustacia does not answer the door. The old woman is killed by a wild cobra. After a big quarrel with her husband, she plans to elope with Wildeve in order to escape from the heath and get to Paris she longs for, but unfortunately both of them are drowned on their way. From her story one can concludes that Eustacia's tragedy is due to her dissolute character, weak view of morality and strong vainglory. She has only herself to blame.

However, on the contrary, another view has it that Eustacia is a brave female who struggles against society for her freedom and happiness. To stress her dissoluteness and vainglory is because they ignore her positive side of opposing the old tradition and pursuing human nature which should be praised. According to this view, under such a close, conservative and backward condition in Egdon Heath, Eustacia's pursuit and rebellion are only too natural. Eustacia is

active, fond of adventure and fantasy, and she likes to pursue exciting life. Such a woman is sure to be different from the rigidity and poverty of the heath, so she feels uncomfortable and oppressed. Her only purpose is to get away from this environment which has prevented her from developing, and spend her life in Paris, her ideal heaven. Of course, it is a pity for her to put her ideal on the showy and vainglorious life. But from the view of humanitarianism, it should be praised because she apposes the oppressing environment and dares to pursue a happy life.

2.3 Opposition against the Decayed Capitalism

In the late 1890's, with the development of the new society, Hardy finds that the marriage of the new capitalist class changes from that of the former, maybe more advanced view, to the present, possibly more backward consciousness. At the time when the new-rising capitalism intrudes into the Wessex country, in order to conquer the traditional and conservative patriarchy, their view of marriage tries to conform to the development of history and respect the nature of human beings, but till the time when he writes *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, their nature of advancement has lost, and the reactionary nature of opposing humanity is exposed.

At that time, the popular view on love and marriage is that marriage is a kind of bestowal and prize to those people who obey the social orthodox ideas. It does not permit any inkling of rebellion, or it will regard this way as immoral. And the real meaning of marriage is a contract signed according to law, whether the marriage has the basis in feeling is not a matter of concern. But a divorce means to disobey the management of God, which is regarded as immoral treason and heresy. Hardy is absolutely opposed to the kind of marriage without love. He does not endorse a marriage arising from a sudden impulse, but he does not approve of the matrimonial knot of a male and female with a lawful contract without considering a basis in love. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy condemns the sin that capitalism makes the marriage tragedies, attacks the popular marriage view of capitalism of that time, portrays the rebellious figures who are not proper for the society and keep on pursuing the freedom of love and marriage. He expounds his systematic and overall ideal view of love and marriage.

In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Tess is portrayed with the writer's full attention. Seen from any point of view, Tess is the most perfect and the most successful woman figure in Hardy's gallery of women. He bestows on her every excellent virtue of working people. She is not only strikingly beautiful but kind-hearted, honest, diligent, and thrifty. Furthermore, she loves life very much. Although she is from a poor family and the family life does not bring her happiness, she has very strong feelings for her family. She agrees that she has to assume immense responsibility. In order to maintain the benefits for her family, she would rather sacrifice everything she owns. However, kindness and tolerance are not the whole lot of Tess's character. She is defined by a sexual being. In contrast with this sexuality, Tess possesses certain qualities inherent in males. The thriving passion of Tess serves two purposes in Hardy's novel. In her defiance of the Victorian ideal Tess is empowered and strengthened. This power of passion also results in her isolation from the cruel social environment and ultimately her death.

In the popular dramas and novels of that time, most of the protagonists are males. He works hard for his career of justice, in the end, he is married with an innocent and beautiful girl with good virtue. Hardy does not write novels according to the traditional pattern, he does not tend to use the happy reunion endings, on the contrary, he always ends his stories with tragedy. According to the traditional view, first Tess loses her chastity, then she lives with a male illegally, so she is an indecent and fallen woman. She does not deserve to get mercy and should be punished by God. But Hardy regards her as a pure woman with deep sympathy, which is a brave protest and satire to the social morality of that time. Tess is beautiful, sexual, kind and tolerant, and the most important thing is, her independence and strength separate Hardy's heroines from Victorian heroines. The combination of sexuality and masculine qualities in Hardy's passionate heroines exemplifies a new characterization of women. By the love tragedy of this glittering figure and her miserable ordeal, Hardy mercilessly criticizes the hypocritical law, morality, religion and marriage system which kill the nature of human beings in the capitalist world. Because of this rebellion against orthodoxy, his works were fiercely attacked by the public opinions.

Jude the Obscure is the further exploration on the love theme in *Tess of the d'urbervilles*. When Hardy begins to portray the female figures in *Jude the Obscure*, he has observed the human nature deeply. He understands their complicated behavior and displays them to the readers without avoiding them as taboo.

Sue is a classic type who is described by Hardy with his full heart. In the forepart of the novel, Hardy portrays her as a figure that has full consciousness of opposition. According to the view of a German critic, Sue is the first female feminist who has been described in novels. Sue, who is naive and innocent falls in love with Jude, but she is obliged to marry Phillotson due to the oppression of the society. After being married, she and Phillotson are seemingly in harmony but actually at variance, and she is unable to get the noble and unsullied love she has been longing for at all. So she tells Phillotson she wants to live with Jude formally, because they can excite each other's sympathy at heart and communicate with each other by feelings. She thinks the love between her and Jude is true love with the communication of heart and soul. Her thought and action represent the tendency of many women's aspiration for liberation and freedom. The union in matrimony between her and Jude is a marriage relationship which conforms to morality, for they have firm

love basis which is also pursued with enthusiasm. Sue also opposes the view of unequal position between males and females. She thinks females are also entitled to choose males as many as males are, an apparent example is a comparison of the chosen females with a she-ass or a she-goat which we have quoted above. Her opposition also exhibits her longing for the society of having males and females on an equal footing.

After all, Sue is a woman. Although she has the courage to struggle, under the then social background, her power means almost nothing. In the latter part of the novel she is unable to extricate herself from the conventional view of love and marriage, and has to compromise to destiny at last. She longs for getting her satisfaction of self-emotion, which is to enjoy her fine love life with Jude. And also she wishes she has good virtue to fulfill her emotionless marriage obligation. In the end, she has to be trapped into a deep, complicated and difficult position. Although once she follows the direction of her own feeling to unite with Jude, she is unable to storm and capture the fort of the traditional view of love and marriage in her mind. This view is not a simple pattern any more. It has turned into a spirit inside her with flesh and blood. When Sue leaves Jude, she has fulfilled her self-figure of sacrificing her own feeling to defend the lawful marriage relationship. In the innermost of Sue's character, how profound the moral experience of self-fulfillment and self-examination is!

After the rebellious opposition to reality, Sue has to pay the price all that a woman could pay to get the right that a human should have. Sue is totally disappointed with the real world, and what she wishes is only to meet Jude in Heaven, not in Reality. Her extreme despair reminds us of the word Predestination on the wall of *the Notre Dame de Paris*. In short, from a fighter with a full spirit of struggles to a woman submitting to the convention under the oppression of the society and waiting for the total predestination of the next life, Sue is drowned by the contract marriage of the capitalist class.

3. Hardy's Consciousness of Tragedy is the Source of His Evolutionary View

Through the above analysis it could be concluded that Hardy's view of love and marriage has a long course of development. His works during the period of writing his pastoral novels were blended with plenty of tragic factors. However, most of these novels have their endings in a reunion to the satisfaction of all. But since capitalism invades Wessex country, the tragic factors have been strengthened heavily. When Hardy criticizes capitalism that opposes the humanity mercilessly, the tragic factors occupy a pivotal position in Hardy's works. Spanning the writing period of *Far from the Madding Crowd* to *The Return of the Native, Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* is the time when Hardy gradually sets and consolidates his style of tragedy. Then what is the reason for Hardy to evolve from a romantic poet who sings the praises of the pastoral life into an austere writer who exposes the tragedies of reality? We venture on an attempt to probe into this question in this thesis, and the analysis could also exhibit the reason of the evolution of Hardy's view on love and marriage.

3.1 The Two factors of Hardy's Evolution

Marxism explains the development of things by the reason of their contradiction of one another. The interior reason of the contradiction is the basis of the development, and the exterior reason could accelerate this development to come into being. This theory can be used in an attempt analyze the reasoning of Hardy's tragic consciousness. The interior reason is Hardy's natural and sensitive nature which is influenced by what he sees and hears during his adolescence in his homeland. This can be called the factor of Nature. And capitalism is the exterior reason from its destruction of the feudal patriarchy as the new representative of advanced productive power to its thwarting of the development of society as the apologist of the decayed consciousness. This provides a great social background for the change of Hardy's thought. This can be called the factor of Time. The interaction of the interior and exterior reason consequently, promotes the formation of Hardy's tragic consciousness.

3.2 The Factor of Nature

Hardy's father was a skillful stone-mason who inherited the technique of stone-masonry from his family. Hardy's mother was from a farmer's family, though. Hardy hardly received any formal education, but his living environment was the soil for the making of an artist. Around Bockhampton there are woodlands and the dark foliage clothes the woods which overshadow plenty of bushes. Wild ponies, fallow deer, lizards and snakes would turn up in the vicinity from time to time. Hardy loves nature, feels its beauty and he is surprised and fascinated at its mystery and horror further. These indelible impressions in his young mind turn into an outstanding feature in his later works.

At Hardy's time, Wessex, a name which stands for the historical geography turns well known. When Hardy edited all of his works into an anthology in 1920's, he entitled them with the general name of Wessex Novels, and defined the range this area belongs to. The main settings including his fourteen novels and more than forty novelettes and short stories are all in this specific area. The undulating grazing land and field, the rugged coasts and harbors, the serene and extensive mansions and gardens, and the honest peasants and simple country accent, etc, are all regarded as the necessary elements which form his works. In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, compared with the characters and the accidents, the description of the natural view and the conventional custom occupies a rather large proportion. It looks like a collection

of some artistic illustrations of the landscapes which are portrayed in the language of prose interspersed among the plots of the stories.

The novelist usually not only deals with the natural and geographic environment as the rather independent element in his novels, but also regards them as a protagonist and endows them the nature of soul. Only a writer with a superior power of understanding to decode nature's mystery can portray such a vivid view. *The Return of the Native* represents the highest level of his portraying view. In this novel, the view and the characters are mixed together as the supplement or the contrast.

In many of the chapters, all kinds of magic and subtle relationship are exhibited between Egdon Heath and the characters. The country natives taking part in the bonfire celebration on the barrow are mixed into a wholeness with the heath; Eustacia, the beauty who pursues freedom with the modern ideal is definitely not proper for the ancient, simple and desolate style of the heath. The reddle man and his van gallop to and fro like a shadow day and night, which adds the mysterious nature of the heath; the serenity of the heath can also calm down the people's restless hearts. There is no one except Hardy among the British novelists who can personify even defy the characters to such an extent.

Human being's cognition of nature is to be divided into two parts -- the perceptual one and the rational one. As an artist, a poet and a novelist, Hardy pays attention to the perceptual cognition more. He stresses to feel life and nature with the power of perceptivity to achieve the communication with nature and understand the mystery of nature. As long as human beings can achieve harmony with nature, when they face the strong power of it, they could conform to it with the potential instinct of themselves to gain its understanding and regard with tenderness. Hardy's sensitive perceptual ability closed bound by nature and his deep experience sharing joys and sorrows with nature make him feel extremely sorry for nature's course of the ten thousand things of creation. On the one hand, he sings the high praises of nature full of life, of the growth of grass and trees; on the other hand, he sighs for the short time of the nature full of life and the quickness of the growth and the decay. Both instances consist of the sad basis of his works. In brief, to mix himself into nature and always notice to communicate with it is the deepest and the most concealed factor to form Hardy's tragic consciousness. This consciousness that is accumulated from the sorrow for nature and life exists together with the connotation of his characteristic. It is an interior nature that can by no means be changed by the environment of time and society.

3.3 The Factor of Time

This basis of tragedy causes Hardy portray the fabulous figure like Eustacia who longs for personal liberty and pursues perfect love in a style without any decoration, especially during the time when free enterprise worms itself into Wessex country which causes the conflict with the old tradition in the society. Although Eustacia's tragedy is inevitable, her spirit is encouraged and highly praised by Hardy. However, when time goes into the late 1890's, Britain fell into the decline due to its decayed politics, and also it lost its free and dominant position in commerce and industry due to its depressed economy. During the period, the social discord becomes more and more irreconcilable owing to the changes taking place in Wessex country and elsewhere at the time. The development of the new emerging domestic economy and the decline of the old small-producer economy, the intrusion of the marketable commodity, the collapse of the patriarchal society, etc, have worsened the situation as far as the country economy is concerned. The situation is again aggravated by the surge of the city reserved working forces and by the introduction of the use of new machines. The austere reality hastens the conflict between the traditional life and the moral view of that time. All these tear off the hypocritical mask of civilization and morality of the personal enterprise.

As said above, Hardy was born in a small town in Dorset County and spent most of his life there. The place seems like haven of peace to him, far from the madding crowd, but Hardy's thought and eyesight never move away from the human world from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. As he lives in the environment of the country, he has deeply grieved feelings and understandings about the machine of civilization intruding into the cultivation style in a British country.

Poverty, starvation and death are the tragic symbols in the middle of the Victorian Age. However, the hack writers of that time are doing their utmost to advocate the so-called "optimism" saying that Victorian Age is experiencing their golden era, and that the civilization and morality of the time is invincible. All these trite and beaten allusions make Hardy wake up from his fantasy of the reality and from his view of pastoral life. He deeply realizes it is exactly the alluded civilization that destroys the patriarchal society of British country. Following the evolution of the new society, people's tragedies have also taken place. The reality is tragic and not optimistic, and this is the factor of Time of Hardy's tragic consciousness. From the hidden misery of his life view of the pastoral style, to his criticism, exposure and opposition of this unequal society, this course of development is exactly the one from *Far from the Madding Crowd* to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* until *Jude the Obscure*. Also, this is the course of evolution of Hardy's view on love and marriage.

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Has Portfolio Assessment Become Common Practice in EFL Classrooms?

Empirical Studies from China

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Abstract

This paper describes the results of an investigation into the use of portfolio assessment (PA) in Chinese context, beginning with a survey of the rationale for the use of portfolios with students. Then the empirical study is presented and the teacher's and the student's as well as the English teaching advisor's voices are revealed through excerpts collected from the questionnaire and the interviews. The findings show that portfolio assessment is in its infancy. The factors that might have hindered its progress are discussed.

Keywords: Portfolio Assessment (PA), Chinese context, Infancy, Factors

1. Introduction

My students will be English teachers of young learners after they graduate with a certificate in education. To be qualified teachers, they need to be aware of what is required from the National English Curriculum (NEC) issued by the Ministry of Education in 2003 and what the main objectives are for teaching English so that they can teach with clear goals in their mind and they can know what they should try to achieve and how they can assess whether they have achieved what they are aimed for. As a tutor who teaches them how to teach young learners English, I feel obliged to help them get to know the NEC requirements.

Unlike the previous syllabi which in general put the mastery of language knowledge and language skills as the first priority, the NEC gives the priority to the development of students' interest, motivation, confidence and learning strategies, advocates more humanistic assessment models and requires teachers to use portfolios in classrooms as a form of formative assessment to change the widely-accepted practices where teachers are used to teaching according to what is tested and give an evaluation to students only by testing them.   Portfolio assessment (PA), together with other measures, is hoped to bring about changes in Chinese educational development. Since 2001 there has been a wide body of theoretical research at home that recommends the use of portfolios in EFL classrooms and interest about portfolios seems high among experts and educators (He 2002; Wang 2003; Yi & Chen 2004). However, there are very few empirical studies on how it has been used by teachers and learners in EFL classrooms in Chinese context, and what consequences of PA and the reactions of and impact on learners and teachers in the assessment context. Such questions interest me and consequently prompt me to conduct the present research. I hope I will be able to have a better understanding of its application to Chinese context by the end of this paper.

This paper describes the results of an investigation into the use of PA in Chinese context, beginning with a survey of the rationale for the use of portfolios with students. Then the empirical study is presented and the teacher's and the student's as well as the English teaching advisor's voices are revealed through excerpts collected from the questionnaire and the interviews. Next, the factors that might have hindered the progress of PA are discussed. Finally, a conclusion is made by referring to some possible solutions to the existing problems.

2. Viewpoints about the use of portfolio assessment

Though interest about PA has been high among researchers and experts since the NEC was issued and even though some teachers may be ready to follow their lead, still most teachers and administrators remain uncertain about how best to deal with the question of assessment. This uncertainty may influence people's attitudes towards it and how well it works in practice. So, before I enter the empirical study, I'd like to provide a brief overview of some principles and practice of PA in the PA literature. In this part, the focus will theoretically fall on the definition of portfolios, the contents of portfolios and the reasons for portfolios.

2.1 What is a portfolio?

Many researchers in language testing have defined it as a collection of student work which represents both the

capability and the progress of a learner. Cameron (2001:237) has explained the original use of portfolios by saying: "Artists, photographers and architects often build up portfolios, in which they put together pictures they feel best represents their style and skills. They then use the portfolios to demonstrate what they have to offer to potential customers and employers." But applied to language learning and testing, a portfolio in classrooms today, which would include such things as samples of writing and lists of books read (O'Malley and Valdez Pierce 1996), has come to mean the collection of evidence that learning has taken place(Davies et al., 2001.).

A range of definitions of the portfolio has developed, illustrating the growth and diversity of its use. For some teachers the portfolio is part of an alternative assessment program, and it can either include a record of students' achievements or simply document their best work. For other teachers, the portfolio documents the students' learning process, and still others use it as a means of promoting learner reflection.

Portfolio assessment has been adopted in many subject areas and embraced in a variety of contexts so that many descriptions of portfolios exist. Portfolio approaches to assess literacy have been described in a wide variety of publications (For example: Flood & Lapp, 1989; Tierney, Carter & Desai, 1991; Valencia, 1990; Wolf, 1989; Hamps-Lyons, 1996). Professional growth portfolios which value the learning process and reflection in pre-service teacher education have been described by Antonek, McCormick, and Donato (1997); and by Tanner, Longayroux & Beijaard et al.,(2000). A reflective portfolio assessment of pharmacy students' knowledge about prescribing has been described by Ashcroft & Hall(2006). They all stress that a portfolio is not a random but a purposive collection of observations or student products; it is systematic and related to major instructional goals.

Then what makes a good portfolio? According to Gnensee & Upshur(2000:104), a good portfolio for learners should "build on what students have done and help them recognize what they have accomplished; praise students for specific techniques or strategies they have used and point out the positive effects of those strategies; listen and respond carefully to students' concerns about their progress or difficulties; offer reasonable suggestions in response to these concerns; discuss process and strategies as well as products; be realistic in setting goals; be positive and supportive at all times." Therefore, a portfolio will not work effectively if it focuses on what has not been done or what goes wrong with what has been done; be judgmental about student work; make too many suggestions or goals and take over discussion of students' work.

2.2 What can be included in portfolios?

Many teachers and experts have offered suggestions on portfolio contents based on their experience with using PA.

Portfolios are often grouped into four types according to Mandell and Michelson (1990):

* Showcase—student only puts best example or best product in for each objective

* Cumulative—Student place all work relevant to each objective into portfolio

* Process—Student places pre/post-samples of work for each objective into the portfolio

* Each type of portfolio should include all of the essential components of a portfolio listed above

Crockette(1998) considers portfolio contents to fall into five categories:

• found samples, which refer to pieces done to fulfill class assignment

• processed samples, or the students' analyses and self-assessment of a work previously graded by the teacher

• revisions or samples of student work that have been graded and then revised, edited, and rewritten

• reflections, which are related to the processed samples but are applied to the portfolio as a whole, providing a chance for students to think about who they are, what strengths and weaknesses are

• portfolio projects, which cover work designed for the sole purpose of inclusion in student portfolios.

Crockette suggests that the portfolio should include the contents mentioned above as well as other items considered relevant to its specific purpose.

And essential components of a portfolio suggested by Campell, Melenyzer and Nettles et al. (2000) should be:

* table of contents with page numbers

* personal introduction describing the students background and capstone experience

*Program outcomes, with artifacts linked to the outcomes

Each artifact should be described in a short narrative(included with artifact) reflecting upon what it is, how it demonstrates obtainment of the objective, and what the student learned as a result(self-reflective). Requiring more than one artifact/objective increases scoring reliability(Campell, Melenyzer, Nettles & Wyman, 2000).

Lu(2005) lists the portfolio contents being Chinese characterized, which may seem a little too demanding for young

learners but still can help broaden our horizons about what can be included in a portfolio.

* self-assessment

* feedback given by parents, teachers, group members

* two sets of quiz papers(one is the most satisfying and the other is the most unsatisfying)

* latest written test score report

* plan including time table for the next stage

* products that won prizes

* two self-written essays(one is the most satisfying and the other is the most unsatisfying)

* writings published

* self-made artifacts

* daily or weekly English diaries

* homework assignments(one is the most satisfying and the other is unsatisfying)

* group projects

* work assignments finished in class (53)

Different from Lu's portfolios, the European Language Portfolio includes the 'I can do statements' (Council of Europe, 2001), which seems to be specific and realistic, I believe.

Suggestions on portfolio contents are presented above. No matter what it contains, in practice the content in portfolios should be firstly built from class assignments and correspond with the local classroom curriculum. Secondly portfolios should consist of two major components: a collection of evidence of events and experiences, and a reflection by the student on what has been learned(Baume, 2001; Friedman et al., 2001). This may include written reflections kept in the form of a journal or diary. Typically, these would include reflections on problem areas, what has been learned, what has still to be learned and plans for how new learning will be tackled (Snadden & Thomas, 1998). Besides, teacher notes, teacher-completed checklists, student reading or learning logs, oral performance records(self-, peer-, and teacher evaluation), such as story-telling, interviewing, drama performance, multimedia project work and so forth can be included in a portfolio (Valencia, 1990). All of these are not used all of the time. But on the last page of the portfolio, there should be a summary report by the student and by the teacher according to Wang (2003).

2.3 What Criteria are needed for portfolio assessment?

According to the researchers mentioned above, with portfolios, the teacher needs to make very clear to the students the criteria for assessment. These criteria should not only be made known to the students but also can be discussed and built jointly with the students. For example, both the teacher and the students will agree on the inclusion of all the required entries, the quality of the final products, seriousness of revisions, depth of reflection, layout and design and keeping up to the time schedule (Smith 2002). Students therefore, need to select and put the samples of their work done by themselves in a folder, discuss with the teacher about what they have done. The teacher can also help the students to set targets for their future performance through their self-assessment, e.g. to be able to say 10 words this week, learn to sing an English song, make a birthday card with English greetings, etc.

Setting up clear criteria for assessment is very important when introducing the use of portfolios. Although there is no single correct way to develop portfolio programs, in all of them students are expected to collect, select and reflect. Early in the school years, students are pressed to consider: 'What would I like to reread or share with parents or a friend? What makes a particular piece of writing?" In building a portfolio of selected pieces and explaining the basis for their choice, students get to know in what aspects they will be assessed and what the expectations will be. In L2 situations Wang (2003) suggests that the students' native language should be used in the discussion about the criteria in order to let every student understand and express one's ideas clearly. With clear guidelines and specific examples they can get started on their work, so these discussions need to be well guided and structured. The earlier the discussions begin the better.

Johnson & Johnson(1992) hold that in developing criteria for judging what is good and what needs improving, older students are more likely to be able to help determine the criteria by which work is selected, perhaps through brainstorming sessions with the teacher and other students. Younger students may need more directed help to decide on what work to include. Older students are generally better at keeping logs to report their progress on readings and other recurrent projects. Also, older students often expand their portfolios beyond written material to include photos or videos of peer review sessions, science experiments, performances or exhibits. Younger students, who need added support, may be encouraged to work in cooperative groups. During group work sessions, younger students who are having difficulty gain the support they need, and very able students gain deeper understanding of the materials they are showing as they

explain the materials to others.

2. 4 Why are portfolios used with students?

On the one hand, students have been stuffing assignments in notebooks and exercise books for years, on the other hand students have been frequently assessed in the form of a pencil-and-paper test, so what's new and exciting about portfolios? And why are portfolios used? Someone may ask these questions.

According to Mezirow(1990) and Schon(1991) portfolios capitalize on students' natural tendency to save work and become an effective way to get them to take a second look and think about how they could improve future work. This method is confirmed to be a clear departure from the old writing, handed in, and forgotten mentally, where first drafts were considered final products. Portfolios provide a tool to promote reflection which can lead to meaningful learning and enhance the student awareness of their learning process. But current assessment practices seem to send the following messages:

- Assessment always arrives from the outside;

- Skills that appear on tests are all that really matters in instruction;

- First drafts are finished drafts;

- Standardizing assessment is the ultimate goal (Sanchez & Duke, 2001:59).

Not all people agree with these messages because they think that current assessment practices undermine regular classroom instruction as well as teachers and students' role in the teaching and learning process.

McLaughlin(1991: 249-250)lists five key points she sees as central to our thinking about the testing-teaching relationship:

(1) It matters what you test: 'because today's tests don't measure…higher-order skills, they discourage classroom practices that are directed toward teaching them' (249);

(2) Do not confuse standards and standardization: 'almost all test-based accountability schemes in use today employ standardized measures that ignore the complexity and individuality of classrooms and constrain teachers' efforts to develop classroom activities appropriate to their students'(249);

(3) Tests constitute a limited lever of reform: 'In the absence of adequate supports for the enterprise, telling teachers to try harder—to achieve 'world class standard'—misperceives the problem'(250);

(4) Test-based accountability plans often misplace trust and protection: 'ironically, accountability schemes that rely on existing testing technology trust the system(the rules, regulations and standardized procedures) more than they trust teachers to make appropriate, educationally sound choices… and they protect that system…more than they protect the students served by the system'(250);

(5) The process of setting standards is as important as the standards themselves: 'Almost four decades of experience with planned efforts to reform education have taught us that (1) teachers are not inclined to take responsibility for carrying out goals and objectives about which they have had no say and (2) teachers have important knowledge and expertise to contribute to the enterprise'(250);

Besides, a sizable number of authors and researchers indicated that the commonly used series of 60-to-120-minute examinations can only provide teachers, parents and school authorities with a quick and limited view of the knowledge a student has actually achieved during a semester course (Slater, 1997; Wang 2003). Examinations which focus very much on students' memory work on their knowledge and skills learned from the textbooks are often done at the end of a term or a program and in the form of a pencil-and-paper test. The results of such tests, which are often presented in marks or grades, are then reported to the students, to the parents and the school authorities. Test scores can't be used to inform teachers and students of their overall teaching and learning effectiveness. Even if they can reveal some aspects about teachers' teaching or students' learning, it is too late for them to do anything about them as it is already the end of a learning period. Some test items such as conventional multiple choice items are designed to determine what the student doesn't know and do not provide the teacher with enough information to ascertain why the student gave a particular response. And in the context of writing, multiple choice tests of 'writing' cannot identify a writer's proficiency, let alone his or her strength and weakness as a writer. Unfortunately, even student-supplied responses, in-class essays, and quantitative problem-oriented test items are severely limited in scope and complexity due to unavoidable time constrains. All too often students are judged on the basis of a single test score from a test of questionable worth (Darling- Hammong & Wise, 1985; Haney & Madaus, 1989). Student performance on such tests can show day-to-day variation. These deficiencies and others have previously been 'thoroughly described and documented'(Berlack et al., 1992:8).

In contrast, because portfolios include first draft, second draft, even third draft of selected samples of work done by the student and are built up over extended time periods they provide teachers with a wealth of information upon which to

base instructional decisions and from which to evaluate student progress(Gomez, Grau, & Block, 1991). That's why many teachers, educators and researchers believe that portfolio assessment is more effective than 'old-style' tests for measuring academic skills and informing instructional decisions. They hold that portfolios can contextualize and provide a basis for challenging formal test results based on testing that is not authentic or reliable. Portfolio assessment, which is the same as or closely resembles the tasks to be carried out in actually language-in-use situations and provides more accurate measures of the language learner's abilities, is therefore inherently more meaningful.

In addition, portfolios as teaching tools demand of teachers and students' rich concepts and a careful consideration about what kind of good works to be put into them. As students and their teachers work together on the development of the portfolio over the term, the teacher is able to assess the student's growth and learning in the course as well as the excellence reached by the end of the course. Portfolios, then, are 'a tool for thoughtful classroom assessment' (Hamp-Lyons, 1996: 152).

Moreover, portfolios are extremely valid measure of learners' language abilities. Portfolios are said to have construct validity because basing assessments on works collected over time, on evidence of processes as well as products, fits specialists' views of what is importantly learned in the class, and therefore, what should be assessed (Hamp-Lyons, 1996). They are also said to have consequential validity. Consequential validity, a new and exciting approach to validity, maintains that a major determinant of the validity of an assessment measure is the consequence that the measure has upon the student, the instruction and the curriculum (Linn, Baker, & Dunbar, 1991). There is evidence that portfolios inform students, as well as teachers and parents, and that the results can be used to improved instruction, another major dimension of good assessment (Gomez, Grau & Block, 1991).

In short, portfolios are useful as a support to the new instructional approaches that emphasize the students' role in constructing understanding and teacher's role in promoting understanding. Portfolios can help to capture a wider variety of student performance to provide a fuller picture of what students actually can achieve, show how students work—process orientation as well as a product one, stress realistic context for work—make assignments more authentic, assist teachers in showing where students are in their development and weave assessment into instruction.

2.5 Why are portfolios used with young learners?

It has often been claimed that timed pencil-and-paper tests disadvantages young learners (Wang,2003), who are defined here as being school children from 6 to 12 years old.   It's well-known that young learners usually are quick to learn to speak a new language and can show remarkable progress within a short period of time, but they may not be good at writing as they haven't acquired full competence in the grammar or the written form of the language which a pencil-and-paper test often tests. They are in their young age which needs plenty of language input (Krashen,1985) rather than language output which pencil-and-paper tests often test. Being young, they may not be very skillful in taking tests and sometimes become confused by the way the question is asked rather than by the task. Further, competitive tests may not help them develop positive attitudes towards English learning. Moon (2000) and Cameron (2001) also hold that young learners need interesting and motivating activities. They do not often have purpose for learning. They learn perhaps simply because they are happy and enjoy the activities. If they are happy and in a threat-free environment or in the absence of test pressure, they are more likely to enjoy learning and to succeed. Generally speaking, success leads to success and the teacher's task is to design and organize assessment activities from the learner's point of view so that every child is able to succeed at some level (Dean, 2000). When children have a sense of achievement they are more likely to have motivation for further learning (Moon, 2000 & Cameron, 2001).

The characteristics of young language learners, and the implications of these for the assessment of their ability are discussed widely in the 'young learner' literature, such as Halliwell(1992), Vale and Feunteun(1995), Cameron(2001), Wang(2003), Hasselgreen(2005) as well as in the special issue of Language Testing(17,2),e.g., in Rea-Dickins's(2000) article. On the basis of this discussion, there appears to be consensus that assessment procedures for young learners should satisfy the following demands:

- Tasks should be appealing to the age group, interesting and captivating.

- Many types of assessment should be used, with the learner's, the parents' and teacher's perspectives involved.

- Both the tasks and the forms of feedback should be designed so that the learner's strength (what he or she can do) are highlighted.

- The learner should at least under some circumstances, be given support in carrying out the tasks.

- The learner needs to be allowed to try the new language to learn from trial and error and gradually they will become independent learners.

- The teacher should be given access to and support in understanding basic criteria and methods for assessing language ability.

PA, as a positive and non-threatening form of assessment takes the special assessment needs of young learners and their

characteristics into consideration. As a record or a collection of the learner's works and self-reflections, it is more likely to be more valid way to assess the child's achievement and learning potential. In PA, children who have already developed some written skills have time to think and many times to correct their errors in written forms without any pressure from the outside on them. For low beginners the teacher can invite them to draw some pictures by themselves to express their feelings and attitudes towards English learning. Their oral performance, such as songs, chants, story-telling, drama performance and interviewing can be audio-recorded and put inside, together with self-assessment, peer-assessment and teacher evaluation. Talking with someone the 'I can do statements in my language biography' (the Council of Europe, 2001) can be a very encouraging experience. Working together with the teacher on the development of the portfolio can enable them to get timely feedback from the teacher, which finally provides timely feedback for children to know how they are doing and what needs to be improved. The information collected about their learning may help them to set targets for their future performance through their self assessment.

So far, PA has been discussed theoretically without reference to any particular context. Such discussions surely need to be empirically based to inform how it has been used by teachers and learners, whether it has become favored in EFL classes in schools, and what consequences of portfolio assessment and the reactions of and impact on learners and teachers in the assessment context, and whether the intended effects have occurred. In the next sections the focus is turned to the use of PA in today's China. First is the description of the study and then are the discussions of the results.

3. The Study

3.1 The participants

Selection of participants is determined by the nature of the issue under investigation. A study of PA necessitates investigating the people who are its users, facilitators or those who benefit from it. They are school teachers, students and English teaching advisors as shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 Here.

3.1.1 Teachers

The teachers who were invited to complete the questionnaire were one hundred and seven English teachers working in different types of primary schools in the city of Doungguan, of whom 79.4% had taught English for at least 3 years, with one having 23 years of English teaching experience. Teachers' teaching experience may affect English teaching, learning and the ways of assessment. With years of teaching experience, this group of teachers should be familiar with their classroom curriculum and should know how to assess learners more effectively. Among 107 participants 15 teachers worked in city key schools and 71 worked in district key schools, taking 80.4% of the total number of the teacher participants. Schools in China are classified into key schools and ordinary schools, state-owned schools and private schools. Key schools are often graded into city key ones or district key ones according to their sizes as well as their teachers and learners' qualification and learning conditions. School type is another possible factor affecting English teaching and learning. Key schools are allotted a larger share of the educational budget, permitted to enroll students before ordinary schools, equipped with better-qualified teachers, and assumed to take the lead in educational reform.

Dongguan is a city lying on the Pearl River Delta under the jurisdiction of Guangdong Province and it is economically and culturally more developed than others. It is well-known that the English learning environment for students in this area is better than that in the less developed areas in terms of the facilities and opportunities available for English learning. Many students in this city, including those in ordinary schools, can afford folders with paper of good quality, and can have an easier access to photocopy machines, audio and video equipments and computers with CD ROMS. If schools adopt PA, teachers and students won't have much financial difficulty in this aspect.

3.1.2 Students

Thirty-six grade-five primary school students at the age of eleven or twelve who had portfolios for assessment for about one term were invited to be the interviewees. They were from two different schools and one was a village school and the other was a district key school. Selection of interviewees took account of student's gender and English level in the hope that different opinions could be sought. For example, a boy student whose English was among the best in his class whereas a girl student whose English was poor in comparison with her classmates were invited. Whether they were bold and willing enough to air their views about PA and to show their individual portfolios was also taken into account in the selection.

3.1.3 Advisors

English teaching advisors in China are those who work in educational departments at different levels to be responsible for assisting teachers in teaching and research as well as the preparation for tests. For example, it is their job to organize teachers' meetings to give guidance in understanding the requirements of the NEC and to evaluate teaching and learning in schools according to the NEC. Normally, they are selected from experienced teachers by the educational departments.

Because of their position, the advisors can persuade schools and individual teachers to use portfolios for students' work. Two advisors were interviewed on the phone for the data collection, one from the city level and the other from the district level.   As Dongguan has approximately three hundred and fifty primary schools located in its 32 districts or towns, each district or town has one advisor, who is under the leadership of the city advisor.

3.2 The instruments

Three instruments were employed to gather the data for this study to achieve method triangulation and enhance validity: (1) questionnaire survey among primary school teachers; (2) interviews with thirty-six primary school students; (3) telephone interviews with two advisors. The study was conducted between May and July 2006. The detailed descriptions of each instrument are as follows:

3.2.1 Questionnaires

The purpose of administering the questionnaire survey was to find out whether portfolio assessment was used by primary school teachers and how it was used as well as their attitudes toward portfolio assessment. The questionnaire comprised three broad sections with the total of 17 questions (See Appendix A). Part One contained 5 questions mainly designed to gather how many respondents had heard of teachers using portfolios for students work and where they had heard the word "portfolios" for assessment. Part Two consisted of 11 questions and it was intended to obtain information concerning how portfolios were used by the respondents who had already tried them by themselves. Part Three just had one open-ended question designed to elicit factors of non-use of portfolios. The questionnaire was in Chinese because it was easier for the participants to read in their native language and completion of the questionnaires should take less time. The English version of the questionnaire was a translation from the original questionnaire.

3.2.2 Face-to-face interviews

With the help of the two teachers who had used PA with their students for about two years, interview data were obtained through semi-structured two group interviews, which were conducted face-to-face with the 36 students in two primary schools respectively using the interview guide prepared beforehand to ensure that the same topic were covered for all interviews(see Appendix B). The purpose of the interviews was to elicit the students' views on the impact of the portfolios on their learning, their experience of building the portfolio, and their attitudes towards the use of portfolios as a means of assessment. The length of the two interviews varied between 30 and 40 minutes, mainly depending on the interviewees' willingness to talk. Both of the interviews were conducted in Chinese. The group interviews were audio-recorded but not transcribed. In the meantime, seven portfolios were observed with their owners' permission and two portfolios which represented different types of PA were photocopied for further study at the end of the interviews.

3.2.3 Telephone interviews

To obtain the advisors' views about PA and whether they had ever persuaded the teachers to use portfolio assessment in any in-service training programs or on their regular tours of inspections, I conducted two telephone interviews with the two advisors, using the interview guide (See Appendix C). The length of the two telephone interviews lasted about 15 minutes each. I told them that the purpose of the research was to investigate the use of portfolio assessment. Thinking that they were both my old acquaintances, I needn't conceal my true purpose from them. Telling the participants the true purpose of the study was also suggested by Allwright and Bailey(1991). The interviews were conducted in Chinese too.

3.3 Results

3.3.1 The result of the questionnaire survey

With the help of my present 113 students who were required to complete one-week observation each academic year as usual in about 30 primary schools taking about ten percent of the total number of primary schools in Dongguan, 140 questionnaires were distributed and in all 107 were returned a week later. The response rate was 76.4%.

Out of one hundred and seven primary teachers who completed the questionnaire survey, forty-seven (1 from private school; 7 from village schools; 9 from city key schools; 30 from district key schools) stated that they had heard of teachers using portfolios for assessment, taking 43.9% of the total number of the respondents in this group as shown in Table 2, whereas sixty teachers(6 from city key schools;14 from village schools; 40 from district key schools) stated that they had never heard of it, taking 56.1% of the total number and thus they needn't go on with the remaining questions in the questionnaire.

Insert Table 2 Here

When asked where they had heard the words PA, the 47 primary school teachers ticked all that applied. It is noticeable in Table 3 that fairly high percentages of respondents mentioned that they had got to know the words from work colleagues, or by reading the NEC or related newspapers and magazines themselves. This can be compared with the far lower percentage of respondents who mentioned that the English teaching advisors had told them.

Insert Table 3 Here

When coming to Question Five, as Table 4 shown twenty-six out of forty-seven respondents stated that their students had or had once had portfolios while twenty-one stated that their students didn't have or had never had portfolios. Therefore they were classified into two groups, with the first group answering Part Two and the second group answering Part Three.

Insert Table 4 Here

Table 5 clearly indicates that a high percentage of twenty-six respondents in the first group had used PA for one or two years in the past five years since the NEC was issued in 2001.

Insert Table 5 Here

As Table 6 shows, portfolio contents mainly included students' best homework, students' artifacts and then students' test papers according to the teachers' point of view.

Insert Table 6 Here

Table 7 clearly indicates that fifty percent of the respondents stated that portfolios were renewed once a term.

Insert Table 7 Here

From Table 8, it is clear that it was overwhelmingly the most common practice to store portfolios in teachers' offices.

Insert Table 8 Here

As Table 9 shows, the replies to this question varied, which may indicate that the teachers gave feedback according to their convention and real situations.

Insert Table 9 Here

Most respondents stated that they would give feedback once a term as it is shown in Table 10.

Insert Table 10 Here

It is noticeable in Table 11 that fairly high percentages of teachers mentioned that teachers and students would decide what were included in portfolios.

Insert Table 11 Here

As Table 12 indicates, out of 26 respondents 12 teachers felt that portfolios were successfully used, taking 46.2 percent of the total number in this group while 11 teachers felt that they were not successfully used, taking 42,3 percent and 3 teachers felt that they were not sure, taking 11.5 percent of the total number in this group. No one stated that they were very successfully used or they were just a complete failure.

Insert Table 12 Here

Replies to Question 15 *Have you any ideas or suggestions about using portfolios?*

Twelve respondents who chose that PA was successfully used in their practice wrote that it was beneficial to students; their students liked building their portfolios which helped develop their confidence and interest in English learning; their students began to enjoy learning English more; Students worked hard on portfolios and their works were wonderful; the student's ability to think creatively and critically was developed in this way. Further, the teachers benefited from using portfolios because portfolios were a record of what their students could do and what they couldn't do; by using them they got to know their students better and could give them timely help and compliment; it was a good way to establish contact between them and their students; it was a good way to involve parents in their children's education programs and to report individual student progress. Portfolios served as a kind of vehicle which went between students, teachers and parents.

But on the other hand, they complained that it was hard for them to handle every portfolio. They stated that they usually taught three classes with each class having about fifty students.

"With more than one hundred and fifty students, I feel exhausted to assess their works in the portfolios. Sometimes, I want to give them up," one stated.

Another wrote: "The school leaders never told us to use PA. The teaching advisor never gave us any ideas on how to use them, and no work colleagues around me used them. Therefore I couldn't get any help from them. I had to surf the internet. It helped but it took time."

"Some parents were not cooperative and they assessed their children's works perfunctorily. What they were concerned about was what scores their children got in paper tests and not works in the portfolio."

"Some students regarded building portfolios as a burden as a kind of homework. By and by, their interest in it faded."

The eleven respondents who expressed directly their unsuccessful use of portfolios felt that it took too much time and energy because their students couldn't complete it all by themselves; almost all the contents were decided by teachers,

not by students; portfolios couldn't show much of students' individual progress because for good students, their works were always good while for less able students, their works could hardly be improved. One wrote: "The idea of PA sounds good, but it is hard to apply it into practice."

The three respondents felt that they were not sure about how well PA was used because they had tried it for only a short period of time and no criteria could help them rate their work; their schools were not adopting PA; apart from English teachers, the teachers who taught other subjects in their school did not use portfolio assessment and thus there was no comparison between theirs and others'.

To inform PA development they put forward some suggestions which are listed as follows:

*PA Training programs should be offered;

*Help with PA from advisors, some more knowledgeable people or superior leaders should be available;

* The education departments should do something to make PA popular;

* More portfolio samples should be provided;

* More space in the classroom should be provided in order to store portfolios so that students would be able to share their works with classmates and learn from each other.

As to the reasons why they had never used PA, the second group of the respondents stated: "Though we know PA, we do not really understand the portfolio assessment procedure; our schools are not adopting PA; the school leaders and the English inspectors have never told us to use it, either. We are compelled to give constant tests and the results are compared by the school authority to evaluate our teaching."

One teacher wrote: 'I use tests in my classroom. I also use quizzes—as a way of keeping a check on the children's learning. I also use it to find out what needs to be improved in my teaching and make changes accordingly. I don't need PA.'

3.3.2 The result of the two face-to face interviews

3.3.2.1 The students' view

As to the students' view on building the portfolio, many students said that building the portfolio was a useful learning experience; it gave them a sense of achievement and helped them develop positive attitudes towards English learning.

As for their views on the impact of the portfolio on their learning, the majority of the thirty-six students said that completing a portfolio was a good way to facilitate their English learning and they had gained further insight into their approach to learning by completing the portfolio. They felt that it allowed them to diagnose their strength and weakness and they could see some opportunities to modifying their approach to learning as a result of completing the portfolio.

Nonetheless, the majority of the student interviewees from the district key school said that they would like more information about building the portfolio. Their teachers seldom met with individuals and small groups to talk about how the portfolio was developed and the teachers' oral feedback on it in front of the whole class were often a little too general.

One girl student from the village school said that the portfolio was only a record of their homework assignments and test papers. They stated that without the use of the portfolio, they just did the homework, handed in and then corrected the mistakes marked by the teacher. Now with it they had to do more, such as making self-assessment, asking their parents and group leaders to assess their performance in the portfolio, which increased their workload.

Another boy said: "My parents are too busy to attend to my portfolios."

One boy student said: "I am already the best one in my class. The portfolio is useless for me. But it may help those weak ones."

Another girl, who seemed to be a group leader, said: "Li Jiaqi(one of her group members) is not willing to show me his portfolio. Each time I ask him to hand it in, he makes an excuse by saying that he has left it at home." When asked why he did that, she answered that his parents often wrote negative feedback in his portfolio and it hurt him."

As to their views on the use of portfolios as a means of assessment they all said that they would prefer to be assessed via tests because the tests often had the last say no matter how well they completed the portfolio. They said that their test scores were often ranked and compared with each other; when there was a parent meeting, the teacher would give the test scores to their parents. The portfolio performance only took 10 percent of the total final score at the end of each term while the middle-term test and the final test came up to 90 percent.

One boy said critically: "All the things we do with the portfolio are to earn good grades for the middle-term tests and final tests."

3.3.2.2 The students' portfolios

In the village school, all the entries into the portfolios the students displayed during the interview looked the same

because they were all designed by their teacher. The portfolio was like a big old handbook with all the pages being spirally bound on the left. On the front cover was the student's personal information including name, birthday and class. The second page wrote the student's self-introduction and study plan. From the third page they were all the forms which recorded the student's weekly performance in English learning and its assessing points included how he or she previewed texts at home, how many times he or she answered the teacher's question in English class, how well their homework was done, whether he or she listened to English or spoke English in daily life. Beside each assessing point were students' self evaluation and feedback from group-leaders and parents. This means that each student needed to be assessed at the end of each week by himself or herself, his or her group leaders and parents from three different angles, which were then handed in to the teacher for her overall evaluation. From a three-level scale, the student and group leader were asked to tick their agreement with each statement, namely *You are /I am great, You are/I am not far from success and You/ I need to work hard.* Parents must assess their children in written form. One parent wrote to his daughter in the portfolio: "This week you spent too much time watching TV. I hope you won't do it next week. The middle-term exams are coming. I hope you will spend more time reviewing your lessons to score high in them." By contrast, the teacher's assessment seemed to be simple. She used three seals marked with *Very good, Good, Not Good* to rate the students' weekly performance. 'When I was too busy, the monitor would do it for me," the teacher told me later. The last three pages were left for the students to stick their most satisfying quiz or test papers, best pictures and best homework which was usually used to show their good and neat handwritings. It seemed that only on these three pages were the students able to choose what they liked to display. The rest of the assessment was mostly from the outside. The student's entry in the portfolio took about one third of all the entries which mainly focused on the student's weekly performance commented by the parents, the group leader and the teacher. So, the students might not be given much freedom in choosing and developing their own way of thinking and learning. There were no oral performance recordings, no summary and no written self reflection in it, which many experts and educators think are more important for young language learners when they develop their portfolios.

In the district key school the portfolios observed were quite different from the ones observed in the village school. They were plastic folders containing the students' written records of their progress or difficulties in learning English pronunciation and the students' evaluation of strength and weakness in pronunciation as well as their reading and speaking on audio tapes, charts of 48 international pronunciation alphabets (IPA) and peer assessment. The students seemed to have more said in choosing what went into it in this school than in the former one. But here the teacher's and the parent's assessment could not be seen. It seemed that there was not much discussion about the development of portfolios and thus the students might not get timely and individual help from the teacher, which was later confirmed by the students who said that the teacher would look at it at the end of each term and then give a grade.

3.3.3 The result of the two telephone interviews

3.3.3.1 The city advisor's view

The city English teaching advisor told me on the phone that not many primary school teachers had used or were still using PA. He said: "Personally speaking, I am not an advocate of PA because PA is something imported home from abroad by those experts and educators who once studied abroad. Though it seems to be a good assessment approach, it is not very practical in China. Those experts at the top do not know how busy classroom teachers are with their work and how many students the teacher has to teach. Teachers don't have adequate time and energy to design and assess complicated portfolios. They don't have adequate time to work together with individual students on the development of the portfolio. To date there has been no training program contributing to PA sponsored by the city education department where I work, and I have never persuaded teachers to use PA, either. But this does not mean that I am against any attempts and trials in PA. If any teacher or any school succeeded in their trial I would do my best to make it popular by persuading teachers from other schools to go to see it." When asked whether it was necessary for me to introduce PA to my present students, he encouraged me to do so, by saying that these future teachers need know the requirements of NEC, but knowing the theory didn't necessarily mean applying it into practice. "It all depends on what it is in practice. All theories come from practice and serve practice," he remarked at the end of the telephone conversation.

3.3.3.2 The local advisor's view

The local advisor told me on the phone that she had encouraged the English teachers in the district to use PA by taking some of them to visit students' portfolios in a neighboring city about two years ago. "At first, the interest in portfolios was high among teachers, but now not many are still using it. PA has not been used in other subject areas yet and so far as I know, no school here has adopted PA. PA, as a form of formative assessment, is not powerful enough to exert influence on schools, teachers, students and parents as tests do. Not mentioning taking a number of quizzes given at other times, students must have at least two conventional exams each term, namely mid-term test and final test. As long as the testing system exists in the schools, it is hard for PA to be implemented. So, I couldn't force the English teachers in this district to use it even though I personally know its distinct benefits. Almost all parents want to send their children to key secondary schools. However, as key secondary schools are limited in number, only a small portion of

students who have scored high in several competitive exams can manage to get into them. This is an age of tests. Tests are like guards posted at the doorway of almost every educational level and of most occupations," she remarked with a sigh at the end of the phone conversation.

4. Discussions

This study investigated the use of the portfolio in the city where I work as well as the local teachers', students' and advisors' attitudes and views about using portfolios.

On the one hand, according to some students and some teachers, PA was successfully used in their practice and both the student and teacher benefited from using it, as the survey shows above. And most students' responses to some extent confirmed expectations that the portfolio would help them: to become more autonomous learners; to reflect on their approaches to learning; to contextualize learning and link experience with personal interpretation; and provide an on-going basis for planning goal setting. Similar findings have been previously been reported with students in English learning or in other subject areas(Miccoli, 2003; Lu, 2005; Tanner & Longayroux et al., 2000; Valencia, 1990; Baume, 2001; Davies et al., 2001; Friedman et al., 2001; Gorden, 2003).

But on the other hand, the questionnaire survey and interviews confirmed the statement that PA was still in its infancy (Hamp-Lyon, 1996). As the figures show clearly PA was implemented only in a very small scale in local area. Only forty-seven(43%)out of one hundred and seven teacher respondents had heard of PA, while just twenty-six teachers(55.3%)out of the forty-seven respondents said that their students had or once had had portfolios, which means that out of one hundred and seven respondents eighty-one(75.7%) had never heard of PA or had never used PA. Out of twenty-six PA users eleven felt that PA was not used successfully and three stated that they were not sure about its outcome because they had just tried it for a short period of time. The survey also shows that there were a number of recognized difficulties or drawbacks in the use of portfolios and as a result PA didn't work effectively. For example, most portfolios were stored in teachers' offices and students might not have an easy access to them; the contents of the portfolios observed were very limited and dull because they lacked the students' self decision or the teacher' timely help; teachers complained that they had no adequate time to assess all portfolios.   Besides, the English inspectors held that it was hard and impracticable to adopt PA in the local schools. Then, what factors might have hindered the progress of PA in the Chinese EFL classroom? The questionnaire and interview surveys have shed some light on this problem.

4. 1 The first contributing factor might have been the over use of tests in the society and in schools. Tests play a crucial role in the Chinese educational system. Students are faced with numerous exams as soon as they start schools. Each term they have to take at least two tests—mid-term test and final test even though they are just six or seven years old. When they leave primary schools, almost all students wish to go to key junior secondary schools and then to key senior secondary schools, in which they may have more opportunities to enter prestigious universities. However, as key and prestigious schools are limited in number, only a small portion of students who have scored high in several competitive exams including the high-stakes NMT (the National Matriculation Tests) can get into them. At college, students will have to pass CET (College English Test) to get a bachelor's degree. After graduation from universities, they will go on to take a number of tests in order to find a decent job, or to study abroad, or to get a certain professional certificate. As China is a country with the largest population in the world, almost all these tests are held on a large scale with thousands of candidates taking part in them. Nobody would have time to ask every candidate to show his portfolio; nobody would like to look at what is in the candidate's portfolio and no one would care how well it is developed. The scores in tests would have the last say. As a result, even primary schools place strong emphasis on tests instead of adopting PA and in practice most teachers teach according to what is tested instead of what is required from the National Curriculum. Being busy preparing for tests, teachers may have no time for portfolios. Being busy preparing for tests, teachers may forget the characteristics young learners bring into language classrooms. Being busy preparing for tests, teachers may have no time to think about the negative influence tests have on learners. Just as the local advisor said, as long as the testing system exists in schools , it is hard for PA to be implemented because PA, as a form of formative assessment according to the NEC, is not so powerful as tests to exert influence on schools, teachers, students and parents.

Portfolios may not be applicable to competitive large-scale tests for selection purposes in China. If portfolios were used instead of tests as a form of summative assessment in this case, validity and reliability, two chief considerations in language testing, needed to be addressed (Snaddern & Thomas, 1998). One issue is that the student work completed beyond the context of the classroom is occasionally subject to issues of academic dishonesty. Another issue in this aspect is that because of 'the close contextualization and task specification inherent to portfolios' (Hamp-Lyon, 1996:157), it is difficult to establish firm criteria or scoring standards which will be applicable to the many kinds of works that learners may choose to put into their portfolios. To date, most portfolio scoring has occurred through holistic scoring of the entire portfolio (for example, Black et al, 2001) or through holistic scoring of each essay in the portfolio (for example, Graham 1992), which must lead to reduced reliability because of the 'superficiality and simplicity of the holistic scoring method in comparison with the complexity of portfolio contents'(Hamp-Lyons, 1996:157). For the

reasons above, PA might not be favored in the Chinese context.

But in primary schools portfolio assessment can be used as a form of summative assessment, not just a form of formative assessment as long as criteria for portfolio assessment is discussed and made known clearly to every learner, and as long as both teachers and learners agree on the inclusion of all the required entries and the quality of the final products according to Smith (2000). When teachers decide the way of assessment, they should take learners' characteristics and need into consideration. Young learners need a happy and non-threatening learning environment. They need interesting and motivating activities, not a competitive test (Moon, 2000; Cameron, 2001; Haliwell, 1992). They also need timely face-to-face help. PA can be appealing to them, interesting and captivating as long as it is conducted properly.

4.2 The second contributing factor might have been that many teachers may not have the assessment skills even though they have the pedagogical skills needed.

The limited nature of the portfolio contents as the survey shows illustrates that the teachers may not really understand portfolio assessment procedure as well as some basic PA knowledge such as what can be included in it and what it is for. For example, the overall goal of the preparation of a portfolio is to promote the student's participation in learning. And the portfolio should document the reflective thoughts of the student and provide evidence that he or she has mastered a given set of learning objectives and plans for how new learning will be tackled (Snadden & Thomas, 1998; Baume, 2001). More than just thick folders containing students' homework, quiz or test papers, weekly performance in learning English and then the student's, peer's, parent's and teacher's assessment of these things, which were observed in the portfolios in the village school, portfolios are typically personalized representations of a student's own efforts and achievements. The development of portfolio should be dialogic and facilitate on-going interaction between the teacher and the student. It cannot be only in written or recorded form and then handed in at the end of each term as I observed in the district key school. On the contrary, it has to be developed in action and shared so that it can facilitate decision–making or joint problem-solving in due time.

Portfolio assessment is an expert system and teachers must have professional preparation in assessment. Because of the contextualized nature of portfolio assessment, the teacher's role seems to be crucial in designing a portfolio assessment. Often, portfolio programs are initiated by teachers, who know their classroom curriculum best.   Teachers may develop portfolios focused on a single curricular area, such as writing, math, literature or science and teachers in the West may develop portfolio programs that span two or more subjects, such as writing and reading, writing across the curriculum, or math and science. And, according to Lamme & Hysmith (1991), the assessment information that teachers gather is seen as having the potential for being by far the most valuable and valued form of assessment. If teachers are to play a central role in designing a portfolio assessment, they should be provided with sufficient background training in order to enable them to fully understand either the process or the implications of assessing students with portfolios (Hamp-Lyons, 1996).

4.3 The third contributing factor might have been the lack of teacher education and administrative support relevant to portfolio assessment.

Portfolios highlight regular classroom instruction and teachers' role in education(McLaughlin, 1991) and place additional demands on teachers as well as school resources. Teachers need not only a thorough understanding of their subject area, instructional skills and assessing language ability, but also additional time for planning, conferring with other teachers, developing strategies and materials, meeting with individual students and small groups and reviewing and commenting on student work. In addition, teachers may need extra space in their classrooms to store students' portfolios or equipment such as video camera. However, as the research shows, there was little evidence to date to suggest that portfolio programs provided sufficient administrative support and background training for portfolio designers and readers to enable them to fully understand either the process or the implications of assessing students with portfolios. And training programs are often costly, but Dongguan is a comparatively rich city in China which can afford such training programs. In fact, apart from a few teachers who took the provincial NEC training programs over three years ago, the majority of the local English teachers had never had any chance to attend portfolio training programs. There was none for them at the city level according to the city English inspector who should have known its real situation well because he had been in the position for over ten years.

Unquestionably, assessing every student's works by portfolio is very costly here not in terms of money. It takes much more time for a portfolio reader to read all the works produced by the class than to read a typical timed pencil-and-paper test. Therefore the workload of teachers is increased. Furthermore, with portfolios teachers need to think where they are going to keep them and how to keep them. Teachers also need to decide when they would ask their students to select their samples and how they are going to discuss with them the reasons for selecting the particular sample. All these can be time-consuming for both teachers and students. In this case, teachers need administrative support. They need support materials, such as folders, file drawers, and access to a photocopy machine, and time to plan, share ideas and develop strategies. Teachers and students may also need parents' support. Together with teachers, administrators need to educate

parents about how portfolios work and what advantages they offer over traditional tests. Once portfolios are explained and observed in practice, parents are often enthusiastic supporters (Education Consumers Guide, 1993).

4.4 The fourth contributing factor might have been that portfolio assessment may assess only a limited part of the mastery of the language.

One of its limitations is its application to oral skills development which is crucial for young language learners. Being paper-based, it is more suited to collecting written development. Learners can include their self-assessment of oral language activities and progress, but it is more complicated to include samples of talk. Recorded tapes may help to some extent but what's on the tape seems not to be so real and dynamic. Because of these reasons some researchers state that portfolio assessment may be inappropriate for measuring students' levels of factual knowledge or for drill-and-skill activities. For very beginning learners, who have not developed a lot of writing skills, it may only include the teacher's, the parent's or peer's assessment as well as pictures related to language learning. Even when advanced learners select their written works to put in their portfolios, as usually happens, they may choose the texts to which they put effort into their portfolios and may choose not to put effort into those they don't plan to include. Over time, this could lead to a de-emphasis on certain writing activities and text types in a writing program (Hamp-Lyons,1996).

4.5 The fifth contributing factor might have been some practical problems, which are visible in every local school.

In most local schools, each class usually has over fifty students. In classes with over fifty students, it seems so crowded that there is no space left to store over fifty portfolios and those students sitting at the back may even feel it difficult to hear the teacher who instructs from the front. Apart from the over-crowding and poor acoustics in the large classes, there is a distance between the teacher and the student, which reduces rapport and interaction(Hywel Coleman, 1996). Moreover, at primary level in China, subjects are kept very separate and a teacher usually teaches the same subject. Quite often the teacher does not always stay with one class because he or she has to teach in different classrooms and thus there is not much chance available for individual students to talk with the teacher. Compared with primary education in modern Western society, where subject boundaries are blurred and one teacher teaches all subjects with the help of a teaching assistant (TA) to the same students numbered less than thirty in one classroom, which is spacious enough to store portfolios and for teachers to walk around to help students in need, PA approach seems a little difficult to apply in the Chinese context.

In such a large class, the priority is often given to discipline and conformity. For example, the lesson proceeds at the same pace, with the whole class working on the same material at the same speed and all the children belonging to one class do most activities together, including lessons for reading, writing, general knowledge, math, music, dance and painting; physical exercises and games on the sports ground; having meals; taking a midday nap. All children are expected to maintain the same level of achievement. All the children are encouraged to achieve the same expected standard as long as they work hard. Everything is orchestrated strictly by the teacher whereas the student is an attentive listener who just does what the teacher says.

4. 6 The last factor might have been the traditional Chinese culture of learning.

The traditional Chinese culture of learning stresses that in Chinese society--in the classroom the priorities are that each person must be part of a group or community; learning interdependency, co-operation and social awareness; becoming oneself in relation to significant others; expressing that which is socially shared rather than individually felt; respecting the teacher's status and teachings (Hywel Coleman, 1996). Besides, traditional learning in primary schools in China gives strong emphasis to memory, imitation and repetitive practice. All these may seem to lead to student passivity and teacher-centeredness, the lack of interaction and individualization and the absence of creativity and self-expression, which may make it more difficult to adopt PA in Chinese context, for PA is a communicative approach to assessment which, in contrast to the culture of learning described above, is highly personalized, needs on-going interaction between the teacher and the student and the ability to think creatively and critically, and highlights self-expression of one's own efforts and achievements. So, the last, but not the least, contributing factor might have been that the traditional Chinese culture of learning has been so rooted in both the teacher and the student's mind that they may feel it hard to tear themselves away from it to adopt communicative approaches from the West even in times of rapid social development in China. Though it is invisible, it is something that we can feel.

People from different cultures come with different expectations of what's going to happen in the classroom. This conformity and teacher-centeredness have become institutionalized as part of a Chinese culture of learning. Not all teachers in the school are aware of the importance of PA approach. Not all the teachers are willing to accept it. The leaders of the Ministry of Education themselves see the latest curriculum as means to force teachers to change their classroom practices but some teachers may not immediately accept it, even though they have attended some short NEC training programs, which might not provide sufficient support to guarantee implementation as planned. Lamb(1995:77) states: "Teachers engage with new ideas and gradually accommodate them within their own belief structures by making adjustments in their own thinking. It may be a long process having little immediate practical effects on their teaching,

and with the tension between previous and recent ideas taking perhaps years to find a resolution."

In sum, the factors such as the over use of tests in the society and in schools, teachers' lack of PA skills, no adequate background training and administrative support relevant to PA, the limitations of PA itself, some practical problems in Chinese classrooms as well as the strong influence of the traditional Chinese culture of learning on the teacher and the student might have hindered the progress of PA in the Chinese context.

5. Conclusion

This paper examines the use of PA in the Chinese context. Firstly, as the research shows, the benefits which PA offers to both students and teachers can be seen even though PA was conducted clumsily in a small scale. Secondly, the accounts of the study carried out in Dongguan have shed some light on the issues widely existing in Chinese assessment context. PA, I am one of those who believe, is in its infancy. There is a long way to go before PA can become common practice widely accepted and implemented. This is one challenge that must not be ignored.

More than five years have passed since the NEC was issued. It is high time that a major program of research was begun into all these issues or obstacles on the way of the implement of the NEC. Good portfolio projects do not happen without considerable effort on the part of teachers, students, English inspectors, parents, school administrators, and policymakers. If they did not make any efforts, the educational revolution might break down and the tide would turn back to the traditional way of learning and teaching.

However, it is still very likely for PA to be widely implemented in China, for at least three reasons. First, the government officials might have already realized the seriousness of this tendency. The newly-revised Compulsory Education Law issued recently by the Chinese government restates that from September 1st, 2006 when the new term begins, no schools of compulsory education can be graded into key ones or ordinary ones; all schools will be allotted the same share of the educational budget, permitted to enroll the same students, equipped with the same qualified teachers; frequent tests for young learners are forbidden and students' test scores can't be ranked and compared with each other and assessment forms should be non-threatening and positive. Secondly, it is worth noting that the Chinese society is changing rapidly and teachers' culture of teaching and students' culture of learning will probably change accordingly. Finally, with the Chinese population on the decrease, class size will surely become smaller. Therefore, there will be a strong possibility for PA to be widely conducted in China.

Nevertheless, it is teachers that play a central part in designing a PA. In the Chinese context, based on Wang's point of view (2003), teachers should first change their way of giving regular quizzes and homework assignments. In fact, some of the regular quizzes and homework can be replaced by working with portfolios and some portfolio work can be done in class. With the use of portfolios, teachers need to pay attention to the quality rather than quantity of assignments. The tasks chosen for the portfolio should be thought out, meaningful, motivating and challenging to learners. With time saved, teachers can have individual meetings or group meetings with students to discuss with them their strength or weakness in learning, give valuable feedback, provide more guidance and support instead of simply looking at the learner's work and then giving it a grade.

On the other hand teachers should tell learners that they will definitely need to spend more time working with self planning, use of imagination, meaningful language use, creative thinking and reflections. They are required to revise their assignments at least once. So when an assignment is handed in for the first time, it is not finished. The learner is expected to revise and reflect on it in a meaningful and useful way the second time or sometimes a third time. Teachers can ask students to set themselves targets for learning and then meet them to talk about their progress or problems they may have in trying to achieve such targets. In addition, teachers can suggest students to build up computer-based portfolios with recorded samples of speech as well as digitally photographed texts to enrich the contents and arouse learners' interest in the portfolio task (Cameron, 2001).

As an advocate of PA, I feel a strong responsibility for discovering both the problems and solutions about the possibilities of using PA in the Chinese context. I feel it urgent to help my students understand the requirements of the NEC and to persuade them to use PA with young learners. Only when classroom teachers are willing to use PA, really understand PA procedures and have the assessment skills can PA become a successful form of assessment.

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Appendixes

Appendix A. English Version of Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear colleagues:

I am making a study on using portfolios for students' work in primary schools. Would you please help me to complete the questions on this questionnaire, which is designed only for academic purpose? All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. You can answer the questionnaire either in Chinese or in English, which you feel comfortable about. Thank you for your co-operation.

Zhang Shumei

Dongguan University of Technology

Part One

1. How many years have you been teaching?_____

2. Is your school a _____? Please tick the one that applies. Write your own answer if the following options don't apply.

A. village school   B. district or town key school

C. a city key school   D, a private school

  3. Have you heard of teachers using the 'portfolio' for students work?

A. Yes. (If yes, please go on).

B. No. (If no, stop here and you Don't need to answer the following questions.)

4. Where did you hear the word? Tick all that apply. Write your own answer if all the following options don't apply.

A. My teacher told me about it when I was in my pre-service training program.

B. I got to know it when I read the National English Curriculum by myself.

C. I got to know it when I read certain magazine or newspaper by myself.

D. I got to know it in an in-service training program.

E. My work colleague told me about it.

F. The local English teaching advisor told me about it.

5. Do your students have or have they ever had portfolios?

A. Yes. If yes, please go to Part Two (See below)

B. No. If no, please go to Part Three (See below)

Part Two

6. How long have you used them?

7. Have you any support for using portfolios? If yes, which of the following have supported you? Please tick all that apply. Write your own answer if the following options don't apply.

A, my work colleagues   B, my leaders

C, English teaching advisors   D, my students

E, parents

8. What is put inside the portfolios?

9. How often are the portfolios renewed?

10. Where are they kept?

11. What do you do with portfolios? Please tick all that apply. Write your own answer if the following options don't apply.

       A.I look at them and give a grade

       B.I show them to the parents at the parents' meetings

       C. I look at them and then give a star or something similar

       D. I look at them and then give written feedback

       E. I look at them first and then make oral feedback on them in class

12. How often do you do these things? Write your own answer if the following options don't apply.

       A. once a week   B. once a month   C. once a term

13. Who decides what should be put inside? Tick all that apply. Write yours if the following options don't apply.

      A. I

      B. my students

      C. my school leaders

      D. parents

      E. the local English teaching advisor

14. How well do you think they are used?

      A. very successfully

      B. successfully

      C. not successfully

      D. a complete failure

      E. I am not sure.

15. Please explain your answer to Question 9 with some examples. For example, if you choose D, then why you think it is a complete failure.

16. Have you any ideas or suggestions about using portfolios? Please write them here.

*Please leave your phone number here for possible further contact if you like:*_____

Part Three (If you have never used them, please do this part)

17. Please write down the reasons why you have never used portfolios.

Appendix B. guidelines for the face-to-face interviews with the students

Questions:

1.   Does every one of you have a portfolio for your own work?

2.   What's put inside your portfolio?

3.   Who decides what should be put inside?

4.   Do you often review and rethink about it?

5.   Whom do you often show it to?

6. Do you often discuss it with your teachers and classmates?

7. Do you think it facilitates your learning?

8. Would you like to be assessed by the portfolio?

9. Would you like to add something concerning the influence of PA?

Appendix C: guidelines for the telephone interviews with the advisors

Questions:

1. Do you think that there are many primary school teachers in our city (or in your district) who have ever tried PA?

2. Were there any training programs in our city (or in your district) about how to use portfolios for assessment?

3. Did you ever persuade teachers to use them?

4. Do you think it is necessary for me to help my present students know how to use them?

5. Do you think it is necessary for me to persuade my present students to use them in their teaching practice after graduation?

6. Would you like to add something concerning PA?

Table 1. Participants of the study

Occupation	Number	Mode of participation
Teachers	107	Completing the questionnaire
Students	36	Being interviewed face-to-face
English advisors	2	Being interviewed on the phone
Total	145	

Table 2. Replies to Question 3 *Have you heard of teachers using PA?*

options	number	percentage
no	60	56.1%
yes	47	43.9%
Total	107	

Table 3. Replies to Question 4 *Where did you hear the words 'PA'?*

Options	number of response	percentage
from work colleagues	21	25.9%
by reading the NEC myself	16	19.8%
by reading magazines or newspapers myself	16	19.8%
in an in-service training program	12	14.8%
in pre-service training programs	9	11%
from advisors	7	8.6%
Total	81	

Table 4. Replies to Question 5 Do your students have or have they ever had portfolios?

Options	number	percentage
Yes	26	55.3%
No	21	44.7%
Total	47	

Table 5. Replies to Question 6 *How long have you used them?*

options	number of response	percentage
One year	13	50%
Two years	6	23
Less than a year	4	15.4%
Over 3 years	3	11.5%
Total	26	

It is apparent from Table 6 that high among the twenty-six respondents' choices was that they had support from their students, work colleagues and school leaders. This can be compared with far low percentage of teachers who mentioned that parents supported them.

Table 6. replies to Question 7 *Have you any support for using portfolios?*

Options	number	percentage
Students	18	29.6%
Work colleagues	17	27.9%
School leaders	14	23%
advisors	10	16%
Parents	2	3.2%
Total:	61	

Table 6. replies to Question 8 *What's put inside the portfolios?*

Contents	number	percentage
Students' best homework	19	25.3%
Students' artifacts (For example pictures, handicrafts, students' handwritten newspapers)	16	21.3%
Students' test papers	10	13.3%
Students' self-reflection (progress and difficulties)	9	12%
Students' Essays	7	9%
Parents' assessment and suggestions	3	4%
Newspaper cuttings and favorite stories and sentences from reading	3	4%
Records of oral reading and dictation	2	2.7%
Personal photos	2	2.7%
Study plan	1	1.3%
Teachers' assessment	1	1.3%
Performance assessment at home (For example doing housework)	1	1.3%
Performance assessment in class (For example how many times you raised your hands to answer the teacher's questions in class)	1	1.3%
Total	75	

Table 7. Replies to Question 9 *How often are they renewed?*

Options	number	percentage
once a term	13	50%
once a month	5	19.2%
It all depends	4	15.4%
twice a term	2	7.7%
once a year	2	7.7%
Total	26	

Table 8. Replies to Question 10 *Where are they kept?*

options	number	percentage
in teachers' offices	17	65.4%
in students' school bags	5	19%
in classrooms	3	11.5%
Sometimes in teachers' office and sometimes in classrooms	1	3.8%
Total	26	

Table 9. Replies to Question 11 *What do you do with portfolios?*

Things I do with portfolios	number	percentage
I look at them and then give a star or something similar	17	23.9%
I look at them and then give written feedback.	15	21%
I look at them and give a grade.	14	19.7%
I show them to the parents at the parents' meetings.	13	18.3%
I look at them first and then make oral feedback on them in class.	12	16.9%
Total	71	

Table 10. Replies to Question 12 *How often do you do these things?*

options	number	Percentage
once a term	16	61.5%
once a month	9	34.6%
once a week	1	3.8%
your own options	0	
Total	26	

Table 11. Replies to Question 13 *Who decided what should be put inside?*

Options	response	percentage
I	19	40.4%
my students	16	34%
my school leaders	8	17%
local teaching advisors	3	6.3%
parents	1	2%
Total	47	

Table 12. Replies to Question 14 *How well do you think they were used?*

Options	numbers	percent
Successfully	12	46.2%
Not successfully	11	42.3%
Not sure	3	11.5%
very successfully	0	
a complete failure	0	
Total	26	

Creating a Global Cultural Consciousness in a Japanese EFL Classroom

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Abstract

Recently, culture has taken an important role in language education. In this view, creating a global cultural consciousness among second language (L2) students can help bridge the gap between linguistic ability and functional intercultural communication. This paper, which makes reference to Japanese adult EFL learners, justifies the body of opinion that creating a global cultural consciousness in the EFL classroom can eventually yield solutions to Japan's communication weaknesses. The first half of this paper illustrates the language-culture connection and its consequences for Japan in a globalizing world. I explain how, in the context of Japan, there is a need to create a cultural awareness in order to implement the ideal Japanese educational philosophy. In the second half of this paper, a five-day lesson plan using an ethnographic teaching methodology is outlined. A discussion of the formation of a new cultural identity for Japanese EFL students and its implications will conclude this paper.

Keywords: Globalization, Japanese students, Ethnography, Global cultural consciousness, Intercultural communication, pedagogy

1. Introduction

"Learning to speak a foreign language is a formidable task, and most adults fail to achieve fluency even after many years of trying" (Salzmann, 1993, p. 46).   Traditional forms of teaching EFL in Japan have focused on grammar and translation techniques, which have yielded little benefit to a student's communicative ability (Mantero and Iwai, 2005). Critchley (1998) writes that the average Japanese university student is conditioned to pay "exceptional attention to the grammatical form – often at the expense of meaning". This focus on form over fluency has led to the Japanese government implementing an increasingly more communicative approach to learning English in high schools (Riley, 2008). The gap between grammar competency and fluency in English is of great concern in Japan.   As English rises to the heights of world language status never seen before in history, countries that fail to educate their citizens accordingly are losing out on a variety on platforms. The first part of this paper examines how culture can fill the gap in terms of giving students a context in which they can express themselves; furthermore, an awareness of culture can also facilitate the transformation of the Japanese cultural identity into a more globally conscious one.

2. Theory of the Language-Culture Connection and the Japanese Context

2.1 Linking Culture and Language

Luis Kelly (1969) wrote that "the culture orientation of language teaching has always been one of its unstated claims" (p. 378). In this first section, I will begin by outlining the fundamental concept of linking culture to language. This forms the basis in which language learning can be transformed into a more effective experience. Raising the status of culture from simply a result of language learning to an overt part of language teaching curriculum is a change, I believe, that will ultimately give way to a better method of preparing students for communicating in a global environment. .

Although culture has been notoriously difficult for scholars to define, an appropriate definition is that culture stands for "creative endeavors that constitute the intellectual and aesthetic life of a community, and the beliefs, customs, and values that govern the practice of everyday life" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 10). Culture, in this sense, is used by societies to evaluate their behavior and form unified communities. Through language, members can refine their ideas and develop their cultural identity.

Many academics have proposed strong connections between the language and culture of a society, but none have had such an impact as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956) stated that, "The background linguistic system of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas" (p. 213). He then went further to conclude that "users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars toward different types of observations…and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world" (p. 221).

Whorf's idea that a language directly affects the thought process is referred to as language determinism. Although this theory has been thought of as an exaggeration by most academics, subsequent updates to his theory have kept similar

basic principles (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 20). Applied linguist Jim Gee (1993) offered a compromise to the Whorfian theory:

"The way language cuts up the world will influence how we initially think about something, but it does not determine how we finish thinking about it. Under pressure we can think about things outside the categories of our language, because we find other people's ways of doing things senseful. We find them senseful because, at least where language is concerned, they are all chosen from the inventory of ways allowed by the human brain, which is, like the eye, everywhere the same across cultures." (p. 11)

Another linguist, Anna Wierzbicka (1997), acknowledged that Whorf's theory had a great deal of exaggeration, but that "clearly…the outlook of a society is…influenced by its language" (p. 5). For the purpose of this paper I will adopt a mix of these theories – a 'soft' version of language determinism: it is possible for people to think outside their language-reality, yet perspectives of thought are still heavily influenced by their language.

2.2 Language Determinism and the Japanese Language

Turning to the context of Japan, Senko K. Maynard, in his book *Expressive Japanese* (2005), outlines various characteristics of the Japanese language that are particularly unique and alter the behavior of Japanese social interactions. Two examples of these are given below:

Social Territory. The style and manner in which one expresses emotion and empathy often depend on awareness of social territory. Speakers outside the *uchi* (group) are *soto* persons. There are two consequences of this: 1) formality increases outside of a group, and 2) the contexts of most sentences are implied, leaving the burden of the meaning on the listener, not the speaker. (Maynard, 2005, pp. 41-42)

Tatemae and Honne. Japanese speakers are known to distinguish between *tatemae* (principles, public face) and *honne* (true private thoughts and feelings). For speakers of the Japanese language, it is important to maintain *tatemae* in many public situations, but it is equally important to express *honne* to people who share intimacy and social territory. (Maynard, 2005, p. 43)

It goes without saying that these language characteristics are quite different from their 'western counterparts', as are the cultural behaviors that are linked to them. Maynard goes on to write:

There is a gap between what one language/culture may find reasonable and what the other language/culture may not… Japanese emotions, therefore, are in many ways particular to Japanese language, culture, and society…. Part of learning a foreign language is discovering different feelings in our hearts. To experience different feelings is to discover different senses of self within ourselves. (p.12)

The consequences of this in the language classroom can be clearly explained through a hypothetical example. Assuming that a Japanese language teacher, who is a native speaker of Japanese, is teaching a non-Japanese student in Canada, the L2 student of Japanese will also become a student of *tatamae, honne, uchi,* and *soto*, and will "discover different (Japanese) feelings." Therefore, the same student will at some point be challenged to express these Japanese feelings in their native language and act out these feelings in their native culture. Through language, the student is essentially borrowing unique features of the teacher's own native culture and using it in his/her native culture. Not only does language influence culture, but culture influences language, which then influences other cultures. A language student's native culture (C1), therefore, is influenced by the teacher's native culture (C2), and is transformed into a hybrid culture (C3), which is far more culturally intuitive. The same applies for EFL students in Japan learning from native English speakers (this is the case in the Japanese private language industry). This concept of adopting different language-realities to create a C3 identity has profound implications.

Sociolinguist, Joshua Fishman (1980), explained the moral implications of this clearly: "the world will be a better place and humanity will be more successful in solving its ever more serious problems if we all master more (and more dissimilar) languages, because of them we can share perspectives and shift perspectives more appropriately" (p. 27). To gain the perspectives needed to communicate effectively across cultures, students must be conscious of the cultural implications of their linguistic abilities; it is this cultural consciousness that needs to be emphasized. Recognizing the role of culture in communication is becoming increasingly important as cultural information is being exchanged at a rapidly increasing rate.

2.3 Globalization and Japan's Important Position

By looking at language teaching through the perspective of language determinism, it takes on a more humanistic role. Understanding of cultures and acquiring the opinions and logic of people outside your immediate community becomes an important task when teaching a language. What exactly is this consciousness that language learners must acquire? How does this specifically apply to EFL? How has globalization made this consciousness more acute and applicable to Japan?

Globalization is "what happens when the movement of people, goods, or ideas among countries and regions accelerates" (Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 1). While people may disagree on the virtues of its achievements, globalization is undoubtedly an unstoppable force. However, despite its controversies, globalization, it is argued, has come about because of the humble desire for world peace (Ota, 2001). Kumaravadivelu (2008, p. 104) supports this conclusion: globalization "seeks to promote among the general public a genuine understanding of the value of cultural diversity in shaping national identity. It believes that discrete ethnic identities can be preserved within a larger national identity that unites disparate ethic groups." According to David Reiff's New York Times article (2006, March 26), "Globalization is both unavoidable and of great benefit to the world as a whole." A popular argument against globalization is that it leads to culture homogenization and threatens a citizen's national identity – old traditions are abandoned and forgotten in place of more cost effective and efficient ideas and processes. However, Harvard social anthropologist James Watson concluded in a study of globalization in Asian societies that globalization does not destroy cultural diversity by homogenizing cultural practices the world over (as cited in Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 20). He states that "local vectors always transform global products rendering them meaningful in terms of local sensibilities, social practices, and cultural models." As globalization brings the world closer, the need for more fluid intercultural communication increases; the consequences of this for Japan will be discussed.

In the context of Japan, history is riddled with the Japanese actively adopting global products and ideas and rendering them successes which are uniquely Japanese: the adoption of kanji into the Japanese writing system from China in the 4th century (Seeley, 1991, pp. 12-19), Buddhism from the Koreans in the 4th century (Quang, 1997), ceramics from the Koreans in the 17th century (Lee, 2008), and science and technology from America in the Meiji Era (Fujimoto-Adamson, 2006). All of these examples have come to define Japanese culture. Being aware of how global forces impact a national identity is needed to manipulate globalization in a favorable way. Many of Japan's successes can be attributed to the acceptance of foreign ideas; similarly, many of its successes can be linked to taking advantage of global needs (e.g. the IT boom and Japan's subsequent semiconductor dominance). These successes were possible because of Japan's keen awareness of the ebbs and flows of global cultural needs. Therefore, one could argue that Japan's modern history has been built on its ability to harness a global cultural consciousness.

2.4 The Internationalization of English

In the current whirlwind of information sharing, English has become the language that has connected the world. Undoubtedly, English has emerged as the world language or a lingua franca in almost all settings (Phan, 2005). In a paper by Phan La Ha, 'International English' (IE) is a term which she adopts to describe English as it more accurately conveys the international use of English rather than implies that there is one clear variety of English that is superior to all others. She also clearly states that English, through the aid of globalization, has morphed into a language that is free from the rules of its source. Because no one society can claim the sole rights to English, and therefore its superior form, societies should be free to adapt this language to suit their local environment without a controlling body. Under this concept Singaporean-English, Indian-English, African-English, Australian-English, American-English, and British-English are all equal under the umbrella of IE. Therefore, IE is a global culturally conscious interpretation of the English language.

However, as Phan (2005) points out, there is still discrimination against different 'dialects' of English. For instance, American speakers or British speakers of English still exhibit a superior attitude and look down upon 'other' newly developed 'Englishes'. This concept of 'otherization' hinders the progress of IE usage and ultimately intercultural communication. Once IE matures to meet its potential, the otherization of English will disappear. Making English language learners more culturally conscious can accelerate the maturation of IE

English has the unique capabilities of taking on the emotions and cultural peculiarities of other cultures. In the book *English and Ethnicity,* Catherine Evan Davies (2000) writes:

English itself must be conceptualized not as a monolithic linguistic entity with one 'standard' form….English can be used to 'signal' a wide range of ethnicities in a wide range of contexts, and no one feature or variable has an inherent semiotic value. Such a perspective recognizes not only the importance of culture as context, but also the reflexive relationship between context and language. (p. 5)

This concept is echoed in the idea of IE.

IE, therefore, has the special nature of being used in different language-realities, and thus, to a certain extent, has evolved to violate the principle of language-determinism; it is a tool used to communicate over multiple language-realities - the ultimate language of C3. The concept of IE, the language facilitator of globalization, must be embraced by Japan in the same way it has been embraced by Singapore (to take an Asian example).

2.5 The Japanese Cultural Shift

According to Ota (2002), a number of shifts from traditional Japanese language values to more international language ideals have already occurred. Some sociolinguistic and pragmatic changes include an increase in the following:

confrontational and aggressive sentence structures, agreement-demanding phrases, self-righteous and non-apologetic language; egalitarian communication, new idiomatic usages, and loan words form English.

This change signals the start of a positive change in the language-identity of Japan; an identity change that is needed to function in the global community; and with language changes there are cultural changes. Norio Ota (2002) also lists the following major areas of Japanese society that have been hit hardest by globalization in the very recent past: judicial system reform, empowerment, psychological analysis, aging and tax reform, attitudes towards multiculturalism, education, marriage, political correctness, restructuring, free trade, and power sharing. Japan must continue to embrace more global language values.

2.6 A Teachable Moment in Japan

Not only has Japan been a receiver of globalization, but it has also been a major giver. Japan's cultural exports include: *manga*, animation, technology, automobiles, and fashion. Tremendously influential global forces from Japan have come in the form of director Hayao Miyazaki, Sony, Toyota, Harajuku fashion, and animations such as *Ghost in the Shell* or *Naruto*. Because Japan has a multidirectional exposure to globalization, Japan has the potential to both reflect on itself as an *instrument* of globalization and as a *victim* of globalization. Herein lays Japan's advantage in the journey to create a more global culturally conscious identity: with so much back and forth interaction between Japan and the rest of the world (C1 and C2), how could Japan not succeed in being more globally aware (C3) if it simply recognized its relationship with the rest of the world?

Japan must capitalize on its current position at this vital stage in globalization and embrace IE as its own. Henry Jenkins points out that this widespread cross-cultural exchange between countries has produced a "teachable moment" in which societies have an opportunity to make incredible progresses in education (as cited in Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 20). Japan, in particular, has the tools to transform this "teachable moment" into large gains in the field of intercultural communication.

2.7 Japanese English Education and its Economy

Japan, a country which has depended on adapting to changing global conditions for its survival, is now at a pivotal stage in its history. L'estrange points out there is an imminent fear within Japan that they will be "under represented in the international community" if its leaders are not able to speak English "directly with their counterparts" (as cited in Phan, 2005, p. 11). Japan, certainly, has awoken to the important role that English will play in its future. In the words of Toyama Atsuko, the former Japanese Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT, 2003):

English has played a central role as the common international language in linking people who have different mother tongues. For children living in the 21st century, it is essential for them to acquire communication abilities in English as a common international language. In addition, English abilities are important in terms of linking our country with the rest of the world, obtaining the world's understanding and trust, enhancing our international presence and further developing our nation.

The concept of IE and its ability to penetrate cultural barriers has certainly, if not rather indirectly, been acknowledged by educational officials in Japan.

This same idea is reflected in how Japan is approaching its economic barriers. In the 2007 annual white paper on international economy and trade, Amari Akira, the Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry (MITI, 2007), highlights this same unique moment in Japanese history:

The year 2007 marks the 60th anniversary of Japan's re-opening of private trade. In the upheaval of the post-war period, there continued to be a period when only the minimal necessary imports and exports were permitted; however, by June 1947 trade transactions by private companies were re-opened, although only within stipulated limits. Since then, Japan has continued to expand its trade transactions as a standard bearer "Trade powerhouse," with trade reaching its highest-ever level in 2006. Presently, in our country, [our society is plagued] with a decrease [in] birthrate and an aging population. In such circumstances, productivity must be raised even higher than previously, and economic growth sustained, if Japan in the future is to be a society with a vigorous economy. In order to achieve this, it is necessary for Japan to take advantage of its strengths, to overcome its weaknesses, and to seek out opportunities for growth around the world through further expansion of trade and of external/internal direct investment.

It seems clear that MITI and MEXT have overlapping goals: to make the Japanese population effective cross-cultural communicators so Japan can take advantage of financial opportunities overseas. Communication, in fact, is Japan's weakness, but one it has admitted to and is willing to fix. According to an article in *Newsweek* by Akiko Kashiwagi and Christian Caryl (2008, May 12), Japan's share of the global economy has slid from 18 percent in 2004 to 10 percent in 2006; a decrease that is indirectly "linked to the striking lack of conversational English among educated Japanese." In reality, even though Japan has the opportunity, tools, and position in the world to conquer its weakness, it appears to be struggling.

Historically, Japan has been able to reach across borders and change internally to retain a command in the global marketplace. Japan has the experience and wealth to remedy its problems through implementation of culture-based education that overflows into business. From what I have discussed in this first part of my paper, instilling in Japan's population a global cultural consciousness can solve problems in its service, trade, and investment sectors; it can bring Japan new ideas for innovation; it can change its attitude regarding foreign business; and it can revamp Japan's cultural identity so that it works well in the 21st-version of globalization. As all the indicators point so clearly in one direction, the opportunity of a "teachable moment" has arisen in Japan.

3. Pedagogical Steps for Creating a Global Cultural Consciousness in the Classroom

The key to bridging the gap between the communication abilities of Japanese now and the ideals of MEXT and MITI is to create a global cultural consciousness in the classroom. Such a global consciousness requires the cultivation of a critically reflective mind that can tell the difference between information and disinformation, between real and unreal ideologies. "Only such a critical mind can help the individual develop the knowledge, skill, and disposition necessary to deal with the challenges of contemporary realities" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 164). In the Japanese public school system, teachers adopt teaching methods used by teachers who taught them; specifically, Confucius-style teacher-centered techniques, memorization, and grammar based translation methods that are controlled by strict rules (Taguchi and Naganuma, 2006). There is little chance for the student to critically reflect on the meaning and purpose of English.

For the remainder of this paper, I will focus on pedagogical steps to creating a globally culture-conscious EFL classroom. Because, for the time being, there is little opportunity to more easily apply new methodologies in the Japanese public school classroom, I will discuss the implementation of techniques in the context of private English language institutes, specifically for adults with the purpose of using English in business. I have developed and tested several instructional techniques that ELT professionals in Asia and elsewhere might find useful. I would now, therefore, like to discuss one specific approach for promoting intercultural global cultural consciousness that I have successfully used in the past with Japanese EFL students who study English for business purposes. The lesson plan that will be discussed incorporates five key cultural factors into the classroom and employs the anthropological technique of ethnography.

3.1 The Five Cultural Factors

According to Kumaravadivelu (2008, pp. 170-171), the following five factors need to be recognized in curriculum for the successful integration of culture into the EFL classroom in the current globalizing environment.

3.1.1 Cultural Connectivity

Cultures do not exist in isolation. In reality, they are rarely found in their purest form – cultural boundaries are just an illusion. Although culture is normally associated with a national identity, it functions at various sub-levels such as race, religion, ethnicity, class, and gender. Culture is multifaceted and layered.

3.1.2 Cultural Complexity

Because culture itself remains an elusive concept, cultures outside ones own are not clearly understood. This leads to stereotyping and otherization. We stereotype people we don't understand, and others stereotype us. "Other" cultures who present themselves as religiously, racially, ethnically, or linguistically different are improperly considered inferior.

3.1.3 Cultural Globality

The current wave of globalization is shaping the global flows of culture with unprecedented speed. There are simultaneous and opposing forces of cultural homogenization and heterogenization, twisting the world into uncomfortable positions that sometimes are seen to weaken local cultures and sometimes strengthen them. Some people are empowered by this awareness while others feel threatened.

3.1.4 Cultural Reality

Modern cultural life is being influenced by four realities: the global reality that shrinks space, time, and borders; the national reality that fosters nationalism as a reaction to cultural homogenization; the social reality that is created through families and communities; and the individual reality that depicts the individual as complex and dynamic.

3.1.5 Cultural Identity

The realities above impact the formation of cultural identity. The commodification and marketing of cultural products within the global free market can also influence identity. The individual's identity is in constant motion, yet there is also a degree of control an individual can have over identity.

The application of each of the five factors above into the EFL classroom will be discussed and pedagogical steps to do this will be suggested.

3.2 Teaching Based on Ethnography

As with many adult private language schools in Tokyo, my school's students are mostly corporate clients with business related study goals; this means that companies are requiring their employees to learn business English in order to operate in the global corporate world. Because of the "trade powerhouse" nature of Japanese business, many of my students travel overseas to meet clients multiple times a year or interact directly with overseas partners on a regular basis. The Japan External Trade Organization website lists the USA, China, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Germany as Japan's top trading countries; in fact, these same places are the most popular destinations for my students' business trips. The assumption that many Japanese business people have regular exposure to foreign culture is made for the purpose of this lesson plan.

To fully integrate culture into the classroom, I suggest the method of ethnography be used. According to Robinson:

Ethnography is a method taken from social anthropology to obtain cultural information about the target culture. Ethnographers not only observe, but also participate... ethnographers lose objectivity and interpret things from a native's point of view… getting an inside, emic account of culture. (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 182)

In the case of Japanese businessman, there are many real experiences that can be used to investigate culture as an ethnographer. Emailing, talking on the phone, meeting clients, or going overseas on business trips could be opportunities for students to gather cultural information. For the following lesson plans, I will choose an extended business trip to a foreign country as the ethnographic setting. I will also assume that when going to this country, be it China, the USA, Germany, or anywhere else, they will speak English. Given the status of English as an international language, this is a fair assumption.

The task that I propose is for the student to write a diary outlining their experiences in detail while on their overseas business trip. The diary should include both cultural observations and activities that the student participates in. Teachers should encourage students to document behavioral culture (for example, taking off one's shoes before entering a house) and material culture (for example, electric toilet seats). The diary is then used in class and exercises are done which critically analyze their experience in terms of the five cultural factors above.

This type of ethnographic method is called critical ethnography. Critical ethnography is "a written investigation that takes into account historical, political, sociological and other macrocontextual factors of another culture" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 183). Another ethnographic technique I will utilize is autoethnography, which is "an autobiographical genre of writing that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 184). In this case, information is collected by the student in the form of a diary, and the multiple layers (the five culture factors) will be added with the aid of the teacher upon reflection on the experience. Autoethnography is chosen as an appropriate example of a culture teaching method because it gives cultural information to the student via real experience, it allows for critical reflection of foreign culture and Japan's culture, and it provides an opportunity for the student to reevaluate their own cultural self.

After completing the diary and returning from the business trip, one class is spent on each of the culture factors, as outlined in the lesson plan below.

Note that the following lessons assume a one-on-one class structure; however, it could be easily adapted to suit group classes. Cultural topics for each lesson below are examples only; in reality, cultural problems will depend on the experiences documented in the student's diary.   Additionally, I should be clear that although the following lesson plans have been tested with success, the diary entries used in this paper are fictional and not written by an actual student. In writing the fictional entries, I did my best to incorporate popular viewpoints from previous students.

4. The Lesson Plan

4.1 Day 1: Cultural Connectivity

The goal of this first lesson is for students to gain a sense of interconnectedness between the foreign culture (C2), as documented in the student's diary, and Japan's culture (C1) on the national level and on a subculture level.

4.1.1 Choosing a Situation

Go through the student's diary and have them select an experience in which they felt culturally awkward. A fictional extract from a student's diary depicting an unfamiliar situation is given below.

On my last day in Washington D.C., an important client took me out for lunch. I insisted that I pay as it was the least I could do in return for his gracious hospitality. Having paid in full and ready to leave the restaurant, my client explained that it was a custom to leave a tip for the waiter. I left what I thought was a reasonable sum and left with my companion. Before exiting, my client excused himself, went back to the waiter who had been serving us, and gave him more money. Upon seeing this, I felt embarrassed.

4.1.2 Presentation of the Cultural Problem

After a brief discussion, it will become obvious that the lack of understanding of "tipping" is the root cause of the student's discomfort. Delving deeper, although the student had a superficial knowledge of this cultural practice, the actual amount to leave as a tip was what led to the predicament. Arriving at the acceptable rule of leaving a tip of 15% to 20% of the bill could ease the practical difficulties for the student of this arising again. During the discussion, useful language can be discussed for the purpose of reenacting this situation as a role-play language activity. For example: "it's on the house," "it's on me, "it's my turn," "I'll pick up the bill this time," "keep the change" or other standard restaurant phrases could be presented.

4.1.3 Language Task

Role-play the act of offering to pay and giving a tip several times, paying careful attention to using new idioms and vocabulary. After each role-play, introduce difficulties such as: "you offer to pay, but you find out you don't have enough money," "your colleague has paid, but he has not left a tip," or "both you and your client feel very strongly about paying." Assist as necessary as the student struggles through each situation. Practice interaction between both the waiter and the other dining companion. Contrast appropriate language used when talking to a waiter as opposed to a client or colleague. Phrases such as "I wonder if….," "Would you mind…," or "It might be a good idea…" are some examples of indirect requests or suggestions. Discuss how indirect phrases could be used in a sensitive situation like this one, which involves money, or other situations that require a degree of tact. Discuss polite language that might be appropriate for the waiter or host of a restaurant to use.

4.1.4 Cultural Exploration of Behaviors

Form a list of jobs with the student in which it is socially normal to tip. Discuss reasonable amounts to tip a waiter, a bellboy, a housekeeper, a taxi driver etc. Discuss ways in which Americans can justify leaving a sizable tip. The student or teacher may point out that for certain service jobs that have an extremely high number of transactions or a deal with large sums of money, the total tip income may be incredibly high. The example of the service industry in Las Vegas may be useful in illustrating how the income of a bartender is often higher than the income of a doctor. Discuss the fairness of tipping and some possible problems in a tipping society. Eliciting more pros and cons can set up a debate between the teacher and student

4.1.5 Establishing a Cultural Connection between C2 and Japan

Discuss reasons why tipping is not practiced in Japan. Comparing the minimum wage in Japan to that of the US may result in the student understanding that it would be difficult for a person to survive on a US minimum wage without tips, yet it is easier for an employee earning a higher Japanese wage. Considering the prestige of Japan's customer service industry, discuss whether Japan would benefit from the introduction of tipping in its society. Many Japanese are surprised at the lack of efficiency and politeness of customer service overseas. This perceived high quality of Japan's customer service can be partly attributed to Japanese *honne* and *tatemae* feature. Discuss how *honne* and *tatemae* is applied to the customer service industry in Japan. Does the student agree that the distance between *honne* (how you really feel) and *tatemae* (what you appear like) in the customer service industry is large? If yes, possible reasons the student may come up with is that it 'avoids conflict' or 'saves face.'

4.1.6 Autoethnographic Analysis

As a final post-class exercise, the student can write a critical analysis of their C2 experience taking into account any new perspectives gained from this class. Students can also write about how they would act differently if they were in this situation again, or how they would react if they were a foreigner in Japan.

Upon concluding lesson 1, the student will have an understanding for the reasons of tipping in some societies and reasons for not tipping in others (minimum wage, *tatemae* and *honne* mindset etc.) This understanding builds a bridge that connects Japanese culture with other cultures, and creates a greater sensitivity towards other people. Other 'foreign' cultural practices can be appreciated so long as the resulting awareness of cultural connectivity is established.

4.2 Day 2: Cultural Complexity

The goal of this second lesson is to use situations documented in their diary to challenge stereotypes of foreign cultures as perpetrated by the media or inaccurate preconceived beliefs. Students can begin to acquire a consciousness of the complexity of individuals and groups within a culture.

According to my experiences teaching Japanese businessmen, American stereotypes, as seen from a Japanese business viewpoint are: acting superior, not wanting to share credit, unwilling to adjust to local cultures, preferring solutions based on their own customs, encouraging individual performance over collective efforts, being disloyal to clients and their own company, and being pushy, imposing, or too direct.

4.2.1 Choosing a Situation

Brainstorm common stereotypes Japanese have of foreigners. After that, go through experiences with the student in which they discovered a stereotype of C2's culture was not true. A fictional extract from a Japanese businessman's diary which contradicts one of these stereotypes is given below.

On my second day, I visited the president of our client's company. As part of our introductions and cordial small talk he proceeded to give a brief outline of his career. Though it was a company with over 10,000 employees, he worked his way up through various positions in the company for 35 years until he was finally named president. He said that he turned down a lot of job offers throughout his successful career because he felt a connection with the company and wanted it to grow with it. I was impressed by his dedication to his company.

4.2.2 Presentation of the Cultural Problem

The stereotype that is broken here is the one that American workers are disloyal to their companies. The student needs to recall reasons why he was surprised. Possible reasons could include past experiences with other clients, portrayal of business in the media, or differences in how Japanese view their companies. List reasons an employee should stay with one company for an entire career. While eliciting reasons, present new vocabulary to the student – lifetime employment, benefits, educational reimbursement, internal promotion, career advancement, severance package etc.

4.2.3 Language Task

Ask the student why he would or wouldn't stay with the same company for the rest of his career. Encourage students to use vocabulary that has been introduced. Present idioms or new vocabulary as needed. Perform a debate with the student on the topic of staying with a company for an entire career. Introduce language of opinion. Allow students to debate both sides so the student intellectually explores all viewpoints.

4.2.4 Cultural Exploration of Behaviors

Take all reasons from the previous language task and divide each of the reasons into two categories: common reasons for Japanese staying with/leaving their jobs, and common reasons for Americans staying with/leaving their jobs. Most Japanese will immediately pounce on the fact that Japanese workers are incredibly loyal and often work for one company their entire life. Discussing reasons for higher overall employee loyalty in Japan may yield the following explanations: Japanese emphasize development as part of a group from a very young age (*soto* versus *uchi*), companies are skeptical of job candidates who have worked for many companies, or Japanese are less 'risky' people. On the other hand, if students are pressed to give advantages of leaving a company, they might give 'higher salary', 'more opportunities', or 'better work environment' as reasons. Issues such as the Japanese concept of 'lifetime employment' could be discussed as something that either benefits employees or makes companies less efficient. At the end of the discussion, discuss the extent to which they understand why people leave their jobs.

4.2.5 Validity of the Stereotype

Now that the student understands that this stereotype is not always true, decide to what degree that the stereotype could be true. Does the student think Americans hold the opposite stereotype of Japan – that Japanese are blindly loyal to their companies? To what extent is this true?

4.2.6 Autoethnographic Analysis

As a final post-class exercise, students may use their new perspectives on American loyalty to write a critical analysis of another experience they have had in which they have misjudged a person because they have wrongly assumed a stereotype to be true.

The goal should be to arrive at a conclusion that this stereotype is either misleading or true to a certain extent. For example, a student might conclude "Americans do have less problems changing companies mid-career for certain reasons, but they are also loyal if they are treated well. On the other hand, although it is understandable that Japanese may be thought of as viciously loyal, there are certain instances where they choose themselves over our companies." This questioning of stereotypes is necessary for students to begin understanding other cultures.

4.3 Day 3: Cultural Globality

The goal of this third lesson is to compare Japanese culture with C2 and find any culture overlaps that may indicate global culture homogenization. Critically looking at both whether globalization has compromised Japanese local customs and the affect of Japanese culture on the world will give students a sense of how globalization is impacting people's lives – a consciousness of culture globality.

4.3.1 Choosing a Situation

Select with the student an experience recorded in their diary when they witnessed Japanese culture influencing C2's culture. A fictional diary entry below illustrates a moment of realization when the author is confronted with a form of Japanese culture in the US.

After spending a week in hotel rooms and not turning on the TV, I decided to flip through the channels to get a sense of what was shown on American TV. I was shocked to see *Naruto* on the Cartoon Network, and *My Neighbor Totoro* shown on the movie channel. I switched back and forth between the two remembering watching the episode of *Naruto* about 8 years earlier in Japan. *My Neighbor Totoro* also brought back memories. It was also strange to hear that these two programs had been dubbed in English. It felt like something was lost in translation. I told my American customer about what I had seen on TV and he said that not only had Japanese animation become extremely popular in the US, but his own daughter's favorite movie was Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*.

4.3.2 Presentation of the Cultural Problem

This passage is a clear example of how Japan has been a globalizing agent. Some authors have called this "Japanophilia" or an "infatuation with Japan's cultural character" (Kelts, 2006, p. 5). It is important to discuss with students whether or not they were aware of Japan's worldwide cultural influence. It is surprising how many students are unaware of this. Animation is the cultural export in this example, but there are many other cultural exports that student should be able to recognize; these may include comics (*manga*), video games, samurai (*bushido*) and ninja tradition, flower arrangements (*ikebana*), tea ceremonies, business practices such as quality control, technology, and influential companies such as Toyota, Sony, Kawasaki, and Honda.

4.3.3 Language task

Have the student choose an activity, cultural item, or behavior which is uniquely Japanese. For example: sumo wrestling, a certain genre of comic, a *ryokan* (Japanese style hotel), the concept of a samurai warrior, a kimono, Zen Buddhism, or *shodou*. Then have the student try and explain in detail what the item/activity is and why it is uniquely Japanese. Introduce descriptive language; not only vocabulary but also similes and metaphors. Practice for other items/activities or behaviors.

4.3.4 Cultural Exploration of Behaviors

Ask students how they would feel if the items mentioned in the above language task were changed in order to be marketed to people in other countries. Do students believe that foreigners have a full understanding of certain exported Japanese traditions, or do they have certain cultural features that cannot be translated? Have any sacred cultural beliefs been trivialized and/or diluted? What is the significance of this? Does it help preserve or deteriorate Japanese culture? Discuss and debate the possible benefits and detriments of exporting Japanese culture.

4.3.5 Being Aware of Culture Globality in Japan

Brainstorm examples of how Japan has changed in the face of globalization – increased use of English, European and American fashion trends, and adoption of western eating habits are some. An example which may relate business to globalization is the appointment of Brazilian-Lebanese Carlos Ghosn to the CEO position of Nissan. The decision to bring in foreign leadership to Japanese companies has caused controversies. List the pros and cons of foreign influence in Japanese business and debate opposing viewpoints.

4.3.6 Autoethnographic Analysis

After discussing specific examples, the student can further write on the significance of Japan's role in globalization: Does the student think Japan is the victim of the homogenization of world cultures, or does the student believe Japan has been the benefactor of the positive effects of globalization? What are some experiences the student has had to illustrate his viewpoint on globalization?

Upon conclusion of this lesson, the student should have an increased awareness of the rapid and multi-directional flow of culture capital around the world.

4.4 Day 4: Cultural Reality

The goal of this fourth lesson is to recognize how observable reality has become increasingly more complex. Political, racial, religious, and various controversial relationships seem to have come to a head. Critically viewing this reality will allow students to appreciate how important it is to have a consciousness regarding these issues.

4.4.1 Choosing a Situation

Select an experience outlined in their diary where they experienced or witnessed a national controversy. A fictional diary entry below depicts an experience involving controversy on a business trip to Seoul, Korea.

After finishing a meeting in the business district of Gangnam, I caught a taxi back to Lotte Hotel which was next to Seoul city hall. The taxi trip was delayed because of what appeared to be a large demonstration outside the government buildings in the area. I opted to get out of the cab a few block from the hotel and make my way through the crowd of people. Some of the signs that were held up in protest were written in English. They read "No Free Trade" and "Say No to USA Beef." I learned on the news that over a thousand Koreans participated in the protest over free trade. I was surprised by the shear size of the demonstration and the anger of the people who took part.

4.4.2 Presentation of the Cultural Problem

The event documented is a protest in Seoul, Korea, by opponents of a beef import agreement with the US. Reasons for the protests could be explored with the students. Fear of importing US beef contaminated with mad cow disease and opposing free trade are some reasons for this kind of protest. Discussions with the student about similar controversies in Japan could spawn the topic of tainted food imported from China or free trade disagreements raised by Japanese rice farmers.

4.4.3 Language Task

Note that Japanese students will often be surprised at the level of emotion and intensity Koreans express when disagreeing with their government. Introduce students to language techniques for expressing anger and emotion – direct language, active voice, threats, and ultimatums might be some appropriate language. For this language task choose a controversy in Japan discussed above and list a few opinions on how the student would like the government to react to the situation; have the student present his views in the form a presentation directed toward the government. Encourage students to be direct and emotional. This is likely to go against the natural *rhetoric of pathos* of traditional Japanese communication which tends to avoid confrontation (Maynard, 2005, p.34-36). This is an opportunity to highlight the *honne* and *tatemae* and *uchi* and *sato* characteristics of Japanese society in contrast to the Korean's emotionally charged personality.

4.4.4 Cultural Exploration of Behaviors

Discuss with students the advantages and disadvantages of importing cheaper but lower quality food from other countries. Debate the pros and cons of this issue. A similar activity could be done for free trade. Discuss and debate how a rice farmer in Japan benefits and loses from free trade. How is Japan currently handling its controversies? Discuss how other societies deal with similar problems – protectionist policies, diplomacy, threats, dumping, price fixing, tariffs etc.

4.4.5 Handling of Japanese Controversies

Does the Japanese government do an effective job of handling its current globalization-related problems? Some additional examples to the ones above could be: the Yasukuni shrine, right-wing political activities, the decreasing population, changing the Japanese constitution to include military rights, the Iraq War, and the Beijing Olympics. Explore the merits of Japanese government strategy on topics which interest the student.

4.4.6 Autoethnographic Analysis

Using ideas from this lesson, the student can write a formal letter of complaint to the government on the topic of a conflict in Japan. The letter should criticize the government's handling of the crisis and offer alternative strategies. Encourage students to use personal experiences to illustrate their discomfort with the government's stance. Giving the student a taste for activism will make the student more aware and conscious of their cultural reality.

This lesson should highlight some of the complexities that can arise because of globalization and the consequential mixing of cultures. The student should realize that in such cultural complexity there are few black and white truths, and because of the grayness of cultural connectivity, culture clashes are becoming increasingly problematic.

4.5 Day 5: Cultural Identity

The goal of this fifth lesson is to reflect on cultural connectivity, cultural complexity, cultural globality, and cultural reality as it relates to the student's experiences, and analyze how their basic attitudes towards their own culture and towards other cultures have changed as a result of this critical reflection. This is the final step in taking cultural information and turning it into cultural transformation. The student will learn to redesign their own identity that incorporates a new global cultural consciousness. In this lesson the transformation to a C3 identity will be explored.

Regarding the previous four fictional diary entries, the student and teacher could make the following conclusions.

4.5.1 Cultural Connectivity

Each culture partially overflows into our own. Even though foreign practices, such as 'tipping,' may seem inappropriate and illogical on the surface, they serve an important purpose in that society. As a result, time should be taken to thoroughly understand the significance of these practices when participating in them. It is not only possible but also our duty to respectfully practice and appreciate other culture traditions.

4.5.2 Cultural Complexity

Stereotypes prevent a person from fully understanding a culture group outside their own. Any belief should be doubted and investigated unless evidence is available to prove its validity. It is ignorant to generalize over groups and individuals within a culture. An assumption of diversity is needed before interaction.

4.5.3 Cultural Globality

Not only have other cultures invaded Japan, but Japanese culture is a major influence in other countries. With every negative aspect of globalization comes at least as many positives. If globalization is blamed for the destruction and dilution of traditional Japan, then it also must be credited with the promotion and success of Japanese ideas around the world.

4.5.4 Cultural Reality

Conflict and controversies are a consequence of dealing with other cultures. These negative side effects can be minimized if we are conscious that right and wrong is relative and depending on a society's viewpoint. Recognizing that people are different can help us be sensitive to other's beliefs, and nullify some of the resulting conflict.

4.5.5 Final Task

As a last authoethnographic exercise, have students imagine they were the foreign teacher of the class. Then have the students write a fictional account of their experience in Japan from the perspective of their foreign teacher. Encourage them to use the ideas of cultural connectivity, cultural complexity, cultural globality, and cultural reality to help them see Japan from a new point of view. The goal of this final task is to see themselves and their culture through a culturally conscious perspective.

Transforming someone's culture identity is, as Montovani (2000, p. 14) put it, "when a journey leads us to expand the boundaries of our own identity to the point at which we include in the 'we' what was previously simply 'other,' our journey is a return home, we come full circle" (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 180) At the end of this final lesson, the student should have come "full circle" bringing with them a new identity that will affect how they view the world and approach other cultures.

4.6 Difficulties in Implementation

Because the above lessons depend on an overseas business trip, this may be difficult (and costly) to implement for students who do not travel frequently; therefore, teachers must be fairly flexible. I have found that students are fairly quick to recollect specific episodes from vacations or overseas experiences in their past; in fact, culture and cultural experiences, it seems, can be very easily discussed with most Japanese students. Sufficient preparation and specific instructions on what to document before the student travels are recommended in order to smooth out any difficulties in selecting appropriate diary entries. Again, teachers must be flexible as experiences may not exactly fit in perfectly with one of the five cultural factors. In general, if a student has had or is planning to have an experience which exposes him/her to another culture, my lesson plan will be successful with few difficulties.

5. Concluding Discussion

Beyond the actual lesson, there are many other routes to increasing the global cultural consciousness within the classroom. From policies and planning to materials used in the classroom, factors outside of teaching methods contribute greatly to a student's cultural and language learning.

The concept of IE can only be taught in the classroom by changing the focus from a "traditional" language community to a global cultural community. Both public schools and private schools in Japan have a disproportionately high number of American, British, and Canadian teachers; the reason being that the teaching of language and culture needs to be confined to the practices and beliefs of the "traditional" language community. This idea neglects the student's need for developing a global cultural consciousness. Teaching IE must first start with cultural diversity among teachers. Teachers who speak with different accents, pronunciations, and vocabularies expose students to different worlds of English; teachers who come to the classroom armed with "strange" arsenals of idioms and peculiar slang only make the student more aware of the different acceptable forms of English around the world. The teacher's culture (C2), therefore, should not be a model by which the student's culture (C1) is transformed into; rather, the student should aspire to an in-between culture (C3). Thus, the perspective of C3 should be such that the student has a language awareness that spans a global community of cultures. Carefully choosing a community of language teachers based on factors such as global prominence, emerging prominence, and political relevance is essential. American, Canadian, British, Indian, Chinese, German, and Islamic regional English speakers would be an example of such a community.

Students should be encouraged to use English expressions associated with their ethnic, racial, and cultural identities in innovative ways. British linguist Ben Rampton (1995) called this *crossing*. He noticed that in language performances, students preserved their cultural identities by using new expressions grounded in their knowledge of "neighborhood, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, role, and recreational interest" (pp. 312-313). In Japan, a common crossing example is the popularly spoken phrase "Let's *challenge* English." The verb *challenge* is used in a non traditional way, yet is derived from a cultural interpretation. Such examples are not inappropriate in the definition of IE; they preserve C1 while also moving the student towards C3 (never arriving at or even completely directed at C2).

Textbooks sometimes have an uncontrollable authority that influences not only students but also teachers. Using authentic and appropriate materials is needed. One major problem with textbooks is that they are widely acknowledged as not being a neutral medium (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 188). They hold a worldview that is directly or indirectly forced onto the teacher and student. One way to bypass this obstacle is to use authentic materials. Former Kwansei Gakuin University assistant professor Derrick Nault, in his paper *Using World Literatures to Promote Intercultural Competence in Asian EFL Learners*, suggested a method called the Intercultural Approach to Literature Teaching (IALiT) which uses examples of world literatures to teach intercultural communication. Nault (2006) recommends using "works in English by authors from regions of the world where English is regarded as a second or foreign language" (p. 140). He argues that by analyzing excerpts from these texts, students both improve their English skills and gain what he calls "international intercultural competence." One technique he utilizes is called *Culture Clashes.* This method brings authentic texts to the classroom, increases a student's cultural awareness, and gives evidence and examples to the concept of IE.

Currently Japan is facing an education crisis. Both the MEXT and MITI agree that English skills need to rapidly develop within the Japanese population in order for Japan to remain competitive in the global marketplace. In this time when culture flow is accelerating both into and out of Japan, a teachable moment has been created and must be capitalized upon. More than being just adept at the mechanical features of English, Japan needs to incorporate culture teaching into its EFL curriculum. A global cultural awareness is the missing link connecting Basic English competence and fluent intercultural communication. Unfortunately, teaching skills that promote cultural awareness do not fit in well with traditional methods of teaching in the Japanese public school system. Ethnography, inclusion of the five cultural values into curriculum, creating a target cultural community among teachers, using authentic texts, and the recognition of the concept of IE are some ways I have suggested to do this. The more Japan sees English as a window into other cultures and as an opportunity to transform its cultural identity, the better prepared it will be to handle life in the 21st century.

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Developing Students' Reading Ability through Extensive Reading

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Abstract

A good reading competence is a necessity for those studying English for academic and occupational purposes. Based on the results of previous research, theory and practice on L2 Extensive Reading, this paper analyses current situation for teaching and learning reading in our Chinese universities and proposes practical applications of extensive reading to a Chinese university, which is sure to improve students' reading competence as well as their linguistic capabilities. It attempts to provide some pedagogical implications to the foreign language teaching and learning.

Keywords: Extensive reading, Reading competence, Sustained silent reading, Out-of-class pleasure reading

1. Introduction

Reading is a source of learning and a source of enjoyment (Nation, 2005). In a second, particularly a foreign language situation, a good reading competence is a necessity for those studying English for academic and occupational purposes and many curricula therefore devote large amounts of time to reading lessons in order to achieve such competence. Yet despite years of instruction and practice in reading, many EFL students have difficulty in making sense of texts they want to read, seem to read considerably more slowly than they read in their first language, and feel less confident about reading in English. Of course, there are a number of possible reasons for this, but this is partly due to the way reading is approached in the language class.

2. Current Situation for Teaching and Learning Reading in Chinese Universities

The perceived role of English in international economic success has led Chinese government to require English courses at all levels of the education system. Based on the College English Curriculum Requirements issued by the Ministry of Education in January 2004, College English, an integral part of higher education, is a required course for undergraduate students for the first four semesters. Although the College English Curriculum Requirements lay great emphasis on the development of students' listening and speaking skills, English instruction at the university level is largely devoted to reading as it has been intricately intertwined with language teaching itself.

The textbooks used in the college English classes are mainly designed for intensive reading courses and are well above the students' current comprehension levels. They include short and authentic texts followed by a variety of exercises that encourage students to study vocabulary and grammar because they know they will be given tests and quizzes, or at least they will be asked questions in class that demand a detailed knowledge of vocabulary, structure, and comprehension details (Field, 2002).

Teachers control the conditions of reading by instructing, explaining and illustrating vocabulary, grammar and sentence formation, teaching reading strategies and testing students' comprehension in the hope to help students to learn English, which turns reading into a process of detailed study, memorization, analysis and guessing (Field, 2002). Urquhart and Weir (1998) describe this kind of reading lesson as 'testing, but not teaching'. In addition, as students are required to pass the CET-4 or CET-6 (national college English test) after completing the first four-semester foreign language requirement, reading is therefore geared to tests and seen chiefly as a means to learn vocabulary and grammar which would help students in the tests. The use of reading as a means to learn something extrinsic is common in almost all the EFL settings all over the world. Urquhart and Weir state (1998:195) 'many teachers see one of their key roles in the reading classroom as expanding vocabulary knowledge and developing learners' ability to continue to increase their vocabulary'. This is almost certainly an ill-understood cyclical process at work, whereby knowing something of the language helps students to acquire more language, which in turn helps students to read better, and so on. Such a view that reading feeds language learning fails to promote extensive reading skills and can even help to fossilize poor reading styles, thus hindering students from ever reading efficiency (Li, 1984). This also goes against the top ten principles for teaching foreign language reading discussed by Ray Williams (1986).

Obviously, the increasing enrollment of university students from 1999 in China pushed college English teaching to confront with a new challenge: the inexorable trend of large-class teaching in many universities. According to the statistics of the survey conducted by the National College English Committee in 2006, the average number of students

in college English classes surpassed 60 in 2005. As far as my university is concerned, in the fall semester of 2006, there were 36 large classes with about 70 students, making up approximately 75% of college English classes. Owing to the widely acknowledged difficulty of managing a large class, most teachers naturally adopt a traditional teacher-centered approach for college English teaching.

As a result, through years of learning to read in English, students have managed to learn large amounts of vocabulary and every subtle grammatical rule by heart, but they cannot read well enough for information or for pleasure and relaxation, being able to decode only at the sentence level. Such a situation for teaching reading in Chinese universities leads to one obvious instructional issue: extensive reading is part of the ESL or EFL curricula in many settings, but has attracted comparatively little attention, which was examined as the sixth of Grabe's (1995a) dilemmas emphasizing the need for extensive reading in most L2 contexts.

Considering that extensive reading is still the missing ingredient in the EFL context of this Chinese university and there is a pressing need for additional reading instruction and practice, I am thinking of applying the extensive reading approach to my teaching situation to approach the issue. Referring to foreign language teaching in general, Nuttall says "an extensive reading program is the single most effective way of improving both vocabulary and reading skill in general' (1982:65). This is Smith's (1985:88) "learn to read by reading". The belief that exposure to large quantities of written texts combined with effort made in reading helps to develop reading ability.

3. Previous Research, Theory and Practice on L2 Extensive Reading

Many researchers have emphasized the importance of including extensive reading in foreign language curricula (Day & Bamford, 1998; Grabe, 1995b; Krashen, 1982; Paran, 1996) and numerous studies have shown the effectiveness of extensive reading in contexts of English as a second or foreign language (Elley & Mangubhai, 1981a; Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Mason & Krashen, 1997). Although there are variations in the ways in which an extensive reading is administered, extensive reading programs share the basic tenet that learners self-select materials within their "linguistic capabilities" from a collection of graded readers (Day and Bamford, 1998: 126) or learners are exposed to "large quantities of materials within their linguistic competence" (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:259). According to Nation (2005), during extensive reading, students should be interested in what they are reading and should be reading with their attention on the meaning of the text rather than on learning the language features of the text. Richards and Schmidt (2002) state extensive reading is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and encourage a liking for reading . Alderson and Urquhart (1984: 120) suggest that students might be free to choose their own reading material and even bring it from outside the classroom, and that the teacher might abandon formal questioning on the texts. Day and Bamford (1998) characterize extensive reading as involving a large quantity of varied, self-selected, enjoyable reading at a reasonably fluent speed.

There is now plenty of evidence that extensive reading can result in a variety of substantial language proficiency and comprehension. A study by Hayashi (1999) of the effects of extensive reading on Japanese university students' English proficiency found that students who reported reading more English books experienced significantly greater improvement in reading ability and vocabulary knowledge than those who reported reading less, as measured by pre-test and post-test. The same perception towards extensive reading was held by the students investigated by McQuillan (1994). They reported extensive reading to be not only more pleasurable, but also beneficial for language acquisition than instruction in grammar. Stanovich (2000) and his colleagues have demonstrated in multiple studies that the amount of people's overall exposure to print has a direct relation to their vocabulary knowledge and comprehension abilities. In examining the research on in-school reading and out-of-school self-reported free voluntary reading conducted in many different countries, Krashen (1993) concludes free voluntary reading or sustained independent reading results in better reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical development.

However, the most convincing evidence for the benefits of extensive reading comes from the "book flood" studies (Elly & Mangubhai, 1981b, 1983), which examined the effect of extensive reading on the English language proficiency by giving Fijian school children a large number of high-interest story books in English. These studies provide evidence of the remarkable increase on measures of language use, language knowledge as well as academic performance. In a repeated study conducted in Singapore, Elley (1991) found the students made significantly more gains in vocabulary and other language skills than the control groups. Day, Omura, and Hiramuatsu (1991) studied 191 high-school and 397 university Japanese EFL students engaged in sustained silent reading for pleasure. At the end of the treatment, they found that students in the experimental group scored significantly higher than those in the control group in correctly identifying the meaning of target vocabulary items. In an experiment comparing the improvement of reading comprehension by Japanese college freshmen taught by either a skills-based or extensive reading procedure, Bobb and Susser (1989) suggest that extensive reading may be at least as effective as skills-building, with the important advantage that it is more interesting for learners.

Quite a few studies suggest that extensive reading leads to greater writing proficiency. Janopoulos (1986) found that writing proficiency correlates positively with the quantity of time spent on reading for pleasure in the second language.

Hafiz &Tudor (1989,1990), in studying the effects of extensive reading among students in the UK and Pakistan respectively reported statistically significant levels of improvement for the experimental groups, particularly in writing. Tsang(1996), in comparing the effects of three different programs on writing performance, also found the one that included extensive reading was significantly effective overall.

Positive effects of extensive reading on facilitating growth of learners' attitudes toward reading and increasing their motivation to read have also been reported (Cho and Krashen, 1994; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Hayashi, 1999; Hedge, 1985; Constantino, 1994; Day & Bamford, 1998). With specific reference to reading fluency development, extensive reading has shown to be effective in increasing reading speed and comprehension (Bell, 2001; Elly and Mangubhai, 1983; Robb and Susser, 1989).

Nuttall (1996: 127) posits a "vicious circle" to describe readers who cannot develop good reading skills. Slow readers do not read much, and if they do not read much, they do not understand. If they do not understand, then they cannot enjoy reading. Day and Bamford (1998) note that it is only through the actual reading experience that L2 or FL readers can acquire the complex linguistic, world, and topical knowledge needed to improve their reading skills. Thus, for theoretical and pedagogical reasons and based on implications from research on instructional issues, extensive reading is one of the effective methods to make up for some of the limitations of the reading done in class and to develop EFL students' reading abilities in university settings.

4. Practical Applications of Extensive Reading to a Chinese University

4.1 Learners' Characteristics

The extensive reading program is intended for the first-year Chinese majors in my university, who have just admitted to the university by passing the National University Entrance Examination. They are all native speakers of Chinese and have studied English for at least 6 years through formal instruction at junior and senior secondary schools. They have completed Band 9 of the Senior Secondary School English Standards and acquired a total of 1,800—2,000 English words. They are at the similar proficiency levels and well placed into the class on the basis of placement test scores upon entering the university. They come into the course having had practice with passages of only a few hundred words of length, because this is what is taught in the high schools and they have been taught to decode for the entrance examination. Besides, as the psychometric test atmosphere is still dominating the education in junior and senior secondary schools in China, students are burdened with all kinds of homework and exercises specially designed for exams in order to pass the entrance exams to gain entry to a key senior secondary school and a prestigious university. Reading has been used as a means to an end and is tied to exams for them. In addition, the opportunities to read in and outside class are severely limited.

4.2 The Goal and Features of the Extensive Reading Program

Extensive reading is a form of learning from meaning-focused input (Nation, 2005). In this program, extensive reading is viewed as an approach to teach reading in which the purpose is Sustained Silent Reading, pleasure reading (Mikuleck, 1990) or free voluntary reading (Krashen, 1993). Therefore, the principal goal is to motivate students to read and enjoy reading in order to develop their reading ability. Because of this, reading is a pleasurable activity for students, promoted as much as possible by the teacher. The features of the extensive reading program correspond with most of Day and Bamford's (2002) "Top Ten Principles for Teaching Extensive Reading", which include the fact that reading material should be within the learners' reading competence, that students are allowed to choose what they want to read, that they read as much as possible, that teachers orient and guide their students, that reading is individual and silent, that the purpose of reading is for pleasure, information and general understanding, that reading is its own reward, and hence, don't include the answering of comprehension questions as part of the activity as well as that the teacher is a role model of a reader.

4.3 Using Graded Readers as the Reading Resource to Meet the Conditions Needed for Learning from Extensive Reading

Extensive reading can only occur if 95%-98% of the running words in the text are already familiar to the learner or no burden to the learner (Hu and Nation, 2000). Nuttall (1982) recommends 1% unfamiliar words for texts used in extensive reading. Laufer (1989) describes a study which found that below the level of 95% understanding of words in a text, comprehension was unsatisfactory. At any rate, the minimum 95% comprehension figure is the guide which is adopted in the extensive reading program. Clearly, in order to achieve this level of comprehension, students whose language proficiency is below a certain level will need to read simplified texts. Graded readers are an obvious choice with controlled vocabulary and can match students' proficiency levels. Hirsh and Nation (1992) found learners would need a vocabulary of well over 2,000 words to read the easiest fiction novels written for teenagers. This shows it is only by reading graded readers that learners like the freshman non-English majors who do extensive reading at intermediate stages of proficiency can have the density of known words that is essential for extensive reading. Above all, according to Nation (2005), learning from extensive reading should meet the following conditions: focusing on the meaning of the

text, understanding the type of learning that can occur through such reading, having interesting and engaging books, getting learners to do large quantities of reading at an appropriate level, and making sure that learning from reading is supported by other kinds of learning. In order to meet the conditions needed for learning from extensive reading at the students' proficiency levels, it is essential to make use of simplified texts (Nation, 2005). Obviously, interesting and well-written graded readers are such simplified texts and are likely to represent the most favorable conditions for reading.

In my university, there is a large stock of graded readers with many interesting titles from Cambridge, Heinemann, Longman, and Oxford funded generously by university funds, and the World Bank loan as well as publishers' sponsorship. Therefore, a class library in each class can be set up, which is comprised of at least 40 graded readers. After one semester, the classes with the different reading resources can exchange their books to give students access to a variety of books. Because the books are kept in the actual classroom, there is a greater chance that they will be borrowed. Such a large collection of interesting books ensure that students can select what they want to read from a reasonably wide selection based on their own interest and proficiency level.

4.4 Monitoring and Encouraging Students' Reading

Extensive reading should ensure that students have opportunities to read at their level, on topic they select, without tests, homework or other measures of learning (Field, 2002). The students' experience of reading the text is at the center of the extensive reading experience, just as it is in reading in every life. For this reason, extensive reading is not usually followed by comprehension questions (Day & Bamford, 2002). But how can teachers motivate students to read more and monitor their reading? Here are some of the techniques and procedures that can be effectively used.

Firstly, the teacher can ask students to fill out a short record form indicating the name of the book they have just read, its level, how long it took to read, and a brief comment on the quality of the book. This allows the student and the teacher to see at a glance how much has been read over a period of time. Secondly, students are required to present an oral report on each book they read to the class or to a reading group. These reports cover questions like what the name of the book is, what type of story it is, where and when it is set, whether it is enjoyable or well written and who would like to read. Thirdly, discussion groups consisting of four or five students can be organized to bring students together who have read the same book. As a result of the discussion, students can prepare an oral book report or a written review to present to others in the class. These activities can also help students improve their speaking and writing skills. Smith (1988: 277) notes that there is evidence that "writing is one way of promoting engagement with a text, which leads to better comprehension." Fourthly, individual counseling can provide the teacher with an opportunity to ask students about their reading experience, their progress and problems, and accordingly to approach solutions. This can be done while the rest of the class are engaged in silent reading. Finally, rewards can be given to the students for the quantity of reading they do. This will keep students excited about reading and eager to read more.

4.5 Integrating Sustained Silent Reading in Class and Pleasure Reading out of Class

This extensive reading program is designed to combine sustained silent reading occurring within class time and pleasure reading outside class time. In class, one of the six 45-minute class periods allocated to college English is devoted to sustained silent reading as well as to activities like retelling the stories orally to the reading group or to the class, information transfer and 'read and write'. During sustained silent reading, there is no reading instruction, no teacher intervention or evaluation, only reading for pleasure. Besides, the teacher serves as a role model. Ideally, 20 minutes is set aside for sustained silent reading and the remaining 25 minutes are used for classroom activities. The benefits resulting from sustained silent reading are many, including student autonomy, improved identification and interpretation skills (Silberstein, 1994), vocabulary gain (Day, Omura and Hiramatsu, 1991; Krashen, 1993) as well as improved spelling and an enjoyment of reading (Krashen). Retelling the stories would give students an opportunity to share their stories with their classmates and to practice their oral English. Information transfer activity helps students to build up a diagram or "visual" from the information read by them. The visual then becomes the basis of a second information transfer in which students reproduce the information linguistically in either a spoken or written mode. As only 45-minute in-class reading is insufficient for the development of an adequate L2 reading ability. One measure which can make up for deficiencies in classroom reading opportunities is for students to engage in out-of-class pleasure reading. Students should spend on average about 3 to 4 hours per week reading the reading program books outside classroom. Teachers can do a lot to help students pursue such extensive reading. The out-of-class pleasure reading has the effect of improving students' reading skills, their confidence, and self-identification as readers (Kitao, Yamamto, Kitao and Shimatani, 1990; Stoller, 1994)

4.6 The Minimum Requirements of the Extensive Reading Program

We plan to monitor the progress of the extensive reading program over one academic year. In the first semester students should read at least one graded reader every two weeks and read at least 8-12 in one semester. In the second semester, students are encouraged to read one per week. After one year of extensive reading, students should read at least 30

books and their reading ability are expected to meet the basic requirements for reading in College English Curriculum Requirements. With the extensive reading program progressing for another academic year, their reading ability will develop to a point where they are able to read large quantities of difficult texts.

5. Conclusion

The teaching of reading dominates the EFL situation in China, and the extensive reading program reported here suggests the extensive reading is an effective and pleasurable way for undergraduates to learn to read English as a foreign language as an alternative to intensive reading courses. By combining sustained silent reading and out-of-class pleasure reading, students gradually move from a learning-to-read orientation to a reading-to-learn framework. By reading what they choose and enjoying their reading students have a great deal of flexibility, which caters to the different needs and interests of individual students and allow them to develop their reading competence at their own rates. As a result, students' motivation to read will increase, which will in turn benefit their eventual acquisition of the target language. In addition, under the extensive reading program, the interests of students are best served as control of the reading activity is left in their hands rather than those of the teacher with respect to choice of topic, text type and difficulty. Students are permitted to assume responsibility for their own learning, which also helps them to a position of independence of the teacher and is ultimately essential for the development of learner autonomy. However, the proposal has its constraints. First, it needs research to test the effects of extensive reading on students' reading ability. Second, teachers' shared understanding of the benefits of the extensive reading should be emphasized. Considering there are clear mismatches between teachers' and learners' opinions about the extensive reading, research is needed to learn about the language goals of the university-level students and to suggest how they can be met without abandoning teachers' or program's goals. Third, some new techniques should be explored to be used in the extensive reading program, such as using online discussion board.

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Translating Methods of Shakespeare in China

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Abstract

Shakespeare was not known to the Chinese until Lin Zexu's (1785-1850) translation of Hugh Murray's (1789-1845) *Cyclopedia of Geography* (1836). Afterwards Shakespeare in China saw many complicated changes, from being regarded as a story-teller to being fully received as a seasoned playwright and poet, and his plays were rendered into the Chinese language and performed on the Chinese stage. But first and foremost is the question of how to translate Shakespeare well, for translation is primarily important for those readers who have no knowledge at all of the English language.

Keywords: Chinese methods of rendering Shakespeare, Literal translation, Free translation

1. Introduction

Since the first real beginning of rendering a Shakespearean play into modern vernacular Chinese by Tian Han (1898-1968) with his *Hamlet* in the year 1921, many Chinese scholars have attempted to translate Shakespeare and his works. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in particular, apart from the ten-year Cultural Revolution between 1967 and 1977, Shakespearean translations along with performances and literary criticism continued to flourish. As far as *Hamlet* is concerned, Lu Gusun estimated that in post-1949 China "at least five translations have been added to the pre-1949 three, two of these five being attempts at a poetic rendering, and more than fifty monographs have been published." (Lu, 1983, p.55).

Generally speaking, there are two methods of translating: one is literal translation and the other is free translation. Literal translation requires the translator to keep loyal to the original work not only in content but also in style, while free translation emphasizes the importance of the target language. In terms of Chinese translation theory, Yan Fu (1853-1921) is said to be the first to put forward his three-character criteria. The Chinese have debated its practicability for almost a century; nevertheless this translation standard has been followed by many later translators in their renditions, consciously or unconsciously:

Translating is difficult in three aspects, namely, *xin* (faithfulness), *da* (readability), and *ya* (refinement). To aspire to perfection in faithfulness is rather difficult. However, to make the translation faithful without being readable is equal to having no translation at all. Hence the relative importance of readability […] [B]esides *xin* (faithfulness) and *da* (readability), one should also pay attention to *ya* (refinement). This is not only to let the text reach a wider audience; as a matter of fact, the discourse is so profound and full of nuances of meaning, it can only be made readable with ease by using the lexicons and grammar of the pre-Han period of two millennia ago; whereas it is difficult to use the current vulgar tongue to produce a refined version. (Fan, 1999, np).

Explained from the perspective of Chinese translation theory, literal and free translation are very different from each other with literal translation staying true to the author and the source language – *xin* (faithfulness) – while free translation leans towards the reader and the target language – *da* (readability). In other words, the choice of free and literal translation is decided by the respective goal. When the translator wants to simply introduce a foreign work, some stories and plots from the text for instance, to the ordinary reader, free translation is not a bad option to help the target reader understand the original well, because in this situation the content of the original is much more important than its style. The translating work here adheres to the opinion of similarity in spirit (*shen si*). By contrast, when the goal of rendering is to illustrate a foreign author, a well-known writer in particular, the original content and writing style including language, structure, rhetorical figures of speech and imagery both play a key role in translating, and therefore the method of literal translation is better, or the best, to preserve the original spirit. Only in this way can both the original works and the original writer be thoroughly appreciated by the Chinese reader, which is called similarity in spirit and form (*shen xing jie si*).

2. Literal Translation in Rendering Shakespeare

Bian Zhilin (1910-2000) is a representative in adopted literal translation in rendering Shakespeare. He translated the

original into the Chinese language according to his principle of *yibu yiqu* – the translator should render the original by imitating the author at every step from the number of lines, rhyme, to feet.

Bian's translation of *Hamlet* was published under the title *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* in 1956 by the Beijing Writer Press. When rendering the play into Chinese, Bian preserved the original mode by "following the distribution of verse and prose in the old version and keeping every variation in the verse" (Zhou, 1981, p.217), as he wrote in his "Illustration to the Translation": "The original prose was translated in vernacular Chinese prose and blank verse was in unrhymed poetic form with five-*dun* [*dun* literally means a group of words] within a line. When there is rhyme in the original, correspondingly the translation is in verse as well." (Zhou, 1981, p.26).

To illustrate how Bian exercised literal translation in rendering the English playwright and poet, let's take Hamlet's soliloquy in Act III Scene I for example.

To be,   │ or not │ to be --- │ that is │ the quesiton:

huo xia qu │ *hai shi* │ *bu huo*: │ *zhe shi* │ *wen ti*.   [*ti*]

Whether   │ 'tis nob │ ler in   │ the mind │ to suffer

yao zuo dao │ *gao gui*, │ *jiu jing gai* │ *ren qi*   │ *ten sheng*   [*sheng*]

The slings   │ or arrows   │ of out   │ rageous │ fortune

lai rong shou │ *kuang bao de* │ *ming yun* │ *shi shi* │ *jiao gong ne*,   [*ne*]

Or to   │ take arms │ against │ a sea   │ of troubles

hai shi gai │ *ting shen* │ *fan kang* │ *wu bian de* │ *ku nao*,   [*nao*]

And by opposing │ end them.

sao ta ge   │ *gan jing*?   [*jing*]

......   (*Hamlet*, 3.1.56-60) (Shakespeare, 1992, pp.56-60)

This soliloquy is in blank verse – unrhymed iambic pentameter; that is to say, Shakespeare adopted ten syllables in a line and then these ten syllables were divided into five pairs called iambic feet. Generally speaking, the foot consists of two syllables with the stress on the second one. At the same time, the lines are unrhymed. Compared to the so-called syllable and foot in the English language system, there is no such equivalent in the Chinese language. Accordingly, Bian Zhilin tried to create his own *dun*, although the idea of adopting five-*dun* in accordance with Shakespeare's five pairs of foot was put forward by Sun Dayu. (Sun, 1996, p.82).

Like Shakespeare's five pairs of iambic feet within a line, Bian adopted five *dun* – five groups in each two or three Chinese characters are put together – in his translation and meanwhile gave no rhyme between lines (see the Chinese *pinyin* in the square bracket). In the meantime he closely followed Shakespeare in the number of lines and even the order of them. Notwithstanding, to avoid inaccuracy resulting from blind faithfulness to the original Europeanized structures and expressions, Bian rearranged these two sentences from "For in that sleep of death what dreams may come / When we have shuffled off this mortal coil" into "Once we get rid of the mortal life / What we will dream of in the sleep of death".

Bian Zhilin's attempt has been accepted by the circle of Shakespearean studies and his version is regarded as one of the best Chinese translations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* (Meng, 1994, p.113). In theory, all that Bian Zhilin had done was to authenticate his principle of "seeking for similarity in spirit through preserving the original form" (*cunxing qiushen*).

3. Free Translation in Rendering Shakespeare

From his translation experience in introducing Western philosophical works to modern China, Yan Fu suggested that the translator "grasp the global spirit of the discourse, let the idea become part of your mind and then let the writing brush take care of itself. When it comes to an abstruse text, which cannot be understood all by itself, try to paraphrase it by adding explanatory remarks either afore or aft, to bring out its meaning." (Fan, 1999, np). In practice, the method of free translation is relatively popular in rendering Shakespeare into the Chinese language.

Zhu Shenghao (1912-1944) talked about his experience in his "Foreword" for the edition of *The Complete Theatrical Works of William Shakespeare*: "I will try to retain the spirit of the original as far as I possibly can; if this cannot be achieved, I will at least try to convey the intentions of the original, using fluent, plain Chinese; as to word-for-word 'hard' translations, I dare not venture to go along with." (Fan, 1999, np).

To make a clear contrast with Bian Zhilin's literal translation, Zhu's version of Hamlet's soliloquy in Act III Scene I is also cited as example, which can be literally rendered back into Englsih in the following way:

To live or to destroy, this is a question that is worth considering. Which behaviour is much nobler: to speechlessly suffer the outrageous slings and arrows of fortune or to bravely rebel against endless troubles in the world and end them

through struggle? (My translation of Zhu's version).

Comparing this with Shakespeare's blank verse and Bian Zhilin's literal translation in verse form, first of all, Zhu Shenghao did not arrange his version in lines; secondly, he added his explanatory remarks to the original text, such as the underlined words in the following sentences: "this is a question that is worth considering" and "Which behaviour is much nobler: to speechlessly suffer the outrageous slings and arrows of fortune or to bravely rebel against endless troubles in the world and end them through struggles?"; thirdly, Zhu reconstructed his sentences according to the Chinese syntax, for instance, "If our heartache and other numberless shocks that our flesh body cannot escape can disappear from now in such a sleep, that is what we most welcome", comparing with the original: "and by a sleep to say we end | The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks | That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation | Devoutly to be wish'd." (*Hamlet*, 3.1.61-4).

Though his translation of Shakespeare is not without errors, Zhu Shenghao's free translation is relatively faithful to the English text in similarity of spirit and is regarded as a good example of rendering Shakespeare:

Wherever the syntax of a sentence in the original text has been found to clash with the grammar of Chinese, I would always mull it over for hours and days until I came up with a version which was totally different in construction from the original, so much so that the intended message of the author had been brought to the foreground without being blurred by obscure Chinese. (Fan, 1999, np).

In conclusion, as far as translation ways of literal and free methods are concerned in practice, neither of them is completely wrong, as Lin Yutang distinguished between them as follows:

"Translation by word" could be used where the translation was deemed correct from the context; and "translation by sentence" had to be used where "translation by word" could not render the "global meaning" of the sentence. The global meaning of a sentence could not be derived [from] a simple summation of the meanings of each and every individual words making up that sentence. It could only be derived after grasping the global idea of the sentence. If the translation happened to be a word-for-word match of the original sentence, so much the better. Otherwise, the meaning of certain individual words had to be ignored in order to catch the global meaning of the sentence. (Fan, 1999, np).

So are Shakespearean translations in China.

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Teaching of Mathematics and Science in English: The Teachers' Voices

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Abstract

The policy to change the medium of instruction in the teaching of Mathematics and Science from Bahasa Melayu (Malay Language) to English in 2003 is an important innovation affecting not only the students but also teachers of Mathematics and Science. However, how far do the changes affect the teachers is the issue addressed in the paper. In fact the objectives of the study were to investigate the reaction of the mathematic and science teachers to using English as the medium of instruction, the problems encountered by these teachers in using English in the classroom and the availability of language support systems. A study was conducted on a group of pre-university educators in the northern part of Malaysia who have undergone language enhancement courses known as English for the Teaching of Mathematics and Science (ETeMS). The study reveals that teachers of mathematics and science are generally perceptive of the change in the medium of instruction but needing some sustainable measures to not only improve their language ability and delivery. Thus it is hope that certain measures would be taken to address on teachers struggle to ensure the success of the policy.

Keywords: Mathematics, Science, English, Teaching, Learning

1. Introduction

In January 2003 Malaysia took a bold step in re-adopting the English language as a medium of instruction for mathematics and science in order to ensure that Malaysians are able to keep abreast with scientific and technological development that is mostly recorded in the English language and to provide opportunities for students to use the English language and therefore increase their proficiency in the language (Ministry of Education, 2002a).

The change in policy is congruent to significant developments and understandings in second language acquisition that emphasise the role of meaningful, understandable input. In this case, teaching mathematics and science in English provides a rich context for genuine language use and as such serves as a focal point around which oral language and literacy in English can develop (Kesseler & Quinn, 1987). Whilst this move may be seen as desirable and progressive, it is one that changes the dynamics of teaching and learning mathematics and science in the Malaysian classroom.

Teachers who have been teaching and learning in Bahasa Melayu are expected to perform effectively in English, to teach and acquire subject specific knowledge. This is indeed a formidable challenge, seen in the light of concerns voiced about teachers' proficiency and competency and the overall declining standards of English. On one hand, we have students who must learn mathematics and science content while they are still learning English (McKeon, 1994) and on the other, we have teachers, who themselves have proficiency problems with the new medium of instruction. Furthermore, the demands on the teachers are even greater as they have to in their own way ensure that the while teaching the subject matters in this case mathematics and science, they need to also improve students' comprehension of the subject matter, encourage interactions on the subject matters, and be aware of the language used in the classroom (McDonough, Mar 2009).

As such, the teachers may resort to the teaching of mathematics and science in a mixture of both the mother tongue and the target language. Studies however found that teaching instruction in the mother tongue or the first language does not impede the development of the second language (Bacherman, 2007; Tong et al., 2008). Nevertheless the use of mother tongue instruction has to be limited and selective in nature as consistent reliance on translation will not only affect the learners' language development but also discourage the learners from using the target language (Hong, 2008). Hence, the aim of teaching Mathematics and Science in English will meet an abrupt end. However when the competency of English teachers themselves becomes questionable, what more can we expect of teachers of mathematics and science? These teachers who are not language specialists will have to cope with the double demand of transmitting content as well as language. Will they be able to cover their subject area in an accurate and effective manner?

Therefore to understand the task at hand, it is important for us to understand the perceptions, knowledge, attitudes and readiness of these teachers towards the teaching of mathematics and science in English. As Pandian (2002) asserts, what teachers know and can do, affect all the core tasks of teaching. Furthermore, numerous studies (Gambrell, 1996; Chakravarthy, 1997; Pandian, 1999) have stressed the roles of teachers in influencing the behaviour of students. With this in mind, the purpose of this study is to investigate:

i.   The reaction of these teachers to using English as the medium of instruction

ii.   The problems encountered by these teachers in using English in the classroom

iii.   Availability of language support systems.

2. Methodology

This study sought to obtain some feedback from educators teaching mathematics and science in one of the pre-university institutions in the Northern part of Malaysia, in respect to the change in the medium of instruction.

2.1 Instruments

A set of questionnaire were administered to the subjects to determine teachers' English language command as well as problems that they faced using English in the teaching of mathematics and science. The questionnaire would also solicit selected personal background information of the subjects and statements related to teacher views and teaching practices in regard to teaching mathematics and science in English. The choice of answers was given on a Likert scale ranging from 'always' to 'never'. Next, semi-structured interviews were also conducted on a smaller sample of respondents for cross-validation purposes.

2.2 Subjects

A total of 26 educators currently teaching Mathematics and Science in the institution participated in the study (Figure 1). These educators teach mathematics, biology and chemistry. The subjects comprised three male and 23 female teachers. All 26 subjects have at least a passed in English at the SPM level (equivalent to GCE 'O' levels). Meanwhile, figure 2 illustrates that the majority of the teachers had at least five years teaching experience.

2.3 Data analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data analyses were used in the study. The subjects' responses were analyzed using

descriptive statistics. Percentages and frequencies of their responses to the items related to their reaction to the change in the medium of instruction, the problems encountered in terms of the use of English in the classroom, their awareness of scientific and mathematical discourse and the support available to them were calculated. Interview data were qualitatively analyzed with initial descriptive codes being assigned to teachers' responses. Related codes were then grouped according to categories and common themes (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). Illustrative quotations representing each theme are used to support findings of the survey.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Problems in using English as a medium of instruction

Table 1 presents the different problems in using English as a medium of instruction. It was found that 80.8% of the respondents felt that they had problems in adjusting with the number of new English words to be learnt as a result of the change in policy. 92.3% of the respondents had problems using new terms or words correctly. This is comprehensible since all of them were trained in the Malay medium. Further, most had been teaching Mathematics and Science in the Malay language for at least five years. In addition to this, 88.5% of the teachers found it difficult to express themselves correctly in English. However, 53.8% of the teachers involved in this study said that they had no problems acclimatising themselves with the use of English in teaching Mathematics and Science. This is perhaps due to the efforts taken by the Ministry of Education to reduce the problems by introducing courses and programmes to facilitate the transition from the Malay medium to English.

When the announcement regarding the policy was made, 46.6 % of the subjects indicated shock and feelings of inadequacy in coping with the task (Table 1). One respondent explained: "Of course, I was shocked at first, my training has been in BM but after several ETeMS courses I am gaining my confidence. But the first few years was terrible. Anyway, this is a do or dies mission, we have to do it and I am getting used to it". One respondent mentioned: "Despite several years of teaching in English, I still need help with my English. I'm afraid of not using correct grammar when I teach. There were times when I felt really ashamed as my students corrected my sentences".

It was found that the main problem encountered by teachers was in explaining concepts in English. One teacher responded: "My students cannot understand me when I explain concepts. I need to use Bahasa Melayu. They understand simple instructions in English but it is difficult to make them understand science concepts in English". Further, 85.2% of the respondents indicated that they had problems explaining concepts in English and 81.8% admitted to using Bahasa Melayu (L1) to give explanations when faced with a breakdown in communication when using English as illustrates in Table 1 as one respondent said: "What am I to do? I have to use BM, if not, how am I to finish the syllabus?" The purpose of introducing English as the medium of instruction in the teaching and learning of mathematics and science is mainly to enable students to keep up with the developments in science and technology by making it possible for them to access this information which is mainly available in the English language. Teachers of science and mathematics generally understand this need and are trying to facilitate this move. However, some of these teachers feel that they themselves lack the necessary language skills to teach in English. Therefore, there is obviously a need for sustained content specific language input for the personal language development of these teachers. As these teachers play an important role in modelling good language practices in their classrooms, it then becomes crucial for them to master the language elements of their content subject. This is consistent to what several researchers have reiterated on the need to address teachers' language development programme focussing on in-depth language instruction, cultural diversity and adaptation of knowledge to instruction (Janzen, Mar 2008).

In terms of language problems in the classroom, it is alarming to note that 81.8% of the respondents studied used the L1 (Bahasa Melayu) to explain concepts when students faced problems in understanding these concepts in English (see Table 1). These teachers maintained that students' low English proficiency was the main cause for using Bahasa Melayu in class.

Whilst the Ministry of Education has initiated nation-wide training to address language problems faced by teachers teaching Mathematics and Science in English, the same cannot be said for students who are required to learn Mathematics and Science in English. Apart from the English lessons that are mandatory, these students have not been given extra language support to help them deal with academic content that is in English. The kind of language associated with the learning of mathematics and science is very different from general English. Scientific and mathematical discourses are less contextualised and require high cognitive levels of comprehension. Cummins (1986) suggests that there are two levels of language proficiency: the basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and academic language proficiency (CALP). CALP involves language that is context-reduced and highly demanding cognitively. Cummins points out that in order to perform effectively in mathematics and science, students would need to develop CALP.

Furthermore, one of the reasons for teaching and learning mathematics and science in English was to provide opportunities for students to engage in the use of the language. Seen in this light, the use of L1 in the classroom is

worrying. While it is necessary to some extent to draw upon background understanding and literacy in the first language, it is dangerous to rely on the L1 as a crutch. As Bowering (2003) points out, limited use of *Bahasa Melayu* in the classroom will be of great benefit in helping students meet the challenge presented by English but total translation as an easy way out defeats the purpose of teaching these subjects in English. Instead these teachers should be exposed to alternative instructional approaches that use a wide range of scaffolding strategies to communicate meaningful input to their students. In this manner the content taught is expressed to suit the proficiency level of their students. Perhaps it is time for these teachers to recognise that subjects such as science should be viewed as an active process of developing ideas, rather than as a static body of already– existing knowledge to be passed on to students (Main & Eggen, 1991).

3.2 Problems encountered in the   classroom

Table 2 illustrates the problems in the classroom. It was found that 70.5% of the respondents indicated that there was a difference between general English and the language of mathematics and science. Due to this, 65.4% of the respondents expressed the difficulty in engaging the class discussion in English. Furthermore, 73.1% felt that responding to students in English is also a problem. Additionally, 73.1% responded that they have difficulty in writing reports and preparing teaching materials in English and 76.9% expressed their difficulty in providing in English. However, interviews with the respondents revealed that these teachers are not clear about the linguistic features of their content subject. As one respondent explained: "I know I have to help them with the language, but I do not know how to do this, we were not taught how in university". Therefore, these teachers are unable to help their students to cope with academic language.

Other problems mentioned by the respondents interviewed were related to the textbook and multimedia courseware provided by the Ministry. The textbook was said to be too brief with inadequate examples and descriptions and thus was not very useful, especially for LEP (Low English Proficiency) students. The multimedia courseware was also said to be unsuitable for LEP students, as they were not able to understand the language used to deliver the content. A respondent pointed out: "The CDs are good but my students don't understand so I have to stop and translate for them".

More problems mentioned by the teachers are related to the prescribed textbook and the multimedia courseware supplied by the Ministry. Mohan (1990) points out that in many content classes reading a textbook is the main means of studying the content to be learned. Mohan also further explains that students' success in understanding their textbook depends on two factors — the content factor and the language factor. Mohan maintains that the language factor is actually knowledge that is related to the formal organisational structures of different types of texts. This knowledge of text types actually falls within the domain of the language teacher. Thus successful reading of content textbooks is actually dependent on having content knowledge and knowledge of text types. Therefore to facilitate successful reading among LEP students, joint action by the mathematics, science and language teachers is required.

3.3 Availability of Language Support

Table 3 illustrates the types of language support attained by the teachers. Apart from the ETeMS courses, teachers of mathematics and science are supposed to get language support from the "buddy system" whereby they can get help from identified resource persons in their respective colleges. It was found that 70.4% of the respondents indicated that they have language support from the "Buddy" and "Critical friend" assigned to help them. Interviews with respondents revealed that "help" in this sense meant assistance mainly with vocabulary and grammar. Respondents also indicated that they were unable to use self-learning materials such as the multimedia courseware and grammar books provided by the Ministry due to lack of time.

In terms of language support from the English panel, 80.7% of the respondents indicated that their English counterparts provided assistance. Interviews with the respondents disclosed that this assistance was mainly with vocabulary and grammar. It was found that 76.2% of the respondents indicated that they often discussed language problems related to the teaching of mathematics or science with their English counterparts. In fact, according to the respondents, their English counterparts have been helping them to the extent of even organizing program for the teachers.

In terms of collaborative teaching between the mathematics and science teachers with their English counterparts, 36.4% of the respondents claimed that they do collaborate with their colleagues. However, the interview with respondents revealed that 'collaboration' in this sense meant using their English counterparts as a source of reference when they have difficulties with grammar or vocabulary.   One of the respondents said: "Yes, the English teachers help us. We always refer to them for meanings of words that we are not sure of or when we don't know how to say something in English". It was found that 87.5% of the respondents felt that the multimedia courseware supplied by the Ministry to teach science and mathematics is well planned and effective in terms of content. However, respondents who were interviewed claimed that these materials were more suitable for proficient students. Most respondents maintained that LEP students had trouble following the content presented because of language difficulties.

Accordingly, joint action is the kind of collaboration that is required to ensure success in using English as the medium of instruction. In order to help LEP students to overcome linguistic barriers in the course of learning mathematics and science, the language teacher together with the mathematics or science teacher must assess the needs and required

language skills of these students (Dale and Cuevas, 1987). Of course this sort of action requires extended time and effort on the part of the teachers and thus may not be practicable in our present school context. However, governing curricula bodies such as the Curriculum Development Center or joint working-committees at district or state levels could look into this suggestion.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of this study suggest that teachers of mathematics and science recognise the need for the change in the medium of instruction and are reacting positively to this change. However, it is apparent that these teachers are experiencing difficulties not only in terms of their own language inadequacies, but also the management of the language development of their students in respect to their content subject. On the other hand, the prevailing language support mechanisms do not completely meet their needs. Therefore, it is important that measures are taken to support these teachers in the teaching of science and mathematics in English.

As a result, the teaching of science and mathematics in English should not be left to chance. The failure of these teachers to master English will be detrimental as they would not only affect the students' language ability but also the dissemination of the content of science and mathematics to the students.

As such in order to successfully implement the teaching of science and mathematics in English, policy makers and teacher educators must deliberate and focus on the needs of the teachers concerned. If that is failed, then perhaps it is probably time to look into the possibility of reverting to the teaching of science and mathematics in the mother language.

Among the things that can be considered is improving the teachers' language competence. Teachers may need to go through language transition programs where improving the language competence of the teachers will be the focus. However, these transition programs should not be conducted by English language specialists but instead handle by Science and Mathematical content specialists. In these programs, the teachers will not only be exposed to English language per se but also will be observing the language in action.

The study, however, is not without its limitation. The sample of the study was too small to generalize the findings throughout the country. A study with bigger sampling and diverse geographical location may provide different results. Thus, it is recommended that a new study should be conducted with bigger sampling and diverse geographical location.

Furthermore, the study focused only on the teachers. A study focusing on the reactions, receptions and performance of the students on the change in the teaching science and mathematics should be explored.

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Table 1. Problems Using English as a Medium of Instruction

Problem	%
English Vocabulary to be Learnt	80.8
Using New Terms or Words Correctly	92.3
Expressing Correctly in English	88.5
Acclimatising with the Use of English in Teaching	46.2
Coping with task	46.6
Explaining concepts in English	85.2
Using L1 in the class	81.1

Table 2. Problems in the Classroom

Problems	%
Differences in the language	70.5
Engage Class Discussion in English	65.4
Responding to Students in English	73.1
Writing Report/Teaching Materials in English	73.1
Providing Examples in English	76.9

Table 3. Types of Language support

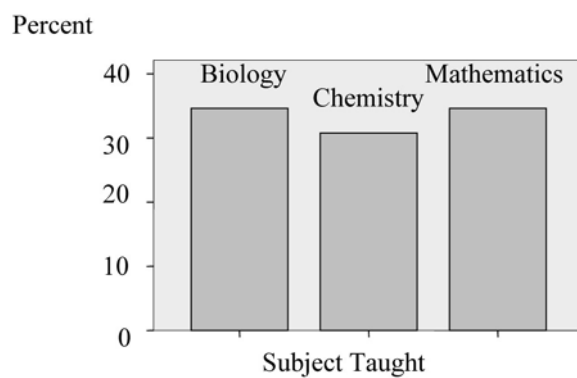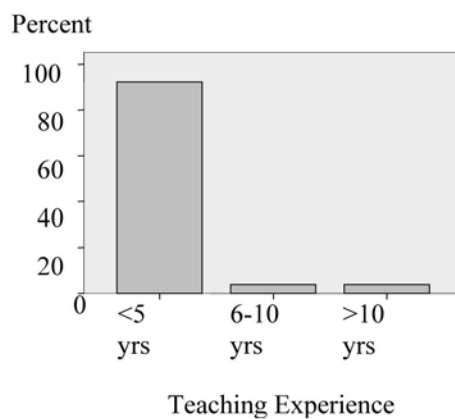| Language support	%
Buddy	70.4
Grammar/vocabulary support from English Colleague	80.7
Subject matter language problems	76.2
Collaborations	36.4
Multimedia courseware	87.5

Figure 1. Subject Taught

Figure 2. Teaching Experience

Critical Instance Analysis of News English Discourse

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Abstract

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) thought that the discourse was concrete social practice, and the language served for the potency, and the discourse embodied the ideology. Two presses about the case that the US Mattel Toy Company recalled toys "Made in China" in Washington Post (newspaper) and New York Times (newspaper) were taken as the language materials and critically analyzed from language environment and discourse structure, and new view and argumentation were attempted to dig the relationships among language, potency and ideology, which could help students to establish the critical thinking, flexibly utilize the discourse analysis tool, enhance the judgment and appreciation ability, directly review the motives concealed in the medias, and understand the media discourses from deeper layer.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis (CDA), News English discourse, Instance analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is also called as the critical linguistics. It begun from the late of 1970s and the beginning of 1980s, and it associates the discourse form, generation process, reading process and the social potency structure through critical opinion analysis and discourse explanation to disclose the complex mutual function relationships among language, ideology and rights.

CDA adopts M.A.K. Halliday's system function grammar as the tool of discourse analysis, and it thought that the language had three functions, i.e. the ideational function, the interpersonal function and the textual function, and its intention is to "explain discourse", i.e. reveal how the discourse expresses the meanings. The ideational function reflects the experiences in the subjective world, and the transitivity is one part of them. The transitivity system takes the minor sentence as the basic unit of language, and expresses human behaviors and information in the real world as many processes, and it points out participators and environment, and explains various processes, relative participators and environment components (Zhang, 2005). These processes include material process, psychological process, relationship process, speech process, behavior process and existence process. The process, the function component (such as actor, object and perceiver) and the form class (such as noun phrase and VP to embody these functions) selected by the author will decided by his opinion and ideology to large extent (Dai, 2002). The interpersonal function reflects the relationships among people, such as the degree, status and attitude of the author, and these relationships are represented by the mood structure and the modality system. Different minor sentence types such as the declarative sentence, imperative sentence and interrogative sentence will endow different roles and status for the talker. For example, in the declarative sentence, talker is the possessor and transfer of information, but in the interrogative sentence, talker is seeking and checking existing information, and it will be a response strategy to express the opposite opinion. In addition, the use of the modal structure or the evaluated adjective also can help us to judge talker's opinion and attitude to some extent. The textual function mainly include the wording and phrasing and organizing the discourse. The study of the textual function will help to understand talker or author's start, and grasp the distribution of the central content in the discourse. CDA emphasizes the conversion process of the sentence type including the nominalization, i.e. the whole

sentence or the sentence component, and the process that the descriptive component about the behavior or the participator is converted into the noun or the noun phrase (Zhang, 2005). The mutual conversions in different sentence structures will induce the generation of different meanings.

Two presses about the case that the US Mattel Toy Company recalled toys "Made in China" in Washington Post (newspaper) and New York Times (newspaper) were taken as the language materials and critically analyzed from language environment and discourse structure. In the part of the language environment analysis, the background and environment of the language materials are introduced, and the critical analysis of discourse structure will concretely review the discourse respectively from the views of the style and the function.

1. Analysis of language environment

Critical linguistics thought that the discourse was a sort of social space which included two basic social processes, i.e. the cognition of the world and the social communication interaction, so the analysis of discourse can not leave the analysis of the talk practice process and the social language environment, i.e. the generated, diffused and accepted living language environment of the discourse, and the reviews of social and historical background must contact with the language environment.

The international press from Washington Post (newspaper) and New York Times (newspaper) can basically reflect the diplomatic polices and direction of the US Administration. Two selected presses all aimed at the event that the US largest toy company Mattel secondly recalled the toys "made in China" at 14 Aug, 2007. The background that the mainstream media reported this event was that 80% of products in the Europe and American toy market all came from China, so the relative reports certainly would include the component pushing "made in China" aside, and intentionally magnified individual problems, and use the safety problem of toy making to kindle some consensuses harming Chinese export commerce. In fact, Chinese General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine definitely pointed out that in recalled toys "made in China", 85% of them accorded with US design requirements and US import requirements in the new release conference at 27 Aug, 2007, so the relative reports were inclined to intentionally damage the image of Chinese products, mislead consumers and set up obstacles for normal trade.

2. Critical analysis of discourse structure

2.1 Stylistic analysis

In the fast changing information times, presses have been one indivisible part in human living, and one important channel to acquire information for people.

2.1.1 Glossary

The glossary can make contribution to construct the mansion of meaning. The English glossary is very abundant, and one general meaning can be expressed by numerous near synonyms, but the selection of synonyms with different degrees and emotional colors must accord with different ideologies and concepts (Ding, 2006). Therefore, it is advisable to use "classification" to review the discourse from the stylistic glossary. The classification means to use the language to endow orders for the external world. The classification system of the discourse means the naming and description of characters and events in the discourse, and it is mainly realized by the selection of glossary. The thing classification by the glossary is the usual measure used by mass media and it is the main approach to create or produce discrimination. The description of the core object in express could fully embody reporter's attitude and position for the event.

When describing Chinese manufacturers, the express (1) used many words and expressions such as "subverted (its safety standards)" and the express (2) also used "intentionally (added cheap or illegal substances to save money)" publicly. From the explanations of two words by "Oxford Advanced Learner's English Dictionary" and "Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English", the former is too grand, and "subvert" is the normal vocabulary which means "overthrowing or destroying 'a government or existing system' in secrete", but the usage of the word in the express obviously aggrandized the severity of the event, and the later possesses obvious misguidance, and "intentionally" means "(for bad things) of purpose, advisedly", and its usage in the express would certainly harm the image of Chinese businessmen in US consumers, even suspect Chinese manufacturers' moral quality, and extend to become the misapprehension for Chinese. Different from the description of Chinese toy, the expresses used "one of the most conscientious toymakers (in the express (2))" to describe the toy company Mattel. The manufacturer should assume responsibility for the brand company which should answer for consumers, and both parties all should assume compelling obligations for the event, but the expresses obviously leaned to one party in the language description.

2.1.2 Syntactic structure

The length of the express (1) and (2) was large and the used sentence structures were complex. As the mainstream media of US, Washington Post (newspaper) and New York Times (newspaper) used large length to report the event that the Mattel Company recalled toys "made in China" just for rising US people's attention. And the complex clauses used in two expresses occupied above 60% of the whole sentences. The main body, time and place of the event were

described in one clause could make the report more "objective" and make readers doubt the orientation and accept the "directional" information unconsciously.

In addition, the titles of two expresses respectively were "Mattel Recalls More Chinese-made Toys" and "Mattel Issues New Recall of Toys Made in China", and both of them used the simple present tense. This tense could reduce the distance between the readers with the event described in the news, make readers feel that the event or status will last a period of time, and increase the reading value. The titles of two expresses just utilized this point to extend the news attention and make readers leave the adverse crisis sense from the products "made in China". The occurrence of passive construction in the news discourse could "make the finishing point", and the passive construction is one of measures of "thematization". The passive construction is used to emphasize and give prominence to the passive object, and put it in the head of the sentence as the marked theme in the system function linguistics. The use of passive construction weakens the behaviors and actions, and the actor becomes the subordinate information, for example, in the "Mattel said the hazards were found…" of the express (1) the "Mattel said the hazard in the products, made between May and July, was discovered…"of the express (2), the emphasized information is "the hazards", and the processes of "were found" and "were discovered" were weakened, by contraries, the process of "were made" which was not described by the words was concealed. The obligations of the product safety problem should be assumed by the brand company and the manufacturer together, but the expresses indicated that the Mattel Company was also the casualty of the event, and the product manufacturer should assume the main responsibility.

Furthermore, the verb structure or sentence could express certain meaning, but the author selects the noun phrase, i.e. the phrase nominalization. The examples of nominalization were also embodied in two selected discourses, for example, in express (1), "discussions with the $22 billion toy industry, establishment of a third-party testing system, etc." and in express (2), "an investigation of all its toy manufacturing, its inspection of toys, etc." The nominalization could create a sort of impersonal effect through deleting the modal component, blurring time concept and concealing the participators in the process, i.e. the causality. Obviously, the examples in express (1) and (2) presented the "actions" in the status for readers, and these "actions" were all adopted by the US enterprise or official department in the sensitive term aiming at the toy event. The nominalization measure could weaken the action sense of the measures and reduce readers' sensitive reaction to "actions". The actions should be weakened, so the US party would not be the concerned focus of the event as soon as possible, and readers could not run US party's responsibility naturally.

2.1.3 Discourse structure

One main character of the press style about the discourse structure is that most end quotes others' words to conceal the author's attitude and position for the whole event as the conclusion. The last paragraphs, "Asked whether the company would consider moving its production from China, Eckert said that was being considered. "We are always reviewing where the optimal place is to make our products," he said." of express (1), and "High levels of lead have also been found in Chinese made jewelry and trinkets, posing serious health hazards, according to American officials." of express (2), all would produce large negative psychological influence to consumers who would naturally be in panic and distrust for the products "made in China". Two seemingly "objective" ends actually intentionally reflected Chinese manufacturers, which went against the consensuses for the products "made in China".

2.2 Function analysis

The initiator of the system function linguistics definitely pointed out that the intention of establishing the function grammar was to offer a theoretical frame for the discourse analysis. The integrality and the coherence identifying the social language environment based on the system function linguistics theory are regarded as the main theoretical base and methodology source by the critical linguistics. The transitivity and the mode respectively are the core composing of "ideational function" and "interpersonal function" in Halliday's three language functions. Next, from the transitivity and the mood, two selected news discourses were reviewed comprehensively.

2.2.1 Transitivity

Halliday (1994) thought that people could classify human experiences into 6 different processes through the transitivity system, i.e. the material process, the psychological process, relation process, behavior process, diction process and existence process. "The process which is selected to express a real process will possess important cultural, political or ideological meanings." In 42 verb components in express (1), 19 of them expressed the communication diction process (about 45%), and in 64 verb components in express (2), 31 of them belonged to diction process (about 48%), and in the diction process in two expresses, the "talkers" were all Mattel Company or US official department. The coherence on this layer reflected both Washington Post (newspaper) and New York Times (newspaper) all adopted the language of the "third party" to prove their own opinions, and the so-called "third party" language was not neutral and objective but leaned to Mattel Company itself. The positions of two expresses were basically consistent, i.e. pointing the event to "made in China", and advocating the distrustful emotion for Chinese products. In US-China trade, to construct the trade barrier by means of the sensationalization of mainstream media has already been a measure used by US party.

2.2.2 Mood

Halliday (1994) pointed out that except for modal verb, modal adjective and modal adverb, personal pronoun, notional verb, tense and direct/indirect oration all could express the modal meanings in English. In express (1), "If people had followed the rules in place, we wouldn't have this problem today", Eckert said, and Eckert was the board chairman and CEO of Mattel Company. And in express (2), "The message was very clear," he said. "If you cannot do these things, please let us know. No problem, but you won't be doing business with us", and he was Jim Walter, senior vice president for worldwide quality assurance at Mattel. Because the direct/indirect orations generally come from party, knower or authority, and they have strong persuasion for the hearers, so the use of them can effectively increase the authority of the discourse. The dictions in the example all came from the superior layer of the Mattel Company, so they could be regarded as the opinions of the Mattel Company. The company thought that the occurrence of the toy quality problem was the result that Chinese manufacturers breached the quality byelaws. Two expresses just used large numbers of similar direct/indirect orations to further express the position and opinion of the newspapers, and they adopted the mode taking a part for the whole to puzzle readers, and smeared "made in China" from the whole opinion. In short, the discourse structure analysis is the basic measure for the critical linguistics (CDA). Through analyzing the selected expresses from the stylistic and functional views, the relationship of selection and embodiment between meaning and form could be found, and combining with the concrete language environment, the analysis could break the meaning layer, and go up to the ideology study and dig the natural deep ideology.

3. Conclusions

The analysis of two expresses indicated that the form embodied the meaning, and to express the meaning of ideology, the language system offered various measures, and the form was always selected, and CDA which was to review the linear process among discourse, ideology, human, ideological meaning, language, and discourse form structure on the higher layer such as the ideological layer was further demonstrated in the news discourse analysis, so the ideological meaning concealed in the news discourse should be rescanned. With the globalization of the economy, in the usual English teaching, the students' ability of critical reading and English discourse analysis should be strengthened, their sensitivity for the ideology concealed in the discourse should be further enhanced, and their language consciousness should be further improved.

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Study on the Application of Body Language in College English Teaching

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Abstract

With the continual reform of English language teaching and learning methods, teachers are in great demand to organize the classes in English and create English-learning circumstances. However, with the limitation of students' vocabulary, teachers have to simplify their teaching language with the help of facial expressions and body movements. In this article, the possibility and the effect of using body language in listening, speaking, reading and writing will be further discussed.

Keywords: English teaching in college, Body language, Application

1. Introduction

As everyone knows, the classroom teaching is one of the most important ways that the students learn English. As far as the English teaching in college is concerned, teachers have to arouse the students' interest so that they may learn better. There are many ways to arouse the students' interest and help them to learn better, body language used in English teaching is one of them.

Body language is an important media through which people communicate with each other. It refers to the patterns of facial expressions and gestures that people use to express their feelings in communication. The specialist on body language research, Fen. Lafle. Angles, once said: "Once it was lost, a baby couldn't have grown into a normal person". It's also true to the college students. In college education, body language plays a positive role in cultivating the students' characters. For, teachers are usually respected, and factually, what or how the teachers say and do will be possibly imitated by the students (sometimes subconsciously). In a word, teachers' graceful body language helps to improve the students' artistic-appreciation and moral character. If the students develop a wonderful body language, which will possibly leads them to form optimistic and active feelings, they will surely have a more smooth interpersonal relation.

The affection of teachers' body language on the students is reflected not only by establishing a good example, but also shortening the teacher-student estrangement by which a more harmonious studying atmosphere is created. As a matter of fact, teachers' friendly appearance can greatly encourage the students' studying enthusiasm. Furthermore, the characteristics of theoretic and abstraction of knowledge also requires the vivid, dramatic and an accessible gestures to make it specific and figurative. As a result, the students' interest is motivated and the effect of teaching is greatly improved.

2. The necessity and importance of using body language in English teaching

English teaching is a key part of the college education. With the English teaching methods reform, more and more English teachers organize the teaching process in English so that they may realize the Communicated English. The Communicated English means that teachers instruct the students and explain questions basically in English, and the students are also required to use English in class. Contemporarily, however, the students in the college can't speak very well; neither can they understand why they should use different tones in different time or situation; their vocabulary and expressive ability are limited too. These limitations made it difficult to realize the Communicated English in the classes. According to the students' present level and practical situation, body language is required. For example, a teacher gives an instruction: "You two, please come to the blackboard." The students can easily understand it if the teacher looks at (or points to) some two students. Then, the teacher points to the blackboard. The students will carry out the order without obstacle even if they don't hear the key words "blackboard" clearly. Furthermore, teachers usually have to explain some language points, and at this time, they have to differentiate the classroom expressions and the examples. Take it for example, "we ought to use the form 'have done' such as 'Have you finished that job jet?'" To make the students understand clearly, a teacher has lots of ways. To do it by speed, he uses a common speed when reading "we ought to use the form 'have done', and reads slowly when giving examples; he can also get the effect by repeating the example "Have you finished that job jet"; a more frequent way is to use gestures to lay emphasis on the key points when he said "have done"(emphasizing it in voice at the same time), he reaches out his index finger, pauses in the air, and then gives out the example. This action will usually give the students a deep impression. From the above we can learn, the use of body language in English teaching is necessary and practical. In the English teaching in college, body

language is frequently used to improve the teaching effect and the students' ability.

3. The concrete application of the body language in listening, speaking, reading and writing

3.1 Body language helps to improve listening

The Greek philosopher Epictetus ever wittily said: "Nature has given man one tongue and two ears that he may hear twice as much as he speaks." From the saying we can learn how important the listening is in our daily life. To understand others is a basic purpose in English teaching, and teachers often train the students' listening accordingly. In this process, if the body language is used, the effect will be better. When beginning a new lesson, the teacher narrates the story outline in English. The body language may help. For example, a teacher can stretch his arms slowly when he says "She is in a very big room"; he can open his eyes widely with mouth opened when he says "She is so beautiful a lady". As a result, the students will have such an impression: She is very beautiful indeed; a teacher who imitates the crying or the movement of the animals under the premise of teaching order will surely achieve a better effect.

3.2 Body language helps to improve speaking

The spoken language is one of the important ways to communicate, so we should try to develop the students' ability of speaking. Factually they are helped to reach the aim in a certain degree by their teacher's body language.

The contemporary emphasis is gradually laid on spoken English teaching. The first lesson of every unit in college English begins with dialogue. The teaching programs require the teachers to organize the class to practice English according to the characteristics of dialogue. Generally speaking, the body language can arouse and sustain the students' interest of learning and using English. In the English class, the teachers should not only use body languages themselves, but also ask the students to use them according to the different situation. Take it for example, the first lesson in Unit one, Book one is about the time when the new students first meet, and they don't know each other. So a teacher can introduce himself first, such as: "Hello, everyone, nice to meet you here. Now I'll introduce myself to you. My name is Arthur. I like playing basketball, for, it makes me much stronger; I like playing chess, for, it makes me more clever; and I like reading books, for, 'reading makes one perfect'". During the introduction, the teacher should use the new vocabularies and sentence structures together with a vivid expression and mating gestures as possibly as he can. He smiles when he says hello to the class; he shakes hands with some students saying "Nice to meet you"; he writes name down on the blackboard; he imitates the action of dribbling and shooting at the basketball, playing chess and turning pages to explain his hobby. After his introduction, the teacher can create a circumstance for the students to practice: "Mary and Jack are new classmates. They are walking together in the street, and they meet one of Jack's old friends, Yangpei. Then Yangpei and Mary are introduced to each other by Jack." After the students' practice the dialogue is introduced naturally from it. Usually, the application of body language in different situations will result in an attracting and successful lesson.

3.3 Body language helps to improve reading

The purpose of college English teaching is to train the students' complicated ability of using spoken and written English. In college, we lay emphasis on the reading ability that serves the students' further study. Here we mainly mention the helpfulness for reading aloud. Reading aloud helps the students to get a correct pronunciation and intonation and to develop the combination of vocabularies' pronunciation, spelling and meaning. Furthermore, it also helps the students to find out the article's internal feelings and appreciate the beauty of the language. A linguist ever said: "A poem is not a poem until it is read." Reading aloud is basic in college, and the teachers should make full use of body language to develop the students' ability of reading aloud.

When reading the sentences, attention should be paid to where to speak softly, emphasize, and raise or lower our tone. To make it clear, we can imitate the strong or soft pats that are used in music teaching, which means to use the arcs to represent different tones. Generally speaking, we use falling tones in declarative and special interrogative sentence, first rising tones and then falling tones in the choosing interrogative sentence. The students in college are not often accustomed to and always confuse them, however, with the help of body language, they can solve the problem much more easily. For example, they use gestures. As they read the choosing interrogative sentence, they raise their hands in rising tones and lower in falling tones. After training for some time, as soon as they read the sentences, they will remind themselves of the gestures. As a result, there will be no problems in rightly reading the sentences at all.

In a word, the vivid gesture together with the fluent English can create a good circumstance of learning, which will surely play an active part in improving the students' reading ability.

3.4 Body language helps to improve writing

Writing is one of the four basic skills of learning language, and it is so important a skill that we can even say without it, people can't communicate with others. Not only should the students get some English knowledge and vocabularies, but also the ability to communicate in spoken and written English as what is mentioned in the teaching programs. To some extent, writing is much more important than speaking, for it can spread without the limitation of space and time. Since the students learn English as a media for communication, they should have the ability of writing.

To get rid of the students' feelings of being dull and tiring, an English teacher has to use every possible method. This is the same to the writing. Teachers use different method in order to improve the students' ability of writing, among which, the application of body language can deepen the object impression, such is magnificent in developing the students' writing ability.

The linguist Franklin ever said, "Tell me, I'll forget; teach me, I'll remember; involve me and I'll learn." If we asked the students to write an unfamiliar composition, they would probably be unable to and feel discouraged. However, the students can write excellent articles if they have the experience. In and out of class, we should ask the students to participate in some English-related activities, and then ask them to write it down. Take "The First Snow in Winter" for example, having enjoyed themselves in the beautiful snowing and been given some hints, the students can write much better a composition. For contrast to their complete imagination, the students are deeply impressed by the body movement of the teachers and themselves, which surely leads to a better article.

4. Conclusion

Learning English needs practice. The 45 minutes in class is very precious and should be cherished, during which the students should practice as much as possible. To exert the limited time, teachers are required to adopt some effective methods. The use of body language can not only attract the students' attention, but also deepen their impression and imagination. The use of body language is completely up to the standard of audio-visual teaching principle, so teachers should try to teach in English from the beginning to the end, together with the corresponding body language. In the end, the students' ability of English will be certainly and greatly improved.

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Comparing and Contrasting First and Second Language Acquisition:

Implications for Language Teachers

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Abstract

In an attempt to understand and explain first language (L1) acquisition and second language (L2) acquisition scholars have put forward many theories. These theories can aid language teachers to understand language learning and to assist their students in their language learning process. The current paper will first look at the similarities between the L1 and L2 acquisition. Then, the differences will be outlined. In the last part of the paper the implications of these findings for foreign language teachers will be discussed.

Keywords: First language acquisition, Second language acquisition, Interlanguage theory, Foreign language teaching

1. Introduction

Various theories are put forward to describe first language (L1) acquisition and second language (L2) acquisition. In order to understand the nature of L1 and L2 language acquisition, various aspects were examined, compared, and contrasted. Results from these comparisons and contrasts have valuable implications for language teachers which can help them to design their syllabuses, teaching processes and classroom activities. These results also enable the language teacher to understand his/her students' learning processes.

Many characteristics of L2 acquisition were highlighted by studies conducted on the issue of Interlanguage. Interlanguage theory was developed in the 1970s and 1980s to emphasize the dynamic qualities of language change that make the Interlanguage a unique system. Selinker (1969, cited in McLaughlin, 1987) defines Interlanguage as the interim grammars constructed by second language learners on their way to the target language. Interlanguage is the learner's developing second language knowledge and has some characteristics of the learner's native language, of the second language, and some characteristics which seem to be very general and tend to occur in all or most Interlanguages. It is systematic, dynamic and constantly evolving.

Interlanguages have some common characteristics with L1 acquisition, because both share similar developmental sequences. Some of the characteristics of L2 acquisition show similarities with L1 acquisition, whereas others show differences.

2. Similarities between First and Second Language Acquisition

2.1 Developmental Sequences

Researchers have carried out numerous studies to understand the nature of first and second language acquisition. These studies have revealed that both first and second language learners follow a pattern of development, which is mainly followed despite exceptions. Rod Ellis (1984) covers the idea of developmental sequences in detail and outlines three developmental stages: the silent period, formulaic speech, and structural and semantic simplification.

Research in natural settings where unplanned language, such as the learner language that results from attempts by learners to express meaning more or less spontaneously, is used to show that both first and second language learners pass through a similar initial stage, *the silent period*. Children acquiring their first language go through a period of listening to the language they are exposed to. During this period the child tries to discover what language is. In the case of second language acquisition, learners opt for a silent period when immediate production is not required from them. In general, however, many second language learners - especially classroom learners- are urged to speak. The fact that there is a silent period in both first and second language learners (when given the opportunity) is widely accepted. However, there is disagreement on what contribution the silent period has in second language acquisition. While Krashen (1982)

argues that it builds competence in the learner via listening, Gibbons (1985, cited in Ellis, 1994) argues that it is a stage of incomprehension.

The second developmental stage is termed f*ormulaic speech*. Formulaic speech is defined as expressions which are learnt as unanalysable wholes and employed on particular occasions (Lyons, 1968, cited in Ellis, 1994). Krashen (1982) suggests that these expressions can have the form of routines (whole utterances learned as memorized chunks - e.g. I don't know.), patterns (partially unanalyzed utterances with one or more slots - e.g. Can I have a _____?), and Ellis (1994) suggests that these expressions can consist of entire scripts such as greetings. The literature points out that formulaic speech is not only present in both first and second language acquisition but also present in the speech of adult native speakers.

In the third stage the first and second language learners apply *structural and semantic simplifications* to their language. Structural simplifications take the form of omitting grammatical functors (e.g. articles, auxiliary verbs) and semantic simplifications take the form of omitting content words (e. g. nouns, verbs). There are two suggested reasons why such simplifications occur. The first reason is that learners may not have yet acquired the necessary linguistic forms. The second reason is that they are unable to access linguistic forms during production.

These three stages show us that L1 and L2 learners go through similar stages of development with the exception that L2 learners are urged to skip the silent period. However, learners do not only show a pattern in developmental sequences, but also in the order in which they acquire certain grammatical morphemes.

2.2 Acquisition Order

Researchers have tried to find out if there is an *order of acquisition* in acquiring grammatical morphemes. The findings are important but contradictory and have implications on first and second language acquisition. Morpheme studies aimed to investigate the acquisition of grammatical functions such as articles or inflectional features such as the plural -s. An important research in this field is that of Roger Brown (1973, cited in McLaughlin, 1987). According to Brown, there is a common - invariant - sequence of acquisition for at least 14 function words in English as a first language - noun and verb inflections, prepositions, and articles. Findings of these studies pointed out that there is a definite order in the acquisition of morphemes in English first language learners. Other morpheme studies were carried out on various functors suggesting that an order of acquisition does exist.

Lightbown and Spada (2006) review studies which have proposed that the acquisition of question words (what, where, who, why, when, and how), show a great similarity in first and second language acquisition. Based on the morpheme studies in L2 acquisition, Krashen (1982) put forward the *Natural Order Hypothesis* which he developed to account for second language acquisition. He claimed that we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order. This acquisition order is not determined by simplicity or the order of rules taught in the class.

Thus far it seems as if L1 acquisition and L2 acquisition follow similar routes, however, other morpheme studies have shown that not all first language learners follow the order of acquisition predicted. There appears to be inter-learner variation in the order of acquisition. Wells (1986b, in Ellis, 1994) proposes inter-learner variables affecting the order of acquisition as sex, intelligence, social background, rate of learning, and experience of linguistic interaction. Furthermore, McLaughlin (1987) claims that evidence from research shows that the learner's first language has an effect on acquisitional sequences which either slows their development or modifies it. He adds that, considerable individual variation in how learners acquire a second language, such as different learning, performance, and communication strategies, obscure the acquisitional sequences for certain constructions. Therefore, McLaughlin (1987) argues that "Krashen's claim that an invariant natural order is always found is simply not true" (p. 33).

The above arguments show that there seems to exist an order of acquisition in both first and second language acquisition. Hence, one should be careful not to claim for an invariant order of acquisition but for a more flexible order of acquisition and be aware of the variations affecting this order.

2.3 Linguistic Universals and Markedness

There are two approaches to linguistic universals. The first approach was put forward by Greenberg (1966, in Ellis 1994) and termed *typological universals*. Typological universals are based on cross-linguistic comparisons on a wide range of languages drawn from different language families to discover which features they have in common (e.g. all languages have nouns, verbs etc.). The second approach is the *generative school* represented by Chomsky. The aim is to study individual languages in great depth in order to identify the principles of grammar which underlie and govern specific rules. This approach was later termed as Universal Grammar (Ellis, 1994).

The most relevant aspect of both approaches that relates to L1 and L2 acquisition is that some features in a language are marked and some are unmarked. According to typological universals, unmarked features are those that are universal or present in most languages and which the learners tend to transfer. Marked rules are language specific features which the learner resists transferring. According to Universal Grammar, core rules, such as word order, are innate and can be

arrived at through the application of general, abstract principles of language structure. Peripheral rules are rules that are not governed by universal principles. Peripheral elements are those that are derived from the history of the language, that have been borrowed from other languages, or that have arisen accidentally. These elements are marked. Peripheral aspects are more difficult to learn (Ellis, 1994; McLaughlin, 1987).

Even though neither of these approaches aimed at explaining first or second language acquisition, the results of both are applicable. The findings show that unmarked features are learned earlier and easier than marked rules in both the first and the second language while unmarked forms require more time and effort by the learner.

2.4 Input

Input is defined as "language which a learner hears or receives and from which he or she can learn" (Richards et al., 1989, p. 143) and its importance is widely accepted. Behaviorist views hold that there is a direct relationship between input and output. In order to obtain favorable habits the language learner must be given feedback, which constitutes the input. Interactionist views of language acquisition also hold that verbal interaction, or input, is crucial for language acquisition.

Stephen Krashen (1982) has put forward the Input Hypothesis which reveals the importance he places on input. He argues that the learner needs to receive comprehensible input to acquire language. Information about the grammar is automatically available when the input is understood. Krashen argues that the input a first language learner receives is simple and comprehensible at the beginning and is getting slightly more complicated. With this argument, he supports his next argument that input should be slightly above the level of the language learner (i+1). Only in doing so can the second language learner move forward. He argues that the second language learner should be exposed to the target language as much as possible and that the lack of comprehensible input will cause the language learner to be held up in his development (Ellis, 1994; McLaughlin, 1987).

The Interactionist Approach to first language acquisition holds that one to one interaction gives the child access to language which is adjusted to his or her level of comprehension, therefore, interaction is seen as crucial and impersonal sources of language (such as TV and radio) are seen as insufficient. Consequently, verbal interaction is seen to be crucial for language leaning since it helps to make the facts of the second language salient to the learner. Similarly, intersectional modifications which take place in the conversations between native and non-native speakers are seen as necessary to make input comprehensible for the second language learner (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Ellis, 1994).

There is, however, a contradicting view to the importance of input in first and second language acquisition. Chomsky (see Ellis, 1994; McLaughlin, 1991) argues that input is essential but that input alone cannot explain first language acquisition because it contains ungrammaticalities and disfluencies which make it an inadequate source of information for language acquisition. Children would not be able to distinguish what is grammatical and ungrammatical based on such input. Furthermore, input underdetermines linguistic competence. He argues that input alone does not supply learners with all the information they need to discover rules of the L1. Therefore, he points out that the child must be equipped with knowledge that enables the learners to overcome the deficiencies of the input. Later, Universal Grammar researchers have drawn implications to second language acquisition from these arguments. It is believed that the same arguments for the inadequacy of input in first language acquisition also account for second language acquisition. Consequently, when learning a first language, learners must rely on the knowledge they are equipped with; and when learning a second language, learners must rely on the L1.

These arguments show us that both input and the knowledge that the child is equipped with are important and should interact for learning and development to take place. Therefore, one should not be favored over the other.

2.5 Behavioristic Views of Language Acquisition

The similarity between L1 and L2 acquisition is seen in the Behavioristic Approach originally which tries to explain learning in general. The famous psychologist Pavlov tried to explain learning in terms of conditioning and habit formation. Following Pavlov, B. F. Skinner tried to explain language learning in terms of *operant conditioning*. This view sees language as a behavior to be taught. A small part of the foreign language acts as a *stimulus* to which the learner *responds* (e.g. by repetition). When the learner is 100 % successful, the teacher *reinforces* by praise or approval. Consequently, the likelihood of the behavior is increased. However, if the learner responds inappropriately then the behavior is punished and the likelihood of this behavior to occur is decreased (Brown, 1994). In other words, children imitate a piece of language they hear and if they receive positive reinforcement they continue to imitate and practice that piece of language which then turns into a 'habit' (Williams & Burden, 1997).

Similarly, basing on the Behavioristic Approach it is assumed that a person learning a second language starts off with the habits associated with the first language. These habits interfere with those needed for second language speech and new habits of language are formed. Errors produced by the second language learner are seen as first language habits interfering with second language habits. This approach advises the immediate treatment of learner errors (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Some regular and routine aspects of language might be learned through stimulus/response but this does not seem to account for the more grammatical structures of the language. The Behavioristic Approach holds that language acquisition is environmentally determined, that the environment provides the language learner with language, which acts as a stimulus, to which the language learner responds. However, L1 and L2 learners form and repeat sentences they have not heard of before. Therefore, this approach fails to account for the creative language use of L1 and L2 learners.

2.6 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The Russian psychologist L. S. Vygotsky has made a social emphasis on education in general and language education in particular. Vygotsky (1982, cited in Daniels, 1996, p. 171-172) explains the ZPD as follows:

"The child is able to copy a series of actions which surpass his or her own capacities, but only within limits. By means of copying, the child is able to perform much better when together with and guided by adults than when left alone, and can do so with understanding and independently. The difference between the level of solved tasks that can be performed with adult guidance and help and the level of independently solved tasks is the zone of proximal development." (p. 117)

When children come across a problem they cannot solve themselves they turn to others for help. Thus, collaboration with another person is important for a child to learn. Otherwise, development would not be possible. Learning collaboratively with others precedes and shapes development. A good example for this process is said to be the development of literacy (Gallaway & Richards, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007).

Vygotsky asserts that through using language children take part in the intellectual life of the community. In order to negotiate meaning, collaboration between the child and the members of the community is required. Considering language education, instruction creates the zone of proximal development, stimulating a series of inner developmental processes (Daniels, 1996; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). According to the ZPD, assistant performance and collaboration are crucial for learning and development. The teacher's assistance and students' collaboration with their teacher and their peers is inevitable for L2 development. The teacher's most important classroom work "is to provide for the social interaction within the community of learners such that the learners may move from what they know to what they don't yet know" (Hawkins, 2001, p. 375).

The ZPD also asserts that "what one can do today with assistance is indicative of what one will be able to do independently in the future" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 210). Thus, development achieved and development potential are equally emphasized. The ZPD concept can aid educators to understand aspects of students emerging capacities that are in early stages of maturation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

3. Differences in First and Second Language Acquisition

3.1 The Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis

Krashen (1982) claims that there are two ways for an adult to approach a second language:

"adults can (1) 'acquire,' which is the way children 'get' their first language, subconsciously, through informal, implicit learning. Once you have acquired something you're not always aware you have done it. It just feels natural; it feels as if it has always been there. Quite distinct from acquisition is (2) conscious learning. This is knowing about language, explicit, formal linguistic knowledge of the language." (p.17)

Krashen continues to argue that learning does not turn into acquisition. He obviously sees first language acquisition and second language acquisition as two different phenomena. Yet, he suggests that acquisition may occur in the classroom when communication is emphasized through dialogues, role playing, and other meaningful interaction.

As a language teacher, one should be careful when evaluating the claims related to acquisition and learning. Through focused input and focused practice learning may turn into acquisition.

3.2 The Critical Period Hypothesis

The Critical Period Hypothesis holds that there is "a biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire" (Brown 1994, p. 52). This hypothesis is based on the ideas of the psychologist Eric Lenneberg. His argument was that various capacities mature according to a fairly fixed schedule during which language emerges in children when anatomical, physiological, motor, neural, and cognitive development allow it to emerge. He added that there is a critical, biologically determined period of language acquisition between the ages of 2 and 12 (McLaughlin, 1987). Originally the notion of critical period was connected only to first language acquisition but later it was applied to second language acquisition as well. Consequently, it is argued that a critical period for second language acquisition is due until puberty.

In order to explain the validity of the critical period in second language acquisition neurological, psychomotor, and cognitive arguments were examined (Brown, 1994). These have mostly tried to explain why adult language learners are not able to reach full competence and native like pronunciation in the second language.

<u>Neurological Considerations</u>: There is an attempt to explain the difference between first and second language acquisition through *lateralization* in the brain. Steinberg (1997) explains lateralization as follows,

"the brain assigns, as it were, certain structures and functions to certain hemispheres of the brain. Language, logical and analytical operations, and higher mathematics, for example, generally occur in the left hemisphere of the brain, while the right hemisphere is superior at recognizing emotions, recognizing faces and taking in the structures of things globally without analysis. This separation of structure and function in the hemispheres is technically referred to as *lateralization*". (p. 179)

Thomas Scovel (1969, in Brown, 1994) put forward that there is a relationship between lateralization and second language acquisition. Scovel suggests that the plasticity of the brain before puberty enables first and second language acquisition to take place easily. After puberty, the brain looses its plasticity and lateralization is accomplished. He argues that lateralization makes it difficult for people to be able ever again to easily acquire fluent control of the second language or native-like pronunciation.

There is a counter argument related to the cognitive development of the brain. Cognitively, this lateralization enables the person to reach the capability of abstraction, of formal thinking, and of direct perception which start from puberty on. This shows that adults posses superior cognitive capacity due to left hemisphere dominance. Then, the following question arises: How come that adults who have a cognitive superiority are not able to learn a second language successfully? Researchers are still trying to find an answer to this question. A tentative answer to this question is that the dominance of the left hemisphere leads the adult to tend to overanalyze and to be too intellectually centered on the task of second language learning (Brown, 1994). Again, there are adults who are able to learn a second language successfully, but factors like affective variables seem to play an important role in such cases.

<u>Psychomotor Consideration</u>: These considerations try to explain the reason why adult second language learners cannot obtain native-like pronunciation in the second language. Starting from birth, speech muscles gradually develop until after the age of 5. Then, until puberty the speech muscles maintain their flexibility. Scientists argue that the flexibility of children's speech muscles is the reason for why they can easily acquire native-like pronunciation both in the first and in the second language. The decline of the flexibility in the speech muscles, however, prevents adult second language learners to reach native-like pronunciation in the second language (Brown, 1994).

<u>Affective Considerations</u>: Although the affective domain includes many factors such as inhibition, attitudes, anxiety, and motivation, this paper will examine only the first two. While anxiety and motivation are mainly related to adult second language learning, child first language learners have not developed or are just in the process of developing such affective factors.

While *inhibitions* pose no difficulty for children acquiring their first or second language, they propose to be intervening in adult second language acquisition. Inhibitions can be defined as ego boundaries the person builds in order to protect his or her ego. As the child matures it develops a sense of self-identity and towards puberty it acquires the feeling to protect this self-identity and develop inhibitions which are heightened during puberty. Alexander Guiora (cited in Brown, 1994) proposed the idea of the *language ego* to account for the identity a person develops in reference to the language he/she speaks. Through puberty the child's ego is flexible and dynamic but as the child reaches puberty the language ego becomes protective due to physical, cognitive, and emotional changes at this stage. The language ego tries to protect the ego of the young adult by clinging to the security of the native language. Acquiring a second language means also acquiring a new language ego which can be very difficult for adults who have built up inhibitions to protect their ego. Mistakes can be seen as threats to one's ego. With the fear to make mistakes the adult language learner can resist to speak in the classroom.

A second affective factor, which is formed by the cognitive development of a person, that can make second language acquisition difficult for an adult is *attitude*. Young children are not cognitively enough developed to possess attitudes towards races, cultures, ethnic groups, and languages. As the child reaches school age, attitudes are acquired. It is agreed that negative attitudes towards the target language, target language speakers, the target language culture, and the social value of learning a second language can impede language learning while positive attitudes can enhance learning (Ellis, 1994; Brown, 1994).

Stephen Krashen has developed *The Affective Filter Hypothesis* to account for the effects of affective variables on second language acquisition. He argues that affective variables can act as a mental block, also termed affective filter, and prevent comprehensible input to be absorbed. When the learner is unmotivated and lacks confidence the affective filter goes up. When the learner is not anxious and wants to be a member of the group speaking the target language the filter goes down. He adds that children are at an advantage when learning a first or second language because their affective filter is low while adults are likely to have a higher affective filter due to events that occurred in adolescence (Krashen, 1982; McLaughlin, 1987).

The critical period shows concrete differences between L1 and L2 acquisition because it is based on the internal factors of the learner. The arguments of the critical period are mainly based on pronunciation, neglecting grammatical and semantic competence.

3.3 Fossilization

Fossilization is used to label the process by which non-target norms become fixed in Interlanguage. The possible causes for fossilization are suggested to be age (learners' brains loose plasticity at a critical age, therefore, certain linguistic features cannot be mastered), lack of desire to articulate (learners' make no effort to adopt target language norms because of various social and psychological factors), communicative pressure (the learner is pressured to communicate ideas above his/her linguistic competence), lack of learning opportunity, and the nature of the feedback on learners' use of L2 (positive cognitive feedback leads to fossilization while negative feedback helps avoid fossilization)(Ellis, 1994; McLaughlin, 1987).

Based on the factors related to fossilization it can easily be inferred that fossilization is unique to L2 acquisition. It is hardly possible to see a child acquiring his/her first language to fossilize certain forms of language.

3.4 Social Factors

Ellis (1994) differentiates between two social contexts in second language learning and outlines them as follows:

a.   Natural Contexts

Second language learning in majority language contexts: the target language serves as the native language and the language learner is a member of an ethnic minority group (e.g. Turkish workers in Germany).

Second language learning in official language contexts: the second language functions as an official language (e.g. English in Nigeria).

Second language learning in international contexts: the second language is used for interpersonal communication in countries where it is neither learnt as a mother tongue nor used as an official language (e.g. in arts, science, academic, etc.)

b.   Educational Contexts

Segregation: the second language is taught to learners in a separate context from the native speakers of the target language.

Mother tongue maintenance: learners of minority groups are either given classes in their mother tongue or they are educated through the medium of their mother tongue.

Submersion: right from the beginning L2 learners are taught with native speakers.

The language classroom: the target language is taught as a subject only and is not commonly used as a medium of communication outside the classroom.

The difference of the contexts of first and second language acquisition play an important role in the acquisition process. While it is possible to learn a second language in various contexts, first language acquisition takes place only in a natural context and in the social group the child is growing up and where the child gets L1 input only. The different contexts for second language acquisition can also lead to variations in second language proficiency due to affective factors.

Schuman (1986, cited in McLaughlin, 1987; Ellis, 1994) has put forward the *Acculturation Theory* to account for second language acquisition development in natural settings. He defines acculturation as the process of becoming adapted to a new culture and his claim is that contact with the target language and culture is crucial. The process of acculturation requires both social and psychological adaptation. Learning the appropriate linguistic habits to function within the target language group is one part of this process. Acculturation is determined by the degree of social and psychological 'distance' between the learner and the target-language culture. According to this hypothesis, the greater contact with L2 speakers and culture takes place the more acquisition occurs.

Another social factor that leads to a difference between first and second language acquisition is that of the *learner's choice of target language variety*. SLA assumes that learners are targeted at the standard dialect of the L2. Beebe (1985, in Ellis, 1994) observed some deviations in L2 learners' from Standard English. She suggests that these may not be errors but a reflection of a dialect which the learner has targeted (e.g. Black English). The choice of the reference group is determined by the social context and the learner's attitude to that variety of language. In settings where the L2 is an official language (such as in India), the reference group may be educated users of the L2 in the learner's own country rather than a native speaker.

It is important to note here that in first language acquisition one has no chance to make such a conscious choice. The environment and social group a person is born into automatically determines the language variety to be acquired.

Therefore, deviations from the standard language are not seen as a failure to acquire the language. However, such deviations may wrongly be attributed to failure if present in the second language.

4. Implications for Language Teachers

To understand the nature of L1 acquisition, researchers have tried to explain how children progress from "no language" to their mother tongue. In L2 acquisition, however, the process is more complicated as learners already have knowledge of their L1. The Interlanguage Theory plays a crucial role in arriving at findings on how L2 learners move from their mother tongue towards the target language. This means that we cannot talk about the Interlanguage of a child but that we can talk about the Interlanguage of the L2 learner.

Language learning to take place depends on various factors, which means that the language teacher has to account for these factors as much as possible. However, none of the theories or factors mentioned in this paper is on its own explanatory enough to account for the complex process of language learning. Every finding or explanation should be considered in interaction with the others. This means that a language teacher cannot base his/her teaching solely on any single theory or claim within the framework of L2 or L1 acquisition.

The above similarities and differences between first and second language acquisition provide the language teachers with information to aid them in their profession. This information can help the teacher in designing classroom activities, designing the syllabus, choosing an appropriate method, understanding the learning processes of his/her students, and guiding his/her students in the language learning process.

The first discussion in terms of the similarities and differences between L2 and L1 acquisition was related to developmental sequences which plays an important role in the cognitive development of learners. Knowing that in L1 acquisition learners have the right to keep silent and process the input would be quite beneficial under ideal teaching situations. Even though this silent period promotes language processing in L1 acquisition, it is quite hard, even impossible, to apply it in L2 acquisition. The teaching conditions and the grading legislations may force the teacher to ask students for immature production. Knowing the need for such a period but not being able to allow for it should at least make the teacher understand erroneous production, inhibited students, or high anxiety in the classroom. Even though the idea of silent period may not be applicable directly into teaching, it gives an idea of why some students resist or avoid to produce the language taught.

Formulaic speech, the second stage of developmental sequences, is said to be present in both first and second language acquisition and also present in the speech of adult native speakers. Thus, language teachers might consider teaching their students samples of some useful and frequently used phrases. Students can then refer to these phrases in situations that require immediate communication. Finally, in the last step of developmental sequences learners apply structural and semantic simplifications to their language. Knowing this can help language teachers understand erroneous or imperfect language production of certain language items such as omitting language functors or omitting content words.

The second phenomena is acquisition order of language learning (both L1 and L2), and can have a great impact on syllabus design. As Krashen (1982) put forward, we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order. Knowing which structures are learned prior to others helps in ordering the content of the syllabus. Similarly, studies on marked and unmarked structures correspond to the acquisition order. Designing the syllabus by taking these findings into account takes the burden of trying to figure out which structures to teach first and which ones later.

The notion of markedness also has implications for language teachers. It is asserted that marked features are learned earlier and easier than marked rules in both the first and the second language. On the other hand, unmarked forms require more time and effort by the learner and are more difficult to learn (Ellis 1994; McLaughlin, 1987). Considering markedness, language teachers could find out the unmarked features of the target language and plan their lessons so that they spend more time on unmarked features. Furthermore, the idea of markedness could help teachers understand why their students fail to learn or have difficulty in learning certain features of the target language.

The issue of input has an explanatory effect both in L1 and in L2 acquisition, which means that it has direct implications for the language teacher. Language teachers are the main source of input in the classroom. A teacher wishing to provide comprehensible input will have to modify his/her language according to the level of students and speak at such a speed that the students can follow. The teacher can use lots of activities requiring the students to interact with each other or with the teacher. Pair work, information gap activities, and classroom discussions are a good source for input. However, overwhelming students with input that is quite above their language capacity might result in lack of self-confidence and resistance to learn the language. So, using input to promote language learning is beneficial as long as it is aimed at the level of the students.

Even though the Behavioristic approach lacks to explain the creative aspect of language production, it helps to understand how in teaching/learning, stimulus/response helps to master both grammatical patterns and phonological patterns. To make use of this knowledge at the right time in the process of teaching depends on whether the teacher has been able to identify when stimulus/ response can be used for the benefit of the learning. However, an important point

here which is to be kept in mind is the age and level of the students in mind. While younger learners might find such an education enjoyable, older learners might get easily bored. In addition, learning language habits might be useful for students with lower levels of proficiency; students with a higher level of proficiency may not benefit the same amount.

The final issue related to the similarities of L1 and L2 acquisition is the ZPD. The importance of assistance and collaboration has useful implications for language teachers. Language teachers should try to assist their students as much as possible by providing them with language necessary to pass to the next level of language competence. The role of the teacher is to direct action within school activity in a manner appropriate to the learner's level of development, the cultural and social environment (Daniels, 1996). It can also be suggested that teachers promote teacher-student interaction or peer-interaction. As Hawkins (2001) states, "It is via this kind of interaction that knowledge very gradually gets built" (p. 374). This is possible through the use of collaborative activities such as pair work or group work where students are required to negotiate meaning. Furthermore, teachers could benefit from the ZPD to understand aspects of students' emerging capacities. That is, language tests should be viewed as both indicators of students' achieved abilities and also students' future capabilities.

When we come to the differences attributed to L1 and L2 acquisition, the starting point should be terms themselves, "acquisition" and "learning". Although it is argued that learning and acquisition are quite distinct processes, a language teacher should consider the possibility that extensive practice in the classroom can lead to acquisition. However, it should be kept in mind that not everything taught becomes acquired. So, expectations regarding the quality of learning should be set realistically.

The Critical Period hypothesis is one of the key differences leading to variations in L1 and L2 acquisition. It is widely accepted that children are better in pronunciation, whereas adults are faster and better learning in rules and pragmatics. Knowing this may guide a teacher who is teaching adults towards practicing pronunciation, if this is one of the objectives in learning the language on the side of the learner. Another important point related to the critical period regards affective factors. While it does not cause a problem in L1 acquisition, the learners of L2 are faced with inhibition and attitudes. The affective states of our students are very important since these are the major factors intervening in language learning. Adult or young adult language learners need to be relaxed and comfortable to create positive attitudes to the language and the language learning process. In addition, teachers need to free their students from inhibitions so that students can freely interact and use the language. This can only be possible if they build up trust and understanding between themselves and their students. More positive than negative feedback, more praise than criticism might be the first step.

The issue of fossilization is only attributable to L2 acquisition. While all L1 learners reach full competence in the target language, some forms in the target language of the L2 learners might be fossilized. Teachers can prevent fossilization by correcting repeated errors of their students or they can practice problematic language more than non-problematic language. One should be aware that once fossilization takes place, it is very difficult to get rid of. Therefore, teachers should act with caution and help their students to prevent fossilization.

The last factor to be mentioned regards social issues. It was previously stated that second language learners may choose to learn a language variety other than the standard form depending on the speech community they are taking as a reference. Such is the case in natural settings and not in classroom settings. Therefore, it is the teacher's (or the teaching institution's) responsibility to decide on which variety of the target language to take as the norm. It is important to make students aware of the different varieties of the target language, but in terms of teaching, there should be consistency.

5. Conclusion

L1 and L2 acquisition are quite complicated processes. To understand these processes will enable the language teacher to be more sensitive to the factors involved. While L1 and L2 acquisition reveal some similarities, they also show differences. The teacher should understand that the phenomena in L1 and L2 acquisition are interacting, none of them being solely explanatory. So, teachers should not base their teaching on just a single claim or factor involved in language acquisition. They should rather understand, analyze, synthesize and even criticize before trying to implement any of the suggestions made for teaching.

It is also important to note that research as tried to make a distinction between "learning" and "acquisition". Especially in L2 education, the terms "learning" and "acquisition" are very often used interchangeably.

The arguments considering L1 and L2 acquisition are inconclusive and that's why many studies were conducted to explain the nature of L1 and L2 acquisition. L1 and L2 acquisition are affected by many variables. Thus, the student's profile itself is an important determiner at the decision making phase of language teaching. Finally, language teachers should combine their theoretical knowledge with their teaching situation.

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On Literal Translation of English Idioms

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Abstract

There are six translation tactics in translating English idioms into Chinese: literal translation, compensatory translation, free translation, explanational translation, borrowing, integrated approach. Each tactics should be reasonably employed in the process of translating, so as to keep the flavor of the original English idioms as well as to cater for the Chinese readers. In this paper, one of the tactics: literal translation will be discussed, which is the most commonly used tactics in translating English idioms.

Keywords: English idioms, Translation tactics, Literal translation

Every language has its own idioms, a special kind of set expressions that have developed within a language. English and Chinese are abundant in idioms. As an important part of the general vocabulary of every language, idioms are the gems of a language, which have been described as the crystallization of human wit and wisdom.

Webster's New World Dictionary of the American English (1988) defines "idiom" as: 1) the language proper or peculiar to a people or to a district, community or class; the syntactical, grammatical or structural form peculiar to a language; 2) an expression established in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in grammatical construction or in having a meaning that cannot be derived as a whole from the conjoined meanings of its elements; 3) style or form of artistic expression (as in painting, writing, composing) that is characteristic especially of an individual, a period or movement, or a medium or instrument.

We may conclude from the definitions that an idiom is an expression whose meaning is not compositional, and does not follow from the meaning of the individual words which make up of it. It is "an accepted phrase, construction, or expression contrary to the usual patterns of the language or having a meaning different from the language or having a meaning different from the literal." (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American language, 2nd college edition,* 1972)

In some senses, idioms are the reflection of the environment, life, historical culture, etc. of the native speakers and are closely associated with their innermost spirit and feelings. They are commonly used in all types of language, informal and formal, spoken and written.

As idioms are important part of languages, understanding of a language requires understanding of its idioms and the tactics for idiom translation. Translation is no easy job, especially the translation of idioms because idioms are the most difficult part to render. In general, three ways are possible in translating idioms, to name only a few : (1) to translate the idiom literally ; (2) to render the sense of the idiom ; or (3) to use an equivalent idiom in the receptor language. To make people better understand idioms, in this paper, according to Nida's "dynamic equivalence" translating theory, literal translation method of English idioms is to be discussed because it is the most commonly used tactics in translating idioms as well as a means of culture exchange.

1. Literal Translation

Literal translation is usually employed in the complete representation of the original when the original almost accords with the target language in the form of vocabulary, grammatical structure and rhetorical device, which means literal translation is a way by which the rhetoric, national and regional characteristics are kept in the target language. The aim of literal translation is to preserve the national flavor of the source language idioms, while not transgressing the linguistic principles of the target language. Translators should make every endeavor to retain the figurative image, rhetorical devices and the national characteristics of the original idioms. In this way, the meaning and form of the source language are unchanged. Sometimes, equivalent translation can be found, but mostly only similar ones. As Nida says, "Finding satisfactory equivalents for idioms is one of the most difficult aspects of translating." (Nida, E.A., 2001: 28) Many English idioms can be translated in a literal way, for instance: "A wolf in sheep's clothing" is translated literally into "Pi Zhe Yang Pi De Lang"; "To pull chestnut out of the fire" is translated literally into "Huo Zhong Qu Li" and "To be led by the nose" into "Bei Qian Zhe Bizi Zou". As to these idioms, in the process of across-cultural communication,

we have absorbed a lot of them into our language.

2. Literal Translation can produce equivalent effect

Language universal and cultural similarities are two factors in the objective world which enable across-cultural communications. People of different languages may share the same feelings, emotions and ways of thinking, because people of different nations experience the same things in the unique nature. Misunderstanding may not be aroused in translating some SL (Source Language) text literally into the TL (Target Language), when the translated text have the same literal meaning or figurative meaning and implicated meaning with the SL text. Therefore, literal translation method can be employed.

In terms of idiom translation, some idioms could be translated literally. Literal translation can keep the original form and images of English idioms without causing confusion in meaning. For example, "Break the record" is translated literally into "Da Po Ji Lu"; What's more, literal translation transfers the original cultural information effectively and conveys the implicated meaning without misunderstandings aroused and narrows the gaps between two languages, and at the same time, interests in reading can be greatly enhanced. For instance, "A rolling stone gathers no moss" is translated literally into "Gun Shi Bu Sheng Tai", it implies that a person who is constantly moving and changing from one place or occupation to another will never gain a steady, established position. And "Packed like sardines" is translated literally into "Ji Dei Xiang Guan Tou Sha Ding Yu", it is a preferred version of translation because it fulfills the function of communicative translation yet retains the original flavor of the source idiom, when the implicated meaning of the idioms can be easily inferred, the idioms can be understood literally by the reader. In this case, these kinds of idioms can be rendered through the employment of literal translation. The most important point of literal translation lies in the function of keeping the full flavor of English idioms.

Let's take the following sentence as an example, "At present the superpowers are <u>armed to the teeth</u> with nuclear weapons, placing the people of the whole world under their nuclear threat."

A. Mù Qián, Chāo Jí Dà Guó Hé Wǔ Qì <u>Wǔ Zhuāng Dào Le Yá Chǐ</u>, Bǎ Quán Shì Jiè Rén Mín Dōu ZhìYú Tā Men De Wēi Xié Zhī Xià.

B. Mù Qián, Chāo Jí Dà Guó Yòng Hé Wǔ Qì <u>Quán Fù Wǔ Zhuāng</u>, Bǎ Quán Shì Jiè Rén Mín Dōu ZhìYú Tā Men De Wēi Xié Zhī Xià.

Obviously A fits the original sentence better than B because the English idiom "armed to the teeth" and its Chinese meaning "Wu Zhuang Dao Le Ya Chi" are perfectly equivalent. A employs literal translation, which keeps the original form and images and causes no confusion at all, at the same time, vivifies the expression, and above everything else, keeps the full flavor of this idiom. On the contrary, B, a free version, with the loss of cultural meaning, violates the "faithfulness" of translation criteria. Here are some more examples with literal translation from English into Chinese with Nida's "dynamic equivalence" theory employed:

Turn a deaf ear   (Zhi Ruo Wang Wen)

To be on the thin ice   (Ru Lǔ Bo Bing)

a gentleman's agreement   (Jun Zi Xie Ding)

It is obvious that all the above idioms are rendered into Chinese by employing literal translation, which keeps the original form and images, at the same time, vivifies the expression, and above everything else, keeps the full flavor of the idioms. The Chinese renditions of these English idioms are so well-selected that the idioms and their Chinese counterparts: "Zhi Ruo Wang Wen", "Ru Lǔ Bo Bing", and "Jun Zi Xie Ding" almost contain the same messages and adopt the same rhetorical devices. Similarly, "Barking dogs do not bite" can be translated literally into "Fei Gou Bu Yao Ren", "All roads lead to Rome" is "Tiao Tiao Da Dao Tong Luo Ma" and "What's done is done and can't be undone" is literally translated into "Mu Yi Cheng Zhou, Fu Shui Nan Shou", in translating them in this way, wisdom of the people is conveyed figuratively to different readers in much the same way through different languages.

To produce equivalent effect on the minds of the readers, the same or similar metaphor is used to render them into corresponding Chinese for the purpose of faithfully and vividly reproducing both the original message and flavor of the original. Thus, information concerning wisdom and suitable ways of behaving from those English-speaking countries can be passed on to us Chinese vividly and correctly.

3. Conclusion

Examples of literal rendering in the translation of English idioms are numerous. Indeed, literal translation should claim top priority in translation, because translation is a means of culture exchange. During the process of translating, a translator should respect both the source language and the target language and their respective culture. He should bear in mind the responsibility for introducing cultural heritage to target language readers.

Language cannot exist without culture as its component. As part of language, idioms are characterized by their richness

and vividness in their concise expressions. In a broad sense, human beings share common culture and cultural similarities that are the overlaps of cultural features between languages. When idioms of the source language are similar to those of the target language in terms of choice of words, collocation and social meanings, according to Nida's Dynamic Equivalence theory, translation becomes easy because of the positive influence of cultural similarities. In this sense, literal translation should claim top priority in translation. The main cultural differences between Chinese and English idioms lie not only in the language expression and ways of vocabulary, grammar and rhetoric devices, but also in their different cultural backgrounds, because Chinese and English idioms originate from different cultures. Thus, in translation of idioms, much attention should be paid to the dissimilarities of cultures as well as languages themselves.

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Investigate and Evaluate Online Resources

of Reading Comprehension Test

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Abstract

If the purpose of language learning is communication, then improving students' reading comprehension competence becomes an overall goal in language teaching.

This paper examines the online resources of reading comprehension tests with non-English major college students, and tackles the problem with the teaching method of integrating web-based study into class teaching. This paper investigates what Chinese EFL college students think about their study feedback in regard to their online reading comprehension test in order to find proper and effective ways to implement reading comprehension competence through Web-based environment.

Keywords: Online reading, Reading comprehension, Internet

Since online reading is apparently different from reading on paper, various knowledge and information on Internet provide language learners with rich authentic reading materials. Web-based environment gives students a great deal of independence for their own reading. It seems that the application of Web-based reading among college EFL learners is not only possible but also feasible. Based on all these ideas, the study focuses on the investigating and evaluating online resources of reading comprehension tests.

1. Instruction

1.1 Background

In China today, English reading instruction in most secondary schools still focuses on intensive reading. Based on certain textbooks, teachers' reading instruction mainly includes words explanation, text translation and grammar illumination. As a result, the reading amount of most middle school students is quite limited. Therefore, most middle school students, when they enter into colleges, urgently need to be provided with interesting reading materials, meaningful reading activities and chances of independent reading and collaboration. Only in this way can these freshmen get through the transition from secondary schools to universities smoothly and quickly, and acclimatize themselves to the reading instruction in colleges.

1.2 Importance of online reading tests

The importance of computer working and Internet to education and language learning has increased significantly during the last few years. Web-based language learning has already been promoted as a good teaching method and as an effective instrumental tool to improve students' language performance. In most Chinese colleges nowadays, CALL, as a new and effective approach of language instruction, has already been employed in various areas of language teaching, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teaching and learning seem to move more and more towards digital modes, and electronic books seem to be used to replace some textbooks, reference manuals, and professional publications. Online reading tends to become an important form of reading for some people (especially students and professionals). Therefore, online reading instruction might be regarded as one part of reading instruction in schools, and be used as a valuable addition to other reading instruction models in regular classrooms.

2. Purpose of the study

Reading comprehension is the process of understanding and constructing meaning from a piece of text. Till now, though some empirical studies concerning online reading had been conducted, little of them had been conducted in the context of colleges in China, let alone using some qualitative and quantitative methods to prove its effectiveness, validity and reliability. The aim of the present study is to find out whether the application of online reading has positive affects in promoting their overall reading ability.

3. Procedure of the study

A ten-week online reading experiment as a new extensive reading course entitled Online English Reading was conducted among a group of Chinese college freshmen (n=100) majoring in law. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the study. Various forms of data were collected through students' feedback sheets. After analyzing the final data by the software Excel, we discussed and concluded main findings of the study. The following is students' feedback sheets.

Report: Online Reading Tests

Class: No.   Name:

Deadline: Nov. 10 th

Suggested websites: _____ (at least 3 websites)

Text type: _____

(essay, story, news, letter, advertisement, lecture, etc.)

Difficulty level:_____ (easy, difficult, normal)

Items Count:_____

(MC, T-F; yes/no, Gap –filling, Short-answer, Guessing meaning, Inference, etc.)

Time Count:_____

Marks: _____

Evaluation: _____
_____. (website, passage, items)

4. Result

Analysis of the data reveals the following major results. About 80 websites are suggested among 100 sheets. As a whole, the research result from the investigation suggests that online reading has some advantages over teaching reading comprehension in class with the pre-taped materials in text. Most studies comparing reading on paper and reading on computer screen focus on the time variable and show that it takes subjects longer to read from the screen than to read the same material from paper (Askwall, 1985; Smith&Savory, 1989). A number of variables, such as the size, type, method, websites and quality of the screen, may have influenced the marks.

5. Evaluation

Online reading tests are a valuable learning method. It would only be feasible with a computer available); free teacher; link to outside the classroom; diversify teaching. Interestingly, less resistance to task-based learning on the Web appears to be reported than in the pre-Web era where students were often found to resist the use of technology, and to prefer to work with pen and paper (Felix, 1997; Gillespie&McKee, 1998). Major blocks to successful development of online reading tests: lack of time; level of expertise required; lack of agreed standards; level of acceptance in wider context; publishing problems; lack of information sharing; lack of suitable software.

In sum, online reading tests may have its own problems, but it can add a valuable dimension to face-to-face teaching by providing an environment for meaningful interactive tasks in authentic settings, or at least in settings that are rich in authentic language and culture. There is no sense in advocating online reading as the sole medium of instruction, but, used at its best; it can be seen as a uniquely valuable addition to already excellent teaching in the classroom.

6. Conclusion

The core of the modern educational technology, in a certain sense, means the development and application of computer technology, the terminal trend of which is the web-based multi-media, which, because of its technological advancement and functional powerfulness, is being exploited and applied quickly to teaching and represents the direction of modern educational technology development. However, the development of the educational technology application will not necessarily improve the teaching efficiency, for it must be answerable to reading comprehension may be affected by the difficulty of the text, the vocabulary words used in the text, and the student's familiarity with the subject matter, the operational processes, methods, the real-time class recordings and etc. The result part elaborates the virtues and disadvantages of the application of web-based reading. I hope my thesis will do some help, both theoretically and practically, the Chinese teachers learn how to apply the multi-media technology on reading.

Notes: The paper is one of the research results of Institute-level task "task-driven" model of teaching English in Higher Education, in Beijing Youth Politics College.

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English Language Teaching

Quarterly