

FACES OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

Students, Teachers, and Pedagogy

Edited by
Lillian L. C. Wong and Ken Hyland



FACES OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

Faces of English Education provides an accessible, wide-ranging introduction to current perspectives on English language education, covering new areas of interest and recent studies in the field. In seventeen specially commissioned chapters written by international experts and practitioners, this book:

- offers an authoritative discussion of theoretical issues and debates surrounding key topics such as identity, motivation, teacher education and classroom pedagogy;
- discusses teaching from the perspective of the student as well as the teacher, and features sections on both in- and out-of-class learning;
- showcases the latest teaching research and methods, including MOOCs, use of corpora, and blended learning, and addresses the interface between theory and practice;
- analyses the different ways and contexts in which English is taught, learnt, and used around the world.

Faces of English Education is essential reading for pre- and in-service teachers, researchers in TESOL and applied linguistics, and teacher educators, as well as upper undergraduate and postgraduate students studying related topics.

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FACES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE RESEARCH AND TEACHING

Ken Hyland and Lillian L. C. Wong

Faces of English may seem a strange title for a book on language education. Perhaps it encourages you, as a reader, to envisage the diversity of the some 1.5 billion people said to be learning the language, or the multiple ways it is used around the globe, from ordering a meal in a Singapore food court to giving a Nobel acceptance speech. It might also make you think of the diverse conceptions of English found in the literature, where it is seen as a lingua franca between interlocutors who share no other language, as an international language of business, tourism, and scholarship, as a tool of repression, as a marker of social class, or as a resource for making one's way in a world which requires it for professional transactions. However, as we understand it, English is always used in particular local contexts by social groups trying to achieve some purpose or other. We use the language to communicate not with the world but with other members of our social groups, whether these are social, professional, or academic; and this not only means there are many *Englishes*, but also that the one we choose to use at any given time marks us out as a certain type of person: as, for example, an engineer, dock worker, loving husband, or exchange student.

For us, the idea of *Faces of English* is a useful way to capture the different facets of teaching and learning English in a way which embraces the perspectives of those involved and which includes some of the key topics currently being debated. Indeed, language education is a multi-faceted enterprise which can be seen from a variety of different perspectives, from its impact on the identities of learners in different contexts, through its effect on a teacher standing in front of her first class in a foreign country, to decisions about designing Massive Open Online Courses or adopting learning analytics to empower language learners. In this book we bring together a range of authors to capture the perspectives of language researchers, theorists, and classroom practitioners on some of these issues of contemporary significance in English language education.

Faces of English was also the theme of a conference hosted by the Centre for Applied English Studies at the University of Hong Kong, where the editors work, in the summer of 2015. Some of the contributors to this book presented their chapters at that conference, and we have recruited others to fill out under-represented areas. In this present form, our aim is to offer an exploratory but authoritative discussion of English language education from an integrated and multifocal perspective, bringing together the three central dimensions of education announced in our subtitle: students, teachers, and pedagogy. In doing so, we hope to present current thinking on issues of central concern to those working in English language teaching.

English language education and educators

Recent decades have seen a rapid expansion in the demand for English language teaching, such that there is concern about the lack of sufficient qualified instructors across the globe (Graddol 2014). This growth, moreover, has been accompanied by almost continuous change, with new challenges, innovative solutions, and novel issues emerging on a regular basis (Hyland & Wong 2013). Teachers constantly find themselves confronted with classroom situations and institutional expectations they have not experienced before, coming to terms with online delivery, flipped classrooms, quality audits, and students from unfamiliar places and with unknown needs. They also find themselves exposed to an ever-growing volume of research, with new journals emerging to report a seemingly endless sequence of experiments, experiences, theories, and insights about teaching and learning. Nor, of course, are teachers merely the passive recipients of top-down demands or research findings; many innovations are initiated by teachers themselves in response to changing contexts. Increasingly, then, an effective teacher is one who is able to make informed choices about the methods, materials, and procedures to use in the classroom based on a clear understanding of the current attitudes, theories, and practices in his or her profession.

Teachers are not a homogeneous group, though. To begin with, they teach in a range of situations, working in schools, colleges, universities, corporate training divisions, and language institutes, and with students of different motivations, proficiencies, language backgrounds, and needs. They come from a range of different educational and language backgrounds, with perhaps 80% of those working in non-native English speaking countries speaking English as a second language themselves (International TEFL Academy 2012). They also work in contexts where English is taught as a Second Language or as a Foreign Language, a distinction based on the language spoken by the community in which English is being studied, and where they enjoy different degrees of freedom to innovate and experiment with their teaching modes, methods, and materials. Some teachers do not work in classrooms at all but in multimedia labs, consultation rooms, or in front of a webcam.

These differences, of course, will have an impact on the kind of English students need and their motivation to acquire it, on the cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the students, on the resources and support available to teachers, and on the opportunities to take risks. There are, however, sufficient similarities between these diverse contexts to identify ELT practitioners as a discrete group with distinct career needs and experiences. Indeed, while the financial situation and job security of many teachers remains brittle, developments over the past twenty years have moved the occupation towards greater professionalism, with standards of integrity, competence, and a body of recognized knowledge becoming more widely accepted. Teachers are now supported by a range of recognized conferences, journals, certification boards, and professional bodies (e.g. TESOL 2016). All of this means there is a growing consensus on some of the main issues, enabling us to assemble topics which are likely to engage those working across a variety of situations, including those in teacher education or professional development courses without any firm idea of where they may find themselves in the near future.

Most importantly, we want to stress that a strong teacher is one who is able to relate classroom activities to relevant research and theory. Unfortunately, much of this research and thinking is scattered and hard to find, so that it often fails to reach those most in need of it. We have sought to address this gap in the present book by identifying contemporary topics in English language education, covering a range of research methodologies, practical applications, and theoretical approaches, and representing some of the best scholarship in ELT from both established experts and classroom practitioners around the world. This collection is therefore, to our knowledge, unique in providing an up-to-date, focused, and broadly conceived discussion of key issues in English language education today.

Structure of the book

The book is divided into four parts with four chapters in each. Part I focuses on issues most centrally related to students and highlights issues of motivation, identity, and learning; Part II addresses teaching and looks at current thinking on classroom pedagogies and practices; Part III concerns learning more directly, and particularly activities outside the classroom; and Part IV looks at different aspects of teacher education and professional development. The topics are timely and the chapters offer a mix of new and updated perspectives on them. Each section begins with more theoretically oriented contributions from well-established experts, followed by more empirically focused studies by practicing educators. All the chapters address the interface between theory and practice, giving a comprehensive and accessible introduction to the areas discussed, and offering a basis for further research. In other words, the following pages present what leading academics are thinking about major areas and what innovative practitioners are doing in their teaching.

Part I: Students: identity, motivation, and learning

In Chapter 2, Bonny Norton examines some of the key concepts of research into learner identity, highlighting her construct of investment, developed as a sociological complement to the psychological construct of motivation. An important focus of the chapter is an expanded model of investment (Darvin & Norton 2015), which responds to an increasingly digital world. Norton argues that debates on identity and the ownership of English are best understood as struggles for legitimacy in the context of frequently unequal relations of power at local and global levels. She exemplifies her theories with data drawn from her collaborative research on English language learning in Canada, Pakistan, Uganda, and Iran. Drawing on wider research in Hong Kong, Chile, the USA, and Mexico, she argues that the challenge for English language teachers, whether native or non-native speakers, is to promote learner investment in the language and literacy practices of classrooms by increasing the range of identities available to English language learners.

Chapter 3 turns to student learning and the relative importance of personal speaking style and task type on second language narrative retellings. Here, Peter Skehan and Sabrina Shum conduct an experimental study where two groups, of native and non-native speakers, complete four video-based narrative retelling tasks of Mr Bean extracts which vary in degree of structural organization. The results suggest that style factors are strongest where students are monitoring their performance, particularly processing at clause-level fluency. Task effects are less general and are strongest when students are trying to conceptualize what to say. For the non-native speakers, accuracy seems to be more task- than style-influenced, so that tasks make a difference where complexity and accuracy of language are concerned, but much less so for fluency. The importance of this study is to suggest performance areas that are likely to be more influenced by pedagogic decisions.

In Chapter 4, Rebecca Toner and Rachel Chaffin explore how students can develop an awareness of their emerging identities as language learners and as members of a local college community. To do this, they focus on the role of reflective practice in an ESL immersion programme, drawing on examples of such an emerging identity from a student's final reflection project about her immersion experience. They argue that reflective activities necessitate English language development in order for the student to accurately express understanding of and membership in the community, advocating the inclusion of reflection in course design. In this practical chapter, the authors explain how reflection was implemented in activities throughout the course, culminating in the final reflection project. The chapter concludes with the implications of reflection as a vehicle for both identity exploration and language development, and suggests potential gains from the incorporation of reflective identity activities in ESL contexts.

The final chapter in Part I looks at the motivational development and academic decision making of Chinese and international English majors at two universities

in China. Aaron Doyle employs an expanded version of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei 2009) to explore the formation of students' English-related aspirational identities—their *ideal L2 selves*—and the relationship between these emerging selves and English learning motivation. Using a questionnaire survey and a year-long interview study, he shows that because English was not the preferred major for many students there was a decline in motivation during the early years of their study. Eventually, however, the majority of Chinese students formed a clear ideal L2 self, based on using English for academic purposes in graduate schools overseas, which restored direction to their learning. In contrast, most of their international classmates had no clear objective, and this less defined ideal L2 self lacked the specificity needed to recover the lost motivation. Such contrasts in motivational orientations are not unique to Chinese universities, and Doyle concludes with suggestions that can help teachers keep their English major courses relevant and motivating.

Part II: Teaching: classroom pedagogies and practices

In Chapter 6, Rod Ellis argues for the overwhelming importance of 'input' in English language teaching. Irrespective of the approach or method a teacher adopts, it will involve exposing learners to some input provided by the teacher, by other students, and in instructional materials. Ellis understands input as providing learners with the data they can process for learning, asking: 'What kinds of input under what conditions are most likely to foster learning?' He sets out to answer this question by first discussing some common pedagogic positions, drawing on how 'input' is handled in popular teaching guides by exploring commonly held positions about authentic teaching materials, teacher talk, and extensive reading. He then examines what SLA theory has to say about the role of input in L2 learning by considering four key hypotheses: the Incidental Learning Hypothesis, the Frequency Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis, and the Noticing Hypothesis. Finally, he returns to pedagogic issues and evaluates them in the light of the SLA findings, arguing for the need to acknowledge that incidental learning is as important, if not more so, as intentional learning.

Another approach to pedagogy is advocated by Wen Qiufang in Chapter 7. Professor Wen challenges the text-centred and input-based English teaching methods which are prevalent in mainland China, arguing instead for what she calls a production-oriented approach (POA). This follows the principle of learning centredness founded on the teacher's careful guidance. With limited class time and few prospects for students to encounter or use English, this ensures the maximum opportunities for in-class learning. It is based on two assumptions. The first assumption, based on an analysis of language use in the workplace, is that professional or business communication is primarily conducted through productive activities (i.e. speaking, writing, interpreting, and translating), with receptive activities (i.e. listening and reading) as mediators. The second assumption, based on Swain's output hypothesis and adult learning psychology, is that

productive activities can yield better learning outcomes than receptive activities. For POA, then, the ultimate objective of adult English learning should be to develop learners' productive skills with receptive skills as enablers.

Maggie Charles takes a very different approach to classroom pedagogy in Chapter 8. Here she discusses and evaluates the use of self-compiled or *do-it-yourself* (DIY) corpora in the classroom. She illustrates the approach with reference to an academic writing course for postgraduates, in which students built individual corpora from research articles in their own fields and then used them to investigate the language of their disciplines. Feedback from students highlights both positive and negative aspects of the approach, and these data are supplemented by the views of three teachers who report on their experience of teaching the course. Both students and teachers agree that one of the key advantages of the approach lies in the fact that the students' corpora are highly specific to their own writing contexts. The chapter argues that the use of DIY corpora enables teaching in multidisciplinary classes to be individualized and provides students with a tailor-made resource for ongoing long-term reference.

In Chapter 9, Anne Peirson-Smith examines the teaching of a popular culture course in a Hong Kong university classroom using a blended and project-based format. The aim of the course is to enhance students' media literacy and critical engagement in the analysis and creation of online and offline texts. It requires students to work in small teams to visually and verbally create a 'fashion tribe' when exploring the notion of identity formation using a montage of images and editorial material. The creative output of each group was shared on a Facebook site following an in-class 'show and tell' session. Peirson-Smith argues that a pedagogy of intervention by the teacher in the process of knowledge enquiry helped students see connections between formal and informal academic literacies by blending the horizontal discourses of everyday life with the vertical discourses of education. Student feedback suggests that the approach resulted in a heightened critical awareness of popular culture; enhanced engagement and agency involving knowledge acquisition; and more significant learner autonomy in preparation for life outside the classroom.

Part III: Learning: activities beyond the classroom

David Nunan opens Part III by pointing out that until comparatively recently, the classroom was where language was learned, and the world beyond the classroom was where language was used. This bifurcation began to break down with communicative language teaching, which brought with it experiential learning and the notion that one could acquire a language by using it productively and communicatively inside the classroom. However, until relatively recently, opportunities for activating classroom learning in the world outside the classroom were limited in many parts of the world. Technology, particularly the Internet, has changed this by providing learners with access to a huge variety of authentic material. The proliferation of social networking sites in particular gives

learners access to opportunities to communicate with other users of the target language around the globe. Drawing on a series of case studies, Professor Nunan argues that learning through using language in authentic as well as pedagogically structured contexts outside the classroom can significantly enhance the language learning process.

In Chapter 11, Christoph A. Hafner and Lindsay Miller explore a very different approach to out-of-class learning: that of project work. The authors argue that by taking control of their learning when working with classmates, learners can achieve learning gains far exceeding anything which can be accomplished in the classroom. To explore this, Hafner and Miller describe and analyse a team-based digital video project for English for science students. The project involved two main processes: (1) brainstorming and planning, researching, scripting, storyboarding, and experimentation; (2) directing, recording, presenting, and editing. By analysing data collected from twelve groups of students, they illustrate how the students collaboratively engaged with their learning through a variety of mediated and face-to-face communication channels. Drawing on focus group interviews and social media posts between students, they examine the processes involved in students' learning experiences.

Sean McMinn turns to the issue of MOOCs in Chapter 12. Massive Open Online Courses have gained considerable attention in higher education over the past few years. While most MOOC courses tend to be content-based and are mainly related to science and technology, English language-learning MOOCs are now beginning to appear. However, McMinn argues that there is little guidance on the design of MOOCs for learning English as a second language (ESL), and even less information on whether participating in these courses is helpful for learners. This chapter explores theories related to MOOCs and networked learning and their applications to ESL pedagogy. The author also explores cases involving people from various backgrounds (i.e. age, education, nationality, English proficiency) enrolled in English courses offered by two major MOOC providers, Coursera and edX. By reviewing discussion forum activity, clickstream data, and pre- and post-course surveys, he examines how student engagement, learning strategies, assessment strategies, and learners' perceptions of English MOOCs can inform future online course design.

Michael Thomas, Hayo Reinders, and Anouk Gelan turn to a very different aspect of learning in Chapter 13, focusing on learning analytics. Learning analytics has emerged as a significant area of investigation in relation to learner profiling, improving learning outcomes and identifying learners at risk of failure. However, much of the research has focused on its role as a tool for administrators or instructors to track learners rather than as a tool to empower students or inform pedagogy. The authors here critically examine the challenges and opportunities presented by learning analytics, particularly social learning analytics in online language learning. They consider the ethical and research implications of attempts to harness big data in language learning, and examine the role that social learning analytics can play in tracing the development of language learning as a summative

process based on interaction and dialogue. The chapter draws on preliminary data from the EU VITAL project (Visualisation Tools and Analytics to monitor Online Language Learning & Teaching), and explores the role learning analytics can play in empowering learners in out-of-class contexts.

Part IV: Teachers: education and professional development

Denise E. Murray and MaryAnn Christison open this section on professional development with a chapter focusing on the affordances and limitations for teacher educators of going online. Teacher educators are increasingly turning to technology to deliver professional development and teacher education courses, and this has been especially popular among English language teachers as a result of the shortage of qualified English teachers around the world. Using data from a variety of delivery options, the authors explore online language teacher education and professional development through the lens of five themes that need to be considered in practice, policy, and research:

- the range of delivery options;
- the options for classifying and conceptualizing online learning;
- the roles of teacher educators and teacher students;
- the development of virtual communities of practice;
- the ways of ensuring quality in online teacher education.

In Chapter 15, Anita Krishnan, Courtney Pahl, and Kathleen M. Bailey explore the learning experiences of two experienced language teachers who were novice supervisors. Enrolled in a graduate seminar on language teacher supervision, the two teachers had each taught a language lesson and received feedback on that lesson. Each teacher then wrote a paper about the experience of being supervised, linking their responses to the literature they had read in the seminar. Subsequently, both trainees observed three different classes and held post-observation conferences with the teachers they had observed. The trainees' audio-recorded and transcribed excerpts formed sensitive parts of the conferences (e.g. where they were critical of the observed teacher's performance). The transcripts were analysed for mitigation strategies, and the two novice supervisors were interviewed to see what they learned from the process of conducting observations and post-observation conferences, and from analysing their own supervisory discourse. The authors discuss the insights of the trainees and connect these to the research literature on teacher supervision.

Laura Taylor explores a different context of teacher education in Chapter 16, looking at the experiences of untrained, short-contract novice teachers in Korean language schools. As she points out, the overseas private-sector market for Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) in South Korea, as in many other countries, is large and growing. As a result, many Native English Speaking graduates are attracted by the good salaries and housing benefits on offer, as well as the appeal

of working in an exotic location. Without teaching qualifications or experience, however, and with minimal local training, many struggle in the classroom. With the added difficulties of coping with a different culture and language, many teachers experience increased anxiety and reduced motivation. Based upon a longitudinal case study in the private language school sector, Taylor discusses the role of the novice NEST in the classroom, the opportunities typically available, and the challenges they face.

Closing the book is a chapter by Vincent Greenier on the challenges of constructivist teaching. This discusses how modern student-centred learning has lagged in the East Asia EFL context, and explores the experiences of a teacher using constructivist approaches with a Project-Based Learning curriculum with English Education majors in South Korea. The author first addresses five challenges to constructivist teaching that were encountered in both cases: (1) preparing students for high-stakes exams; (2) teaching low and mixed levels of English proficiency; (3) providing fair and transparent assessment; (4) coping with time-constraints; and (5) changing roles as a 'teacher'. The author illustrates how the process of facing such obstacles holds important implications for teacher education and professional development. He concludes by arguing that teacher education should adopt a constructivist framework by encouraging teacher-learners to collaborate with peers, take calculated risks, formulate open-ended hypotheses to problems, and continuously analyse and reflect on experiences.

Together, these chapters offer a collection of up-to-the-minute studies and reflections on key issues in contemporary thinking and practice in English language teaching and learning. They not only capture some of the most exciting and important developments in the field, but also illustrate a variety of methods, of both research and teaching, and perspectives on current issues.

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PART I

Students

**Identity, motivation,
and learning**



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2

IDENTITY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS ACROSS GLOBAL SITES

Bonny Norton

Introduction

In a special issue of the *TESOL Quarterly* on Language and Identity that I guest-edited two decades ago (Norton 1997), I introduced the issue with an article that explored debates about whether English belongs to native speakers of English, to speakers of standard English, or to all of those who speak it, irrespective of linguistic and sociocultural identities. As I will argue in this chapter, debates on identity and English language learners are best understood in the context of social relations of power across both local and global sites, from the interaction between two people in a local community to the relationship between nation states. While such debates pertain to all languages, the discussions are particularly salient with respect to English, precisely because of the power English exerts as a global language, and the opportunities English can provide for those who speak, read, and write it, both on and offline. Of central interest to this chapter are the questions: How do English language learners across global sites navigate their identities in changing times? What impact can identity research have on theory and practice in English language education?

When addressing these questions two decades ago, cognitive and psychological theories dominated understandings of how languages are learnt, and theories of the good language learner interpreted individuals as having an essential, unique, fixed, and coherent core. In more traditional research, language learners were often defined in binary terms as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, with little reference to unequal relations of power between language learners and target language speakers, whether in ESL or EFL contexts. Drawing on the work of Christine Weedon (1987), I argued that identity is multiple, changing, and a site of struggle, shaped not only by material conditions and lived experiences but also by learners' imagined

futures (Kanno & Norton 2003). I have therefore defined identity as ‘how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future’ (Norton 2013: 45). While learners can speak from multiple positions, they can also be positioned in undesirable ways, which may limit opportunities for them to speak and be heard. For example, the identity categories of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation can shape interaction in different learning contexts, and the opportunities that are available for language learning.

In this chapter, I will first discuss the key influences on my theories of identity, and discuss the ways in which these ideas are being enriched in more recent research. I will also address the theory of investment that I developed as a sociological complement to the psychological construct of motivation. I will then illustrate the ways in which theories of identity and investment have helped to inform my research with a range of English language learners in Canada, Pakistan, Uganda, and Iran. Thereafter, drawing on the research of scholars in Hong Kong, Chile, the USA, and Mexico, I consider the implications of identity research for English language teaching across global sites.

Theories of identity and investment

My theories of identity and investment have arisen from the recognition that language is both a linguistic system and a social practice in which identities are forged, negotiated, and sometimes resisted. The conceptualization of language as both a linguistic system and a social practice is well articulated by the French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu (1991), whose constructs of ‘legitimate language’ and the ‘legitimate speaker’ provide important insight into debates on identity and English language learning in the global community. What and who is considered ‘legitimate’ must be understood with respect to a given ‘field’ or social context that is often characterized by unequal struggles for meaning, access, and power. For example, when non-native English speaking teachers interact with students, their perceived ‘legitimacy’ as teachers is often related to the politics of place. A qualified non-native English teacher in Uganda, Pakistan, or Chile might be considered a highly valued ‘legitimate’ English teacher in each of these contexts. However, if the teacher were to move to a country in which her or his variety of English was not valued, the teacher’s legitimacy as both a speaker and teacher of English might be compromised, with a negative impact on the teacher’s identity.

While such shifts of identity, for both teachers and students, might be associated with transitions from countries in which English is taught in what Kachru (1986) has called the ‘expanding circle’ or ‘outer circle’, to countries of the ‘inner circle’, there are cases in which transitions may take place in the reverse direction, i.e. from the inner to outer circle, with equally disruptive identity shifts. In my research with Margaret Early in Uganda, for example, we describe an email we received from a newly graduated Ugandan student, Doris Abiria, who had spent

a year with her husband and two young boys at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. After returning to Uganda, Ms Abiria wrote to us as follows (Early & Norton 2012: 195):

The boys are getting better. In school the teachers complain they have gone with a style they are calling Western. The teachers say the boys have an accent that they do not hear while the boys say the teachers speak English up side down . . . Paul talks to the teacher in class any time he wishes when children are expected first to listen to the teacher and talk when the teacher asks them. Now we keep checking on them frequently in school and supporting them more at home. We hope that by next year they will be okay.

For young Paul, English as a linguistic system and a social practice was being renegotiated in the Ugandan context. If Paul was to be accorded the identity of a successful Ugandan student, he needed to adjust to the variety of English considered legitimate in his Ugandan school, and he needed to adopt the classroom practices expected of young learners in this context.

In order to capture this complex relationship of language learners to the target language, I have developed the sociological construct of ‘investment’ (Norton 2013; Norton Peirce 1995). Recognizing that language learning as a social practice is implicated in the operation of power, the construct of investment signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. As I have noted, ‘if learners “invest” in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic resources (language, education, friendship) and material resources (capital goods, real estate, money) which will increase the value of their cultural capital and social power’ (Norton 2013: 6). As a complement to the psychological construct of motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2009), learners can be highly *motivated* to learn a language, but may not necessarily be *invested* in the language practices of a given classroom if it has practices that are, for example, racist or sexist. In addition to asking ‘Are students motivated to learn a language?’ researchers and teachers are therefore encouraged to ask the additional question, ‘To what extent are students and teachers invested in the language and literacy practices of a given classroom and community?’

Because identity is often a site of struggle, investment is complex, contradictory, and frequently in a state of flux. To successfully negotiate the conditions of power that enable or constrain English language learning, learners need to develop a communicative competence that goes beyond understanding the rules of use of a target language. They also need to understand how these rules are socially and historically constructed to support the interests of dominant groups, and they need to learn what Kramsch (2009) has called symbolic competence. As a theoretical tool, investment helps scholars and teachers examine the conditions under which social interaction takes place, and the extent to which

social relations of power enable or constrain the range of identities available to language learners.

An expanded model of investment

In the 1990s, when I developed my early theories of identity and investment, large-scale migrations were transforming the economic and cultural landscapes of many urban centers. As people of different language backgrounds crossed borders to fill the labour needs of these countries, these urban centres became more multilingual and multicultural. Learning English in countries like the USA, Canada, and the UK was critical in enabling migrants to integrate into their new communities and find meaningful employment. The theory of investment became a means to examine how non-native English speakers were able to access and participate in contexts usually dominated by native English speakers (cf. McKay & Wong 1996). Research on investment has not been restricted to Anglophone countries, however, with special issues on the topic in both China and francophone Europe (see Arkoudis & Davison 2008; Bemporad 2016; Norton & Gao 2008).

As technological innovations continue to transform the 21st century by offering a more flexible and multimodal engagement with the world, there are important implications for theories of language, identity, and investment (Darvin 2016). The spaces of socialization and information exchange continue to multiply, in both face-to-face and virtual worlds, locally and globally. As learners move fluidly across transnational borders, they are able to learn and use English in exciting new ways. How they negotiate these spaces has become increasingly relevant to language education research, even as the power operating in these spaces becomes less visible. It has therefore become necessary to examine how investment in this shifting communication landscape positions learners in new ways. In this new communicative order, how do English language learners claim the right to speak?

To provide a critical framework that responds to these questions, I have worked with Ron Darvin to develop an expanded model of investment that responds to the demands of a more mobile and fluid world, where language learners move in and out of online and offline contexts (Darvin & Norton 2015). This model recognizes how the skills, knowledge, and resources learners possess are valued differently in these multiple spaces. As learners are able to interact with others from different parts of the world that share specific interests, language learners are exposed to a range of belief systems and worldviews. To draw attention to how these ideologies operate on micro and macro levels, this model examines both communicative events and communicative practices. Institutional processes and patterns of control shape what become regular practices, but it is in specific instances or events that learners are able to question, challenge, and reposition themselves to claim the right to speak. Our model thus locates investment at the intersection of identity, capital, and ideology, in order to provide a

window on the ways in which structures of power work, while finding opportunities for language learners to exercise agency (see Figure 2.1).

In our model, Darvin and I refer to ‘ideologies’ as ‘dominant ways of thinking that organize and stabilize societies while simultaneously determining modes of inclusion and exclusion’ (Darvin & Norton 2015: 72). Neoliberal ideology, for instance, upholds the supremacy of market forces and the pursuit of profit (Duchêne & Heller 2012). Ideological assumptions guide the choices people make until these assumptions become ‘common sense’, and repeated actions become ‘practice’. Hence, ideology is constructed and maintained through the imposition of power, hegemonic consent, and the repetition of practices. In the same way, language ideologies that privilege English, for instance, are reproduced through language policies constructed by governments, the acquiescence to such policies, and the use of English in different discourses with limited forms of resistance.

As learners navigate across online and offline spaces, ideologies collude and compete, shaping learner identities and positioning them in different ways, which complements the view of identity as multiple and fluid. In our research in Uganda, for example, we have found contrasting ideologies related to Ugandan English, in which some teachers consider it ‘broken English’ and others consider it culturally

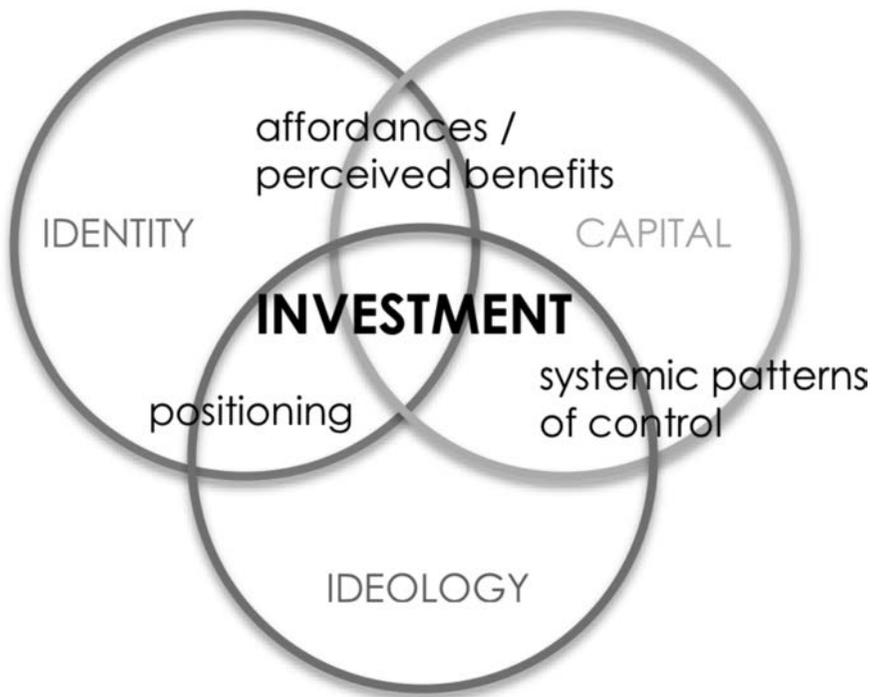


FIGURE 2.1 Darvin and Norton’s 2015 model of investment

appropriate (Early & Norton 2014). Depending on which teacher instructs a given class, language learners may consider themselves either inadequate or highly competent, or vacillate from one teacher to the next. As such, the model recognizes that the value of a learner's economic, cultural, or social capital shifts as it travels across time and space. However, the value of capital is subject to but not completely constrained by the ideologies of different groups or fields. As Bourdieu (1991) notes, it is only when different forms of capital are perceived and recognized as legitimate that they become symbolic capital. It follows that the extent to which teachers are able to recognize the value of the linguistic or cultural capital learners bring to the classroom—their prior knowledge, home literacies, and mother tongues—will impact the extent to which learners will invest in the language and literacy practices of their classrooms.

English language learning across global sites

Drawing on my collaborative research on identity and English language learning across global sites, I will now illustrate the ways in which the 2015 model of identity and investment can help to inform theory and practice in English language education. Of central interest in the model is the interplay of identity, capital, and ideology, and the conditions under which language learners invest in the language and literacy practices of their classrooms. The model extends the question, 'To what extent are learners invested in the language and literacy practices of their classrooms and communities?' to a wider range of questions, as given below. These questions will then be discussed in greater detail with reference to my research in Canada, Pakistan, Uganda, and Iran, where children, youth, adolescents, and adults, respectively, navigated their relationship to the English language.

1. What do learners perceive as *benefits* of investment, and how can the capital they possess serve as *affordances for learning*?
2. What *systemic patterns of control* (policies, codes, institutions) make it difficult for learners to invest and acquire certain capital? How have prevailing *ideologies* structured learners' investments?
3. What are learners' imagined *identities*? How do these impact their investment in different language and literacy practices?

Young English language learners in Canada

In my research with Archie comic readers in Canada (Norton & Vanderheyden 2004), I collaborated with Karen Vanderheyden to examine the investments of young girls and boys in Archie comic books, written in English. The readers were approximately 9–11 years of age, and were both native speakers of English and migrant English language learners. We learnt from some of the migrants that it was comic book reading, more than any other activity, which had advanced their English skills, and that they engaged in translingual practices (Canagarajah

2013), in both the mother tongue and English, when discussing Archie comics with peers from their migrant community. Native speakers also provided important insight into the relationship between Canadians and migrant students. A boy we called Dylan, for example, defined newcomers to Canada as ‘kids with English problems’, and shared an intriguing reflection on why popular culture can improve relationships between native and non-native speakers of English:

- Karen: I want to find out one more thing. You’ve got ESL kids and a lot of them hang out with their own group of friends. Then you’ve got English-speaking friends and they hang out together. Is popular culture like Archie a good way of bringing kids together?
- Dylan: Well, yes because I know that one reason most of the kids with English problems and kids with good English don’t relate is because the English kids seem to think that either they are stupid because they can’t speak English which is totally a misconception or they’re not like them and they’re kind of pushed away by that.
- Karen: So that’s what you think, that it’s a good way ’cause they can talk to each other?
- Dylan: ’Cause it would give them something to realize that these kids like some things that they like, that they are kids who like things that other kids like, which is a way of bringing them together.

With reference to the question given above, ‘How have prevailing *ideologies* structured learners’ investments?’, we have much to learn from young Dylan. First, although the current literature in the field (Blackledge & Creese 2009; May 2014) reflects the ideological position that English language learners should be positioned as valued ‘multilingual’ learners rather than as deficient ‘ESL’ learners, the comment from Dylan suggests that this ideological position has had little penetration in his school and community. Multilingual students are still, for Dylan and his peers, ‘kids with English problems’ who are sometimes considered ‘stupid’. Clearly, this ideological position would have impacted how young migrants saw themselves in Dylan’s school, and how they perceived their power relative to native speakers.

Second, with reference to the question, ‘What do learners perceive as *benefits* of investment, and how can the capital they possess serve as *affordances for learning*?’ the data is more promising. Implicit in Dylan’s comments is that if the social capital of English language learners is to be enhanced (leading to more regular interaction with native speakers and enhanced language learning), there needs to be investment on the part of both native speakers and language learners. In other words, both the native speaker and the language learner need to appreciate that benefits can accrue from their mutual interaction. As Dylan said of migrant

students, ‘they are kids who like things that other kids like, which is a way of bringing them together.’ Dylan suggests that it is the common interest in Archie comics that can provide this dual investment, and that language learners’ knowledge of Archie comics (their cultural capital) could serve as an affordance for learning and social engagement. This finding has significant implications for classroom practice and the important role that teachers can play in providing opportunities for young non-native English speakers to interact productively with young native speakers.

Pakistani youth as English language learners and tutors

In my research with Farah Kamal in Pakistan (Norton & Kamal 2003), we examined the investments in English of middle-school students aged approximately 12–14 who, while English language learners themselves, had been active in teaching English to young orphans from Afghanistan. In relation to the question on the benefits of investment, students discussed the perceived usefulness of English, both locally and internationally, in advancing the speaker’s cultural, economic, and social capital. As Shahida said:

The English language is an international language spoken all over the world and it is the language of science. Therefore to promote their education and awareness with modern technologies, it is important to teach [the Afghanis] English.

Pakistani students noted that knowledge of English would enable the Afghan children to communicate directly with people all over the world, without the help of translators, and explain to the wider community how much they had suffered. Fariha’s comments have important implications for ideological positions taken up in the international community, in which English often serves as a *lingua franca*:

English is the language spoken commonly. This language is understood throughout the world. If the Afghan children learn English, know English, speak English, they will be able to discuss their problems with the people of the world.

With regard to cultural capital associated with English, students such as Jamshed noted further that English serves as a common language not only across nations but within nations, which in turn has important implications for both an individual and a nation’s imagined identity:

We choose this as our next step because English is the international and global media language and most of the Afghan immigrants do not know English and have no particular language to communicate with local

[Pakistani] people. Therefore we choose this as the next step so they can communicate with local people.

With regard to the model of investment, what we learn from these young Pakistanis is that Pakistan youth, as tutors, were highly invested in teaching English to the Afghani children because they had learnt that language, and English in particular, is central to the exercise of power, both locally and internationally. Of interest in our study was some evidence of resistance to this ideological position.

Adolescent English language learners in Uganda

Turning now to my long trajectory of research in the African country of Uganda, one particularly interesting research participant was Henrietta, an 18-year-old female student who participated in a study on the use of digital resources for HIV/AIDS education and enhanced English language learning (Norton, Jones, & Ahimbisibwe 2011). Henrietta lived in a rural Ugandan village that had limited electricity and no running water, with a per capita income of less than \$1 a day. In the study, we brought Henrietta and her peers to an Internet café in a neighbouring town to research HIV/AIDS. By working on this task, Henrietta and other students were able to develop the skills of navigating the web to find the information they needed, while at the same time improving their English skills. During data collection, Henrietta noted that her ‘main interest in learning more about computers is to know how they use Internet, to communicate to people in the outside countries’. She stated her belief that knowledge gained through the Internet would enhance self-knowledge, as she would learn more about herself ‘through sharing view with Canadian people’. Her fervent desire to ‘join the group of knowledgeable people in the world’ indexes a powerful imagined identity that helped structure her investment in the language and literacy practices of the digital literacy course.

Ron Darvin and I have noted, however, that Henrietta’s opportunities to develop her literacy and to continually engage in transnational conversations in English may be highly restricted (Darvin & Norton 2015). Not only is Henrietta’s own economic capital limited, but the technological infrastructure of her local community is poorly resourced. In this case, both her own social location and the economic position of rural Uganda constrain access to the technology necessary for Henrietta to master literacies relevant to the knowledge economy. It is for situations such as this that our model of investment incorporates what we have called ‘systemic patterns of control’. While Henrietta may be driven by a strong desire to learn more about computers and to connect more regularly with other people, her social location makes it very difficult for her to enter these new spaces of socialization. Even though her desire to engage in transnational conversations can be seen as a way to increase her social capital, the perceived benefit may not be sustainable.

Because discourses of globalization construct Henrietta's own conceptions of what is valuable or not, she positions herself as inadequate, as one who is not sufficiently 'knowledgeable'. Such data is illustrative of the relationship between identity and ideologies that privilege the global over the local, and in which the global North is seen as more knowledgeable than the global South. As Henrietta seeks to gain access to affordances of learning like devices and books, systemic patterns of control will also hinder this access. These include the limited allocation of technology budgets to local schools, and connectivity challenges in rural Uganda. Ideologies that privilege urban vs. rural, middle vs. lower class, or male vs. female will also further limit opportunities for Henrietta to achieve her imagined identity.

In terms of linguistic capital, although she speaks English, a common language of the Internet, Henrietta's access to valued forms of English is also restricted. Interestingly, what she finds particularly appealing about the Internet is that it gives her the opportunity to 'understand more about English language'. As she notes, 'I got communication. I have learnt the English language because the English in Internet has been very create and it has arranged properly.' How others will position her as a teenage girl from rural Uganda will shape the dynamics of their interaction, and the value of her linguistic capital may be uneven, as exemplified by Blommaert's data from his young Tanzanian friend, Victoria (Blommaert 2003).

Adolescent and adult English language learners in Iran

In a very different part of the world, Mehri Mohammadian and I recently conducted research on the appeal of English language institutes (ELIs) for Iranian adolescents and adults (Mohammadian & Norton in press), which provides further insight into identity and English language learning internationally. ELIs in Iran are fee-charging institutions of varying sizes, which seek to provide a more communicative language curriculum than that available in Iranian schools. School-aged language learners attend English classes at ELIs after school hours, usually from 6 to 8 p.m, and enjoy the flexibility of the ELI curricula. Our 2012 pilot study focused on interviews with administrators at five ELIs in Shiraz, Iran, most of whom would agree with the following comment from one of the administrators:

The students directly, after finishing school, come here and they are so tired, but they come with interest because they like it! Because the system is totally different from the public schools. Here, we have more flexible techniques and ways of teaching.

We also found that the number of female students at ELIs is far greater than that of male students, suggesting that female students are particularly invested in the opportunities that ELIs provide. This finding is also consistent with research

around the globe that suggests the learning of English may be associated with the desire for greater gender equity (Kobayashi 2002). In the context of Iran, young women have limited mobility, and going to cinemas, restaurants, or coffee shops with friends is generally not an option approved by parents. For such families, English classes are a particularly desirable form of outdoor recreation and a place where young women can experience a different world.

We also learnt that Iranian students have diverse investments in learning English, including being able to find information from different sources on the Internet; continuing education abroad; getting scholarships; finding better jobs; travelling to foreign countries; or living abroad. Their participation in English classes at ELIs is not mandatory, but they are eager to learn English and 'they come with interest', as noted above. As for the adult language learners, we also found a range of investments in language learning. One administrator explained,

People like to learn English because it's an international language and it means a password for them to gain status. If they want to be somebody, to go abroad, to have new opportunities, they have got to learn the English language.

Such comments provide further evidence of the relationship between investment, identity, and capital, and support the argument that the imagined identity of a learner, whether a child, youth, adolescent, or adult, is particularly salient to investment in English.

Pedagogical implications

It is evident from recent publications (Mahboob 2010; Moussu & Llorca 2008; Selvi 2014) that debates on English language learning have shifted dramatically to a focus on multilingualism and transnationalism (Canagarajah 2013), and that, in the applied linguistics literature, there is increasing interest in English as a lingua franca, and its implications for identity (Jenkins 2007). Such research suggests that there is a need for innovative approaches to classroom pedagogy, teacher education, and language policy. How should the English teacher, whether native or non-native, develop classroom practices that promote investment by language learners, and enhance the range of identities available to them? In posing these questions, teachers of English are encouraged to design learning activities that recognize the rich diversity of learners, and affirm the knowledge, languages, and identities that they bring to the classroom. Learners who may be marginalized by virtue of race, gender, ethnicity, or social class can be helped to reframe their relationship with others in order to appropriate more powerful identities from which to speak, read, and write English, both on and offline (Motha 2014).

The following examples, drawn from research with English language learners and teachers in Hong Kong, Chile, the USA, and Mexico, are illustrative of the

ways in which English teachers have developed classroom practices that enhance learner investment in the English language and expand the range of identities available to both learners and teachers. What these methods have in common is innovative pedagogies with respect to ‘audience’, which is indexical of findings of the Archie comic research, discussed earlier.

Hafner (2014) (see also Hafner and Miller, Chapter 11) describes a compelling study in which university students incorporated digital literacy in their learning of scientific English, and provides convincing evidence that the students were highly invested in these pedagogical practices. Students were required to develop a project in which they conducted a simple scientific experiment and then reported their findings in two formats—one as a multimodal scientific documentary shared on YouTube for an audience of non-specialists, and the other as a written lab report for an audience of specialists. The students combined a range of modes to develop the appropriate identities with which to engage the non-specialist audiences, from that of scientist and investigative journalist to that of curious traveller. Hafner describes how each of these identities indexed different purposes, from educating the audience to entertaining it, and the students needed to harness diverse semiotic modes, including image and sound, to achieve desired effects.

With respect to experimenting with ‘audience’ in a very different context, the research of Menard-Warwick, Heredia-Herrera, & Palmer (2013) on teacher identity and online pedagogy in Chile and the USA illustrates the ways in which English teachers, both native and non-native, can navigate productive relationships to the English language. In an audience-oriented online Internet chat exchange between prospective teachers studying English in Chile and Californian graduate students who served as tutors, the researchers found that it was not the native language of the tutor that led to differences in online discussion, but rather a given tutor’s particular orientation to cultural issues. One non-native tutor, Eugenia, for example, had a more global orientation to educational and political issues, while the native speaker tutor, Dionne, had a more local orientation. Particularly interesting was the finding that the Chilean language learners were no more apprehensive about accuracy when the audience was the native speaker rather than the non-native speaking tutor, suggesting that relatively equitable power relations can be established in online communities.

Drawing on research with three non-native English teachers in Oaxaca, Mexico, Sayer (2012) describes vividly the practices adopted by these teachers as they sought greater legitimacy in their classrooms and communities. Sayer, for example, described the activities of one teacher, Carlos, who made innovative use of role-play in the classroom and provided learners with the opportunity to experiment with a variety of English speaker identities and audiences in a ‘Black Horse Restaurant’ in the classroom. Although the students did not remember all the vocabulary and struggled with some grammatical expressions, Carlos was excited that the students ‘really got into it’ (p. 48) and sought to apply in practice what they had learnt theoretically in class. Sayer noted that the three teachers’ engagements with the language did not simply comprise their competence with

respect to the linguistic forms of English, but also evoked what he called ‘their whole biographical history with the language’ (p. 79), such as the opportunities the teachers had had to travel outside Mexico. It is clear that the teachers’ knowledge of English as both a linguistic system and a social practice was implicated in their perceived legitimacy as English teachers, and in their students’ investments in the language practices of the English classroom.

Concluding comments

My research and that of colleagues internationally suggests that language learner investment is important for English language learning, and that it is useful to investigate investment with respect to the constructs of identity, capital, and ideology. Further, the range of research discussed, across a wide variety of global sites, supports the view that investment is enhanced when the pedagogical practices of the teacher increases the range of identities and audiences available to language learners, whether face-to-face, digital, or online. Such findings have important implications for research (De Costa & Norton 2016) as well as for classroom pedagogies that promote greater agency on the part of learners (see Wen, Chapter 7). Drawing on research discussed in this chapter, English teacher education programmes are encouraged to provide language teachers with greater opportunities to explore language as both a linguistic system and a social practice. Such programmes should encourage teachers to harness the social, cultural, and linguistic capital that language learners already possess, and to better understand their hopes for the future. As the ownership of English is increasingly associated with all who speak it in the global community, an examination of the identities and investments of English language learners provides much insight into the many faces of English internationally.

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3

WHAT INFLUENCES PERFORMANCE?

Personal style or the task being done?

Peter Skehan and Sabrina Shum

Fundamentally, teachers want to help their students improve, so that they develop greater control over an expanding second language system. One contribution that research can make is to suggest performance areas that are more influenced by pedagogic decisions and, contrastingly, the areas where personal speaking style may limit the scope for intervention to be influential. We will explore such a tension in the present chapter, which reports on a study investigating task and style effects on second language narrative retellings, with comparisons also between native and non-native performances. Two groups, of native and non-native speakers, completed four video-based narrative retelling tasks which varied in degree of structural organization. Performances were measured in terms of structural and lexical complexity and of fluency.

Measuring L2 task performance: complexity, accuracy, lexis, and fluency

Research into second language learning tasks has grown apace in the last thirty years, and we have learnt a great deal about the effects on second language performance of different task characteristics such as structure (Skehan & Shum 2014) and conditions such as post-tasks (Foster & Skehan 2013). An interesting feature of this research is that the measurement of task performance itself has become the focus for research, and it is now common to measure this performance in terms of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (Skehan & Foster 2008; Housen, Kuiken, & Vedder 2012). Structural complexity concerns the extent to which language is more advanced, and the two types of structural complexity measures which are most used are:

- indices of subordination (Foster, Tonkyn, & Wigglesworth 2000);
- the number of words used, on average, per clause (Norris & Ortega 2009).

Lexical complexity, in slight contrast, is meant to reflect the size of the speakers' mental lexicon, or more particularly, the size of the accessible and usable mental lexicon, as mobilized in performance. Two measures are increasingly used:

- Lexical diversity, often called the type–token ratio, reflects the number of different words in relation to the total number of words used, and is taken to be an index of the speaker's capacity to integrate different words into their performance as opposed to recycling a smaller subset of words. This method is very text length-influenced, but various methods of correction for this are available (Malvern & Richards 2002).
- Lexical sophistication (Read 2000), a text-external measure, reflects the speaker's ability to use less frequent words, and is taken to reflect the mobilization of a wider and perhaps less habitual mental lexicon.

Finally, accuracy is taken to be an index of developing control over the interlanguage system, reflecting a concern for language form and a need to avoid error. It is most commonly measured through the proportion of clauses which are error-free.

Broadly, if accuracy indicates *emerging* control, fluency is taken to represent more *developed* control, where language can be used in real time, with a degree of speed and smoothness. But it is immediately clear that there are a range of measures of fluency, and the different measures represent different sub-aspects of this overall construct. Tavakoli and Skehan (2005) proposed a three-way distinction between

- breakdown, when pauses occur in the speech stream;
- repair, when the speaker tries to deal with processing problems, as with repetition, reformulation;
- speed, as indexed by the number of words or syllables per minute.

More recently, Wang and Skehan (forthcoming) and Skehan, Foster, and Shum (2016) have proposed a realignment of these distinctions as discourse fluency, clause fluency, and speed. Discourse fluency is largely represented by pauses at clause boundaries, and is taken to represent macroplanning processes, whereas clause fluency is measured through repair indices such as reformulation plus mid-clause pausing, and is taken to represent microplanning, often in relation to lexical problems that are encountered.

Influences on second language task performance

We turn next to ask what factors might influence level of performance. First of all, there are influences from the different types of task and the conditions under

which they are done (Skehan et al. 2012). A range of influences have been identified, such as familiarity (Bui 2014), interactivity (Foster & Skehan 2013), reasoning demands (Michel 2011), and structure (Skehan 2014b). This last variable has generated fairly consistent results, with greater task structure generally being associated with greater fluency. Greater task structure is also associated with greater accuracy and, some of the time, with greater complexity (Skehan & Shum 2014). In view of this, structure will be used as a variable in the present study. In addition to task influences, the proficiency level of the speaker may have an important influence on performance generally, and fluency in particular, although the variable of proficiency has been much less researched systematically. But a third possibility, relatively unresearched up to now, is that of personal style, and here fluency is the aspect of performance which comes into prominence. Particular speakers may have an overall level of fluency which is simply part of their general speaking style. First language speakers certainly vary in speed of speech. Second language speakers, too, may vary in their fluency, not because of task or proficiency level but because of prevailing approaches to how they talk.

There is one other issue we need to consider: how native speaker data could illuminate the style–task influence tension. One role it can have is to establish a possible baseline role in evaluating task performance as occurs in Foster (2001), Foster and Tavakoli (2009), and Skehan (2009). However, such studies are few in number, and this deficiency compromises interpretations of task effects which have been found (Ellis 2011). But native speaker data can have another role. If one is interested in establishing consistency of style, there are, broadly, two general approaches.

First, one can explore whether the same speakers, in their L1 *and* in an L2, show similar evidence of consistency of style across the two languages, implying that style from the L1 carries over into L2 performance. Two interesting studies have explored the possibility of cross-language style effects. Derwing et al. (2009) researched two groups, of L1 Mandarin and Slavic L1s (Russian and Ukrainian), with both groups learning English (and living) in Canada. The groups' speaking abilities, particularly fluency, were measured in their L1s, and at three time intervals, after two months of study, after ten months, and after approximately two years. There were strong correlations between L1 fluency measures and L2 measures for speed and breakdown after two months of learning English. These correlations reduced slightly but continued to be substantial over the next two time intervals for the Slavic group, but the Mandarin group did not maintain this pattern.

The study therefore provides some evidence that fluency has strong style components, particularly at early stages, and particularly for the group whose L1s more resembled the L2. A second study explored L1/L2 fluency stability, but in this case with L1 English and L1 Turkish learners of L2 Dutch (de Jong et al. 2015). These researchers measured breakdown, repair, and speed fluency. They report substantial L1–L2 fluency correlations for breakdown, regarding length and duration of pauses, at AS (Analysis of Speech) boundary points, and mid-clause (with correlations ranging from 0.62 to 0.76). They also report substantial

correlations for repair (0.60 for repetitions and 0.68 for corrections, i.e. reformulations). In slight contrast, the L1–L2 correlation for speed, measured by mean syllable duration, was only 0.37, suggesting much less overlap. As with Derwing et al. (2009), many features of fluency showed strong style effects.

Second, one can explore the extent to which speakers, in either their L1 or their L2, show consistency in performance across different tasks. This approach, the focus of the present chapter, is less fundamental, but does illuminate whether style and consistency in task performance work similarly in the two groups, native and second language speakers. It is assumed that where relationships are similar or different for the two groups, this will provide important insights into the style–task contrast, and possibly of the psycholinguistics of second language processing.

Research questions

Following the above analysis, the research reported here is guided by two general questions:

(1) For non-native speakers, what aspects of performance in video-based narrative retellings reflect the task being done, and which aspects reflect a more general style of speaking? More specifically:

- Does degree of structure in a narrative retelling task influence measures of structural and lexical complexity and of fluency?¹
- In contrast, is there consistency of performance across tasks which vary in structure suggesting that task effects are less important than characteristic, personal style?

(2) Do native speakers perform in the same way as non-native speakers on such narrative retelling tasks? More specifically:

- Does structure influence native-speaker performance in comparable ways?
- Do native speakers show similar or different patterns of style consistency across tasks?

All performances were in English, with a group of L1-English native speakers and a different group of L1-Chinese non-native speakers of L2 English.

Method

The study

The study used four 5–7-minute Mr. Bean video excerpts. The video selections represented increasing degrees of narrative structure, established by a combination of analysis by the authors and ratings by ELT professionals. Video-based

narratives were used because they have figured prominently in previous studies of the effects of structure on performance.

1. *Crazy Golf*: Mr. Bean plays a round of Crazy Golf. A series of unconnected misadventures ensues. This narrative has a beginning and an end but no obvious structure between.
2. *Christmas*: Mr. Bean meets his girlfriend on Christmas Eve. She sees a ring she would like. But next day he gives her the picture and hook he saw in the jewellery store. This narrative has a clear beginning, middle, and end, but no obvious narrative links.
3. *Funfair*: Going to a funfair, Mr. Bean's car gets hooked to a baby's pram. He 'parks' the baby in a rocking car while he enjoys himself, returning the baby to its mother eventually. This narrative has a clear beginning and end, and some causal links.
4. *Thief*: In a park, Mr. Bean fails to take a photo of himself, and recruits a passer-by who steals his camera. He searches for the thief and finds him. The thief escapes, but is recaptured and identified amusingly. This narrative had the tightest structure and the strongest causal links.

Participants

Data were gathered from 28 NNSs and 28 NSs of English. The NNSs were 15 female and 13 male second-year students at a university in Southern China, age range 19 to 22 (mean = 21). Their proficiency, based on their College English Test scores, was low intermediate. They were able to do comparable tasks as part of their English classes. All had L1 Cantonese or Mandarin. The NSs were 15 female and 13 male international students at a university in Hong Kong. They ranged in age from 21 to 32 (mean = 26). They were familiar with narrative retellings.

Procedure

One-on-one meetings were arranged between a researcher and each participant. It was explained what was to be done. The videos were shown on a computer screen, and the participant watched each story and narrated it. Instructions were provided on the computer screen. All participants completed all four narratives, in a counterbalanced order to control for sequence effects.

Data processing

Each narrative was transcribed in CHAT format, a format for transcription of sound files in first and second language acquisition intended to facilitate exchange of data (MacWhinney 2000), supplemented by TaskProfile² coding.

Measures

There are two independent variables: structure of narrative and speaker type. The former has four values: (a) no structure (Golf), (b) a clear beginning–middle–end structure (Christmas), (c) loose problem–solution structure (Funfair), (d) tight problem–solution structure (Thief). Structure is a within-subject variable. The independent between-subjects variable of speaker type contrasted NSs and NNSs. The dependent variables comprised measures of fluency and of structural and lexical complexity³ (see Table 3.1). Pauses were defined as an interruption to the speech flow of more than 0.4 seconds, following Derwing et al. (2009).

Structural complexity was calculated by dividing the data into syntactic clauses and AS-units (Foster et al. 2000) and expressed as the ratio of clauses to AS-units. The second complexity measure (Norris & Ortega 2009), was the average number of words per clause, and reflects the internal complexity within clauses. Lexical complexity was measured in two ways. Lexical diversity was measured through the VocD subprogramme (Malvern & Richards 2002). Lexical sophistication (Read 2000) concerns the selection of less common words, defined through frequency lists. Following Meara and Bell (2001), a version of PLEX was used, outputting a value, Lambda, which reflects the ‘penetration’ in a short text of less frequent lexical items (Skehan 2009).

TABLE 3.1 Summary of the variables used in the study

<i>Fluency</i>	
<hr/>	
Speed	
Words per minute	No. of words produced per minute
Discourse	
Clause-boundary pauses per 100 words	No. of pauses at clause boundary position
Clause	
Mid-clause pauses per 100 words	No. of pauses in mid-clause position
Reformulations per 100 words	No. of times a word or expression was reformulated
Repetition per 100 words	No. of times a word or expression was repeated
<hr/>	
<i>Structural complexity</i>	
<hr/>	
Subordination index	No. of clauses divided by number of AS-units
	Average no. of words used per clause
Words per clause	
<hr/>	
<i>Lexis</i>	
<hr/>	
Lexical diversity	Corrected type-token ratio, D
Lexical sophistication	Lambda (Meara & Bell 2001), reflecting use of lower frequency words
<hr/>	

Analyses

Three analyses are reported here. The first compares native and non-native speaker performance, and uses between-subjects t-tests for each of the four tasks. The second analysis explores whether task structure has an impact on structural and lexical complexity, and on fluency, and uses one-way analyses of variance. Third, median inter-task correlations are provided for each dependent variable for native and non-native speaker groups separately. In addition, the final part of the section reports on accuracy results for the non-native speaker group.

Results

Native/non-native speaker comparisons

Table 3.2 shows the mean scores for native and non-native speaker groups for each of the four tasks. The number of times that significance was reached is shown in parentheses in the leftmost column

The dependent variables fall into two groups. The first group contains those where three or four tasks generated significant differences between the native and non-native speakers. These include D, AS-boundary pausing, mid-clause pausing, repetitions, reformulation, and words per minute. The second group contains dependent variables where no or only one significance was found; these dependent variables are lexical sophistication and words per clause. There is also one variable which is midway, with two significances, the measure of subordination complexity. The emphasis seems clearly towards the fluency measures, plus D, as separating the native and non-native groups, while the measures of complexity (structural as well as lexical sophistication) do not differentiate between them anything like so clearly.

Task effects

The descriptive data have already been shown in Table 3.2. The univariate results exploring task differences are shown in Table 3.3.

Several variables are unaffected by task. These are, broadly, the clause fluency (or repair) variables; repetition, with both native and non-native speakers; and reformulation with native speakers and mid-clause pausing for the non-natives. Reformulation with non-natives is significant, but has no clear pattern with task structure, and mid-clause pausing with native speakers just reaches significance, with only two groups (Funfair and Golf) being significantly different from one another. The pattern of significance, but no clear relation to structure, also applies to the two lexical measures and curiously in reverse to one another.

The predicted pattern—that task structure affects performance—applies to the discourse and structural measures. Greater task structure is associated with more subordination (both groups), fewer AS pauses, suggesting greater fluency (for both groups) and, with the non-native speakers, a tendency for clauses with

TABLE 3.2 Native/non-native speaker comparison: mean scores

<i>Measure, and no. of significances</i>	<i>Golf</i>		<i>Christmas</i>		<i>Funfair</i>		<i>Thief</i>	
	NS	NNS	NS	NNS	NS	NNS	NS	NNS
D (4)	41.9	26.2	57.5	40.2	48.8	34	50.9	35.6
Lexical sophistication (1)	2.27	2.19	1.79	1.71	2.16	1.96	1.93	1.84
Subordination (2)	1.39	1.3	1.38	1.30	1.52	1.37	1.53	1.53
Words per clause (1)	6.02	6.53	5.17	5.54	5.43	5.64	5.3	5.38
AS pauses per 100 words (3)	5.2	7.59	5.85	7.94	4.41	7.38	4.77	5.82
Mid-clause pause per 100 words (4)	2.66	12.43	2.55	11.6	2.11	11.6	2.36	10.9
Repetitions per 100 words (4)	1.63	9.21	1.51	8.51	1.62	9.92	1.49	9.53
Reformulations per 100 words (4)	0.61	3.17	0.66	3.56	0.67	4.65	0.51	3.85
Words per minute (4)	145	71	196	110	193	110	225	117

Significances are given beneath each pair of means, and statistically significant results are shown in boldface. Throughout N = 28 for NS and 28 for NNS.

TABLE 3.3 The effects of task structure on performance

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Native speakers</i>			<i>Non-native speakers</i>		
	<i>F</i>	<i>Signif.</i>	<i>Detailed comparison</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Signif.</i>	<i>Detailed comparison</i>
D	18.4	0.001	G<X,F<T	47.2	0.001	G < F,T < X
Lexical sophistication	47.3	0.001	X<T<F<G	20.65	0.001	X < F,T < G
Subordination	9.86	0.001	G, X < F, T	36.2	0.001	G,X < F < T
Words per clause	28.8	0.001	TFX < G	8.27	0.001	T < X,F < G
AS pauses per 100 words	8.58	0.001	X> T,G > F	19.6	0.001	G,X,F > T
Mid-clause pauses per 100 words	3.08	0.050	G > F	0.58	0.64	–
Repetitions	0.29	0.830	–	0.96	0.43	–
Reformulations	0.69	0.570	–	6.49	0.002	G < T,X < F
Words per minute	0.87	0.47–0.64		0.61–		

G = Golf; X = Christmas; F = Funfair; T = Thief.

fewer words—it is the *less* structured tasks which have more words. It seems that task structure facilitates language which itself has greater internal structure, and that the organization of what is said into clauses enables speakers to sustain fluency without so much need to pause at clause boundaries.

Intercorrelations across tasks

We turn next, in Table 3.4, to the correlations between performances across the four tasks, shown separately for native and non-native speaker groups. Only the median correlation is shown (calculated by averaging the third and fourth highest of six correlations).

Strikingly high cross-task correlations are evident for repetition, mid-clause pauses, AS-boundary pauses, and D. All of these, except D, measure fluency. Less elevated correlations are found for words per clause, and clauses per AS-unit. Then we have some interesting disparities between the native and non-native groups. Lexical sophistication shows a high correlation for the native speakers (0.67) but not for the non-natives (0.20). The converse pattern appears, with higher correlations for the non-natives, for reformulation (0.45 vs. 0.78) and words per minute (0.27 vs. 0.62).

TABLE 3.4 Median correlations for task performance measures

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Native speakers</i>	<i>Non-native speakers</i>
D	0.70	0.78
Lexical sophistication	0.67	0.20
Subordination	0.58	0.50
Words per clause	0.40	0.43
AS pauses per 100 words	0.77	0.79
Mid-clause pause per 100 words	0.66	0.78
Repetitions	0.83	0.90
Reformulations	0.45	0.78
Words per minute	0.27	0.62

Accuracy

The main presentation of results has not included data for accuracy, principally because accuracy was not an issue for the native speaker group. But accuracy was measured for the non-natives. Two measures were used. The first was the proportion of clauses that were error-free. The second was the maximum length of clause that could be produced error-free at the level of 70% accuracy or better for the total clauses at that length. (See Skehan & Foster 2005 for further details on this measure.) Both measures were significant for task. The results suggested that greater structure in a narrative task was associated with a greater degree of accuracy. In general there was little difference between the two most structured narratives, *Funfair* and *Thief*, but both were significantly higher than the other two narratives. One can also examine the degree of intercorrelation of the accuracy measures across tasks. The median values were 0.41 for error-free clauses and 0.29 for length accuracy. In other words, the level of relationship for accuracy across tasks is only moderate. Knowing a participant's accuracy score on one task, that is, does not allow one to say very much about accuracy on the other narrative tasks.

Discussion

There are three general patterns in the results. The first, and the largest, has two things in common: (a) a lack of an effect of task structure on performance; and (b) high cross-task (median) correlations. The data are shown in Table 3.5, as is the number of significant differences between native and non-native speakers.

Within the first pattern, there are interesting sub-patterns. Both native and non-native speakers show remarkable consistency in repetition, and mid-clause pausing. In addition, the non-natives are consistent in their reformulations. All of these are concerned with what might be termed the surface of language while it is being formulated, and reflect some degree of monitoring. They are, basically, connected with claims about repair fluency or, in more recent formulations

TABLE 3.5 Pattern 1: No task structure effect, clear style effect

<i>Dependent measure</i>	<i>No. of NS/NNS significances: Max=4</i>	<i>NS median inter-task correlation</i>	<i>NNS median inter-task correlation</i>
Repetition	4	0.83	0.90
Filled pauses	4	0.86	0.96
Mid-clause pauses	4	0.66	0.78
Reformulation	4	0.45	0.78
Words per minute	4	0.27	0.62

(Skehan, Foster, & Shum 2016), clause-based fluency. Although there is no task difference here, there are consistent significant differences between the native and non-native speakers. Each group may be consistent in how much repair they engage in, but they do so to considerably different degrees, with the non-natives, predictably, being the ones whose mean scores are much higher. In other words, there is a strong indication of style, specifically with respect to clause-based fluency measures.

In addition, one other variable, the words-per-minute measure, meets the criteria for this pattern but for one group only. Native speakers show little inter-task agreement here, but the non-natives show much more consistency. Natives, that is, seem to vary their speed across the different tasks, and so style cannot be proposed for this—this group seems to adapt to the circumstances. The non-natives, in contrast, with a median correlation of 0.62, seem to have a prevailing speed which is less influenced by the task at hand. Interestingly, de Jong et al. (2015) report broadly comparable L–L2 correlations, in a within-subjects study, with 0.60 (repetition), 0.73 (filled pauses), 0.65 (mid-clause pauses), 0.62 (reformulation), and 0.37 (words per minute) with this value being close to the NS median inter-task correlation in the present study.

We turn next, in Table 3.6, to the most clearly contrasting Pattern 3, characterized by significance where task is concerned, but with low or moderate median inter-task correlations.

TABLE 3.6 Pattern 3: Task effects, lower style effects

<i>Dependent measure</i>	<i>No. of NS/NNS significances: Max = 4</i>	<i>NS median inter-task correlation</i>	<i>NNS median inter-task correlation</i>
Subordination	2	0.58	0.50
Words per clause	1	0.40	0.43
Lexical sophistication	1	0.67	0.20
Reformulation	4	0.45	0.78

The intercorrelations for subordination and words per clause are each at a moderate level. The difference between the native and non-native groups is not that great, with one significance for the words-per-clause measure and two for the subordination measure. So it appears that whether more complex language is used does rely on style to a limited extent, but is strongly task-influenced. That this applies to both groups leads one to conclude that tasks themselves, if appropriately designed, do have some potential to push complexity.

The two other variables in this pattern only apply to one of the groups. Lexical sophistication does show an appreciable median intercorrelation for the native speakers, but not for the non-natives. For native speakers, then, lexical style is a stable attribute. In contrast, non-natives show very little cross-task consistency here. Their use of less frequent lexical items, it would seem, is not the result of a stable, well-organized mental lexicon, but reflects more the demands of a particular task, and the words they have available that are relevant. The final measure, reformulation, is fairly straightforward to interpret. Non-natives are consistent in the extent to which they reformulate, and do so frequently, whereas the native speakers are not consistent in this way, and hardly ever reformulate. More broadly, one might regard a tendency to reformulate as a good thing for the second language learner, since it implies an active involvement in what is being said, and a developmental opportunity. So in some ways it is slightly disappointing that there is such a degree of cross-task consistency here—it appears there are some speakers who reformulate consistently and others who do not. This might provide a challenge for instruction, if reluctant reformulators need to be induced to become more willing to revise.

The final pattern to be considered, like Pattern 1, is characterized by cross-task consistency of correlation, but unlike Pattern 1, there are significant differences in performance as a function of task. So whereas Pattern 1 suggested style as the most important influence, in this pattern, Pattern 2, style is not such as to swamp the effects of task. The data are shown in Table 3.7.

The first ‘member’ of this pattern is pausing at clause boundaries. For three of the tasks, there are differences between the native and non-native speaker groups, always with more pausing for the non-native group. Broadly, more structured tasks lead to fewer pauses, for both groups. But pausing at this point is consistent: even though there may be less clause-boundary pausing on structured tasks, it

TABLE 3.7 Pattern 2: Task and style effects

<i>Dependent measure</i>	<i>No. of NS/NNS significances: Max = 4</i>	<i>NS median inter-task correlation</i>	<i>NNS median inter-task correlation</i>
No. of AS pauses	3	0.77	0.79
D (type-token ratio)	4	0.70	0.78
Reformulation	4	0.45	0.78
Lexical sophistication	1	0.67	0.20

appears to be the same people who pause. The other variable which shows a task difference yet consistency of performance for both groups is D, the text-length corrected type-token ratio. The effect size of the difference between the two groups is also very large. The task effect which was found was significant, but this significance did not translate into a pattern relating to task structure. The values obtained were: for the native speakers, 42 (Golf); 58 (Christmas); 49 (Funfair); 51 (Thief); and for the non-native speakers, 26 (Golf); 40 (Christmas); 34 (Funfair); and 36 (Thief), following the same ranking in each case: Golf < Funfair < Thief < Christmas. More interesting for our purposes is that, as with AS pauses per 100 words, there is marked consistency in performance. The participants who tend to recycle the same words more, whether native or non-native speakers, tend to be the same—a fascinating but unpredicted result.

The remaining two variables from Pattern 2 apply in each case to only one group. Reformulation shows a task difference for the non-native speaker group (with more reformulation for more structured tasks) but there is considerable cross-task consistency. There is also a major difference in amount of reformulation between the native and non-native speaker groups. Regarding lexical sophistication for the native speaker group, there is a task effect but nonetheless there is consistency in the extent to which the speaker, at different levels for different tasks, mobilizes the use of less frequent words. This contrasts with the non-native speakers, who show little consistency here.

Concluding interpretations

What we need to attempt next is to bring some theoretical interpretation to bear on these three patterns. Drawing on the Levelt model (Levelt 1989) is instructive. The model suggests that first language speaking is based on three stages, Conceptualization, Formulation, and Articulation (although we will only focus on the first two). Conceptualization is concerned with developing the ideas to be expressed, and outputs a preverbal message. This message is then the starting point for Formulator operations, which start with lemma access from the mental lexicon, followed by syntax-building on the basis of the information contained in the lemmas which have been accessed. Then, remaining stages are concerned to translate the message into sound. Table 3.8 attempts to locate the different dependent variables that have been investigated in this study in terms of the Conceptualization and Formulation stages.

Lexical sophistication is taken to reflect the implications for mental lexicon access of the preverbal message. The same applies to the level of subordination, since this follows from the organization of ideas at the Conceptualization stage. In Table 3.8, AS boundary pausing is located, tentatively, at the Conceptualization stage, because if subordination is located there, it is assumed that the discourse shape of what is to be said will have implications for possible locations for pauses. Some locations are not clear-cut, but D, as an indicator of detailed word choice, is located within an early Formulator stage, since at this stage we are concerned

TABLE 3.8 Stages of speaking and task/style effects

<i>Stage in Levelt model</i>	<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Style relevance</i>	<i>Task effects</i>
Conceptualization	Lexical sophistication	Moderate/strong	Strong
	Subordination	(NS) but weak	Strong
	AS boundary pausing	(NNS)	Strong
Formulator: Lemma access	D (type-token ratio)	Moderate Strong	Strong
	Words per clause	Strong	Strong
Formulator: Syntax Building	Repetition	Weak to moderate	Strong
	Filled pauses	Strong	Weak
	Mid-clause pauses	Strong	Weak
	Reformulation	Strong (NNS)	Moderate (NNS)

with priming and how one word has implications for the use of others. On that basis, it is assumed that clause-internal complexity, which the words-per-clause measure captures, is also a consequence of detailed lexical organization within this unit of speaking. The remaining variables which have been reported on are a little clearer. They all concern the detail of assembling the syntax of what is to be said, and basically are unified by their role in monitoring, an important process within the Levelt model.

If one accepts this analysis, the generalizations which flow from Table 3.8 are reasonably clear. Style manifests itself to some extent with most of the variables which have been measured. However, within this generalization, the strongest impact of style is with monitoring of performance, and with relatively local, clause-linked fluency indices. Speakers seem remarkably consistent when it comes to the surface of language, and the clause level of processing (Wang & Skehan forthcoming). Task effects are not quite so general, and seem to be relatively weak in the very areas where style effects are strongest—monitoring and the surface of language. They are clearest and strongest when things concern the Conceptualization stage. This manifests itself most clearly with complexity indices, although there is a slight effect with fluency measures which relate to a discourse level of processing. For the non-native speakers, accuracy seems to be more task than style influenced. The inter-task correlations for accuracy are low, but the effects of task structure are significant. So at least we can conclude, for non-native speakers, that tasks do make a difference for complexity and accuracy, but much less so for most fluency indices.

There are pedagogic implications which follow from these results, in that different aspects of performance appear to be malleable to different degrees. Fluency, generally, seems strongly affected by style, which would suggest that teachers need to have realism here as to how much impact they can have on learner performance. Obviously one wants to increase fluency on the part of

learners, but it would seem that a natural fluency style provides a constraint on what is possible. Much more encouragingly, it appears that task effects are much more prominent where the complexity and accuracy of language are concerned. Style influences are lower here, and so the room for pedagogic choices to have an impact on performance are much greater. It would seem that choosing tasks which lead to higher complexity (structural and lexical) as well as higher accuracy is a feasible pedagogic goal. This provides considerable encouragement when teaching decisions are made.

Notes

- 1 Accuracy results, inappropriate for native speakers, will be reported for native speakers where relevant.
- 2 TaskProfile (Skehan, 2014b) is software written to produce automatically generated scores for task-based second language performance.
- 3 Measures of structural and lexical complexity are dependent variables regarding structure and speaker status. But they are also possible influences on fluency, and so have an independent variable role with respect to the fluency measures.

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4

INCORPORATING REFLECTIVE WRITING TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY AWARENESS

Rebecca Toner and Rachel Chaffin

Whenever I entered a shop, I heard the staff saying, ‘Hi! How are you doing?’ At first, I was quite scared of this kind of greeting because I thought its meaning was that either you buy things or leave . . . When I first arrived here, I felt lonely and I had no friends. However, when I went in a food shop or a supermarket, people greeted a lot. Even when I went into a lift, students would say hi to me. Their greetings gave me warmth and made me feel that I was welcomed by the city. This helped [me] go through the obstacles that I faced at that time.

Claudia, final essay, 2014

Claudia wrote about her experiences during a four-week English language summer programme in an American university. As instructors in that programme, we were impressed by her observations about her experience and her command of English. Her composition was one of the reflective essays produced by 73 foreign students in the programme and it encouraged us to review literature connecting language development, reflection, and identity. Drawing upon Brockbank & McGill’s (1998: 65) ‘black box’ metaphor, or the idea that there are aspects of teaching and learning that are ‘unexplained, unnamed, and invisible,’ we will attempt to clarify how language teaching, specifically the language conventions of the reflective writing genre, incorporates identity work, in that students make language choices in order to portray a version of themselves to their readers.

First, we will outline the rationale and methods of incorporating a reflective essay assignment into our curriculum. We will also draw connections to current theories of reflection, identity, and language development, using Claudia’s essay and responses to a post-programme interview to examine the impact of the reflective writing process on her interpretation of her study-abroad experience.

We will conclude by making a case for the incorporation of reflective writing in language learning classrooms, particularly those with curricula targeting students who wish to matriculate into American universities.

Local context and curriculum goals

We worked in an immersive four-week study-abroad English language programme at a private university in the United States. The programme was developed to offer intermediate to advanced English language learners a brief introduction to the practices and general culture of a liberal arts education at an American university. Students with the required proficiency (i.e. a TOEFL iBT score of 57+ or equivalent measurement) could enrol in the programme's courses to explore the history and culture of the university and city, as well as topics related to business, psychology, and innovation. As the programme's goal was primarily English language development, content-relevant vocabulary and forms were introduced in all courses, particularly features that contributed to conciseness, emphasis, and style, such as: cohesive devices, sentence inversion, hedging, and varied sentence types. Before returning to their home countries, students' cultural and linguistic growth was assessed in a final reflective essay, which is the focus of this chapter.

The reflective essay and identity awareness

For anyone participating in an immersive study-abroad programme, the experience of living in a foreign country is a transformative one (Carley & Tudor 2006; Dewaele, Comanaru, & Faraco 2015). It is an opportune time for students to use reflection to unpack and contextualize their experiences. Reflection calls on participants to critically examine ways in which their social and cultural beliefs are confirmed, challenged, and/or changed. We found reflection to be an ambiguous and broad concept (Clara 2015), yet for our programme, we defined reflection for students as a process by which they would explore '[their] growth and understanding of [themselves]/American culture/[their] place in the world' (University of Pennsylvania English Language Programmes 2013: 20). The reflective essay would 'describe to themselves and their professor how their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives have changed' (p. 25).

In designing and implementing the reflective elements of the curriculum, we considered that reflective practice involves thought processes 'that give coherence to initially incoherent or confusing situations' (Clara 2015: 267). We assumed our students would encounter situations both in and out of class that would create confusion and challenge their sociocultural beliefs. Reflective writing, therefore, would engage students in a 'conversation . . . [with] the situation to be clarified' (Clara 2015: 267). Thus, in the context of this programme, we envisioned the reflective essay as a piece of writing that 'examines and observes the progress of the writer's individual experience' (DePaul University 2012). From our standpoint as language instructors, our goal was to provide lessons introducing the

linguistic, organizational, and stylistic features of the reflective genre, thus providing students with the tools necessary to write an organized essay in which they reflect on their experiences. We saw this as an opportunity to guide participants through the process of reflective essay writing, a process that can have both personal and academic value (Rogers 2001; Watson 2010).

In addition to using reflection as a means of understanding their experiences, students were negotiating versions of themselves through their language and style choices. In order to 'construct credibility' with their readers (namely, their teachers and classmates), they had to present themselves in a way that was 'coherent and meaningful to both the individual and the group' (Hyland 2011: 11). Students made language choices that: (a) clearly narrated those moments, (b) conformed to the conventions of the reflective genre, and (c) demonstrated consideration of their audience as they attempted to position themselves in 'particular way[s]' (Hyland 2011: 11). How students positioned themselves within the group was likely influenced by their mastery of the language and how they interpreted external forces, e.g. what they expected their instructors wanted to hear, social pressure to present their best face to their classmates, or some other vision of how they wanted to be viewed. Despite these influences, we consider the versions of themselves presented in their reflective essays as cues suggesting awareness of who they are and how they wish to be perceived.

In their essays, students gave narrative accounts of moments that they identified as challenging and/or changing their personal and cultural views. Students were required to include these short narratives in order to substantiate claims of personal change. By doing so, they provided their readers with context for why and how their views had changed. Support for identity construction through narrative is explored by Coffey & Street (2008) and Barkhuizen (2011). Coffey & Street (2008) suggest that narratives provide a glimpse of how a writer's personal identity is constructed and transformed over time. Similarly, Barkhuizen (2011: 393) notes that narratives serve as a means for 'mak[ing] sense of . . . lived experience', and that, in telling their stories, the narrators are 'performing themselves' or 'doing their identities' (p. 399). By asking them to produce a narrative as part of their reflective essays, we provided students with a familiar gateway into the reflective genre; they were able to write a known type of composition using linguistic forms with which they were familiar, including the use of active voice and the first person pronouns.

By requiring students to use their experiences as source material and to draw upon known grammar forms to narrate them, instructors were able to focus on stylistic choices (Appendix A) and organizational features characteristic of the reflective genre (DePaul University 2012). The use of the personal pronoun 'I' in reflective academic texts has been documented by Hyland (2002); however, the majority of the grammatical forms and stylistic choices taught were chosen as a result of brainstorming among experienced writing teachers involved with the development of the programme. The list of narrative features in Appendix A was based on a review of sources such as the DePaul University website (2012),

Practical English Usage (Swan 1995), and *Advanced Grammar in Use* (Hewings 1999), together with the writing teachers' understandings of reflective writing and what they anticipated students would need based on pre-arrival placement exams. For this chapter, we reorganized this grammatical information using the grammatical framework of *form, meaning, and use* (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999). While we hope that this list may serve as a jumping-off point for others teaching reflective writing, the list should certainly be adapted to fit individual teaching contexts and learner needs.

Scaffolding the reflective essay

Reflective essays offer a linguistic space for the negotiation and expression of one's identity; however, this is the case only if one has the linguistic resources to do so. While the instruction of additional forms, organizational features, and stylistic devices was required, we also faced the instructional challenges of how to approach familiarizing students with the organizational and stylistic choices seen in the reflective genre and then to guide students to think introspectively to produce truly reflective content. In other words, how could we push participants to write not only about what they experienced but also about how they felt and why? Moreover, how could we lead participants to draw connections between their experiences and how those experiences may have changed their views?

Scaffolding reflective writing required a two-stage approach: introducing the process of reflection then teaching the features of a reflective essay. In the first stage, instructors actively positioned students as knowledgeable members of the class through task-based activities and small-group discussions. Tasked with discussing similarities and differences of their home culture with American culture, students had a space in which they could compare personal perceptions of culture and hear different viewpoints. After a few of these activities, instructors then encouraged them to think about their experiences from multiple viewpoints: American college student, tourist, researcher, language learner, etc. Following in-class readings, group discussions, and cultural field trips, students completed journal entries in response to reflective questions such as: What did you think before this experience? What happened during the experience? What did you learn? How did your views change (or not) and why? How does this knowledge or experience compare with similar knowledge/ a similar experience you may have had in your home country? In this way, students were practising the process of reflection and creating content for their reflective essays. This content could include personal beliefs, social permissions and constraints, language functions and choices, or other elements that drew their attention.

As students moved from journaling to drafting their reflective essays, instructors initiated the second stage of scaffolding reflective writing in which they introduced stylistic and organizational features of the reflective essay genre. We began by guiding students through comparative analysis between a traditional, five-paragraph expository essay, with which our students were familiar,

and examples of reflective essays (DePaul University 2012). Using a T-chart, students were instructed to identify characteristics of the two types of essays. Through this activity, we attempted to make clear the similarities (e.g. both maintain an academic, formal tone, provide evidence for claims, and have an introduction, body, and conclusion) and differences between the two (e.g. reflective essays use the first person pronoun and can move back and forth in time depending on how one experiences a change, while expository essays are often written in third person and progress linearly or chronologically). With regard to the grammatical forms and stylistic choices detailed in Appendix A, all instructors in the programme were asked to teach these grammar and style points through their own methodology. One method many instructors used was to introduce the form, such as inversion, have students practise with discrete items, and then incorporate this form into their essays. Instructors then would offer individual feedback on students' use of these forms during draft reviews. In this way, the writing process was presented as a dialogue between a student writer and his/her instructor.

This feedback-as-dialogue often consisted of leading questions from the instructor, both written and oral, which then required the student to revisit and revise inaccurate use of forms, organizational/cohesive inconsistencies, and/or weak connections between experiences and growth. *How* questions were common: 'How did this change your view on . . .?' or 'Can you explain *how* this experience helped you . . .?' Students revised their writing to answer such questions, and to create nuanced accounts and analyses of their experiences. Just as important, though, was that students, as authors, understood that the final essay was a result of their choices; while instructors made suggestions and often asked students to rethink/revise some of their choices, the decisions of what editing recommendations to accept or reject were their own to make. Understanding that there are linguistic choices to be made when writing reflective essays, and that the writer has the ability to accept or reject suggestions, is more obvious when the revision process is a dialogue versus red marks on a paper. In the next section, we will analyse excerpts from a student's essay, highlighting language choices she made that distinguished her essay as reflective writing and that constructed her identity for her audience.

The emergence of identity awareness: a student's reflective essay

Claudia, introduced through the quote from her reflective essay at the beginning of this chapter, was a full-time student at a university in Hong Kong and was placed in the advanced level of our immersive four-week academic English summer programme. Her essay is reproduced as Figure 4.1, and we analyse her lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and organizational choices as she attempted to follow the conventions of reflective writing.

With regard to lexical and grammatical choices, we note Claudia's use of first person pronouns, the past tense, cohesive devices, inversions, and hedging

Line

My Reflection

1 During this summer holiday, I was glad that I was able to go to the United States
 2 to join a summer English programme at the University of Pennsylvania, where I gained
 3 a lot of valuable and unforgettable experience. I flew far away from Hong Kong all the
 4 way to Philadelphia. With the large culture difference and the fear of being alone for
 5 the first time, I still had a lot of fun. I would be very happy to share some cultural
 6 difference that I found here which was quite interesting.

7 The first different thing I noticed was people's informality. I usually went
 8 shopping when I was free here. Whenever I entered a shop, I heard the staff saying,
 9 'Hi! How are you doing?' At first, I was quite scared of this kind of greeting because I
 10 thought its meaning was that either you buy things or leave. However, I got used to it
 11 after several times and the greeting even gave me a very deep impression. American
 12 people usually treat people in an informal way that creates a relaxing atmosphere. It
 13 made me feel relaxed and comfortable. Moreover, their informality can somehow help
 14 you to recover from homesickness and depression after leaving home. When I first
 15 arrived here, I felt lonely and I had no friends. However, when I went in a food shop or
 16 a supermarket, people greeted a lot. Even when I went into a lift, students would say hi
 17 to me. Their greetings gave me warmth and made me feel that I was welcomed by the
 18 city. This helped go through the obstacles that I faced at that time.

19 The second thing I noticed is the popularity of sports. I watched a baseball game
 20 in the first week. It was amazing. Baseball is one of the most famous sports in the
 21 United States. It was my first time to watch a baseball game. I enjoyed it very much. I
 22 strongly suggest that those people who have never watched it before to go to a game.
 23 You may probably find it very fun. Participating in this activity, you may be surprised
 24 by the large groups of audience of different ages, just like I did. The Americans
 25 watched the match with their whole family. Apart from having fun, you can also see
 26 how the participants interact with the audience which is a very interesting experience.
 27 For example, there are some small activities during the break. Different kinds of music
 28 will be played and audience can follow it to dance and have fun. You may even be
 29 filmed on the huge television!

30 Furthermore, studying for a month here made me change my learning attitude.
 31 Having lessons every day for four weeks, I discovered a lot of differences in the
 32 education between Americans and people in Hong Kong. Teachers in the United States
 33 love encouraging students to talk more in class to express their ideas to everyone. On
 34 the other hand, students in my city tend not speak as much as the Americans during
 35 class. In fact, I could not get used of it when I first attended a class here. I was too shy
 36 to speak in front of others. After a few days, I started to speak my opinion in front of
 37 the whole class. I am happy that I have gained much confidence after these days.
 38 Studying in the United States really changed me a lot. It could not only build up my
 39 confidence, but also understand the importance of expressing my own ideas as much as
 40 I could. This is the only way to success. I really hope that I can bring this type of
 41 studying atmosphere back to my city and encourage my classmates to do so.

42 During these four weeks in Philadelphia, I had a lot fun. Although there were
 43 cultural differences, I learnt many things. I also met many friends from different
 44 countries. I think this will become the most unforgettable and meaningful experience in
 45 my life. It also widened my horizon. I started to think of the life that I used to have in
 46 Hong Kong before this trip and I found that I have already changed a lot. I become
 47 more mature and independent. Moreover, this trip gave me a chance to think of my
 48 future and what I want to do after my graduation. Those differences meant a lot to me
 49 and I am sure that they can guide me to a success way in the future.

FIGURE 4.1 Claudia's reflective essay

(see Appendix A). Consistent with Hyland's (2011) research into first person pronoun use in academic reflective writing, Claudia also conformed to this convention throughout her essay. Moreover, she narrated experiences using past tense verbs, while also utilizing verb choices that indicated her observations during those experiences, such as 'I noticed' and 'I discovered'. Further she used phrases such as 'I got used to', 'I started to think', and 'I found' to indicate changes in her perceptions and feelings over time, again utilizing past tense verbs and first person pronouns. Claudia used cohesive devices that expressed the passage of time, such as 'during this summer holiday', 'when I first arrived here', and 'after a few days'. Words expressing her feelings shifted as time passed in her essay. For example, she began by describing store greetings that made her nervous, but that nervousness eased over time as she became accustomed to them: 'It made me feel relaxed and comfortable' (line 12–13).

Two grammatical features that are closely linked to style include inversions and hedging. Claudia's instructor chose to offer explicit instruction on these points, as they are structures by which authors can indicate ideas of importance, suggest lack of certainty in their claims, and/or vary sentence types to avoid repetitiveness. Both structures appear in Claudia's essay, such as in line 23: 'Participating in this activity, you may be surprised . . .', wherein the phrase 'Participating in this activity' has been shifted to the head of the sentence, and the use of the word 'may' softens her claim about surprising the reader. Another example of inversion appears in line 31: 'Having lessons every day for four weeks, I discovered . . .' Other hedging devices Claudia used include 'usually', 'probably', and 'tend to': 'American people usually treat people in an informal way' (lines 11–12); 'You may probably find it very fun' (line 23); and 'Students in my city tend not to speak as much as the Americans' (lines 34–5). By using inversions and hedging, Claudia avoids repetitive 'I' sentences and acknowledges that her observations of her experiences are from her personal viewpoint and may not be shared by her readers.

From an organizational standpoint, Claudia's essay has an introduction, body, and conclusion. Within the body, she organized her experiences into three main topics: greetings in paragraph 2, sporting events in paragraph 3, and differences in learning cultures in paragraph 4. Claudia included these topics in her body paragraphs after reading through her journal entries and identifying which experiences seemed to mean the most to her and/or were written about the most. This decision-making process was in line with instructions that students should include events connected by overarching themes, including change and personal growth. Like researchers, participants had to analyse their journals in order to extract examples that supported these themes and then explain those examples to an audience unfamiliar with their background, experiences, and views.

Through the lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and organizational choices she made in her writing, Claudia emphasized differences between the culture of her home and that of America, from the standpoint of a visiting student in the US, and narrated her experiences through that lens, thus positioning herself 'in a

particular way' (Hyland 2011: 11). By choosing to narrate her experiences from this perspective then analysing her reactions to these experiences, she affords us a view of her personal growth, suggesting awareness of her identity as a visitor with a different cultural background.

One notable example is her comparison of her classroom experiences in the United States and Hong Kong:

Having lessons every day for four weeks, I discovered a lot of differences in the education between Americans and people in Hong Kong. Teachers in the United States love encouraging students to talk more in class to express their ideas to everyone. On the other hand, students in my city tend not speak as much as the Americans during class.

lines 31–35

In this excerpt, Claudia considers the practices of two different classroom styles: one in which students are encouraged to talk (US) and one in which opportunities to talk are limited (Hong Kong). In the lines that follow this excerpt, Claudia delves into her feelings about these differences and examines how those feelings changed over the course of the programme. At first, she said that she struggled to get used to the different teaching style due to her shyness when talking in front of others: 'I was too shy to speak in front of others' (lines 35–6). Her shyness, although a personal characteristic, may have been reinforced through years of expected classroom practice in Hong Kong (i.e. students having limited chances to speak during class). Yet she said that she gradually grew more confident, and eventually 'started to speak [her] opinion in front of the whole class' (lines 36–7). Given the change she noticed in herself, this reflection seems to indicate that she made associations between Hong Kong classroom culture and shyness and US classroom culture and confidence. Thus, she appears to connect her gradual ability to participate in US classroom culture with growth in confidence.

Claudia followed this experience with an examination of lessons she learned and concluded with a nod to the future:

Studying in the United States really changed me a lot. It could not only build up my confidence, but also understand the importance of expressing my own ideas as much as I could. This is the only way to success. I really hope that I can bring this type of studying atmosphere back to my city and encourage my classmates to do so.

lines 38–41

This excerpt exemplifies an aspect of Norton's (2013: 4) definition of identity regarding how a person understands 'possibilities for the future'. Claudia positions herself as someone who has 'become more mature and independent' (lines 46–7), personality traits that she thinks will be important to her success in

the future: 'this trip gave me a chance to think of my future and what I want to do after my graduation. Those differences meant a lot to me and I am sure that they can guide me to a success way in the future' (lines 47–9). From this, we understand that Claudia is aware of the many ways she has grown, and has demonstrated awareness of her identity in the way she portrayed herself as a visiting student in our programme.

Claudia's essay represents only one student's thoughts as she negotiated, interpreted, and related to an environment that was largely unfamiliar and confusing at times. But in the essay, we can see how a student can use a variety of language choices to construct a version of herself in consideration of a particular audience. In a sense, Claudia was 'doing her identity' (Barkhuizen 2011: 399) by writing about her experiences, and using the reflective essay as a space in which she could make meaning of those experiences.

Discussion

Thus far, we have attempted to provide context for and examples of language choices made by a student in her reflective essay. She demonstrated emerging identity awareness in that she showed consideration of her audience as she used language to portray herself in a certain way. As part of our post-programme feedback, we contacted Claudia a year later to ask her to reflect again on her experience (Appendix B), focusing on whether she perceived reflective writing as a means for language development and personal growth.

Claudia confirmed that she found reflective writing to be valuable in terms of language learning and observing changes in her ideas and perspectives, noting that when she reread the journal entries and her essay, she was surprised by how much she had changed over the course of a month. She said that she 'got used of the university life there much better. Also, [she] was more confident to communicate with people with English' (Question 2). From this we conclude that she perceived reflective writing to be worthwhile as a means of English language development and seeing personal growth over time. Reflective writing provided a basis for which to 'note down this every precious moment. It was not only helping [her] to improve [her] writing skills, but also let [her] remember these memories' (Question 2).

As instructors reflected on this teaching and learning experience, we found that reflective practice and writing in the language classroom engages learners on multiple levels. It is one way to encourage learners to uncover layers of meaning in their experiences and identify personal beliefs and/or values that influenced how they thought or felt. It may also help them make connections between changes in their perceptions of the world as well as understand that their perceptions are grounded in sociocultural expectations that may not be shared by everyone. Furthermore, it is an activity during which learners can practise using target language forms in order to write for and position themselves in consideration of a particular audience. Finally, it is a practice that has value, as it is important

to language learners who seek admission to American universities for undergraduate or graduate degrees.

Part of identity work when using a second language is being able to access different communities (Norton 2013), and reflective writing for an academic audience is essential for acceptance to/participation in certain US academic communities. Many US universities require prospective students to write an admissions essay or statement of purpose for undergraduate or graduate work. These essays are typically narratives in which students respond to prompts asking applicants to reflect upon their lives or ways of seeing the world. Admissions officers use these essays as one criterion for evaluating applicants. These essays are difficult for all applicants, especially second/foreign language writers. If our students sought admission to our university, our guided tour through writing the reflective essay was a window into the requirements of the application essay.

Lending weight to the importance of teaching reflection and reflective writing, the reflective process does not stop once a student is admitted to university. Reflective writing is used among various disciplines from introductory science courses (Kalman 2011; Huang & Kalman 2012; Otfinowski & Silva-Opps 2015) to undergraduate nursing courses (Naber & Wyatt 2014) to medical education programmes (Wald & Reis 2010), among others. For students who need to learn English to gain access to such communities, exposure to reflective writing within their English language classrooms could prepare them for modes of learning and use of English forms in ways that may be unfamiliar.

Conclusion and implications

In this chapter, we have shown how we incorporated reflective writing into an immersive four-week study-abroad programme for English language learners. We have attempted to show that reflective writing can serve as a site for language development and identity work by analysing a student's reflective essay for evidence of these concepts, and by following up with questions about her perceptions of the course. While there are limits to what we can claim on the basis of the essay and questionnaire answers of one student, Claudia's essay and responses inspire further inquiry into what forms, as well as stylistic devices and organizational structures, should be taught to English language learners for the purpose of writing reflective compositions.

There are caveats to the implementation of activities in which students do identity work, i.e. activities in which they must consider both their audience and how they want to portray themselves to that audience. First, the effectiveness of reflective activities is tied to participants' level of language competence. The students in our programme possessed a high level of grammar and writing skills, so in giving feedback on their essays, we were able to utilize explicit error correction as well as leading questions to indicate problematic language. However, at lower levels of proficiency, students may lack the ability to understand the intent of leading questions as indicating the need for revision, so more reliance on

explicit instruction may be necessary. This may mean that instructors have a greater influence over how students are able to narrate their experiences, and thus students could have less agency in ‘doing their identities’ (Barkhuizen 2011: 399). Despite this, by introducing and teaching the forms inherent to reflective writing, instructors expose their students to a type of composition that is common to the American university experience and the academic reflective genre (Hyland 2011).

Second, there has to be time within a curriculum for reflective activities. The frequent dialogue between student and teacher in the reflective writing process requires effort and focus on everyone’s part. We suggest training students in peer review, namely using ‘How?’ and ‘Why?’ questions to push one another for introspection and reflection in their written work. Peer review could reduce the teacher time needed to complete such activities while at the same time providing discussion opportunities for students.

Despite these challenges, reflective writing has exciting teaching and learning potential. Reflection allows teachers to crack open the ‘black box of process,’ (Brockbank & McGill 1998: 65), making visible the ways in which students’ experiences impact who they are, how they seek to portray themselves, and the needs language instructors must address in helping them to accomplish that goal. This is no easy task, but teachers can introduce reflective writing to provide a framework through which students can both visualize and express the changes they see in themselves. For study-abroad students in particular, who may be overwhelmed by their unfamiliar/confusing surroundings, reflection can serve as a space in which they can record and make sense of their experiences. Finally, if shared, students’ reflections offer insight into their worldviews as they are challenged and possibly changed over time.

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Appendix A. Forms to use in a reflective essay

<i>Form (accuracy)</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Use-when/why-appropriateness/Example</i>
First person pronouns	Expressing personal views/experiences/opinions	For students to make meaning for themselves about a lived experience
Verb forms	Narrate past events that are finished (simple past, past progressive) and express current thoughts and opinions (simple present)	Distinguish change in thought as a result of experiences
Conditionals	Type 3: to express unreal past condition and the unreal outcome of that condition;	To express lack of cultural understanding, gain in perspectives, change in thoughts

	Mixed: to express an unreal past condition	
Cohesive devices	To indicate sequence and/or relationship between ideas	To carry the reader through the development of ideas/story; connect ideas and experiences
Varying sentence types: simple, compound, complex	—	For stylistic purposes; maintain audience interest; avoid repetitiveness
Inversions	Emphasis on ideas appearing earlier in the sentence	For stylistic purposes: give energy and variation to the writing; make it an enjoyable experience for the reader to want to continue reading
Hedging devices	To allow for other interpretations, to show uncertainty	To avoid offending readers; to avoid stereotypes; to allow for future growth

Appendix B. Claudia's answers to post-programme interview

Question 1. *How did the programme help you talk to other English speakers and participate in university life and life in Philadelphia? In your reflection you mention shopkeepers' greetings. Are there any other experiences that you remember clearly?*

This programme did help me a lot. Although this was only an English programme, there were many chances to communicate with other English speakers such as the students and instructors of the course. There were a lot of projects which included interviews and looking for information in the library. These experience allowed me to speak more English as well as enjoying the life there. I can easily involved in the local life and everything was so interesting that you would not suffer homesickness.

Question 2. *Did writing journal entries about your experiences help you learn English? If yes, how? If no, why not? Did your journal entries and reflection paper give you ideas about or change how you saw yourself as a Penn student and English speaker in the world? If yes, how? If no, why not?*

I think writing journal entries could improve my English. During the one month programme, I had many different experience every day. I met people from different countries and enjoyed every moment with them. It is very important to note down this every precious moment. It was not only helping me to improve my writing skills, but also let me remember these memories.

When it was almost the end of this programme, I looked back to these entries. It actually surprised me because I found myself change a lot during that one month. I got used of the university life there much better. Also, I was more confident to communicate with people with English.

5

EXPLORING THE MOTIVATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACADEMIC CHOICES OF LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH MAJORS IN CHINA

Aaron Doyle

Introduction

English degree programmes in the foreign language departments of universities in mainland China are in a period of transition. English language ability, once the competitive advantage of English majors, has become widespread among today's undergraduates. Consequently, a Bachelor's degree in English no longer carries the cachet it once did, and the popularity of the English major is decreasing (English 2012; Qu 2012). At the same time, some departments are receiving an enrolment influx into their English major course from a new source: international students. Over the past decade, China has emerged as a higher-education destination, and many incoming students, mainly from neighbouring countries in East Asia, are choosing to major in English at their Chinese university.

These are recent and unstudied trends, and due to the important role of motivation in second language (L2) learning, it is essential for teachers and course administrators to understand how Chinese English majors and their international classmates differ in terms of the influences on their English effort and how the downgraded employment outlook of an English BA is affecting their choice to major in English. This chapter reports on a mixed-methods study that compared the motivational development and academic decision-making of Chinese and international undergraduate English majors at two universities in mainland China. Using Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System as a theoretical framework, the study explored the relationship between students' English-related aspirations, their decision to major in English, and their English learning motivation.

Background

In parallel with the field in general, the recent theoretical focus of L2 motivation research in China has concentrated on the role of the self in language learning.

Leading this development is Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System, which applies the theories of *possible selves* and *self-discrepancy* to L2 motivation. Proposed by Markus and Nurius (1986), possible selves are visions people hold of themselves in the future that prompt them to take action in the present. These hypothetical selves influence behaviour by guiding the individual towards attaining or avoiding the imagined future scenario. In self-discrepancy theory, Higgins (1987) divides the possible self into an *ideal self* and an *ought-to self* depending on whether it represents desired or obligatory attributes, and he proposes that motivation comes from an urge to close the gap between today's self and the envisioned ideal or ought-to self.

The L2 Motivational Self System is based on the premise that a possible self that includes proficiency in an L2 will provide motivation to learn the language (Dörnyei 2009). At the centre of the model is the *Ideal L2 Self*, which reflects a learner's aspirations associated with the L2, including promotion-focused instrumental motives such as career goals. It is the language user the learner would like to become. In contrast, the *Ought-to L2 Self* embodies language-related obligations, including prevention-focused instrumental motives like tests or parents' requirements. It personifies what learners feel they should become. The third facet of the model, the *L2 Learning Experience*, relates to the influence of prior learning history and the current learning environment, including input from teachers and curriculum. Based on this framework, L2-related choice, effort, and persistence—the hallmarks of motivation—can be explained by learners' desire to narrow the distance between their current self and their Ideal or Ought-to Self and by the influence of their L2 Learning Experience. For the purposes of the current study, the model's comprehensiveness makes it a useful means to investigate students' decision to major in English and their subsequent motivated behaviour.

Studies from a wide variety of contexts have confirmed the efficacy of the L2 Motivational Self System (for a review, see Dörnyei & Ryan 2015). Research conducted among English learners in Chinese universities has found that students' L2 motivation is most associated with their appraisal of the L2 learning experience and the strength of their Ideal L2 Self vision (Taguchi, Magid, & Papi 2009; You & Dörnyei 2016). When analysed as a subgroup, English majors report stronger Ideal L2 Selves and higher effort levels than their peers, and this has been linked to the commitment to the language demonstrated in their choice of English as major along with its connection to their career (You & Dörnyei 2016). Although the Ought-to L2 Self has been found to play a lesser role overall, its related components of family pressure and the desire to prevent academic failure appear prominently, especially for English majors. Researchers attribute this to the obligation in Chinese culture for children to care for ageing parents and to the fear of losing face (Jiang & Dewaele 2015; Taguchi et al. 2009; You & Dörnyei 2016).

As these studies illustrate, the L2 Motivational Self System has been used to illuminate characteristics of English majors at Chinese universities, and scholars have looked to the influence of Chinese culture when interpreting their findings.

However, not all English majors in China share a Chinese cultural background. Over the past fifteen years, the number of international students in the country has grown exponentially from just 52,000 in the year 2000 to nearly 380,000 in 2014 (China Scholarship Council 2015; *China Daily* 2010). While most come for short-term programmes, many are pursuing their full degree. In 2014, Chinese universities hosted about 116,000 degree-seeking undergraduate international students, most frequently from South Korea, and top-tier schools can have more than 100 international students majoring in English (China Scholarship Council 2012, 2015; Doyle 2014). Despite their increasing presence, the motivational characteristics of these English majors and the extent to which they differ from their local Chinese classmates have not been investigated.

Also, while the relationship between English majors' future L2 Self and their persistence and effort in learning English has received considerable attention in the motivation literature from China, students' choice of English as a major has not been closely examined. Evidence suggests that recent trends have made this choice less popular than it once was. James English (2012: 138) explains in *The Global Future of English Studies* that in China, 'the rising tide of English fluency has been eroding the linguistic advantage enjoyed by English majors on the job market and softening the once strong employer demand for an English BA credential.' Consequently, Weiguo Qu, a dean of Fudan University's College of Foreign Languages and Literatures in Shanghai, states there has been a 'steep decline of interest in the study of English as a "major" at university level' (2012: 15).

For those who do become English majors, this decision is not necessarily an indicator of a robust Ideal L2 Self. In Chinese universities, students are typically placed in majors based on their results on the *gaokao*,¹ China's national college entrance examination (Davey, De Lian, & Higgins 2007). This can result in a potential discrepancy between students' allocated course and their actual interests, and evidence suggests this can affect their L2 Self development. Jiang and Dewaele (2015) found in a study of English majors in Beijing that 'not all students were equally eager to take the course' (p. 343), even to the point of being 'forced into the programme' (p. 345), and this factor was associated with a delay in participants' formation of an Ideal L2 Self. Considering there are approximately 1,000 universities offering English degrees in China (English 2012: 35), it is important to more fully understand the link between students' choice of major and their motivation.

In summary, while the L2 Motivational Self System has offered insights into the motivation of Chinese students majoring in English at Chinese universities, their international classmates have yet to be studied. Also, a potentially important relationship exists between the choice to major in English and subsequent L2 effort for both groups of students. Therefore, the objectives of the current study were to compare the L2 English motivational disposition and development of Chinese and international English majors and to explore the relationship between their choice of major and English learning motivation.

Methodology

The study used a mixed-methods research design that combined questionnaires and interviews with English majors at two highly ranked universities located in separate cities in mainland China. International students are primarily clustered at this type of university (China Scholarship Council 2012), and the sites were chosen because each had many degree-seeking international students majoring in English. At both universities, Chinese students are admitted into the English major based on *gaokao* scores or are recruited directly from foreign-language high schools, while their international classmates take entrance exams created by the university specifically for foreign applicants. English majors begin their four-year degree with language skill classes followed by courses in literature, translation, and linguistics.

Instruments

The questionnaire's main purpose was to investigate students' motivational dispositions. In addition to questions regarding demographic information and other personal characteristics, it contained items related to the variables of the L2 Motivational Self System measured using six-point Likert scales on which participants indicated the extent of their agreement or disagreement from 1 (*strongly disagree/not at all*) to 6 (*strongly agree/very much*). These items were primarily adopted from Taguchi and colleagues (2009) and were adjusted to fit the context of an all-English major sample. The items composed the following variables:

1. *Ideal L2 Self* (four items): view of the self as a successful English user. Example: I imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.
2. *Ought-to L2 Self* (five items): view of obligatory aspects of the self as an English user. Example: Being successful in English is important to me so that I can please my parents/family.
3. *L2 Learning Experience* (four items): perception of the English learning context. Example: I find my English classes are very interesting.
4. *Instrumentality Promotion* (four items): companion variable to the *Ideal L2 Self* focusing on specific goals related to learning English. Example: Studying English is important to me because I think it will some day be useful in getting a good job.
5. *Instrumentality Prevention* (four items): companion variable to the *Ought-to L2 Self* focusing on specific requirements related to learning English. Example: Studying English is necessary because I don't want to get a poor score on English proficiency tests.
6. *Intended Effort* (five items): criterion measurement of L2 motivation. Example: I can honestly say that I am doing my best to learn English.

The interview portion focused on students' choice of major and L2 Self development, and consisted of two interviews conducted over two academic semesters.

The initial interview explored students' prior learning history, current L2 learning experiences, the reasons behind their choice of major, and their future plans. To serve as a prompt for discussion, students plotted their motivational development on a graph that had years of study on the X axis and motivation level on the Y axis. Drawing these reflective timelines stimulated participants' memories and added structure to their responses. In the follow-up interview, students extended their timelines and discussed changes in their motivation level along with developments in their future plans.

Procedures and participants

Following a pilot study, the final version of the questionnaire was administered in classes by the author in the autumn of 2014. Students who were away on exchange programmes completed an online version. Interview participants were recruited using an invitation distributed together with the questionnaire, and volunteers were selected with attention given to enlisting both Chinese and international students in all four undergraduate years. The interviews were conducted by the author between the autumn of 2014 and 2015. All data were collected in English.

As shown in Table 5.1, usable questionnaires were collected from 536 students. A total of 59 students participated in the interview, of which only seven were unavailable for a follow-up. The majority of participants were female, a situation typical of English-major programmes in China (You & Dörnyei 2016). Table 5.2 shows international students' country/region of origin, and reflecting the population of foreign students in China, most were South Korean (China Scholarship Council 2012).

TABLE 5.1 Questionnaire and interview participants

<i>Student category</i>	<i>Year of study</i>	<i>Questionnaire (female/male)</i>	<i>Interview (female/male)</i>
Chinese	1	123 (98/20)	7 (7/0)
	2	60 (51/7)	6 (6/0)
	3	57 (43/11)	8 (6/2)
	4	61 (46/14)	11 (10/1)
Total		301 (238/52)	32 (29/3)
International	1	69 (39/27)	10 (6/4)
	2	60 (35/21)	7 (2/5)
	3	44 (25/18)	2 (0/2)
	4	62 (37/21)	8 (5/3)
Total		235 (136/87)	27 (13/14)
Overall total		536 (374/139)	59 (42/17)

Note: Some questionnaires had missing gender data

TABLE 5.2 International students' country/region of origin

<i>Country/region</i>	<i>Questionnaire</i> (<i>N</i> = 235)	<i>Interview</i> (<i>N</i> = 27)
South Korea	205	23
Japan	13	2
Myanmar	5	0
Other	10	2

Note: Some questionnaires had missing nationality data

TABLE 5.3 Variable item reliability coefficients and inter-item correlations

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Chinese</i>		<i>International</i>	
	<i>Reliability coefficient</i>	<i>Inter-item correlation</i>	<i>Reliability coefficient</i>	<i>Inter-item correlation</i>
Ideal L2 Self	.67	.34	.69	.36
Ought-to L2 Self	.70	.32	.72	.34
L2 Learning Experience	.81	.52	.70	.37
Promotional Instrumentality	.55	.25	.69	.37
Preventional Instrumentality	.82	.53	.76	.44
Intended Effort	.68	.32	.75	.39

Data analysis

Using SPSS 22.0, reliability analysis for the questionnaire variable items was conducted using both Cronbach's coefficient alpha and inter-item correlation (see Table 5.3). Internal consistency coefficients were at or near the recommended .7 level, and all mean inter-item correlations were at or near their respective recommended levels of .7 and .2 (Pallant 2011).

T-tests were used to look for differences between the two groups, and relationships between variables were investigated using Pearson's product-moment correlation. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the text was analysed thematically using a deductive-inductive category construction method (Kuckartz 2014). The qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA was used to aid coding.

Questionnaire findings

Descriptive results

Table 5.4 presents descriptive statistics of the questionnaire variables. All mean values for both Chinese and international students surpassed 3.5 on the 6-point scale, suggesting that overall, participants were positive about their English studies (You & Dörnyei 2016). This favourable outlook can be seen in the strong results of both groups for the L2 Learning Experience, the variable investigating

TABLE 5.4 Differences in mean values of variable scores

Variable	Chinese (<i>N</i> = 301)		International (<i>N</i> = 235)		<i>d</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Ideal L2 Self	5.01	.73	5.05	.72	534	-.75	.00
Ought-to L2 Self	3.76	.86	4.22	.95	534	-5.83**	.06
L2 Learning Experience	4.26	.90	4.12	.85	534	1.83	.01
Promotional Instrumentality	5.26	.58	5.22	.71	444	.66	.00
Preventional Instrumentality	4.27	1.11	4.32	1.09	534	-.46	.00
Intended Effort	4.12	.76	3.92	.86	534	2.88*	.02

* $p < .01$; ** $p < .001$ ^aeta squared

participants' assessment of their English courses. Likewise, the Ideal L2 Self values were high for both groups, indicating many students had a well-developed vision of their future English-using selves.

The robust Ideal L2 Self findings were reinforced by the results for Promotional Instrumentality, the component that measured students' specific English-related aspirations, which had the highest mean scores of all the variables for both groups. However, a close look at this variable's items revealed differences in students' promotional motives. For the work-oriented item 'Studying English is important to me because I think it will some day be useful in getting a good job', the international students' score ($M = 5.56$, $SD = .82$) was significantly higher than that of the Chinese students ($M = 5.17$, $SD = .95$), $t(528) = -5.18$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$. In contrast, for the item about graduate school, 'Studying English is important to me because I think I'll need it for further studies', the score for Chinese students ($M = 5.40$, $SD = .77$) was significantly higher than that of their international classmates ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.08$), $t(406) = 5.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$.

These differences suggest that students had divergent future plans, a finding that was strengthened by responses to a background information item in the questionnaire that asked participants what they planned to do after finishing their Bachelor's degree. In the Chinese sample, 244 (82%) reported plans for further study, compared with 81 (35%) of the international students. Conversely, 143 (61%) of the international students reported planning to go to work, compared with only 43 (14%) of the Chinese students. Several participants in both groups had aspirations of 'other'. A Chi-square test for independence showed the difference in future plans between the two groups was significant, $\chi^2(2, n = 532) = 129.75$, $p < .001$, $V = .49$.

TABLE 5.5 Variable correlations with intended effort

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Chinese</i> (<i>N</i> = 301)	<i>International</i> (<i>N</i> = 235)
Ideal L2 Self	.43*	.39*
Ought-to L2 Self	.05	.18*
L2 Learning Experience	.61*	.58*
Promotional Instrumentality	.28*	.30*
Preventional Instrumentality	.06	.10

* $p < .01$

There were further differences in the variable Intended Effort, the criterion measurement of English learning motivation, which while strong for both groups was significantly higher for Chinese students, although with a small effect size in the difference. The variable with the most dramatic disparity between the two groups was the Ought-to L2 Self. For international students, this variable's mean score was significantly higher and the difference had a large effect size, indicating these students felt more of an obligation than their Chinese classmates to study English.

Relationship with intended effort

To investigate their association with motivated behaviour, correlations were conducted between Intended Effort and the other questionnaire variables (see Table 5.5). The L2 Learning Experience had the strongest relationship for both groups, suggesting that contextual influences such as classes and teachers played an important role in students' L2 motivation. Ideal L2 Self and Promotional Instrumentality also had significant correlations with effort for both groups, which indicates that participants' goals and aspirational visions of themselves as English users were connected to their L2-related exertions. There was no significant correlation with Preventional Instrumentality for either group, implying that although the high mean scores for this variable showed that avoiding negative outcomes was important, the sentiment was not associated with L2 effort.

Differences between the two groups emerged in the Ought-to L2 Self, which only correlated with effort for international students. However, the strength of this correlation was low, casting doubt on the motivational efficacy of this variable.

Interview findings

Similar motivational struggles

While the questionnaire results showed a high level of motivation and strong L2 self vision for both groups, the most salient motivational theme to emerge from

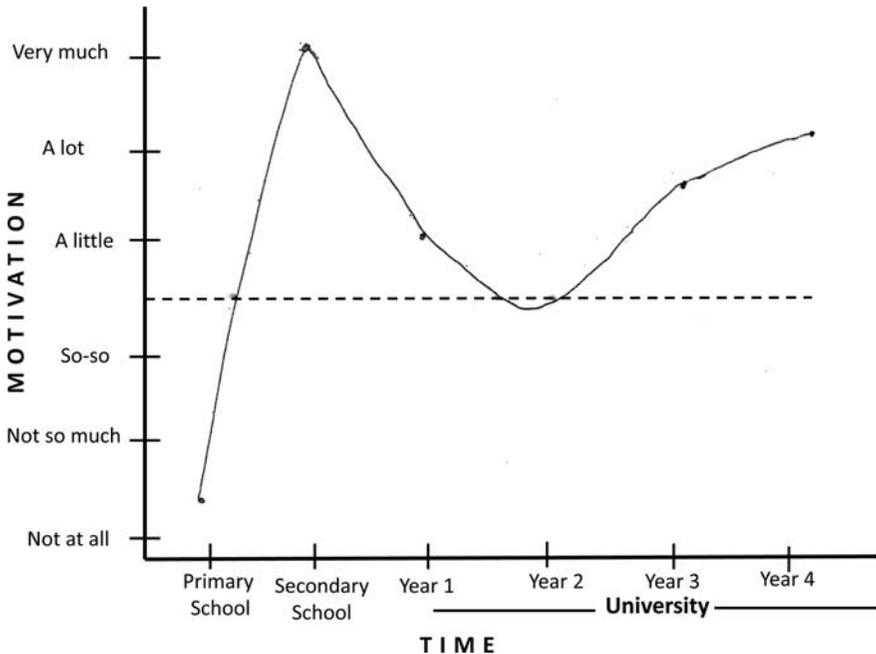


FIGURE 5.1 Motivational timeline drawn by a third-year Chinese student

the interviews was the consistent description of a motivational decline or struggle, usually taking place during the early years of undergraduate study. Older students recalled this theme retrospectively, while their younger classmates described it in real time. Twenty-seven of the 32 interviewed Chinese students (84%) and 24 of the 27 international students (89%) reported such an experience. Figure 5.1 shows a motivational timeline drawn by a third-year Chinese student that illustrates the trend.

Similar negative perception of the English major

The motivational struggle appeared to be due in part to the effect on students' L2 Self of society's negative perception of the English major. Participants reported a widespread belief that their major was unpromising because English was 'just a tool' that peers in other disciplines also had, and a degree in English would consequently offer no career advantage. Significant people in participants' lives, such as classmates, parents, and even professors, held and conveyed such an opinion. This pervasive view caused students to question the value of their major, creating dissonance in their future L2 Self and impacting their motivation.

The effect was especially strong for Chinese students, with 25 (78%) mentioning the negative perception compared with 13 international students

(48%). The impact appeared most pronounced among students in their early undergraduate years, and the following statement illustrates its influence on the future L2 Self as described by a first-year Chinese student:

There is one thing that I'm a little bit concerned [about]. I always heard people say that English is just an instrument, it can hardly become your future. So sometimes I wonder if all my dreams related to English failed, how am I going to find another? It's like when English just became an instrument, what is the rest of my future?

The choice to major in English: Chinese students

The negative perception of the English major was connected with another significant factor in students' motivational struggles: for many, especially among the Chinese cohort, English had not been their first choice of major. Due in large part to university admission practices, English had been clearly chosen freely by only 11 of the 32 interviewed Chinese participants (34%). Twenty-four Chinese students (75%) had been recruited directly from high school to university through a special programme that enabled them to bypass the *gaokao* entrance examination in exchange for their commitment to major in English. Of these 24 students, eighteen indicated they might have chosen a different major but agreed to English, often because it was a means by which they could avoid the *gaokao* and be admitted to a prestigious university.

Students' dissatisfaction with the major they were enrolled in had motivational consequences. In the following quotation, a third-year Chinese student reflects on her struggles during her first year, illustrating the connections between the choice of major, society's negative perception of a degree in English, and the adverse impact on the future L2 Self:

I felt disappointed. Because I didn't want to major in English. Because everyone told me English wasn't a good major because nowadays many people are quite good at English even though they don't major in English. English is just a tool. You can't really learn some very useful skills or [knowledge] for your future career, so if you major in English you won't have any advantage over other peers. Yeah, then so I was told about that, and I thought so. So I was pretty disappointed and hesitant.

As described in this statement, an underlying reason behind students' pessimistic feelings about their major was the belief that English alone was not enough and that other skills were needed. It was not because they disliked English or thought learning the language was unimportant, but rather that an English BA by itself would not lead to the future they were envisioning.

The choice to major in English: International students

International students were more positive about the English major, with fifteen of the 27 (56%) reporting it had been their preferred choice. The influences behind this decision were often intertwined with their prior experience in China and a desire to learn Chinese. Twenty of the international students (74%) had gone to high school in China, and the average age of arrival in the country was about 13. When describing the influences on their postsecondary choices, students often reported that having been abroad for so long, it would have been difficult to return to their home country and enter a good university. China offered better prospects. Many reported choosing English because they believed that by majoring in English in China, they could improve their English and at the same time either maintain or enhance their Chinese. A fourth-year South Korean student describes how Chinese was part of his choice:

Since I stay in China, my Chinese is quite okay. So I thought I needed more English skills. That's why I chose English. Because I wanted to speak both Chinese and English very well.

It is important to note that English by itself was not enough; it was English *plus* Chinese that often informed the decision-making process. Also, although international students were more likely to have freely chosen to major in English, they were not immune to others' negative opinions about their choice. As a first-year Japanese student commented regarding his decision:

My family [members] always said if you choose language as a major, they think it's not as good as other majors like economics. So every time when they talk about that to me I feel a little regretful.

L2 Self development and motivation recovery

While a negative perception of the English major adversely affected students' motivation, the decline was often followed by a recovery. Thirty Chinese students (94%) and 25 international students (93%) described an increase in motivation at some point in their undergraduate studies. An example of the decline–recovery pattern is seen in the timeline shown in Figure 5.1. To explore the role of the future L2 Self in this upturn, participants were asked to describe their plans for using English after graduation and how this envisioned future affected their motivation. These plans were evolving and students sometimes listed multiple possibilities.

Chinese students: a Postgraduate L2 Self

In a manner similar to the questionnaire findings, the interviewed Chinese students described a future L2 Self that centred on using English in graduate

school, a 'Postgraduate L2 Self'. All 32 indicated they were considering further study, often to English-medium universities overseas and in disciplines other than English. Only six (19%) mentioned going directly to work after graduation was an option. Among the eleven Chinese students in their final year, two eventually decided to go to work while nine planned to enter Master's programmes in the coming autumn, five of these to universities in the UK or US. Their future fields of study included public policy, education, linguistics, science, and English literature.

The development of this Postgraduate L2 Self had a positive impact on students' motivation in part by providing a clear purpose for learning English. The following statement is from a second-year Chinese student who was explaining an upturn in motivation between her first and second year:

[My motivation increased] because I think I have a more exact plan. . . . I just didn't know what to do during my first year. But after I have asked many senior students about that, I think that I have [made] some decisions about my graduate school, which I learned that English is really important, not just for TOEFL but also for the classes I have to understand and [I] have to learn well.

The Postgraduate L2 Self also boosted motivation by helping students to counter misgivings regarding an English major's career prospects. The following quotation illustrates how a first-year Chinese student was able to overcome the major's negative perception by setting her sights on going to graduate school overseas in a discipline other than English:

Although the English major is kind of like you have no major because almost everyone can speak English, you can study other majors when you're in your graduate school later. . . . I may go abroad after for graduate school. . . . So English may be part of my life.

International students: a Workplace L2 Self

In contrast, international students' future L2 Self was oriented towards getting a job after finishing their Bachelor's degree. Of the 27 participants, five (19%) were contemplating further study upon graduation, while eighteen (67%) planned to go directly to work and five (19%) intended to complete compulsory military service. All of the eight final-year students were returning home after graduation, seven to look for work and one to join the military. Consequently, international students' envisioned future use of English tended to be a 'Workplace L2 Self' that centred on using English in jobs that were yet to be determined. The following statement from a fourth-year South Korean student shows both the necessity and uncertainty that informed this future L2 Self:

Maybe I'll go back to Korea and get a job which [is] related to trades. . . . I think English will matter in the interview, and my TOEFL or TOEIC will be important. . . . I want to use my English in my future job but I don't know.

International students' vocational plans often included Chinese as well, as demonstrated by a first-year Japanese student who reported: 'in the future, I want to work in a company, like do some trade, so I want to find a job I can use English and Chinese.' Students held this additional L2 Self in part because, as a fourth-year South Korean explained, 'since we don't have any skills other than English like other majors' students do, we depend on English and Chinese.'

The Workplace L2 Self appeared to influence motivation by reminding students of their impending job search and prompting English learning to take on more urgency. Its effects seemed to be strongest for older students whose graduation was imminent. The following response is from a South Korean student in his final year explaining why his motivation was increasing:

You know because I have to graduate from university. After the last semester I thought about myself, but I don't think I have improved a lot. And so I have to do more. And so I think the motivation is going up because I have to go to the company or I have to apply [for] the job.

For students in their initial years, the time for job hunting was in the distant future and the Workplace L2 Self appeared to lack motivational force. This is exemplified by a first-year South Korean student's explanation regarding why her English proficiency was not improving to her satisfaction: 'Because there is not much push or motivation about the future job in my surrounding.'

Discussion

Consistent with previous research (e.g. Taguchi et al. 2009), the current study found that the L2 motivation of English majors in China was linked to students' future projections of themselves using the language for promotion-focused purposes. The study also found that international students, a previously uninvestigated population of English majors in China, were envisioning dramatically different future uses of English compared with their local classmates. While most Chinese English majors imagined a Postgraduate L2 Self that centred on further study, the majority of international students envisioned a job-oriented Workplace L2 Self.

These divergent aspirations had motivational implications. First, the Ought-to L2 Self has been found to be a less effective motivator than the Ideal L2 Self (Dörnyei & Chan 2013), and with its strong obligatory element of meeting job prerequisites, the Workplace L2 Self appeared to have a greater Ought-to focus than the Postgraduate L2 Self. Second, for a future L2 Self to be motivationally

operative, it needs to be sufficiently elaborate and vivid (Dörnyei 2009). Graduate school at an overseas university is a clearly visible target that enables aspirants to anticipate the future ways in which English will be needed. As a result, the formation of a Postgraduate L2 Self helped participants in the current study find purpose in their English learning, even during their early undergraduate years. Conversely, unless a student has a definite job in mind, the Workplace L2 Self is an inherently vague construct. Indeed, except for meeting potential employers' TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) and interview requirements, participants with this type of self were often unsure how and to what extent English would be needed in their future. Due to its obligatory and ambiguous aspects, the Workplace L2 Self appeared to lack the motivational strength of the Postgraduate L2 Self, especially for younger students whose graduation was distant.

Despite their contrasting orientations, both Chinese and international students experienced motivational struggles due in part to a negative view of the English major and related career misgivings. These factors figured prominently in students' choice of major and subsequent L2 Self development, and they appear to be directly linked to current linguistic and economic trends in East Asia. In China, Qu (2012: 16) explains: 'After years of opening-up, there has been a steady rise in the general level of English among young people, and so most companies or institutions expect people to have expertise in special fields as well as a mastery of English.' Evidence suggests the situation in South Korea is similar (Park 2016).

Job market concerns related to these trends were the primary reason why many participants in the current study, especially Chinese students, did not want to major in English. After a period of motivational struggle, they adapted by focusing on developing assets to supplement their future L2 Self. For most Chinese students, the supplementary asset was a Master's degree. In contrast, international students were usually counting on English combined with Chinese proficiency to give them an employment advantage. This 'English plus Chinese' objective could explain why they were more likely than their local classmates to have freely chosen to major in English, and also why they appeared less affected by society's negative opinion of the major. Future research could illuminate this theme further by simultaneously investigating the English and Chinese language learning motivation of this population. Also, while the current study focused primarily on students' future L2 Self, the motivational influence of the L2 Learning Experience appeared prominently in the results for both groups. Previous research has also found this component to be significant (You & Dörnyei 2016), and its role in English majors' motivational development should be further explored.

Recommendations

Whether related to postgraduate study or the workplace, the development of a future L2 Self helped pull both Chinese and international students out of a

downward motivational spiral. This is congruent with studies that have found that learners' capacity to visualize their Ideal L2 Self plays a key role in their motivation (Dörnyei & Chan 2013; Magid & Chan 2012). Helping students create and strengthen their L2 Self through targeted visualization training is a motivational strategy that all language teachers can use. Magid and Chan (2012) describe two such programmes used in Hong Kong and England and provide methods to help learners visualize their future L2 Self and develop plausible action plans. These activities can be adapted for different age groups and proficiency levels.

While teachers can readily implement strategies to help students develop their future L2 Self, the more fundamental motivational issue highlighted in the current study is that English proficiency alone appears to be losing its currency in East Asia. A pragmatic learner could justifiably question the purpose of developing an L2 English Self if it was not complemented by additional career skills. This is a systemic challenge, and English departments in China now appear to be experiencing the same headwinds as their counterparts in Anglophone countries such as the US, where for the past several decades enrolment in English degree programmes has been declining in favour of more job-ready majors (Klinkenborg 2013). Given the instrumental demands of today's university students, James English (2012: 166) argues that one way for departments to adapt is to add courses related to the 'creative industries', a growth sector in the global economy that includes media corporations who need skilled producers of content. Departments could capitalize on this niche and offer classes that blend media studies with more traditional English major courses.

While research for this study was conducted at two of China's highest ranking universities and the results are not representative of all English majors in the country, the economic and linguistic trends emphasized in the findings are not university-specific. It is probable that many English majors regardless of their institution are experiencing similar career-related motivational struggles. By helping students envision their future L2 Self and develop additional skill sets, English departments and their teachers can adapt to the current challenges facing English studies and English learners in China and beyond.

Note

- 1 The *gaokao* is the common term for China's national college entrance examination. It is taken by millions of students each year and is the primary means for determining university entrance and placement (see Davey et al. 2007).

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PART II

Teaching

Classroom pedagogies and practices



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6

TEACHING AS INPUT

Rod Ellis

Introduction

Teaching, however defined, involves ‘input’. No matter which approach or method is adopted, learners are exposed to the input provided by the teacher, by other students, and through the instructional materials. Input provides second language (L2) learners with the data they need for learning. The key question, then, becomes: ‘How can teaching ensure that learners are exposed to the kinds of input that are known to promote learning?’

I will begin by distinguishing two ways of viewing teaching—what I call the external and internal views. Starting with the external view, I will examine what teaching guides and teacher trainers have had to say about ‘input’, focusing on two key aspects – the use of authentic materials and teacher talk. I will then summarize what SLA research has had to say about the role of input and the conditions that promote learning. At the end of the chapter I will reconsider the pedagogic positions relating to authentic materials and teacher talk.

An external and internal view of language teaching

Ellis & Shintani (2014) distinguished what they called an ‘external’ and ‘internal’ view of language pedagogy. The external view treats language teaching in terms of methods, syllabus design, instructional materials, classroom activities (e.g. ‘exercises’ and ‘tasks’), and methodological techniques and procedures. The internal view sees teaching as a series of interactional events that provide learners with input and opportunities for output. It focuses on what happens when teaching takes place (i.e. the *process* of teaching) and encapsulates what Douglas Barnes (1976) called the ‘hidden curriculum’.

In general, accounts of language teaching are based on the external view. Scrivener (2014: 47)—an experienced teacher trainer—provides an example of this:

What I usually see are the tasks, the activities. What I mainly worry about is how those tasks and activities will work, how I can run them, how I can give good and clear instructions, whether they ‘work’, whether students are having fun, whether I am boring my students.

Popular methodological handbooks (e.g. Ur 1996; Harmer 2003; Scrivener 2005) also adopt—understandably—the external view of teaching. They have chapters that inform teachers what and how to teach, how to plan lessons, what kinds of materials to use, and how to manage life in the classroom. They aim to equip teachers with the technical knowledge needed to be a good teacher. As such they do a very useful job. But, as I will argue in this chapter, it is not enough.

Interesting, though, Scrivener, whose own handbook (*Learning Teaching: A Guidebook for English Language Teachers*) is a good example of the external view of teaching, appears to have experienced a sense of disillusionment with this perspective. He commented that hundreds of lesson observations had led him to conclude that although teachers were teaching technically sound lessons they ‘were not pushing students, not challenging them to tangibly improve, nor even expecting that they might be able to achieve more’ (2005: 51). He proposed that teachers need to ‘demand high’, which he defined as ‘the raw idea that we can ask more of our students, that we can challenge them and base our teaching around going where the learning is’. However, by his own admission, Scrivener struggled to explain what this might involve.¹ In effect, but without explicitly saying so, Scrivener was putting the case for an internal perspective on teaching. I want to suggest that if teachers are to ‘demand high’ they need an understanding of how learning takes place and, crucially, the role that input plays in facilitating it. This is what SLA can offer.

Input in teacher guides

Popular methodological handbooks for language teachers (e.g. Hedge 2000; Nunan 1991; Ur 1996) do not include ‘input’ as an entry in the indexes. Somewhat surprisingly, the same is the case in books about language-teaching materials (Tomlinson 2011; Harwood 2010). It would seem, then, that ‘input’ is not a term that belongs to mainstream thinking about language pedagogy, and that teacher educators do not conceptualize teaching in terms of ‘input’. However, input is addressed obliquely in what the guides and teacher trainers have had to say about authentic texts and teacher talk.

Authentic texts

Morrow (1977: 13) defined an authentic text as ‘a stretch of real language produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a

real message of some sort'. In other words, authentic materials contrast with 'contrived materials' (i.e. materials consisting of input that has been specially designed to teach L2 learners). Various claims have been made about the advantages of authentic texts (Grellet 1981; Nunan 1999; Tomlinson 2010):

- The main claim is that authentic texts expose learners to features of language use that are not typically found in contrived ('artificial' texts), and that unless learners are exposed to them they will not be able to handle them when they are confronted with 'real' texts. Authentic materials, unlike contrived materials, come with a 'communicative context'.
- Authentic materials are also seen as beneficial because they are more interesting and motivating than contrived materials.

These are claims (i.e. opinions) and they are typically advanced without any support from empirical research. They constitute a reaction to the highly contrived language-teaching materials that characterized the early structural methods—the Audiolingual Method in the USA and the Oral Situational Approach in the UK—and were key features of communicative language teaching in the 1980s. They have since become part of the accepted creed of 'good' language teaching.

However, these claims have not gone unchallenged. Widdowson (1978) in particular pointed out the need to deconstruct what is meant by 'authentic'. Morrow's definition is the standard one but it raises questions. What does Morrow mean by 'real speaker' and 'real audience'? One interpretation is that he is referring to the language produced by native speakers for native speakers. But cannot communication between non-native speakers (or between a native-speaker and non-native speaker) also be 'authentic' provided that it conveys real messages of some sort? So a broader definition is needed—one that circumvents the difficulty of pinning down concepts like 'native speaker' and that takes account of Widdowson's (1978: 98) claim that it is the process of authentication that is important not whether the input itself is 'authentic': 'People make a text real by realizing it as discourse, that is to say by relating to specific contexts of communal cultural values and attitudes. And this reality does not travel with texts.'

The importance of carefully considering what is meant by 'authentic' will become apparent when we consider what SLA has to say about input. However, it has been largely ignored in the pedagogic literature, where the consensual view is that authentic materials are based on 'genuine' (i.e. native-speaker) texts and authenticity is a quality inherent in the texts rather than in how a text is processed by a reader or listener.

The advent of corpus-based analyses of native-speaker texts has lent support to the pedagogic case for authentic texts. These analyses have shown that there are marked differences in the linguistic, pragmalinguistic, and textual features found in native-speaker corpora and the textual features found in language-teaching textbooks. Williams (1988), for example, found almost no correspondence

between the language used in authentic business meetings and that presented in 30 business English textbooks. This has led to suggestions that the information obtained from corpus analyses should be fed directly into the development of materials. Again, though, this position has not gone unchallenged. Widdowson (2003) pointed out that classroom communication is inherently different from real-world communication, making it difficult—perhaps impossible—to co-opt so called authentic language into it.

By and large the case for and against authentic materials has been made without reference to SLA research and theory. An exception is Gilmore (2007), who, in a comprehensive review of authentic materials in foreign language teaching, touched on a number of key issues (e.g. the importance of comprehensible input and ‘noticing’). These issues, I will argue, are of central importance in evaluating pedagogic claims about authentic texts.

Teacher talk

‘Teacher talk’ refers to the language used by a teacher when addressing students in a classroom. Teacher educators recognize the importance of teacher talk, and seek to identify those characteristics that constitute ‘good teaching’. Nunan (1991), for example, emphasized the dual function of teacher talk—as a tool for carrying out pedagogic activities and as a source of input for acquisition. However, an inspection of popular teacher guides indicates that it is the first of these functions that receives the most attention. There is scant mention of how teacher talk might facilitate acquisition.

A common view expressed in these guides is that teachers should minimize the amount of time they talk in order to maximize student talk time. When teachers adopt the roles of ‘controller’ or ‘assessor’ they control who speaks, when the students speak, and what language to use. As a result, teachers tend to dominate the classroom talk (typically speaking 70% or more of the time). In general, teachers are advised to cut down on ‘teacher talk time’ (TTT). A CELTA training video, for example, recommended that teachers should avoid ‘commentating’ (i.e. narrating what they are doing as they do it) and gave this example of what teachers should *not* do:

Now, I’ll just rub this off the board and then we’ll get on with the next exercise—Oh, where’s the board rubber? Here? Oh yes. Great! Right I’ll just give out these sheets. I wanted to put them on different coloured paper but there wasn’t any in the cupboard, unfortunately. Still, it’s not very important. So have a look at these.

The same video, however, did acknowledge that teacher talk serves to provide learners with language input and listening practice. Interestingly, however there was no consideration of whether the kind of teacher talk illustrated above might serve these functions.

There are also more discerning views about teacher talk. Prabhu (1987), for example, rejected the view that teacher talk needs to be restricted, arguing that in the kinds of classrooms in his Communicational Language Teaching Project (i.e. large classes of beginner learners in Indian secondary schools), it was important that the students had access to the best models available and that these were best provided through teacher talk. O'Neill (1994) also questioned the standard view that teacher talk is bad, suggesting that many teachers talk too much but also that many teachers do not talk enough. Cullen (1998) also acknowledged that teacher talk is of value in providing comprehensible input. He noted that, in general, attempts to reduce the TTT phenomenon have failed, and suggested that in cultural contexts where the teacher's role is the traditional one of transmitting knowledge, it would be inappropriate to try to do so.

According to Prabhu, O'Neill, and Cullen, then, it is the quality and appropriateness of teacher talk that is important, not its quantity. O'Neill suggested that teacher talk is useful if it meets certain conditions, such as when it is simplified but not unnatural, is more redundant than ordinary speech, and includes a variety of elicitation and explanation techniques. Cullen (1998: 185) argued that teachers need to achieve 'a communicative balance of behaviours for different teaching and learning purposes' in their talk. He rejected the view that teacher talk should always manifest the same characteristics as communicative behaviour outside the classroom (e.g. referential questions, the use of content feedback, simplified input, and negotiation of meaning) and suggested that for some teaching purposes non-communicative teacher talk (e.g. display questions, form-focused feedback, echoing students' responses, and initiative-response-feedback chains) are appropriate as the classroom constitutes its own 'communicative' context.

Clearly, there is an awareness in the pedagogical literature that teacher talk is an important aspect of language pedagogy. It is, however, dealt with largely in terms of opinions about what constitutes effective practice, based largely on educators' own experience. By and large there is a conspicuous absence of any reference to the SLA research that has investigated teacher talk, or to L2 learning theories that might inform what kinds of teacher talk are likely to foster learning.

Input in second language acquisition research

Second language acquisition researchers (e.g. Hulstijn 2003) distinguish intentional and incidental language acquisition. Intentional acquisition occurs when learners make deliberate efforts to learn a specific feature, for example, when they set out to learn the meanings of a set of words or when they study and practise a specific grammatical feature. Incidental acquisition occurs when learners 'pick up' linguistic features from input they are exposed to. It can occur when they are primarily focused on meaning, but can also occur during intentional learning (i.e. when their attention is directed at learning one feature but they happen to acquire some other feature).

By and large the teacher guides I considered above address how to help learners learn intentionally. SLA, in contrast, is primarily interested in how learners learn incidentally. This is partly because SLA has tended to focus on naturalistic settings where acquisition is mainly incidental, but it is also because a language is just too complex to study, practise, and intentionally learn all its phonological, lexical, grammatical, and textual properties (Krashen 1982). Even in instructed settings, therefore, much learning must be incidental if learners are to achieve high levels of L2 proficiency. This is why ‘input’ is such a central construct in all theories of L2 acquisition; it is primarily through exposure to input that incidental learning takes place.

SLA researchers have addressed two key questions:

1. What is the nature of the input that L2 learners are exposed to?
2. How do learners learn incidentally through exposure to input?

The answers to these questions can help address a third question: ‘What can teachers do to facilitate incidental acquisition?’ I will consider the first two questions here and delay consideration of the third to later in this chapter.

Non-interactive and interactive input

Input can be non-interactive or interactive. Non-interactive input consists of oral or written samples of the target language that do not require any verbal response from the learner (e.g. when listening or reading). Interactive input arises from the social interactions that learners participate in with other people in the classroom context, with the teacher or other learners. Both types of input afford opportunities for incidental learning, but SLA researchers have shown that input obtained through interaction is especially beneficial.

Non-interactive input may or may not be modified to suit the learner. Long & Ross (1993) distinguished three types of non-interactive input. ‘Baseline input’ is unmodified, typical of the kind of input that occurs in communication between competent speakers of a language (i.e. it is ‘authentic’). It is characterized by lengthy sentences and dense propositional content. ‘Simplified input’ is input that has been simplified by using short sentences and thinning out the propositional content. ‘Elaborated input’ is input that has been elaborated with the aim of making the task of comprehension easier by structuring the propositional content more clearly, but is not necessarily more linguistically simple.

Interactive input is likely to be modified to suit the learner. In accordance with Grice’s (1975) cooperative principle, interlocutors strive to achieve mutual understanding. Thus when learners fail to understand they have the option of signalling they have a problem which can lead to their interlocutor modifying the input to accommodate them. In the example below taken from Pica (1992), a native speaker (NS) is talking with a learner while performing an information gap task involving describing the location of some objects. Initially the learner fails to

understand ‘mushroom’ in the NS’s instruction (turn 1) and requests clarification (turn 2). The NS responds by simplifying her initial instruction (turn 3), which enables the learner to identify the source of her comprehension problem and request a definition of ‘mushroom’ (turn 4). The NS provides this (turn 5) and the learner then seeks confirmation she has understood by offering a synonym (turn 6). The NS confirms and then provides further details (turn 7). This example illustrates how input that is initially not comprehensible to a learner is modified through interaction so that it becomes comprehensible.

1. NS: Place the mushroom with the four yellow dots underneath the two mushrooms that are already there.
2. NNS: Which one?
3. NS: OK? Place the *mushroom*
4. NNS: What’s a mushroom?
5. NS: It’s another kind of plant
6. NNS: A fungus
7. NS: Yeah a fungus. It’s a little brown thing . . . a little brown thing?

Neither non-interactive nor interactive input involves a fixed set of features; instead, they consist of a continuum of adjustments. Early studies of teacher talk (e.g. Henzl 1979), for example, have shown that teacher talk can be dynamically tailored to learners’ needs, affording them increasingly richer input as their proficiency develops.

Learning through input

Incidental learning takes place when learners establish a link between a specific linguistic form and the meaning that it conveys (e.g. ‘s’ on ‘boys’ signals the meaning ‘more than one’). This process of mapping meaning onto form is the *sine qua non* of incidental acquisition.

There are, however, differing views about how form–function mapping takes place when learners are exposed to input.

1. *Incidental acquisition takes place subconsciously* (Krashen). According to Krashen (1985), ‘acquisition’ (in contrast to ‘learning’) is a subconscious process; that is, it takes place without any awareness as long as the input is comprehensible and the learners are responsive to the input. In other words, Krashen saw acquisition not just as ‘incidental’ but also as ‘implicit’. He went on to suggest two key ways in which input is made comprehensible. First, the situational context can make the meaning of the input clear. Second, input becomes comprehensible when it is simplified, which Krashen saw as taking place naturally when efforts are made to ensure that learners can comprehend what they hear and read.

2. *Incidental acquisition involves consciousness at the level of ‘noticing’* (Schmidt). Schmidt (1994; 2001) argued that incidental acquisition takes place when learners pay conscious attention to a linguistic feature in the input. He distinguished

consciousness as ‘noticing’ and consciousness as ‘understanding’. He argued that little learning could take place without ‘noticing’, but that while ‘understanding’ might be helpful, it was probably not necessary. In other words, learners need to pay attention to exemplars of linguistic forms and their meanings as they encounter them in the input but do not need to construct explicit rules to explain them. Schmidt also proposed that incidental acquisition is supported when learners compare their own output and the input—a process he called ‘noticing-the-gap’.

Both noticing and noticing-the-gap involve learners’ working memory when learners ‘intake’ an exemplar they have noticed and rehearse this, for example, by repeating it aloud or silently to themselves. Noticing and noticing-the-gap only result in acquisition when a form that has been activated in working memory results in change in the learner’s long-term memory. Unlike Krashen, Schmidt does not see acquisition as an entirely implicit process.

3. *Incidental acquisition involves both implicit and conscious processes (N. Ellis).* Connectionist theories view language as a complex network of weighted connections between neurons rather than as a set of symbolic categories (i.e. ‘rules’). These connections are dynamically and continuously adjusted through exposure to input. From this perspective, the development of a language system is in part at least an implicit process, as learners are not conscious of the subtle changes in the weighted connections that constitute their L2 knowledge. However, learners also construct explicit representations of linguistic elements through intentional learning, and also through conscious reflection on and analysis of output derived from their implicit system. N. Ellis (2002; 2005) argues that the learners’ implicit and explicit systems interface indirectly. He proposes that learning commences with the explicit representation of a linguistic chunk—a formulaic sequence that encodes a particular semantic or pragmatic meaning—and at this point, learning is conscious. However, once a form–meaning mapping has been established, noticing is no longer necessary and the pattern-recognition mechanisms that shape and reshape connectionist memory take over. It is in this sense that learning takes place implicitly. N. Ellis (2005: 340) talked about the ‘collaborative mind’ to capture the idea that implicit and explicit processing systems are ‘dynamically involved together in every cognitive task and in every learning episode’.

These theoretical accounts of incidental acquisition differ in how they view the role of consciousness. If consciousness is not involved (as claimed by Krashen), then all that is needed is to make sure that input is comprehensible. The problem here is that when learners can comprehend by without processing the input linguistically, it is difficult to see how learning can take place. It is bottom-up processing where ‘small (“lower level”) units are progressively reshaped into larger ones’ (Field 2004) that makes noticing and noticing-the-gap possible, and allows the ‘collaborative mind’ to function.

There is now a clear consensus in SLA that while comprehensible input is clearly desirable it is neither sufficient nor efficient. Recognizing this, SLA researchers have turned their attention to how input triggers learning.

Making input work for learning

For input to work for learning, learners' need to engage in bottom-up-processing—that is, their attention needs to be drawn to linguistic features that otherwise they would ignore because their L1 or existing L2 schemata prevent detection and processing taking place. Overcoming these blocks makes learning possible. One way of achieving this, of course, is through explicit instruction and intentional language learning. My concern here, however, is how input can facilitate incidental acquisition by prompting learners to attend to linguistic forms. I will distinguish how this can be done in non-interactive and interactive input.

In non-interactive input, one factor that can induce noticing is the frequency with which specific linguistic forms appear in the input. However, frequency by itself does not guarantee noticing. The most frequent form in the input to English learners is 'the', but this form is typically late acquired and in fact may never be fully acquired by learners whose L1 lacks articles. SLA researchers have investigated whether enhancing difficult-to-acquire features in the input helps their acquisition. Text-enhancement studies ask learners to listen to or to read texts in order to understand them, but also draw their attention selectively to a predetermined linguistic feature in a variety of ways: (1) 'flooding' the input with exemplars of the feature, (2) elaborating the input through repetition and paraphrasing, or (3) highlighting a specific form through intonation in oral input or by bolding, italicizing or paraphrasing in written input. Lee & Huang (2008) carried out a meta-analysis of these studies, reporting that overall text enhancement does facilitate both noticing and acquisition but has only a limited effect. This is one reason why SLA researchers have focused greater attention on interactive input.

Much of the research that has investigated interactive input has drawn on Long's Interaction Hypothesis (Long 1996), which claims that the 'negotiation of meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the native speaker or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways' (pp. 451–2). A good example of how this can work is the negotiation sequence shown above. The negotiation that takes place when the learner signals she does not understand *mushroom* helps her to attend to this word and potentially acquire it. Several studies (e.g. Ellis, Tanaka, & Yamazaki 1994; Mackey 1999) provide evidence that interactionally modified input can result in the learning of both vocabulary and grammar.

The Interaction Hypothesis is limited in a number of ways. Long never intended to suggest that meaning negotiation is the only type of interaction that fosters learning. Clearly, 'uninterrupted communication' (i.e. communication where there is no problem of understanding) can also contribute. Its major limitation, however, lies in its insistence on the negotiation of *meaning* as the trigger of acquisition. In fact, in a classroom context, breakdown in communication is rare, as teachers try to ensure that their input is comprehensible (i.e. through teacher talk). However, negotiation need not depend on a breakdown in meaning.

Negotiation of *form* is in fact quite common even in communicative language lessons. In the example below from Doughty & Varela (1998), the learner failed to use past-tense verb forms, leading the teacher to first repeat the learner's utterance highlighting the erroneous forms intonationally and then, when that fails to elicit a correction, recast the utterance. Negotiation of form functions in the same way as the negotiation of meaning, by providing learners with input related to a specific linguistic feature that they failed to use correctly, and thus caters to both noticing and noticing-the-gap.

L: I think that the worm will go under the soil.

T: I *think* that the worm *will* go under the soil?

L: (no response)

T: I *thought* that the worm *would* go under the soil.

Both negotiation of meaning and of form make frequent use of recasts, defined by Long (1996: 436) as an utterance that 'rephrases the learner's utterance by changing one or more components (subject, verb, object) while still referring to its central meaning'. Recasts provide learners with input that they can use to modify their L2 systems. Research (e.g. Lyster & Ranta 1997) has shown that teachers make frequent use of recasts. However, one problem with recasts is that their corrective function is not always clearly evident, so learners fail to attend to them. However, when recasts are made more explicit, as in the example above, where the recast is preceded by a repetition of the learner's erroneous utterance, or when just the erroneous part of a learner utterance is recast (i.e. in a partial recast), the likelihood of the learner attending to the corrected feature increases.

Long (1991: 45–6) proposed that learners benefit from opportunities to communicate when there is a 'focus on form' which 'overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning'. Long characterized 'focus on form' as reactive in nature (i.e. it occurs in response to learner error), and emphasized the value of recasts. However, this is perhaps an overly narrow view of focus on form. Teachers also address their students' linguistic problems pre-emptively, for example, by checking whether they know a key word or by warning them about the need to use a particular target structure before they start an activity. There are a variety of strategies available for doing focus-on-form (see Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen 2002), and clear evidence that such strategies help learners to learn incidentally.

Back to language pedagogy

It is not so surprising that the teacher guides and teacher trainers pay so little attention to 'input'. The guides focus on the practical business of 'teaching'; SLA is concerned with theoretical issues related to 'learning'. Yet, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Ellis 2010), this does not mean that SLA should be ignored by teachers and teacher educators. Rather, it means finding a way in

which the practical discourse intended for teachers can be informed by the theoretical discourse that addresses how learners learn. One way of achieving this is to take pedagogical issues as the starting point and examine them through the lens of SLA. So I will now return to how ‘input’ has been addressed in language pedagogy, and suggest how an understanding of the role of input in learning can shed light on the claims made about authentic materials and teacher talk.

Authentic materials

I noted earlier that there are conflicting pedagogic views about authentic materials. In general, language educators emphasize the importance of authentic materials on the grounds that they expose learners to the kinds of language use they will experience in non-pedagogic contexts. However, some commentators argue that it is the process of authenticating texts that is important rather than the genuineness of the text themselves, and that authentic materials may be too linguistically complex for some learners.

To adjudicate on these differing views, we need to acknowledge the key distinction between intentional and incidental learning—so central to SLA. Where teaching is directed at intentional learning, the case for making use of authentic materials is a strong one. As McCarthy (1991) pointed out, if we are going to teach the properties of a language it makes sense to ensure that we base what is taught on the properties of ‘natural discourse’. Also, as some commentators have claimed, authentic materials are motivating. The problem lies in the linguistic and cultural difficulties they pose for learners, especially those of low proficiency. But where the aim is intentional learning, this need not be a problem. If learners receive pedagogic support and have time to process the texts, the inherent difficulty of authentic materials can be overcome. Widdowson (1978) suggested one way of achieving this—through ‘gradual approximation’, where learners first read or listen to simplified versions of a text before graduating to the authentic version. Authentic texts, then, have a clear role to play (1) in identifying what properties of language to teach and (2) as a resource that can be manipulated pedagogically when the purpose is intentional learning.

If the aim is to promote incidental learning, however, it is a different story. SLA research focuses on incidental acquisition. It is difficult to see how authentic materials can contribute to incidental acquisition unless they have been selected with great care to ensure that they match the level of development of the students they are intended for—a challenging task. Non-interactive input works for incidental acquisition when (1) it is comprehensible and (2) it induces attention to specific linguistic features. Comprehensibility can be achieved by simplifying authentic texts, perhaps guided by reference to word frequency lists and scales of grammatical complexity.

However, simplifying texts in this way can deprive learners of exposure to the wide range of linguistic features needed for full development. It was this reason that Long & Ross (1993) argued for text elaboration. Whereas simplification

involves removing those words or grammatical structures deemed too difficult for the learners, text elaboration enriches a text by making the meanings of unknown words clear through paraphrasing and by making grammatical structures more transparent. Elaboration also helps noticing, as it draws attention to the meanings of linguistic forms that may not yet be fully acquired. But probably more is needed to facilitate noticing—enhancing linguistic features in the input and, perhaps most importantly, ensuring that learners have sufficient time to process the input, for example through text repetition (see Ellis & Chang 2016). The more time learners have to process a text, the greater the opportunity for the bottom-up processing needed for acquisition.

Non-interactive input, then, can be made to work for incidental acquisition by making texts comprehensible and by facilitating noticing in these ways:

1. text elaboration;
2. text enhancement;
3. allowing time on task.

Teacher talk

One of the main findings of studies of teacher talk is that it is dynamic, i.e. it is consciously adjusted to the level of the students. For this reason, it is well equipped to provide learners with comprehensible input. Potentially, too, the discourse adjustments that arise in teacher talk (e.g. the online repetitions and paraphrasing that studies have shown occur regularly) can help to make specific linguistic forms prominent in the input and thus encourage noticing. Teacher talk, then, can facilitate the kind of input processing that is important for incidental acquisition. For this reason, perhaps, the fact that teachers tend to dominate talk time in a classroom is less of a problem than some educators have claimed. Simple injunctions about the need to reduce TTT fail to take account of the level of the students or the purpose of a lesson. As Prabhu (1987) argued, beginner learners, in particular, benefit from teacher talk, as this serves as the main source of input for incidental acquisition.

Other teacher educators have stressed that it is the quality rather than the quantity of teacher talk that is important. It is here perhaps that SLA research can be helpful. Teacher talk is often characterized as a type of non-interactive input, and perhaps in the case of a lecture it is. Often, however, teacher talk is highly interactive as good teachers respond to the verbal and nonverbal signals of comprehension on the part of students. SLA research points to the kinds of modification that teachers make in response to these signals: they slow down, they pause longer, they speak more loudly and distinctly, they use high-frequency words, they shorten their utterances and avoid complex grammatical structures, and they make use of self-repetitions. Such modifications help to make the input comprehensible for learners. Teachers also exploit the classroom context to make input comprehensible. The example I quoted from the CELTA training video is

a good example of this. This was offered as an example of how *not* to do teacher talk, but in fact it illustrates exactly how a teacher can exploit the ‘here-and-now’ of the classroom to provide learners with input that is comprehensible and, potentially, a source for incidental acquisition.

There are, however, problems with teacher talk. In whole-class situations teachers may find it difficult to ensure that the adjustments they make are well suited to individual learners. Another problem lies in the fact that teacher talk has been shown to be sometimes lacking in the full range of grammatical features, and tends to be characterized by low-frequency vocabulary. In other words, there is a danger that the input remains oversimplified. A final problem concerns teachers’ reliance on display questions, and their reluctance to allow time for students to respond both of which have been shown to restrict opportunities for learner output.

Teacher talk works best when it is fully interactive—that is, when students are willing and have an opportunity to respond to what the teacher says. The negotiation of meaning and of form—which, as we saw earlier, are viewed as important sources of incidental learning—depend on the students being prepared to indicate when they have not understood. Teacher talk is interactive because it does not consist just of the talk that the teacher initiates but also of the talk that a teacher produces in response to what the students say. So teachers need to know how to encourage students to indicate they have a comprehension or linguistic problem, and they need appropriate strategies for accomplishing successfully the negotiation of meaning and form. These strategies are an essential element of teacher talk because they not only help to make input comprehensible but also attract learners’ attention to form and thus engage what N. Ellis (2005) called the ‘collaborative mind’ of the learner.

Teacher training programmes typically do not provide adequate training in how to do teacher talk—often merely warning against talking too much or advising teachers to avoid running commentaries on what they are doing. The importance of teacher talk and its potential problems point to a need for educators to address teacher talk directly. SLA offers some important insights about how to set about doing this, and points to the kinds of strategies that constitute effective teacher talk. As Thornbury (1996) pointed out, an important way of sensitizing teachers to their own use of teacher talk is by asking them to prepare a transcription of a lesson and reflect on their use of teacher talk. Such reflection can be guided by those features of teacher talk that SLA has shown to be facilitative of acquisition.

Conclusion

You can learn a language (to some level at least) without having to speak or write it, but you cannot learn without input. It is therefore something of a mystery that teacher guides and some teacher educators place so much importance on learner production and give so little attention to how teachers can ensure that their

students are provided with sufficient input of the right kind for learning. I put this down to the external view of language pedagogy that informs the teacher guides and CELTA-type courses—the focus on what to teach, the techniques needed to execute particular lessons, and intentional learning. But once we acknowledge teaching as input, we are really forced to take an internal view of teaching and consider how the non-interactive and interactive input that figures in teaching shapes opportunities for incidental learning. We need to acknowledge that incidental learning is as important as intentional learning—if not more so.

I began this chapter with reference to Scrivener's (2014) prolegomena for teachers to 'demand high', noting that this derived from his strong feeling that teachers were too intent on teaching technically sound lessons and as a result were failing to push and challenge their students. But this requires an understanding of what language learning is and, in particular, the conditions that support incidental learning from input. If teachers are to 'demand high' they need to recognize that learning occurs incidentally as well as intentionally in classrooms, and that to cater for incidental learning it is necessary to take an internal perspective on teaching by asking how they can make input work for learning. If teachers are to 'demand high' they need an understanding of the role of input in incidental acquisition and how it can be shaped so that it works for incidental acquisition.

Note

- 1 Scrivener has a web-page (<https://demandhighelt.wordpress.com/>) that develops his ideas about 'demand high' and offers some concrete suggestions for how this might be achieved.

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7

THE PRODUCTION-ORIENTED APPROACH

A pedagogical innovation in university English teaching in China

Wen Qiufang

Introduction

Since the policy of reform and opening up was adopted in mainland China in the 1970s, the quality of English language education at tertiary institutions has attracted more and more attention. High-ranking government officials have made public speeches calling for reforms in English education to improve its effectiveness, since they firmly believe that the country needs competent English users for faster growth in political, economic, and technological spheres (Li 1996; Wu 2004; Zhang 2002; Zhou 2004). As a result of their attention to English, people from all walks of life have very high expectations of English instruction at tertiary institutions. It seems that parents, students, and employers in mainland China are all dissatisfied with the quality of university English instruction, and criticism can be heard from almost every corner of the country (e.g. Dai 2001; Cai 2006, 2012; Jing 1999a, 1999b).

Against this background, I have proposed the production-oriented approach (POA) as a potential remedy for current English instruction. I believe that POA can at least enable university students to transform most of their inert linguistic knowledge acquired in their secondary school into active linguistic behaviour by engaging in genuine productive activities, in the process raising their language awareness, perfecting their linguistic system, and expanding their discourse competence far beyond their current levels.

By drawing on the strengths of several western theories (e.g. Ellis 2003; Krashen 1985; Long 1983; Markham 2011; Swain 1985) and integrating them with Chinese contextual features (e.g. Wang & Wang 2015), POA was finally theorized in 2015 as a result of continuous revisions based on the feedback from conference participants (Wen 2014b, 2015a, 2015b) and the initial findings from several rounds of experiments using POA (Yang 2015; Zhang 2015, 2016). In

2015, a set of textbooks entitled *iEnglish* were compiled and published embodying POA principles (Wang & Wen 2015). Now thousands of university students are taught English through *iEnglish*. In general, POA is already practised in classroom instruction, and has generated a considerable impact on English pedagogy in mainland China. However, its ultimate effectiveness takes time to fully show itself.

This chapter begins with the background of current English instruction against which POA has been developed, followed by a detailed explanation of the programme including its principles, hypotheses, and teacher-mediated instruction procedure. Towards the end, there is an illustrative example of POA in use by a teacher from a Chinese university in Beijing who is doing her PhD under my supervision (Zhang 2016).

Current situation of English instruction in tertiary institutions

In general, current university English instruction can be classified into two types, input-centred and output-centred, with the former being more popular. Each has its weaknesses, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Input-centred instruction (ICI)

ICI, also called text-centred instruction, means that English teachers treat the text as an end rather than a means. In general, there are two ways to deal with input. The first is bottom-up, which was popular from the 1950s to the mid-1990s and is still being used in some less developed areas. The second is top-down, which has been increasingly popular since the late 1990s and is now extensively practised in many universities (Wen 2014b).

Bottom-up instruction is traditionally called intensive reading, which is said to be imported from the former Soviet Union. It dissects the text into small bits for a detailed explanation aiming at a thorough understanding of the text by students. Normally, the teacher would expect students to preview the text, looking for new words, expressions, and grammatical features and preparing answers to the teacher's possible questions. In class, the teacher would first ask students to read aloud one or more paragraphs depending on the length and then focus the students' attention on some difficult new words, expressions, or sentence structures. Once the barriers of linguistic forms are removed, the teacher would require the students to paraphrase some complicated sentences to check their comprehension, or to answer some reading comprehension questions. Sometimes, in order to help the students learn how to use the new words or expressions just encountered in the text, the teacher would ask the students to do translation or sentence-making exercises. After class, the students would read the text repeatedly until they are able to recite it. The advantage of this type of instruction is to maximize the use of the limited amount of input when abundant input is not available. However, its disadvantage is also self-evident. It puts too much emphasis

on individual linguistic items and the text itself without providing students with opportunities to use the language for communicative purposes.

In top-down instruction, the teacher focuses students' attention on the general meaning of a text. The teacher usually starts teaching with warm-up activities, which are followed by skimming or scanning the text to get the main idea. The follow-up activity is typically an analysis of the structure of the text for the purpose of determining its overall organization. Some teachers might select for further discussion a few sentences which are apparently difficult to understand or contain some expressions worth learning. Once the text instruction is finished, the teacher would ask the students to do the exercises at the end of each unit designed by the textbook writer. The other option is to do these exercises along with the teaching of the text. Finally, if time permits, students might be asked to undertake a productive activity as homework. For example, when the teacher taught the text entitled 'To lie or not to lie—the doctor's dilemma', students were asked to write an essay by choosing one of the following topics: 'To quit or to continue—a smoker's dilemma', 'To run or to stay—a thief's dilemma', 'To ___ or to ___ —a ___'s dilemma' (Zhang 2012). The problem is that the writing task is not relevant to the text that has been studied. This kind of instruction is most conducive to the development of macro-level comprehension skills. However, the important linguistic forms in the text are rarely focused on, and seldom taught for use by the students in their communication.

In general, ICI focuses on processing input rather than on producing output. By its nature, ICI does not aim at developing students' productive skills. Therefore, it has been criticized as involving 'huge cost, little return' (Cai 2006), 'spending enormous time but obtaining poor outcomes' (Jing 1999a), and 'dumb English' (Dai 2001).

Output-centred instruction (OCI)

Apart from the popular ICI, some innovative teachers in China have experimented with output-centred instruction, such as project-based or task-based teaching, since the beginning of the 21st century. OCI has been adopted generally along with the teacher's strong belief in the learner-centred principle.

In project-based instruction, students are asked to accomplish a group project that may last two or more weeks: examples include performing a short play in English, producing an English newspaper, conducting an English debate, or making a short video programme in English. The students are encouraged to learn from each other and to collaborate within the group. Once the students finish the projects, the teacher may organize a big show, inviting some external judges to give their evaluations.

In task-based instruction, the teacher would require the students to undertake tasks such as writing a complaint letter, or making an oral presentation on the topic of environmental protection. Once the task is assigned, the students would be encouraged to brainstorm either in groups or as a whole class led by the teacher.

Sometimes, under the guidance of the teacher, a general outline of the writing or the speaking task is generated, while some useful expressions and structures are sometimes offered by the teacher.

It seems that OCI is more effective than ICI. Some studies (e.g. Wen & Liu 2007; Wen & Song 1999; Xu 2004) reported that students were found to be more active and creative in their use of English. Moreover, they became more willing to cooperate with other students. However, students in this type of production often just use what has already been learnt and stored in memory (Wen 2005). If they happen to learn some new linguistic items from their classmates or through searching the Internet or dictionaries, this outcome does not result from the teacher's careful planning. POA believes that careful planning by the teacher can help students develop their communicative competence more efficiently than students' accidental learning. Some people might argue that the weaknesses discussed here are not inherent in the theory of project-based or task-based approach, but are instead derived from misunderstanding or misapplication of the theory. Their argument sounds reasonable. However, the POA is more concerned with problems in practice that can directly affect the learner's learning outcomes.

The theory of the POA

Compared with existing instructional approaches, the outstanding features of the POA can be characterized as production enhancement, input-as-enabler, and teacher mediation. 'Production enhancement' means that POA starts with production and ends with production as an ultimate objective. The initial production is intended to help Chinese university learners who have already acquired some receptive knowledge but are weak in the use of English for communication to notice their deficiencies in production, and to stimulate those students for further learning. Taking productive skills as the eventual learning objective is to meet the needs of the job market in China, where productive skills (i.e. speaking, writing, interpreting, and translating) are crucial for public professional or business communication, while receptive skills (i.e. reading and listening) only serve as mediators. 'Input-as-enabler' means that all the reading and listening materials are directly selected to enhance production. This alignment between input and output aims to overcome the weaknesses in ICI and OCI. As mentioned before, ICI in China attaches too much importance to input, and thus cannot satisfy the learner's needs of producing English for communication, while OCI, although emphasizing the use of English, does not enable learners to expand their limited linguistic knowledge with a careful plan. 'Teacher mediation' means that POA treats the teacher as a mediator who plays a professional role in scaffolding students' learning so that they can make faster progress than they would through learning by themselves or from their peers alone. As a mediator, the teacher is required to play a central role in instruction (Atkinson et al. 2007) rather than acting simply as a facilitator or a consultant. In the following section, the theoretical system of the POA will be expounded.

The system of POA

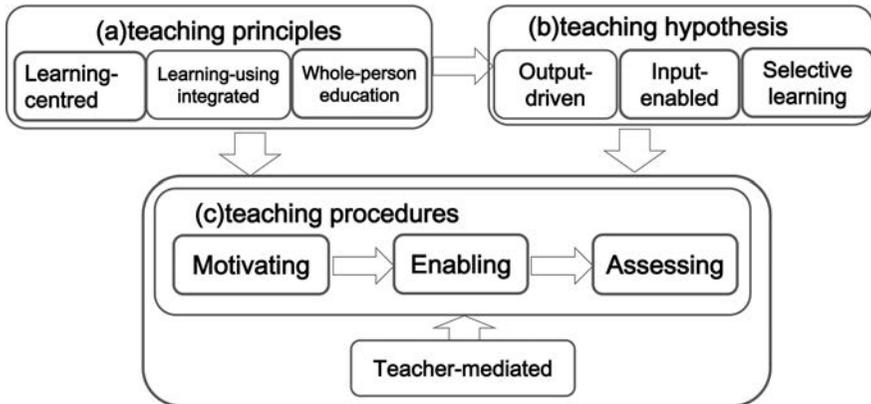


FIGURE 7.1 The POA system

Figure 7.1 presents the POA model, which comprises three components: (a) teaching principles; (b) teaching hypotheses; and (c) teacher-mediated processes. The teaching principles, serving as guidelines for the other two components, contain learning-centred, learning-using integration and whole-person education. The teaching hypotheses comprise output-driven, input-enabled, and selective learning, serving as a theoretical basis for the teaching processes. The teaching process contains three phases: motivating, enabling, and assessing, with the teacher's mediation at every phase. The three hypotheses serve as a theoretical basis for the teaching process; the three-phase teaching process reflects and illustrates the principles while being aimed at testing the hypotheses (Wen 2015c, 2016).

Teaching principles

Learning-centred principle (LCP)

The first teaching principle of the POA is learning-centredness: teachers should make efforts to ensure that every minute of instruction is effectively used while students' engagement is vigorously promoted. The learning-centred principle is directly opposed to learner-centred instruction, which has been strongly advocated and widely accepted by westerners. The latter was first proposed in reaction against the teacher-centred approach. Learner-centred instruction appears to be more reasonable and meaningful than the teacher-centred approach, given the fact that without learners, there is no necessity for having teachers, while without teachers, some learners obviously can survive by themselves. Although learning taking place in the absence of a teacher is ubiquitous in daily life, formal schooling with teachers' guidance is more fruitful than informal schooling simply because

formal schooling is systematically arranged and carefully designed by people who are professionally trained (Wang 1983). It is clear that learning in the classroom requires the joint efforts of both the learner and the teacher. It is evident that the ultimate goal of any formal instruction is to make learning occur. Therefore, learning-centredness can capture the nature of formal schooling, which can strike a balance between the roles of the teacher and of the student.

Learning–using integration principle (LUIP)

The second principle is learning–using integration (LUIP), which maintains that the acquired input should be used in subsequent communicative activities. In other words, POA tries to align input with output so that the former can serve the needs of the latter. In this way, processing input and using acquired input are merged and linked seamlessly. As has been mentioned before, ICI focuses either on individual linguistic items or on the macro-meaning of the text, but the use of the processed input in communication is almost absent. Project-based or task-based instruction provides students with opportunities to use English, but this is not given timely support by necessary new input designed by the teacher.

Whole-person education principle (WPEP)

The third principle is that of whole-person education (WPEP), which maintains that English instruction is not simply to achieve instrumental objectives such as developing skills for using English in communication but also entails humanistic objectives such as forming a positive world outlook and having healthy personal growth. Emphasizing this principle does not mean that POA teachers need to devote much class time to it if it is properly handled. For example, one strategy is to carefully select input materials and topics for productive activities that are conducive to developing the learner's critical thinking skills, autonomous learning abilities, intercultural competence, and overall humanistic qualities.

Hypotheses

POA proposes three hypotheses which guide the third component of the model, i.e. teaching processes.

Output-driven hypothesis (ODH)

The output-driven hypothesis assumes that output-driven is more powerful than input-driven in terms of learning outcomes. It means that if students start their learning with an output activity with potential communicative values, their initial trial can make them notice what they lack. Awareness of their deficiencies can stimulate the desire for learning and focus their attention on what needs to be learnt. Normally, any communicative task requires the performer to be equipped

with relevant ideas, appropriate linguistic expressions, and an adequate framework to present the ideas. By analogy, this initial trial is like creating a state of 'being hungry' so that the students are eager to 'devour' what has been provided for them, instead of being 'force-fed'. It is understood that students in the same class can vary in what they lack in order to accomplish the same productive activity. This trial can help students pinpoint their learning needs from the input given.

The input-driven instruction proposed by Krashen (1985) holds that, so long as learners are exposed to sufficient input, they can acquire a language naturally and effortlessly. This might function well in L1 acquisition or L2 acquisition by children. However, ODH does not consider that Chinese university students can learn an L2 as effectively as Krashen claims, since adult learners have already accumulated a considerable amount of receptive knowledge about English in primary and secondary schools, having 'a full stomach without proper digestion'. As the saying goes, 'hunger is the best spice': output-driven instruction is designed to stimulate the appetite of a learner, thus preparing her/him for processing with more appreciation the enabling input given subsequently. In other words, through an initial trial of the productive activity, the learner, just like a hungry person anxious for food, is eager to obtain relevant input.

Input-enabled hypothesis (IEH)

The second hypothesis, the input-enabled hypothesis, claims that any kind of productive activity which students are asked to perform requires input of enabling materials. With newly provided enabling input, the productive activity to be carried out can develop the learner's lexical, grammatical, and textual competence, in addition to increasing fluency and automaticity in using previously acquired knowledge. Therefore, POA is based on the belief that input-enabled production can link what has been acquired with production on the one hand and, on the other, lead to better learning outcomes than production alone practised through task-based or project-based instruction.

Selective-learning hypothesis (SLH)

The third hypothesis, the selective-learning hypothesis, advocates that instruction with limited classroom time should process the given input selectively. SLH assumes that learning selectively can lead to better learning outcomes. What is selected is expected to be aligned with the student's need to perform the designated productive activity. It has been explained above that students within the same class might have varied needs in terms of ideas, linguistic forms, or discourse organization. The students thus have freedom to decide their learning focus. The hypothesis directly argues against bottom-up input instruction. In real-life learning, people often search for something relevant to learn for fulfilling a specific purpose. For example, when writing a paper, we might download a huge

amount of relevant papers from websites, but we do not read every paper very closely. We normally scan them first and select relevant ones for careful reading. SLH believes, therefore, that classroom instruction should provide university students with opportunities to experience real-life learning. Furthermore, human beings' attention span is limited and their capacity for taking in new things is constrained. Instead of allocating their attention to resources relating to too many new items, SLH can enable students to focus their attention on the most crucial things so that learning efficiency can be maximized.

Teaching procedures

POA proposes three phases of English teaching, Motivating, Enabling, and Assessing, accompanied at each phase by the teacher's mediation.

Motivating

The first phase of motivating is linked with ODH. The teacher first presents a series of possible scenarios in which assigned productive activities can occur, and then briefly explains what the students are expected to attempt in these scenarios. Following the teacher's instruction, the students try to carry out the assigned activity, which can be either in written or in oral mode. In order to ensure that the students are serious about their trial, their initial performance can be taken as part of the formative assessment of learning a unit. Finally, the teacher explains what the students are expected to achieve. The learning objectives include communicative, linguistic, and organizational targets that are comprehensive, manageable, and measurable.

Alternatively, instruction at the phase of motivating can follow a 'flipped-class' mode by which students are asked to watch a video clip before class. Authentic scenarios are shown, and productive activities are performed by invited participants who simulate the roles according to specific tasks. The invited participant, if playing the role of the student, has a similar English proficiency level to the students who watch the video clip. Difficulties or embarrassments displayed in the video clip would make the viewers realize that they might very likely experience similar or greater difficulties compared with the invited participant, so that they feel anxious and ready to try. The learning objectives are illustrated and explained at the end of the video clip. In class, the teacher simply checks whether the students have watched the clip carefully, and to what extent they have understood the learning objectives of the unit. If necessary, the teacher needs to give them further explanations.

Enabling

The second phase, 'enabling', is crucial for the POA model to guarantee learning to take place. It is connected with IEH and SLH. In order to implement IEH,

the teacher or the textbook writer must prepare either reading or listening materials as input geared to the designated productive activity, in the sense that the input can provide students with sufficient and adequate support for their production. The reason for implementing SLH is that POA believes that it would be very difficult for the given material to match the productive activity 100 per cent. Therefore, the learner needs to learn how to select the useful materials from the given input while ignoring or skipping over those that are not immediately relevant to the activity at hand.

Before class, when the teacher prepares, the productive activity must be divided into several mini-activities; at the same time the given reading or listening materials are also divided into several segments, each of which matches one mini-activity. In the process, actual teaching can take place with several cycles. In each cycle, one segment of input materials is paired with one mini-activity of production so that the delay between input processing and production is effectively reduced. Furthermore, teaching takes place step by step and students learn bit by bit with a short productive activity hard on the heels of input processing. In actual instruction of the second phase, there are several options for promoting selective learning. One of them is to design a set of questions in relation to each segment of input materials that can help extract the essential ideas with corresponding linguistic forms. The other option is to organize pair-work in which students work together to decide what materials can be selected from the text to perform a corresponding activity. Then a teacher-led discussion checks the result of what has been selected from the given input materials while examining students' comprehension.

Assessing

The third phase, 'assessing', examines to what extent the learning objectives have been achieved. POA adopts two types of assessment. The first is ongoing diagnostic assessment occurring at the enabling phase, where the teacher needs to diagnose from time to time to what extent the student's selective learning and mini-productive activity performance meet the requirement, so that the teacher can take timely remedial measures. The second type is achievement assessment at the end of each unit. This final product may take the form of compositions, oral presentations, public speeches, debates, posters, translated texts, or consecutive interpretations, which are normally prepared by students outside class. The final product may be one of two kinds. One is reproduction that logically connects several mini-activities practised during the enabling phase. The second is a result of transferring to a new scenario what has been learnt in the enabling phase. Students may choose either, depending on their proficiency level and their personal likes.

The major difficulty in the assessment phase is that POA requires students to produce considerably more numerous and varied productive activities compared with traditional teaching. Large class size and heavy teaching load, however, means that it is very challenging for the teacher to give each student's product

timely corrective feedback. To meet this challenge, POA proposes a new method, Teacher–Student Collaborative Assessment (TSCA). In TSCA, a few representative products scrutinized by the teacher before class are then brought to the whole class anonymously. First of all, the students are asked to revise the selected products in pairs or in groups. Secondly, the teacher leads a class discussion in which different versions of revisions are compared to see which version is better than another, and why. During the discussion, the teacher may make her or his comments on different versions put forth by the students and then offer her/his own prepared version if needed.

Such collaborative assessment has several advantages over a teacher’s feedback to individuals. On the one hand, the teacher can focus on the places where common problems are most pronounced. On the other hand, students participate in revisions and comparisons of different versions so that they can gain a better understanding of why one version is more appropriate. Consequently, it is more likely that the students will absorb the best versions resulting from a discussion. For those who have not been assessed in class, the teacher can invite the students to undergo a peer assessment coupled with the teacher’s feedback. All the students’ work can form a portfolio which serves as evidence of their progress and as part of the formative assessment of the course in the end.

Implementing POA: an illustrative example

Before explaining what is to be done at each phase of teaching in the following section, I will give a brief description of a topic, ‘Cultural shock in a courtroom’, which Zhang (2016) taught using POA.

A description of Zhang’s teaching plan

Zhang’s students are first-year university students majoring in law. The topic of the unit, ‘Cultural shock in a court room’, is closely linked with their future career. The major teaching materials include an English-language movie, *Gua Sha*, and supplementary reading materials. The unit lasts three weeks, with two 50-minute lessons per week. The students are expected to achieve both communicative and linguistic objectives. The first objective is to develop students’ intercultural competence. Specifically, they are expected to (1) identify clashes and injustice in court due to misunderstanding of other cultures; (2) explain cultural clashes in a legal case involving intercultural communication; (3) develop skills to resolve cultural conflicts and to defend individuals with a Chinese cultural background. The first two objectives are primarily based on students’ understanding of the movie. The third requires the help of the supplementary reading materials. Linguistically, the students are expected to be able to use 40 linguistic items, which include 18 words, 12 expressions, and 10 legal terms such as *defendant*, *trial*, and *prosecution* as their focus. In addition to these lexical items, the use of past subjective mood and the rhetorical device of analogy are also regarded as linguistic objectives.

Gua Sha is a Chinese traditional medical treatment that helps blood circulation by using an instrument somewhat like a comb to make repeated vigorous movements at a specific acupuncture point on a patient's back. Such treatment leaves bruises on the patient's skin which can look like the marks of severe beating. The movie was shown in the US in 2001, with the objective of showing how cultural conflicts between Chinese immigrants and American people can occur due to cultural misunderstanding. The hero is Datong Xu, an American Chinese, who settled in the US as a designer of electronic games. He has achieved great success by years of hard work. Datong's father comes from China to visit his family. While there, he gives his grandson, Dennis, a treatment of *Gua Sha* to treat a slight fever. The authorities, however, mistake the harmless traditional Chinese treatment for child abuse due to the obvious bruised skin on Dennis's back. As a result, Datong has been accused of abusing his son.

Since the movie is fairly long, the teacher asked the students to watch it before class to get an overall picture of the story. In class, she only focused on two hearings in the movie aiming at collecting forensic evidence. The first hearing was to ask Datong to explain to the judges what *Gua Sha* is. Due to his explanations, which used literal translations of some important terms in Chinese medicine, the judges felt more confused and became even more suspicious of his maltreatment of Dennis. During the second hearing, one of the lawyers blamed Datong for designing a video game which promoted violence and displayed brutality, based on Sun Wukong. The lawyer's criticism made Datong burst into fury, since Sun Wukong or the Monkey King, a fictional figure in a classical novel, *The Pilgrimage to the West*, is acute, smart, kind, and very adept at killing evil creatures, and is loved by all Chinese people. His mischievous behaviours are mistaken by the judges as evidence of violent tendencies, which increases their suspicions of Datong's child abuse. Due to these cultural conflicts, this case was put on file for investigation and prosecution.

The unit's productive task was to ask students to perform a court debate concerning two topics, with each debate lasting 6–8 minutes. The first one was '*Gua Sha*: treatment or abuse?' and the second, 'Sun Wukong: a violent king?'. The students were divided into four groups, each comprising five students, with two groups studying the same topic. The students were required to write scripts according to the roles of judge, lawyer, witness, defendant, and accuser. The scripts were to be submitted to the teacher one day before their performance so that the teacher had time to prepare detailed comment. The ultimate purpose was to defend Datong by clarifying cultural differences and explaining why such differences could lead to cultural conflicts.

Three phases of Zhang's teaching

At the phase of motivation, Zhang discussed for a few minutes the nature of culture and of cultural shock. Then, before discussing the movie *Gua Sha*, she showed a few slides concerning more cases of cultural conflicts occurring in

international settings, in order to make students realize that such conflicts are fairly common:

Case 1

In 2001, Chinese American Cao Xianqing was accused of child sexual abuse for applying ointment and changing clothes for his 8-year-old stepdaughter.

Case 2

An Indian couple was fighting in Norway for the custody of their two toddlers who were taken away by the Child Protective Service, who objected to the mother's hand feeding the baby (force feeding) and the child sleeping in the same bed with the father.

Case 3

A Chinese mother was arrested on suspicion of child pornography in Canada after she took and uploaded naked photos of her 4-year-old son.

After viewing the above cases, the teacher asked the students:

Suppose you are a lawyer invited to defend your compatriots. Do you think you are capable of doing it successfully? I am afraid that we will encounter some difficulties. For example, how can we explain traditional Chinese culture in English readily comprehensible to people from different cultural backgrounds? Don't worry about it. Today we will learn how to cope with it. So long as we make efforts to learn, I believe that all of us will become more confident and more capable of dealing with such cases.

Finally, the teacher asked the students to focus on two selected topics in defence of Datong. As expected, the students found it difficult to act as a successful lawyer, since they did not know what to do and how to do it. Then the teacher gave a detailed explanation of the overall teaching plan of the unit, and of general learning objectives as well as specific ones.

At the phase of enabling, she designed three mini-activities which are logically connected (see Figure 7.2). Each mini-activity is supported by enabling materials. Let's take the second mini-activity for example. In order to accomplish the productive activity for the unit, i.e. a legal debate in the court, the students must be able to explain what *Gua Sha* is and who Sun Wukong is in Chinese culture in a way American people can understand. Due to limited space, just the topic of *Gua Sha* will be taken up here. The teacher selected two segments from the movie. In the first segment, Datong gives his explanation, and in the second, the explanation is given by a successful Chinese medical doctor working in the US. The teacher asked the students to make a comparison between the two explanations to see in what way they were different, and why the Chinese medical doctor does much better than Datong. After that, the teacher provided the students with a reading passage in English for selective learning, which explains the history of *Gua Sha*, its working mechanism, and positive comments made by

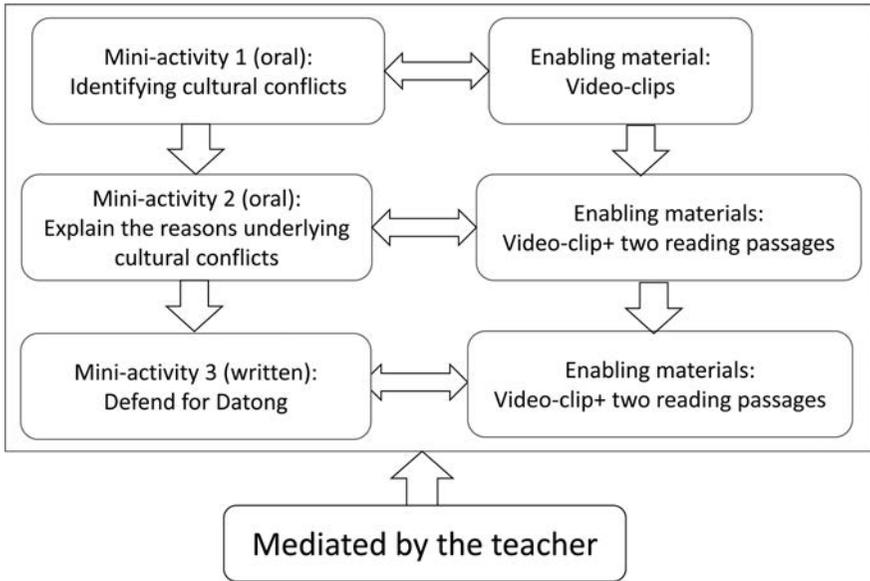


FIGURE 7.2 The enabling phase for the unit 'Cultural shock in a courtroom' (adapted from Zhang 2016: 108)

western patients. Once the students knew what to say and how to talk about *Gua Sha* with the help of enabling materials (i.e. two segments of the movie and one reading passage in English), they were asked to perform the second mini-activity in pairs, and then some of them reported in class what had been discussed. The teacher then gave feedback on the students' report in terms of linguistic forms, ideas, and discourse organization.

At the third phase of assessment, the students performed in groups what they had already prepared and practised according to the guidelines given by the teacher. As mentioned before, teacher and students participated jointly in evaluation. Such an assessment served a double purpose. On the one hand, it evaluated the effects of teaching; on the other, it helped each student evaluate how well s/he learnt compared with other students. In this sense, such assessment looks back at past learning and forward to future learning.

Students' feedback on POA

Once the unit was finished, the teacher collected the students' feedback on POA by asking them to write reflective journals. The following are some quotes from the students' journals:

I love the POA by which I can concentrate on learning instead of looking at their mobile phones from time to time.

Student A

The productive activity centring on one topic is clearly specified, with mini-activities supported by interesting materials. Such teaching is more effective than the previous teaching.

Student B

Every lesson aims at accomplishing a mini-activity. I must be attentive and work hard. Fortunately, what has been learnt is almost seamlessly linked with what is going to produce. So long as I follow the teacher's requirements step by step, practicing speaking, then practicing writing. I needn't worry about the final assignment. Frankly speaking, I haven't attended English lessons so conscientiously for quite a long time.

Student C

Although the majority of students gave positive feedback about POA, some complained that they did not have sufficient time to prepare for the unit's productive activity, and that students' working loads were not evenly allocated. The complaints indicate that POA still has room for improvement.

Conclusion

POA is still at the experimental stage, where a number of tasks are expected to be undertaken. First of all, more empirical studies need to be conducted to measure its effectiveness. Secondly, more action studies must be carried out to adapt to diverse learning conditions and students with varied English proficiency levels. Thirdly, more varieties of textbooks for POA are expected by teachers teaching English for academic purposes, or for vocational skills. Finally, the theoretical basis of POA must be further explored so that its unique features can be well established when compared with other influential instructional approaches.

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8

DO-IT-YOURSELF CORPORA IN THE EAP CLASSROOM

Views of students and teachers

Maggie Charles

Introduction: using corpora in the classroom

A corpus is a collection of electronic texts designed according to set criteria and compiled for a specific purpose. It is accessed through concordance software, which retrieves data from searches made by the user. Corpora are currently widely applied in language pedagogy: they both supply data for the development of teaching materials and provide a resource for direct consultation by students. For classroom use, corpus data are usually presented in the form of concordances, which show a word or phrase chosen by the user in the centre of a set of lines on screen (or on paper). The lines can be sorted and grouped, which allows regularities in the data to emerge, thereby enabling users to perceive patterns and tendencies in the language. For example, the concordance in Figure 8.1, taken from a corpus of doctoral theses, shows two patterns associated with the noun *increase*: *increase in* and *increase of* + expression of quantity. Presented with such data, students are prompted to ‘Identify—Classify—Generalize’, and thus to notice patterns and work out explanations for themselves (Johns 1991: 4).

One of the pioneers of classroom corpus use was Johns (1991), who reported using corpus data with EAP students to investigate lexico-grammatical issues such as the difference between *convince* and *persuade*. He introduced the term

1 llowing heating was due to an **increase in** the concentration of activ
2 the tiles potentially give an **increase in** their operating temperatur
3 dimensions usually demands an **increase in** doping concentration, the
4 significant cases there is an **increase of** 6.4%, implying that in sig
5 that can withstand 1600 C, an **increase of** 400 C on the current mate
6 demonstrated that there is an **increase of** approximately 3.5% in (15N

FIGURE 8.1 Concordance on the noun *increase*

'data-driven learning' (DDL) to refer to his approach, which regards students as 'researchers' who need to study language data in order to progress their learning. Since Johns' research, there has been wide-ranging work on corpus pedagogy, describing and evaluating DDL courses in many different classroom contexts and for many different purposes. For example, corpora have been used with teacher trainees (Hüttner, Smit, & Mehlmauer-Larcher 2009), students of translation (Frankenberg-Garcia 2015), general EFL (Pérez-Paredes, Sánchez-Tornel, & Alcaraz Calero 2013), and individual disciplines of EAP such as economics (Bianchi & Pazzaglia 2007) or law (Hafner & Candlin 2007). Teaching purposes have included grammar practice (Estling Vannestål & Lindquist 2007), vocabulary work (Mudraya 2006), writing skills (Flowerdew 2015), reading comprehension (Curado Fuentes 2015), and oral production (Aston 2015).

Despite the diversity of instructional contexts, there is much agreement on certain key advantages of using corpora in the classroom (Gilquin & Granger 2010). First, the language in a corpus is authentic, which means that the examples encountered by students are utterances that have a genuine communicative function within their context. Second, students gain rapid access to a very large number of examples at the same time. A corpus provides far more instances of an item than dictionaries or textbooks, and this 'condensed exposure' is deemed to help students master the items studied. Moreover, the processes central to DDL, such as identifying, classifying, and generalizing from data, are general cognitive skills, transferable to other academic and professional contexts. Finally, in carrying out such processes, students discover linguistic features for themselves, which can be highly motivating and promotes student autonomy.

Although the evidence is mixed and more empirical work is needed, studies evaluating DDL have concluded that the use of corpora can lead to language learning gains (Yoon 2011) and that attitudes towards corpus use by students are generally favourable (Charles 2011). However, certain requirements need to be fulfilled for direct corpus work to be successful. One aspect of importance is the corpus which is consulted, as it must be appropriate in both content and language level in order to provide data relevant to students' needs.

Due to their easy online accessibility, large general corpora have often been employed in the classroom, including the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (e.g. Frankenberg-Garcia 2012). However, several problems have arisen when students use such corpora (Ädel 2010). First, as the users are not familiar with the contents of the corpus, they may not be able to recognize the context of the concordance lines, making it difficult for them to 'authenticate' the material in order to make it their own. For some learners, the language level of the corpus data may be too high, leading to frustration as they struggle to understand the examples. General corpora may also be too large for some learners to manage, with certain queries retrieving so many examples that students feel they are drowning in data. Finally, for EAP and ESP purposes, general corpora may not always be suitable for answering academic or specialist queries.

DIY corpora

In order to combat such disadvantages, smaller specialist corpora have been used with students of EAP and ESP. However, such corpora are not necessarily readily available in all fields and may therefore have to be constructed by teachers themselves. This approach demands a certain level of expertise and a considerable investment of time on the part of the teacher. Moreover, although a specialist corpus is appropriate for classes in which all students share a common field, it does not address the individual specialist requirements of students in multidisciplinary classes.

Another option, introduced in EAP classes by Lee & Swales (2006), is to have each student build their own do-it-yourself (DIY) corpus. Lee and Swales' students constructed individual corpora of research articles in their own discipline, which they used to carry out self-chosen research projects. Building on this work, Charles (2012, 2014) incorporated DIY corpus construction into an academic writing course for multidisciplinary classes in order to provide students with corpora specific to their own needs. DIY corpus-building courses have also been run in other contexts, including with translation students (Varantola 2003), English majors (Varley 2009), and computer science and engineering undergraduates (Okamoto 2010). Although the teacher needs corpus expertise to set up and oversee students' corpus-building endeavours, the DIY corpus-building approach addresses many of the problems mentioned above. If students create their own corpora, they are familiar with the contents; they know the context of the material and can more easily understand the language of the concordance lines. DIY corpora also tend to be much smaller than general corpora; thus it is unlikely that users will retrieve too much data to handle, and the data they do retrieve will be relevant to their own work. Finally, building and consulting their own discipline-specific corpus is likely to promote students' language awareness and enhanced engagement with the language of their field.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the claims made about DIY corpus-building by presenting data from surveys of three teachers and over 300 students who have used the approach. The chapter proceeds as follows: first, a DIY corpus course is described; then, students' views on the advantages and disadvantages of DIY corpus work are examined; there follows a consideration of the views of teachers. The chapter concludes by discussing the circumstances under which a DIY corpus-building approach is likely to be appropriate.

The DIY corpus course

The course reported here forms part of the academic writing programme at Oxford University Language Centre. The programme is targeted at Master's and doctoral students and is open-access and non-assessed. The DIY corpus course, 'Writing in your Field with Corpora', lasts six weeks, with one two-hour session per week. It has been running since 2009, with several multidisciplinary parallel

classes offered each year. Classes contain about 10–16 students, with roughly equal numbers studying natural sciences and social sciences and about 10–20% arts/humanities. The participants are taught in a computer laboratory, although many students work on their own laptops. The course has been taught by four teachers, including the present researcher, who originally designed the course and developed the materials. The software used is *AntConc* (Anthony 2014), a free tool which is robust, easy to download, and reasonably user-friendly.

Rationale

Given the diversity in students' requirements, the ability to tailor course material individually to students' disciplines is a key factor motivating the course. Work is based on investigating a set of widely used academic discourse functions, which are likely to throw up interesting aspects of disciplinary variation. This enables the multidisciplinary nature of the class to be exploited by having students discuss their corpus findings and explain the characteristics of their own disciplinary discourse, thereby affording opportunities for oral practice.

The biggest challenge for these students, writing the thesis or dissertation, lies in the future. It is therefore important to equip them to become more independent learners, and to provide them with a resource to improve their academic writing by themselves over the long term. Learning the basics of how to build a corpus, becoming familiar with concordance software, and practising applying its functionality to address linguistic and disciplinary questions provides a valuable set of skills, which can be drawn upon throughout the student's academic and professional career.

Thus the four key aims of the course are as follows:

- to individualize academic writing instruction;
- to explore functions of disciplinary discourse;
- to foster autonomy;
- to provide a resource for students' future long-term use.

Course design and procedure

After the first introductory week, the course design consists of three interlinked strands of content: discourse function; lexico-grammar; and corpus work, as seen in Table 8.1. Awareness of a discourse function (first strand) involves perceiving how it is realized and signalled by lexico-grammatical choices (second strand), while corpus work (third strand) focuses on the use of *AntConc* to investigate discourse function and lexico-grammar.

The first session introduces concordancing with *AntConc* using two corpora of theses compiled by the researcher to answer students' lexico-grammatical queries. The selection of files for the DIY corpora is also discussed. Students are advised

TABLE 8.1 Course programme

<i>Week 1: Introduction to AntConc and concordancing</i>		
<i>Discourse function</i>	<i>Lexico-grammar</i>	<i>Corpus work</i>
Week 2: Referring to the literature	Noun patterns, collocations	Corpus construction
Week 3: Investigating self-reference	First person forms (<i>I, we</i>)	Using the Clusters tool
Week 4: Making and countering arguments	Linking adverbs	Using Word List
Week 5: Making and modifying claims	Reporting clauses, reporting verbs	Using the Collocates tool
Week 6: Defending your research against criticism	Subordination, coordination	Context searching

to choose research articles from the most prestigious journals in their field, to choose texts which they consider well-written, and to include a range of writers, whether native or non-native speakers. Corpus construction begins in the second session, when students bring their pdf files and are shown how to convert them into plain text format for use with concordance software. Anthony's (2015) *AntFileConverter* is used, which converts multiple files simultaneously.

The issue of cleaning the files is also addressed. Cleaning a corpus involves deleting all information that is not part of the running text (e.g. titles, references, graphics). It results in more accurate statistics and may make it easier to read the concordance lines, but is a lengthy and tedious process. Students are advised to use their corpus in its 'dirty' form and only to clean it if really necessary. Students are expected to add ten files per week to their corpus, so that they have 50 files by the end of the course. Corpora of this size are likely to contain about 250,000–400,000 words. By the standards of general corpora, DIY corpora are very small, but they are extremely specialized. Flowerdew (2012) notes that 300,000 words is sufficient for such a narrowly focused corpus.

After these two sessions, each class begins by examining the discursive aspect under study, using short extracts taken from theses. Students are prompted to notice the discourse function along with its lexico-grammatical realizations, and to discuss their ideas in groups. After this text-based phase, the teacher demonstrates how to use the *AntConc* tool to retrieve examples that show how the discourse function is used in the student's discipline. Worksheets provide detailed instructions to guide students through the search process, and they are asked to write down their observations and generalizations from the data and to discuss their findings in multidisciplinary groups. Worksheets are collected and reviewed by the teacher each week.

Method and data

A feedback questionnaire handed out at the end of each course asks students to complete the following sentences:

*The **advantages** of working with my own corpus are . . .*

*The **disadvantages** of working with my own corpus are . . .*

Omitting the sentence stems above, the student responses were transcribed and two corpora were constructed, one containing the advantages of DIY corpus use (4,316 words) and the other the disadvantages of DIY corpus use (4,057 words). There were 302 student responses concerning the advantages of working with their own corpus; however, fourteen students did not complete the sentence stem for disadvantages, leaving only 288 responses, which may explain the lower number of words in the Disadvantages Corpus.

The two sets of sentence completions were first examined manually to gain an overview of the data. It was noted that one student made a negative comment in response to the sentence stem requiring an advantage. However, seventeen students (6%) responded that they did not see any disadvantages at all, giving responses such as *none*, *n/a*, or *nothing*. Thus the number of students who actually described disadvantages was 271 as against the 301 who mentioned advantages.

In order to identify the most important advantages and disadvantages cited by students, wordlists of each corpus were retrieved using *AntConc*. Lexical words (Biber et al. 1999) were identified, and those that occurred at a frequency of 3.5 per 1,000 words or more appear in Table 8.2. Words in bold occur in only one corpus.

As seen in Table 8.2, the majority of lexical words are specific to a single corpus. In the following section on students' views, we examine these words in context in order to identify the most important responses in each corpus.

Students' views

Advantages of a DIY corpus approach

The following words occur only in the Advantages Corpus: *specific, more, used, know, discipline, words, vocabulary, area, research, work, style, familiar, write, academic, improve, subject, understand, related, relevant, better, learn*. Several of these (e.g. *specific, used, discipline, area, research, related, relevant*), along with *field* and *language*, suggest the key advantage that DIY corpora are specific to the student's own field. This advantage is mentioned by about 78% of students, as illustrated in the following examples (listed lexical words in bold).

*It's **discipline specific** (i.e. **more useful**).*

*Giving me the chance to be **familiar** with the **use** of **language** in my **field**.*

TABLE 8.2 Frequent lexical words in Advantages and Disadvantages Corpora

<i>Advantages</i>		<i>Disadvantages</i>	
<i>Frequency per 1,000 words</i>	<i>Word</i>	<i>Frequency per 1,000 words</i>	<i>Word</i>
36.3	field	25.5	corpus
13.7	writing	14	time
12.3	specific	7.5	takes
10.7	language	6.8	sometimes
9.8	use	6.3	limited
9.5	more	6.3	too
9.1	used	6	articles
8.4	know	5.3	English
7.4	discipline	5.3	field
7	words	5	build
6.5	vocabulary	5	clean
6.3	corpus	5	native
5.8	area	5	use
5.3	research	4.5	find
5.3	work	4.5	speakers
5.1	find	4	small
5.1	style	3.8	writing
4.9	familiar	3.5	enough
4.7	write	3.5	language
4.4	academic	3.5	number
4.4	articles	3.5	very
4	improve	3.5	written
4	subject		
4	understand		
3.7	related		
3.7	relevant		
3.5	better		
3.5	learn		

Many students identify more precisely the benefits they derive from having a corpus in their own discipline. Four sets of advantages particularly stand out: the first is the language-learning opportunities a specialized corpus offers, including both the ability to check their own writing and more generally to learn about the characteristics of the discourse of their own discipline. This advantage was mentioned by about 60% of students and is often associated with the words *improve*, *better*, *learn*, *writing*, and *language*.

*It helps me **know** the standard of the **language** for the top journal **articles** in my **research area better**.*

*I can **learn** and **improve** my **academic writing** by myself.*

Another advantage, mentioned by about 12%, is that it is more efficient, quicker, and more accurate to search a specialized corpus than to look for appropriate language in other ways. The words *more* and *specific* are often employed for this purpose.

*Much **more** accurate than Google searches I **used** to do.*

***More specific**, not too (broad) big, easy and quicker to **find specific words** and terms from my **discipline**.*

One reason why the searches are more efficient is that the students are familiar with the contents of their corpus and understand the examples retrieved. Roughly 8% of students gave this as an advantage and it was often signalled by the words *know*, *familiar*, *articles* and *understand*.

*I am **familiar** with the content and context of the **articles**. I **know** the **articles** and can easily **understand** the **language** and its functions within the text.*

The fourth set of advantages, mentioned by roughly 8% of students, is connected with their control over the corpus, their ability to choose the corpus content and adapt it to their own language learning purposes. The words *more*, *know*, *research*, and *articles* often function as indicators for this set of advantages.

*You can always go on improving it and adding new **articles**. You can bring it away with you after lectures and **work** further on it.*

*I can choose **specific work** (**research**, review, meta-analysis) and **find** models. I can choose authors (celebrities in the **field**).*

*It gives me **more** confidence in using it, because I **know** that I've constructed it myself and I **know** what expect from it.*

Disadvantages of a DIY corpus approach

The following words appear only in the Disadvantages Corpus: *time*, *takes*, *sometimes*, *limited*, *too*, *English*, *build*, *clean*, *native*, *speakers*, *small*, *enough*, *number*, *very*, *written*. Two of these, *time* and *takes*, concern the time-consuming nature of DIY corpus work, a disadvantage mentioned by roughly 20% of students. Together with *build* and *clean*, they refer to the time required for corpus construction. In some disciplines, locating sufficient files proved challenging, e.g. in modern languages, where the literature is often not in English, and mathematics, where articles contain many equations. Converting files from pdf to text format was also a lengthy process, while several students mentioned the time needed to clean the corpus.

*Most of my sources are **written** in German. Building up the **corpus takes** some **time**.*

***Time-consuming** to **build clean**, proper **corpus**.*

Consulting the corpus was also perceived as time-consuming by several students, since they found it took time to familiarize themselves with the workings of the software, to study the concordance lines, and to answer their own queries.

*It **takes time** to be familiar with the function.*

*It **takes some time** to open the file and **find** the information I need.*

Further examination of the most frequent lexical words also reveals indicators of negative evaluation, including *limited*, *small*, *(not) enough*, and *too*. Along with *articles*, *English*, and *clean*, these words are often used to highlight the limitations of the corpus with regard to content and language. About 21% of students mentioned the small size of the corpus, which led to a lack of examples.

*It is difficult to **find** what I search as my **corpus** is not big **enough**.*

***Limited number** of words.*

Discipline specificity was also perceived to have a negative aspect, as the DIY corpora did not provide information on general English. Roughly 20% of students worried that their language might become too narrow, and that they lacked exposure to other ways of writing.

*There are **limited** papers so that I cannot **find** many useful phrase and words for general **English** outside my **field**.*

*Can be **too** restrictive for some research. It covers only one part of the **language**, in a particular area.*

Doubts were voiced by roughly 9% of students about the validity of their selection of research articles. These respondents were concerned about whether they had chosen the best examples and whether their corpus was representative in subject matter or language.

*It is **limited** to my own selection, which might not reflect the best possible **use** of **English** in the **field**.*

*The selection of **articles** may not be representative.*

About 7% of students mentioned that their corpus was not clean, which made it difficult to find the information they needed.

*It is huge and not **clean**, so I get a lot of meaningless entries.*

*It's not a **very clean corpus**.*

A further area of concern was the quality of the language in the DIY corpora, an issue noted by 10% of respondents. This disadvantage was attributed specifically to non-native speaker English by about 7% of students. For this reason some students were reluctant to rely on their corpus data.

*The quality of **English language** is not always up to standard even in good **articles**.*

*The writers in my discipline are mostly non-**native speakers**, so their works are not the best examples for me to learn.*

For students, then, the most important advantage of the DIY corpus is its discipline-specificity, which allows them to study relevant language efficiently; there is less agreement on the disadvantages, although many respondents mention the time-consuming nature of the approach and issues regarding the content of the corpus.

Teachers' views on a DIY corpus approach

The three teachers who taught this course (James, Paul, and Mark) completed a survey with nineteen open and closed questions designed to find out about their experiences of using DIY corpora with their students, and more generally to ascertain their attitudes to corpus use in the classroom. All were experienced EAP tutors (6–12 years) and were familiar with the students' needs, since they had taught the DIY corpus course several times each (4 to 6). However, their prior experience of corpora varied: Mark was entirely unfamiliar with corpora; Paul had limited experience, using the BNC only rarely; James was the most experienced, consulting the BNC several times a month to check collocations in his own and students' writing. All reported good or very good computer skills.

The teachers were asked whether they found it easy to learn how to use *AntConc* and the corpora, and it is noticeable that those with more experience, James and Paul, found it *fairly easy*, while Mark, a new user, considered it *fairly difficult* (*more tricky than difficult*). He elaborated further on this judgement, drawing attention to the need for good familiarity with *AntConc* and for keeping up to date with developments of the software, a point also endorsed by James.

*The main challenge is to be expert enough with the *AntConc* software to be able to anticipate and answer the questions/problems that come up in class. This issue is recurring, as different versions of the software have different idiosyncrasies.*

Mark

**AntConc* is not entirely intuitive to use . . . So it takes a little while each year to remember how to use the program and to get up to date with any changes.*

James

The teachers were also asked about the advantages and disadvantages of the DIY corpus approach. Echoing the most important advantage mentioned by the students, both James and Paul emphasized its discipline-specificity, noting that it enabled learning to be individualized and the particular requirements of individual students to be addressed. Mark made the allied point that the approach fostered student autonomy as it asked learners to be responsible for constructing their own corpus.

It means that students are fully involved in the classes in working in their own disciplines and dealing with their own problems. Thus it can create an ideal climate for individual learning of a kind rarely found in the classroom.

James

Students can get a sense of real language use within their own discipline. They can also be taught the skills for performing powerful and specific linguistic inquiries that they have designed themselves to investigate language use within their specific discipline.

Paul

This approach puts the responsibility for their corpus with the students and many respond well to the autonomy given to them.

Mark

However, this individualization may come at the cost of class unity, which was evident from the disadvantages noted by James and Paul.

It can make the students harder to teach. When trying to draw the class together, there may be a lack of common ground.

James

It was a challenge to inculcate a sense of group-belonging when so much work was solitary with students interacting with a computer.

Paul

Like the students, Paul also highlighted the fact that corpus construction and familiarization with *AntConc* were time-consuming, while Mark pointed out that if students did not make a commitment to building their corpus, they did not gain the benefits of a tailor-made resource.

The time spent learning the ropes; sometimes students do not spend sufficient time finding useful input files and so they have no proper corpora to work with in class.

Paul

Others [other students] were less engaged in corpus-building and, as such, had less definitive results in their searches.

Mark

A further question asked the teachers specifically whether they thought DIY corpus-building was worthwhile for students, given the ready availability of Google and large corpora. Interestingly, all three answered *yes definitely* to this question. All stressed the need for discipline-specific corpora in order to address the highly specialized writing needs of these students, while James and Mark cast doubt upon the applicability of large ready-made corpora, regarding them as too general to deal adequately with students' queries.

Large corpora can be too general. This approach is specific and can be tailored to particular parts of particular fields.

James

For post-graduate work, where students are writing in a 'micro-discipline' and expected to follow the conventions of that discipline, the applicability of online corpora based on the BNC is debatable.

Mark

There are many language features that are peculiar to a specific discipline and so only bespoke corpora confined to that discipline will bear them and offer the opportunity of them being picked up in concordance searches.

Paul

Despite the disadvantages they mentioned, all three teachers answered *yes definitely* when asked whether they would follow a DIY corpus approach in the future. They had slightly different perspectives on the issue, however, with Mark seeking to adapt the approach, while James emphasized its ability to boost writer confidence. Paul made the valid point that as students become increasingly skilled computer users, they are more likely to benefit from the DIY corpus approach.

I would use the corpus-building section of the course, though in time may look to adapt the focus of the later weeks.

Mark

I think it's another useful tool for the teacher as well as the student . . . I can appreciate how it can help and reassure writers.

James

Every year students' IT skills improve and they are better able to exploit the software.

Paul

There was no agreement, however, on whether they would recommend other tutors to use this approach. Both James and Mark were cautious, pointing out that

it requires a certain level of technical competence and would therefore not be suitable for all teachers.

It demands quite a lot of confidence in computer skills and is rather different from normal academic writing classes.

James

Some tutors may be intimidated by the course (in terms of the underlying knowledge of AntConc needed).

Mark

Paul, however, was definitely in favour of recommending DIY corpus-building, citing the benefits to the students in terms of disciplinary knowledge as his main reason for supporting the approach.

Becoming a full-fledged member of students' discourse communities means becoming aware of the linguistic characteristics of the genres that they need and their own subject area. This process is one that corpus linguistics techniques help accelerate through offering students explicit awareness of these features rather than the traditional route of gradually building up an implicit understanding.

Paul

These teachers, then, highlight the advantages of a discipline-specific DIY corpus, noting the possibilities for individualized learning and the access to relevant language in students' own fields. The disadvantages mentioned included technical issues and concerns over class management.

Discussion

Both students and teachers agreed with researchers' claims as to the benefits of DIY corpora, in particular the huge advantage of having a specialized corpus tailor-made to the student's discipline and field. They point to the language-learning opportunities that such a specialist resource offers for investigating, checking, and refining discipline-specific writing. In contrast to ready-made corpora, students can readily understand the context and language of their DIY corpus and find it immediately relevant to their needs. While the students focus particularly on the benefits they experience when using the corpus, including speed, efficiency and accuracy, both students and teachers highlight the importance of the autonomy, control, and independence that a tailor-made resource can bring.

In terms of disadvantages, students and teachers agree that the DIY corpus approach can be time-consuming. However, it should be noted that corpus construction is now quicker and easier with the *AntFileConverter*, and can be further speeded up by eliminating the cleaning process, since a 'dirty' corpus is adequate for most students' purposes. Of course, learning how to use new

software does take time, and to ensure reasonable familiarity with the technical procedures, students need to be assigned clear goals and tasks for building and consulting their corpus on a regular basis. However, it is important to stress that time spent on selecting and analysing corpus data is time devoted to valuable language-learning activities, stimulating students to think carefully about the language of their discipline, exposing them to multiple examples of its discourse, and engaging them in investigating its characteristics.

One disadvantage mentioned only by students concerned the quality of language in their corpora. One way of tackling this issue is to encourage students to expand their corpus, since it is likely that non-standard language will then become relatively less frequent and can be more easily discounted. It is also important that students learn to pay attention to relative-frequency data, to ignore examples that occur rarely or are limited to articles written by a single writer and to focus on central, typical patterns. As students may well be more used to studying single examples, they may not always understand the necessity of taking relative frequencies into account. However, this is fundamental to corpus work and an important concept to grasp.

One example of a task which alerts students to the importance of relative frequencies is the use of Word List to examine the linking adverbs *however*, *nevertheless*, and *nonetheless* in the material on 'Making and Countering Arguments'. Students are asked to record the frequencies of the three adverbs in their corpus and discuss their results in groups. Typical findings reveal huge differences in frequency between *however*, which is highly frequent in all disciplines, and *nevertheless/nonetheless*, which are comparatively rare or even nonexistent. Students often regard these adverbs as interchangeable, but when confronted with the data, they immediately realize that *however* is the preferred choice of expert writers.

A disadvantage mentioned by two out of the three teachers was the technical difficulty of familiarizing themselves with the software. Interestingly, technical issues did not feature markedly in the students' list of disadvantages, with only 4% of students saying that they experienced problems in this area. Although working with DIY corpora definitely adds a technical dimension to EAP work, it should be noted that concordance software is continually being improved and made more user-friendly. Nonetheless, a reasonable level of confidence and skill in using computers is needed so that teachers can feel comfortable introducing the software to students.

For the teachers, perhaps the most serious disadvantage of the DIY corpus approach was its effect on class management; the downside of individualization is the difficulty of establishing and maintaining a sense of cohesion and shared purpose in the class. Students can become very absorbed in their individual work and reluctant to interrupt it in order to share their findings with others. However, it is precisely the discussions in the oral phase of the class which consolidate the individual work, bringing to it a new comparative dimension and ensuring that students can articulate and explain the generalizations they draw from their data

(Flowerdew 2008; Charles 2015). To gain maximum benefit from DIY corpus work, individual corpus consultation should be firmly embedded within a group task, preferably including oral feedback to the whole class. One way of achieving this is to set up the discussion groups at the beginning of each class, so that students perceive the oral feedback phase as integral and essential to all the classwork.

Conclusions

The views of students and teachers clearly suggest that the DIY corpus approach provides a valuable tool for specialized EAP students as they write themselves into their disciplinary fields. The more specialized the student, the more likely it is that the approach will prove appropriate and worthwhile. However, it is necessary to weigh up the gains of having a highly specific resource against the time taken to achieve it, including both constructing the corpus and learning how to use the software. For many less specialized classes, ready-made corpora will prove adequate.

It is also worth stressing a further benefit of the DIY corpus approach that distinguishes it from consulting a ready-made corpus: the learning opportunities provided by the process of corpus construction itself. Students have to consider what they regard as suitable for inclusion in their corpus. They have to collect, evaluate, and select the material they will work with, in the process confronting questions such as: What constitutes 'good writing' in my field? Which papers will provide me with useful language to study? This extra dimension to corpus work helps develop students' awareness of disciplinary discourse and sharpens their critical engagement with the literature.

It can also be argued that the value of DIY corpus-building is not confined to the EAP class. Once gained, a basic familiarity with corpus methods provides a set of transferable skills which can be used throughout the student's career and applied in a range of different circumstances, including (but by no means restricted to) academic writing. As noted earlier, DIY corpus-building already forms part of some teacher training and translation programmes, but it could be useful for students working in the social sciences, in literary fields, and in professional ESP contexts. It could also be offered as part of a package of research training materials to enhance editing skills for both graduates and junior researchers. As one teacher (James) put it, the knowledge and skills that students learn as they build and consult a DIY corpus give them 'a tool for life'.

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9

POPULAR CULTURE AS CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM TO ENHANCE CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Anne Peirson-Smith

Introduction

This chapter will examine the teaching of a popular culture course in a Hong Kong university classroom using a blended-based learning and project-based learning format with the objective of enhancing media literacy and critical engagement in the analysis and creation of both online and offline texts. A case study approach will be used to illustrate this pedagogic approach, based on a specific classroom-situated workshop requiring students taking the course to work in small teams to visually and verbally create a fashion tribe when exploring the notion of identity formation using a hard-copy montage of images and editorial material. In addition, the responses of students to the creative output of each group will be analysed from the course Facebook site where the students shared their workshop outcomes following an in-classroom 'show and tell' session.

In this way, the effective use of various spaces of classroom engagement will be examined in the process of teaching popular culture in a creative way. This is done by adopting a pedagogy of intervention in the process of knowledge enquiry whereby the teacher facilitates connections for the student between formal and informal academic literacies by blending the horizontal discourses of everyday life with the vertical discourses of education, for example, when analysing and creating popular-culture texts. Findings from student feedback suggest that the intended outcomes of this teaching approach for a content-based course occur in terms of a heightened critical awareness of popular culture regarding the production and consumption of texts; enhanced engagement and agency involving knowledge acquisition; and more significant learner autonomy in preparation for navigating life outside the classroom.

Background

The development of critical and creative thinking skills has become an important consideration across the higher-education curriculum globally. Increasingly, educators are mindful of the need to facilitate whole-person education to prepare students with the necessary social skills to ready them for a competitive, knowledge-based workplace where graduates are hired on the basis of their ability to demonstrate higher-order competencies. Generally, this is based on the understanding that higher-education courses should enhance analytical and critical thinking skills from exposure to a range of sources and texts in a given subject in the humanities and social sciences, whilst analytically comprehending and synthesizing their implicit claims and evidence; in addition to understanding the sociocultural context of those texts and their claims by evaluating, understanding, and questioning those sources as a means of developing an individual viewpoint.

This need to prepare students for life is reflected in the liberalized and broadened content of the higher-education curriculum by a focus on topics such as popular culture and film studies in both General Education and out-of-discipline courses made available for students university-wide, 'as a way of broadening students' learning experiences' (Miller & Peirson-Smith 2014: 97).

The teaching approach credited with facilitating this effectively is content-based instruction (CBI), and particularly sustained CBI in the second language classroom, reflecting the various paradigm shifts that have resulted in more flexible learning frameworks being introduced into ESL/EFL pedagogies.

Building on the tradition of content-based instruction

In terms of teaching approaches and strategies, CBI is not a new pedagogic concept or practice, implemented from the 1960s as content-based L2 courses in language education and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classrooms in particular. As a means of employing a subject rather than a language orientation as a teaching vehicle for more engaged learning, the content of the course syllabi drives the type and level of language use, unlike a generic language-dominant course (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche 1989). The rationale for adopting a CBI approach is based on the idea that by merging content and language, students are able to develop their academic subject knowledge alongside language development opportunities. As Stoller suggests, it gives 'a means for students to continue their academic development while also improving their language proficiency' (2004: 262).

Content-based instruction typologies

The range of CBI approaches covers a sliding scale of methodological pedagogy (Williams 1995), in terms of the context in which it is implemented across the educational range, from pre-school to post-secondary and higher education

involving considerations of whether it is content-oriented or language-oriented (Snow & Brinton 1997) in both first-language (L1) and second-language (L2) classrooms (Zwiers 2008). In addition, CBI can also be structured in various ways comprising a total programme, or used for particular courses, including General Education and out-of-discipline classes.

Its relatively recent evolution into sustained CBI (Pally 1997, 1998, 2001) is relevant for the current analysis with reference to classes whereby students progressively practise English-language skills when studying one subject area in depth over one semester, visiting different sub-topics that form a larger topic, with the earlier subject matter providing the foundations and links to later course content. This affords students increased opportunities to tap into the structured content or 'scaffolding' (Vygotsky 1962) presented initially by the instructor, in addition to sharing with and learning from peers.

In this way, sustained CBI provides a context, often using project-oriented assessments, allowing learners to employ situated academic language and skills by authentically addressing a given discipline in a comprehensive way, acquiring transferable skills in a staged manner, and building on previous knowledge to understand and develop subject matter subsequently introduced and discovered progressively across the course. This approach fills the gap between the skills provided in the traditional L2 classroom and the conceptual and linguistic competencies required in the workplace and everyday life. It also imparts the cognitive academic learning proficiencies (Cummings 1981) acquired by '[h]igher-level reading, synthesis, research and academic/professional presentation (written and oral)' (Pally 2000: 9) as would also occur in the L1 content-based classroom.

Here, the gap between content and critical thinking skills is filled within a given field by immersing students in a subject or discipline, such as popular culture, and accessing content through guided and non-guided readings supplemented by student-directed information searches from both print and digital sources. This also requires critical immersion and engagement with the content both inside and outside the classroom, including an online presence. Concepts, ideas, and texts can be debated, discussed, and synthesized in verbal and written form 'using the argumentations and rhetorical conventions of a discipline' and written about 'over a long enough period of time to revise both ideas and prose' (Pally 2000: 9). In the process, the student has an opportunity to demonstrate a full grasp of the subject content in charting their transition from 'knower'/student to 'known'/citizen (Maton 2007). The known-knower dynamic operates within the macro education system of knowledge production and consumption founded on the vertically delivered prescriptive content from teacher and textbook and learnt discourses from English for Academic Language (EAL) course content in preparation for professional careers. In sustained content-based courses, such as General Education and out-of-discipline courses, this approach is often juxtaposed with, and can complement, the horizontal discourses of everyday life found in 'oral, local, context dependent and specific' scenarios (Bernstein 1999: 159).

Teaching and learning on courses such as popular culture or film studies (see Pally 2000) takes a critical literacies approach (Giroux 1997), based on the presentation of vertical knowledge by initially providing a framework of theoretical content introducing the complexities of the subject through diverse, multimodal discourses. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to apply this framework by exploring their subjective lived experiences—their horizontal knowledge—in order to elucidate the vertical knowledge provided by the instructor in structured lectures and readings, as part of the course content. This discursive shift away from more traditional pedagogical approaches positions the student as agent whereby their own perspectives and experiences constitute a valid part of the knowledge enquiry and analysis.

This agency provides students with the potential to become active participants in the social process of learning. In this process, students taking a content-based course constitute an interpretive community tasked with analysing critical issues such as ideology, representation, and identity positioning in the second-language classroom through critical engagement with situated texts (Wallace 1992). The sustained content approach also enables learners to become actively socialized into discourse communities, albeit student discourse communities. This in turn prepares them for the professional communities of practice that they plan to enter on graduation, providing tangible outcomes for both their combined vertical and horizontal learning. As Pally notes:

language emerges from context and purpose (instrumental and interactive), and that language learning is boosted by specific contexts: notably, the real-world tasks and social exchanges in which learners engage.

Pally 2001: 280

Teaching popular culture in the second-language classroom

A few studies have provided insights into the use of sustained content-based courses in creative modes to heighten critical competencies and literacies in L2 higher-education classes on film studies, for example (Pally 2000), to acquaint junior undergraduates with a range of academic communicative competencies and rhetorical practices useful for their subsequent subject-specific studies. Equally, another study using sustained content-based learning on the topic of health issues for a high-intermediate ESL course utilizing interactivity, interdisciplinary, intertextuality, and interculturality resulted in heightening students' cultural awareness and sense of community. This was based on 'social values, attitudes, justice and injustice', enabling the class to learn 'from one another how to think critically and communicate their ideas in English in an academic setting . . . to trust themselves to talk and listen confidently and to participate willingly' (Bailey 2000: 191).

In the context of the second-language classroom in Southeast Asia, the use of film at university level as a content-based source yielded positive learning

outcomes in terms of ‘the development of analytical ability and aesthetic awareness; of film knowledge; of English-language skills; of broader academic skills; of interest and enhanced enjoyment; and the development of a broader understanding about the world and their place in it’ (Chapple & Curtis 2000: 429). Equally, teaching popular culture as a General Education course for second-language learners in a department of English at a Hong Kong university supports the beneficial impact of a sustained content-based course for L2 learners: ‘adopting a critical pedagogy highlights the advantages of using popular cultural texts and practices as stepping stones for second-language learners in Asia in order to develop more critical analytical skills’ (Peirson-Smith, Miller, & Chik 2014: 253). In addition, it is beneficial in generating ‘creative knowledge, collaborative skills, enhanced cultural and critical literacies and discursive strategies’ (Miller & Peirson-Smith 2014: 108). Building on this argument, the chapter will suggest that non-traditional, sustained content courses implementing an analytical pedagogical approach enhance critical and creative literacies founded on a rereading of the status quo and the established order by drawing on horizontal learning resources of lived, situated experiences. In this way, the learner reads the content from their own perspective by relating it to their personal environment, and discovers empowerment in the collaborative power relations of citizenship exercised by individuals and institutions in society.

Motivating students to learn and sustaining interest in the subject is often based on the recognition by the learner that learning is taking place and that effort is matched by benefits. This may be evaluated by the learner in terms of the ability to complete the task or to fulfil learning encounters based on the content knowledge acquired. This chapter will further suggest that progressive content-based courses through the use of stimulating material resources and authentic contexts, in addition to interactive, student-led exercises, despite the complexity of the information being presented and accessed, can be geared up to enhancing interest and the triggering of intrinsic motivation leading to an elevated learning experience. This intrinsic occurrence has been described as a ‘flow’ state. According to Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of optimal experiences (1990), it leads to increased learning, based on a decade’s worth of longitudinal qualitative research analysing educational or workplace experiences. Flow states in language-learning contexts can occur when personal competencies and knowledge are challenged, resulting in more focused attention, complete involvement in the activity at hand, and detachment from temporality and personal issues, thereby maximizing and sustaining the learning moment.

Out-of-discipline and General Education courses in Hong Kong’s linguistic landscape

Given its colonial background, Hong Kong currently has a multilingual landscape, with Cantonese as the predominant first language of the street, entertainment, and popular culture (Poon 2004; Peirson-Smith et al. 2010). Whilst

English still operates as the major language of international trade, commerce, finance, administration and advanced education (Nunan 2003; Evans 2009, 2010), over the past decade Putonghua has also been increasingly employed in these fields. Equally, the secondary school education system has shifted to a more controlled set-up post-handover. From 1997 onwards, the HKSAR Education Bureau limited the primary English medium of instruction to a quarter of local schools in the system, with the majority teaching in Chinese. By way of contrast, the primary medium of instruction for all eight universities in the territory is English, based on the understanding that this will prepare students for graduate-level entry in the globalized workplace. Therefore, most classes across the university curriculum operate in a second-language medium.

The university system has also undergone numerous revisions and restructuring exercises in the past two decades. Post-handover also saw the implementation of a credit unit system from 1998, accompanied by liberalization of the curriculum and the introduction of ‘out-of-discipline’ courses in 2000 in the university under study here, requiring all students in all subject areas to take six to nine credits outside their normal disciplinary studies. This also paved the way for the restructuring of both the secondary school and university system to accommodate a four-year degree programme or a 3 + 3 + 4 model that was introduced in all universities from 2012 onwards. At the same time, other forces impacted significantly on humanities teaching at university level. In particular the liberalization of the secondary school curriculum from 2005 saw the introduction of more creative subjects and critical enquiry with the remit that students should as informed citizens be able to discuss social issues in an active, confident, and interpretative way. Linked to this trend, whilst all Hong Kong universities have addressed various student-centred learning initiatives since 2005, the Hong Kong-based university in this study became committed to the Discovery Enriched Curriculum (DEC) across the board for all programmes in all disciplines. The DEC pledge promises that every student will discover and innovate in each course and programme that they take.

The introduction of General Education (GE) courses on subjects such as popular culture (Peirson-Smith et al. 2014) or sports communication (Miller 2015) built on this notion of broadening students’ cognitive horizons by providing a foundation level of broad-ranging topics for the new undergraduate intake. In addition to taking 21 credits of GE courses, at college level undergraduate students are required to take nine credit units of college-specified courses (formerly known as ‘out-of-discipline’ courses).

Case study: the Popular Culture and Social Life course

In global terms, popular culture as a new literacy has been present on the European and North American higher-education syllabus for decades as a way of generating student interest by analysing familiar texts in an unfamiliar way (Prensky 2001; Gee 2003) or as a way of developing media literacies using

TABLE 9.1 Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) for ‘Popular Culture and Social Life’

‘Popular Culture and Social Life’

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand and apply basic theoretical approaches in the field of popular culture studies.
 2. Identify and evaluate critically the circulation of cultural and subcultural images and identities in popular cultural texts.
 3. Identify, analyse and evaluate the roles of language in construction of images and identities in popular cultural texts.
 4. Describe and critically evaluate the relationship between popular cultural images/texts and social issues.
 5. Critically evaluate and reflect upon the relationship between consumption of popular culture and social life.
-

personalized observations and multi-level analysis (Buckingham & Green 1994; Masterman 1987). This is a relatively new departure in Asia, with Hong Kong seemingly leading the way by integrating the subject into the secondary-school and university-level curricula, given that popular culture is intrinsically woven into the lives of young people in terms of how they spend their leisure time and money as popular culture consumers

The course under analysis here, ‘Popular Culture and Social Life’, is a semester-long, three-credit unit, College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CLASS) specified course, run by an experienced instructor from the Department of English with a research specialism in this subject field. The class size is 65–75 on average, comprising junior and senior level students from across the College, in addition to exchange students from global universities representing students from a variety of cultures and disciplinary fields. The aim of the course is to acquaint students with the theoretical framework using grounded examples of a new subject outside their field for the purposes of developing critical literacies and communicative competencies in English (see Table 9.1).

During this course, popular culture topics are explored each week across various themes—fashion, sport, food, travel, advertising, film, music, social media and technology, for example—in a mini-lecture format interspersed with interactive class exercises. This enables the direct application by students of newly acquired concepts, from a vertical knowledge source of prescriptive content to information from their own lives, representing horizontal discourses. The main theoretical framework for the course was sourced from John Storey’s *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, based on a six-part typology of popular culture:

- (1) culture that is liked by many people;
- (2) ‘inferior culture,’ that which is left over from ‘high culture’;
- (3) mass-produced commercial culture;

- (4) culture which originates from the people;
- (5) culture which results in change—the intersection between culture and power;
- (6) everyday life, from a postmodern perspective, where there is no distinction between high and low culture. (Storey 2001: 6)

This approach enables students to evaluate popular culture topics from various analytical perspectives to appreciate the complexity of the subject. Equally, it assists them to recognize that there was no one best model answer for this enquiry, as answers had to be based on exploratory knowledge with claims and evidence in argumentation that were often legitimately grounded in a subjective way, based on personal examples. Each popular culture sub-theme is explored both in class discussions and after class in a course Facebook group from global, local, and ‘glocalised’ perspectives. This approach aims to reflect the complexities of the dynamic global circulation of popular culture products, commodities, and texts (Appadurai 1990) and how they are appropriated and reappropriated by the various cultures across space and place that assimilate them (Iwabuchi 2002). It also enables students to make sense of their own consumption encounters and affective connections with popular cultural products within a subjective frame.

Popular culture and/as fashion and identity

The sub-theme of fashion and popular culture runs over two weeks in two three-hour classes. By means of a mini-lecture, the students are broadly introduced to the interdisciplinary subject of fashion itself. Key definitions and terminology are provided and applied in the first lecture. This information is then elaborated in weekly recommended readings on Canvas, the course learning management site, in-class group exercises, and in Facebook discussions. This enables the exploration of general principles of fashion in a multi-faceted way, from the current mode of dress and appearance that changes across time, space, and place, to its existence as a cultural subject across a range of cultural codes employed in ‘creating meaning for particular individuals or groups’ (Craik 2009: 14). Using Storey’s six-part model to frame the first lecture, fashion is explored as a cultural subject, operating both individually or collectively as a badge of identity in terms of how it is created, appropriated, and consumed, yet beyond this being also ‘a matter of production, distribution and retailing’ (Braham 1997: 121) involving considerations of control, politics, economics, and power relations (Storey 2001).

This broader interpretation using Storey’s model is exemplified by one Facebook post by a student on the course responding to the instructor’s question ‘Are fashion and popular culture connected?’:

First, culture is widely liked by many . . . It allows wearers to gain a sense of belonging when they wear similar styles of clothing.

Second, fashion can be defined as high and low fashion. Famous brands like Louis Vuitton and Gucci are high fashion, which are expensive. Fashion, which is mass-produced, is low culture, like H&M and Uniqlo.

Third, fashion is a mass commercialized culture. The production and consumption of fashion is an endless cycle.

Fourth, fashion is from the people. For example, street fashion is from style gangs like hipsters on the street.

Fifth, fashion is a hegemonic power struggle. Poor people cannot afford the high price of famous brands. The ones who wear high fashion clothes are most likely the upper class in society who have much more power.

Finally, fashion is a postmodern mix and match culture, e.g. females can wear male style clothes or we can wear old and new stuff and be in fashion.

Jennifer, 19, Asian and International Studies major

In the second three-hour session, fashion was examined in a micro-way as a purely cultural phenomenon, using a mini-lecture and guided exercises introducing the topic of fashion and identity by examining the subject as a coded social and cultural differentiator in terms of how, why, when, and where we use fashion and accessories in combination to dress into groups or outside them by communicating a sartorial connection with a particular style tribe. Following a group exercise based around what each group member was communicating in terms of the outfit that they were wearing, the remainder of the session was devoted to an in-class, two-hour workshop where each group, typically of four to six persons, had to create their own style tribe for a specific demographic, providing a name for the 'look' that they had created and devising a sentence in terms of what this particular style was 'saying'.

Each group was provided with a pile of magazines, glue, and scissors, A3 paper, and coloured whiteboard markers to create their own fashion tribe by making a fashion montage. The instructor circulated the class throughout the duration of the exercise observing progress, clarifying task objectives, prompting group members about the fashion and popular culture concepts that had been covered during two weeks of engagement with this subject. Once each group had completed the exercise, they were tasked with sharing their fashion tribe and its message with the whole class, and each A3 output was displayed on the course Facebook site following the class for further discussion and commentary. This fashion tribe workshop represents a sustained-content approach in action with the prime intention of heightening the learning experience by providing a stimulating, hands-on exercise to fully engage the students and enable them to apply concepts to practice in a physical way aligned with the materiality of the subject matter.

Methodologically this qualitative, action-based case study (Miles & Huberman 2008) of summative student feedback and follow-up focus group interviews also generated data that were themed and coded in terms of learning outcomes, namely, applied skills, involvement, and motivation, as reported in the following sections.

Challenging personal competencies and knowledge: student feedback

The students' reflective responses to the workshop suggest that the uniqueness of the task tests their competencies and content-based knowledge in a number of ways. First, to execute the task effectively and in the given time period, they must divide up the labour. Some in the group will be responsible for cutting images out of the magazines, others will sort and select them into categories and possible options for the style tribe, whilst others will be responsible for sticking the clipped images onto the paper to create the montage, leaving others to compose the communicative sentence. As one student observed:

It was a good exercise in group work as we all had to take part in it and all of us wanted to use our different strengths such as creative thinking, writing or design which we often don't get to use in classes outside of our area as we are just fixed on learning a new subject.

Tom, 18, Chinese Translation major

Many respondents noted that it was an interesting way to test their understanding of the lecture content and conceptual knowledge about the subject:

We are normally used to using lecture notes and required readings to write essays but this activity was very different to the normal way we do things in classes to show that we have understood what the lecturer says and I found it quite exciting.

Mandy, 19, International and Asian Studies major

There was also an awareness amongst the student groups that they were not just applying the content knowledge, but also their multi-modal language skills:

We had to get our ideas out through the images that we cut and pasted and also the English names of our tribes . . . So, we were using our English language a lot to do this work.

Cherry, 18, English Studies major

During the period of eight semesters that this workshop ran, the instructor observed each time that all groups and their members gave their undivided attention to completing the exercise from the moment that they had all the materials in hand. As a measure of the high levels of engagement with this task, the instructor invariably has to give regular time checks to complete the task necessitating the exercise of good time management skills.

Levels of collaboration were high, with students focusing on their allocated task to cut, stick, or write, interspersed with brainstorming discussions of what images should fit together, whether to use a colour scheme, whether to focus on

menswear or womenswear or both, and what name and message would best convey the essence of the style tribe created. As one respondent said:

We always had something to do to get this task done and the clock was ticking like a reality TV show! I really enjoyed the group discussions that we had about the name of our style brand, the target and what we were trying to say in our outfits—that really tested our minds and our ability to work together.

Ken, 19, Creative Media major

It was interesting to observe that for a socially mediated generation who are always seemingly connected to mobile technology (Prensky 2001), this workshop created an action learning space where technology was not needed.

We looked at the levels of technology and social media in our lives the previous week in class and how hard we find it sometimes to be disconnected from it. But during this workshop none of us used our phones . . . we had no time and needed to work very quickly together in a face-to-face way to get it all done.

Gloria, 20, Social Work major

All of the observed groups demonstrated high levels of determination and agency to get the task done in full and according to the brief, with one respondent describing their high level of engagement with the task:

This was such a fun workshop and exercise and we also produced something worthwhile based on the lecture and readings. Also, we enjoyed doing it as we could use our own thoughts and be creative where there was no right or wrong answer and that gave us some freedom to think.

Jon, 19, Criminology major

Discussion: creative outcomes, motivation, language enhancement, and collaboration

The objectives of this workshop-based task invariably prompt high levels of multi-modal creativity in terms of the ability of the students to collate images and words in a new way to communicate their own ideas with relevance to the topic being studied, in both visual and verbal forms. Essentially, it represented the range of creative output and the blending of vertical with horizontal knowledge to get the task done.

This 'out-of-discipline' popular culture class demonstrated that sustained-content courses using a progressive pedagogical approach with high levels of interactive, student-centred group work provided second-language students with the opportunity to make sense of their lives by acquiring content-based vertical

knowledge (Bernstein 1999) and grounding it in their own experiences during in-class exercises and online Facebook discussions. This is exemplified in the comments of one respondent:

I'm a dedicated online gamer and love new technology so it was really interesting to look at the links between popular culture and technology in different ways as it is connected so much to our lives. In this fashion assignment we were able to do a futuristic fashion tribe with wearable technology. We called it *Ex-Fashiona* with the tag line, 'If you can imagine it – you can wear it!' We were referring to a recent popular film, *Ex-Machina* about AI and robots as our inspiration.

Jett, 19, Media and Communication major

Not only did this approach elevate students' cognitive faculties and subject knowledge, it also invested them with considerable levels of agency (Giroux 1997), as their subjective perspectives and grounded examples also made sense of contemporary subject content. Whilst popular culture itself is highly related to the lives of the youth demographic, it is nonetheless a complex subject with a strong interdisciplinary basis, borrowing from cultural studies, media studies, communication studies, anthropology, and sociology.

Additionally, the aim of heightening critical thinking skills requires the traditional approach to teaching and learning to be re-evaluated and reworked in a more progressivist way, emphasizing individuals as social actors and change agents rather than as passive citizens (Freire & Ramos 2000). Here, the progressive pedagogical approach operates 'not with teachers and students but for and around them' (Gallagher 2002: 78), in the interests of effectively promoting second-language learners' linguistic and cognitive development by nurturing critical literacy skills (Cummins 1996). This suggests that both teacher and student are engaged in active knowledge co-creation in a collective learning scenario, reinforcing the idea that pedagogy is essentially a collaborative form of action.

Hence, a progressive pedagogy approach using interactive exercises throughout the course is needed to bring it to life and make it relatable for the students. Giving students the opportunity at every turn to make the subject matter their own would appear to be critical. This is especially pertinent in a model answer culture such as Hong Kong; as an antidote to this the students were given free rein to discover and innovate with their ideas in the workshop context.

According to the instructor's observations, motivation levels for the course and the classroom experiences were consistently high. Using stimulating, hands-on exercises in group settings appeared to heighten engagement, with creative outcomes that fulfilled the assignment brief every time, and in many cases exceeded the instructor's expectations in terms of the effort expended and the high level of creative output generated. It appears that providing classroom space for progressive activities facilitated an inspirational 'flow state'

(Csikszentmihalyi 1990) as a stimulus for cognitive engagement, active involvement, and creative deliverables.

Communicating in English in a variety of ways, from in-class discussions tied into the lecture input and periodic required-reading analyses, to extended group-based workshop tasks and assignments, both in class and online, appeared to elevate students' English-language usage in context (Pally 1998). The course demonstrated that English-language enhancement was occurring successfully across different levels of affordances—speaking, listening, collaborating, negotiating, and writing—all with the rhetorical purpose of presenting ideas persuasively to fit the task brief and convey meaning to the wider class.

Although certain aspects of popular culture are part of students' everyday leisure time activities, on the whole they would not discuss a new fashion or music trend such as K-pop or K-fashion in English. Equally, they admitted that they did not critically evaluate their popular culture activities other than on the basis of liking certain foods, music, fashion or films based on affective connections. It appeared that students were using English here in a new context and as part of a new discourse community, enabling them to reflect on its multiple applications from practical to emotional contexts.

The use of group discussion exercises and activities appeared to enhance English-language usage in a novel way. Some respondents noted that the pedagogic style of the class, blending lectures with class exercises and Facebook discussions, had enabled them to practise their language skills, broadening their vocabulary and content knowledge by using new terminology such as 'hegemony' or 'postmodernism'.

Providing students with an opportunity to analyse popular culture topics of their choice, or to generate their ideas subjectively, also appeared to generate confidence in using English in spoken and written formats. As one student said:

I've never used English in this way before and the open way that we were able to express our own ideas and opinions meant that I could speak freely in this language.

Victor, 20, Applied Sociology

Popular culture, whether films or fashion, is something that students normally engage in and talk about in their first language and not usually in an educational setting. Discussing a seemingly familiar subject matter in English seemed to further stimulate their conversations, with a new take on the knower-known (Maton 2007) dynamic providing an added stimulus to their second-language usage (Peirson-Smith, Chik, & Miller 2014).

The project- or extended task-based approach also enabled students to work cooperatively, which appeared to heighten their motivation to share ideas and discover knowledge. It also empowered them to apply their existing competencies to get the task done through a division of labour and learning together when brainstorming designs, brand names, and markets for their style tribes. Equally, it prepared them for life in the team-based workplace. More specifically, as many

of the students taking this course will graduate into the service industries, which are the mainstay of Hong Kong's post-manufacturing economy, the workshop simulated how executives actually work in public relations, advertising, and marketing settings when tasked with generating ideas to fulfil the client brief. The freedom for students to choose their own magazine images and then reappropriate them for another purpose in another contextual space also simulated how the popular-culture and creative industries work by tapping into existing lived cultures and reworking this into collections and style statements for consumption purposes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it would appear that acquiring and enhancing communicative competencies through close engagement with the subject of popular culture can be a motivating pedagogical and learning experience. Taking a progressive, sustained content-based approach in teaching and learning undoubtedly has multiple benefits in enhancing students' linguistic, communicative, creative, interpersonal, and professional competencies. In essence, it provides students with a sense of agency in their learning by enabling them to actively and subjectively contribute to making new sense of a seemingly familiar subject. The intention was to motivate second-language learners to learn a relatively complex subject such as popular culture in a fun way by 'acknowledging its pleasures' (Duncum 2009: 241) as well as identifying the underlying glocalised social issues and hegemonic power relations (Storey 2001) in an engaging manner. In this way, it is possible to learn both *about* and *through* popular culture to sustain knowledge and language competencies beyond the classroom in preparation for students' future roles as universal citizens and knowledge workers when navigating social and professional life outside the classroom.

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PART III

Learning

Activities beyond the classroom



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10

LANGUAGE LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

David Nunan

Introduction

The two contexts for language learning and use are inside the classroom and outside the classroom. This may seem an obvious, and indeed simplistic, distinction, but it is one which needs to be made, because, as I argue in this chapter, there are certain fundamental and important differences between language in the classroom and language beyond the classroom, a point I shall elaborate upon in due course. Traditionally, the classroom world was where language was learnt, and the world beyond the classroom was where language was used. This bifurcation between language learning and use began to break down with the advent of communicative language teaching (Savignon 1993), which brought with it experiential learning and the notion that one could actually acquire a language by using it productively and communicatively inside the classroom (Kohonen 1992). However, as I will argue in this chapter, it is important for learners to have opportunities for also using the language productively and communicatively outside the classroom.

Until relatively recently, opportunities for activating classroom learning in the world outside the classroom were limited in many parts of the world. All that has changed with technology, particularly the Internet, which gives learners access to an astonishing variety of authentic input. The proliferation of social networking sites provide learners with opportunities to communicate in speech and writing with other users of their chosen target language around the globe. Learning through using language in authentic as well as pedagogically structured contexts outside the classroom can significantly enhance the language learning process (Richards 2014)

The main aim of this chapter is to provide practical illustrations and examples in the form of case studies to illustrate the rich variety of opportunities that exist

for language learning and use outside the classroom. However, before turning to practical matters, I want to spend a little time substantiating my claim that there are important differences between classroom language use and language use beyond the classroom.

My interest in language learning beyond the classroom is a long-standing one, and I have set up numerous courses organized around out-of-class projects as capstone or culminating experiences for the course. My teaching and research interests over the last thirty years have been based on learner-centred language teaching and task/project-based instruction. Both of these areas are perfect fits for language learning beyond the classroom.

Classroom language and out-of-class language

As long ago as 1975, Sinclair and Coulthard demonstrated that classroom discourse tends to be structured and hierarchical. When compared with language beyond the classroom, it involves simple rituals and routines as well as display language (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975; Walsh 2001). Behaviour and contexts of use are safe and predictable particularly in the early stages of the learning process (McCarthy & Walsh 2003). As learners acquire sufficient competence to make their own meanings through engaging in tasks which simulate real-world contexts of use (Nunan 2004), they move beyond the regurgitation and manipulation of models provided by teachers and textbooks. Their language begins to take on some of the features that one finds in communication beyond the classroom, such as the negotiation of meaning and initiation of topics, and they begin to use a wider range of discourse types (McCarthy & Walsh 2003). Despite this, students are still functioning within a predictable, 'stable state'. They are familiar with the physical environment, they have developed relationships (not always entirely harmonious) with their interlocutors, and the communication is scaffolded and supported by the teacher.

Discourse beyond the classroom, on the other hand, is relatively unstructured and its contexts of use can generate problematic interactions that require much more than the deployment of already mastered phonological, lexical, and morpho-syntactic language. Affective and cultural factors can override linguistic ones and lead to breakdowns in communication, and even silence (Cadd 2015; Nunan & Choi 2010; Choi 2010). Such communication breakdowns can occur in even relatively low-level service encounters.

Larsen-Freeman (2016) draws on complexity theory to explain the quite different communicative contexts between in-class and out-of-class language use. She argues that complex systems are made up of many components which interact and give rise to patterns at another level of complexity and create contexts that are not readily predictable. She argues:

Part of our responsibility is to help learners relate to the language environment outside of the classroom—to help them cope with the massive amount

of change that is transpiring in today's world, or at least that part of the change that has to do with enacting their language resources.

Larsen-Freeman 2016: 7

In closing her paper, Larsen-Freeman draws inspiration from Varela, Thompson, & Rosch (1991: 144), who point to the imperative of '[k]nowing how to negotiate our way through a world that is not fixed and pre-given, but that is continually shaped by the types of actions in which we engage'.

The narrow-band, cognitivist SLA view of language acquisition has it that once a learner has achieved comprehensible pronunciation and acquired sufficient vocabulary and grammar in the classroom, they have all of the resources needed to communicate outside the classroom. This view was challenged many years ago by linguists who argued that linguistic competence was only one of the elements needed to communicate effectively; in addition, a user needed sociolinguistic discourse and strategic competence (see e.g. Hymes 1970; Savignon 1972).

However, there are other factors that the learner has to deal with in achieving successful communicative outcomes outside the classroom. These include knowledge of the culture (Nunan & Choi 2010), the relationship between the interlocutors (Halliday 1985), knowledge of the content of the communication (Brinton & Snow 2016), physical factors such as whether the communication is face-to-face or conducted through technology (Halliday 1985; Martin 2001), and affective factors such as the anxiety that almost always accompanies initial attempts to use the target language outside the classroom (Arnold 1999). A small change in any of these has the potential to destabilize the communication process.

Language learning beyond the classroom

The purpose of this chapter is not to call into question the legitimacy of the classroom. Classrooms have many invaluable functions, particularly for learners in the early stages of the learning process. However, they also have limitations. These include class size, limited time, a lack of connection between the classroom and the real world, a lack of opportunity for authentic communication, and a 'one size fits all' curriculum. In traditional foreign-language classrooms, it is not unusual to have fifty learners in the room. Shamim (1996) presents a study in which there were 140 learners to a class. In such classrooms, opportunities for any kind of interaction, authentic or otherwise, are severely limited if not outright impossible. As McCarthy and Walsh (2003) point out, even in more 'privileged' contexts, most speaking opportunities are designed to provide learners with structured rehearsal of the target language or opportunities for them to display prefabricated patterns. Opportunities to engage in real communicative language use have, until recently, been relatively rare. Opportunities provided by the Internet for communication beyond the classroom are changing this as well as challenging our notions of what constitutes the classroom. However, blended learning models are still relatively unsophisticated, and a great deal needs to be

done to articulate the relative benefits of digital and face-to-face instruction (Nunan forthcoming).

The point is that limitations of classroom instruction can be compensated for if learners are provided with, or themselves seek out, opportunities to learn and use their second language beyond the classroom. There, they will receive authentic aural and written input, they will have opportunities for real communication, they will encounter a broader range of interactional contexts, they will receive honest feedback, and their autonomy as learners and users will be fostered (Richards 2014).

Activating language learning beyond the classroom

There are many ways of activating language learning beyond the classroom. Twenty-nine of these are documented in Nunan & Richards (2015). In this section, I present five of these: extensive reading, email tandem language learning, dialogue journals, intensive listening, and contact assignments. I will describe each activity, articulate a number of principles for activating each, and discuss the advantages and disadvantage of each.

Extensive reading

Specialists in the teaching of reading draw a distinction between intensive and extensive reading, and stress that in developing effective readers, it is important to encourage readers to develop both strategies, as well as showing them how to match these strategies to different reading purposes. In his book on the teaching of reading as a second/foreign language, Neil Anderson (2008) makes the point that reading is best developed through reading rather than talking about reading. He argues that both intensive and extensive reading are essential, and draws the following contrast between the two:

The differences between intensive and extensive reading are important for teachers to understand. Intensive reading is the teaching of reading skills, vocabulary, and phonological instruction, typically through short reading passages followed by reading comprehension exercises. Extensive reading is reading of longer passages with a focus on enjoyment and/or learning new information while reading. There is typically no accountability required during extensive reading.

Anderson 2008: 8

In other words, extensive reading involves reading widely, principally for enjoyment and for fluency rather than for mastering the target language. This does not mean that learning does not occur during extensive reading, but that the learning is incidental. Many years ago, I decided to try to pick up some Italian prior to a trip to Rome. I had some informal lessons from an Italian friend, learned some

phrasebook Italian from a textbook and tape for beginners, and picked up vocabulary and rudimentary grammar from a set of fairytale books for children. For example, I began to pick up information about articles and plurality from the Italian version of ‘The Three Little Pigs’ or ‘I Tre Porcellini’. I knew the story from having heard and read it in English as a child, and was able use this prior knowledge to begin picking up some Italian. This learning was incidental, in that my primary purpose was not to use the reading activity primarily to focus on morphosyntactic features of the language, but to get a feel for the language and to learn some formulaic phrases. In the course of doing this, I noticed certain regularities in articles and plurality among other features. The noticing itself occurred at a conscious rather than a subconscious level. (For what it’s worth, this supports Schmidt’s (1990) rather than Krashen’s (1982) view of language acquisition.)

In their call for a greater focus on extensive reading, Day & Robb (2015) tell the story of Wendy, a beginning learner of Japanese as a foreign language. Wendy was interested in learning Japanese through reading as a result of a graduate course she took on second-language reading. As she was unable to find a course on beginning Japanese that included extensive reading, she created her own course. Over a nine-week period, she read 43 books. These included comic books and children’s story books. Over a four-week period, she improved her vocabulary knowledge by 24%.

In a learning journal, she made the following entry at week 10:

The cool thing about reading so far, or perhaps I should say the rewarding part is when I am able to recognize words that I have read from other books before. Last night I took a Japanese children’s book from the bookshelf and was going to show the pictures to my baby. As I scanned through the book, I realized that I could read some of the words.

Cited in Day & Robb 2015: 4

For a westerner, learning to read Japanese, even comic books and story books, is exponentially more difficult than learning to read Italian because it involves hiragana, kanji, and, in the case of comic books, quite a lot of katakana, which is used to emphasize foreign words. If the learner is familiar with Chinese, this facilitates the process. There is no mention by Day & Robb of Wendy’s familiarity with the different scripts, nor of whether she had any knowledge of Chinese.

Day & Robb identify five principles for developing an effective extensive reading programme. In the first place, select reading material that is easy. Given the fact that the primary aim is reading for pleasure and that learning will be incidental rather than intentional, the reading texts must be well within the reader’s comfort zone. It is for this reason that Wendy selected comics and children’s storybooks, in which the pictures provide contextual support for the written text. Day & Robb recommend that for beginners there should be no

more than one to two unknown words per page. For intermediate learners, there should be no more than five new words per page. Secondly, select a variety of reading materials on a wide range of topics.

Variety is the spice of life, and a variety of different text types will serve to maintain interest and motivation. Depending on their age, proficiency level, and degree of autonomy some students, such as Wendy, will be able to make their own selections. Others will need guidance from the teacher. Thirdly, let the learners choose what they want to read. An important article of faith within a learner-centred approach to instruction is that learners should have a say in making decisions about what to learn, how to learn, and how to be assessed (Nunan 2013). This principle is particularly important when it comes to selecting reading materials. If texts are imposed on the reader, levels of interest, and consequently motivation, are likely to be reduced. The fourth principle is that learners must read as much as possible. A fundamental reason for promoting extensive reading is to increase the sheer volume of material being read. Students learn to read by reading, so the more reading they do, the more rapidly they will progress. Finally, the purpose should be to read for pleasure, information and general understanding. As I pointed out in the introduction to the chapter, the purpose of extensive reading is mainly for engagement and enjoyment rather than instruction. That said, it is clear from the case study of Wendy that a considerable amount of incidental learning occurs. In Wendy's case, she significantly increased her recognition of Japanese vocabulary in a relatively short space of time.

Although extensive reading can be used inside the classroom (where it is sometimes known as 'silent sustained reading'), it is a natural technique for language learning beyond the classroom. Traditional books, as well as ebooks, are light, portable, and can be used for shorter or longer periods in a wide range of settings. It therefore fosters the development of independent learning skills.

Through extensive reading, learners develop flexible reading strategies. They stop consulting a dictionary every time they encounter an unknown word, and focus on understanding the overall gist of the text without worrying about the occasional unknown word. As a result, they develop a range of strategies such as reading for gist and guessing from context. Extensive reading also leads to increased reading speed. The development of an extensive vocabulary is one of the major benefits of extensive reading. This was illustrated in the case of Wendy, in this chapter. However, as has already been indicated, the learning will occur incidentally rather than deliberately. Day & Robb (2015: 7) also argue that extensive reading fosters positive attitudes towards reading in general: 'perhaps the best result from numerous studies is that students develop positive attitudes towards reading and increased motivation to study the target language.'

There are challenges in establishing an extensive reading programme. Finding appropriate reading material has been one of the perennial challenges for reading teachers as well as learners. These days, however, the Internet and ebooks have gone a long way to solving this particular challenge. For adults, matching

linguistic level to cognitive maturity is another issue. While children's books might be at the right level linguistically, they can be very frustrating for the adult who wants to read about politics and current affairs.

Email tandem language learning

Email tandem language learning pairs learners from different first language backgrounds who are learning the first language of their partner as a second language. For example, a first-language speaker of English who is learning Japanese as a second language will be paired with a first-language speaker of Japanese who is learning English as a second language. Each learner will send messages in their second language. When they receive a message from their partner, they will respond to it in their first language. In other words, the English speaker will send messages in Japanese, and will respond to the Japanese speaker's message in English. The Japanese speaker will send messages in English and will respond to the English speaker's Japanese message in Japanese. Sasaki, who presents a case study of this technique, argues that, unlike regular native speaker–non-native speaker (NS–NNS) communication, where only the NNS benefits, tandem partners bring their own L1 knowledge and reciprocally support their partner's L2 learning (Sasaki 2015: 116).

In the study, 9th grade Japanese students of English were paired with 9th–11th grade American learners of Japanese. All students were high beginner/low intermediate. The students communicated in their second language and received linguistic feedback in their partner's first language. In his case study, Sasaki documents the experiences of Shelly, an American learning Japanese, and Shogo, a native Japanese speaker learning English. Both students were part of an extracurricular out-of-class learning experience which was designed to augment their regular, explicit, in-class learning programme. In addition to their participation in the programme, students kept a reflective journal of their experiences. The journal extracts included in Sasaki's account of the programme provide interesting insights into the processes and experiences of the students.

Sasaki makes a number of observations and identifies several principles for email tandem learning. The procedure helps learners develop linguistic skills by using language as both medium and topic of communication: while learners use language to communicate about experiential topics such as festivals or school holidays, they also discuss aspects of language itself. Students also learn from each other's cultural background. Although the principal aim of tandem learning is to develop language proficiency, students also develop a great deal of knowledge about the target culture through the email tandem procedure. They do not regurgitate prefabricated patterns or reproduce the meanings of others, but engage in authentic communication in which they express their own meanings in their own language. Finally, through this procedure, learners are required to function autonomously, making their own decisions about what to say and how to say it.

Dialogue journals

Dialogue journals are reciprocal, ongoing written exchanges between students and teachers used consistently over time (Peyton 1993). In the introduction to their chapter on dialogue journals, Chiesa & Bailey (2015) argue that dialogue journals are an excellent way of helping learners connect in-class with out-of-class learning. (The lack of opportunities for learners to activate classroom learning in authentic contexts outside the classroom is a major limiting factor in foreign-language contexts.) They stress that teachers should respond to students' ideas and comments, not their language problems. Dialogue journals are similar to extensive reading in that the focus of attention is on experiential rather than linguistic content. Teachers should therefore avoid correcting learners' errors, no matter how tempting it might be to do so. They should relinquish power in order to build interactive reciprocity. Effective dialogue journalling requires the teacher to abandon an instructional stance and enter into a partnership with the student, responding to the students' entries as a sympathetic 'friend' rather than as a teacher.

One of the hallmarks of a learner-centred approach to instruction is that decisions about content and task selection should be made with reference to out-of-class learners' needs, interests, and experiences. These are not always easy to identify. Dialogue journals provide a way of obtaining this information. However, judgement needs to be exercised in deciding what learner information divulged in the journals should be used in the classroom. To get honest entries from students, confidentiality needs to be guaranteed.

According to Chiesa & Bailey, there are three primary advantages to dialogue journalling. In the first place, it provides opportunities for teachers to better understand students' zone of proximal development. This zone spans the metaphorical distance between what learners can currently do in the target language without assistance, and what they can do with the guidance and assistance of more proficient users such as a teacher or peer. The collaboration involved in dialogue journalling pushes learners to perform at a higher level than they would if communicating independently. Entries also provide teachers with unique insights into students' ideas, proficiency, concerns, and cultural/personal backgrounds.

The most obvious disadvantage to the procedure is that it is time-consuming for students and for teachers, particularly so for teachers who have large classes. Also problematic for the teacher is the fact that the students may divulge personal problems such as harassment or abuse that have to be dealt with in some way.

Popular media

The term 'popular media' is used to cover extensive and intensive viewing through television, video, YouTube and a range of other Internet resources providing access to authentic texts. These are principally aural, but can also be

written. The explosion in popular media, particularly through the Internet, has provided learners with access to an unlimited amount of authentic data.

In their article on popular media, Grode & Stacy (2015) present a case study of two Japanese learners of English. Keiko and her partner improved their pronunciation, grammar, and discourse through the intensive analysis and practice of a scene from the popular television series *Sex and the City*. Because they wanted to work on persistent errors of pronunciation (in terms of segmentals and suprasegmentals), grammar, and discourse, they adopted an intensive rather than extensive viewing approach, restricting their attention to a single scene from the series. They selected a scene in which the speakers used the linguistic features they wanted to improve in their own speaking.

They did three things with the scene. First, they watched the scene multiple times and transcribed it, marking suprasegmental features such as intonation and stress. Next, they practised with the transcript, focusing in particular on the features of interest. Finally, they shadowed the original. Shadowing involves listening to a short segment of the scene, pausing it, and then attempting to imitate the speakers. Keiko also recorded her attempts at shadowing, and then compared her speech with the original.

Grode & Stacy argue that exposure to popular media provides access to authentic materials. In the context of English-language teaching, 'text authenticity' refers to spoken and written texts that were not produced for the purposes of language teaching (Helgesen 2003). While the language of a scripted television series such as *Sex and the City* is not identical to the discourse of everyday life, it is authentic in terms of the definition in the language-teaching literature.

Keiko's errors were stubbornly resistant to change. She could use the target forms, for example /l/ and /r/, when monitoring her speech, but would continue to make the same errors when focused on meaning. Grode & Stacy report that building automaticity through drilling proved helpful: 'the facilitation of extensive practice is also an underlying principle of improving spoken accuracy for the basic notion of repetition is a solid one that can lead to automaticity of use' (2015: 175). The intensive study of short scenes from television dramas, along with rehearsal and shadowing, also served to raise learners' linguistic awareness of their own speech, as well as the characteristics of English.

The case study reported by Grode & Stacy was carried out within a blended (in-class and out-of-class) learning environment. Although the teachers designed the project, the students carried out the work in their own time outside the realm of the classroom. Providing learners with extensive opportunities to make choices fostered autonomy, which led to self-motivation. This in turn created a sense of empowerment in the learners, a fact commented on by Keiko in oral and written reflections on the project.

There are numerous benefits to the intensive listening and analysis procedure developed and implemented by Grode & Stacy. In terms of language learning, students develop a greater understanding of the elements that make up speech. They are able to self-identify those aspects of pronunciation, grammar, and

discourse in their own speech that they wish to work on, and improve these by exercises such as shadowing. In terms of learning processes, the procedure promotes autonomy. In fact, this is likely to be a beneficial outcome of any learning and practice activity carried out outside the classroom, even those that are initiated by the teacher because the student is required to make decisions (in this case identifying target features to work on) and carry out the work independently. The major challenge is that the task is time-consuming for the student. By their very nature, most if not all out-of-class activities will consume student time. Some, such as dialogue journals, will also consume teacher time. But then, mastering a second language is time-consuming!

Contact assignments

A contact assignment requires students to engage in authentic interactions with native speakers or fluent users of the target language. The context in which contact assignments are carried out can vary. They include study-abroad programmes in which students spend time in a country or community where the target language for the student is the native language, or one of the native languages, of that community. They also include language exchange websites and tandem language exchanges (Sasaki 2015), in which learners of different languages who are studying each other's language are paired together virtually. The email tandem exchange described earlier is an example of this. A third example would be the language village. These are communities located in the learner's home country in which the target language is used exclusively by staff who are native or highly proficient speakers of the target language. Arnold & Fonseca-Mora (2015: 225) state that 'the starting point of the experience is learners' desire to improve their language skills and increase their knowledge of the culture in situations of authentic communication'. (An example set in a somewhat different context would be the immersion programmes in Canadian schools which were prominent in the 1970s and 1980s (Cummins & Swain 1986).)

Cadd (2015) presents a case study of Monica, an American student of Spanish, who undertook a study-abroad programme in Spain. Monica carried out twelve tasks that required her to interact with native speakers and report back to the teachers and fellow students through an online discussion forum. In evaluating the experience, Monica reported that, while initially she experienced a great deal of anxiety, her fluency and confidence increased as a result of undertaking the contact assignments. 'If I can introduce myself to the person and get the person to see that I can speak Spanish well enough to hold a conversation, they are much less likely to keep switching back into English. They are appreciative that someone can speak the language fairly well and so I get more practice'(Cadd 2015: 254).

This chapter is predicated on the assumption that success with foreign-language learning is significantly enhanced with out-of-class learning experiences, and that a blending of in-class and out-of-class activities optimizes foreign-language learning. The success of a study-abroad programme hinges

on the extent to which the student interacts with native speakers or highly proficient users of the language. Cadd cites research indicating that many study-abroad programmes are relatively ineffective because learners taking part in the programmes do not avail themselves of the opportunities provided by the programme, but instead stay within their 'comfort zone', and interact mainly with fellow speakers of their own language. His solution to the 'comfort zone' phenomenon was to create tasks requiring students to interact with native speakers while on study-abroad programmes. In Cadd's programmes, students are required to carry out twelve such assignments and complete an online report for each of these.

Below is an example of an online assignment. It consists of two parts, a task, and a set of questions to stimulate reflection and guide the preparation of an online report.

Attend a festival, fair, public event, etc. celebrated in the culture. Speak with at least two members of the culture who are present. Choose two who are quite different: e.g. young vs. old, male vs. female, etc. Ask why the event is important.

Which festival, fair, public event, etc. did you investigate? What is its history? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have problems understanding them? If so, what did you do about it?

Cadd 2015: 257

The contact assignments are designed to create experiences that result in students undergoing decisive interventions. Cadd adopts the notion of 'decisive intervention' from Laubscher (1994). The term refers to an experience in which the student gains an insider perspective on the target language and culture, usually from a 'key informant' which will usually be a native speaker. In other words, it is more than simply collecting and reporting information; it is a consciousness-raising experience.

Structured encounters with native speakers bring affective, linguistic, and cultural benefits. Affectively, initially at least, being forced to interact with native speakers can be threatening and anxiety-creating. In the longer term, however, students experience increased confidence and motivation. Linguistically, their oral fluency improves. They gain insights into and sensitivity towards the target culture. Also important is the fact that they are able to make connections between the classroom and the real world, and are able to find applications for what they learnt in class.

Dimensions of out-of-class learning projects

When designing out-of-class learning projects, it is useful to think in terms of the following different dimensions: location, modality, skills, learning aims, control,

type of interaction, language register, logistics, task demands, manner, and resources.

Many tasks can be carried out in a range of locations such as the home, a library or museum, a park or other outdoor space, or a cinema. Others will require a specific location. Modality refers to whether the learner is dealing with speech or writing, face-to-face versus email or telephone, or blended modes. Some tasks will be restricted to a single skill. Intensive and extensive reading will be restricted to reading, just as intensive and extensive listening will be restricted to listening. Others, such as projects, will require learners to engage in all four skills. In terms of learning aims, the question is whether the task is intentionally targeted to particular learning outcomes such as the acquisition of particular vocabulary, or whether learning outcomes will happen incidentally, whether the aims are general or specific, and so on.

Another factor to consider is who controls the task. Is it teacher-managed, learner-managed, or other-managed? One-way interactions are those in which there is no reciprocity, while two-way interactions involve learners in communicating with, and responding to, others. Language register has to do with whether texts are scripted or unscripted, casual or formal, involving native or non-native speakers, and so on. In thinking about the logistics of a task, one needs to consider the demands of the task in terms of the complexity of sub-parts that make up the task. At a more specific level, consider the demands of the task in terms of what learners are actually required to do: a task such as listen and repeat will make fewer demands than rephrasing, summarizing, and evaluation. 'Manner' refers to whether students work as individuals, in groups, or in pairs. Finally, 'resources' specifies the technical equipment such as computer, mobile phones, and television, needed to complete the task.

Conclusion

Out-of-classroom projects and activities provide opportunities to address the limitations of classroom-based learning. Through the five case studies presented in this chapter, we see that such projects and activities provide opportunities to develop language and communication skills, improve confidence and motivation, and foster personal growth and intercultural awareness. Through authentic language experiences learners have opportunities for real communication.

Out-of-class learning is not meant to replace classroom instruction, but to supplement it. As already indicated, the activity can be student-directed, as in the extensive reading case study, or teacher-directed, as is the case with the other studies. Regardless of the type of project or activity, all out-of-class activities entail new teacher and learner roles. This is particularly true for the learner. Even with activities that are teacher-initiated, once the learner steps out of the classroom, he or she is required to exercise a degree of autonomy, and to take control of their own language learning and use.

TABLE 10.1 A comparison of the five cases in terms of out-of-class learning variables

Variables	Extensive reading	Email tandem learning	Dialogue journals	Popular media	Contact assignments
Location	Home and elsewhere	Home and elsewhere	Multiple locations	Home	Country where target language is spoken
Modality	Writing	Written (email)	Reciprocal written exchanges	Blended mode	Speech
Skill	Reading	Writing	Writing	Listening	Speaking
Aims	General; reading for enjoyment; incidental vocabulary and grammar acquisition	General; language improvement through email correspondence; incidental focus on specific language errors	General; to connect in-class with out-of-class learning	Specific; intentional improvement of specific linguistic features	General; improvement of confidence fluency and cultural awareness through contact with NSs
Control	Generally learner-initiated and managed but can also be initiated by the teacher	Teacher-initiated; learner-managed	Teacher-managed	Teacher-initiated; learner-managed	Teacher-initiated; learner-managed
Type of interaction	One-way	Two-way	Two-way	One-way	Two-way
Register	Written Scripted	Written/initially stranger to stranger	Written/informal/student to teachers	Informal/written to be spoken	Spoken/informal/stranger to stranger
Logistics	Simple	Simple	Simple	Complex	Demanding
Task type	Extensive reading	Email exchange	Written dialogue	Transcribing oral to written; shadowing	Authentic conversation
Manner	Individual	Pair	Pair	Individual	Pair
Resources	Book—print or ebook	Internet	Notebook or computer	Video clips from popular TV shows	Native/competent speakers

Although the great majority of out-of-class activities are systematically linked to the classroom, usually in terms of scaffolded preparation prior to the activity and/or follow-up feedback and evaluation, some activities are entirely independent of classroom work. For example, Stanley (2015) attempted to acquire Spanish in an entirely self-directed way by moving to Peru for a period of time and initiating conversations with native speakers of Spanish. She provides the following description of how she went about it.

In Lima, I learned Spanish as I had learned English by using all kinds of meaning-making strategies to build my language as needed from the ground up. The first day I sat with Aron I used, perhaps, 2% Spanish and 98% everything else: cognates, gestures, drawings and the avoidance of anything complicated. During and in between our chats under the tree, I kept my eyes and ears open magpie-like collecting Spanish. I strained to string sentences together and I gathered new words as I needed them. I would make a coffee last all afternoon in the marketplace poring over a book called, ambitiously, *Spanish in Three Months*. The book was a prop: it and the lone *gringo* attracted passersby, many of whom transformed themselves momentarily into Spanish teachers. Everyone was keen to help out. And then the next time I sat down with Aron I used, maybe, 3% Spanish 97% everything else. And so it went.

Stanley 2015: 246

Stanley's account illustrates the notion of moving beyond the deficit hypothesis. The deficit hypothesis sees learners being deficient when it comes to the target language—empty vessels that need to be 'cured' of their lack of facility with the language. The alternative view is to see learners as resourceful. Stanley is the perfect example of the resourceful learner. Her story illustrates the fact that there is no such thing as the learner who knows absolutely nothing. In the initial stages, even though she was only able to use Spanish for about 2% of the conversation with her interlocutor, she used what she had to grow her mastery of the language. Rather than saying to herself, 'I don't have 98% of the Spanish I need to have a conversation with Aron', she said to herself, 'I actually have 2% of what I need to communicate.' This is resourceful learning.

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11

ESP PROJECT WORK

The collaborative processes involved in students' learning experiences

Christoph A. Hafner and Lindsay Miller

Introduction

Pedagogical approaches to the teaching and learning of English have undergone significant changes over the past 50 years (Miller 2014). In line with a more socially constructed view of language learning, we have moved from a pedagogy of teaching to one of learning. However, even though there have been significant shifts in how we view learning, with the focus now more on learning outcomes than teaching practices, most of the main decisions about classroom-based learning still rest with the teacher. Teachers make decisions about what, when, and often how students learn. The communicative language learning approach (see Richards & Rodgers 2014) tried to alter the decision-making process by encouraging techniques such as pair work, group work, and task-based learning, which promoted a student-centred learning approach. Nonetheless, students most often still look to their classroom teacher for guidance and evaluation, and do not trust their own abilities as autonomous learners to realize the extent of their learning.

The idea behind using learner-centred approaches in language education is to encourage students to engage more with their learning and to show them the relevance and practical nature of what they are doing in class so that learning becomes more meaningful (Barraket 2005: 65). In line with this thinking, the course reported on in this chapter adopted a learner-centred approach via project work, collaborative learning, and students' investment in their learning.

The main features of project-based learning are that: there is interesting content; the project has some connection with the students' real experiences (both socially and academically); the role of the teacher changes from controller to adviser, and students move from being passive recipients to active participants in their learning. In this way, decision-making power shifts from the teacher to

the students. In project-based learning, students take on responsibility for all aspects of their learning, and when working collaboratively they need to share their learning outcomes. Projects must connect to real-world problems, issues, or situations in some way, and so by its nature ‘project-based instruction is . . . exploratory . . .’ (Boudersa and Hamada 2015: 28). Students need to discover how to learn the relevant knowledge and skills in order to achieve their own project objectives.

Students working collaboratively on projects have been studied in both first language (L1) and second language (L2) learning contexts (see Beckett & Miller 2006; Storch 2013). However, simply asking students to work together on a project does not guarantee that the principles of cooperative group work (one of the main premises of project work) will be realized. In order for cooperative group work to be successful, students must be aware of elements of group cooperation and they must understand: the stated goal of the project; the benefits they get by working together; the stated objectives for each part of the project; how to check each other’s performance and give relevant feedback; the importance of accepting collective ownership of the project (Johnson & Johnson 1999: 68). When designed well, these features of a collaborative project lead to the development of a learning community, the goal of which is enriched learning by pooling collective knowledge (Scardamalia & Bereiter 1994).

As learners are social beings whose cognitive development is enhanced through their social interactions with each other (see Vygotsky 1986), the collaborative nature of project work is central to its success as a learning tool. When viewed in this way, a collaborative project enriches the students’ learning experiences especially when the second language is used in order to create authentic texts for authentic audiences and purposes (Stoller 2002: 25).

Another dimension when implementing a learner-centred approach for second-language learners is encouraging students to invest their time and energy in improving their language proficiency. There is limited time in class in which students can take control of their learning (hence the limitations of CLT methods) and make all the decisions that lead to becoming an autonomous learner. Therefore, teachers have to design a project that is engaging out of class and provides opportunities for students to use the second language. Norton (1997: 411) uses the term ‘investment’ ‘to signal the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it’. According to this theory, learners will invest their time and energy in language learning out of class when they need to do so to achieve some real-life purpose—for example, they want to join a relevant or ‘imaginary’ community (Kanno & Norton 2003).

Students may join a community, or prepare themselves to join one, by enacting their individual agency—taking control of their learning and finding ways and means to do this. When students invest in their English language learning in this way, ‘power’ shifts from teachers to students. Students who have the power to make decisions about their learning enact their ‘creative discursive agency’

(Collins 1993). That is, students take control over their communication in the L2 and further language learning. The power relationship between teachers and students 'is additive rather than subtractive. Power is created with others rather than being imposed on or exercised over others. Within this framework, empowerment can be defined as the collaborative creation of power' (Cummins 2001: 322). Project-based learning provides a context within which this kind of empowerment can take place.

For the reasons mentioned above, we believe that there is a strong case for using collaborative group projects in the higher educational context (see also Hafner & Miller 2011; Miller, Hafner, & Ng 2012). However, as students doing project work take charge of their learning, including processes of learning involved in the project such as management of time, division of labour, co-construction of texts, there is a need to better understand the out-of-class collaboration processes that they engage in as well as how these promote learning. Our aim is to observe these out-of-class activities as closely as we can, drawing on a range of ethnographic data, with a view to promoting more effective project-based learning pedagogies in the future. In this chapter we investigate two main questions:

- (a) How do students interact collaboratively with each other in out-of-class project work?
- (b) How do such interactions support the project process in general, and second-language learning in particular?

Context and course design: an English for science project

The principles of collaborative learning, project-based learning, and investment in language learning were implemented on a digital video project in an English for Science course at a university in Hong Kong. Roughly 250 students from programmes in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Architectural Studies, Computing Mathematics, Environmental Science and Management, and Surveying take the course each semester. Each class has up to 25 students, the majority of whom are aged 18–20 years with Cantonese as their first language. The course aims to develop students' ability to read a variety of scientific texts, and appropriately communicate (through speaking and writing) the findings of scientific projects for both specialist and non-specialist audiences. The course is structured around an 'English for science' project, a simulation that involves students in completing a simple scientific experiment or field study and then reporting the results in two ways: first, as a digital video scientific documentary, aimed at a non-specialist audience and completed in teams; second, as a written scientific report, aimed at a specialist audience and completed individually. The course is thirteen weeks long, with the group work video due roughly halfway through the course and the individual scientific report due at the end. In this chapter, we focus on the collaborative processes that are associated with the digital video project.

At the beginning of the course, students self-select into groups of three or four and choose from a selection of assigned topics as the basis for their project. Students research their topic, collect data, and prepare a script before filming and editing a digital video scientific documentary to communicate the findings of their project. The documentary is then uploaded onto YouTube, and the class meets to view and give feedback on each group’s video. Table 11.1 shows key steps in this digital video project process and expected tasks students undertake both in and out of class. As can be seen from Table 11.1, the tutor deals with the structure of students’ learning with in-class activities and information, while students themselves take control of their projects out of class time. In this way, both structure and agency are important components of the video project. The principles of cooperative learning are evoked, with the tutors’ roles being to make a number of pre-structural decisions: explain the task to the students; monitor students’ performance; and assess students’ learning (Johnson & Johnson 1999: 68–9).

The digital video is assessed in two ways: first, each group is given feedback from other students in the class who have also prepared a digital video. Students are encouraged to say which aspects of each video they liked, or what could have been done better. As all the students have recently prepared a documentary video, their comments are informed by their own experiences. Students comment on

TABLE 11.1 Mapping the project structure with aspects of learner agency

<i>Structure (tutor-supported)</i>	<i>Agency (learner-controlled)</i>
Presentation of the project topics and guidelines	Students form groups and make decisions about the different roles they need to perform and the approach they will take to complete their video documentary
A seven-week time-line is presented to students with clearly marked outcomes for each week	Students plan their time to meet project goals, scheduling mutual free time in the group
Students are presented with online video-editing software and shown how to use it	Students master the technical aspect of producing a digital video in their own time
Students are presented with important linguistic aspects of how to present their topics using technical and semi-technical vocabulary	Students help each other to practice and master the linguistic aspects of how to present their research findings in their digital video
Aspects of creativity are demonstrated to students via online video documentaries and students are encouraged to think of how to communicate their research findings to a general audience	Students do online searches to see how projects can be presented in creative ways
The tutor projects guidelines on how the video documentary is assessed, and this assessment is then done by students and the tutor in class	Students upload digital video onto YouTube and receive online feedback from viewers

such aspects as the genre used, the music, any special effects, and the presentation skills of other students. Formally, the tutor completes a feedback form and gives each group a grade for their video documentary. The video is worth 30% of the overall course grade and is assessed on Organization and Content (10 marks); Multimedia and Visual Effects (10 marks); and Language (10 marks).

Methods

The study that we describe here involved a total of 48 science students (twelve groups), who volunteered to collect evidence of and report on their group communication and learning processes while completing the English for science project. A pilot study with two groups of students was conducted first, followed by a full study with ten additional groups the following semester. The majority of students (46) were in their first year of study for the BSc degree. Most of the students (44) identified Cantonese as their L1, with two reporting Mandarin, one reporting Korean, and one reporting Chaozhou 'dialect' as L1. There were 36 females and 12 males in the study.

In order to investigate students' collaborative processes on this project, we adopted a form of qualitative inquiry (Richards 2003). This approach is especially appropriate where, as in this case, 'how'-type questions are being asked (Yin 2009) and complex social practices are being investigated. The approach is 'emic' in nature, meaning that it seeks to understand practices from the point of view of participants and therefore considers the accounts of participants to be a valid data source (Davis 1995). In our study, participating students were asked to keep records of any artefacts that they created as they went through the project process: project communications; written notes; draft scripts and storyboards; images, audio or video they had found or recorded; final video product. Each group also attended two semi-structured interviews to describe their process. These were transcribed before analysis (see below).

The data collection was facilitated by five student researchers (recruited and paid by project funding), who were responsible for liaising with the participants and helping them to archive documents. These researchers communicated regularly with the participants, observed them in class, out of class, and through social media, kept field notes, and reported their observations back to us in face-to-face meetings. As project investigators, we had little contact with the project groups themselves, meeting them only for the interview. As a result, much of the data that has been generated can be considered naturally occurring: what students would have created in the course of doing the project anyway. It is important to note that students gave their informed consent to participate in this process and were briefed that they were not required to provide any information that they considered to be private.

The artefacts that were collected through this process are summarized in Table 11.2. As can be seen, each group is unique in the amount and type of sources they used.

TABLE 11.2 Project artefacts

	<i>Video</i>	<i>Images</i>	<i>Audio</i>	<i>Written text</i>	<i>Communication</i>
Group 1	16	102	8	17	EM, FB, WA
Group 2	38	17	2	10	EM, WA
Group 3	1	76	52	8	FB, WA
Group 4	19	7	1	28	FB, WA
Group 5	7	1	0	7	FB, WA
Group 6	32	38	22	12	WA
Group 7	1	9	13	14	FB, WA
Group 8	1	6	1	6	WA
Group 9	10	38	13	3	FB, WA
Group 10	44	29	11	18	FB
Group 11	3	17	31	11	EM, FB, WA
Group 12	1	18	0	9	WA

Key: EM = email, FB = Facebook, WA = WhatsApp.

The communication between groups is of special interest in this study. In addition to face-to-face communication, students communicated using a mix of digital tools, email and social media (i.e. Facebook group pages, Facebook messenger, and WhatsApp). From the perspective of collaborative processes, these communications provide a permanent record of interactions that occurred out of class and which is open to detailed analysis. That is to say, as well as the students' accounts of their collaborative practices, we are also able to observe direct evidence of such practices, as recorded in social media.

Analysis focused on field notes, transcripts of interviews, and transcripts of project communications (these had been copied from online platforms and needed to be minimally 'tidied up', removing extraneous formatting). All of these data sources were imported into MaxQDA (Verbi Software 2016) and coded thematically by members of the research team, who were given systematic training and followed an established code matrix (adopted from Hafner & Miller 2011). Project communications were also analysed for language choice: English, Chinese, or mixed code. The resulting analysis was checked by a research assistant in order to ensure consistency of coding. The analysis has involved multiple readings of the data, going through a process of 'constant comparison' of findings across different kinds of data in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis.

Collaboration in social media

In this section, we illustrate the range of collaborative experiences observed on the project. We have replaced students' names with pseudonyms throughout. When it comes to their communications, students used a mix of Chinese and English. Of the more than 6,000 messages that were analysed, approximately

58% were written entirely in English, 16% entirely in Chinese, 17% in mixed code, while the remaining messages consisted entirely of punctuation marks, emoticons, images, videos, or hyperlinks and did not exhibit a clear code choice. Most of the twelve groups followed this general pattern of preferring English in their computer-mediated communication (CMC), but two groups (G12, G8) ran against this trend, using Chinese or Chinese-based mixed code more frequently than English. Nevertheless, we can initially observe that when these students engaged with one another independently through CMC, there was generally potential for them to create a new, out-of-class context for L2 practice opportunities.

We are of course also interested in the quality of these interactions, that is, how students used social media for collaboration and learning. Looking at the social media record, we see a range of different functions: (1) supporting/motivating; (2) managing the group/task; (3) negotiating the text; (4) sharing files and links; (5) requesting and giving feedback; (6) peer teaching and learning from peers. We describe each of these functions in more detail below.

Supporting/motivating

Students sometimes used CMC to send encouraging messages to one another, which seemed to be intended to support and motivate. This was not a very frequent function. Extracts 1 and 2 were sent near the beginning of the project (translations of Chinese text appear in square brackets, emoticons are represented as '(emoji)', original orthographic errors are retained, timestamps are reduced):

Extract 1 (G6, WhatsApp)

11:03:06: *Tom*: happy chinese new yeah

11:03:54: *Lo*: Happy new year happy project

11:04:24: *Tanya*: Happy new year happy project

Extract 2 (G8, WhatsApp)

13:36:53: *Yan*: (emoji) 年快樂! 心想事成 (emoji) 我地ge video 攞A+ (emoji) [Happy New Year! Get an A+ in our video project!]

13:49:31: *Hon*: 新年快樂 我都想攞A+(emoji) [Happy New Year! I want to get an A+ too!]

Both of these messages were sent out around Chinese New Year (usually January or February) near the beginning of the project, when students needed to collect data. They demonstrate the range of code choices available to students in the CMC. Serving a similar function, one particularly enthusiastic member of G10 created a document entitled 'Calculation of our bonding strength' and shared this with team members through FB messenger. G10 were good friends who not only did the project together but also socialized together, attending the same dance club outside class.

Messages of support were often seen near the end of the project, when students were working hard to finish their videos by the deadline.

Extract 3 (G9, WhatsApp)

01:57:03: *Dom*: Noting is perfect, do our best is okay la!!!! (emoji)

Sometimes students used humour to provide this kind of support. Extract 4 shows the messages of two students who stayed up all night working on the video project.

Extract 4 (G10, FB Messenger)

6:25am *Rafaella*

another sun rose again ==

6:25am *Zhang*

I hear birds laughing at us = =

Another dimension of this social support function is seen when students from time to time used social media to go ‘off topic’ and ‘chat’ about non-project matters. For example, Ron from G1 contacted group mates to find out if any of them could help him find a copy of course notes for his general education psychology course. And Rafaella from G10 used the team’s Facebook messenger group to excitedly announce the election of a new pope in Rome and share a link to a live YouTube channel covering the event.

Managing the group/task

Managing the group was a common function in students’ CMC, especially organizing and facilitating meetings by using messaging tools to check availability and announce arrival at a location for shooting, for example. In addition to organizing meetings, students used CMC in order to: plan timeline by discussing their ‘production schedule’; organize collaboration tools by discussing which tools to use; divide labour by assigning tasks to particular individuals; coordinate their reading, writing, filming, and editing, including brainstorming ideas; and check progress on the project. Extract 5 shows a WhatsApp conversation which combines some of these functions.

Extract 5 (G11, WhatsApp)

14:26 *Gina*: Actually I have already borrowed some reference book from library. Should we really need to wait until Tuesday and start the project?

14:26 *Billy*: No

14:27 *Billy*: You can start reading

14:35 *Gina*: How to tell you guys what I have read? Make a copy?

14:38 *Billy*: Notes

14:38 *Billy*: I will create a shared doc

Here, Gina and Billy coordinated the background reading task by discussing when Gina could get started. This involved an implicit division of labour and timeline. The two went on to discuss the use of a collaboration tool ('shared doc') to share summaries of the reading with the group.

Negotiating the text

Students sometimes used CMC platforms to negotiate the content and structure of their documentaries. This occurred both in initial stages, as students generated ideas, and in later stages, when they were editing together parts of the video. In Extract 6, the students needed to select shops to observe for a documentary on crowd behaviour. All four students in the group were involved in this exchange as they discussed whether to select the cinema or an electronics store (Broadway).

Extract 6 (G9, WhatsApp)

23:08:35: *Dom*: 我地係咪決定用cinema啊?我驚會後悔播 (emoji) [Are we sure we will use cinema? I am afraid that we would regret later.]

23:15:26: *Dom*: 因為compare係咪應該要差唔多類型嘅店呢? [Since we are going to compare, should we find a shop of similar type?]

12:17:05: *Dom*: 請覆機!! [Please reply!!]

12:18:08: *Erin*: Broadway ok?

12:18:49: *Erin*: ???

12:19:35: *Rachel*: ok

12:20:22: *Ruth*: Use broadway rather than cinema la

12:24:51: *Dom*: Right???

12:27:05: *Ruth*: Yes!!

12:27:12: *Erin*: (emoji)

Sharing files and links

Sharing files was a very common function in CMC. In fact, G12 used their FB group exclusively to share files, unaccompanied by any verbal messages (the same group did use WhatsApp for messages, though). Students shared: information, e.g. weblinks and notes on reading; research instruments like questionnaires that they had designed; drafts of their script and storyboard; original audio, video, and image files; found music or sound effects; found footage or images; links to technical resources, e.g. video editors. Shared files could be accompanied by some verbal message and could also attract comments from other group members, though this was relatively infrequent (see below).

Requesting and giving feedback

Sometimes students used the CMC tools to request feedback from group members, as in Extract 7.

Extract 7 (G7, FB)

Wen uploaded a file.

This is the video outline just imagined by myself. So, please look through it carefully and points out the mistakes. The most importantly, we must make it in detail, please add your ideas to it and make it as perfect as possible.

A+ Outline.docx [filename]

6:56pm

This student uploaded an outline in the form of a Word file, encouraging group members to ‘point out the mistakes’ and ‘make it as perfect as possible’. At times, students typed their ideas and drafts of scripts directly into the social media platform instead of uploading a file. At other times, they provided links to Google Documents (a collaborative, online writing tool). These appeals for feedback often went unanswered in the CMC record, as was the case in Extract 6 above, but discussion could have occurred in offline contexts.

When students did provide feedback, it targeted different aspects of the multimodal composition: content, structure, language, as well as the effectiveness of video (e.g. timing). Students sometimes provided feedback by leaving comments on posts. In Extract 8, the file uploaded contained an incorrectly labelled table: it should have been labelled ‘Fortress’ (the name of an electronics store) but instead was labelled ‘PageOne’ (the name of a book store in the same mall). The comments, ‘wrong word’ and ‘shop name’, draw attention to this problem.

Extract 8 (G9, FB)

Rachel

pageone

[Uploaded a table in English showing number of people passing through Fortress]

1:35am

Dom Wrong word

1:36am

Dom Shop name

1:36am

Rachel lol sor

1:36am

As well as commenting on or replying to a social media post, students could provide feedback by reposting a draft with modifications or uploading a modified file. Where students modified and re-uploaded or reposted draft scripts in this way, the changes made were not always obvious, though one group (G4) used colour to signal additions in Word documents.

Peer teaching and learning from peers

When asked, it is quite common for students to say that they learnt from their peers or made changes based on the feedback of their peers. For example, Pinky (G1) said of her peers, ‘because they give me some comment, I’ve changed some things in this script.’ In addition to making adjustments to their script in response to comments, students also reported proofreading one another’s writing for grammar, teaching and learning specialized vocabulary (e.g. specific vocabulary associated with the architecture of a Catholic church), and correcting one another’s pronunciation. Looking at the CMC interactions, we can see some evidence of this kind of activity, but examples that clearly suggest uptake and learning are rare. Here we examine two examples that focus on implicit vocabulary teaching and learning from peers.

In Extract 9, the discussion concerned selecting a church to feature in a documentary on architecture. The student listed three criteria for selection, glossing ‘aesthetics’ (point 3) with a Chinese translation. The student apparently perceived a possible gap in group mates’ vocabulary and attempted to remedy the problem by ‘teaching’ the word. This could have an effect on group mates and on the student himself: if this was a new word for him, then writing the post gave him an opportunity to use and reinforce it.

Extract 9 (G7, FB)

Dom I personally think that, the church we choose would have such criteria in other words:

1. traditional historical building
 2. structural components and design
 3. aesthetics (美學) of its design . . .
- welcome any other comments :)
- 3:09pm

Finally, in Extract 10, Zhang requested language assistance from his peers and entered an extract from his script. Rafaela provided feedback, making three suggestions: (1) correct the spelling of ‘brief’; (2) translate ‘起源’ as ‘origin’; (3) use the phrase ‘let’s look at’. Ten minutes later, Zhang, who appeared quite frustrated, reposted his script with one amendment (Rafaela’s point 2).

Extract 10 (G10, FB messenger)

4:31pm *Zhang*

I need grammatical checker !

SCript: After having a breif Idea about the 起源 [origin] of the cathedral
Shouldn't We take a look on the 整體佈局 [overall structure] of the Church ?

4:34pm *Rafaela*

Brief

Origin
erm
A bit weird
Just say Let's look at
[. . .]
4:37pm Zhang
.
I need full sentence
[. . .]
4:44pm Zhang
?!???!???!??AM I CORRECT !??
[. . .]
After having a breif Idea about the origin of the cathedral
Shouldn't We take a look on the elementary design of the Church?

This example is interesting for two reasons: first, it provides some limited evidence of vocabulary learning on Zhang's part; second, the failure to take up points 1 and 2, both of which seem like good suggestions, hints at the limitations of this kind of messaging tool for providing language feedback.

Teamwork issues and conflict

The analysis so far has shown how social media can be used in a supportive way to manage the group and manage the project task. However, teamwork issues like 'freeloading' and conflict in the group can also threaten the collaborative process. Our data suggest that such issues did not arise frequently in the groups observed. When they did, they tended to be handled in a constructive way by students. In general, students perceived more benefits than problems when it came to working in a team, emphasizing that teamwork helped them to create a better product, as below.

I think the understanding of one person of something is quite limited, but when we discuss with each other, we will know the opinions or angles of other people, and make the understanding more close to the proper one. And when I have some problem in translating, I will ask them for help. And it also improves the documentary and when between the discussions we will talk about some other things, and that make the whole process interesting.

G2, Noelle

This student emphasized the value of group diversity and the idea that the whole was greater than the sum of the parts. This was a view repeated by others as well. She maintained that diverse 'opinions or angles' promote a better understanding of subject matter, which 'improves the documentary'. This view, that an effective team is a diverse team, is one that we had promoted when students formed their

project groups. At that stage, we suggested that they should look for teammates with complementary strengths and interests so that the various challenges of the project (e.g. researching, scripting, acting, directing, editing) could be addressed by teammates with appropriate skills and motivation for a particular role.

In order to investigate the issue of freeloading, we asked students how they divided the workload between them. Sometimes students commented on the way that particular students took on specialized roles, as here:

Lindsay: Was there anybody in the group that was the expert in technology?

Trish: I think Ron is the expert [laughter]

Ron: Just a little bit (G1)

At other times, they took a 'divide and conquer' approach, breaking a task like script-writing down sequentially, as here:

Celia: At first each of us were responsible for one part [of the script] and we upload into the internet to combine it and to edit it together. (G3)

In discussions with student researchers, it was noted that some groups and some students were clearly more engaged with the project task than others. In one case, a researcher commented on a particular individual (in G4) and noted: 'Amy was always out of the discussion . . . She seemed having no interest in participating. Meanwhile the other girls seldom asked for her opinions as well.' Interestingly, though, this observation, based on one observation of in-class activity, was not borne out by the CMC data. In social media, Amy was one of the more active contributors in this group.

In CMC, there were few overt signs of conflict, though there were signs, such as those observed in Extract 10, that students got frustrated with one another from time to time. In interviews, students sometimes described conflicts that occurred, but these were generally not seen as negative. They usually related to choices about the project, for example, which topic to choose and how to present it. Students saw such conflicts as natural and productive. Zhang (G10) said, 'Conflict is good' and 'If there wasn't any argument, then I think there must be a problem.' One possible reason for the generally positive reports here is that we addressed issues of teamwork explicitly on the course, using activities to raise students' awareness of possible issues (Oakley et al. 2004). Another possible reason is that, in the Hong Kong cultural context, students tend to avoid conflict over group work issues, especially the issue of freeloading (Bremner et al. 2014).

Discussion and conclusions

In interpreting the data, we have to keep in mind that the social media interactions observed here are only one part of the whole collaborative experience,

which also included a lot of face-to-face interaction. Nevertheless, the permanence of these social media posts means that they provide a record of out-of-class interactions that would otherwise be difficult to obtain, offering a valuable window onto students' collaborative practices. These data allow us to explore not only what students *say they were doing* but also what they *actually were doing*. Also, the students on this course were not directed to set up social media platforms as part of the project. They did so voluntarily because of the benefits that they perceived. Considering the way that they have used these social media tools may therefore give us insight into how such tools can support collaboration and learning. As an initial caveat, we also need to keep in mind that different groups used social media very differently.

The data drew attention to the very complex nature of the collaborative processes that students engaged in as part of this project. They used social media for a range of purposes, which suggest three main categories of group work management:

1. managing group dynamics;
2. managing the collaboration;
3. managing the task (process/product).

Here, 'managing group dynamics' refers to the social aspect of the group work, supporting and motivating the team. 'Managing the collaboration' refers to the nuts and bolts of working together: deciding when to meet, how to communicate, how to divide labour. 'Managing the task' refers to two task-oriented purposes: first, coordinating the project process by planning a timeline for brainstorming, reading/researching, planning and writing scripts/storyboards, filming, and editing; second, designing and creating the actual textual product. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses tend to focus more on aspects of task, for example, how to construct genres in terms of both process and product. However, the findings show that when engaged in this kind of collaborative project work, issues of task coordination, collaboration, and group dynamics were raised. It is therefore important to provide support for group work processes, designing activities that help students plan and monitor their group work (see Oakley et al. 2004 for some practical suggestions that we use on our course).

In our educational context, it is increasingly common for students to be called on to carry out the kind of collaborative project work described here. However, the collaborative writing strategies employed by students on this project did not seem especially sophisticated. We frequently observed students swapping Word files through Facebook and swapping texts through social media posts. We did not observe students making use of the collaboration features of Word or Google Docs. These collaboration features afford detailed commenting and suggesting. Yet when students provided feedback by re-uploading or reposting texts, the changes suggested were not always obvious. This is clearly evident in Extract 10, where Zhang was unable to properly process and benefit from the text messages

sent by Rafaela: Facebook messenger may not be the right tool here. Students could probably be equipped with a better understanding of collaborative writing: (1) possible teamwork strategies and their advantages and disadvantages, e.g. whether to write sequentially or in parallel (Sharples et al. 1993); (2) how different tools can be used to support the process, including writing tools and communication tools. An enhanced understanding of these issues would benefit students on collaborative writing tasks in the academy and have possible application in the workplace, where the trend is to increase use of teamwork.

Our findings reinforce existing work on the use of social media in education, which suggests that social media present a hybrid space for learning, blending learning, social, and leisure spaces (Manca & Ranieri 2013). This is evidenced in the way that the social media messages were used by students to send messages of support and encouragement, go off topic and ‘chat’, and even discuss their other courses (‘supporting and motivating’, above). Academic learning and negotiation of the academic task coexist with social interactions that are often humorous in nature. Such social interactions may play an important role in the collaborative learning process, providing the necessary foundation for peer teaching and learning opportunities to be taken up.

As mentioned above, students on this course were not required to adopt social media tools, but did so because they felt it would benefit the project work. They made use of the affordances of digital tools in order to create their own out-of-class learning environments and ‘micro communities’ (Hirvela 1999). Our findings provide abundant evidence of interaction, evidence of negotiation, and tentative evidence of learning in these contexts. In terms of instructional design, we see here the interplay of structure and agency referred to near the beginning of this chapter. The English for science project provided a structured context for learning within which students exercised agency in order to create learning spaces and invest in their language learning. In addition, note that students were assessed on their project work, rather than the way that they communicated in these spaces. This again provides a measure of autonomy that may be an important ingredient in encouraging positive peer teaching and learning experiences.

This study provides us with a better understanding of how undergraduate second-language learners approach collaborative project work and the kind of experiences that they have. In English for Specific Purposes, collaborative processes tend to be addressed in a superficial way, and in any case there are considerable differences in the way that people collaborate in the academy and in the workplace (Bremner 2010). We would like to close by remarking again on the complex nature of the collaborative task that students engaged in for this project. The sheer complexity of the task produced a collaborative process one step closer to what one might experience in the workplace. There, diverse teams collaborate because they need each other to produce a better final product. This sense that ‘the whole is greater than the sum of the parts’ is one that was shared by our students. As Yoyo (G4) put it ‘I think working in a team can help each

others . . . if we can have a concerted effort . . . the whole project it is better than only one person to do so.'

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12

PARTICIPANTS' ENGAGEMENT IN AND PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE MOOCs

Sean McMinn

Introduction

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in higher education have attracted widespread attention from people such as education researchers and academic bloggers and from news media since 2012 (Pappano 2012; Bates 2012; DeSantis 2012; Lewin 2013; Watters 2012). These courses tend to be content-based and are mainly related to the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) domains. However, there is a growing interest in Language MOOCs (LMOOCs) for academic, research, or professional purposes (Bàrcena & Martín-Monje 2015; Perifanou & Economides 2014). While there has been an increase in studies, ranging from the subject of attrition rates (Coffrin et al. 2014) to design (Guàrdia, Maina, & Sangrà 2013) and communication patterns (Gillani and Eynon 2014), research on MOOCs is still relatively new. As a result, there appears to be little guidance on the design of MOOCs for learning English as a second language (ESL), and there is even less empirical research about LMOOCs (Bàrcena & Martín-Monje 2015).

Theoretical backgrounds and concepts, such as Connectivism (Milligan, Littlejohn, & Margaryan 2013) and social network analysis (Sinha 2014; Jones 2015; Goodyear & Carvalho 2014), have addressed MOOCs in general, shedding some light on how MOOC participants engage or connect with content and each other in learning networks. However, there still seems to be a lack of understanding of how participants position themselves within MOOCs and interact, or connect, with others to share, evaluate, create knowledge, or learn skills. There seems to be even less understanding of how or why this might be relevant in LMOOCs. Currently, there is very little published on how students' engagement, their learning and assessment strategies within English LMOOCs, and their perceptions of LMOOCs can inform future online course design.

To help understand whether and how learners engage others in an LMOOC, four cases were analysed involving people from different countries and various backgrounds (i.e. age, education, English proficiency), who are participating in networked learning through edX courses for the purpose of improving English speaking and writing skills. These cases were chosen by the following criteria:

- (1) MOOC type: All cases occur within an xMOOC model.
- (2) MOOC platform: All cases occur within the edX or Coursera platforms.
- (3) Course design: All cases involve a similar course design that includes weekly modules, each with learning sequences of video lectures (5–10 minutes), review questions, quizzes, discussion forum activities, and exams.
- (4) Institution: All cases involve courses offered by the Center for Language Education, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. This criterion is mainly due to accessibility issues.
- (5) Duration of course: The duration for each case is six to seven weeks.

The courses are:

- 'English for Doing Business in Asia—Speaking', offered through edX (EBA101xA)
- 'English for Doing Business in Asia—Writing', offered through edX (EBA102xA)
- 'English for Doing Business in Asia—Speaking', offered through edX (EBA101xB)
- 'English for Doing Business in Asia—Writing', offered through edX (EBA102xB)

While there are specific learning outcomes designed into each course with clear tasks, including summative and peer assessment, participants are given some freedom to choose how they engage in the course to improve their English. To better understand this subject, the following question was explored: how do participants position themselves within a network of English language learners in a massive open online course (MOOC)? This was followed by asking: what type of perceived interactions and connections do participants initiate within an LMOOC? Identifying and distinguishing possible connector types and the common ties they make, and understanding how participants perceive their engagement in LMOOCs, could assist course designers in gaining meaningful knowledge about online language learning and other e-learning initiatives, accounting for various learning strategies or learning goals.

Review of literature

Networked learning and connectors

As Goodyear & Carvalho (2014) note, MOOCs share similar characteristics in relation to networked learning. For the purpose of this chapter, networked learning is defined as:

learning in which information and communication technology [. . .] is used to promote connections: between one learner and other learners, between learners and tutors; between a learning community and its learning resources.

Dirckinck-Holmfeld, Jones, & Lindstrom 2009

As a consequence, literature on networked learning was explored to assist with identifying shared characteristics in relation to connectivity and connectors. Literature suggests that there are various elements involved that enable or constrain connectivity among participants in a learning network. For example, Saadatmand and Kumpulainen (2014) note the phenomena of social serendipity, which is something that some participants in an open online course may experience as a result of being connected in a learning network. However, Kop (2012: 3) suggests that power relations could limit connections, and that ‘it is the presence and involvement of (knowledgeable) others in an environment characterized by many technological variables and contexts that help learners to make sense of the multitude of resources offered on the Web’. Hodgson, McConnell, & Dirckinck-Holmfeld (2012) suggest that networked learning is achieved through participation in communities of learners where meaning is both negotiated and created through collaborative dialogue.

Drawing from other disciplines and social network theories (Granovetter 1973; Kotowski and Dos Santos 2010; Williams 2006), literature suggests that a social network consists of various types of connectors. One possible type includes people who have weak ties to others, providing new knowledge and bridging people to form new groups or connections within a larger social network (Granovetter 1973; Kotowski and Dos Santos 2010). Jones, Ferreday, & Hodgson (2007) apply the concept of weak ties to networked learning, noting that knowledge is often negotiated through dialogue within a network. Williams (2006) suggests that bridging occurs ‘when individuals from different backgrounds make connections between social networks. These individuals often have only tentative relationships, but what they lack in depth they make up for in breadth.’ The opposite of bridging would be ‘bonding’, which occurs when strongly tied individuals provide support for one another; people who initiate bonding among strong ties could be another type of connector.

Additionally, Sedereviciute & Valentini (2011) provide other types of connectors in their Stakeholder Salience Model (SSM): (1) unconcerned lurkers, individuals who have no connections with other members in the network, nor express an interest in particular organization using social media tools—these

can also be called *non-stakeholders*; (2) unconcerned influencers, who have connections within an examined network, but do not express an interest in a particular organization—also called *dormant stakeholders*; (3) concerned lurkers, who express an interest in an organization, but who do not have a central position in the network to pass their messages fast to others—also called *dependent stakeholders*; and (4) concerned influencers, who have great position in the network and considerable interaction in an organization; they are important stakeholders since they share content—also defined as *definitive stakeholders*. This literature on networked learning and connectors helps frame both the review of MOOC literature and the analysis of a MOOC and of participants' interactions in its learning network.

MOOCs as networked learning and participant connectivity

McAuley et al. (2010) indicate that there are two main categories of MOOC: xMOOCs and cMOOCs. xMOOCs are highly structured courses that centre around a series of short video lectures, automated marking, and peer evaluation. cMOOCs are based on connectivism, where participants build and navigate their own learning experience by choosing their own web connections. Coursera, EdX, and Udacity are often labelled as xMOOCs. While this chapter focuses on xMOOCs, it is argued that elements related to participants' engagement in both xMOOCs and cMOOCs are related to networked learning theories and are treated as being equally relevant.

While MOOC literature does focus on participants' engagement, it is often either too vague or does not adequately show how participants position themselves in networked learning. Milligan et al. (2013) provide one of the first studies related to patterns of engagement in cMOOCs; their research suggests that MOOCs consist of three categories of participants: active participants, lurkers, and passive participants. They suggest that certain factors affect engagement: confidence, prior experience, and motivation.

However, it is not clear how one measures motivation for engagement. Additionally, passive participants are not clearly defined. In contrast, Koutropoulos & Gallagher (2012) provide their own categories: lurking participants, moderately active participants (one or two topics are engaged), and memorable active participants (participated in five more activities). Again, they provide only vague descriptions, and their study does not measure connectivity and positioning of participants within the MOOC. Saadatmand & Kumpulainen (2014) note that learners can create their own learning experiences, alone or in networks, and suggest that lurkers may be peripheral learners setting their own pace within a course. Hill (2013) provides another set of categories to explain student patterns in an xMOOC: (1) no shows, (2) observers, (3) drop-ins, (4) passive participants, and (5) active participants. Their study indicates that the number of students in each category decreases as the course progresses. Ramesh et al. (2014) note two different forms of student engagement: passive and active. They also note another category of registrant, the auditor.

LMOOCs and networked language learning

There is considerable published research in the areas of computer-mediated communication (CMC) and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) (Bax 2003; Chapelle 2009; Davies et al. 2014; Warschauer 1996), which can inform us of how language learners engage others and content in online language-learning communities that are a part of a course. Yet the subject of LMOOCs is relatively new, and there are very few studies related to it. Lewis et al. (2015) do explore sociality theory in their study of an open translation MOOC, and their findings are encouraging. They suggest that traits related to human sociality can provide a framework that could reinforce successful learner-participants in a MOOC. In contrast, Rubio (2015) recommends course design that reinforces higher levels of learner-content interaction in LMOOCs compared to learner-learner and learner-instructor interactions. Dixon & Fuchs (2015) suggest that LMOOCs afford the ability for learners to connect with others, offering the chance for authentic interaction with native and non-native speakers. Sokolik (2015) refers to past CMC and CALL research, calling for high levels of engagement in LMOOCs that includes an instructor presence and videos that initiate engagement rather than simply presenting information. While these represent a good start in understanding engagement in LMOOCs, more research is needed to understand how networked learning may be designed for LMOOCs.

Methods

A mixed-methods approach was used in this study, including an analysis of discussion forum activity, online surveys, and clickstream data. These were used to analyse how participants create, define, and experience their roles in LMOOCs.

Discussion forums

An inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006) of the discourse in discussion forum activity was used for this research, which consists of six phases: (1) familiarising yourself with the data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) searching for themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) defining and naming themes; (6) producing the report.

Online surveys

Pre- and post-surveys containing mainly 5-point Likert items in two categories were given to students to complete online. These surveys were also part of the course coordinators' practice of collecting quality assurance data for course review purposes. The categories include learning English online and online learning communities.

Clickstream data

The amount of accessible MOOC clickstream data, which show which items learners visit in what order, based on mouse clicks and interactions with course content, is vast. Depending on the MOOC platform, instructors can analyse numerous interaction types, ranging from geographic distribution of learners, access to and completion rates of video lectures, to participation in activities or quizzes. An analysis of all clickstream data for the five cases is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, some analysis of items related to student geographic distribution and frequency of interaction with course items is worth mentioning to get a wider understanding of participants' engagement in the course.

Findings

Analysis of discussion forums

Initial ideas were first noted after reading and rereading transcripts of randomly selected discussion threads from the five courses. Codes were then generated upon first analysis and recoded after careful review by identifying new and reoccurring patterns, analysing relationships between emerging categories, and distinguishing variations between categories.

It was revealed that participants positioned themselves within the discussion forums in various ways to connect and engage in the course. Four main themes emerged: (1) influential connector, (2) moderate connector, (3) peripheral/distant connector, and (4) dormant connector. For example, data coded 'moderates participants', 'encourages participants', and 'invites participants for comments' share properties in that participants positioned themselves as contributors or influential actors within the learning network; as a result, they were attributed to the 'influential connector' category. It was also revealed that the type of connectors and their relationships within a wider scope of the learning network varies: not all participants connect the same way, nor is the frequency of their connecting the same.

Additionally, while some connectors share similar properties, it was revealed that the four categories work across a spectrum, each decreasing in shared properties. For example, a moderate connector and influential connector may share the property of inviting other participants for comments on their ideas; however, they do not share the property of moderating participants.

Influential connector

Some participants position themselves within influential roles within the learning network or are definitive stakeholders in some way in that they influence the sharing and creation of knowledge and/or types of activities related to learning goals. These participants tend to encourage connections with others, despite

having weak ties, and sometimes play the role of moderator or guide. These influential connectors may also initiate bridges across boundaries formalized in the course, such as starting group meet-ups through social media outside a MOOC platform.

For example, Participant A, who was one of the more frequent participants in one of the analysed cases, started seven discussions and commented 75 times in various threads. In Week 5, Participant A started the thread ‘Task 2 informal assessing’, which received 31 comments. Figure 12.1 shows an excerpt from that thread.

<p>Participant A: my pitch link: https://soundcloud.com/ . . . example for your assessing: score : 10 out of 12 feedback : work on your pronunciation to make it clear for everyone, please post your assessment and feedback in ‘add a comment ’ part. because everyone can see your assessing about her/his pitch in one place, under her/his link. thank you</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT B: Well, I consider that your pronunciation is OK, especially when it comes to pauses and stress. Your speech is well structured, and I would buy your idea if I were your audience ;). Score: 11 out of 12.</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT A thank you _____ ;).</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT C Week 5.1 – Discussion: high-context and low-context cultures Where does your country/culture fit in this spectrum? Does Hall’s categorization of your culture seem valid? Why or why not? Hi, [_____] Would you help me, My name’s [_____] I’m from Brazil in South America, I think the categorization of my country/culture is between Spain and Italy. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What do you think? Please send me an answer to my question, with your opinion. Thanks a lot guys. Link Sound Cloud: https://soundcloud.com/. . .</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT A let all feedback for one person have been come under her or his link post please post your assessing under my post in ‘add a comment’ part and Delete this post. thank you</p>

FIGURE 12.1 Influential connector discussion forum sample

Moderate connector

These participants share similar features of influential connectors, such as contributing social remarks like 'good work', 'hello', or 'nice to meet you'; however, the main difference is that a moderate connector tends to respond to similarities or reinforce commonalities with other participants within the discussion forum. They reinforce strong ties due to 'bonding social capital', as described by Williams (2006). For example, Participants E, F, and G link their comments for a task in Week 5 to a commonality they share: their national background. The same three participants exhibit similar discourse in a discussion task.

<p>PARTICIPANT E Hello, Italy – my country, stands before India in the chart. it seems to be half way between high and low context. I do not know how to interpret this position, but i think it might refer to the fact that communication in Italy is not always high or low, but varies according to situations.</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT F I agree with my compatriot _____: in Italy the communication is not always high or low context, but it changes according to the different situations, and indeed it changes also by different regions. That is confirmed also by Hofstede model about cultural dimensions. As you may remember, Italy is a pragmatic country, according to Hofstede: people are able to adapt traditions to changed conditions.</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT G Hello! I do agree with both my compatriots: you cannot define Italy as an high context culture or a low content culture since it varies much on regions and individuals. I think that in Italy there are many unspoken rules that everyone understands and that can be used to easily spot foreigner.</p>

Similar discourse patterns occur in two other separate discussion threads. In both threads, participants connect based on their ethnicities: Chinese and Spanish.

Peripheral/distant connector

Peripheral connectors appear to participate less frequently and meaningfully in a discussion forum. These connectors contribute to a threaded discussion but do not make connections to other posters. They tend to only post content that answers a task, and their discourse does not in any way connect to other participants' contributions to the task. For example, in one case, students were given the task of defining 'culture' in the discussion forum. Peripheral/distant connectors completed the task; however, they positioned themselves in the discussion only by addressing the task, and did not connect with other participants. This can be seen in Figure 12.2. Participant H begins a threaded discussion, but Participants I and J seem to ignore H's contribution and only contribute their own answer for the activity (Figure 12.2).

<p>PARTICIPANT H I think this definition for the concept of 'culture' show clearly how people define culture when I ask them. They use to say that the culture is the customs and behaviours of a human group, and that's all. That's true, but I think it means you have a low knowleadage about that culture, for example of Chinese culture because the complexity is in the deep layer. If a person really understand a culture, then he or she will talk about deep culture layer, that is harder to realize. Of course, have a basic knowledge isn't bad, but I think for make truly nice business with people from other countries is better immerse yourself in deep culture also.</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT I Culture comprises of ideas, customs and social behavior of a particular community. I believe we all do over generalization and sometimes have negative stereotypes about different culture.</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT J understanding the culture of every nation is great. I think the conclusion of this topic is we must understand the different perspective of other people, especially when we contact them in our business event. example when you work with Indonesian people make sure they know what to do and when to do it. and understand that some value is very important for some person. Do not make them angry because you do something that makes the value that those person think great becoming small.</p>

FIGURE 12.2 Peripheral/distant connector discussion forum sample

The discourse of peripheral/distant connectors sometimes connects with that of other participants, but only minimally. For example, they may simply write, 'I agree', with no elaboration. This seems to be similar to Eynon et al.'s (2014) study on discussion forum interactions in a MOOC, which suggests that many discussion posts are essentially a statement of observation or opinion (of varying quality), with fewer posts contributing to knowledge construction with other participants

Dormant connector

These participants often start a thread that receive comments; however, the dormant connectors do not continue the discourse. What they initiated may be influential in initiating discussion and knowledge creation, but other connections remain dormant. An example would be the the excerpt in Figure 12.2: Participant H positions himself or herself as a dormant connector in that he/she initiates a discussion, receiving 35 comments from other participants, but he/she does not follow up or continue discourse within the thread.

Pre- and post-course surveys

Survey findings indicate that participants positioned themselves differently within the course. For example, Figure 12.3 shows that a significant number of

How frequently do you intend to participate in the EBA101x discussion forum?		
	<i>Response total</i>	<i>Response %</i>
I will contribute to discussion threads frequently	1,071	23
I will contribute to discussion threads occasionally.	2,597	55
I will view discussion threads, but will not contribute.	819	17
I will not visit the discussion forums.	221	5
Total respondents (skipped this question)		4,708
		1,510

FIGURE 12.3 Frequency of participation

respondents in a pre-survey indicated that they plan to view the discussion threads; a similar amount indicated that they will contribute to the discussion threads frequently, while the majority planned to contribute to the discussion forums occasionally.

Additionally, participants varied in how they planned to position themselves within the wider learning network—i.e. outside of the discussion forums. For example, Figure 12.4 shows that over half the respondents in one case indicated that they do not plan to join other online communities to work on the material, although a large portion did indicate that they would join a Facebook group to work with others on the course. A few indicated that they would use social media tools, such as Skype, QQ, Google+, WeChat, Twitter, and Facebook.

Post-survey findings indicate that participants varied in how they positioned themselves during the course. Figure 12.5 shows that a large number of participants

Do you plan to join other online communities to work on the material for EBA101x?		
	<i>Response total</i>	<i>Response %</i>
I don't plan to join other online communities.	2,747	58
I will join a Facebook page to work with another person or persons.	1,547	33
I will use Twitter or Weibo to work with another person or persons.	229	5
I will use other social media to work with another person or persons. Please specify.		4

FIGURE 12.4 Planned participation in other online communities

Which best reflects your participation in the discussion forum and other community type of activities in the course?						
	<i>Never true of me</i>	<i>Rarely true of me</i>	<i>Sometimes true of me</i>	<i>Usually true of me</i>	<i>Always true of me</i>	<i>Response total</i>
I was an active participant in the course.	13.73% (32)	12.02% (28)	30.47% (71)	28.76% (67)	15.02% (35)	233
I was a passive participant in the course.	16.38% (38)	22.41% (52)	27.16% (63)	24.57% (57)	9.48% (22)	232
I initiated connections with other participants in the course.	30.47% (71)	27.9% (65)	25.75% (60)	9.01% (21)	6.87% (16)	233
I relied on other participants for help.	48.29% (113)	22.22% (52)	19.66% (46)	8.12% (19)	1.71% (4)	234
I helped other participants.	30.6% (71)	21.12% (49)	28.45% (66)	15.52% (36)	4.31% (10)	232
I requested information from the instructors.	40.95% (95)	19.4% (45)	23.71% (55)	10.34% (24)	5.6% (13)	232
I requested information from other participants.	43.1% (100)	22.84% (53)	21.55% (50)	8.19% (19)	4.31% (10)	232
I encouraged participants to continue in the course.	39.48% (92)	19.31% (45)	19.31% (45)	15.45% (36)	6.44% (15)	233
I played a role in creating online groups with social media.	62.23% (145)	17.6% (41)	11.16% (26)	6.44% (15)	2.58% (6)	233

I managed connections with groups of participants.	55.13% (129)	19.23% (45)	13.25% (31)	8.97% (21)	3.42% (8)	234
I contributed to group discussions (either in edX forums or other social media).	30.26% (69)	19.3% (44)	27.19% (62)	16.67% (38)	6.58% (15)	228
I followed group discussions but did not participate (either in edX forums or other social media).	22.32% (52)	20.6% (48)	34.33% (80)	15.88% (37)	6.87% (16)	233
I led group discussions (either in edX forums or other social media).	51.97% (119)	21.4% (49)	17.9% (41)	3.93% (9)	4.8% (11)	229
Total respondents (skipped this question)	234					
	27					

FIGURE 12.5 EBA101xB post-course survey (participants with an overall score 60% and over; certificate earners)

who received a certificate in a course considered themselves to be active in the discussion forum; however, forms of activity varied, ranging from helping to leading other participants. Additionally, a significant number of participants considered themselves to be passive learners, with some indicating that they followed the discussion forums but did not participate in them. Results also indicate that a large portion of participants believed that interacting with others in the learning network helped them find new strategies for learning English (see Figure 12.6 which shows results from post-course survey participants with an overall score 60% and over; certificate earners). However, findings also suggest that a significant number of participants believed that the learning network hindered their learner strategies or that they could not turn to other participants for advice (see Figure 12.7).

Survey results also indicate that participants differ on the importance of learning objects, student–student engagement, and activities for learning English. For example, a large majority believe watching lecture videos and completing

<i>Question</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Total</i>
The people I interacted with helped me find new strategies for learning English.	5.48%	21.92%	47.95%	15.07%	9.59%	73

FIGURE 12.6 Interaction and learning strategies responses

<i>Question</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Total</i>
The more I interacted with people in the MOOC, the less strategies I learned.	2.74%	17.81%	53.42%	15.07%	10.96%	73
There was a participant in the MOOC I could turn to for advice about making very important decisions in the course.	4.05%	18.92%	45.95%	17.57%	13.51%	74

FIGURE 12.7 Learning network and learning strategies responses

interactive activities are extremely important when learning English in an online course. Interacting with other students seems to be perceived as being less important. Figure 12.8 provides an example of the results from one of the cases.

<i>How important did you find the following when learning English in an online course such as this? (Please rate on a scale of Extremely important to Not important)</i>	<i>Extremely important</i>	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Slightly important</i>	<i>Not important</i>	<i>Total</i>
To participate in the online community	10.39%	24.68%	36.36%	19.48%	9.09%	77
To watch the lecture videos	48.68%	40.79%	9.21%	1.32%	0.00%	76
To complete the interactive activities	51.32%	28.95%	18.42%	0.00%	1.32%	76
To complete assessments (quizzes and exams)	59.21%	34.21%	5.26%	1.32%	0.00%	76
To interact with the instructor(s)	22.67%	40.00%	20.00%	9.33%	8.00%	75
To interact with other students	17.33%	26.67%	30.67%	17.33%	8.00%	75
To get feedback from the instructor(s)	41.33%	33.33%	18.67%	2.67%	4.00%	75
To get feedback from other students	21.05%	30.26%	28.95%	11.84%	7.89%	76
To play games to aid learning	34.21%	28.95%	19.74%	9.21%	7.89%	76
To have access to online learning resources	39.47%	48.68%	9.21%	2.63%	0.00%	76

FIGURE 12.8 Activities contributing to learning online

Clickstream data

Geographic distribution

Perhaps unsurprisingly, due to the nature of the subject of learning English and accessibility of the MOOC platforms, the majority of participants are from Asia. For example, EBA102xB includes China and India in the top four of enrolments (Figure 12.9).

Student interactions

In all cases, overall engagement with course content decreases as the course progresses (Figure 12.10). Engagement includes unique viewers interacting with an activity (e.g. discussion forum, interactive learning object), a problem (e.g. peer assessment, quiz), and video lectures. This seems to be consistent with other MOOCs (Coffrin et al. 2014). These results also show that the number of student interactions with discussion forums, compared to other course engagements (e.g. watching video lectures), decreases the most. For example, results from EBA 102xB show that the figure of 557 (out of 7,128 participants) unique viewers engaged in discussion forum activities during the first week decreased to 23 unique viewers by the final week of the course. Meanwhile, engagement with video lectures by unique viewers in the final week of the course was relatively higher. For example, the lecture video on active and passive voice received 118 unique views.



FIGURE 12.9 EBA102xB geographic distribution of participants

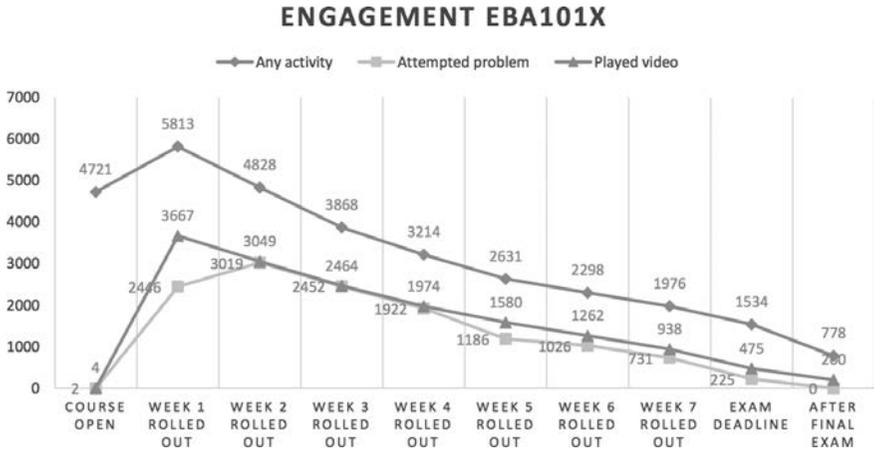


FIGURE 12.10 Engagement data from edX EBA102xB

Clickstream data indicates that language activities and quizzes, like vocabulary exercises or interactive listening activities, tend to have the most number of unique viewers (Table 12.1). For example, clickstream data from EBA101xA shows that language activity items, as opposed to video lectures or discussion forum activities, often have the most unique viewers. Here, language activity items appear seven times in the top twenty of a total of 141 course items.

TABLE 12.1 Total unique viewers per item

<i>Items' display name</i>	<i>Total unique viewers</i>
Survey	7,759
Elements of Introducing Yourself (lecture video)	6,964
Weekly outline	6,691
Course introduction (lecture video)	6,097
Introduction to Challenging English Sounds (lecture video)	5,674
Word list	5,178
Quiz 1	4,905
Welcoming Visitors (lecture video)	4,620
Common English Phrases for Introductions (lecture video)	4,546
Fill in the gap (2 activities)	4,306
Discussion: Introduce yourself	4,176
Challenging English Sounds /ÄË/ and /i:/	3,901
Fill in the gap with a synonym (2 activities)	3,765
Vocabulary Prep	3,696
A02 Listen up part A	3,618
What to expect from this MOOC? (lecture video)	3,616
Weekly outline	3,513
Challenging English Sounds /i_/ and /e/	3,507
Association map (3 activities)	3,486

Discussion

Comparisons of the findings from the discussion forums, survey results, and clickstream data suggest that participants position themselves differently through a variety of connections to content and other participants. These results also indicate that participants' perceptions of how they can engage learning and assessment strategies through networked language learning vary. For example, participants requesting others to comment on their English performance for a speaking task, encouraging others to connect and help with the assignment, indicate that some students may bridge boundaries within a learning network as part of their assessment strategies. Additionally, participants used the discussion forums to connect with others to accomplish a specific learning goal. This is significant because these activities were not designed into the course, yet the nature of networked learning appeared to afford this type of engagement in LMOOCs. In contrast, however, most participants did not use the discussion forums and engaged with the course in other ways, such as interacting with the vocabulary activities.

Findings from the discussion forums do suggest four main categories in which participants can position themselves: influential connector, moderate connector, peripheral/distant connector, and dormant connector. Here, influential connectors share similar qualities in what Kotowski & Dos Santos (2010), Williams (2006), and Granovetter (1973) refer to as people or connectors who bridge borders. They also share similarities with concerned influencers or definitive stakeholders within Sedereviciute & Valentini's (2011) Stakeholder Salience Model. While moderate connectors are active, they are limited connectors, as their discourse in the discussion forum positions them as being more homophilic, making limited connections with other participants, knowledge, and activities since they rely on strong ties or bonding social capital. Making these distinctions in connector type and identifying how participants might bridge borders or rely on strong ties within LMOOCs suggests that not all participants connect and engage through discussion forums in the same way. As the survey findings indicate, some participants were aware of LMOOCs providing opportunities to engage other participants to approach learning and assessment strategies differently. For example, participants indicated that they connected to other participants to either assist someone with a language task or receive assistance.

Findings from the survey and clickstream data also suggest that a new category is needed for participants who do not interact with others but connect with the course in some other way. This would include participants who view the discussion forum but do not contribute and/or do not view the discussion forum at all, or those who interact with content and language activities only. Koutropoulos & Gallagher (2012) suggest 'lurkers', participants who follow a course but do not participate, and Hill (2013) suggests 'observers'. Neither term seems adequate, because both suggest that these participants are disconnected from learning.

While the scope of this study does not measure whether learning occurs in LMOOCs, it cannot ignore the possibility that it might, regardless of how one positions themselves in the learning network. A more neutral term like 'silent connector' or 'remote connector' is suggested for these participants. This suggests that they do not interact with other participants in LMOOC, which survey results indicates to be true for many participants. As the survey and clickstream data show, and in addition to the discussion form results, participants will vary in how they engage with an LMOOC and how they perceive the different levels of importance for each course element (e.g. video lectures, forum discussions).

Conclusion

This chapter draws attention to how LMOOC designers might be able to anticipate possible participant behaviour or connector types and other engagements that may occur, accounting for various participants' perceived learning and assessment strategies within networked learning. While formal tasks can be established for peripheral, dormant, and silent connectors, the design should recognize that some participants will look for ways to cross boundaries and connect with other participants in an LMOOC to adapt to their language-learning goals. This can lead to new opportunities for curriculum designers and, of course, for learners of English. LMOOCs are not an isolated, or entirely unique, phenomenon: they overlap with and share similar pedagogies with other technology-enhanced language-learning tools or platforms, whether it be blended learning or online learning. As mentioned, there is substantial research on the subject of student engagement through CMC and CALL. Chapelle (2003) made this clear when pointing out how technologies might enhance pedagogies to reinforce interpersonal, learner-computer, and intrapersonal interactions. LMOOCs are simply on a larger scale in relation to the number of involved participants.

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13

LEARNING ANALYTICS IN ONLINE LANGUAGE LEARNING

Challenges and future directions

Michael Thomas, Hayo Reinders, and Anouk Gelan

Introduction

Over the last two decades universities have steadily increased investment in digital technologies and online learning in the belief that they will enhance learning and the student experience. The increased focus on online learning has led to the integration of digital technologies and platforms that have transformed the way language learners and teachers interact (Fischer 2012). This integration has also enabled the development of the field of learning analytics (LA), or '[t]he measurement, collection, analysis, and reporting of data about learners and their contexts for purposes of understanding and optimising learning and the environment in which it occurs' (Long & Siemens 2011: para. 14). Despite the promise of LA (Dyckhoff et al. 2012), its use and influence in language learning and teaching have thus far been minimal. In seeking to address the challenges and future potential of learning analytics, this chapter first examines some of the key questions raised by the research literature that will influence language education over the next decade, and investigates what kind of data can be used to inform effective decision-making in online language-learning contexts and how it can be visualized.

The second half of the chapter turns to consider preliminary data arising from the needs analysis phase of the VITAL Project (Visualization Tools and Analytics to Monitor Online Language Learning and Teaching), a two-year EU-funded project that specifically addresses the gap in the research literature on analytics in language learning and teaching. VITAL aims to help teachers, students, and course designers to understand language learners' engagement by tracking their digital footprints and answering such research questions as: Does the online student activity indicate whether the student is learning successfully? How can student engagement be measured? Is it possible to predict how well students are going to do without focusing exclusively on their summative grades? What are

the correlations between course design, tool usage, and student performance? By exploring the role that language learning can play in this respect, this chapter responds to the call made by Dawson, Gasevic, & Mirriahi (2015: 2) that in order to develop the field of LA, it is necessary to ‘provide opportunities to bring in new voices from diverse disciplines into dialogue and experiment with alternate approaches that challenge the security of our often tightly held beliefs’. Before examining preliminary data from the VITAL project, the first section of the chapter considers developments in the wider context of education.

The emergence of learning analytics

In the first wave of educational technology identified by the American technology association EDUCAUSE in 2000, learning management systems figured prominently. Investment in the technology led to its rapid development across global higher education as a gateway to online teaching and learning evident in the increased prominence of Blackboard and Moodle. In the second wave, Web 2.0 collaborative technologies emerged between 2005 and 2010 and emphasized learner connectedness and creativity. Learning analytics belongs to a third wave in which instructors and learners are engaged in measuring learning activities. As a result of renewed interest in online and blended forms of learning and the emergence of massive open online courses (MOOCs), tracking learner movements and task activities that contribute to performance has become a growing trend (Volk, Kellner, & Wohlhart 2015).

The use of analytics has been prevalent in the business world since the 1990s, and has been justified as a way of making organizational processes more efficient and of eliminating wastage. Given the consolidation of neoliberalism in higher education over the last decade (Block, Gray, & Holborow 2012) the application of business intelligence to education is a natural development. In education, the emergence of ‘big data’ (Bienkowski, Feng, & Means 2012) has led to significant interest in the field from a range of stakeholders from administrators to classroom instructors, each hoping to address problems such as student retention, low motivation, and lack of engagement. In the educational context it is necessary to distinguish between academic analytics and learning analytics, where the former relates to business intelligence about the organization (Campbell, Deblois, & Oblinger, 2007) and the latter is increasingly concerned with using data to inform pedagogical processes, such as the design of tasks or the nature and scope of instructor-led interventions. Both processes depend heavily on the development of new techniques and algorithms in educational data mining in order to identify synergies and patterns in the data collected (Bienkowski et al. 2012).

The purpose of learning analytics

Developing from earlier approaches that focused on summative tests and performance data associated with student success, interest in the field over the last five

years has led to a diversified understanding which is more nuanced vis-à-vis the various stakeholders involved. Through the analysis of large amounts of data about individual student behaviour, often triangulated from a variety of on- and offline sources including virtual learning environments, test scores, and library and teaching-room access, educators aim to identify learning habits and to design effective interventions founded on an evidence-based approach. Learners themselves may be able to engage in more reflective learning practices based on access to real-time data about their patterns of activity. A data-driven approach may help course developers to create a case for pedagogical and institutional change. On the other hand, it is also necessary to have more studies investigating the factors influencing resistance to analytics, increased surveillance, and threats to privacy.

Widespread use of social networking sites and other daily online activities has led to interest in the data traces website users leave behind whenever they access online resources. Based on user experience, the Web now predicts and recommends products, services, and friends for individual users' networks. As higher education moves to a mass system, institutions are turning to consider the role of analytics to visualize complex data sets on engagement in an area increasingly underpinned by the idea of student-as-customer. The application of big data has led to research on adaptive forms of modelling (i.e. the use of data from previous or different cohorts to engage in predictive testing of the impact of instructional models) that can be used to predict future student success or failure.

Over the last few years dashboards have become an integral component of many everyday applications and digital devices. They are used to record and display large amounts of data in visually appealing formats in real time (see Figure 13.1 for an example).

Students in higher education are less familiar with the use of dashboards in formal education, however, and more research is required on the indicators they perceive as useful and how likely they are to use them to aid learning.

Learning analytics in language education

The increased use of digital technologies in language learning has been a steady trend over the last two decades. According to meta-analyses of research on computer-assisted language learning (CALL), a small but significant correlation between the use of technology and second language acquisition is evident (Plonsky & Ziegler 2016). While this is generally accepted by CALL researchers, not much is known about how language learners spend their time, utilize resources and learning materials, and interact in online environments (Youngs, Moss-Horwitz, & Snyder 2015). Chapelle (2001: 36) argued that it is 'necessary to identify the observable data that provide evidence of CALL qualities'. In e-learning environments, data is routinely captured about what users do, when, with whom, and how frequently. Such data can be used on the one hand to investigate the relationship between second language learning and CALL

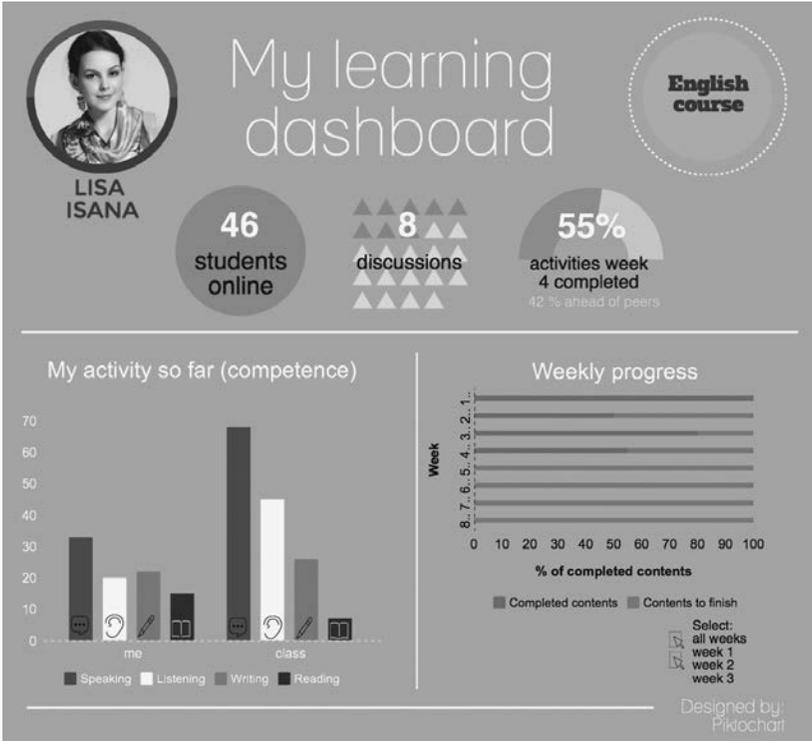


FIGURE 13.1 An example of a student dashboard

software (Fischer 2007) and on the other hand to produce more adaptive environments that respond to the decisions learners make. Youngs et al. (2015: 348), for example, discuss the potential of data mining for online French learning, and argue that learning analytics could prove useful to instructors by answering questions such as:

How much time do students spend on lessons, sections of lessons, exercises for lessons?

What do students do when they have questions?

Do they continue without the answer, or do they return to an explanation and then retry the exercise?

What is an average amount of time that students spend in an online language course, in each section, and on each exercise?

If the time is not ‘equivalent’ to the time students spend in a traditional course, does this mean that the online learner is disadvantaged in some way?

While self-reporting on user activity through qualitative data capture in the form of stimulated recall or interviews can be unreliable on its own, the use of learners’

data logs may provide support about frequency of activity as Youngs et al. (2015) suggest. On the other hand, this quantitative focus may offer little insight into a rationale for students' behaviour. As Fischer (2007: 430) puts it, tracking 'should certainly be a substantial part of quantitative data collection' but 'we should not use tracking in isolation because while it clearly shows what students do, it does not explain why they do what they do.' In line with normalized e-learning tools such as the anti-plagiarism application Turnitin, analytics requires an instructor to engage in interpretation and scrutiny of the data rather than accepting it at face value.

Related to this is the use of analytics to aid personalization of feedback. Link & Li (2015) report a study of Blackboard Learn Performance Dashboard and Retention Center (an online dashboard that gives information about student engagement with Blackboard's Learning Management System) from a graduate-level research writing course for non-native English-speaking students. According to them, the goal of learning analytics is to 'enable practitioners to tailor educational opportunities to each student's level of need and ability' (p. 372). Moreover, the results of tracking can lead to evidence that provides the impetus for syllabus and course redesign and new strategies for effective feedback.

Analytics has also been linked to the development of opportunities for adaptive learning. According to Kerr (2015: 88), adaptive learning is a 'way of delivering learning materials online, in which the learner's interaction with previous content determines (at least in part) the nature of materials delivered subsequently. Its purpose is to generate personalized learning.' The widespread use of VLEs (virtual learning environments) has largely led to the storage and delivery of standardized content rather than to customized learning. Kerr provides a useful distinction between three key terms that are often used interchangeably but require clearer definition: individualization, differentiation, and personalization (see Figure 13.2).

Popular online learning platforms such as Rosetta Stone and Duolingo attempt to harness historical data from users to select and plan the tasks that students are given. As Kerr suggests, they are based on an individualization approach in which some aspects of differentiation are evident. In order for them to be effective,

<i>Three types of adaptive learning</i>		
<i>Individualization</i>	<i>Differentiation</i>	<i>Personalization</i>
Learning goals are the same for all, but students can progress through the material at different speeds.	Learning goals are the same for all students, but the method or approach of instruction varies according to the preferences of each student or what research has found works best for students like them.	The learning objectives and content as well as the method and pace may vary.

FIGURE 13.2 Individualization, differentiation, and personalization (adapted from Kerr 2015: 88)

however, they need to be able to collect more fine-grained data about individual language learners.

One way of doing this is through dashboards. Verbert et al. (2013) investigated the use of fifteen dashboards. The indicators used, such as test results, time spent on various tasks, the frequency of use vis-à-vis language-learning activities and resources, and the quantity of language-learning discussions, were not shown to be specific to language learning and could have been used with any discipline. So while more recent forms of learning analytics are moving away from purely quantitative measures and toward a recognition of measuring social learning, it is still not clear which indicators can be visualized to provide meaningful knowledge of language-learning processes.

In the specific case of language learning, complex algorithms will be needed because the process of SLA cannot be assumed to be linear (Larsen-Freeman 1997). Kerr (2015) argues that the emergence of language proficiency scales such as the Cambridge English Scale and the Pearson Global Scale of English are based on language knowledge rather than actual competence. Similarly, the development of adaptive learning in online platforms is connected with learning vocabulary and grammar items, particularly with lower-level learners where information about frequency of usage is more relevant than at the more advanced stages. At the moment, developments within adaptive learning are more suited to subjects such as mathematics, and English-language teaching has yet to see significant interest. As a result, the use of the platforms mentioned above (i.e. Rosetta Stone and Duolingo) relies more on individualization than on differentiation or personalization in the language-learning context.

While Kerr (2015) was interested in small-scale online environments, it is clear that the emergence of MOOCs has given a new emphasis to analytics, primarily as a response aimed at understanding drop-out rates, as well as the uneven participation of large, international student cohorts. Moving from an initial stage focused heavily on quantitative analysis, MOOCs have more recently prompted research on social interaction. CALL researchers seeking to develop a research agenda in this field can learn a great deal from the use of social network theory and visualization techniques evident in Coffrin et al.'s (2014) work, as well as from the importance of different types of learner profiles identified by Dyckhoff et al. (2012).

As CALL research begins to pay more attention to the use of analytics and the types of indicators that will be necessary to understand language-learning processes, the role of theory will become increasingly important (Chapelle 2001). Link & Li's (2015) contribution is important here, as they provide a framework that integrates three theoretical approaches: interactionist, skills acquisition, and complexity theory (see Figure 13.3).

Link & Li also highlight a number of challenges associated with incorporating learning analytics, indicating that the transition may be slow. Such challenges include resistance from instructors who fear technology may replace them, and those who reject online feedback and assessment and who need further training

<i>Fields of inquiry</i>	<i>Example theoretical approach</i>	<i>Focus of theory</i>	<i>Example data points</i>
Psycholinguistics	Interactionist	Language acquisition is facilitated through learners' engagement in meaningful interactions and noticing during meaning-oriented tasks	Social network diagrams Communication activity in forums Eye-tracking data
General human learning	Skill acquisition	Language as a skill is acquired through practice and a process of turning declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge	Performance data on exercises/assessment Time spent on the system Document and tool use Learner corpus data
Language in social context	Complexity theory	The process of language development is complex, self-organizing, dynamic, open, and adaptive	Error analysis reports Keystroke logging
Language in social context	Language socialization	The evolution of learner's identities as a part of community of practice	Social network diagrams Communication activities in forum posts Learner interest and preference Communications with instructor/peers

FIGURE 13.3 The role of theory in language-learning analytics (adapted from Link & Li 2015: 375–6)

(Ali et al. 2013). Ethics, security, and privacy vis-à-vis the collected data remain a significant concern, particularly when data is viewed as capable of predicting student performance. The ethical challenges need to be set within the wider context of a theoretically informed approach, according to Link & Li (2015), and their adaptation of Chapelle's (2001) model of task and CALL-based activities provides a potential path for considering key pedagogical questions such as: What kinds of data can be collected on language learners? Who should have access to the data? Who should benefit? (See Figure 13.4.)

This framework shows how the category of 'Language learning potential' allows analytics to collect data to understand and measure the 'quality of interaction and practice' (Link & Lee 2015: 380). 'Learner fit' leads to questions about how analytics can be used to understand individual learner development. 'Meaning focus' questions the ways analytics can be used to evaluate attention to

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Theory</i>	<i>General research questions</i>
Language-learning potential	The extent to which LA can demonstrate (opportunities for) focus on form	Interactionist approach Skill acquisition theory	Do the analytics capture and present sufficient data for understanding learners' focus on form? What evidence do the analytics provide that suggests the learner has acquired targeted forms?
Learner fit	The extent to which LA can provide evidence of learners' engagement with language under appropriate conditions given specific learner characteristics	Complexity theory	Is an understanding of individual learners' language development evident from the analytics? What evidence do the analytics provide that suggests the target linguistic forms are at an appropriate level of difficulty for learners?
Meaning fit	The extent to which LA can demonstrate learners' attention to the meaning of the language	All theories except skill acquisition theory	Do the analytics provide data directed primarily towards learners' attention to meaning of the language? What evidence do the analytics provide that suggests that learners' construction of linguistic meaning aids language learning?
Authenticity	The degree of correspondence in LA data collection and analysis between target language activities and tasks beyond the classroom	Language socialization	Do the analytics demonstrate a correspondence between target language activities and tasks beyond the classroom? What evidence do the analytics provide that suggests learners see the connection between classroom activities and outside tasks?
Positive impact	The positive effects of LA use on stakeholders	Language socialization	Will users have a positive experience with using LA?
Practicality	The adequacy of resources to support use of LA in language classrooms	n.a.	What kind of available LA or predictive models may fit the pedagogical goals of CALL? Are there any policies in place or measures taken to ensure transparency in data collection, management, analysis, and storage? Is there adequate support to help users of LA utilize the tool in an effective way? Are the data from the LA tool sufficient to allow for the management and prediction of student success?

FIGURE 13.4 Criteria for researching the use of learning analytics in online language learning (adapted from Link & Li 2015: 379–80)

meaning. ‘Authenticity’ measures the fit between in-class and outside activities. ‘Positive impact’ relates to the extent analytics can be used in language research. The final category, ‘Practicality’, focuses on the type of support required by instructors, learners, and administrators and explores the adequacy of the resources needed to undertake learning analytics in the CALL context. One weakness in this approach is that the indicators are exclusively focused on instructors rather than on students. A more developed model would include variables that students perceive to be useful in their learning engagement, and more research is needed in this area.

Turning to the first large-scale project on learning analytics and online language learning, Link & Li’s theoretical framework provides a useful starting point to consider the role of dashboards for language learners and instructors.

Case study: the VITAL project

VITAL (Visualization Tools and Analytics to Monitor Online Language Learning and Teaching) is a two-year Erasmus+ project (2015–17) funded by the European Commission. The project aims to reposition the debate about analytics in language education by focusing on its pedagogical potential for both instructors and students, thus moving away from the current emphasis on using analytics merely to administer learning. Improving the quality of language learner engagement is therefore a significant component. Unlike previous research in the field, which relied on students to report on their own progress, VITAL draws on the opportunities afforded by new forms of online learning to trace students’ actual online activities.

Based on these ‘digital traces’ it aims to identify and explore the patterns of engagement and interaction that can help language instructors and students understand their own learning characteristics and to visualize them in an easily accessible format. Dealing exclusively with learning analytics in higher education in the European Union, the project is supported by three universities (Hasselt University in Belgium as project coordinator, the University of Central Lancashire in the UK, and the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands) and a technical partner (HT2, based in the UK). At the University of Central Lancashire, VITAL focuses on two different types of online language courses on Blackboard: an MA TESOL degree and a BA degree programme in International Business Communication.

The project aims to analyse the processes of autonomous learning in these different courses through the use of process-mining algorithms to explore the difference between the course outline, or intended usage of the activities, and what the language students actually do when online. Through the creation of dashboards for students, it aims to provide the learners with important information to enable them to understand the key variables in their language-learning processes, highlighting in particular the indicators of success and failure that may result from the analysis of learning patterns.

Unlike existing learning analytics projects, VITAL aims to use the new xAPI specification to aid the acquisition of more fine-grained data arising from learner activities. Formerly known as Tin Can API Experience, xAPI is a new standard for analytics that enables learning activities to be recorded as activity statements consisting of <subject> <verb> <object> in which the activity of the student or actor always takes place within a context. For example, xAPI can be used to produce a recipe or instructional code to collect data between two points in time: *learner A viewed document B*. This data is then sent to a data warehouse or Learning Record Store (LRS). Based on the interoperability integral to xAPI, from there the data can be disseminated across a variety of reporting and visualization tools and compatible devices such as tablets and smartphones.

VITAL is divided into three main phases. In the first stage a needs analysis was conducted with practitioners and students. Following this, a pilot phase established the tracking procedures using the xAPI specification and applied them to each course design selected for the project. This allowed researchers to explore how the language learners use the e-learning resources, what pathways were chosen, and which areas of the site were used, with which results and how frequently. Following the analysis of the pilot data and data collection procedures, a main study lasting for at least one semester will be conducted in late 2016. In the final phase of the project, process-mining techniques will be used to aid data analysis to understand the potential patterns in learner interaction.

One of the key deliverables of VITAL relates to the ethical and legal aspects of data collection from the language learners, and is based on a UK national policy document on the Ethical Code of Practice for Learning Analytics (JISC 2015) in order to mitigate any potential risks to learners. It emphasizes data ownership, consent, transparency, privacy, validity, access, action, minimizing adverse impact, stewardship of data, and security. The data collection is based on consent from students and does not affect their assessment. Moreover, the project's ethical framework puts students in control of their own data, emphasizing that it will be used only for the intention of enhancing their learning.

Methodology

During the first phase of VITAL a needs analysis was conducted at each of the three partner universities. Only the needs analysis conducted with participants from the University of Central Lancashire in the UK between March and May 2016 will be the focus of the analysis presented in this chapter.

The needs analysis included a questionnaire with instructors and educational staff and focus groups with students. The questionnaire for instructors and educational staff combined eleven open and closed questions and, as Brown (2011) suggests, was the most appropriate method for exploratory research of the type required for learning analytics. The open responses provided the opportunity for stakeholders to give their views on the new area of emerging uses of learning analytics, in which the agenda has not yet formed. Participants ($m = 54\%$; $f = 46\%$) were aged between

25 and 64 years and drawn from a range of roles including researcher, senior manager, course designer, teacher trainee, teacher, and research student. Experience ranged from 2 to 20 years in higher education with 44 participants from the UK, 1 from France, 1 from Nigeria, 1 from Saudi Arabia, and 1 from Cyprus.

Building on the questionnaire, focus groups with students were also conducted in order to understand their perspectives on the potential of learning analytics (Heigham & Croker 2009). The focus groups added a qualitative dimension which, as Steel & Levy (2013: 319) suggest, can help to close the gap that exists 'between what students are actually doing and where research directions in CALL are taking us'. Two focus groups lasting between 30 and 80 minutes were held with a total of eight students. Volunteers were selected from an online MA in TESOL and final-year undergraduate students from a BA in Intercultural Business Communication; they came from Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, Greece, and Slovakia. The students ($m = 62\%$; $f = 38\%$) were aged between 20 and 55 and had English-language proficiency ranging from 6.0 to 8.0 on IELTS.

Findings and discussion

Data from the questionnaire indicated that 84% of instructors and educational staff were familiar with online applications and tools in their teaching and research context, but only 40.8% had used analytics applications. They were familiar with the use of dashboards to provide performance data on health and sports activities, and as a result they could see the potential of using them to provide a clear visualization of their online learner interactions. Instructors and staff who were familiar with learning analytics experienced it mostly through the integrated tracking function in Blackboard as well as through other applications that generated statistics about student participation. Only 35% of those who had experience of using learning analytics said that they had been positive about their experience of analytics to date.

This data confirmed the finding of Verbert et al.'s (2013) study that more research is required on teachers and learners in relation to the specific indicators that can be used to visualize the language-learning process. Given the large amount of information in the Blackboard dashboard, the focus group students indicated that customization of student-facing dashboards was important, and that they would like the option of being able to view or turn it off as and when they deemed necessary. Some of the interviewed MA students identified the importance of dashboard indicators showing information such as their own grades and attendance information as well as a comparison of their activities as a 'way of measuring progress' over a sustained period of time to show if they were 'headed in the right or the wrong direction'. One MA student suggested, for example, that the dashboard could help language students by visualizing their formative progress across the duration of their module. Nevertheless, it was also a concern that if used in this way the dashboard might not be an accurate reflection of their out-of-class or self-directed engagement with language resources. This confirms

Link & Li's (2015) adaptation of Chapelle's (2001) model of CALL-based activities, underlining the specific need to investigate questions targeting language learners such as: What kinds of data can be collected? Who should have access to the data? Who should benefit?

Chinese undergraduate students commented that they would like to see the average grades of the group they belonged to, as this was a typical feature of student life in their own country. This was the minority view, however, and other students argued that being able to see this information on a day-to-day basis might increase anxiety and pressure to achieve group benchmarks rather than compete against themselves and their own personal targets. Both focus groups suggested that dashboards should have a system for creating alerts and recommendations for further learning. Above all, the dashboards should have a range of functionality, and each language learner should have the opportunity to customise and personalize individual dashboards.

When discussing the potentially negative effects of learning analytics, both MA and undergraduate students identified some concerns about the partial nature of all quantitative data about their online learning, and the need to avoid overemphasizing its value. Unless this partial effect is understood and acknowledged, it could lead to false actions by a teacher and to a demotivational effect on the learner. Being the subject of too much data capture and surveillance was another potential concern raised; reflection is a key aspect of learning, and sufficient time outside of a zone in which all activity is quantified was also deemed necessary and healthy for learning and creativity.

The instructors and educational staff in the study also viewed dashboards as potentially valuable, with 86.4% agreeing that the ability of dashboards to visualize information could be beneficial for their students. Comments by six different staff supported this viewpoint:

I would be able to target specific students with additional support.

Such a dashboard would give insights into [the] online learning experience.

I think it would be very useful to know the way my students learn, so I can improve the materials and the interaction I have with my students.

You can build a profile of each student to help understand them better in terms of their needs and their motivations.

A dashboard would provide a single-glance summary which could be very useful given that usage reports can be quite complex to interpret.

It would help to know the students and their learning styles, strengths and weaknesses better.

These comments support the argument that targeting weaker students and gaining insights into different learning styles were perceived advantages of analytics. For the instructors and educational staff, the top five highest-ranking

indicators of learning were activity type accessed (89.4%), students' scores per activity (87.2%), time spent online (80.9%), formative assessment (78.7%), and level of interaction (78.7%). One instructor commented:

I would like to see a map of learner-to-learner interaction—showing how they have interacted with each other, how many times; maybe it could be in a matrix table with student names along the top and down one side with the shared box indicated the number of interactions—or presented visually as a kind of neural map with more intense lines between students for more interactions.

The instructors and staff also perceived dashboards as a potential source of learner motivation and agency: 'This would enable learners to take greater ownership of their online learning.' On the other hand, one instructor argued that displaying individual student achievement against the average in the group raised concerns and could be 'demotivating'. This view was countered by one of the MA students, who argued that students should have the choice of using this feature:

one thing that I miss at the moment is progress against the rest of the group, because I don't know whether I'm doing normal or just mediocre, for example on the discussion boards . . . you get the results . . . 65% or 75% or something but you don't actually know [if you are in] . . . the top quarter [or] lower quarter and . . . know where you need to go.

How and where to access dashboard information was also the subject of student discussion. The focus group with undergraduate students concluded that they should be integrated into the Blackboard VLE rather than offered as a 24/7 mobile application and accessible anytime, anywhere. The opinions of the MA students were divided on this feature. One student wanted to be able to access a dashboard on a range of mobile devices (tablet, phone, laptop); on the other hand, three students suggested that it should be located only on the VLE in order to avoid creating anxiety, overdependence, or becoming a distraction.

While analytics applications are increasingly based on predicting students' future behaviour based on statistical models, some of the MA students thought this might be too deterministic and lead to partial or false evaluations of their potential:

I don't know to what extent we can make predictions regarding learning . . . so I'm not quite sure how useful that would be because it's not a linear progress that we make . . . we discover something amazing so we make great progress at one point, things go a little more smoothly afterwards, I'm not quite sure how useful that would be.

I find predictions are very, very dangerous, because they restrict motivation, it also depends on the environment that somebody's learning in if someone says you can't do it, you don't strive.

The MA students also challenged the deterministic nature of analytics, pointing out that collecting data only from a VLE gives a limited and incomplete picture of engagement:

Relying on statistical analysis can be demotivating, the statistics there are very black and white and that would definitely be a problem and could also build up a barrier between the teacher and the pupil.

Instructors and educational staff likewise noted that carefully interpreting the data and developing appropriate strategies were integral and non-negotiable elements of using learning analytics.

When used strategically and in a non-deterministic fashion, analytics were perceived by students as having potential to improve or at least contribute to improving more targeted feedback from instructors. One MA student indicated that a benefit could be controlling the amount of input or content that students receive:

[dashboards seem] like a better alternative than a final exam at the end, so you can maintain your progress throughout the course with a dashboard . . . [they] would incorporate different things that you have to do for the course, maybe for English teaching for example they'd have to do some reading, some listening, some speaking, maybe have their recordings on there . . . maintaining a progress portfolio of their progress and how it works.

Dashboard data may also help to enable language learners to improve revision techniques: 'you teach something today and then you like to revise the same material three months later, what were the results then and what are they now, and am I really getting better and why.' Comparison of their results with last year's class was also suggested as a potential answer, but this was a feature that students wanted to be able to control individually and hide if necessary.

These results appear to confirm Link & Li's (2015) research in which analytics may provide evidence for personalizing learning, redesigning syllabi and courses, and developing new strategies for effective feedback. In identifying the potential value of dashboards, the questionnaire and focus group data also emphasized the importance of using theory as a guiding principle (e.g. Interactionist, Skill acquisition, Complexity theory, Language socialization) in order to shape the types of data that can be collected and visualized (Link & Li 2015). While earlier forms of LA focused on dashboards that merely logged time on task as suggested by Youngs et al.'s (2015) questions (e.g. How much time do students spend on lessons, sections of lessons, exercises for lessons?), more work needs to be done to explore how dashboards can visualize the evolution of learners' identities, and how language acquisition is facilitated online through learners' engagement in meaningful interactions (Link & Li 2015).

Limitations and future directions

Some of the key issues mentioned by both instructors, educational staff, and students as limitations included issues of data overload, privacy, engagement with technology, distancing students from teachers, the impact on motivation, the potential for manipulating data, and the adverse effects of creating competition between students.

Digital footprints of language-learning activity online (and, in the future, combinations of on- and offline activity) may provide language students, instructors and course designers with important information about performance and behaviour that up until now they have only been able to infer rather than determine in any concrete way. While ethical, security, and privacy issues are always near the forefront of these new developments, researchers need to accept that the analysis of behavioural data cannot prove cause-effect relationships but can be used to highlight correlations that may help to understand learning. Moving beyond first-generation learning analytics, which aimed to identify students at risk of dropping out and failure, research in the second generation is turning towards algorithms that attempt to predict language-learner behaviour and to understand online social interaction and collaboration. In order to overcome the technical and pedagogical challenges involved in this new phase, researchers in language learning and learning analytics will need to collaborate in cross-functional teams and, above all, involve students in the process of designing, measuring, and analysing data about their own strategies for engagement.

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PART IV

Teachers

Education and professional development



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14

GOING ONLINE

Affordances and limitations for teachers and teacher educators

Denise E. Murray and MaryAnn Christison

Introduction

In the past decade there has been an increased interest in and use of online education at all levels—primary, secondary, and tertiary (NEA n.d.; Moore 2005; OECD 2005), and in all disciplines, including second language teaching and learning (Healey et al. 2011; Murray 2013; Reinders & White 2011; Rubio & Thoms 2013; Thomas & Reinders 2010). Educators are also turning to technology to deliver professional development and teacher education (Collis & Jung 2003), and this option has been especially popular for English language teachers (England 2012; Hubbard 2008; Murray 2013) given the current demographics; namely, that there are insufficient numbers of qualified English teachers worldwide to satisfy the growing number of individuals who wish to learn English. In addition, the uses of computer-based technology vary, from incidental use to entirely online delivery.

Online education has undergone exponential growth over the past decade. For example, in US higher education, 6.7 million students were taking at least one course online in 2012, the year of data collection in Allen & Seaman (2013). These 6.7 million students represent 33% of enrolled students, compared with 11.7% in 2003. Similar trends can be seen in online teacher education, including second language teacher education (England 2012; Hubbard 2008; Murray 2013). Over this decade, both the technology and pedagogy have changed, with the most recent manifestations being mobile assisted learning and MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses). The needs of learners and the availability of resources in different contexts have also led to different configurations of delivery, from totally online to occasional use for some activities.

In online language teacher education (OLTE), both the instructors and the students are teachers (or possibly teachers in preparation or pre-service teachers).

Therefore, we need to clarify the use of terms. We will use the term ‘teacher educator’ to refer to the instructors in the OLTE courses or professional development (PD) offerings. We will use the term ‘teacher student’ to refer to all types of students in the OLTE courses (i.e., both pre-service and in-service teachers), while the students they teach (or will teach) (i.e. language learners) we refer to as ‘students’.

There are some important benefits for individuals who choose OLTE. A meta-analysis conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2010) on studies of online education found that students performed modestly better in courses with some online component. In contrast, there are also limitations. For example, a 2013 study of community college students enrolled in online classes found the students were more likely to withdraw from online courses, and to score lower in these courses if they did complete them, and that those who began college with online courses were less likely to persist and complete their degrees (Jaggars, Edgecombe, & Stacey 2013). Further, developmental students are particularly challenged by online courses. Public perceptions related to online teaching are mixed, with US respondents to a 2013 Gallup Poll believing online courses provide a wide range of curricular options and value for money, but have less rigorous testing/grading, fewer qualified instructors and less credibility with employers (Saad, Busteed, & Ogisi 2013). Despite these limitations, OLTE continues to gain popularity.

Given the relative novelty of online delivery, as well as the dearth of extensive research in OLTE, we will use data from a variety of delivery options and research studies to explore further the affordances and limitations of OLTE in this chapter. We will examine OLTE through the lens of five themes that need to be considered in practice, policy, and research—the range of delivery options, the options for classifying and conceptualizing online learning, the roles of teacher educators and teacher students, the development of virtual communities of practice, and ensuring quality in OLTE.

Situating OLTE

Computer technology has been used for language teaching for almost two decades (see Davies, Otto, & Rüschoff 2013; Dudeney & Hockly 2012 for brief histories of CALL). The agreed-upon overarching term is CALL (computer-assisted language learning), with MALL (mobile-assisted language learning) the most recent subset of CALL. While in some ways OLTE has much in common with CALL, it may be more useful and more accurate to situate OLTE within the framework of distance learning (DL), as Murray (2013) argued. DL developed to provide education to students who could not travel to a bricks-and-mortar institution to study. DL was first offered as paper-and-pen via mail. It then developed to using taped materials. Next was added video or TV. All of these modes of delivery still exist, depending on the resources of a particular country or region.

Perhaps the most important affordance of OLTE is the ‘any time, any place’ possibility for learning, so it is especially useful for DL students who are unable to

attend bricks-and-mortar institutions, either because of the remoteness of where they live (see e.g. Banegas & Busleiman 2014) or because of scheduling difficulties, such as work or family commitments. If we consider OLTE as having its roots in DL, we find that adding online support to traditional distance learning models provides a definite benefit for DL students. For example, a study in Pakistan found that the online support in distance education enhanced students' performance in terms of access, interaction, and cost (Farooq, Al Asmari, & Javid 2012). Institutions offer and students study in online programmes most often because of time and distance constraints. This position is confirmed by Murray & Christison (2017). In their study on OLTE, they found that 60% of the 304 participants in OLTE courses stated that they chose an OLTE option because they liked 'the flexibility of an online course' in terms of managing their time, and 42% indicated that they chose OLTE because they could not work and attend face-to-face (f2f) courses when they were scheduled. The position concerning the importance of time and distance constraints as a factor in choosing OLTE courses is also supported by a recent volume on teacher education via distance (Robinson & Latchem 2003) and by the online journal, *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning (IRRODL)*.

Robinson and Latchem (2003), drawing on experiences from around the world, demonstrate how DL can facilitate initial teacher training, continuing professional development, training of school leaders, training for those who provide non-formal education and communities of practice for the profession. *IRRODL's* contributions are increasingly about 'virtual' environments for DL. This DL perspective informs much of our discussion below.

A further theoretical conundrum for situating OLTE is illustrated by the history of MOOCs and how this history impacts OLTE. The first MOOCs cited as the origins of the model were George Siemens's 2008 course, 'Connectivism & Connected Knowledge', and Sebastian Thrun's 2011 course, 'Introduction to Artificial Intelligence'. Their instantiations were actually based on two entirely different models. The former has its roots in DL and research. This 'learning model is borne from an idea that network connectivity, and all of the connections humans and computers can make both with each other as well as themselves, is essential for learning in the modern digital age' (Moe 2015). In this model, learners are co-creators of content and activities, with the instructor's content acting as a springboard for new interactions and knowledge creation in a truly open environment.

In contrast, Thrun's model is grounded in artificial intelligence, with an economic goal of delivering expert content to as wide an audience as possible with as little cost as possible, and with content embedded in 'LMS-protected hubs' (Moe 2014). In other words, these two models represent the two ever-present conflicts over education: whether education is for the development of thought and reason to enrich both the individual and their community, or whether it is for improving recall and skills learning. While we have used the history of MOOCs to illustrate these conflicting models, they are ever-present in much of

the discussion about the digital classroom of the future. These conflicting models also inform our discussion below. However, before we continue with our discussion, we need to understand what exactly we mean by OLTE.

Range of delivery options for OLTE

OLTE delivery varies both in terms of the types of technologies used and the percentage of instruction and learning taking place online. The Sloan Consortium, which is now the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) (Allen & Seaman 2013), has long divided online learning by percentage of content that is delivered online as the basis for their annual reports. They identify four categories: traditional, in which no content is delivered online; web-facilitated, where online constitutes 1–29% of content, the remainder face-to-face; blended/hybrid, where 30–79% is delivered online with reduced numbers of face-to-face meetings; and online, where 80% or more is online and typically there are no face-to-face meetings. The OLC classification is similar to the typology developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD's) 2005 study of e-learning in tertiary education in thirteen countries: none or trivial, web-supplemented, web-dependent, mixed-mode, and fully online (OECD 2005: 11–12). Within each of these classifications the online technologies are configured in many different ways in terms of content, activities, and the sequencing and timing of instructional components.

Complicating our ability to understand delivery options is the fact that international statistics on online learning in general and on teacher education in particular are outdated (e.g. OECD 2005) and/or region- or nation-specific (OECD 2004).

Classifying and conceptualizing online learning

Despite the usefulness of considering the percentage of instruction delivered online as a method for discussing delivery types, other criteria also need to be considered: Is the learning synchronous or asynchronous? Is it a MOOC? Is it a flipped course? Does the course involve videoconferencing? Is there a learning management system (LMS) for course delivery? Is social media being used?

Synchronous vs. asynchronous learning

The distinction between synchronous and asynchronous online learning options has long been present in the use of computers in education. The term 'online' once meant connected to your computer, but synchronous and asynchronous learning now refer only to web-connected learning environments.

Synchronous delivery/online learning options allow students and instructors to be online at the same time and communicate in real time; the asynchronous option does not allow for real-time communication. Examples of synchronous

online technology continue to expand, and the list includes videoconferencing, webcasts, instant messaging, telephone conferences, interactive learning models, virtual worlds, and chatrooms. The most common example of an asynchronous tool is the traditional discussion board, which allows learners to see one another's posts and respond but not in real time. Asynchronous learning is by far the most common (Meloni 2010); however, there are unique benefits and limitations for each delivery/learning type, and many studies have been conducted to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of each in CALL and general teacher education (Hastie et al. 2010).

In OLTE, Gakonga (2012), for example, found that the asynchronous mode allowed teacher educators to better organize, prepare, and deliver their answers and ask questions. In addition, teacher students were able to actively participate in their own learning according to their own time constraints, thereby allowing them more time for reflection, collaboration, and interaction with other teacher students. Asynchronous learning tools can become personalized learning tools so that teacher students can develop more in-depth understanding of content (Bonk & Zhang 2006). Other researchers have found that OLTE actually places greater time demands on teacher educators (see e.g. Gabriel 2004). Many of the teacher educators who reported in the Murray (2013) study had either not chosen or had abandoned synchronous modes because of the time zone differences among their teacher students. An exception was Anaheim University (Nunan 2013), which specifically held an hour's synchronous online class with the teacher educator, followed by a half-hour discussion session moderated by a teacher student without the teacher educator. The University of Southern California (Filback & Chun 2013), Aston University (Copland 2013), California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) (Ciancio & Diaz-Rico 2013), the Instituto Guatemalteco Americano (IGA) (Gomez 2013), Shenandoah University (England 2013), and York University (Hughes 2013) used combinations of Skype and/or instant messaging (IM). Monterey Institute for International Studies (Bailey 2013) and Massey University (Skyrme 2013) used Adobe Comment and Eluminate for real time interaction.

Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs)

MOOCs have the potential for changing the landscape of OLTE in terms of cost and access to quality courses. Institutions of higher education in the US, such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Stanford, Harvard, and the University of California Berkeley, are all offering free MOOCs. As mentioned previously, one of the first MOOCs taught at Stanford by Sebastian Thrun attracted almost 100,000 students. Although most MOOCs are not as large as Thrun's MOOC on artificial intelligence, still the cost of adding an additional student to a course with several thousand students is negligible. The possible affordance for MOOCs in OLTE is an intriguing one, given the shortage of qualified English language teachers worldwide who could benefit from well-designed and delivered

MOOCs that were free or low-cost. It is also true that MOOCs are driven by economics. Carey (2012) believes that accredited colleges will eventually accept MOOCs for transfer credit. Because colleges accept transfer credit from unknown colleges for classes taught by unknown professors, it would seem possible to justify accepting transfer credit for MOOCs, which would be designed and taught by leading experts from major universities, thereby leveraging both the economic value and the quality of instruction for teacher students in OLTE MOOCs.

However, many writers have questioned the assumption and the claim made by the major providers (i.e. Coursera, edX, and Udacity) that MOOCs automatically democratize education. A recent study claims that MOOCs are in fact creating a new type of haves and have-nots for students, faculty, departments, and institutions (McMorran 2013). McMorran notes that most MOOCs are in science, technology, mathematics, and engineering, courses that lend themselves well to visuals and online content. These disciplines were designed using original business models. For these fields, the video lecture can be used for several years; in other fast-moving fields, the course has to be redesigned every year. Additionally, many disciplines have to face almost insurmountable issues around copyright, especially the humanities and social sciences. Currently there are no OLTE courses listed on the three websites (i.e. the websites for Coursera, edX or Udacity). The caveats about MOOCs are even more essential for OLTE because it is incumbent on instructors to model the pedagogical practices about which they are instructing—communities of practice, interaction, collaboration, and appropriate and equitable assessment.

Flipped learning

Advances in online technologies and access to broadband have allowed teacher educators to explore different types of organizational frameworks online for content and activities, such as flipped learning, which has grown in popularity. ‘Flipped learning’ is a pedagogical model in which the typical lecture and the homework elements are completed prior to the f2f meetings, so that the group learning space can be transformed into an interactive learning environment where the teacher educator guides the teacher students as they apply key concepts and engage interactively in discussions and exercises during class time. The key content prior to the f2f meeting is most often delivered via technology (e.g. using a video-recorded lecture), and the f2f classroom is used by the teacher educator to explore, discuss, and apply the course content to real-life problems, and to the process of problem-solving.

Despite the term’s widespread use, Abeysekera and Dawson (2015) found little common understanding of what a flipped classroom actually is, and Murray & Christison (2017) found that participants had little experience with the model. Little research has thus far been conducted to determine whether flipped instruction actually results in improved learning outcomes. However, it has become popular because it involves active learning, that is, when ‘an instructor stops

lecturing and students work on a question or task designed to help them understand a concept' (Andrews et al. 2011: 394). Although active learning has been found to improve learning (Andrews et al. 2011), Abeysekera and Dawson (2015) found little evidence to support the effectiveness of flipped learning. Nevertheless, it has been received enthusiastically in educational circles (see Hamdan et al. 2013) and in OLTE. It is one example of how online technologies might also affect the choices that teacher educators make relative to the organization of content and activities in OLTE, and how instructional choices affect teaching and learning.

Video conferencing

A video conference is a real-time conference or meeting between and/or among people in separate physical locations, using two-way video and audio transmissions. Video conferencing is making significant inroads in education (and in OLTE) and has evolved rapidly in recent years. The introduction of telecommunication services in the late 1990s, public access to relatively low cost broadband, innovations in computer processing, and the use of video compression techniques have made video conferencing an affordable and attractive option for synchronous online courses. At the simplest level, video conferencing can be used in OLTE courses for the transmission of static images or text, and at the most sophisticated level it can include video through the use of webcams, audio, and screen sharing, which allows teacher educators to present lectures in real time with slides and other visual materials much the same as would be possible in a f2f classroom (see e.g. Nunan 2013). Video conferencing is beneficial for teacher students because it provides them with opportunities to ask questions during the lecture using the audio or messaging features. The webcam feature allows teacher students to see real-time images of their teacher educator and their peers. In online classroom environments, opportunities for interaction and collaboration have been identified as important factors that contribute to positive learning outcomes (Bonk & Zhang 2006). Inherent in the notion of video conferencing is a view of learning that clearly supports the educational model expressed by Moe (2015), in which connections and connectivity are essential components of learning.

Learning management systems

The advent of learning management systems (LMS) has provided affordances for teacher educators for the conceptualization of course design and learning options. We use LMS as a ubiquitous term to refer to a software application that is used for the creation, storage, and management of course content and for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, and delivery of OLTE. The term 'course management system' (CMS) has also been used in the literature to refer to software applications that are primarily concerned with the former. Open-source LMSs, such as Canvas and Moodle, and proprietary ones, such as Blackboard and Google Scholar, have contributed to the transformation of OLTE, allowing

teacher educators much more flexibility in conceptualizing the creation, delivery, and management of course content. The teacher educators who reported on their OLTE programmes in Murray's 2013 study used a variety of LMSs, including ones specifically designed for their institution. Seven indicated using Blackboard, seven reported using Moodle, one of which was a proprietary version, while one institution had its own proprietary LMS.

Within most LMSs, there are features that allow for synchronous learning, such as chatrooms and messaging, and asynchronous communication, such as forums and discussion boards. In addition, there are options for using content pages or docs to which multiple persons can contribute. An LMS also has numerous options available for fostering collaboration and promoting reflection and independent learning. Through the LMS, teacher educators can track teacher students' progress, reconfigure them into different groups for different assignments, and access course analytics to determine such things as who is participating and how often. However, it should be noted that an LMS can also be used to achieve an economic goal by delivering content to a wide audience with as little cost as possible. It is critical for teacher educators to choose an LMS consistent with their pedagogical philosophy. An LMS that views education as courses and content, for example, will facilitate cognitive behaviourist pedagogies at the expense of constructivist or connectivist ones (Anderson & Dron 2011).

Social media

Social-media technologies are often referred to as Web 2.0, and they encompass many different web-related communication technologies, such as blogs, wikis, virtual worlds, and social networking, such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Friedman & Friedman (2008) identified five overlapping characteristics of social media technology that can assist us in clarifying the potential affordances (and limitations) of social media for OLTE: communication, collaboration, community, creativity, and convergence. An important feature of social networking sites is their usefulness in fostering communication among groups of people, such as among teacher students and between the teacher educator and teacher students. Even blogging, which seems like an individual activity, has an important communicative feature, as bloggers frequently cite other bloggers and repost comments and ideas. Social media technologies all have scalable collaborative features, with wikis residing at the top (Tapscott & Williams 2006).

Through social media, new communities develop online as groups of individuals interact with one another for the purposes of accomplishing shared goals. Because digitization simplifies editing, teacher educators and teacher students in OLTE are not likely to experience the limits of the medium so readily. Consequently, social media may promote creativity among its users in ways that other activities cannot.

The convergence of technology on the Internet through digitization has also created a convergence in terms of the roles that individuals assume (e.g. user and

creator), thereby allowing both instructors and students in online courses the flexibility to see themselves assuming multiple roles (Craig et al. 2008; Morris, Xu, & Finnegan 2005). In OLTE courses, teacher students must see themselves not only in terms of their own development as teachers and users of new online technologies but also as teachers of their own learners. Several of the institutions that reported in Murray's (2013) study used social media for recruitment, but none used it for instruction, even though its use in CALL is well documented, as in TIRF's MALL study (TIRF 2013). However, Murray's study also noted that teacher educators often turn off the Facebook function so that students are not distracted.

Roles of teacher educators and teacher students

Although teaching online and teaching f2f are both teaching endeavours, they are different in many ways, and therefore require different skill sets for teachers. When online technologies are used to support teaching and learning, the roles for teachers are likely to change. Goodyear et al. (2011) suggest eight possible roles for teachers: content facilitator, technology expert, course designer, manager/administrator, process facilitator, adviser, assessor, and researcher. Depending on teachers' own personal views or preferred models of teaching, a few to almost all of these roles may already be part of a teacher's instructional repertoire for f2f classrooms, although the nature of the role may change online. For example, facilitating learning processes in f2f environments may be quite different from facilitating learning processes online, especially when using asynchronous features. In addition, depending on the online technologies available to teacher educators, the roles may vary in their importance for different courses.

The role of technology expert is one role that provides the greatest challenges for teacher educators who are new to working with a particular online technology or are new to OLTE in general. Murray & Christison (2017) found that 21% of 304 participants involved in OLTE considered their teachers' expertise relative to the technology as 'very helpful', 24% 'helpful', 20% 'reasonable', and 35% 'not helpful'. These data suggest that while some of the teacher educators for the teacher students in this study (35%) were challenged by the use of the online technologies, a greater percentage (65%) were doing a reasonable job of answering questions and mentoring teacher students. Murray's (2013) contributors at institutions where technology support was readily available also noted that they referred most technology questions to on-campus experts.

The roles assumed by teacher students in OLTE also change with the introduction of online technologies. Palloff & Pratt (2003) identify five key features of 'good' online learners. They are open, flexible, honest, responsible, and collaborative. In online learning environments, students must actively participate in their own learning, take opportunities to interact with their peers, provide feedback to others, reflect on their own learning, and manage their learning time. In OLTE courses, teacher students who lack openness to new ideas or ways of

learning and are inflexible, irresponsible, reflexive (rather than reflective), and non-collaborative will struggle in OLTE. One important role of a teacher educator in OLTE courses is to help teacher students develop positive identities about themselves as online learners or learners who embrace online technologies as important tools for learning (Khalsa 2012).

Communities of practice

English language teacher education and research has shown the importance of developing communities of practice (CoP), the concept that learning takes place through the sharing of purposeful, patterned activity (Lave & Wenger 1991). CoPs are 'groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis' (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder 2002: 4), and they have three essential elements: a domain of knowledge, a community of people, and shared practice (Wenger 1998). The vital issue in OLTE is how to establish virtual communities. In traditional, f2f teacher education programmes teachers are able to create CoPs as they develop a domain of knowledge and a shared understanding of TESOL practice through their collective experiences and f2f interactions. But how to create a virtual CoP that engages all teacher students, regardless of context, is an enormous challenge, and must involve all English language teaching professionals engaged in online education (Khalsa 2012; Plastina n.d.).

OLTE research has shown that synchronous and asynchronous tools facilitate interactive learning. Bulletin boards, for example, 'provide an interactive venue where new and future teachers can reflect, evaluate, solve problems or simply exchange ideas' (Arnold & Ducate 2006: 42). Data from Murray's 2013 study indicate that creating a community of professionals was a key goal and outcome of these OLTE courses, achieved through a variety of tools and tasks, including synchronous and asynchronous tools, especially bulletin boards. Some used web conferencing. Additionally, they had designed tasks that helped their teacher students relate new knowledge to their own diverse contexts, sharing their reflections and insights with their peers, who were asked to comment and/or ask questions. In this way, teacher students expanded their understanding of the profession, while also developing a sense of cohesion and community among a group of peers who worked in very different contexts. One institution expanded its discussion list to alumni who were teaching, thus providing teacher students with direct access to the ELT community of practice (Copland 2013). However, these data also showed that teacher educators needed to scaffold instruction and provide models of appropriate online interaction.

Ensuring quality in OLTE

As the popularity of OLTE continues to expand, the question of how we ensure quality becomes even more important. Regulatory frameworks for quality

assurance vary widely across countries, and even within countries there are competing accreditation bodies. However, all broadly agree that regulatory frameworks should include the following: '1) providing clear statements of educational goals; 2) sustaining the institutional commitment to support learners; and 3) engaging in a collaborative process of discovery, which contributes to 4) improving the teaching and learning environment' (Parker 2004: 386).

In the US, for example, the Sloan Consortium (now the Online Learning Consortium, OLC) established a framework around their five pillars of quality: learning effectiveness, cost effectiveness and institutional commitment, access, faculty satisfaction, and student satisfaction (Moore 2005). In a similar vein, the National Education Association (NEA) has established a set of core beliefs on effective online education in general (NEA n.d.: 6):

- Courses should be instructor-led.
- Courses should be student-centred.
- Learning should be collaborative in nature.
- Coursework should maximize participation flexibility while providing a framework for student pacing.
- Courses should foster communication, information, and technology skills necessary for success in this century, such as 21st-century and ICT learning skills.
- Course format, expectations, and instructions should be clear and concise.
- Activities and assessments should account for different learning styles.
- Courses should use the latest best practices.

Since their initial identification of the five pillars of quality, OLC has developed an online quality scorecard and a blended learning scorecard to help institutions 'determine strengths and weaknesses of their programme, and initiate planning efforts towards areas of improvement' (OLC n.d.). The scorecard covers the following elements of quality: institutional support, technology support, course development/instructional design, course structure, teaching and learning, social and student engagement, faculty support, student support, and evaluations and assessment. The blended learning elements are the same with the omission of 'social and student engagement'. The institutions that participated in Murray's 2013 study developed a range of procedures to ensure the quality of their online programmes: training of both teacher educators and teacher students in technology, programme evaluations, and attention to the specific needs of their teacher students.

Technology training

Healey (2012: 182), in discussing planning of OLTE, notes that it is not only teacher educators who need training in technology; '[m]ost importantly, ongoing professional development for course developers, instructors and technical support will enable timely responses to changes in the use of online technologies.' In

addition, Hubbard (2013) states that learner training, the teacher student in the case of OLTE, is also important. TESOL International has established standards for technology in language teaching, standards that include teacher and teacher educator knowledge and skills (Healey et al. 2011). Some of the institutions reported on by Murray (2013) provided technology training as needed, while others required their teacher educators to undertake a training course. TESOL's Electronic Village Online provided the most extensive, requiring four-week training around the syllabus to be taught, as well as ongoing coaching (Hanson-Smith 2013).

Conclusion

OLTE has the potential to fulfil the mission of traditional DL education, that is, to provide educational opportunities to those who cannot attend bricks-and-mortar institutions. This need is especially crucial with the current shortage of qualified English language teachers around the world. However, for OLTE to provide quality educational opportunities there must be a careful evaluation of the affordances and limitations of the various delivery options. The data thus far indicate that institutions and teacher educators need to evaluate options based on their ability to facilitate communities of practice and interaction and provide technical support. Further research is needed to determine how best to implement OLTE in which contexts and for which purposes. Similarly, prospective teacher students need to understand the affordances and limitations of OLTE so that they can make the most appropriate choices for their language teacher education; therefore, OLTE providers need to have transparent websites delineating the types of applications, the programme's pedagogical philosophy, the time commitment expected, the types of collaboration expected, as well as the technical knowledge and equipment required and the technical support provided.

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15

EXAMINING THE DISCOURSE OF LANGUAGE TEACHER SUPERVISION

The learning experiences of two supervisor trainees

Anita Krishnan, Courtney Pahl, and Kathleen M. Bailey

In this chapter, we will explore the issue of language teachers preparing to work as language teacher supervisors. We will take a case study approach in which we examine the initial supervisor training of two English teachers. Writing about supervision in general education, Alfonso, Firth, & Neville (1984: 16) wrote:

Every profession equips its members with a conceptual and intellectual base from which skills are derived and expressed in practice. The skills of instructional supervision, however, have remained remarkably undefined and random, partly because the theoretical base is so thin. Moreover, the skills that are used are generally acquired on the job, rather than during professional preparation and internship.

In fact, this lack of preparation is a repeated theme in the literature on teacher supervision. However, toward the end of the last century, language teacher supervision began to be recognized as a viable career track (Bailey 2006). Indeed, it is not uncommon for language teachers to find themselves unexpectedly in supervisory positions, in which their responsibilities involve observing and evaluating other teachers in their school or programme. Sometimes people are promoted into supervisory positions because they are good teachers, or they have seniority, or have demonstrated leadership abilities, or perhaps just because they are cooperative employees (Bailey 2006).

According to Wallace (1991: 107), a supervisor has ‘as a substantial element in his or her professional remit, the duty of monitoring and improving the quality of teaching done by other colleagues in an educational situation’. Gebhard (1990: 1) notes that ‘at a fundamental level, language teacher supervision is an ongoing process of teacher education in which the supervisor observes what goes on in the teacher’s classroom with an eye toward the goal of improved instruction.’ In spite

of this positive focus, several terms have been used to describe the fact that some aspects of supervision are negative. For instance, supervision has been described as ‘managing messes’ (Schön 1983: 14). Blumberg noted that the relationship between teachers and supervisors can be thought of as a private cold war (1980). There is even a book entitled *Supervision: The Reluctant Profession* (Mosher & Purpel 1972).

A seminar on language teacher supervision

Nevertheless, many educational organizations employ people as supervisors, and increasing professionalism in our field suggests that appropriate training is needed for this role. In response to this need, Bailey (the third author of this chapter) developed a graduate seminar to prepare language teachers and programme administrators for their (future) roles as language teacher supervisors. Upon completing the course, it is expected that participants will clearly understand current models of and research on language teacher supervision. During the course the trainees practise observing language teachers for supervisory purposes and gain experience in conducting post-observation conferences. In the process, they develop verbal and nonverbal skills for providing feedback in clear professional terms. To do so, they analyse supervisory discourse from post-observation conferences in order to improve their own feedback skills.

There are two written assignments for this seminar. The first paper involves being on the receiving end of supervisory feedback. The second assignment entails observing classes and giving supervisory feedback. In completing both assignments, trainees record, transcribe, and analyse their post-observation conferences.

In the first assignment, students teach a language lesson to be observed by one or more persons. Some trainees opt to use videotapes of their teaching a language. After these lessons, they write journal entries about the lesson, in which they summarize what they did and write their own introspective assessment of the lesson. Shortly thereafter they meet with at least one observer to get feedback on the lesson. They audio- or video-record the feedback session and subsequently analyse both the feedback they receive and the experience of receiving feedback, using analytic frameworks introduced in the course and the data they have collected (both in the recordings and in their journal entries). They also connect the experience of receiving feedback to additional appropriate literature in the field, and choose one additional framework or coding system with which to analyse the data.

For the second assignment, the trainees observe one language teacher for three different lessons, or three different language teachers for one lesson each. The total teaching time observed amounts to at least one hour (i.e. at least twenty minutes per observation). The permission to observe must include a plan to talk to the teacher(s) afterwards to give feedback on the lesson(s), as well as the right to audio or video record the follow-up conversation(s). The trainees are to

observe the teacher(s), using whatever principled data collection procedures best suit the context(s), their purpose(s), the foci of the observation(s), and the needs of the teacher(s). Next the trainees write a description of each lesson they observed, in which they distinguish among their observations, inferences, and opinions about the lesson.

The trainees then transcribe one fifteen-minute segment of the tape-recorded feedback session, or they can choose two or three such segments totalling up to at least fifteen minutes of post-observation conference talk time (e.g. if they wish to focus on a particular challenge that arose in more than one conference). They subsequently analyse the transcripts and reflect on their work by analysing their own ability to provide evaluative feedback.

The assumption underlying these two main assignments is that having teachers engage in the processes of being observed and receiving feedback, followed by observing language teachers and giving feedback, will lead them to develop a deeper understanding of how to conduct effective post-observation conferences. It is important to note, however, that both of these experiences included an analytic component as well as making connections with the professional literature on supervision.

Mitigation in supervisory discourse

The analyses incorporated in these tasks are derived largely from Wajnryb's (1994, 1995) three-part discourse analytic framework. She characterized supervisory discourse as sometimes being so heavily mitigated ('hyper-mitigation') that the message can be obscured. In contrast, feedback from the supervisor to the teacher is sometimes so blunt and under-mitigated ('hypo-mitigation') that it puts the teacher on the defensive. The third category is 'indirect mitigation', meaning that the softened criticism is accomplished at the discourse level.

In another part of her framework, Wajnryb (1994) described three specific types of mitigation strategies: syntactic, semantic, and indirect mitigation. In the second assignment, the trainees used this framework to analyse their speech in the post-observation conferences with the teachers they had observed. For this reason, these three types of mitigation strategies will be described briefly here.

Syntactic mitigation includes tense shifting, aspect shifting, negation, the use of interrogatives and modal verbs, changes in clause structure, and person shifting. Semantic mitigation consists of qualm indicators, asides, lexical hedges, and hedging modifiers. Finally, the indirect mitigation devices include conventional indirect mitigation, implicitly indirect mitigation, and pragmatic ambivalence. Each of these mitigation devices is further subcategorized and explained in Wajnryb's reports (see e.g. 1994, 1995; see also Bailey 2006). Those types of mitigation strategies which arose in the data from this project will be defined and exemplified below.

The tendency to mitigate is triggered in contexts where a speaker engages in a face-threatening act (FTA). A face-threatening act is 'a communicative act which

runs contrary to the face needs of the speaker or hearer' (Wajnryb 1994: i). 'Face' is defined as 'the public, socially valued image of self which participants in an encounter claim for themselves and each other'. Engaging in a face-threatening act, as may occur during a post-observation conference, can be a highly charged situation.

Given this background on the course and the analytic frameworks used, we will now discuss the experiences of two trainees undergoing this preparation, first in terms of each of them being observed and receiving feedback. Then we will examine the results of their data analyses when they were observing and conducting post-observation conferences. With the exception of references to the authors, all the names used in this chapter are pseudonyms.

Two trainees' experiences receiving feedback

For her first assignment Krishnan (the first author) delivered a 20-minute lesson and was observed and given feedback by two of her peers, in separate post-observation conferences. Between her lesson and the conferences, Krishnan wrote a detailed reflective journal entry about her teaching (i.e. what worked and what needed improvement), which she found to be very helpful in priming her to receive feedback from her observers. Krishnan noted that she also felt comfortable being observed because she knew the goals of the feedback sessions and she was aware that they were developmental in nature rather than evaluative.

In both post-observation conferences, Krishnan's supervisors adopted a non-directive approach (Freeman 1989) of delivering feedback, in that they allowed her to talk through her lesson and actions without judging her or providing their own evaluation. According to Richards and Farrell (2005: 94), 'By engaging in non-evaluative classroom observations, the responsibility of professional development can also shift from others (supervisors, peers, etc.) to the individual teacher.' As a relatively new teacher developing her practice, Krishnan appreciated the opportunity to be actively involved in her own learning and growth. Wallace (1991: 13) asserts, 'It is (or should be) normal for professionals to reflect on their professional performance, particularly when it goes especially well or especially badly.' Krishnan found that the process of reflection improved her participation in the conferences and also made her more receptive to feedback.

Both conferences began with the observer asking Krishnan how she felt about the lesson, thus inviting her to identify her own strengths and areas for improvement. She found this strategy to be effective because once she had admitted what went wrong, both observers were then able to provide constructive feedback that seemed supportive of her ideas rather than accusatory or judgemental. Krishnan had felt that her lesson was a failure, so she tried to anticipate the critiques she would hear. When discussing observations and delivering feedback, it is crucial to manage face-threats carefully, because once teachers are put on the defensive, they may become less receptive to suggestions, thereby rendering further constructive feedback ineffective (Bailey 2006; Wajnryb 1994). Krishnan was

pleasantly surprised, however, that both observers first identified several strengths that she herself had not been aware of, and were also able to offer substantial positive feedback on the lesson. Krishnan realized that novice teachers may have a tendency to disregard a whole lesson because one part felt less than successful, so her observers' approach of highlighting the positive elements was both reassuring and encouraging.

Providing negative feedback, on the other hand, is more challenging and often requires mitigation strategies (Wajnryb 1994) that soften the blow while still delivering the message. Bailey (2006: 170) notes that 'the balancing act for teacher supervisors becomes one of delivering criticism gently enough that teachers can listen to it but clearly enough that they can hear it'. Upon analysing her transcripts, Krishnan found that her observers both employed syntactic and semantic mitigation strategies to convey constructive feedback without hypermitigation or hypomitigation (Wajnryb 1994).

Krishnan identified tense and aspects shifts and interrogatives as the most common forms of syntactic mitigation in her data. Tense and aspects shifts can be used to either distance oneself from an event or to promote 'collegiality' (Wajnryb 1994: 236). In line with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, Krishnan noted examples where both observers switched present-tense suggestions to either the future or the past, distancing themselves from their suggestions to avoid posing face-threats (e.g. *I would recommend you paying more attention to . . . in the future; Yeah, and I was gonna say that what I thought you did . . .*). The most notable tense shift occurred when Krishnan's observer was offering constructive feedback and caught herself being too forceful in mid-utterance. She then added an extra layer of mitigation, moving a verb from the preterit to the past perfect (*So I noticed . . . I . . . um, what I had noticed was there were two students . . .*).

Both observers used interrogatives to mitigate potentially face-threatening statements by framing them as questions for Krishnan (Wajnryb 1994). For instance, one asked, *And so you think that that could (pause) be correlated to wait time?* and *Do you feel like there are students that are more dominant in your class than others?* Krishnan found this strategy effective because it gave her space to ponder the issues herself before internalizing the feedback. One supervisor also employed a person shift by asking, *What do you think would be the remedy moving forward?* rather than asking directly, *What will you do moving forward?* This choice steered the focus away from the teacher and towards 'the remedy' in the future.

In addition to syntactic mitigation, many forms of semantic mitigation were utilized, including 'hedging modifiers' (e.g. *just, a little, really*) and 'qualm indicators' (e.g. *um, er, uhh*) (Bailey 2006; Wajnryb 1994). The most common hedging modifier was the word *maybe* (e.g. *maybe like them going into groups and talking about it first; maybe practising by having them write their own . . .*). These comments helped Krishnan feel that her observers valued her autonomy as a teacher and were simply providing alternatives. Similarly, the observers used 'stroking asides' (Wajnryb 1994), which serve to temper criticism with praise (e.g. *In terms of improvements . . .*

I definitely agree with the wait time, but I think that had more to do with . . .). This form of mitigation made Krishnan feel supported and more receptive to potentially critical feedback.

While both observers employed non-directive approaches to delivering feedback, Krishnan found that one was notably minimalistic and reflected traits of Edge's (2011) model of Cooperative Development. In this model, the person giving feedback is a sounding board, seeking to clarify what the other speaker says and guiding him or her through a reflective process. As a relatively new teacher, Krishnan found this method slightly frustrating at first because she wanted more direct feedback, but she appreciated when it was paired with more directive methods (e.g. giving alternatives) rather than as a stand-alone practice. Krishnan felt the use of the Cooperative Development model helped her take ownership for her teaching and pushed her to be more autonomous and reflective. Admittedly, the model functioned particularly well in this case because of the lack of power distance between the teacher and the observers. The existing rapport between Krishnan and her observers—as both peers and classmates—helped create a safe space in which she felt comfortable admitting perceived flaws of her lesson (e.g. *it was kind of awful; it de-railed*).

Krishnan acknowledges that supervisors will not always find themselves working in conditions where the stakes are low and the goals are purely educational. However, one of her key takeaways from this assignment is that feedback sessions built around clear intentions and affective trust can encourage teachers to explore and reflect upon their practice honestly. In the more common case of a power differential—be it administrative, higher rank, or more experience (Bailey 2006)—if a supervisor sets a focus on development rather than evaluation, supervisees will be more likely to share both their strengths and their weaknesses.

In analysing her experience of receiving supervisory feedback in the first assignment, Pahl (the second author) found that she benefited most from self-reflection. Bailey (2006: 47) states that 'awareness gained through self-initiated data collection is difficult to deny'. In her reflections, Pahl identified various noteworthy aspects of her feedback sessions.

First, she realized that she did most of the talking. She attributed this imbalance of speaking time to the fact that she had an existing level of trust with her observers, as they were friends and classmates. Wheeler & Grotz (1977, as cited in Chamberlin 2000) claimed that, in order for people to be open, they must feel they can trust the person to whom they are disclosing information. Trust is especially important in supervision, because 'within the context of supervision, increased self-disclosure can afford greater opportunity for discussion and reflection; without established trust, however, the threat of supervision may hinder the process' (Chamberlin 2000: 657).

Pahl also noted that one observer's feedback style was another reason she did more of the talking than her observer in their feedback session. That particular supervisor used Freeman's (1982) 'non-directive approach' to giving feedback by listening and not adding her own evaluation as Pahl described her lesson. She

asked Pahl open-ended questions, thereby encouraging Pahl to reflect upon her own lesson, and opened the session by noting positive aspects of Pahl's lesson. This approach served as a way of establishing rapport and allowing Pahl to feel comfortable reflecting on her lesson. Pahl found this feedback strategy to be extremely successful, especially with a novice teacher, as she was able to open up and learn through self-reflection.

Pahl's observer also used a number of mitigation strategies in giving her feedback. According to Wajnryb (1995: 71), mitigation occurs when the speaker changes his or her presentation of information based on the reaction of the hearer. In analysing the transcripts of her feedback session, Pahl concluded that her supervisor demonstrated an above-the-utterance-level mitigation technique. Wajnryb explains this strategy as one used to prepare the teacher for possible criticisms by 'building on her strengths, affirming the positive side of her teaching, engaging in interaction, and setting a tone of trust and professionalism' (p. 74). As outlined above, Wajnryb's mitigation strategies are divided into three main categories: syntactic, semantic, and indirect, all of which were used by Pahl's observer. The majority of the supervisory discourse contained interrogatives, a type of syntactic mitigation strategy. Rather than directly stating the faults of the lesson, the observer asked Pahl to reflect upon the lesson herself. This use of interrogatives created multiple opportunities for Pahl to engage in self-reflection.

As she prepared for her first post-observation session, Pahl expected (and thought she wanted) to receive direct and specific feedback. However, like Krishnan, she found that her observer's use of a non-directive approach allowed her to practise self-reflection. This strategy proved to be extremely useful in awareness-raising and esteem-building as Pahl recognized her potential for professional growth and development.

After completing the first assignment, Pahl reported two major takeaways. First, she better understood the importance of self-reflection and how much she could learn by simply stopping to think about what she was doing, why she was doing it, how it was going, how it could go better, and how the use of self-reflection could play a profound role in the success and growth of novice teachers. Second, she now had experience receiving feedback through various strategies and techniques and could start forming her own strategies in preparing to give supervisory feedback in the second assignment.

Two trainees' reflections on giving feedback

For the assignment on giving feedback, Krishnan observed three different teachers in order to work with a range of people. She reflected upon her experience of receiving feedback and identified what had worked and what she felt was lacking. She then tried to incorporate what she had learned as a supervisee into her role as an observer, indicating that post-observation conferences are not only a way for supervisors to relay information to supervisees, but also serve as models for the practice of giving feedback. If supervisors are aware of this opportunity

and consciously model supervision practices during meetings, perhaps even explicitly noting certain effective strategies, then feedback conferences can serve multiple purposes at once.

Krishnan noticed a clear arc of growth in her supervisory style as she progressed through the three post-observation conferences. She transcribed, analysed, and reflected upon each conference before moving on to the next, and she began to distinguish between the traits that were part of her supervisory style and those that she unknowingly displayed and hoped to improve. Krishnan selected approximately fifteen minutes of discourse from two conferences (those with Kelly and Isabel, pseudonyms) that exemplified certain traits of her supervisory style to be examined through the same mitigation framework (Wajnryb 1994) used in the first assignment.

Knowing a teacher's concerns ahead of time can help an observer focus the notes taken during the actual observation (Bailey 2006). Prior to observations, Krishnan asked each teacher about specific areas of concern, which she noted and kept in mind while conducting her observations. Due to scheduling issues, the length of time between post-observation conferences and the observed lessons varied for each teacher: One took place directly after the lesson, one was several days later, and the third was held the morning after the class. Krishnan felt that the third option was most effective because the teacher had sufficient time to process and reflect upon her lesson, but it was still fresh enough in her mind that she could remember minor details.

After analysing her supervisory discourse, Krishnan realized that her existing paradigm of feedback, at its core, involved making suggestions for improvement. In the first assignment, she had expected highly critical feedback from her supervisors on her failed lesson, and was admittedly somewhat disappointed when they only briefly mentioned its trouble spots. Krishnan noticed that she tended to give feedback as she hoped to receive it, but the analysis of Kelly's conference in particular, revealed that in order to be heard, supervisors must adjust their feedback to accommodate the listener's preferred style. Krishnan discovered that she had initially seen giving positive comments as a mitigation strategy to cushion negative feedback rather than as a stand-alone, integral part of supervisory discourse. By the third conference, however, she consciously attempted to highlight positive aspects of Isabel's teaching, and learnt that even the sharing of slightly differing perspectives between supervisor and teacher can result in positive changes and build rapport. As Chur-Hansen & McLean (2006: 67) note, the goal of formative feedback is 'to help trainees identify their abilities and strengths, as well as areas that need improvement'.

Throughout her three post-observation conferences, Krishnan found that she commonly employed the use of syntactic mitigation, specifically in the form of tense and aspect shifts. In order to distance herself from an event or claim (Wajnryb 1994), she frequently switched tense from the present to the past when asking teachers about their classes (e.g. *I was wondering; I just wanted to ask you; I was gonna ask you . . .'). Additionally, Krishnan observed that she mitigated using person shift, changing the subject of the question from the teacher (e.g. *Why do you . . .?*)*

to herself (e.g. *I was wondering why . . .*). Because she had less teaching experience than the peers she was observing, she used this mitigation strategy to help establish a collegial rapport in the post-observation conferences, rather than trying to position herself as an expert, which would have seemed less credible.

In addition to syntactic mitigation, Krishnan also observed her use of semantic mitigation, specifically style-shifted lexemes, qualm indicators, and reformulations (Wajnryb 1994). Style-shifted lexemes involve a speaker changing the way certain words or phrases are said, and can be used to establish a sense of informality and closeness (Bailey 2006; Wajnryb 1994). Krishnan noticed her tendency to elongate words in order to mitigate their impact, and additionally, to convey a sense of suggestion rather than command (e.g. *I thi::nk there should be no more penalty; I fee::l like there has to be a better wa::y*). In the last example, the word *way* was not only elongated but also aspirated with a laugh, which Krishnan felt could be attributed either to maintaining a sense of collegiality with her supervisee or to a lack of certainty or awkwardness on her part as a novice supervisor.

Krishnan's analysis of her discourse also revealed instances in which she thought she had mitigated critical feedback but her utterances may still have resulted in a loss of face. After one such utterance, about the sensitive subject of two unruly students, she noticed that Kelly had said little and appeared intently focused on her seating chart. In the moment, Krishnan had not paid attention to this action but in retrospect, she realized that Kelly might actually have suffered a loss of face and did not want to respond to the comment. Similarly, in trying to address another problematic aspect of Kelly's class, Krishnan employed multiple mitigation strategies (style-shifted lexemes, reformulation, qualm indicators, hedges) to soften the following utterance:

I thi::nk there should be (pause) is there no penalty that you can (pause) 'cause I don't, I mean I know you're working within the structure of the Intensive English department here (one-second pause) but (pause) it just doesn't se::em ((aspirated)) like you should have to plan your lessons based on (one-second pause) the fact that they won't do their homework and . . .

Krishnan noted that this utterance was followed by a six-second silence, which could certainly indicate that her mitigation attempts had failed and Kelly felt she had lost face.

Reflecting upon the experience, Krishnan realized that she should have been aware of Kelly's withdrawn responses and modified her feedback. Fortunately, Krishnan was able to adjust her approach in her third post-observation conference, and maintained a heightened awareness of her supervisee's verbal and nonverbal responses to feedback. Her analysis of the final transcript did not reveal any instances where the supervisee's responses signalled a loss of face, but this fact could also be in part because overall the feedback was positive in nature. The key takeaway gleaned from these examples was that supervisors must be aware of their supervisees' responses in order to understand how, and if, their feedback is

being received. Krishnan found that once her comments resulted in a loss of face, the session was rendered less effective because the supervisee was not as receptive to her feedback. In the future, she will try to notice her supervisees' behaviour and be prepared to adjust her discourse by switching topics or moving to a positive note.

Based on the experience she gleaned from assignment 1 and additional readings and research done in the seminar, Pahl set out to complete assignment 2, for which she observed three lessons, gave feedback to the instructors, and analysed the discourse of each session. In her analyses, Pahl identified a number of the strategies she had learnt about in the seminar and analysed how effectively they were used and how she might want to adjust them in future sessions. And, just as Krishnan did, Pahl identified shifts in her feedback style from one session to the next, illustrating the importance of self-reflection as she made these adjustments.

There are many factors that can influence supervisory discourse, including power differences. For Pahl's first experience giving supervisory feedback, she chose to observe Dr Jones, one of her graduate school professors. Although Bailey (2006) addresses the issue of power as one where the supervisor has some power over the teacher, in this case the role was reversed. Even though Pahl was playing the role of supervisor, in reality she was giving feedback to a much more experienced teacher, thus creating a reversed power imbalance. With this imbalance, Pahl felt she had no authority in the discussion. While Bailey was referring to the opposite power structure when she said that 'power imbalance can have profound effects on the behavior of the conference participants' (2006: 149), Pahl concluded that the opposite can also be true in situations such as her session with Dr Jones. Although this exact dynamic is not one typically found in language programmes, similar situations can occur when a teacher is promoted and is given supervisory responsibilities over more senior instructors.

Pahl's struggle with the power imbalance in her feedback session with Dr Jones was evident in the strategies and discourse she used. Blase & Blase (1995) found that experienced supervisors are able to subtly control the topic, whereas novice supervisors take control more directly. Such directness was evident in Pahl's session with Dr Jones. One example was Pahl's attempt at engaging in a face-threatening act by abruptly introducing a new discussion topic after a brief pause in conversation. She tried to disguise the FTA with multiple hedging techniques: *Um, one thing I noticed, is they used a lot of Chinese, and nothing, you didn't seem to, didn't seem to bother you, or didn't seem to be an issue, what was your, what's your—reason behind that, or wh-* Her voice trailed off when Dr Jones began answering the question as he noticed her discomfort.

As Pahl analysed the transcripts of her feedback session with Dr Jones, she found it quite interesting that after she attempted the FTA, she spent the rest of the session complimenting Dr Jones's teaching in an attempt to regain his trust and save his face. She realized that the amount of praise that she gave to Dr Jones was excessive and potentially distracting.

Although Pahl was very direct in introducing an FTA, overall she tended to use Wajnryb's (1994) hypermitigation discourse style—using an excessive number

of qualm markers. This semantic mitigation device indicates hesitation on the part of the speaker. Pahl also used an abundance of stroking asides, such as *What I did notice, which was impressive, was that . . .* and *I was impressed by that. . .*. Her use of the hesitation marker, *um*, as well as numerous duplications, reformulations, false starts, and stroking asides clearly illustrates her lack of confidence in giving feedback in this first session.

Pahl's second supervisory experience was quite different from her first. She was now giving feedback to Nicole, a peer, rather than a professor, which proved to have a tremendous impact on her supervisory discourse and feedback style.

The primary difference between Pahl's first and second feedback sessions is her level of confidence, which was illustrated in her discourse style. She used more asides and very few qualm markers, thereby presenting a less hesitant, more confident supervisory persona. Bailey (2006: 175) explains that 'asides' allow 'the speaker to shift footing and momentarily depart from his or her core message to add another concept'. Wajnryb (1994) describes eight types of asides used as semantic mitigation devices, three of which arose in Pahl's session with Nicole. First, she used a number of 'deflecting asides' in order to shift the focus to herself and share her own experiences in similar situations. She also used a 'stroking aside' when delivering potentially face-threatening criticism, then quickly followed with a pair of 'excusing asides', which, according to Wajnryb, make excuses for whatever is being criticized. Additionally, Pahl used a number of hedging modifiers, specifically *maybe*, when giving suggestions for improvements. In analysing the discourse of her second feedback session as compared to her first, she found that her approach to FTAs had improved and the level of confidence in her overall discourse had grown, but that there were still many aspects of her feedback style that she wanted to improve.

Overall, Pahl's reflection on her second session was much more positive than her first. She found that she primarily used 'above-the-utterance-level mitigation' (Wajnryb 1994). In contrast to her session with Dr Jones, her session with Nicole was not over-mitigated nor was it too direct or blunt. As mentioned above, 'If feedback is so direct that it puts teachers on the defensive, they may not absorb the information' (Bailey 2006: 167). Therefore, this time Pahl was pleased with the balance she was able to achieve. Though confidence is important in a supervisory session, it is also important to allow the teacher to partake in self-reflection. Bailey (2006: 37) says that awareness 'can be the first step for teachers in making a change', as she refers to Freeman's (1989) model of the constituents of teaching. Allowing the teacher to practice self-reflection in the supervisory session creates an opportunity to raise the teacher's awareness about some aspects of his or her teaching.

Developing self-awareness

Before discussing Pahl's third post-observation conference, it is essential to introduce the Johari Window framework (Luft 1969). The Johari Window is a simple image of four quadrants, which illustrates that 'things about us are either known or not known to us as individuals. These same things are also known or not

known to others' (Bailey 2006: 38). The four quadrants are labelled as follows: the open self (known to oneself and also to others), the hidden self (not known either to oneself or to others), the blind self (unknown to oneself but known to others), and the secret self (known to oneself but not to others). This framework can be a useful tool in supervision, because once a teacher becomes aware of previously unknown aspects of her teaching, she can move from blind self to open self, and can start working toward her own professional development.

Pahl felt that her third experience giving supervisory feedback was extremely positive. She watched a video of Maggie, a fellow classmate, teaching a language lesson, held a feedback session, and reflected on the session. For Pahl, the most interesting part of reflecting on this feedback session was experiencing her own shift in awareness as a supervisor. Just as she had when she watched a video of her own teaching, Pahl found herself in the Johari Window (Luft 1969). She realized that prior to analysing her third feedback session, she was positioned in the blind self quadrant, in regards to her use of compliments. After listening to the recorded feedback session for a second and third time, she felt embarrassed at how excessively she praised Maggie. She described the abundance of compliments as distracting. Reflecting on this session allowed Pahl to move into the open self quadrant of the Johari Window, where she could then intentionally work towards achieving a better balance in future feedback sessions.

Looking beyond her overuse of compliments, Pahl was pleased with the structure of her third conference. Unlike her second, she allowed Maggie to reflect on her teaching and explore possibilities on her own by asking open-ended questions (e.g. *How do you think the lesson went?*). And when the time came to address a potentially face-threatening act, Pahl used an embedded question along with a stroking aside (Wajnryb 1994) in order to redirect the impact of a potentially negative comment: *Yea, I noticed that at the end, I—it worked really well, but I wondered if you had planned on them finishing their descriptions.* Given the time to reflect, Maggie was able to come up with some great ideas to improve future lessons. This example was a clear illustration of how Pahl used self-reflection to improve her strategy of introducing FTAs.

After completing the first assignment, Pahl's initial impression of receiving feedback was that she wished her supervisor had used a technique similar to Freeman's (1982: 23) 'alternatives options', where supervisors provide suggestions rather than leaving the supervisees to generate their own ideas. However, after giving feedback on three separate occasions, which were all conducted quite differently, Pahl, like Krishnan, realized that there is a time and place for different supervisory strategies and that it is important to know your teachers and their distinct needs and personalities in order to use the appropriate approach with each individual.

Conclusion

Being a successful supervisor entails both knowledge and skill developed through training as well as experience. Both Krishnan and Pahl felt that analysing their own supervisory discourse was incredibly beneficial in their training as language

teacher supervisors. Krishnan found that in addition to gaining practical experience in giving and receiving feedback, she also developed a deeper understanding of herself as a supervisor. As she transcribed and analysed her own utterances, Krishnan's self-awareness increased and, similar to Pahl's experience described earlier, she watched herself move through the quadrants of the Johari Window (Luft 1969). She identified several instances when she believed she was appropriately mitigating negative feedback, but her supervisee was able to perceive the unmitigated intention, thus seeing a side of Krishnan that she herself was unaware of. This discrepancy between Krishnan's view of herself and how she was being seen by her supervisee placed her in the blind self quadrant (known to others, unknown to self). Through the process of examining her discourse, however, Krishnan's awareness of herself increased and she moved from the blind self to the open self (known to others, known to self) (Bailey 2006). She felt herself begin to evolve as a supervisor and saw evidence of this growth in her final post-observation conference, which she felt was the most successful.

Likewise, Pahl felt she learnt a great deal from the process of observing, providing feedback, and analysing this feedback on three separate occasions. As the perceived progression of her feedback sessions illustrates, she improved her confidence level, her discourse style, and even her approach for addressing FTAs. Although she noted clear improvements in her supervisory approach and discourse style, Pahl recognized that experience and self-reflection are essential to fostering one's development in becoming a successful supervisor.

Both supervisor trainees believe what they learned in the Language Teacher Supervision course (specifically through analysing the experiences of observing and being observed and receiving and giving feedback) will continue to positively influence their future interactions as both teachers and supervisors. They feel they are much more cognizant of their own supervisory styles, the discourse of post-observation conferences, and the many mitigation strategies that are commonly employed in delivering feedback.

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16

THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS WORKING IN SOUTH KOREA

Laura Taylor

A personal introduction

My relationship with South Korea (hereafter Korea) began in 2008, and by this point I had already completed an English teaching contract in Japan, so I thought I knew what to expect in the Korean classroom. On my first day at the private English kindergarten, I arrived on time at 8.30 a.m. and the director of the school gave me a tour of the facility. At 9.00 a.m. the students began to arrive; she pointed to the clock and told me it was time to go teach them. That was all the training I received.

This was different from my experience in Japan, where for the first two months of my contract a Japanese administrator attended each one of my classes, gave me feedback on my performance, and acted as a translator. Upon reflection, my assumption that the Japanese and Korean contexts would be similar because they were both 'in Asia' was misguided. Furthermore, it was presumptive to assume that the training I received in Japan was largely standardized across Japan, never mind abroad.

I was able to adapt to the Korean context, or at least get by, largely because I was able to apply some of the skills I had learnt teaching in the Japanese primary school context to the Korean kindergarten classroom. Yet over the course of that first Korean contract, I watched as other novice Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) struggled to cope. I observed the increase in stress levels and the anger toward the job/administration and, as a result, a decline in motivation among these NESTs. This was not true of all the teachers, but my curiosity was for the ones that were affected, which then led to research in this area. Aspects that were particularly interesting included these NESTs' interpretation of personal and professional development, whether they were interested in 'best practices' for teaching, and the strategies they were employing in the classroom with young learners. As a result, I conducted a longitudinal case study.

The goal of this chapter is to highlight the professional development situation for NESTs in Korea regarding pedagogy, considering how all parties may benefit from NESTs that are given the opportunities to develop professional skills, which may in turn reduce high levels of stress that tend to appear in the classroom.

Private language schools in Korea

Private language schools in Korea are popular among parents and students alike. These private schools offer tuition where students can study a variety of different subjects, one of which is the English language. Schools are profit-driven enterprises that cater to a range of ages and abilities—from preschool children to adults. Many schools hire Native English Speakers (NESs), who are often preferred by parents and students because they offer native language models and a link to English-speaking culture (Han 2005). This means the schools can potentially charge more for these types of classes, although it is essential not to break the bank with the cost of teachers' salaries (Park 2009). Therefore, it is often the case that schools hire NESs with little or no teaching experience because they can pay lower wages, often advertising for teachers with 'no experience necessary' (Ruecker & Ives 2015). Moreover, in order to obtain a teaching visa in Korea, a NES must be from an Inner Circle country (i.e. Canada, the USA, the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa) and only need to produce a Bachelor's degree (in any subject), a medical certificate, and a criminal background check (Korea Immigration Service 2016).

Applicants to these positions also have clear objectives. Foreign teachers in Korea are generally compensated well for their time and are given some perks along with this salary. These perks can include housing, food stipends, airfare reimbursement, paid vacation, medical insurance, contributions to a pension, and severance pay upon completion of a one-year term. For a newly graduated NES who may be facing challenges entering the job market in their home country, Korea offers a sense of adventure together with the opportunity to travel (Ruecker & Ives 2015). Despite this mutually beneficial scenario, however, we also need to consider the pedagogy and the impact that this might have on the students. The training of NESs upon arrival in Korea varies by institution and by teacher. With a focus on profit, any training that removes the NESs from the classroom costs money, while asking new teachers to shadow or observe experienced ones is also an additional financial burden. Further, since many NESs only stay at a private language school for one year, and since not all teachers start employment at the same time of year, the scheduling and implementation of formal training policies would be a fairly large undertaking.

Professional development opportunities for NESs

While the above scenario suggests an image of novice teachers colluding with profiteering schools at the expense of students, this is not always the case. There

are opportunities for these novice teachers (and experienced teachers as well) to participate in professional development opportunities. The value of professional development is clearly established in the literature. According to Wang & Lin (2013), for example, teacher performance is strongly linked to teacher professionalism, and as a result requires cultivation. Johnson & Golombek (2011) suggest that professional development must occur in all phases of a teacher's career and in all contexts. Professional development opportunities can take on a variety of different forms and can consist of either internal or external activities that enhance and support pedagogical practices as well as the quality of character (Johnson & Golombek 2011). It is evident that professional development is, largely, a good thing for teachers to engage in for the purpose of personal growth (Xu 2013), or simply as a coping mechanism when faced with integration into a rural or remote environment (Sharplin, O'Neill, & Chapman 2011).

One issue, when considering the professional development of NESTs in Korea, involves the possible difference in perception of what constitutes a 'teacher'. The literature generally assumes that novice teachers intend to be non-novice teachers at some point in the future, and that being a teacher is a career path (Gu & Benson 2014). In addition, the literature assumes that novice teachers have had at least some training before experiencing an authentic classroom (see Gu & Benson 2014; Walters, Garii, & Walters 2009). In Korea, the NESTs may not fit the definitions provided in the literature because they may lack any training, may not have any teaching experience, and may not intend to pursue English language teaching as a career. Considering these factors, the question is: why do NESTs need professional development if their only intention is a short one-year contract? One possible answer to this question is that there is a certain amount of stress related to moving and teaching abroad (Bodycott & Walker 2000; Garson 2005). Stress, in this type of scenario, generally surrounds cross-cultural adjustment factors, as the challenges of daily life can seem magnified due to new surroundings and communication difficulties in a foreign language. Stress, in higher than average quantities, is not associated with positive teaching practices (Mousavi 2007) and can lead to a decline in motivation both in the classroom and externally (Kyriacou 2001).

According to Brannan & Bleistein (2012), the involvement in social support networks and being surrounded by friends and/or acquaintances can be particularly helpful in alleviating stressful situations. Professional development opportunities have the potential to offer social support and an immediate network of colleagues within the same social setting; these networks can function as a replacement for social ties from a NEST's home country. Failure to establish social support networks generally leads to unsuccessful expatriate adjustment and adaptation, which can be detrimental to the psychological well-being of the NEST (Pipin 2010).

If stress levels increase and motivation declines among NESTs, serious concerns arise for all parties. NESTs would undoubtedly be happier if stress remained low with motivation to teach (and communicate) effectively remaining constant or

increasing over time. From the schools' perspective, stressed teachers can be less effective teachers. As a result, this may have potential impacts on student enjoyment in the classroom. A class of unhappy students does not typically represent a good business model and as a result, students may seek a more positive experience and take their business elsewhere. Finally, for parents and students alike, these private language lessons are offered in addition to regularly scheduled classes and are completely optional. For the money being paid and for the overall experience of learning English, students expect an environment conducive to effective learning.

As professional development may be one way to reduce stress among novice NESTs (Kyriacou 1987), it is essential to examine the different options available to these teachers during their teaching contracts.

Internal sources of professional development

While often not commonly or consistently found (Carless 2006), some Korean private language schools do offer in-house training. However, within an unregulated industry, this training could be provided by any one of a number of individuals, including other NESTs, Korean English teachers, Korean support staff, or the administration (see Kwon 2000 for a general overview). Certainly, in my own experience over the past decade working with NESTs, this type of development is often limited to classroom rules (e.g. students should raise their hand if they want to speak), regulations (e.g. teachers must be in the school between 8.30 a.m. and 5 p.m.), and expectations (e.g. students should finish one workbook every two months), rather than actual teacher training.

As indicated above, NESTs come to Korea on one-year contracts. While teachers may choose to renew their contracts, in many instances, once teachers have gained experience they choose to move out of the private language industry into more 'elite' teaching positions. These positions are usually offered by the public sector or by universities. They are preferable because they still offer all the perks (e.g. housing, pension, etc.), while providing better salaries and fewer contact hours than the private language school industry. This creates a cycle within the private industry of teachers without experience remaining in employment for only one-year terms. While this cyclical influx of novice teachers might seem problematic for the schools, it does offer a better profit margin, because novice teachers can be paid considerably less and be expected to work longer hours.

Moreover, in working with numerous administrators at various preschools and kindergartens (first as a teacher and then as a researcher), I found that the anecdotal evidence they provide generally indicates that NESTs are, upon arrival, overwhelmed with the transition to Korea, and that it is difficult to provide them with training because of the language barriers between Korean staff and NESTs. In addition, because of the rapid turnover of teachers, organizing and implementing a training model is an arduous task on top of an already heavy workload

undertaken by the full-time Korean staff. Again, this does seem somewhat disturbing, especially if the response is (as it seems to be) to do nothing and let NESTs figure it out.

External sources of professional development

In addition to the support that NESTs can gain from both their peers and internal supports, there are also both national and international ESL conferences held in Korea annually through the KoTESOL (Korea TESOL) association. KoTESOL was established in 1992 and is an affiliate of the TESOL International Association and a founding member of the Pan Asia Consortium (KoTESOL 2016). While membership numbers for KoTESOL are not disclosed, in a 2014 survey of registered members ($n = 239$), members are generally ‘experienced’ teachers (2+ years of experience, 60%), have a Master’s degree (58%) but do not have a teaching licence in their home country (71%), are between 26 and 41 years of age (62%), and work at the university level (public 20%, private 39%) (KoTESOL 2014). KoTESOL also offers multiple events each year to stimulate both professional and personal development. These events may target specific aspects of teaching and learning or may offer a more casual environment for teachers to come together to discuss other aspects of living and/or teaching in Korea. With eleven official chapters, KoTESOL represents most of the major centres, though participation in different chapters varies. A low-stakes or informal introduction to teacher development may be less daunting for these inexperienced teachers compared with a formal national or international conference. These external venues offer teachers the opportunity to branch out beyond their local school colleagues, which may offer a unique perspective not found in an internal support network.

In addition to physical attendance at professional development opportunities, NESTs also have access to a vast online development network. There are numerous English-language teaching ‘Webinars’, video tutorials, and other resources available for NESTs to draw from (e.g. teacher training through Worldlearning.org, 2016 or the free online course ‘Teaching for Success’ offered by the British Council through Futurelearn.com, 2016). Yet it is unclear whether NESTs are actually using these resources. Certainly there are some concerns by researchers that the support for NESTs in Korea is lacking, especially compared with the JET programme offered in Japan (Kasai, Lee, & Kim 2011), where NESTs are given the opportunity to ‘team-teach’ and automatically become part of a community of practice without having to take the initiative to seek out further opportunities (Carless 2006).

Personal and professional development: the perspective of NESTs

The contract system in Korea links NESTs to one-year terms, meaning that at the end of the contract these teachers are free to return to their countries of origin. Though there is no official data to indicate what these NESTs do upon

return to their home countries, it is unlikely that they continue to work as ESL professionals. This is often because in 'Inner Circle' countries, some background training and/or formal education is generally required for teachers. Going back to the Korean context, if these NESTs are aware that at the end of a one-year contract they are no longer going to be teachers, there seems to be limited motivation for them to develop a teaching framework with pedagogical foundations either in research or in best practice. This was acknowledged by one of the study participants (see below).

In terms of personal development, since there is very limited training before arrival, it is the responsibility of the NEST to 'prepare' for teaching abroad. This in itself is a challenging statement, as there is no way to determine how a person will respond to a new country and the challenges faced by moving and accepting a new way of life. While teacher training programmes exist, they cost money and are typically not required for jobs in Korea where 'no experience is necessary'. Further, it is questionable whether any sort of personal preparation can be achieved. It is possible, however, that an awareness of some of the challenges could be discussed if NESTs were required to attend a training programme specifically for teaching English abroad prior to departure (Kumaravadivelu 2003). These programmes already exist, and vary in terms of duration and quality. Again, the lack of research on these types of programmes and whether they demonstrate any positive benefit to assist novice NESTs in their first few months of teaching has not yet been determined and could be an avenue for future research.

A case study of four NESTs

Based on these numerous unanswered questions, I conducted a small research project to discover how teachers approached their personal and professional development. Over the course of twelve weeks in 2010–11, I interviewed four English teachers from a private preschool offering English language instruction in a medium-sized Korean city. The private preschool was fairly typical of preschool English instruction in Korea; it was part of a larger franchise network and offered similar course instruction to the fourteen other franchises scattered across the Korean peninsula. The school had 9 classes with 12–15 students in each, along with 6 NESTs, 2 Korean teachers, a school director, and various Korean support staff. Students ranged in age from 2 to 5 years and were divided into classes by age. Classes ran weekdays from 8.45 a.m. until 2.30 p.m.

Four novice NESTs took part in this research project, three from the United States and one from Canada. Their undergraduate degrees were in philosophy, mathematics, history, and international management. There were two male and two female teachers aged between 22 and 26 years of age. None of the participants had undertaken any formal teacher training (in teaching the English language or otherwise), and none could fluently speak any language other than English. Teachers were hired by the director of the preschool using an advertisement

posted on several teaching-job websites. The two female teachers (Alanna and Nicole (pseudonyms)) were hired in September 2010 (which is the middle of the preschool term) and the two male teachers (Jack and Michael (pseudonyms)) were hired in March 2011 (the beginning of the term). Once the teachers were hired, they were contacted and asked to participate in the research project.

This data was collected primarily to answer the following research questions:

- To what extent do first-time ESL teachers use their ‘practical knowledge’ in the classroom?
- How do internal and external sources play a role in the personal and professional development of first-time ESL teachers?

Based on these questions, I sought to discover the strategies that teachers used to cope in the classroom. It was important to differentiate between practical and theoretical knowledge. Practical knowledge, which is generally associated with teachers’ experiences or reflections, is based on the knowledge teachers have generated as well as past experiences (Fenstermacher 1994). This was considered to be more appropriate because the NESTs had no formal training in theoretical pedagogy. In contrast, theoretical knowledge is often seen as being ‘derived from rule based learning’ (Flyvbjerg 2006), which teachers might attain through teacher training programmes, courses, and/or through completion of a degree in teaching/education at university. While none of the NESTs had formal training in teaching or educational pedagogy, it was possible to ask them to reflect on their own experiences as a learner and how that might affect their classroom practice. While the choice to select practical knowledge was made, limitations exist. NESTs in this study were NESs with very limited second-language learning experiences (e.g. beginner French/Spanish). Using practical knowledge, participants would not be able to apply their own experiences to an ESL context, but because practical knowledge goes beyond the knowledge of subject matter/context and focuses more on experiential knowledge and self-awareness (Golombek 1998), it was seen as the preferable option for evaluation.

Using these research questions, I intended to get a better sense of how NESTs’ perceptions of their own practical knowledge informed their practice in the classroom. From this foundation, I then wanted to identify challenges faced by NESTs and what steps they were taking (if any) to reduce these challenges by undertaking activities associated with personal and professional development.

Methods

After obtaining consent from the participants, data collection lasted twelve weeks for each pair of teachers. Methods for this case study were qualitative and included semi-structured interviews, participant journals, and classroom observations. The study began with individual semi-structured interviews before each teacher arrived in Korea (week 0). This initial interview was conducted through

videoconferencing and the remaining two interviews, held in weeks 6 and 12, were done face-to-face at an off-site location. In addition to some initial demographic questions, participants were asked to comment on their teaching philosophy and experiences, what they felt were the characteristics of a 'good teacher', and the support they would require to be effective. These questions sought to assess practical knowledge. Teaching philosophy was identified as one aspect of practical knowledge, and in the week 6 and 12 interviews, teachers were asked to provide examples of in-class instances where they actually applied their teaching philosophy and adopted 'good teacher' characteristics in the classroom.

Additional questions, intended to identify both internal and external sources that had an impact on NESTs' personal and professional development, were also asked at the interviews. It was anticipated that the support needs of NESTs would change over the first twelve weeks of their contracts, and in order to answer the research questions, this topic needed to be consistently addressed.

Teachers were observed during two classes each week for twelve weeks. I was not present in the room during the observation process, as the preschool already had CCTV in each of the classrooms (used when parents wanted to watch teacher/student interactions). Prior to the commencement of this study, an audio component was added to record the class through remote access. NESTs were aware that they would be videotaped at some point each week, but they did not know which classes were being recorded. These observations were then coded using an observation schedule. The schedule, initially created by Numrich (1996) for the purpose of identifying techniques for error correction, was modified to suit the needs of this research and consisted of three categories: teaching strategies (e.g. 'teacher says answer is incorrect, asks student to try again'), teaching tools (e.g. 'teacher uses whiteboard'), and discipline strategies (e.g. 'teacher takes away privilege from student as a result of misbehaviour'). In order to accurately code the observations, videos were transcribed using atlas.ti and then categorized. After the twelve-week period, changes in teaching practices were analysed. Finally, NESTs were asked to write daily journal entries documenting their experiences and recording their feelings, challenges, and achievements.

Study findings

From the interviews, observations, and journal entries, the focus was on areas where the NESTs enhanced pedagogical practice and/or changed the nature of their discipline strategies. In the week 0 interviews, teachers were questioned about their expectations of a 'typical day' in the preschool classroom and of the characteristics associated with 'good teaching'. Participants were vague on what they expected to see in the classroom, but all generally indicated that there would be a 'textbook to teach from' (Alanna, week 0), there would be 'considerable support from Korean staff' (Jack, week 0), and that students would be 'generally well-behaved because Korean children usually are better behaved than [American] children' (Michael, week 0). Characteristics associated with good teaching that

were unanimously outlined by all teachers included patience and enthusiasm, while three participants also indicated that 'good teachers' made class interesting with diverse/unique activities. These responses, along with week 1 observations and week 1 journal entries, provided a baseline for these teachers and changes over time could be noted.

Positive personal and professional development outcomes

Among the four NESTs, all made some attempt to take advantage of peer resources and strategies for success in the classroom, especially in their first weeks. The newer teachers often sought advice from the 'more experienced' NESTs (i.e. teachers that had been there for a couple of months). This was demonstrated in the classroom observations. For example, if Alanna used the whiteboard to explain a grammar point in week 1, it would be common to see Nicole using a similar method in week 5. This was also true with the exchange of materials, so if Michael was given a game to play in week 1 (by Alanna or Nicole), Jack would be observed using this material in a later week. NESTs alluded to this camaraderie and exchange of information in their journals, indicating that this support was beneficial because it offered something new, it required the NEST to do less lesson preparation, and games could be played immediately without spending additional time on instruction.

The outcomes reflected well on NESTs' original characteristics of a 'good teacher' because unique activities were used (based on the textbook) and students were all able to play the games successfully. One teacher, Alanna, indicated in her journal that by using the materials from another teacher she saved time and money (because if teachers wanted to include teaching materials beyond the textbook, they had to purchase/supply the materials). Nicole (in her week 6 journal) indicated that collaborating with Alanna was really useful because she 'was getting bored of only using the textbook and [Alanna] had some really good ideas.' This indicated that by week 6, these female teachers had utilized peer support strategies beyond what they were initially using to change their pedagogical approach.

These NESTs gave specific personal and professional examples of when they had used the experiences and/or suggestions of the other NESTs for their own benefit. These experiences related both to the in-class and external components of life. NESTs suggested that strategies for 'controlling students' (i.e. classroom management/discipline) were particularly useful, as well as incentivized reward systems for good behaviour and/or task completion (e.g. providing gold stars for achievement). By the end of the twelve-week period, all four teachers were using sticker charts with gold stars on the whiteboard, where students received a star for good behaviour. This suggests collaboration among the teachers related to an instance of 'best practice' and consistency in the classroom. Teachers also used insight gained from group discussions on a personal level by obtaining better mobile phone rates and for visiting the doctor when ill, both of which represent examples of instances where NESTs used collaboration to enhance their external personal development. In terms of overall professional development, all NESTs

demonstrated that in these specific instances, changes in classroom pedagogy and external personal development occurred.

Negative personal and professional development outcomes

All four of the teachers in this study expressed frustration and anger which, according to their journal entries, peaked in weeks 8–12. This frustration concerned four main topics: classroom management difficulties, lack of administrative support, lack of job satisfaction, and external cultural influences.

Classroom management was particularly problematic, as none of the teachers had ever taught preschool before, and they were not able to maintain effective order among the children. The classroom observations showed that instances of misbehaviour generally increased each week, and responses to this misbehaviour were neither consistent by each individual nor between NESTs in different classes. This inconsistency was widespread, as the observed NESTs not only had different interpretations of what was ‘acceptable practice’ in the classroom, but they also varied widely in what constituted an acceptable discipline strategy. Their strategies ranged from completely ignoring student misbehaviour to yelling at students and/or punishment with a time-out. NESTs indicated in their journals that the discipline process was exhausting particularly because the children did not understand English and the administration was sending ‘mixed messages’ that the classroom environment was supposed to be ‘fun’ but also ‘rigorous’. While all teachers did adopt a ‘star chart’, justification for giving a student a star varied widely.

When asked in the interviews about the difficulties in classroom management, one of the main issues brought up by NESTs was that they had no idea what was appropriate and administrative guidance was lacking. Some NESTs expected, based upon their week 0 interviews, that the Korean children would be ‘generally well behaved’ (Michael), though this response changed by week 5 when Michael highlighted a specific incident with a student in his journal:

[the student] speaks slowly and the kids sometimes make fun of him for it . . . We’ve been trying to pay more attention to it, but it’s been hard to get the other kids to be respectful.

Along a similar line, by week 3, Alanna expressed challenges of classroom control, indicating in her journal:

Because I can’t understand [the language] . . . I have difficulty holding the attention and control of the class. I feel like the students have as much control as I do (almost more).

Based on the observations, combined with week 6 interviews and these journal entries, there were clear indications that these NESTs struggled to apply their practical knowledge in the classroom for instances of discipline.

The general dissatisfaction with the administration, related to mixed messages, extended beyond the lack of communication in classroom management. NESTs also indicated that they were expected to work unpaid hours to prepare materials for the children. Generally, all four teachers felt dissatisfied with this practice, primarily because they did not 'feel rewarded' or 'appreciated' if they put in the extra work. In his week 7 journal, Jack indicated:

I've noticed that the Korean staff really just like to throw things out there with little to no warning or preparation, leaving us foreign staff dizzy and . . . trying to keep up without getting frustrated, this can be challenging.

This was an area where motivation to do well declined over the twelve-week period outlined specifically in interviews (weeks 6 and 12) and in the journal entries. NESTs felt that finding new activities for their classes was tedious. This is an area that would have potentially benefited from professional development opportunities, as while teachers did use each other's games and materials at times, they were limited to their own ideas within one school. If these teachers had the opportunities to communicate with teachers from other schools or to attend workshops on the subject, they might have discovered more innovative ways to design learning materials.

Job satisfaction was another issue that teachers generally linked with increased stress and a decline in motivation (see also Nelson & Gongwer 1999). All NESTs reported in their journals that a lack of training was contributing to their confusion about the role of an English teacher. Several of the NESTs referred to themselves as 'edutainers' (i.e. Nicole, Alanna, and Jack), which meant that they were there to entertain the children more than they were there to facilitate the learning of English. One example was provided by Nicole in week 11:

Another thing that made me sure that I don't like this job, is the support system. As foreign teachers we are supposed to make our own lesson plans and have them approved. So, I do that every week. Then I *also* make a list of material . . . Without fail what I need is *never* on time. It's frustrating and hard to work with . . . Blah—what kind of system is this?

NESTs in this study found their roles challenging because they could not accurately complete their jobs with the practical knowledge from their own preschool experiences, as no such job existed in their own kindergarten/preschool (or they could not remember such a position existing).

Finally, the Korean culture was a significant external factor contributing to the increase in stress levels among NESTs. Teachers generally suggested that while they might have sought out professional development opportunities at the beginning of their contracts, trying to navigate the Korean cultural context was not worth pursuing for what would be a one-year contract that they were not

planning to renew. Examples of the struggles faced by NESTs appeared in the journals:

Most things in Korea don't make sense to me. Want an example? Well how about the traffic, a red light honestly means nothing here. I've learned to just close my eyes.

Nicole, week 3

The thought of staying over my contract in Korea, even though the homesickness phase has dwindled, doesn't appeal to me. Partially because two years at a hagwon [private language school] makes me feel a bit squirmy, but also I don't feel a great rapport with this country.

Jack, week 12

By week 12, all teachers indicated in their journals that they had found a routine that would get them through the remainder of their contracts. In this routine, teachers indicated that they planned to do the very minimum of acceptable work for the classroom in order to receive their bonuses. In week 9, Michael indicated:

I have almost given up on [this student]. He doesn't listen or pay attention. He distracts the other students and won't stop. Lately, I have just been ignoring him.

All four NESTs, to varying degrees, acknowledged that they were unprepared for both preschool teaching and living in Korea, and that training prior to the commencement of employment would have been beneficial, as indicated by Alanna in week 5:

I came into this job with no experience and no training. The 'training' that I received during my first few days consisted of me watching a class and learning where a few things were around the office and—GO! That's about it . . . I was just expected to teach the kids.

These negative outcomes were particularly problematic. According to Mitchell & Cubey (2003), when it comes to the young learner context, teachers need to be engaged in the educational processes in order to better facilitate learning among students. They posit that teachers who have good theoretical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge as well as those who are involved in professional development opportunities are more likely to encourage better literacy and numeracy skills. The desire for these NESTs to disassociate from their classrooms in order to 'cope' with both internal and external influences suggests that, at least in this case study, NESTs were not engaging in effective pedagogy because of their lack of professional development.

Conclusions

Over the course of twelve weeks, this case study research sought to determine the extent to which NESTs were using their practical knowledge in the classroom. While instances of practical knowledge were identified and acknowledged by NESTs (e.g. using the whiteboard to explain a concept, playing interactive games, demonstrating using written examples), challenges with the ESL context were indicated as a barrier to the application of practical knowledge. Other factors, such as difficulty with cultural adjustment—within and beyond the classroom—also led to a decline in motivation and an increase in stress. The lack of motivation resulted in a reduction of unique activities created by NESTs and a corresponding decline in engaging and interesting lessons. Issues with classroom management further compounded this issue.

Teachers were also unable to demonstrate practical knowledge from previous experiences when applying discipline techniques in the classroom. Communication between Korean staff and NESTs, and even between NESTs in the study, could have been better. As a result, inconsistent discipline strategies were employed in the classroom.

When considering the internal and external sources affecting the NESTs' personal and professional development, there were some positive outcomes. These included the use of peer collaboration in terms of sharing materials as well as support from other NESTs on personal areas of need (e.g. finding a doctor, navigating cultural challenges). Unfortunately, these positive outcomes were hampered by an equal number of negative ones. The NESTs in this study expressed no interest in undertaking external professional development opportunities, such as KoTESOL, and there was very limited internal training or discussion surrounding the implementation of the curriculum. In response to the research questions initially posed, it is clear that both internal and external sources played a role in NESTs' personal and professional development, though the negative aspects seemed to have a larger impact, affecting motivation and stress. More research on this issue, with a larger cohort of participants, would be beneficial. Ultimately, introducing novice NESTs to the notion of reflective practice, to a more formalized peer support network, or to the opportunity to partake in Webinars and/or workshops may assist in reducing the anxiety and stress levels and could contribute to a better experience for NESTs, private language schools, and students.

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17

PREPARING TEACHERS FOR THE CHALLENGES OF CONSTRUCTIVIST TEACHING

Vincent Greenier

Introduction

Despite ongoing global educational reform towards more student-centered learning (Fox 2001; Kim 2005) and an ever-growing demand for communicative competence in English, the transition from teacher-centered, lecture-dominated classes to more process-oriented, constructivist approaches has not always been easy to implement in practice (Butler 2011; Kaufman 2004), particularly in the East Asian EFL context (Kim 2005; Li 1998). This may in part be due to the confounding nature of constructivist learning theory, given its different orientations and epistemological stances (Fox 2001). An in-depth analysis of constructivism, however, is beyond the scope of this chapter, and a relatively broad definition will need to suffice. This chapter employs a social constructivist orientation, which posits that learning is a shared experience rather than an individual one, and hence knowledge is constructed through social interaction and mental models are shaped in collaboration with others (Vygotsky 1978). In the educational context, constructivism is based on the view that knowledge cannot be transferred from the teacher to the students but is instead an intellectual and creative process of experience, discovery, and understanding (Thompson 2000).

This chapter describes an Action Research (AR) project that set out to explore how five specific obstacles with using constructivist pedagogy in the Korean EFL context could be mitigated through teacher preparation, course design, and a variety of teaching strategies. Project-based learning was used for one semester at a national university in Korea in a freshman English conversation course. As the semester progressed, it became clear that rather than thinking in terms of ‘solutions’, certain processes combined with a particular set of inclinations towards problem-solving would better prepare teachers to successfully move towards constructivist approaches. This study argues that for teachers to understand how

to put constructivist theory into practice in their classrooms, they must embrace it in their own learning; further, teacher education should itself assume a constructivist paradigm (Brown 2012; Crandall 2000; Le Cornu & Peters 2005; Richardson 2003).

Literature review

The constructivist pedagogical approach used in this study is known as Project-Based Learning (Project-BL) (Buck Institute of Education 2016; Wurdinger 2016). As education in many parts of the world has moved towards more active, learner-centred, and collaborative approaches, project work in the EFL classroom has become increasingly popular as well (Dörnyei 1997). Project-BL embraces constructivist principles such as learning-by-doing, engaging learners in cooperative investigation, and giving priority to the learning process (Wurdinger 2016). The Buck Institute of Education (BIE, <http://bie.org>), an organization devoted to developing Project-BL in education, describes it as a method for teaching in which students acquire skills and knowledge through sustained work on a particular challenge; this work is student-centred, collaborative, and carried out over a period lasting from a few classes to an entire semester. It aims to enhance communication, negotiation, and collaboration and to stimulate greater cohesiveness and interaction between learners in the language classroom (Dörnyei 1997).

Despite the apparent benefits, there are a myriad of challenges to implementing a communicative-oriented constructivist approach like Project-BL in the Korean EFL context that has hindered its application in actual classroom practice, but the underlying obstacle is that teacher education and training in Korea currently gives limited attention to preparing teachers for constructivist pedagogy. There is growing concern that the current instructional paradigm in the Korean education system is not providing students with the necessary and relevant skills for the future, yet at the same time efforts at reform have been criticized by both parents and teachers who feel the educational climate in Korea is not ready for the change to constructivism (Kim 2005). Although the curriculum and textbooks officially adopted a learner-centred communicative orientation more than twenty years ago (Nunan 2003), the change from a grammar/translation approach has not been widespread primarily because most teachers do not possess the necessary methodological knowledge to actuate more constructivist-oriented learning, an issue that can only be addressed through teacher education. To this point, McDonald (1988) argues that a major hindrance to pedagogical reform is that while constructivism emphasizes the active role of the learners in the learning process, teachers are often cast as the passive recipients of the innovation and face the challenge of applying an approach they have neither used nor experienced themselves. Hence, a major question for advancing constructivism in language teaching in Korea is what teacher education and training courses might entail and how they would be conducted.

Richardson (2003) points out the inherent contradiction of teachers learning how to employ constructivist practices through explicit step-by-step models or

lectures about its theoretical basis, and asserts that the goal should be to help teachers facilitate constructivism by using it in their classrooms. What is crucial is that teachers learn to understand the factors inhibiting constructivism in their own teaching circumstances, and engage in the processes that will allow them to adapt their teaching accordingly. The following describes the main challenges specific to my teaching situation in Korea, the difficulties faced as I explored a new instructional method, the practical lessons learnt, and how my experience could inform teacher education and training to better prepare others for a transformation towards more constructivist ways of teaching and knowing.

Problems implementing constructivist approaches in Korea

The original aim of this AR project was to ‘find answers’ to five specific problems that commonly arise when attempting to implement constructivist learning in the Korean context. Thus, I was looking to solve the challenges *of* using a constructivist approach, not to solve the challenges *through* using a constructivist approach. These challenges were selected based both on the existing literature (Butler 2011; Li 1998) and on my past experiences. They are: (1) providing fair and transparent assessment; (2) preparing students for high-stakes exams; (3) dealing with time constraints; (4) managing varying English proficiency levels; and (5) teachers changing roles from ‘instructor’ to ‘facilitator of learning.’

The first major challenge, and one of the most essential responsibilities of teachers, is providing students with fair and transparent assessment. This is particularly important in Korea, where students’ university grades have an impact on everything from scholarship opportunities to finding employment in a competitive market. Constructivist approaches, however, advocate collaborative engagement with open-ended outcomes, and it can be difficult for teachers to devise standardized, clear-cut scoring criteria based on such learning aims (Koosha & Yakhabi 2012). For this reason, many students prefer more conventional, standardized assessments.

Moreover, constructivist approaches like Project-BL, which emphasize communicative and collaborative engagement, may not be the best way to prepare students for high stakes English proficiency exams. These exams are arguably even more important than course grades for academic and career opportunities, and some students may feel that communicative-oriented, constructivist approaches give less attention to skills that can help them on such exams (Fox 2001; Kim 2005; Li 1998).

Another criticism of constructivist curricula is time constraints (Wurding 2016). The demand of learner–learner interaction takes time, particularly in Project-BL, because it requires the extensive negotiation of ideas. However, time in university EFL classes in Korea is limited, and constructivist approaches generally take longer than more formal means of teaching such as lectures.

The students’ varying levels of English proficiency can further prolong the time required to complete projects, often causing less proficient students to withdraw

and consequently requiring stronger students to take on more of the workload. Managing such differences can be difficult in the university EFL context in Korea, where students are commonly grouped by academic major rather than their English proficiency level. In discussing the growing popularity of constructivist pedagogy in Asia, Kim (2005) argues that important consideration must be given to context, such as in Korea where traditional teaching techniques are more valued by many and teachers may have difficulty changing roles to a facilitator of learning as opposed to a purveyor of knowledge (Koosha & Yakhabi 2012).

These were the major challenges anticipated in implementing project-based learning in the Korean university context. As the AR project progressed, however, a major realization was that the problems themselves were not the primary focus of my reflections and analysis, nor were the exact actions I took in managing them; rather, a few key principles, embedded in constructivist epistemology, were instrumental in helping me see things differently and in actuating change. They were (1) collaborating with my colleague and students; (2) empathizing through valuing students' perspectives; (3) taking risks; and (4) continuously analysing and reflecting. The following explains how these principles manifested in the course of implementing the Project-BL curriculum, how they helped me deal with the five challenges of using a constructivist-oriented approach in Korea, and how they could inform teacher education and training.

Research questions

As the AR project progressed, attention was increasingly placed on the key constructivist principles addressed above and how they were and were not being activated in my teaching. The research focus was thus amended, from finding concrete 'solutions' to the five challenges to how constructivism epistemology could be applied to gain a greater understanding of one's teaching context, and further, to a focus on how constructivist pedagogy might be fostered in the course of teacher education and training. The revised research questions became:

1. What implications does my experience suggest for teachers who wish to implement constructivist approaches in their own classroom?
2. How can educational institutions and training programmes better prepare teachers to engage in constructivist epistemology in both their teaching and learning?

Method

In an attempt to better understand and more effectively manage the challenges to implementing constructivist approaches, I conducted an Action Research project (AR) in a freshman English conversation course that took place over the course of one 4-month semester (36 contact hours) at a national university in Korea. Dörnyei (2007: 191) asserts, 'Action Research is conducted by or in cooperation

with teachers for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of their educational environment and improving the effectiveness of their teaching.’ The essential objectives are to enhance teaching practice, better understand changes made in the learning enterprise, and to investigate problems specific to a teacher’s circumstances (Dörnyei 2007).

Action research process and instruments

The first step was to identify and limit the topic (Mertler 2013), which was selecting the five major challenges discussed above. The next step was to collect and analyse the data. Qualitative data collection included writing a reflective journal shortly after each class and jotting informal notes during discussions with students and colleagues throughout the semester (Mertler 2013). In addition, in the middle of the semester one video-recorded focus-group session was conducted with students and a Korean teaching colleague. The rationale for keeping a reflective journal and writing notes during conversations with students and colleagues was originally intended to help me draw insights that could help uncover solutions to the five challenges. However, during the semester, the *processes* of seeking a better understanding of pedagogical choices and students’ issues with Project-BL became more valuable than determining explicit resolutions to the challenges.

This became increasingly evident through an inductive approach, enabling me to generate and make sense of new insights from the data. The data was then reanalysed to explore the themes and patterns through the personal observations recorded in my notes and reflective journal, and what these revealed about how certain actions impacted students’ attitudes and perceptions about constructivist-oriented learning (Mertler 2013). The final step was to reflect upon the findings in order to enhance my practice moving forward, and to share this experience in order to help other teachers and teacher educators better prepare to meet the challenges in their own journey towards constructivist epistemology and practice.

Participants

The class was composed of nine university students, five males and four females. All students were English Education majors, the same age, Korean nationals, and in the second semester of their freshman year. As they were all students in the Department of English Education and had undergone a rigorous selection process, it was assumed that they were at approximately the same advanced level of English proficiency. In the first semester, the students had a different teacher and reported that the classroom environment was casual, with the curriculum consisting mostly of ‘free-talking’ discussions in which the teacher chose the topics and moderated the conversations. According to the students, both group work and homework were minimal. From the beginning, students stated that the Project-BL curriculum was in stark contrast from the previous semester and unlike any English language courses they had experienced in the past.

My Korean colleague who took part in the focus-group session was a professor in the Department of English Education at the university where this study was conducted; she had been hired one semester prior to the start of this study. Before arriving at this university, she had taught English Education for four years at another university in Korea.

I had also taught for just one semester in the English Education department at this university before commencing this study. During the first semester, I taught the English Conversation course primarily through the textbook provided by the school, but near the end of the semester I tried two short projects, each taking four classes to complete. The students reported that they enjoyed these mini-projects, so in the following semester, I decided to try, for the first time, using Project-BL as the basis for the entire curriculum. As this was very different from the set curriculum, before the start of the semester I secured permission from the administration and ensured that all students and fellow faculty were aware that the Project-BL curriculum would be used. Approval was granted by the department, and students enrolled in the course voluntarily.

Implementing a Project-BL curriculum in a university freshman English conversation course in Korea

After an extensive amount of time spent exploring project ideas before the semester began, I eventually decided on four projects, each of which would take six to nine classes (each class was 50 minutes, held three times per week). Each project was based on a different thematic concept (designing a classroom; a parody of a Korean drama; creating a new national festival; and inventing and marketing a new product for university students) and each included a number of grammatical, lexical, and presentation style requirements.

It was clear by the end of the first project, 'Designing the Classrooms of the Future', that the transition to constructivist-oriented learning would not be easy. While students gave creative and interesting presentations, their lack of enthusiasm throughout the three weeks of preparing it was evident. So, I gathered *their* ideas for the next project. They collectively compiled a list, voted, and decided on creating their own board games. The originally planned project, parodying a Korean drama, was intended to help students learn English idioms, and I decided to keep this as the language focus despite the change in the project theme. Before beginning work on their board games, the class was presented with some common English idioms, then each group was assigned ten which they would need to integrate into their game. In the next class, the students, while seemingly interested in the project theme, struggled to use the idioms in their game design. I explained again what each idiom meant and offered suggestions for use. Two weeks (six classes) were allotted for this project, but in the end, it took eleven classes. While the projects and presentations were well done, most groups had used far too many of the ideas that I offered as 'suggestions'. It was also clear that students had again lost interest well before completing the project.

After this project, I held a voluntary focus-group session with students, which six of the nine students attended. I enlisted the help of a Korean professor so that students could articulate their opinions more thoroughly in Korean if needed. During the focus group, students offered their concerns about the course and provided insightful feedback about how to improve it. During this discussion, my Korean teaching colleague compiled a list of the students' major concerns. When we met the following day, she offered several recommendations based on her own personal classroom experiences of using constructivist approaches. First, she proposed a step-by-step framework to help students understand the process of Project-BL and to help them proceed on schedule. Next, she recommended clarifying the grading criteria for the course, as students were uncertain about which facets of the projects were most important (e.g. participation in group work, the presentations, creativity). Finally, it was mentioned in the meeting that some students were self-conscious about their English proficiency and were anxious about their grade because more fluent students tended to dominate group conversations. She suggested reducing the number of language-related requirements for the projects in order for students to engage in more genuine group discussions, rather than having to concentrate on specific linguistic objectives.

For the third project students came up with the idea of making Animated Digitales, their versions of famous fairy tales, which they created using free online animation software. This time they were also asked to determine the language requirements (they decided on about half the number of language requirements from the previous projects). Before beginning the project, I created a process-oriented framework with a detailed three-week schedule (nine 50-minute classes). In addition, the revised grading criteria were carefully explained to students. This included the addition of a peer assessment, self-assessment, and a short 'experience essay' to be written at the end, all of which would factor significantly into their final project score (20% each). Additionally, the project-scoring rubric was negotiated with the class, which helped unveil the aspects of the projects and of language learning that they felt were most important. During the project, I provided guidance conservatively, limited my suggestions, and gave more positive reinforcement throughout. The language requirements were reduced, and 'question posing' during group discussions was strongly encouraged in order to better involve all members of the group.

At the end of the third project, students reported that they had more thoroughly enjoyed the project theme and the process, felt the requirements were sufficient but not overwhelming, and were pleased with the final outcome of their projects and presentations. They were also surprisingly candid in the assessment of themselves and group members, and conveyed evident understanding of the main language and thematic concepts through their 'experience' essays. Students finished the project more efficiently, confidently, enthusiastically, and, due to the emphasis on asking questions to group members, more collaboratively as well. Unfortunately, with only a few classes left in the semester, not enough time remained for a fourth project.

Preparing teachers for constructivist teaching

Based on this AR project, four key principles are proposed for constructivist-oriented teacher education and professional development in ELT. These key principles focus on the thinking processes and learning experiences that come from engaging in the practices of observation, reflection, and change. Again, they are: (1) collaborate with colleagues and students to enhance effectiveness and understanding; (2) incorporate multiple perspectives for a deeper sense of empathy that can inform teachers’ decision-making processes; (3) face challenges and uncertainty by taking calculated risks; and (4) continuously analyse and reflect during the course of enacting and understanding change. The core characteristics of each principle are listed in Figure 17.1 and detailed in the following elaboration of each principle.

Collaborate with students and colleagues

It became clear early on that my students’ notion of an interesting and engaging project differed from mine. Fortunately, students showed surprising initiative and creativity in generating project ideas of their own when empowered to do so. This resourcefulness was also evident in other forms of constructivist-oriented activities during the semester, such as collaboratively mediating project requirements

Key Principles for Constructivist Teacher Education, Training & Development			
Collaborate with Students and colleagues	Empathize through Valuing Multiple Perspectives	Take Calculated Risks to Address Difficulties	Continuously Analyse and Reflect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower teacher-learners (and they will empower their students) Seek help/advice from colleagues Help create a collaborative learning community (with colleagues and students) Engage in observations, discussions & ‘collaborative exploration’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to understand the views of others Value differences as other ways of knowing Relearn as you teach Activate ‘social practice’ through authentic learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust in the process of learning to teach ‘Break Rules’ to see what you are truly capable of Critically discuss and evaluate alternatives to real or recorded classes Understand that change requires change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret and make sense of your discoveries Strive to recognize and understand biases in your teaching Engage in Action Research in teacher training, and throughout one’s career Recognize development as an enduring process in the vocation of teaching

FIGURE 17.1 Key principles for constructivist teacher education and training in ELT

and grading criteria; articulating their opinions in self- and peer-evaluations; and conveying their concerns and seeking middle ground in the focus-group session. Involving students in negotiating content and grading criteria is not a common practice in Korea, but in this study, including students in these responsibilities clearly helped with the challenge of delivering more transparent, fair, and objective assessment with Project-BL.

In addition, collaborating with my Korean teaching colleague in the focus-group session provided greater awareness of the students' issues with the course and helped students express their feelings more openly. Yet asking for assistance was initially unnerving, as it seemingly invited criticism and evaluation. This was intensified by the uncertainty of what students might say, knowing they were not entirely happy with the course. My colleague was truly interested in what was taking place in my class and, by offering feedback, helped me better understand both my students and my own practice. This promoted a sense of community and informed my continuous critical observation throughout the semester. By listening to my colleague's suggestion of constructing a more clear-cut framework for the project cycle, I recognized the students' frustrations in not knowing how to proceed in this new learning environment, and was able to reduce the time-constraint challenge by providing more structure.

Cooperation that requires in-depth discussions and learning through shared experiences can be activated in teacher education and training by having teachers engage in group projects, such as collaborative practicums, followed by peer feedback sessions. Collegial interaction during teacher education and training can offer an essential source for meaning-making as it encourages teacher-learners to articulate their ideas, listen to those of others, engage in collaborative opportunities as part of a community, and utilize it as a vehicle for ongoing professional development (Brown 2012).

Empathize through valuing students' perspectives

Empathizing through valuing multiple perspectives is implicit in collaboration, though distinct in that it explicitly welcomes divergence. Further, beyond merely collaborating, empathy requires appreciating and gaining a deeper understanding of the motivations and mindsets of others and necessitates 'a caring approach', particularly on behalf of the teacher when introducing major changes in the learning environment and in 'reshaping established learning and teaching roles' (Taylor 1998: 1120). Empathy was perhaps lacking at the beginning of the semester, as I had difficulty changing roles, especially with knowing when to give guidance and when to let them persist despite their apparent struggles.

After the second project, I recognized the need to understand students' attitudes about Project-BL. Yet I had some concern that the focus group would simply become a forum for grievances, or inversely, that students would be apprehensive in voicing their genuine feelings, as outwardly criticizing a teacher is exceptionally rare in Korea. Instead, students demonstrated a clear sense of

responsibility for their learning through the participatory opportunity to be heard as important actors in their own education. As the teacher, I learnt more about the ways in which their ideas about learning coincided and contrasted with my own. In valuing students' perspectives and making them co-constructors in the learning process, Freire (2005: 32) believed that teachers should:

teach, not as bureaucrats of the mind, but reconstituting the steps of [teachers'] curiosity . . . teachers who perform as such have a rich moment of learning in their teaching. Teachers first learn how to teach, but they learn how to teach as they teach something that is relearned as it is being taught.

Learning through teaching can be realized by seeing through the eyes of students and seeking to assimilate their consciousness into the teacher's own sense of knowing. For example, it had become increasingly clear that persisting with an overly strict 'hands-off' approach, as I had at first idealized constructivist pedagogy, was making active participation even more difficult for lower-proficiency students. This knowledge, confirmed during the focus-group meeting, helped me find a better balance between instruction and guidance and made me increasingly cognizant of when more learner-teacher interaction was required.

It is often difficult, in the course of classroom teaching, to recognize students' individual difficulties, but teachers can encourage student input by creating an environment where they feel their opinions and ideas are valued. This may take time, but could be initiated through involving them in grading criteria and lesson development, or by conducting focus-group sessions where students may feel more comfortable discussing curricular issues as a group. Perhaps most importantly, teachers should strive to observe from a critical standpoint and seek to gather a greater understanding of the classroom ecology.

Richardson (2003: 1627) contends that teacher-learners must be engaged in enacting constructivism in their own education 'to help students develop deep understanding of the teaching process and habits of mind that would aid in their continuing learning'. To critically explore differences, teaching practicums can be followed by feedback from fellow teacher trainees, who may ask questions about pedagogical choices. In addition, debates about various teaching practices and application of theory and the extent to which constructivist principles can or should be applied in a wide array of teaching scenarios would provide teacher-learners a forum for expressing their thoughts, feelings, and reservations about the application of constructivist theory in their classroom.

Take calculated risks to address difficulties

To espouse a constructivist epistemology, teachers must be willing to embrace the unknown and unexpected, be flexible, take calculated risks, and have an authentic desire to extend themselves (Brown 2012). Teacher education must embolden

teachers to deal with anomalies, experiment, make mistakes, and ultimately recognize these aspects as part of becoming a capable teacher (Bailey 1996).

Risk-taking, however, is not an easy endeavour. In collectivist cultures like Korea, group cohesion is considered imperative for maintaining a good working environment, and there is an expectation to align with prevailing social norms; individuals who seem to be 'standing out' might be criticized (Kim & Park 2010). In the EFL context, this concern also applies to foreign teachers who are attempting to navigate cultural waters with which they may be unfamiliar and who often rely on reproducing typical instructional practices observed in their teaching context. Further intensifying the risk of doing things differently, accountability and teacher evaluation systems are becoming increasingly pervasive and consequential (Kaufman 2004). Indeed, a major concern for instructors in Korea, who are often employed on one-year contracts, is that student evaluations of teachers are often a critical factor in contract renewal decisions. Being a recently hired teacher, I found trying a new approach especially disconcerting for this reason.

Further, knowing that Project-BL was strikingly different from what other instructors were doing or had done in the past at this university was a pressing concern. There was the potential for students to be overwhelmed by the demand for communicative and creative engagement and to immediately discard the curriculum as too far removed from their previous learning experiences, or believe it to be irrelevant for their learning needs. Fortunately, asking for their input was indispensable in transforming their attitudes about Project-BL.

Their willingness to continue with Project-BL was certainly a favourable outcome, but it is worth speculating what might have happened if they had requested to return to more traditional methods of instruction. Does the constructivist teacher then capitulate or simply assert their authority? Through empathizing and being flexible, there is usually middle ground that will allow teachers to demonstrate that their decisions are based on compromise rather than power. For example, agreeing to reduce the language requirements resulted in more emphasis being placed on the students' collaboration, consequently ameliorating some of the difficulties associated with varying levels of English proficiency.

Another risk was incorporating peer- and self-assessments as part of their project grades. The subjective nature of the peer-evaluation could cause tension between students if negative reviews adversely affected their grades. However, students took these assessments seriously and used them as a medium to effectively express their individual struggles and achievements and to voice both the benefits and challenges of working with others. For instance, one student wrote that they had difficulty opposing a group member whom they felt spoke significantly better English, so they usually acquiesced to this student's decisions even if they didn't necessarily agree. This comment made me more cognizant of students' different proficiency levels and the ways in which this affected their group interaction. Unquestionably, going beyond rubrics and routine assessments provided insights into their learning and personal circumstances that would not have surfaced with more formal evaluation measures.

Involving students in determining assessment, the grading criteria, the project themes and requirements, and engaging them in a critical evaluation of the curriculum were all rather unexpected modifications to the course. Fanselow (1987: 7), in his seminal work *Breaking Rules*, advised that doing things differently allows teachers to 'see more clearly what we are each capable of and how our preconceived ideas sometimes limit this capability'. Although it can be difficult to overcome risk aversion in the EFL context, Crandall (2000) pointedly insists that to be considered a truly professional enterprise language teaching requires continual experimentation and appraisal on the part of the teacher in which he or she attempts to discover new ways to be effective in their practice and to cultivate their own professional development.

While it is difficult to directly transfer this type of in-service experience of risk-taking to a teacher education and training situation, the key objective is to get teachers outside their comfort zone through numerous and varied situated opportunities for practical experiences throughout a teacher training programme (Freeman 1991). This can be practised in teacher education and training by discussing past teaching experiences, evaluating recorded lessons, and brainstorming alternatives, and (again) by extensive practice, real or simulated, in situations that require pursuing new techniques. Fundamentally, teachers must embrace the truism that change requires change.

Continuously analyse and reflect

Widely advocated as a foundational means for change, Reflective Practice asks teachers to gather data about their teaching in order to critically analyse how their beliefs, assumptions, personal learning experiences, and teaching philosophy influence their classroom practices (Richards & Lockhart 1994). The aforementioned key principles of collaboration, valuing multiple perspectives, and risk-taking provide the dissonance that can spark an emerging consciousness about existing convictions and a window into one's transformation-in-progress. In a constructivist approach to teacher development, teachers are called upon to make sense of their experiences by developing rationales for their actions, understanding and challenging their own biases, endeavouring to reconcile the incongruities that come with growth, and initiating change (Le Cornu & Peters 2005).

With this Project-BL course I wanted to provide students with a new learning experience and give them agency, within limits, in the learning process. However, the difficulties with changing roles to constructivist teaching began almost immediately, for both myself and the students. Because too much structure was removed and minimal guidance was applied prematurely, students were left feeling confused, discouraged, and overwhelmed. When they struggled, I gave them lectures rather than procedural guidance and supplied too many 'examples' when trying to move them along. In retrospect, the class should have begun with a discussion about the reasons for the approach (Kaufman 2004), allowing a channel of communication to be opened and the aims of the course to be clarified.

Through ongoing dialogue with students and colleagues, and by gaining a clearer understanding of my own beliefs and values, it became easier to elucidate my reasons for implementing constructivism, both to myself and to my students. Nonetheless, certain inclinations were difficult to overcome, but critical discussions with colleagues (and students) made me cognizant of the ways in which it was a struggle to break fixed patterns of teaching as well as the missteps made in applying constructivism. It also allowed me to make the curriculum more relevant by incorporating students' points of view. For example, students were able to include in the content of the projects the language, topics, and information they felt would help them with proficiency tests—while I had hoped to get them away from a test-taking focus, I realized their need to incorporate skills they considered to be relevant and important for their future.

To experience this productive tension and to nurture the capacity to accept and resolve incongruities, teachers must be engaged in continuous, intensive reflection. There is a substantial amount of literature on techniques and practices for reflective teaching (see Richards & Lockhart 1994), and therefore I will refer only to the option exemplified in this study: Action Research can help teacher-learners emphasize the processes of self-examination, attention to contextual diversity, and openness to perpetual change that is consistent with a constructivist approach to language teaching—it can provide the quintessential bridge between knowing and doing, between learning to teach and relearning as you teach.

Research limitations

The context of this study and the methodology used present several limitations to its wider generalizability. First, I had more freedom in the choice of materials and curriculum than many teachers and was well supported by my educational institution; this is certainly no minor detail. It is hoped that as more countries promote constructivist epistemology in their educational agendas, national educational ministries will endorse and subsidize larger-scale studies that will help inform and improve these innovative policies.

Secondly, the small and relatively homogeneous sample in this study makes its generalizability limited, as all student-participants were from the same cultural and linguistic background and were comparable in other important variables such as age, educational level, and academic major. Evaluating a wide range of contexts and learner variables is essential for advancing the research into how teachers can more effectively implement constructivist approaches.

Finally, while AR is useful in observing and analysing a teacher's beliefs and values, more robust and multi-faceted methods of data collection (e.g. questionnaires, interviews, ethnographic research) and analysis (e.g. discourse analysis, grounded theory research, experimental studies on student outcomes) would strengthen the literature on the applicability of constructivist approaches to language teaching and language teacher education in different contexts.

Conclusion

A major consideration in moving teacher education and training towards constructivist-oriented approaches is helping teachers develop awareness of the processes that bring about change in their own learning, as well as helping them be more conscious of how their actions affect students in their classroom (Richardson 2003). This Action Research project revealed four key principles that could be incorporated into teacher education and training programmes to help teachers acquire a better understanding of how their beliefs and values influence their intentions and attitudes in classroom practices.

Teacher education and training should include rich learning experiences and interaction so that teachers better understand constructivism as a philosophical premise of classroom culture and professional practice, rather than as a set of instructional techniques or activities (Kaufman 2004; Richardson 2003). Language education, like general education, is undergoing a paradigm shift from teacher-centred transmission-type models to more student-centred, process-oriented approaches (Crandall 2000). Therefore, prospective and in-service language teachers would highly benefit from experiencing the process of knowledge construction in their own learning in order to understand the relevance of constructivist-oriented education and enact it in their teaching (Villegas & Lucas 2002).

Applying these principles during in-service teaching experiences, as in this study, can indeed be difficult given the myriad of contextual challenges that likely exist; nonetheless, teachers can look for opportunities to activate these principles in a number of ways, such as discussing difficulties with colleagues, conferring with students about the class, closely examining students' behaviour when implementing novel activities, and keeping a journal of hurdles, successes, and personal reflections.

The key principles proposed in this chapter are certainly not limited in their classroom applicability to constructivist curricula or approaches to teaching; teachers can benefit from applying them even in more traditional instructional settings. Indeed, the successful implementation of constructivism is not necessarily about what teachers do or don't do in the classroom; it is about the approach they take towards learning, teaching, and learning to teach.

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