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September 2016 Foreword

by Aradhna Malik

The current issue of the AEFL Journal contains six articles. The first two explore different approaches to learning English as a second or foreign language, and the remaining four highlight different aspects of the experiences of English language teachers in a variety of environments.

The paper by Yeh, Lu & Humes discusses how textual familiarity through repeated reading leads to enhanced comprehension (not fluency) among L2 learners.

The paper by Asmalı & Sayın describes the benefits of the Synectics approach to learning English as a foreign language in 'learning and retaining new vocabularies' through the process of collaborative learning and experience. The authors also highlight the uniqueness of the Synectics approach in 'encompassing the emotional perspectives of the students' towards enhancing their propensity to learn English while having fun with the language.

John Lee uses the ethnographic framework to understand lived experiences of a "novice Korean teacher of English with a PhD […] during his first year of teaching in a Korean EFL school." He describes the intricacies of the ethnographic approach especially in the context of EFL teaching, and then goes on to highlight how 'unrealistic expectations' of the teacher contribute to the struggles faced by this Korean teacher.

Prof. Carol Griffiths describes a rich, eclectic approach to finding out how college students develop their writing skills in a foreign language, through her study on second year college students studying English language in a University in China. She compares quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data collected to enquire into the strategies adopted by students to hone their writing skills, and brings to light the diverse range of ways in which students progress in this direction.

Nguyen Ho Phuong Chi describes the disconnect between the EFL trainee teachers, their school mentors and their University mentors during their practicum training through a study of 141 EFL trainee teachers in Vietnam. The paper highlights the need for a strong, collaborative, cooperative partnership between these three players towards facilitating optimal training of EFL teachers.

Nghia describes the development of a scale to find out the qualities teachers of English language are expected to have especially in contexts where English is not the primary means of communication. The process, including testing of the content validity, and construct validity & reliability is discussed along with implications of using this scale in personal & professional environments, and directions for researchers who are keen to use, customize or build on this scale for their unique, individual requirements.

Two books that can be used very effectively by teachers of second language training to understand their own lived experiences as ESL & EFL teachers, have been reviewed for this issue of the AEFL Journal. Tsepsura reviews 'Experiences of Second Language Teacher Education', by Wright and Basingstoke, and Kane discusses her insights regarding 'Methodologies for Effective Writing Instruction in EFL & ESL Classrooms' edited by Al-Mahrooqi, Thakur & Roscoe.

This issue of the AEFL journal showcases a collection of articles that use various methods of analysis including a single respondent ethnographic enquiry and the detailed process of development of a scale to assess personal attributes that can contribute to performance in multicultural environments. In accordance with the mission of this journal, the voices and writing styles of the authors have been preserved as far as possible.

ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Integrating the Awareness of Text Structure into Repeated Reading Intervention: Taiwanese EFL Students' Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

The present research deals with the effectiveness of Repeated Reading (RR) in improving reading fluency and reading comprehension of L2 learners. Although RR intervention was first introduced to L1 beginning readers and individuals with reading disability, recent research has applied it to L2 readers. However, the results are inconclusive. Review of the past research on RR in L2

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readers has inspired this current study, which aims at strengthening the effectiveness of RR within the L2 context. Hence, not only the automaticity of lower-level reading processing is tackled, but the repeated training on higher-level processing is also emphasized. EFL students with different English proficiencies were recruited to our RR intervention. It is hypothesized that by means of implicitly and repeatedly presenting different texts with similar text structure to the participants, they would "naturally" develop awareness of the text structure and show better reading comprehension. Participants' performance in pretest and posttest as well as during the intervention generally confirmed our prediction. Although the participants' reading fluency was not improved, their reading comprehension on new texts (transfer effect) did significantly improve. Additionally, the higher proficient EFL students also showed higher repetition and transfer effects during and after the intervention. Based on these findings, theoretical and practical implications for the future research on RR in L2 context are discussed.

Keywords: repeated reading, text structure, EFL, ESL, second language education, bilingual education, reading comprehension

Introduction

Cognitive rewards of reading comprehension

Reading is a complex cognitive activity. Good reading comprehension requires successful operation of information in different aspects. For instance, good readers usually possess a larger vocabulary reservoir (Alderson, 2000), show faster word recognition (e.g. Booth, MacWhinny, & Perfetti, 1999; Fraser 2007; Just & Carpenter, 1987; Rayner, 1998; Stanovich, 2000) and have high awareness of text structure (Beck, McKeown, Sinatra & Loxterman, 1991; Brantmeier, 2004; Carrell, 1992; Commander & Stanwyck, 1997). These abilities can generally be categorized into two levels of reading process, namely the lower-level processing and the higher-level processing (Chang, 2012; Grabe, 2009; Pang, 2008).

The lower-level processing includes lexical knowledge and sentence processing such as word recognition and syntactic parsing. Studies concerning first language (L1) reading found that good readers are characterized by their automatic word recognition. The automaticity of the lower-level processing is usually considered to be the foundation of fluent reading. However, lower-level processing alone is not sufficient for proficient reading comprehension. Proficient reading comprehension also requires higher-level processing such as awareness of text structure, construction of mental representations and the utility of advanced reading strategies. It has been shown that although poor readers can recall the subordinate ideas of long texts more accurately than good readers, good readers are better at recalling the superordinate ideas of texts regardless of text length (Commander & Stanwyck, 1997). Furthermore, good readers display more comparisons between pieces of information, re-constructional reading and comprehensive monitoring strategies (Chen, 2010).

Even though the automaticity of lower-level processing is insufficient for successful reading comprehension, it is still necessary for fluent reading. Moreover, efficient lower-level processing is particularly needed for second language (L2) readers since bilinguals may possess insufficient L2 vocabulary and show slow word recognition, which could hinder their comprehension of L2 texts (Bialystok, 2001, Fraser, 2004; Pang, 2008). Even for highly proficient L2 readers, rapid word recognition in L2 is still a challenge as they often show slower reading fluency in comparison with their L1 reading. (Nassaji, 2003; Segalowitz, 2003; Segalowitz & Segalowitz, 1993).

Therefore, whether for theoretical reasons or practical uses, bilingual researchers and educators have been anxious for effective methods which might assist L2 readers in improving their reading fluency as well as in enhancing their reading comprehension skills. One of the established methods of this regards which interests the present study is the so-called Repeated Reading (RR).

The research of RR in L1 setting

RR was first proposed by Jay Samuels in 1979 for beginning readers and readers with reading disability. The typical intervention of RR consists of reading a text several times until a desired level of fluency is achieved, usually measured by Word-Per-Minute (WPM). The same procedure is then applied to other new texts. Following Samuels' research, many L1 studies in this context have been done, which successfully utilized RR to enhance reading fluency for students without reading disabilities (Bryant et al., 2000; O'Shea, Sindelar, & O'Shea, 1985; Rasinski, Padak, Linek, & Sturtevant, 1994) as well as students with reading disabilities (Freeland, Skinner, Jackson, McDaniel, & Smith, 2000; Gilbert, Williams, & McLaughlin, 1996; Mathes & Fuchs, 1993; Mercer, Campbell, Miller, Mercer, & Lane, 2000; O'Shea, Sindelar, & O'Shea, 1987; Vaughn, Chard, Bryant, Coleman, & Kouzekanani, 2000). Although, RR is generally considered to be effective, a more recent research suggests that RR does not help students with severe reading disabilities (Wexler, Vaughn, Roberts & Denton, 2010).

The theoretical framework of RR is commonly attributed to the Automaticity Theory (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Roundy & Roundy, 2009; Samuels, 2002; Samuels, 2004), which argued that slow lexical decoding would create a "bottleneck" that hinders the flow of thought and thus hampers comprehension. As mentioned, successful reading involves both lower-level and higher-level processes. Since each individual's mental resource is limited, anyone who suffers from inefficient lower-level processing would have much less mental resources available for the higher-level process. Nevertheless, RR intervention is able to help readers decode words more automatically and, therefore, enables readers to allocate more attention to higher-level processes.

The research of RR in L2 setting

Using RR to improve individuals' reading comprehension in L2 is not as widely studied as that in L1, and the results are inconclusive. (Chang, 2012; Han & Chen, 2010; Taguchi, 1997; Taguchi & Gorsuch, 2002; Taguchi, Takaysu-Maass, Gorsuch, 2004; Wang & Kuo, 2011). Taguchi (1997) designed a ten-week intervention consisting of 28 in-class sessions to examine the effects of RR on EFL readers' reading fluency. The participants were first-year university students majored in Japanese literature, all of whose courses were taught in Japanese except for the English course. In each session, participants were required to read a text silently seven times, in three of which an audiotaped model of the texts was provided. The texts were stories selected from *Heinemann New Wave Readers Series level 3 to level 5.* The result of the study showed that silent reading rate increased significantly even at the seventh reading with the practiced texts. However, the increased reading rate could not be transferred from practiced texts to new texts.

Additionally, Taguchi and Gorsuch (2002) did a similar research with the intention to investigate the RR transfer effects (the effect generated from the reading experience of old texts to new texts) of reading fluency and reading comprehension. The results indicated that the reading comprehension of the experimental group was not significantly better than that of the control group and the transfer effects were not apparent. Taguchi speculated that the lack of effects might be due to the short duration of RR intervention. Therefore, Taguchi, Takayasu-Maas and Gorsuch (2004) extended the duration from 10 weeks to 17 weeks and the total number of RR sessions from 28 to 42. In this experiment, significant transfer effects in reading fluency as well as in reading comprehension were found. A recent study conducted in Taiwan with participants only using English in professional settings also found a significant improvement on reading fluency, but not on reading comprehension, after 26 sessions of RR intervention (Chang, 2012).

Commentary on the research of RR in L2 setting

Although RR has been found to significantly improve ESL or EFL students' English reading fluency, it did not improve participants' reading comprehension, except for Taguchi, Takayasu-Maas and Gorsuch (2004). This is quite inconsistent with the previous findings of RR research in L1 setting. We have been considering a few possible reasons regarding the lack of effectiveness of RR on reading comprehension in L2 setting.

First, the English proficiency of the ESL or EFL participants in the above studies was quite basic. In the L1 setting, RR was utilized for speakers with reading difficulty, and it has been suggested that for readers with severe reading difficulty the implicit intervention would not be effective (Wexler, Vaughn, Roberts & Denton, 2010). Similarly, ESL or EFL students with only very basic English proficiency may not be suitable for RR intervention.

Second, providing training merely to the automaticity of lower-level processing may not be sufficient for the improvement on reading comprehension. According to the automaticity theory, once lower-level processing becomes automatic, readers would simultaneously utilize the available mental resource for higher-level processing. However, this supposition might meet problems in the L2 setting as it assumes that readers should be able to utilize their mental resources spontaneously for higher-level processing, whereby it ignores the possibility that these ESL or EFL readers may still not be able to apply higher-level processing skills in L2 naturally.

Third, the reading comprehension tests used in the previous studies were in short-answer format. As Taguchi, Gorsuch and Sasamoto (2006) suggested, in comparison with other methods such as text recall, the short-answer test format may not be suitable for measuring reading comprehension because those questions primarily aim to assess the participants' memories of details contained in a text.

Present study

The purpose of the present study was to develop an RR intervention which can effectively improve EFL or ESL students' reading comprehension. We chose the RR as our target intervention, partially because it is inexpensive and convenient to practice. In addition, as discussed in the above paragraph, we believed that the ineffectiveness of RR in the previous research is partially due to the readers' incapability of utilizing higher-level processing in L2. If that is the case, providing information and practice related with higher-level processing should boost the effect of RR. In the current study, the element of higher-level processing to be examined is the awareness or recognition of text structure.

Text structure refers to the organization of information in a text. Meyer, Young and Bartlett (1989) argued that writers usually use a certain types of text structures (e.g. description, sequence, causation, problem-solution, comparison, etc.), and readers would recall or comprehend a text better if they are aware of these structures. Meyer Meyer, Young and Bartlett (1989) proposed an intervention named Text Structure Strategy (TSS) to increase readers' awareness of text structure. Contrary to the implicit instruction like RR, TSS explicitly instructs readers to recognize the structure of a text and use the same structure for recall. Numerous studies (e.g. Meyer, 1985; Meyer & Freedle, 1984; Meyer & Poon, 2001; Meyer, Talbot, Poon & Johnson, 2001; Meyer, Young, & Bartlett, 1989) have demonstrated the effectiveness of TSS for enhancing text recall for a variety of readers from elementary school age to older adults. In addition to the studies in L1 setting, a few L2 studies also demonstrated the benefits of TSS (Carrell, 1985; Raymond, 1993; Yeh, Schwartz & Baule, 2011).

In our study, text structure as a component of higher-level processing was incorporated into the RR by means of presenting different texts with similar text structures implicitly and repeatedly. We were going to examine whether such an RR intervention would "naturally" develop EFL readers' awareness of the text structure and therefore enhance their mastery of the text content. Accordingly, the reading materials used in the current research are distinctive from those in the previous RR researches. In the previous studies, texts were mostly extracted from storybooks, which were narrative, using metaphors and flowery descriptions to create artistic style, and their structures were therefore inconsistent. In our study, the reading materials were all expository texts with a problem-solution structure. The problem-solution structure was employed because it is frequently used in technical and analytical writing (Horowitz, 1985; Stempel, 2010), revealing itself the easily accessible structure (Meyer & Freedle, 1984).

In addition, only EFL students with high and intermediate levels of English proficiency were recruited, so that those with only basic English proficiency could be excluded. We were interested in the question of whether different L2 proficiency would influence the effect of RR differently. It was predicted that EFL students would increase their reading fluency as well as reading comprehension, and those participants with higher proficiency would even show more improvement.

Research Methods

Participants

23 Chinese-English EFL students (Female = 22) were recruited from the Department of Applied Linguistics and Language studies at Chung Yuan Christian University in Taiwan. All participants had taken Test of English as an International Language (TOEIC), a standardized English proficiency test, prior to the study. There are 11 students whose scores were at the intermediate level (TOEIC score 550-650), and 12 students whose scores were at upper-intermediate (high) level (TOEIC score 650-900).

Participants also filled out the Language History Questionnaire (LHQ) to assess their linguistic background and self-reported language proficiency (Li, Zhang, Tsai & Puls, 2014). Please see Table 1 for the summary of their English levels, Age of Acquisition (AoA; with which age a person starts to acquire), self-reported proficiency and frequency of English use. Self-reported proficiency was rated on a scale from 1 to 7 with 1 being *Very poor* and 7 being *Excellent*. The frequency of English use was also rated on a 1-7 scale with 1 being *Never* and 7 being *Always*.

Although we expected that EFL students at the high level would rate their own English proficiency higher than those at the intermediate level, the self-reported ratings did not fit our expectation. The lack of significant difference may reflect their self-confidence of English proficiency as English is their major subject. Additionally, even though similar English proficiency by two groups was reported, students with high English proficiency did report slightly higher (i.e. marginal significant) frequency of using English to think, to dream and to remember numbers, indicating that they engage English in private speech more often.

Table 1: Results of LHQ

AoA, Self-reported English Proficiency and Related Activities

	English level	
	High	Intermediate
Age of Acquisition	8.1 years old	8.1 years old
Self-Report Proficiency Rating[1]		
Reading	4.9	5.0
Writing	4.5	4.6
Speaking	4.8	4.8
Listening	5.3	5.2
Use English for the following up activities[1]		
Arithmetic (e.g. count, add, multiply)	2.6	2.0
Remember numbers (e.g. student ID, telephone)	3.0[†]	2.1
Dream	2.9[†]	2.0
Think	3.8[†]	2.9
Talk to yourself	3.8	3.1
Express anger and affection	2.9	2.8

[1]On a Scale of 1 to 7 [†] Sig. at $p < .1$

Reading materials

Twenty-seven expository texts were selected from the website (https://student.societyforscience.org/sciencenews-students), 24 of which were used in the RR intervention and the other three were used in the Pre- and Posttest. All texts were revised by two proficient Chinese-English bilinguals (two native Chinese speakers who are proficient in English) and one English-Chinese bilingual (a native English speaker who is proficient in Chinese) to fit the problem-solution structure. The title, word count and Flesch-Kincaid grade level (Kincaid, Fishburne, Rogers &

Chissom, 1975) of each text are summarized in Table 2. The average word count is 363 (SD = 26) and the average Flesch-Kincaid grade level is 8.4 (SD = 0.7).

Table 2: Texts used in the pretest, posttest and RR intervention

Text Number	When is it used?	Title	Word count	Flesch-Kincaid grade Level
	Pretest & Posttest	Veggies: a Radiation Shield	381	8.5
	Pretest	Growing Healthier Tomato Plants	360	8.2
	Posttest	Protecting Cows and People from a Deadly Disease	374	7.8
1	Week 1	When Cupid's Arrow Strikes	346	7.6
2	Week 1	The Taste of Bubbles	346	8.1
3	Week 1	The Cabbage's Clock	330	7.7
4	Week 1	The Weight of Thought	391	8.7
5	Week 2	The Smell of Trust	392	8.0
6	Week 2	The Bug That May Have Killed a Dinosaur	311	9.0
7	Week 2	Sun Got Your Tail?	355	8.5
8	Week 2	Nature May Nurture Paying Attention	377	9.5
9	Week 3	Monkeys in the Mirror	358	7.6
10	Week 3	Meet the New Meat	368	8.2
11	Week 3	Listening to Birdsong	375	7.5
12	Week 3	Learning in Your Sleep	365	8.2
13	Week 4	Baby Talk	368	8.0
14	Week 4	How to Reset a Cell	398	8.7
15	Week 4	Homework Blues	413	8.1
16	Week 4	Girls are Cool for School	324	9.3
17	Week 5	Fighting Fat with Fat	372	9.1

18	Week 5	Dreaming Makes Perfect	356	8.8
19	Week 5	Dissecting the Dog Paddle	320	7.2
20	Week 5	Digging into a Tsunami Disaster	403	8.1
21	Week 6	Detecting True Art	356	9.0
22	Week 6	Cactus Goo for Clean Water	369	9.0
23	Week 6	Mapping the Brain's Highways	382	9.8
24	Week 6	Passing diseases from Bee to Bee	321	9.7

Procedure

Pretest

Interactions with participants were carried out both in Chinese and in English. After the informed consent, the participants sat individually in an isolated booth in an audio-video classroom. The experimenter told the participants that they were going to read aloud two texts ("Veggies: a Radiation Shield" and "Growing Healthier Tomato Plants") three times respectively in English at their own pace. They needed to time themselves for each reading. Additionally, after the 1^{st} and 3^{rd} reading, they were requested to write down whatever they could remember from each text. After the reading task, participants completed the LHQ (Li, Zhang, Tsai & Puls, 2014). The entire procedure took approximately 60 minutes.

Repeated Reading Intervention

The RR intervention consisted of twelve sessions within six weeks, with two sessions for each week. Each session lasted about sixty minutes during which participants read two texts for five times each. Hence, they read a total of twenty-four different texts. The procedure generally followed the suggestions in Therrien (2004). In this meta-analysis study he examined six common used instructional components (adult or peer tutor, modeling, corrective feedback, performance criteria, comprehension component and charting progress) in RR interventions. After the analyses, he suggested that in order to maximize transfer effect, readers should read the text aloud, be assisted and given accurate feedback by an adult instructor during the RR intervention. The exact procedure of each session is described below.

(1) Participants read aloud each text five times on their own pace.
(2) After the first reading, participants could ask the pronunciation of any unknown words. However, the meaning of the word was not given.
(3) Participants measured their reading time on the 1st, 3rd and 5th reading. Additionally, they needed to make text summaries after the 1st, 3rd and 5th reading respectively. In the text summary, participants were not required to write down all the details of a text, instead they were asked to write down the main theme of a text. Participants were encouraged to balance their reading rate and text comprehension.

Posttest

The posttest was conducted three days after the 12-session RR intervention. The procedure was identical as that in the pretest. The participants read two texts three times respectively in English at their own pace. They needed to time themselves and write down whatever they could remember after the 1st and 3rd reading. One of the text is the same text used in the pretest ("Veggies: a Radiation Shield") and the other was only shown in the posttest ("Protecting Cows and People from a Deadly Disease").

Scoring

Pretest and Posttest

Participants' reading fluency was measured by their average WPM, while their text comprehension was recognized by the text recall measured by the scoring system from Carrell (1985).

For measuring the quantity of text recall, the texts used in the pretest and posttest were first analyzed into idea units (see Appendix 1). Three raters participated in the analysis and establishment of the idea units. Each idea unit should consist of one and only one clause (main or subordinate clauses). Each infinitive construction, gerundive or nominalized verb phrase was also identified as a separate idea unit. Additionally, the established idea units were organized into hierarchical levels according to the criteria shown in Table 3 to examine the quality of the text recall (see Appendix 1). The hierarchy of idea units was made in order to examine whether the intervention was effective at organizing main idea units based on the text structure.

The total idea units of “Veggies: a Radiation Shield” are 54 and 18 of which are categorized as top/high level idea units. The total idea units in “Protecting Cows and People from a Deadly Disease” are 35, with 18 of which categorized as Top/High level. “Growing Healthier Tomato Plants” has 51 idea units, 9 of which are categorized as top/high level.

The quantity of text recall made by the participants was scored in terms of the total idea units recalled out of the total idea units defined by the researchers in each text. Two independent raters scored the participants’ recalls. Raters were blind to whether a recall was from pretest or posttest. In the initial rating, the inter-rater reliability (Pearson’s correlation coefficient) of total idea unit recall was .60 in the pretest and .72 in the posttest. The raters met after the initial rating and discussed about their discrepancies and made agreements on participants’ final scores. The raters also organized participants’ idea unit recall into hierarchical levels and compared with the original texts to determine the quality of the text recall.

Table 3: The hierarchical levels of idea units

Hierarchy	Criterion
Introduction	The thesis statement which leads to its top-level organization.
Top-Level	The main problems and solutions
High-Level	The main ideas in the problems and solutions
Mid-Level	The subtopics
Low-Level	The minor details

Repeated Reading Intervention

Participants’ Reading fluency was measured by their average WPM. Text summary was measured based on the Top-Level Structure (TLS) system with slight modification (Yeh, Schwartz, & Baule, 2011). TLS is a scoring system ranging from 1 to 6 that assesses whether readers utilize the correct structure to organize their recall. To gain high scores in the TLS scoring system, participants not only have to remember the content of the text correctly, but also have to be able to use the correct structures in their recalls (Table 4). Two independent raters scored the participants’ text summary, discussed about their grading and then made agreements on participants' final scores. In order to illustrate the TLS scoring criteria, a few participants' response samples are given in the Table A in Appendix 1.

Table 4: Scoring criterion for top-level structure

TLS score	Criterion
1	Bizarre, mostly unrelated, or nothing from the passage
2	Just description, just problem, or just solution.
3	Other structure—no problem/solution
4	Recalls a problem and solution with no clear organization, i.e., has problem and solution in a few sentences embedded in a list of random content from passage, or may give problem/solution in only one sentence
5	Knowing problem and solution but organized using other structures
6	Organized as problem/solution

Results

The results are viewed from two aspects: the reading fluency and the reading comprehension. In each aspect, participants' performance in pretest, posttest and in the RR intervention was analyzed. To avoid any practice effect (the effect caused by repetition) but to examine the transfer effect cultivated through RR intervention, data analyses were confined to the comparison between the two texts, one used in the pretest ("Veggies: a Radiation Shield") while the other used in the posttest ("Protecting Cows and People from a Deadly Disease"). These two texts were selected because they have the same number (18) of top/high level idea units.

Reading fluency

Pretest and Posttest

The descriptive statistics of participants' WPM of 1^{st} and 3^{rd} reading on Veggies: a Radiation Shield and on Protecting Cows and People from a Deadly Disease are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: The mean and SD of WPM in the pretest and posttest

Pretest			
Text title	Reading time	WPM-mean	WPM-SD
Veggies: a Radiation Shield	1^{st}	102.0	14.3
	3^{rd}	126.2	56.6
Posttest			
Text title	Reading time	WPM-mean	WPM-SD
Protecting Cows and People from a Deadly Disease	1^{st}	110.0	22.0
	3^{rd}	128.2	22.5

A three-way repeated measure ANOVA was conducted. The independent variables (IV) were Reading Time (1^{st} and 3^{rd}), Pretest_Posttest and English level (High and Intermediate). The dependent variable (DV) was WPM. The results showed that there were no significant effects on Pretest_Posttest, nor on any two-way or three-way interactions. However, the main effects of Reading Time and of English level were significant respectively (Reading time: $F_{(1,21)}=13.54$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .39$; English level: $F_{(1,21)}=6.03$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .23$). This outcome indicated that the RR intervention did not improve their reading fluency when they encountered the new text in the posttest. However, participants did increase their reading fluency as they read aloud the same text three times. Additionally, participants with high English proficiency read aloud faster than participants with intermediate proficiency.

RR intervention

The participants' reading fluency from text 1 to text 24 throughout the RR intervention is illustrated in Figure 1.

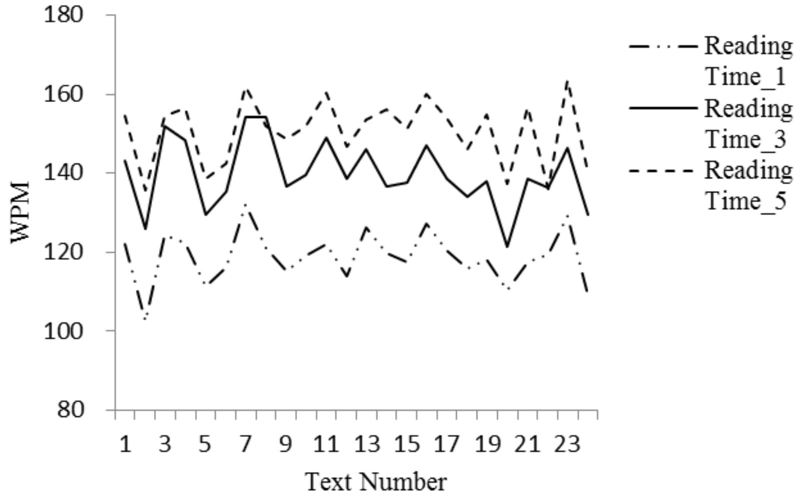

Figure 1: reading fluency during RR intervention

A two-way repeated measure ANOVA with Reading Time (1st, 3rd and 5th) and English Level (High and Intermediate) as IVs and WPM as DV was conducted to examine whether participants' reading fluency is subject to their English proficiency level and whether reading fluency increased as practice time increased (see Table 6 for descriptive statistics). The results showed that the main effects of Reading Time ($F_{(2,46)}$=522.5, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .96$) and of English Level ($F_{(1,23)}$=310.1, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .931$) were both significant. More importantly, the interaction between Reading Time and English Level was significant ($F_{(2,46)}$=16.4, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .42$), which indicated that high proficient EFL students developed more reading fluency during the RR intervention (38 WPM) than intermediate proficient EFL students did (25 WPM).

Table 6: The mean (and SD in parentheses) of WPM during RR intervention

English Level	Reading Time_1st	Reading Time_3rd	Reading Time_5th
High	128.5(9.3)	153.6(12.1)	166.5(11.1)
Intermediate	109.3(5.5)	126.2(8.1)	134.7(7.4)

Reading comprehension

Pretest and Postest

The mean and SD of the total idea units and the top/high level idea units recall are summarized in Tables 7 and 8. A three-way repeated measure ANOVA was conducted to examine participants' recall of total idea units before and after the RR intervention. The IVs were Reading Time (1st and 3rd), Pretest-Posttest and English level (High and Intermediate). The results showed that the main effects of Pretest-Posttest ($F_{(1,21)}$=87.5, p < .01, η_p^2 = .81) and of Reading Time ($F_{(1,21)}$=102.8, p < .01, η_p^2 =.83) were significant. This outcome indicates that participants, regardless of their English level, had improved their general reading comprehension after the RR intervention. Moreover, their reading comprehension also increased as the practice time increased.

Table 7: The Mean (and SD in parentheses) of total idea units recall (%) in the pretest and posttest

Pretest			
Text title	Reading Time	English Level_High	English Level_Intermediate
Veggies: a Radiation Shield	1st	8.7(3.2)	8.5(3.5)
	3rd	17.6(8.2)	13.8(4.6)
Posttest			
Text title	Reading Time	English Level_High	English Level_Intermediate
Protecting Cows and People from a Deadly Disease	1st	23.2(8.7)	19.4(6.4)
	3rd	36.0(15.5)	29.1(7.0)

In order to examine whether participants would be able to raise higher awareness of the text structure, a three-way repeated measure ANOVA was conducted on the top/high level idea units. The IVs were Reading Time (1st and 3rd), Pretest-Posttest and English level (High and Intermediate). The results showed that the main effects of Pretest-Posttest ($F_{(1,21)}$=79.7, p < .01, η_p^2 = .80) and of Reading Time ($F_{(1,21)}$=39.1, p < .01, η_p^2 =.65) were significant. The interactions between Pretest-Posttest and English Level ($F_{(1,21)}$=5.9, p < .05, η_p^2 =.22) and between Pretest-Posttest and Reading Time ($F_{(1,21)}$=6.4, p < .05, η_p^2 =.23) were also significant. These results suggested that participants with higher English proficiency recalled more top/high level idea units after the RR intervention (see figure 2). Moreover, participants could also recall more top/high level idea units after the 3rd reading in the posttest than in the pretest.

Table 8: The mean (and SD in parentheses) of top/high level idea units recall (%) in the pretest and posttest

Pretest

Text title	Reading time	English Level-High	English Level-Intermediate
Veggies: a Radiation Shield	1st	3.0 (2.9)	4.2 (4.8)
	3rd	7.1 (6.1)	9.3 (6.8)

Posttest

Text title	Reading time	English Level-High	English Level-Intermediate
Protecting Cows and People from a Deadly Disease	1st	18.2(15.9)	15.7(7.4)
	3rd	33.3(27.8)	30.6(10.7)

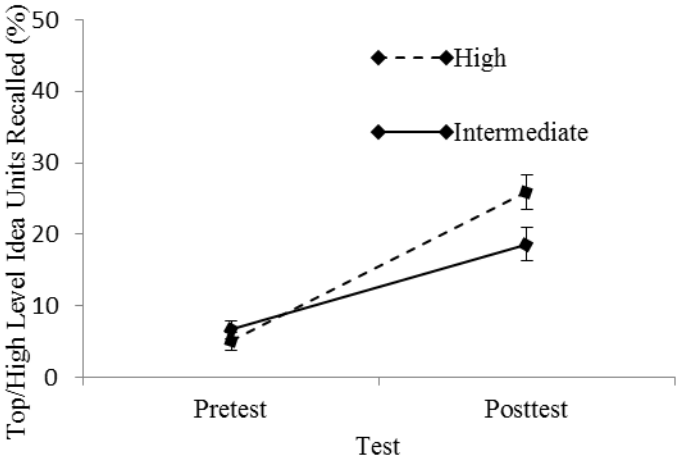

Figure 2: Top/high level idea units recalled in the pretest and posttest

RR Intervention

Participants' TLS scores in the 1st , 3rd and 5th reading are illustrated in Figures 3, 4 and 5 respectively. We can seemly observe a trend in which participants gradually increase their TLS scores along the progress of the RR intervention. In this study, three-way ANCOVA was recruited to examine the participants' learning trajectories. ANCOVA is typically used to test the effect of one or several categorical IVs on a continuous DV while controlling for the effect of a continuous covariate (CV). We especially wanted to test if there were any significant interactions, which would indicate that the effect of the continuous CV on the DV depends on the particular level of IVs. We can use regression analyses to test their progressions (i.e.

the slops of regression lines). On the other hand, the significant main effects of IVs with no significant interactions would indicate that the CV has similar effect for all the levels of IVs.

The two IVs were the Reading Time and English Level, whereas the CV was the Text Number (the order of texts which participants read aloud during RR intervention) ranging from 1 to 24. The CV of Text Number was used to represent the progress of the RR intervention. The DV was the TLS score. The results showed that the main effects of English Level ($F_{(1,22)}$=79.1, $p < .01$, η_p^2=.78) and of Reading Time ($F_{(2,44)}$=211, $p < .01$, η_p^2=.91) were significant. The interaction between English Level and Reading time was also significant ($F_{(2,44)}$=6.0, $p < .01$, η_p^2=.21). Most importantly, the three-way interaction of English Level, Reading time and Text Number was significant ($F_{(2,44)}$=4.1, $p < .05$, η_p^2=.18). To determine the nature of the interaction, six linear regressions were conducted. Table 9 summarizes the results of these regression analyses.

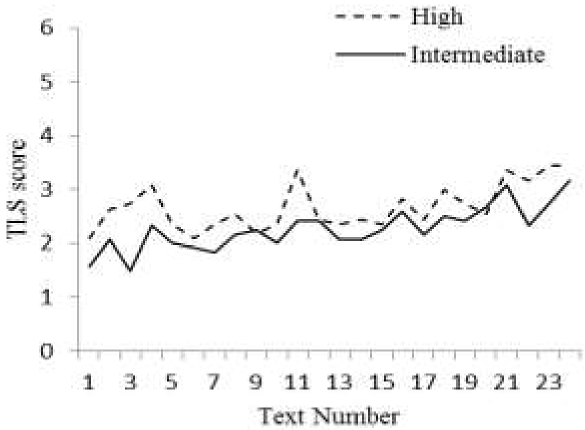

Figure 3: TLS score at 1st reading

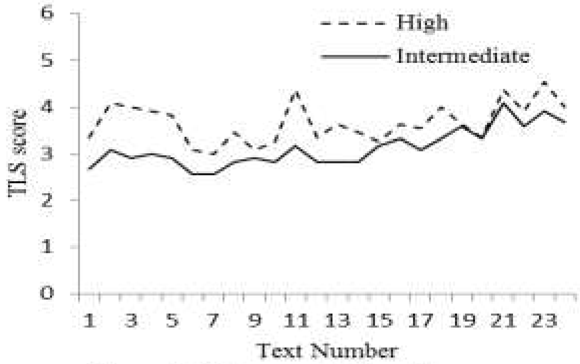

Figure 4: TLS score at 3rd reading

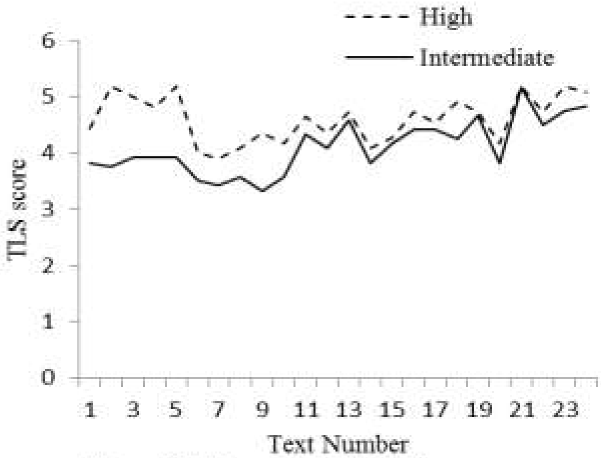

Figure 5: TLS score at 5th reading

Table 9: Summary of regression analyses of text number on TLS score during RR intervention

English Level	Reading Time	R^2	Standardized Coefficients(β)	t-value	p-value
High	1st	.3	5.7	3.3	.004
	3rd	.1	.3	1.5	.142
	5th	.03	.18	.9	.390
Intermediate	1st	.6	.8	6.3	.000
	3rd	.6	.8	6.2	.000
	5th	.5	.7	5.0	.000

The results showed that the text comprehension of the participants with high English proficiency gradually improved in the 1st reading through the way of the RR intervention. However, this trend was not found in the 3rd and 5th reading. On the other hand, for the participants with intermediate English proficiency, the TLS scores on the 1st, 3rd and 5th reading all gradually improved as they read more and more texts. The discrepancy between high and intermediate proficient participants will be discussed in the following section.

Discussion

The findings of the present study not only support the previous researches but also extend their findings; demonstrating that implicitly and repeatedly presenting different texts with a certain structure to readers would "naturally" develop participants' awareness of the text structure and therefore increase their reading comprehension. The general findings and their implications are discussed as follows.

First, EFL students' reading comprehension was significantly improved after the RR intervention, as measured by the total idea units and top/level idea units recall. These two types of measure conveyed different implications. The total idea units represent the amount of information in a text. The students who recalled many details from a text but had no idea about its hierarchical structure might still get a high total idea units score. In this case, the higher scores on total idea units indicate that EFL participants could remember more pieces of information from the texts regardless of the text structure. On the other hand, students would get a high score in top/high level recall only if they could properly organize the problems and solutions in their recall. The improvement of recall in top/high level idea units demonstrated by the participants with high English proficiency showed that they had developed a better awareness of the main structure in comparison with the participants with intermediate English proficiency.

Second, the analyses of reading comprehension during the RR intervention revealed some interesting details relating to participants' progression. From figures 3, 4, and 5, a probable learning trend was detected, which reveals that participants gradually increased their reading comprehension as they read more and more texts. Our suspicion was confirmed by the follow-up analyses, which indicate that, for the participants with high English proficiency, the initial reading comprehension of a text was partially determined by the previous text reading experience (i.e. the number of texts read in the intervention). The more texts they read, the higher initial comprehension they possessed for the following new text (i.e. transfer effect). However, this trend disappeared in the 3rd and 5th reading of the same text. On the other hand, for the participants with intermediate proficiency, their reading comprehension of a text was partially predicted by their previous text reading experience in all three reading measures.

The TLS scores from these two groups suggest that the previous text reading experience and the text repetition experience (i.e. the repetitive reading of the same text) may cause different impacts on participants with different English proficiency. For the highly proficient participants, the influence of previous text reading experience became less important in the 3rd and 5th reading, indicating that they were very efficient at grasping the main outline of a text. In other words, participants with higher English proficiency are quick learners. However, for intermediate proficient participants, the influence of previous training experience was still quite salient even at the 3rd and 5th reading, indicating that they were less efficient at gaining reading comprehension, which, however, could be trained through repetitive practice.

Third, EFL participants' reading fluency did not significantly improve after the RR intervention. This result is different from the findings in some of the previous studies, which reported higher reading rate after RR intervention. One possible reason for this difference is that in the present study, participants' reading fluency was measured by the speed of reading aloud, whereas in other studies, reading fluency was measured by silent reading rate. This means that participants might be able to read faster silently after the RR intervention, but they still could not read aloud faster. Another possible explanation is that as participants knew that they were required to summarize their recall after reading, they intentionally did not want to speed up their reading. Besides, the analyses of reading fluency showed that although participants with high English proficiency gained higher WPM, participants from both groups showed similar learning curves throughout the RR intervention.

The present study has made both theoretical and applicable contributions. Traditionally, the underlying mechanism of RR intervention was attributed to the Automaticity Theory which argued that automatic word recognition is essential for fluent reading while effortful lexical decoding would obstruct the thought flows and thus reduce comprehension (e.g., Samuels, 2004). However, since participants in our study were never taught about the text structure during the RR intervention, our findings along with some other studies suggest that higher-level processing can also be implicitly automatized through continuous practice (Taguchi, Gorsuch & Sasamoto 2006; Walczyk, 2000).

Moreover, our findings coincide well with the Extended *Compensatory Model* of Second Language which emphasizes that in addition to L2 language knowledge and L1 reading ability, the strategic knowledge and background knowledge also significantly contribute to L2 reading proficiency (McNeil, 2012). The increased awareness of text structure will allow readers to take appreciate strategy to master the text content such as re-reading the critical sentences and words related with the main ideas in texts (Yeh, Schwartz, and Baule, 2011). Thus, the current study enriches the theoretical discussion on RR and proposes to integrate the *Compensatory Model* of

Second Language to interpret the cognitive mechanism of RR. So far, by our understanding, the present study is the first one to integrate the component of the awareness of text structure into the repeated reading intervention. It does not only strengthen the effect of previous L2 RR interventions but also shorten the intervention period from a few months to six weeks.

One practical issue regarding RR is that in many of the previous studies, the instructional components employed are highly varied so it is not easy to identify the critical components contributing to the effect of RR (Therrien, 2004). After reviewing the results of the present study, we argue that the awareness of the text structures should be considered as another critical component related with the efficacy of RR. This current "upgraded" version of RR intervention would make RR much more applicable in most of the ESL or EFL programs. Furthermore, we would like to make a pedagogical suggestion to the English educators that it is probably a better idea to ask students to "just read" instead of introducing them a variety of reading strategies or text structures. Additionally, it might be helpful to group the texts according to their text structures and let students generalize or find out the common pattern of these texts by themselves. Human beings are active leaners who are capable of generating some common rules among the information they absorb. We believe that by doing so, the self-generated understanding of text structures may bring more benefits to the learners.

Although RR has been widely used and measured in educational settings, it has not been studied as extensively for online (real time) reading behavior and thinking processes. Thus, we suggest that the underlying mechanism of RR could still be further researched. A few available eye-movement studies have reported the decrease of fixation duration (i.e. the period of time that the eyes gaze in the same area), decrease of number and duration of regression (i.e. the number and time that the eyes look back to the preceding areas) and increase of saccade size (i.e. rapid eye movement) during RR (Hyönä, 1995; Hyönä & Niemi*,* 1990; Kaakinen & Hyönä, 2007; Schnitzer & Knowler, 2006). It was also found that, during RR, relevant and important information is processed differently than irrelevant and unimportant information (Hyönä & Niemi*,* 1990; Kaakinen & Hyönä, 2007). However, to the best of our knowledge, there is no published study focusing on EFL readers' online reading behavior during RR. Therefore, future researches might aim at addressing this knowledge gap by examining EFL readers' text comprehension during RR and, at the same time, monitoring readers' online reading behavior and thinking processes by eye-tracking measures and think-aloud protocol.

Another research possibility is to examine whether EFL students are also capable of naturally acquiring awareness of other text structures such as comparison, sequence, etc. through RR. If they do, how long does it take? Moreover, is it also worth to examine whether EFL students can generalize the learning outcome to their academic study, since EFL students' academic success through reading is the major applications of this research. Addressing this issue helps us recognize the gap between the texts used in the current study and those in the real class. Whenever the gap is recognized, we might learn how to modify the intervention to fit students' needs.

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Appendix 1

"Veggies: a Radiation Shield": Idea Unit Analysis

I (1)-Radiation can help

I (2)-or harm

I (3)-and sometimes do both at the same time.

I (4)-When used as a medical treatment,

I (5)-radiation kills cancer cells.

T (6)-A serious problem though is

T (7)-that any nearby healthy cells hit by radiation can also die

T (8)-or suffer lasting harm,

T (9)-unless the body is able

T (10) -to quickly repair them.

T (11)-Protecting healthy cells is important

T (12)-since damaged caused by radiation can have horrible side effects in cancer patients.

M (13)-Scientists have known for decades

M (14)-that the body has ways

M (15)- to repair radiation damage.

H (16)-However, they also know

H (17)-that they need

H (18)-to find something

H (19)-that can give that repair system a boost

H (20)-to reduce the side effect.

M (21)-Recently, scientists have identified a chemical

M (22)-that might help with these repairs.

M (23)-It's called DIM,

L (24)-and it develops in the body after

L (25)-eating a diet rich in broccoli

L (26)-and related vegetables,

L (27)-such as cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and kale.

L (28)-These veggies contain a healthful compound.

L (29)-In the stomach, that compound is converted into DIM.

L (30)-The team led by Fan and Eliot Rosen at Georgetown University believed

H (31)-that DIM can protect the healthy cells from being killed

H (32)-and at the same time still let radiation kill cancer cells.

M (33)-In order to test this theory,

M (34) they focused on a type of radiation known as gamma rays,

M (35) -which is used to treat some cancer patients.

L (36) -The researchers beamed high doses of this radiation at healthy rats.

L (37) -Two hours after the radiation exposure

L (38) - using gamma rays on a group of rats,

L (39) -scientists injected the rats with DIM.

L (40) -Those rats continued

L (41) -to get a dose of DIM each day for two weeks.

L (42)-A month after the radiation exposure,

L (43)-six of every 10 of the DIM-treated rats were still alive.

L (44)-Two months later, the surviving rats were all still alive.

L (45)-A different group of rats also got DIM.

L (46)-However, their two weeks of injections started 24 hours after being exposed to the radiation.

L (47)-Among these rats, only three in every 10 survived the tests.

L (48)-Now, scientists have shown

H (49)-that DIM helps cells recover from high doses of radiation, at least in rats.

L (50)-In 2009, Fan and Eliot Rosen showed

H (51)- that DIM's benefit does not stop with fighting cancer.

H (52)-DIM also protects cells from some types of chemical damage.

L (53)-Now they've extended their findings

H (54)-to DIM's protection of cells hit by toxic chemicals.

"Protecting Cows and People from a Deadly Disease": Idea Unit Analysis

I (1)-Chewing on a juicy hamburger might be a little less tempting than it once seemed.

I (2) It took just one case of mad cow disease

I (3)-to make several countries ban imports of U.S. beef.

I (4)-Officials in Japan and elsewhere are afraid

I (5)-that people may eat infected meat

I (6)-and develop the human version of mad cow disease.

H (7)-Mad cow disease gets its name

H (8)- because cattle infected with the disease behave strangely.

H (9)-They seem nervous and distressed.

H (10)-They can't stand or walk properly.

H (11)-These symptoms are caused by the breakdown of the animal's nervous system.

M (12)-Deformed proteins, known as prions, multiply and worm their way through an infected cow's brain and nerves,

M (13)-making the tissue look like a sponge.

M (14)-These prions have a similar effect in people.

T (15)-Consuming infected meat is also the main way prions are transferred from one cow to another.

T (16)-However, where does this mad cow disease come from?

T (17)-And how is it transferred from one cow to another cow or even from a cow to a human being?

L (19)-Studies have shown

T (20)-that this occurs because of an old method of producing food for cows.

M (21)-When cows were slaughtered for their meat and skins,

M (22)-some of their remains including their brains, eyes, spinal cords, and intestines were used

M (22)-to make animal feed containing protein.

T (23)-When the cows ate the food they became infected with the disease

T (24)-and when humans ate the infected cow the disease transferred itself.

H (25)-For the wellbeing of the cows and also humans

H (33)- who consumed the cows,

H (33)- this type of feed was banned in 1997

H (27)-when scientists realized

H (28)- that it was responsible for the spread of mad cow disease.

L (28)-Christl Donnelly of Imperial College in London says

M (29)-that as long as the ban on this type of feed is enforced,

M (30) mad cow disease shouldn't spread in the United States.

H (30)-This means it's also highly unlikely the disease would spread to people.

L (31)-Officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture are taking an extra precaution.

L (32)-Their plan is

M (33) - to track every cow that will be used for beef, M (33)- from its birth until it ends up in the grocery store.

M (34)- Outside of the U.S. other government bodies are also taking precautions

M (35)- to ensure the healthy rearing of cows so that the disease cannot spread.

*I = Introduction, T = Top-Level, H = High-Level, M = Mid-Level, L = Low-Level.

Table A: Scoring criterion and sample responses for Top-Level structure

TLS score	Criterion	Sample responses from text 19
1	Bizarre, mostly unrelated, or nothing from the passage	
2	Just description, just problem, or just solution.	Psychologists conducted experiments to find if boys' and girls' academic preferences are the same when they are in the same classroom or in different classrooms?
3	Other structure—no problem/solution	Psychologist found that there are differences of single-sex class and mixed-sex class. Boys learning ability are different when there are more or less girls in the same classroom.
4	Recalls a problem and solution with no clear organization, i.e., has problem and solution in a few sentences embedded in a list of random content from passage, or may give problem/solution in only one sentence	Does single-sex education boost academic performance? Researchers found that there is no clear and absolute conclusion after conducting the experiments. The experiments are about how the proportion of boys and girls in a classroom can affect their learning. The finding is still new and it is still under exploration.
5	Knowing problem and solution but organized using other structures	Studies showed that high school girls perform better in all-girl class. Scientists are not sure about whether the result would be the same for younger students. There are researches showing that boys perform better or equal to girls in the class which girls are the majority. Boys learn slower in the class which has more boys. In contrast, girls' performances are not affected by the proportion of boys and girls in the classroom. Scientists said that they don't have enough research to make conclusions.
6	Organized as problem/solution	Girls are not excited to go to schools with boys, and boys are note excited about going to school with girls either, so we wonder should girls and boys be taught in separate classrooms? Does single-sex classroom help them learn better? In high schools, girls do better in single-sex education, but not so well in middle school. Among preschool years, boys can do better when there are more girls than boys. Boys learn slower when the majority in the classroom are boys. Finally, we still have many things to explore about this problem.

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The Effects of the Synectics Model on Vocabulary Learning, Attitude and Desire to Learn English

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of the Synectics Model on vocabulary learning, attitude and desire to learn English. The research group is composed of secondary state school senior students in Turkey. A total of 41 participants, 21 in the control and 20

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in the experimental group took part in this study. Two pre-tests, a post-test and a delayed-post-test were used as data gathering tools.

The Synectics model was implemented in the experimental group for four sessions. Mann Whitney U test and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were used for the analysis of the data. When the post-test results were compared, although a significant difference was found in terms of vocabulary learning performance, no statistically significant difference was found between the groups for attitude and desire to learn English. The findings related to pre-test and post-test comparison of the experimental group revealed that while there was a significant difference for vocabulary performance and attitude, no significant difference was found for desire to learn English. Comparison of post and delayed-post-test results showed that the Synectics model helped learners retain vocabularies longer.

Keywords: Synectics, vocabulary, attitude, desire to learn English

Introduction

Although vocabulary learning was characterized as a ‘neglected aspect of language learning’ in 1980 by Paul Meara, “the acquisition of vocabulary has become the most active areas in second language acquisition research” (Lightbrown & Spada, 2006, p. 36). In this sense, the teachers have the responsibility to go beyond the use of classic methods of teaching vocabulary and introduce new ways and techniques so as to develop positive attitudes toward vocabulary learning on behalf of students and to motivate learners not just to learn new vocabularies but also to retain those longer. As the starting point, this study makes use of the Synectics model as a vocabulary teaching approach which has been developed and generally used for the purposes of enhancing creativity and problem solving ability.

The name of the Synectics model comes from the Greek word synecticos meaning “understanding together that which is apparently different” (Gunter, Estes & Mintz, 2007, p. 146). The father of the Synectics model, Gordon according to whom it is an operational theory, bases the entire theory on a belief that the creative process can be taught using analogous and metaphorical thinking (Keyes, 2006). Gordon identified strategies that creative people use unconsciously and developed these strategies into teachable forms (Davis & Rimm, 1998).

The Synectics model originally developed by William Gordon is implemented as "an instructional model which is specifically designed to enhance creativity in problem solving by having students consciously develop analogies that allow for an emotional rather than rational approach to solutions" (Gunter, Estes & Mintz, 2007, p. 147). Whether fostering students' emotional approach to solutions is what the teachers expect or not can be a matter of debate but this model enables students to voice their answers depending on their personal perspectives, emotions, backgrounds, and feelings. Although traditional way of teaching is crucial for objective information, the importance of emotional perspective was also supported by the researchers. DeSiato and O'Quinn (2006, p. 10) claimed that "attempts to eliminate or ignore the emotional impact of certain texts result not only in awed critical understandings, but also stunt the growth of some students and silence the voices of others desiring to respond in public". Therefore, the Synectics model, which encompasses the emotional perspectives of the students was used in this study to create positive attitudes toward vocabulary learning, to increase the desire to learn English of the learners, and to teach the vocabulary in a new format which was expected to help learners retain them longer.

"The Synectics approach was originally developed for groups of individuals responsible for developing new products" (Gunter, Estes & Mintz, 2007, p. 147). As mentioned above, the techniques and materials produced since 1960s related to Synectics have been effective in teaching creative thinking and writing. Emphasizing the effect of it on creativity, Keyes (2006) also views Synectics as a model of teaching which can be used as a brainstorming tool individually and in a group work to enhance creative writing and reflection. As it can be seen from the definitions of the model, it is mostly used for enhancing creativity or promoting writing ability of the learners. However, this study makes use of the Synectics model as a vehicle to learn and retain vocabularies. Having this new perspective, due to the nature of this model which brings learners together to work cooperatively and calls forth brainstorming among them, the Synectics model is also expected to create positive attitudes and increase the desire to learn English as a foreign language among the participants of this study.

Concerning vocabulary learning, one of the important functions of this model is letting the learners connect what they already know with the new concepts they come across. "What Gordon and his associates developed is the specific skills to help learners make unique and creative connections between what they know and what they are to learn" (Gunter, Estes & Mintz, 2007, p. 147). Gordon considers learning by purposeful connection making as efficient due to the fact that it makes explicit the associative process by which the mind naturally assimilates knowledge. To support this claim, the possibility to understand something new without associating it with something with which a person already knows is also questioned (Gordon & Poze, 1978). Through the use of metaphor, these connections are facilitated in the synectics process. Using metaphors and analogies to highlight similarities and differences increases students' understanding and the application of new skills and information (Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2001).

According to Gordon (1961), it is an operational theory which uses group interaction to create new insights through 'understanding together' process. Involving creativity, problem solving, group work, and interaction, this model is considered to have positive effects on vocabulary learning and retention due to its game-like nature. It takes attention of even the most disinterested students and let them feel free to express their knowledge in English. Also by going beyond the traditional way of teaching vocabulary, it is estimated to create positive student attitudes toward learning English as a foreign language and to make students desire to learn English.

Using an existing teaching model on language teaching with a different purpose makes this study significant. The findings of this research, which has the objective of enriching vocabulary learning together with creating positive attitudes and desire to learn English as a foreign language, are important for language teachers and researchers due to the fact that it has a unique perspective by employing the Synectics model for vocabulary learning.

Literature review

The Synectics model

In Synectics, metaphor is broadly defined to include all figures of speech (e.g., simile, personification, oxymoron) that join together different and apparently irrelevant elements through the use of analogy. Three forms are stressed in the Synectics model: (1) 'direct analogy' defined as the direct comparison between two objects, ideas or concepts such as "how is a classroom like an anthill or a teenage crush like a roller coaster?", (2) 'personal analogy' defined as becoming part of the problem to be solved or the image being explored such as "how does it feel to be a zipper?", and (3) 'symbolic analogy' explained as compressed conflict involving descriptions that appear to be contradictory but are actually creatively insightful such as "alone together" or "intimate strangers" (Gunter, Estes & Mintz, 2007).

There are three stages of Synectics including 'making the familiar strange', 'making the strange familiar', and 'the Synectics excursion'. In 'making the strange familiar', students are basically guided to make new knowledge more meaningful by bridging new and familiar information. It includes eight steps. The third approach to Synectics, 'the Synectics excursion' uses analogies and metaphors to solve problems (Gunter, Estes & Mintz, 2007). It also has nine phases.

The first stage of the Synectics model, namely 'making the familiar strange', helps students to see new patterns and relationships from previously learned knowledge and understandings. It involves seven stages through which the students describe a topic, create direct analogies, describe personal analogies, find conflicting words in personal analogies, create a new direct analogy, reexamine the original topic, and evaluate all these steps. First, the implementer of this stage asks students to find a subject that can be from any discipline, such as a character from a novel that has been read or a concept such as freedom or justice. All the descriptive words uttered are written on the board. For instance, the students may choose the topic of 'feelings' and the descriptive words may be 'love, hate, and anger'. Second, the instructor asks students to examine the descriptive words generated in the previous step and form analogies between the words and an unrelated category they select such as 'machine, plant, or food'. The students form sentences like 'a rose reminds me of love'. Third, teacher asks the students to select one of the direct analogies and create personal analogies by telling the students to feel like the object and describe how it feels and works. As an example, students are questioned about how they would feel if they were a 'rose'. Their responses are written on the board such as 'alive, happy, good, bad, and dead'. In the next stage, students are directed in finding the pairs of words which seem to fight or are in opposition to one another such as 'good-bad, alive-dead'. In the following stage, students choose one of the pairs of words from the previous step and create another direct analogy by selecting an object (animal, machine, and fruit) that is described by the paired words. For instance, 'animal' can be the object and 'alive-dead' can be the characteristics chosen by the students. For the next step, students are required to remember the original idea or task so that they may produce a product or description that uses the ideas generated. They may concentrate on the final analogy or they may use ideas from the total experience. Students create sentences like 'feelings are like lions. They are alive but, sometimes appear to be dead'. As the final step of this stage, students discuss the experience with the class and develop techniques for determining both individual and group response to the process.

Only the first stage “making the familiar strange” is employed for the present study due to several reasons such as the current English proficiency of the participants, the topics planned to be taught, and its convenience to the vocabulary learning by making connections. Concerning connection making, Prince and Logan (2005) emphasize the significance of connection-making by naming it as the essential building block for learning which stands at the very heart of learning and creativity. This idea encourages the very idea of this study that Synectics model’s first stage including connection-making can be used as a method for vocabulary learning through which it will have an effect on students’ attitudes and desire to learn and study English as a foreign language.

Although the literature on the studies conducted to find out the use of Synectics model is scarce, it has been used by researchers in different ways. One of these researchers Rolheiser-Bennett (1986) compared the effects of four theory driven models of teaching on student learning. Synectics model was one of the teaching strategies together with advance organizer, memory model and cooperative learning group investigation. The results showed that use of any of four model of teaching was efficacious on a wide variety of outcomes.

In another study, Keyes (2006) focused on secondary student’s exploration into multidimensional perspectives in literature and creative writing using the Synectics model. This study employed narrative inquiry and empowered participants to discuss their experiences with Synectics in knowledgeable communities and resulted in finding new knowledge through the sharing of teacher stories. One of the important findings and implications of this study was the development of positive student and teacher attitudes towards Synectics and metaphorical thinking strategies in secondary English language arts classroom.

Synectics was not just put into action in language teaching. In a study (Kleiner, 1991), the Synectics model’s effects on students’ creativity and achievement in science was researched. Fourth and fifth grade students took part as the participants of the study. Training the experimental group with the model for four weeks increased the vocabulary and classroom participation. However, no statistically significant difference was found in terms of creativity and achievement in science between the groups.

Attitude and desire to learn English

"Attitude, which is defined as a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behavior" (Baker, 1992, p. 10) is one of the important factors in predicting the level of success in second language learning (Gardner, 1980). Attitude as a general term is mostly known as individual's positive behavior and desire to experience those consequences (MacIntyre, Baker, Clement & Conrad, 2001), however compared to other school subjects, learning a second language requires learners to familiarize themselves with the characteristics of other cultures to be successful (Gardner, 1985).

In countries where English is spoken as a foreign language, attitudes toward American and other English speaking cultures are surely created through education and exposure to media (Dörnyei, 1990). In Turkey, English taught at state schools symbolizes the world out of Turkey which allows people to connect to foreign countries and people living there which is not limited to just English-speaking countries. Having the awareness of importance of English in mind, young learners should also have positive attitude toward learning English in order to be successful. In the case of creating positive attitudes toward learning English, the responsibility is mostly regarded in control of teachers. Thus, teachers of English for young learners as in the case of this study should make classes attractive and enjoyable by going beyond classic methods of teaching. For the present study, Synectics model is employed with learners in order to create more positive attitudes toward learning English.

Another construct, desire to learn English is thought to move parallel with attitude by having positive correlation between. Thus, for the present study, it can be claimed that learners' attitude toward English and their desire to learn English will be in positive correlation with one another.

This study has the primary objective of measuring the impact of the Synectics model on vocabulary learning, attitude toward learning English as a foreign language and desire of eighth grade students to learn English. This experimental study attempts to discover whether the use of Synectics model can improve eighth grade students' vocabulary learning and retention in English as a foreign language, attitude and desire toward learning English. Bearing this in mind, the present study tries the find answers to the following research questions:

1) Is there a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of post vocabulary test scores?
2) Is there a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of their attitude toward learning English as a foreign language in post-test?
3) Is there a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of their desire to learn English as a foreign language in post-test?
4) Is there a significant difference between the pre and post vocabulary test scores, desire and attitude towards learning English in the experimental group?
5) Is there a significant difference between the post and delayed post vocabulary test scores in the experimental group?

Method

The present study is an experimental study employing the intact groups design involving a control and an experimental group with pre, post and delayed post-tests. “The main problems with the intact groups design stem from the fact that the subjects in the groups being compared were not randomly selected from the population, nor were they randomly assigned to groups” (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 92). However, in second language research we often need to use intact classes for our studies, and in these cases the participants cannot be randomly assigned to one of the experimental or control groups. “Intact classes are commonly and often by necessity used in research for the sake of convenience” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 142) as in this study.

However, the advantage of using intact classes is also provided by Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 143): "if the effects of a particular instructional method are investigated, an existing classroom may be the most ecologically sound setting for the research". In the case of this study, a new instructional method for vocabulary learning, namely the Synectics model is used which makes use of intact classes design as the best research design for this study.

One of the problems mentioned about this design is that "without randomization, we cannot be certain that the groups being compared were identical or at least quite similar to begin with" (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 92). In order to eliminate this problem, two pre-tests were conducted.

The research design involves an examination of the effects of Synectics instruction model first version (the independent variable) on the students' vocabulary learning (the dependent variable), desire to learn English (the dependent variable), and attitude toward learning English (the dependent variable). The students in the experimental group were taught using Synectics model by their own English teacher who is also one of the researchers of this study for four sessions. The students in the control group were taught without the use of Synectics by the same teacher. Students in both groups were unaware of the implementation of a new method during the treatment.

Participants and setting

The participants of the present study were composed of 41 B1 level senior secondary state school students aged 14. As it was explained before, this study employed the intact groups design involving a control and an experimental group. A total of 41 students, 21 of whom were in the control group and 20 of whom were in the experimental group, were included in the study. The students in both groups have been studying English as a foreign language since they were ten-year-olds and they were chosen without bias. They learned English for three hours a week in the first two years and four hours a week in the last two years. The students in both groups have experienced the same style of English Language education so far, which means at the primary school level the subjects mostly focused on expanding their vocabulary knowledge; and at the secondary school, students were exposed to dense reading passages and grammar rules. Teachers have a standard curriculum to follow both for primary and secondary school level at state schools in Turkey and as it is so dense with grammar, most of the time listening and speaking parts are disregarded by teachers. The students in both groups have been taught English by the same English teacher for the past three years.

Instruments

Desire to learn English questionnaire

The instrument used to measure the participants' desire to learn English is the adapted version of the questionnaire used in the study of Yashima et al. (2004). What have been combined for this study is 'motivation intensity' questionnaire and 'desire to learn English' questionnaire which originally belong to Gardner and Lambert (1972) with three multiple choice answer format and used by Yashima, Lori & Kazuaki (2004) with a 7-point scale. These two questionnaires were put together and used as the 'desire to learn English' questionnaire with 5-point Likert Scale for this study. The items were translated into Turkish and then back translated to establish validity.

Attitude questionnaire

The attitude questionnaire used for this study is the adapted version of the one used by Pae and Shin (2011) in their study. Fourth and tenth items were added by the researchers to the existing items and 5-point Likert Scale was used. The reason to employ a questionnaire both for attitude and desire to learn English is that: "…questionnaire is one of the most common methods of collecting data on attitudes and opinions from a large group of participants" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 92).

Pre-test 1

In this research, two pre-tests were applied to make it sure that both experimental and control groups had the same level of English proficiency for the aimed subjects to be taught. The first pre-test measured the vocabularies of unit 1 and unit 2, which were studied six weeks before the implementation of this model. It was limited with the 'adjectives of personality and physical appearance' which was the main focus of unit 1; and 'a daily routine of a student' which was studied in unit 2. The questions of the pre-test 1 comprising of unit 1 and unit 2 were gathered from the test books and internet resources by the researchers.

Pre-test 2, post-test & delayed post-test

The second pre-test questions which were also conducted as the post-test and delayed post-test of this study were created by the researchers in accordance with the course book (Kurt et al., 2009) vocabulary expand. The questions in this test were directly related to 'places to visit/ personal experiences' unit 7. The unit 7 was not taught before the implementation of the pre-test 2 which means that students in both groups had no knowledge about the vocabularies in the test. The test consisted of twenty multiple choice format questions. Students answered all the questions in twenty-minute-time. The same test was conducted as the post-test and delayed post-test of this study after the implementation of the Synectics Model for four sessions with the experimental group. Pre-test 2 and post-test were administered with the attitude and desire to learn English questionnaire. However, delayed post-test was just composed of vocabulary questions.

Data collection procedure

Implementation of the Synectics model with the experimental group

Before the main practice of the Synectics model, the model was introduced to the students with three pilot studies. The main practice of the model was the fourth usage of the model in the classroom with the experimental group. Through these trials in the pilot studies, students got used to the seven steps of the model which can be named as the logic of the model.

During the fourth and main implementation of the Synectics model, the new vocabularies of unit 7 (places to visit/ personal experiences) such as *journey, magical, honeymoon, trip, gondola, traditional, fantastic, historic, ancient, ticket, wedding, customary, fortune-teller, journalist, international, square, art gallery, bridge, temple, shopping centre, museum, palace, canal, bazaar, church, fountain* were taught through the use of Synectics model. The primary purpose of the last implementation of the model was to teach the vocabularies of unit 7 by combining them with the vocabularies of 'adjectives of personality and physical appearance' (unit 1) and 'a daily routine of a student' (unit 2) through the steps of the Synectics model. The detailed implementation of each step of the model together with the sample productions of the students in the experimental group is presented below:

<u>First step</u>

Through brainstorming students were required to say the adjectives belonging to unit 1. During this step, all the adjectives that students said were written down on the board. Some of the adjectives stated by the students are given below:

e.g. hardworking, punctual, reliable, stingy, ambitious, medium-height, supportive, respectful, good-tempered, anxious.

<u>Second step:</u>

The phrase '………reminds me of being…………' was given by the teacher and students were asked for filling the first blank with the phrases of unit 2. For the second blank they were required to use the adjectives of unit 1. Some of the examples stated by the students are given below:

e.g. ……A designer…... reminds me of being …….brave……. .

……Taking notes…... reminds me of being …….hardworking…. .

……Cheating…... reminds me of being …….bad-tempered……. .

Third step:

In this step, students were asked to create a question and then answer it. Students were required to fill in the blank of the phrase "how would it feel to be like ………..?" with the vocabularies of unit 2. Students were asked to answer the question with the adjectives of unit 1. The following questions and answers were created by the students during this step:

e.g. How would it feel to be like ……a journalist…….?

- Curious.

How would it feel to be like ……a president…….?

- Brave.

How would it feel to be like ……a robber…….?

- Lazy.

Fourth step

In this step, through brainstorming students worked on the opposites of the adjectives that were given as answers at the third step, and they also added the opposites of the adjectives they remembered from unit 1. The following conflicting adjectives were found by the students in this step:

e.g. brave x coward

lazy x hardworking

honest x dishonest

Fifth step

Before the fifth step, the second pre-tests of each student were handed out to remind the students about potential new vocabularies of the new unit (7). At the fifth step, the phrase '…………is/are like being……….. .' was written down on the board by the teacher and students were asked to fill in the first blank by using the words of unit 7 and the second blank by using the adjectives of unit 1. The following sentences were created by the students:

e.g. ……A festival…... is like being... happy…. .

……A temple…... is like being... mysterious…. .

……Bazaar…... is like being....bored….   .

Sixth step

In this step, students were required to talk about the original topic (unit 1) by comparing the last direct analogy (unit 7) to the original topic. New images were created with reasons. At this step, the phrase 'being…………is/are like……….. because it is sometimes…………and sometimes…………..' was written down on the board by the teacher and students were asked to fill in the first blank by using the words of unit 1 and the second blank by using the words of unit 7. The explanation part following 'because' was filled by the students using the conflicting words used in the 4^{th} step. The following sentences were created by the students:

Being …….colorful is like a ………festival because it is sometimes ……..dead and sometimes …………..alive

Being …………interesting is like a ……………..temple because it is sometimes …………..boring sometimes ………………….interesting.

Seventh step

An assessment questionnaire was applied and students were asked about how they felt during the implementation of this method for learning new vocabularies while studying a unit for the first time. Of 21 students, three of them said that they felt 'excited', seventeen of them felt 'interested' and only one student indicated that he felt bored. Application of the seven steps lasted forty minutes, which is one-hour-lecture time.

Collection of the quantitative data

The quantitative data were gathered from both groups. The first pre-test, attitude and desire to learn English questionnaires were conducted at the same time in 40 minutes in both experimental and control groups. The second pre-test, attitude and desire to learn English questionnaires were conducted just before the final implementation of the Synectics model in both groups. The post-test, attitude and desire to learn English questionnaires were conducted in 40 minutes 15 days after the final implementation of the Synectics model. The delayed post-test which just included the vocabulary part of the post-test was administrated 30 days after following the post-test in order to determine the retention effect.

Analysis

For the analysis of the first three research questions, The Mann-Whitney U-Test, which is a non-parametric test, was used to compare the experimental and control groups in terms of pre and post-test scores of vocabulary tests, attitude and desire to learn English questionnaire. “This test may be used when the conditions for using *t*-test are not met” (Tailor, 2005, p. 215). Some of the assumptions stated by Harris (1995) such as ‘random sampling’ and ‘normally distributed population’ were not met in this study. Besides, Kesici and Kocabaş (1998, p. 307-308) emphasize the importance of sample size by stating that: “to be closer to the normal distribution, the sample size must be at least 30. If the sample size is lower than 30 and if the distribution of the participants forming the sample is not known, non-parametric tests are used.” Due to the lack of ‘normally distributed population’, ‘random sampling’, and large sample size, the Mann-Whitney U-Test was employed for the first three research questions.

For the analysis of the last two research questions of this study which are related to the difference between the pre and post vocabulary test scores, attitude and desire to learn English levels of experimental group and between the post and delayed post vocabulary test scores of the experimental group respectively, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was administered. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, which is a non-parametric test, was employed because if the researched sample is measured in two different conditions, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test may be used. “It, instead of comparing the means, in order to rank and compare, turns the values into two different time periods (time 1 and time 2) and compares whether there is a difference between them or not” (Kalaycı, 2010, p. 104). As the main objective of these two research questions was to compare the pre- and post-test scores and post-delayed post-test scores of the same group and due to the factors leading to the use of non-parametric tests as mentioned above, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used for the analysis of these two research questions.

Findings

As it was presented above, this study made use of intact groups design in which no randomization took place. The control group and the experimental group students were already the students of two different classes. Therefore, in order to understand that the groups being compared were similar to each other in terms of English proficiency, two pre-tests including twenty multiple choice vocabulary questions each were conducted. Pre-test 1 included two units' subjects which had already been taught to both control and experimental groups at the time when the pre-test 1 was conducted in order to determine the current English proficiency levels of the groups.

After determining that the control and the experimental groups had almost equal English proficiency levels according to the results of the first pre-test (see Table 1), a second pre-test was administered including vocabularies of a unit (unit 7) which had not been taught at the time when the second pre-test was conducted with both groups. The students in both groups did not have any knowledge about the vocabularies in the second pre-test. The mean scores of both pre-tests are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Mean scores of pre-test 1 and pre-test 2 vocabulary tests

Tests	Groups	
	Experimental (n=20)	Control (n=21)
Pre-test 1 mean score	74.25	73.80
Pretest 2 mean score	51.75	55.00

As it can be understood from the similarity of the pre-test 1 mean scores of experimental and control groups, the groups had almost equal English proficiency levels before the training took part. The similarity can also be seen in the pre-test 2 mean scores of experimental and control groups as well. In order to check whether there was a statistically significant difference in terms of pre-test 1 and pre-test 2 scores of both groups, Mann- Whitney U test was conducted using SPSS 20.

According to the results, although there was a slight difference between the mean ranks of experimental (21.15) and control (20.86) groups in pre-test 1 and pre-test 2 (experimental= 19.53 and control= 22.40) there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control group in terms of both pre-test 1 (U=207.0) and pre-test 2 (U=180.5). According to the results of Mann-Whitney U tests conducted both for pre-test 1 and pre-test 2, it could be claimed that the control and experimental groups were equal in terms of being knowledgeable about the vocabularies related to the training before the treatment was implemented.

Together with the second pre-test, the attitude and desire to learn English questionnaire was also conducted with the aim of comparing them with the post test results. In order to claim that both groups had equal levels in terms of attitude and desire to learn English before the treatment, the same procedure conducted above for vocabulary tests was followed. Therefore, Mann- Whitney U test was conducted one more time to observe the present attitude and desire to learn English levels of experimental and control groups. The results demonstrated that there was no statistically significant difference between experimental and control groups in terms of attitude (*U*=168.00) and desire to learn English (*U*=97.50) before the treatment.

The findings of this study are discussed under the research questions provided below.

R.Q.1. Is there a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of post vocabulary test scores?

The first research question of this study investigated whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and control group in terms of post-test vocabulary scores. The Mann-Whitney U-Test results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control group (*U*=29.500, *p*=.000) ($p<.05$).

R.Q.2. Is there a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of their attitude toward learning English as a foreign language in post-test?

After specifying that both groups did not differ from each other significantly in pre-test 2, the second research question examined the potential difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of their attitude toward learning English as a foreign language in post-test. The Mann-Whitney U-Test was conducted to find out the potential difference and the results purported that there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of their attitude toward learning English as a foreign language according to the results of post-test (*U*=154.500).

R.Q.3. Is there a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of their desire to learn English as a foreign language in post-test?

The results indicating the difference between the control and experimental group in terms of their desire to learn English as a foreign language in post-test showed that there was no statistically significant difference between two groups (*U*=193.500).

R.Q.4. Is there a significant difference between the pre and post vocabulary test scores, desire and attitude towards learning English in the experimental group?

The findings for this research question investigating the potential differences between pre-test and post-test scores of experimental group in terms of vocabulary learning performance, attitude and desire to learn English provided some interesting results. To start with the vocabulary learning performance, it could be claimed that a 4 session, one time weekly Synectics model vocabulary learning treatment elicited a statistically significant change in vocabulary learning performance of the experimental group (Z= -3.876, p= .000).

The second issue related to last research question was the potential difference between pre-test and post-test scores of experimental group in terms of attitude toward learning English. The results illustrated a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores in terms of attitude toward English in the experimental group (Z= -2.056, p=.040).

The final part of this research question was concerned with the desire to learn English pre-test and post-test scores' difference. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test results indicated no significant difference between pre-test and post-test desire to learn English scores of experimental group (Z= -.104).

R.Q.5. Is there a significant difference between the post and delayed post vocabulary test scores in the experimental group?

Findings with regard to the retention effect of the Synectics model on vocabulary learning performance of the learners in the experimental group showed that there was a statistically significant difference between post-test and delayed post-test mean scores (Z=-3.385, p= .001).

Conclusion and Discussion

The results of this study suggested that the Synectics model was effective in improving the vocabulary learning performance of the senior secondary school students. An interesting finding of the study showed that, contrary to general expectation to have correlation between, although the Synectics model helped improve the attitude of the students in the experimental group, it did not have the same effect for the desire to learn English of the same learners. The possible reason of this was that students in the experimental group were active during the implementation of the model. They received positive reaction both from their teacher and friends when they contributed with even one word or sentence which created positive self- esteem and positive attitude toward learning English. Although they had positive attitude as a result of the Synectics model, limited time allocated to English in the school syllabus, dense grammatical topics, and exam-oriented system may have a negative effect on the learners' desire to learn English.

The improved vocabulary performance of the learners due to the model may be related to the fact that the senior students in the secondary schools in Turkey have to study English with an exam based method which makes them memorize the words and grammar structures. However, the Synectics model, by differentiating the traditional method of working on books or papers into game like studying and repeating the vocabularies, may also be effective in improving vocabulary learning.

Another interesting finding appeared as a result of the comparison of experimental and control group. It was found that although use of the Synectics model improved the vocabulary learning performance of the experimental group, no improvement was found for attitude and desire to learn English. Also, a significant difference was found between post-test and delayed post-test which showed the positive effect of the Synectics model on retention of the vocabulary learning.

During the implementation of the model, majority of the learners in the experimental group were interested in the new model. However, the implementation of it was not an easy process. First of all, teachers and students needed long practice for the implementation. It was realized during the implementation that the more proficient the learners in English, the easier to implement the model because the learners with higher English proficiency did not need help from their teacher which allowed for a more flexible implementation. It has also been proved in this study that game like models such as the Synectics model help students have better attitudes toward learning English and retain new vocabularies longer.

However, for the successful implementation of this model, learners need to be familiar with each other and their teacher for a long time in order to feel psychologically comfortable to express their ideas during the seven steps of the model. As it starts from stating one word to creating a full sentence, it encourages learners to speak in class which makes even the passive learners in class feel successful and creates positive attitudes toward learning English.

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An Ethnographic Research on a Novice English Teacher with a Ph.D. Degree for the First Years in a Korean EFL Context: Bridging the Gap between Unrealistic Expectations and Reality

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand how one novice Korean teacher of English with a Ph.D. degree faced challenges as a result of 'unrealistic expectations' during his first year of teaching in a Korean EFL school. The ethnographic approach was employed as a conceptual framework to "make sense" of this beginning teacher and deconstruct his "lived" stories. Multiple data sources (e.g., field notes, semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire, and group conversations) were employed to triangulate the data over the span of eleven months. The findings demonstrate that the beginning English teacher greatly struggled due to his unrealistic expectations in terms of a teaching environment, professional role, and school culture. Some practical suggestions for novice English teachers in an Asian EFL context are also discussed in this study.

Keywords: Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE), Korean alternative school, Ethnographic research, Novice English teacher

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Introduction

Utilizing a sociocultural perspective, Johnson (2006) claims that second language teacher education (SLTE) should pay more attention to second language (L2) teachers' internal state of mind and encourage L2 teachers to engage in self-directed teacher professional development (TPD) in their teaching contexts. Several studies about SLTE (Ahn, 2010; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Johnson, 2009; Lee, 2009; Lee, 2015a; Lee, 2015b; Said & Zhang, 2014) have also utilized a sociocultural perspective to understand L2 teachers' complex inner perceptions and their TPD. However, Farrell (2012) sheds light on the challenges of novice L2 teachers' lives and calls for more attention on this issue in SLTE. Although several quantitative (Ministry of Higher Education & Ministry of Education, 2006; Veenman, 1984) and qualitative studies (Farrell, 2003, 2006; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Peacock, 2001; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Richards & Pennington, 1998; Tsui, 2007; Watzke, 2007, cited in Kanno & Stuart, 2011) have explored L2 novice teachers for short-term or long-term periods, no research has approached the challenges of L2 novice teachers by employing an ethnographic lens. The two gaps in knowledge about novice teachers are particularly noticeable. First, the paucity of studies on L2 novice teachers' experiences (published in *Asian EFL Journal* for the last decade) has been documented in the Asian EFL context. Second, an inquiry into novice Korean L2 teachers is scarce in the Korean EFL context, and even less research has discussed the experiences and challenges of L2 novice teachers in the Korean EFL alternative school context, which features a nontraditional and flexible curriculum and course of instruction and has rapidly evolved in recent years.

In order to fill these gaps, I conducted an ethnographic study to thoroughly reveal how one novice L2 Korean teacher with a Ph.D. degree assimilated into an EFL alternative school context, focusing on challenges as a result of his unexpected experiences during his first year of teaching. From February 2013 to January 2014, multiple data (e.g., field notes, semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire, and group conversation) were collected. Then, the findings were reviewed and juxtaposed with other studies about novice teachers' problems and challenges taking place in other English teaching contexts.

This study aims to enhance the field of SLTE by providing an ethnographic perspective and expanding its scope into L2 novice secondary teachers in an EFL alternative school. It will also help L2 novice teachers notice and prepare for anticipated problems prior to embarking on their new teaching journey. Also, teacher educators can refine their curricula and methods of instruction for L2 pre-service teacher education and take proactive actions to collaborate closely with school leaders and experienced in-service teachers to help novice L2 teachers at the earliest stage—upon their arrival in the classroom.

Theoretical background

'Sociocultural turn' in Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE)

In the 40th anniversary issue of *TESOL Quarterly*, Johnson (2006) discussed how SLTE in the TESOL field has shifted during the past 40 years and how the new trend— 'sociocultural turn' – may pose challenges for L2 teacher education. Her claim corresponds to Block's (2003) seminal work that promotes the SLA research from more socially informed perspective. Johnson (2006) also forecast for the next two decades of *TESOL Quarterly* and emphasized that "the view of L2 teacher education should be broader, one that encompasses externally sanctioned as well as internally initiated and controlled professional development experiences [by L2 teachers]" (p.250). To put it another way, the SLTE should pay more attention to "the complexities of teachers' mental lives" (p. 236) of L2 teachers, and it is the L2 teacher trainee's responsibility to engage in a sustainable, self-directed TPD that is suitable for their teaching contexts. Johnson (2009) also argued for the needs to adopt a 'sociocultural perspective' (Vygotsky, 1978) as a theoretical underpinning as to conducting a study on teacher education and TPD. Many other studies on SLTE (Ahn, 2010; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Lee, 2009) have drawn on the 'sociocultural perspective' to make sense of teachers' complex inner perceptions and TPD when carrying out research on teacher education. Most recently, in line with Johnson's call for 'sociocultural turn' in the field of SLTE, Said and Zhang (2014) attempted to explore language teachers and their teaching, and language teacher education, and TPD from a wide array of local teaching contexts around the world.

In Korea, Ahn (2010, p. 4) also concurs with Johnson's point of view, explaining, "Human learning [can be] defined as a dynamic social activity situated in specific social, historical, and cultural contexts." Drawing on the sociocultural perspective, she carried out a case study on how one EFL high school teacher undertook her TPD through action research in Korea. Ahn's qualitative study stresses the importance of teachers' specific contexts, including "their classrooms, schools, curricula, and larger sociocultural or sociopolitical contexts" (Johnson, 2009) because this approach can fill the gaps in quantitative research (i.e., experimental designs) on SLTE and increase an in-depth understanding of what is actually happening within their unique contexts.

Novice L2 teachers in ESL/EFL contexts and teacher preparation

While the research literature on SLTE through a sociocultural lens is growing, Farrell (2012) argued that there is a dearth of literature on how post-teacher education novice L2 teachers struggle inside the classroom. In a recent *TESOL Quarterly*'s special issue (2012), Farrell first defines *novice* teachers are "those who are sometimes called newly qualified teachers, who have completed their language teacher education program including teaching practice [TP], and have commenced teaching English in an educational institution (usually within 3 years of completing their teacher education program)" (p. 437), which this study also adopts its definition. Subsequently, he diagnoses why novice L2 teachers face challenges (e.g., a lack of relevance between teacher education program and the real classroom) when they first walk into a real classroom (Densgombe, 1982; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Morrison & McIntrye, 1969; Richards, 1998). He makes several hands-on suggestions to help them get ready for what they will encounter in their beginning years. More importantly, Farrell emphasizes that L2 novice teachers' lives take place almost behind the scenes, which would therefore need a forum for novice teachers to air and share their stories and concerns in a range of contexts (e.g., small-/large-size classrooms, private/public schools).

Despite Farrell's argument, several studies on novice L2 teachers in ESL and EFL contexts have been carried out for short-term and long-term periods. In terms of short-term studies of novice L2 teachers' experience, Veenman (1984) conducted a meta-analysis study, which is regarded as landmark literature in the field of novice teacher issues. He analyzed 83 studies published from 1960 to 1983 on novice teachers' problems and showed the 24 most frequent problems experienced by novice teachers. Among others, they struggled the most in managing a classroom, motivating students, dealing with students' varied needs, grading, and handling students' parents.
Weinstein's (1988) seminal study was carried out on 118 novice students through survey with regard to their first year of teaching. Accordingly, a majority of

pre-service teachers experienced ‘unrealistic optimism’ (p. 39) and struggled greatly during their first years of teaching. This study also pointed out that beginning teachers should evaluate their teaching contexts on the basis of an accurate, objective evaluation (e.g., the school’s teaching workloads). More recently, in an ESL context, the Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Education (2006) in Malaysia conducted a large-scale survey on novice ESL teachers’ professional readiness and respective challenges. It turns out that 910 respondents were struggling regarding teaching preparation; classroom instruction; classroom management; student assessment; interpersonal relationships with colleagues, students, and parents. Together, these factors represent an enormous burden for teachers and administrative personnel. On the other hand, several studies have attempted to approach this issue for a long-term period. Recently, Kanno and Stuart (2011) conducted a longitudinal study on how novice L2 teachers’ identities are developed over time. In addition, they did a terrific job by arranging the research on novice L2 teachers’ long-term development, in chronological order, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Studies of Novice L2 teachers’ long-term development (from Kanno & Stuart, 2011, p. 238)

Source	Focus	Context	Research Methods
Pennington & Richards (1997) Richards & Pennington (1998)	Coping with the first year of teaching	3 graduates of a B.A. TESL degree in Hong Kong	Questionnaires; classroom observations monthly meetings. Duration: 9 months
Peacock (2001)	Teachers’ beliefs about L2 learning	146 pre-service teachers in a B.A. TESL program in Hong Kong	Learner self-report questionnaire; ESL proficiency scores; instruction package; classroom observation. Duration: 3 years
Farrell (2003) Farrell (2006)	Transition from a teacher education program to life in a real classroom	1 first-year English language teacher in Singapore	Classroom observation; post-observation conferences; teaching journal; semi-structured interviews. Duration: 1 year
Liu & Fisher (2006)	Changes in conceptions of self	3 foreign language teachers in a postgraduate certificate program in the UK	Semi-structured interviews; open-ended questionnaire; self-reflection report; evaluation logs. Duration: 9 months

Watzke (2007)	Changes in pedagogical content knowledge	9 novice foreign language teachers in the U.S.	Reflective journals; classroom observations; focus group interviews. Duration: 2 years
Tsui (2007)	Teacher identity formation	1 EFL teacher in China	Interviews; reflective diaries. Duration: 6 months, but covers 6 total years of development

When it comes to bridging the discrepancy between the L2 teacher education program and the classroom reality, several scholarships have discussed various ways to improve the teacher preparation. Freeman and Johnson (1998) indicate that it is important to promote working partnership between L2 teacher education program and the school, which can help the new teachers better understand its unique educational context and thus assimilate more smoothly into the new social and cultural environment. Freeman and Johnson (1998) also make the point that:

> Studying, understanding, and learning how to negotiate the dynamics of these powerful environments in which some actions and ways of being are valued and encouraged, whereas others are downplayed, ignored, and even silenced, is critical to constructing effective teacher education. (p. 409).

This statement acknowledges the dynamic environments a prospective teacher may encounter when teaching in a new school and thus emphasizes on collaboration to make him or her more qualified, which resonates with Densgombe's (1982) work in the '*hidden pedagogy.*' Densgombe (1982) points out that it is 'classroom experience' that plays a critical factor in influencing new teachers' attitudes and perceptions of their profession. Thus, he highlights that novice teachers should get aids directly from seasoned teachers or senior colleagues in the new school by working closely together in the form of team-teaching or observing classroom performance of those experienced teachers.

Lortie (1975) suggests that an individual becomes socialized into teaching (and becoming a teacher) from the early socialization period (when he or she enters the school and spends as a student) until starting a formal teacher education. Lortie (1975) frames an "apprenticeship-of-observation" theory that describes this early socialization period. During their apprenticeship period, Lortie maintains that teachers become acquainted with teaching tasks (e.g., teaching style, student evaluation, student supervision, class routines, exhibiting professional characteristics). Also, teachers tend to start identifying themselves as teachers in the apprenticeship period, which underlines the importance of the apprenticeship period (while being a student and a student teacher in schools). A decade later, Schempp (1987) verifies and supports Lortie's theory in his study of 49 physical education student teachers, echoing "the apprenticeship is formed from the perspective of a student" (p. 7).

Kent and Simpson (2010) explore the potential use of interactive videoconferencing (IVC) in teacher education programs to help better prepare prospective teachers. Findings show that preservice teachers can benefit greatly by observing exemplary inservice teachers who teach subject matter(s) in classrooms through IVC technology. IVC also provides preservice teachers with an opportunity to talk with the inservice teacher about a range of topics and issues related to its school, classroom practices and specific lessons, which can help them better get a more realistic viewpoint of the school and thus assimilate more smoothly into the real classroom.

Need of ethnographic study on novice L2 teachers in an Asian EFL context

Although numerous quantitative and qualitative published studies have explored L2 novice teachers' experience, only a few studies have examined the challenges of L2 novice teachers during their initial years through an ethnographic lens, which can provide an in-depth understanding of their experiences in the field of SLTE. Specifically, little attention has been given to a novice Korean L2 teacher in an Asian EFL school context. Nor has research been conducted in a newly emerging alternative school setting.

In L2 education, Freeman (1992) investigated a French language classroom as a participant observer using field notes, lesson transcripts, and interviews with the teacher and students, which shows how his study in a real-world setting was different from artificial settings in terms of 'contextual, unobtrusive, longitudinal, collaborative, interpretive, and organic' factors. In the light of the fundamental principles of the ethnography and Nunan's summary (see Table 2), my personal engagement with the participants, broad references concerning their background and working environment, and extensive methods of data collection and analysis will be provided in the methodology section.

In terms of investigating a novice Korean L2 teacher with a Ph.D. degree, very few studies were available. For example, Lee (2009) utilized a sociocultural theory in order to conduct a case study on one participant with a Ph.D. degree. She attempted to explore whether the participant's U.S. doctoral degree helped her notion of progress or caused tension as a teacher educator in the given sociocultural setting. However, two main limitations were identified in her study. First, a senior professor with 30 years of teaching experience was chosen for this study because the author believed very few secondary school teachers could earn a Ph.D. degree. In other words, she helped reveal the perception of a teacher educator (Ph.D. holder), but fails to identify Ph.D. secondary school teachers' beliefs and inner state of mind. Second, the data was collected only through a one-hour interview (i.e., MSN video chat). However, using a one-hour-long conversation can hardly allow one to understand subject's complex mental life. Senom, Zakaria & Shah (2013) argued that a study concerning novice L2 teachers' problems should depict precisely the tensions and problems of ESL and EFL novice teachers face in their early stages of teaching.

To fill these gaps, I attempted to conduct ethnographic research from February 2013 to January 2014 on a novice L2 secondary school teacher in EFL alternative school; this teacher recently obtained his Ph.D. degree from a Canadian university.

Research design

Research question

The purpose of this study is to understand how one novice Korean teacher of English with a Ph.D. degree faced challenges as a result of 'unrealistic expectations' during his first year of teaching in a Korean EFL school. To address these issues, one research question is formed as follows: What challenges did the L2 novice Korean teacher with a Ph.D. degree face as a result of 'unrealistic expectations' during his first year of teaching in a Korean EFL context?

Methods of data collection and analysis

This study was provisionally undertaken in November 2012 when one Korean alternative boarding school hired Michael (pseudonym; the participant), who earned two graduate degrees (M.A. in United States and Ph.D. in Canada) as a new secondary teacher of English. When I (as a director-appointee of the English

Department) was participating in his on-site job interview, I was concerned about two things: teaching and school culture. First, there was a mismatch between his professional experience (i.e., scholarly activities for 14 years without any English teaching experience) and the school's current need (i.e., new English teacher). Although he has an "attractive" educational background (i.e., American and Canadian diplomas) and has a proficient level of English competence, I remained cautious due to his inadequate L2 pedagogical knowledge and lack of teaching experience at K-12 level.

Secondly, a Korean Confucian culture may negatively affect him in trying to fit into the school. According to Lee (2009), 56% of public school teachers in Korea do not collaborate well with their colleagues due to the influence of Confucian society in which they are equally treated as fathers, kings, or "omnipotent beings" by students, parents, and outsiders. Despite its flexible, non-conventional school atmosphere whose teachers are assumed to be more congenial than the Korean public or private schools, Michael would still be working with Korean teachers. I was not confident about whether the incumbent teachers with B.A. and M.A. degrees would be willing to connect and collaborate with this new 'higher' king.

The above two concerns led me to conduct an in-depth ethnography study, elucidating his experiences as a L2 novice teacher in this unique teaching setting. Above all, it is important to notice that ethnography differs considerably from other research methods in its characteristics. In comparison to quantitative research, for example, ethnography employs larger instruments for data collection and analysis (e.g., conducting a longitudinal observation in a setting; becoming intimate with its culture; gathering more extensive data through field notes and interviews; and requiring much more theory-based, sophisticated interpretation) while approaching the issue more personally. Nunan (1992) summarized several characteristics of ethnographic research, as shown in Table 2.

There are, however, some limitations concerning ethnographic research. The main problem may stem from the validity (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). The findings of ethnographic research observed and conducted in one investigation setting by a participant observer may be inconsistent with other contexts or different times of 'the same type', which may lead to misinterpreting and/or misleading the data. Nonetheless, Blommaert (2013) shows how ethnographic inquiry can help sociolinguists (or researchers in other disciplines) identify changing phenomenon and better understand/analyze complex social occasion(s) with convincing and compelling evidence. Walford (2007) also points out that data obtained from one form of ethnographic inquiry – interview – is not sufficient to study social life. Therefore, to minimize the invalid claims and maximize the advantages of ethnographic research, it is important to collect and present multiple data to make a certain argument more persuasive.

After Michael officially became an English teacher, he agreed to participate in this ethnographic study. For nearly one year, I could observe him in a natural setting and collect raw, authentic data. The descriptions of such data came in handy without any attempt to manipulate the investigation (Nunan, 1992), in that we technically worked and lived together in the same dormitory school. Specifically, I taught adjacent to his classroom; my family lived next door to his house; and we often ate together as meal mates. In other words, the data was acquired purely from the Michael's performance in 'unobtrusive' real-life social situations.

Table 2. Characteristics of ethnographic research (from Nunan, 1992, p. 56)

Characteristic	Glossary
Contextual	The research is carried out in the context in which the subjects normally live and work.
Unobtrusive	The researcher avoids manipulating the phenomena under investigation.
Longitudinal	The research is relatively long-term.
Collaborative	The research involves the participation of stakeholders other than the researcher.
Interpretive	The researcher carries out interpretive analyses of the data.
Organic	There is interaction between questions/ hypotheses and data collection/ interpretation.

The data collection and analysis comprised three stages, from February 2013 to March 2014. While collecting the data (i.e., observation and informal oral interview) from February 2013 to January 2014 (Stage 1), individual interviews were informally conducted several times with Michael in a natural setting, followed by my brief summary of my field notes (e-blogs) later that day. Discussion was primarily focused on his complex mental life and professional experiences in an EFL alternative school, specifically zooming in on his classroom setting, schools, and sociocultural context context (Johnson, 2006).

The spontaneous, open-ended interviews provided me with significant data in that he freely vented his authentic feelings and thoughts about his personal and professional life. At this stage, I primarily took a 'romantic conception of interviewing' position (Roulston, 2010, p. 217) as an interviewer in which I worked to establish genuine rapport and trust with Michael to generate intimate, more authentic quality data.

From January 26 to February 3, 2014 (Stage 2), Michael and I attended a TEFL International conference. For nearly a week, I clarified 'the initial emerging themes' with him through informal and semi-structured interviews to increase the reliability of the data. I also wondered what concrete actions he took to mitigate such problems and challenges during his first year. At this stage, specifically, I took a 'romantic' interviewing approach and positioned myself as a passive listener (Roulston, 2010). This intensive discussion took place every night (8 sessions). Each meeting lasted for nearly 90 minutes face to face. I made notes on my laptop computer as I interviewed him. Later, such notes were written up again in my e-blog after the interview. The 'unplanned' group conversation or 'conversational narratives' also took place where Michael and I entered into a discourse space with other conference participants (Ochs & Capps, 2001). For nearly two hours Michael reflected on his teaching experience with different parties (one Canadian ESL teacher and one Filipino ESL teacher) in a non-threatening environment. Since he also expressed his opinions in English with different interlocutors (non-Koreans), it generated much more authentic information about his own stories, which helped me understand him from a different angle at a deeper level. That night, a group conversation was briefly summarized in my field notes. Then I spent the remainder of February analyzing and interpreting the data, juxtaposed with other studies.

Table 3. Procedure of this ethnography research

Stage	Period	Main Activities	Instruments for Data Collection & Analysis
1	Feb, 2013-Jan, 2014	Observe the subject & analyze the data	Face-to-face Informal Interview Field Notes
2	Jan 26 – Feb 3, 2014	Clarify the data for deeper analysis	Face-to-face Semi-structured Interview Group Conversation Field Notes
3	Feb – Mar, 2014	Triangulate & interpret the data juxtaposed with other studies	Questionnaire Online Semi-structured Interview

To generate conclusive findings and achieve triangulation, from February to March 2014 (Stage 3), I administered a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) to “get more than one perspective on the topic” (Wallace, 1998, p. 36) and investigate his additional attitudes and perceptions with regard to the research question. I designed, piloted and made subsequent changes before implementing it. After securing the credibility of the questionnaire, it was then administered simultaneously with the online semi-structured interview, which means that question items in the questionnaire were closely aligned with the questions asked during interviews, so that I could improve my understanding and interpretation of the data more accurately. In terms of the question items, the first four questions aimed to investigate a participant’s backgrounds, such as teaching experience and prior expectations and concerns. Questions 5-9 were designed to investigate both cognitive and behavioral aspects of a participant’s attitudes toward teaching (e.g., his beliefs about teaching English, views on teaching at an alternative school, and strategies to negotiate the tensions).

When it comes to interview technique, unlike the first and second stages, I took a ‘constructionist conception of the interview’ approach (Roulston, 2010, p. 218) at the third stage to better comprehend the talks by mostly asking and clarifying Michael’s previous utterances and the questionnaire. For this, *Kakaotalk* (Korea’s popular communicating SNS) and email were also employed as useful tools to collect the data. In particular, *Kakaotalk* was often utilized to connect with him, in that it was convenient for talking and asking questions. Table 3 summarizes specific three stages of this ethnographic research.

Table 4. Three categories and themes from the data

Four Contexts	Initial emerging themes
Classrooms	Teaching Environment
School	Professional Role
Sociocultural Context	School Culture

In terms of data analysis, I first designed a coding chart based on Johnson’s (2006) study and focused on ‘three contexts’ after reading the collected field notes several times and analyzing words or phrases that indicated his stated tensions and challenges, as displayed in table 4. Then, I identified three primary emerging patterns in the order of frequency in the use of such words. For example, he used words concerning ‘teaching environment’ issues most often, whereas he used words such as ‘school culture’ least frequently in this study. I also attempted to identify discourse in which the same meaning was conveyed but without directly using words like ‘culture’ or ‘environment.’ In order to improve the reliability of this coding process, I re-checked my understanding and interpretation of the data with Michael twice via email. Subsequently, I used them for doing the subsequent interview. Finally, I matched the first emerging themes with each of the corresponding three contexts. Each of these issues will be discussed in turn with descriptive data, analysis and discussion later in the study.

Setting and participant

The participant, Michael, is a 43-year old Korean secondary teacher of English. He obtained his B.A. in English language and literature with Teacher’s Certificate (the Secondary School Teacher of English) in Korea. He also earned his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in the United States and Canada, respectively. Although Michael had taught a few English courses in Canada at the university level after several weeks of international T.A. (Teacher Assistant) training, he had no teaching experience at the K-12 level.

An alternative school is a relatively a new concept, yet one that is steadily growing in Korea. Its main features include a nontraditional and flexible curriculum and course of instruction. In Korea, it can be classified into three types of institution: a school for 1) drop-outs who do not assimilate well in formative Korean education, 2) young immigrants from Southeast Asia and North Korea, and 3) students who select an alternative education because of its philosophy.

Michael’s school belongs to Group 3, which is operated on the basis of Christian values. This alternative boarding school in Korea (hereafter referred to as *K School*) is one of the oldest and largest Christian alternative schools in Korea, serving around 300 middle and high school students annually. At this school there are more than 80 teachers, including residential part-time teachers and commuting instructors with specialties in art, photography, music and cooking. The school offers the core classes (i.e., Korean, English, Mathematics, Science, Bible, etc.) in addition to a variety of electives, including multimedia, art and craft, creative playing, and cooking. The students’ level of academic achievement is relatively higher because of the school’s well-established academic and vocational aptitude mentoring and consulting system. In terms of the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) program within the institution, less funding and financial support are available due to its budget constraints. The institute does not receive any financial support from the government in order to run its own Bible-based curriculum. Therefore, the school is supported almost entirely by school tuition and contributions.

Results and Discussion

This study aims to understand how one novice Korean teacher of English with a Ph.D. degree experienced challenges as a result of 'unrealistic expectations' during his first year of teaching in a Korean EFL school. In this section, three unrealistic expectations identified and experienced by Michael will be discussed in terms of teaching environment, professional role, and school culture.

Unrealistic expectations 1: Teaching environment

In terms of teaching environment, as a novice teacher Michael felt a significant disparity between his prior expectations and then-current realities. In particular, according to the field note recorded on May 19, 2013, he mentioned a perceived gap between how the school website described students' lives in a classroom and what he actually confronted in everyday life, as noted below.

Excerpt 1. A field note on 'Teaching Environment' (May 19, 2013)

> I thought this school concentrated highly on the autonomous learning where the students lead the class and study themselves in their self-study space after school. In reality, however, since [my] students have little or almost no ability and motivation to sustain their learning themselves, I should play a leading role both in and outside class for their learning. I was honestly puzzled by a majority of [high school] students who were demotivated and lethargic during the self-study session [while I was on duty].

Michael also explains the unrealistic expectation about 'teaching environment' is mainly due to the school's hectic schedule. According to the semi-structured interview conducted on February 2, 2014, Michael was too busy to follow the school schedule, which was different from his expectation. Several data from the field-notes also support his claim. For instance, although Michael was not a homeroom teacher in 2013, he started each day with English Bible study with 12^{th} graders, from 8 A.M. to 8:30 A.M. In order to prepare for the class and have breakfast, he needed to arrive in his classroom before 7:20 A.M. His daily schedule lasted from 8:40 A.M. to 5:10 P.M. He only taught three classes per day on average, which is a reasonable amount of work. However, he was also responsible for helping his students in his designated classroom for their self-study and correcting their essay writing. Every Tuesday afternoon (3:30

P.M. to 5:20 P.M.), he had to attend the English department's meeting, while every Thursday afternoon (3:30 P.M. to 5:20 P.M.) he attended an entire teacher-training seminar. After dinner, he was responsible for supervising students' self-study session from 6:50 P.M. to 9:20 P.M. every Tuesday, and attending chapel every Wednesday evening. Moreover, he was asked to preach a monthly sermon, plus a weekly sermon for the early morning service. It shows that the only time he could invest his time for preparing for the next class or doing his own activities was on Monday, Thursday, and Friday evenings or, hopefully, over the weekend. However, he was also too busy to deal with unexpected events and prepare for his next class even when rest time was allowed. Additionally, since the English department did not have a fixed curriculum, it empowered English teachers to choose their autonomous instruction. It meant that Michael had to prepare everything (i.e., the textbook, quizzes, PowerPoint slides) from scratch, which had the effect of aggravating his already heavy schedule.

According to the semi-structured communication with Michael via *Kakaotalk*, with regard to his perception of his life after becoming a homeroom teacher in 2014, he commented, "*You know I do not usually pray, but this semester I have been praying hard always [to handle this hectic schedule well]* (Mar/03/2014)." It implies that he may already have been having difficulty carrying out his extra function apart from teaching and other assigned responsibilities. When asked about his expectation about this school prior to his actual employment—via a questionnaire collected on March 25, 2014—he mentioned that he would expect this school to be like the Canadian university he attended. There, teachers could freely engage in professional development in the evening, but here, in reality, that was impossible.

Michael's unrealistic expectation about his teaching environment is supported by previous studies. Among others, for instance, Veenman (1984) pointed out that novice teachers encountered "reality shock" due to "the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life" (p. 143). Michael obtained prior knowledge about this particular school based on the school website and his previous teaching experience in a Canadian university, an experience he attributed to forming his biased or unrealistic expectation about teaching context. Weinstein (1988) also indicated that many novice teachers encounter 'reality shock' (p. 39) due to unrealistic expectations. This finding suggests that Michael could have mitigated this 'reality shock' of teaching environment if he had investigated the school more accurately and thoroughly in advance.

Unrealistic expectations 2: Professional role

As regards a professional role as a novice English teacher, Michael reported that he also felt a discrepancy between his anticipated and current realities. For 14 previous years in North American universities, he had been educated and trained to become a researcher. In several field notes, Michael often mentioned that he would want to become a professor in a university. Excerpt 2 specifically illustrates how his prior expectations toward his professional role as an English teacher were in opposition to his actual role as an English teacher in the school.

Excerpt 2. A field note regarding his 'Professional Role' (Oct 14, 2013)

> My expectation as a professional role was teaching students during the daytime and writing a series of papers during the evening hours. On vacation, I was expected to attend at seminars or conferences. I would also like to spend time translating from Latin and Greek texts into Korean, which is my interest area. Nowadays, I feel strongly I was very wrong.

In Excerpt 2, Michael vividly revealed that his expectation as an English teacher was far from the actual (multiple) roles he played in the actual school context. Initially, he would expect to play multiple professional roles (e.g. author, conference presenter, and translator) in *K School*, apart from being an English teacher. In the questionnaire, Michael pointed out that this unrealistic expectation stemmed from his eight years of living in Canada. In particular, he became so accustomed to teaching adult learners at a Canadian university that he found it challenging to teach English to young Korean students, one by one. Additionally, he did not expect to play a professional role in motivating high school students because his former undergraduate students were highly motivated and autonomous learners. Michael negatively criticized his limited professional role for his hectic school schedule. He responded in the questionnaire: "Teachers here seem to overwork. They are extremely busy. In Canada, I worked only for eight hours. I would expect to play other professional roles in the evening. But it is not realistic given the situation."

Most importantly, the issue over his 'professional role' continued after one year of teaching. In a semi-structured interview with Michael, he implies that he is still battling against his professional role: *"I feel guilty as a scholar because I don't publish a paper* (Feb/17/2014)*"* Here, it seems that he experienced a considerable gap between his professional role as a college professor (e.g., publishing papers and translating ancient texts) and his current role as a secondary English teacher (e.g., teaching English). Farrell (2011) maintained that English teachers play 16 main professional roles (e.g., entertainer, juggler, motivator, social worker, etc.) and "articulate these roles through their biographies, stories, and/or diaries and share with other teachers" (p. 60). In other words, what Michael shared with me about his teaching experiences through written and verbal communication could reflect his multiple professional roles as an English teacher in *K School*. Burns and Richards (2009) have indicated that professional role identity reflects "how individuals see themselves and how they enact their roles within different settings" (p. 5). In light of this suggestion, Michael still attempted to identify himself not only as an English teacher but also as a writer, conference presenter, and translator in *K School*. These were all roles that he had played as a professional in Canada.

Unrealistic expectations 3: School culture

In terms of school culture, Michael also experienced a significant gap between his previous expectations and the realities he encountered at *K School*. Throughout eleven months of his initial teaching, Michael frequently used words "very hectic," "chaotic," and "uncooperative" when describing the school culture. Among several field notes, Excerpt 3 indicates how the school's hectic schedule was far from his expectations and thus did affect his life as a beginning English teacher.

Excerpt 3. A field note regarding 'School Culture' (Nov 18, 2013)

> Unlike my expectations, this school is extremely busy under the current structure of a curriculum. From early morning to late night, the school wants to take full control of its students within a specific boundary. I understand the necessity of this suffocating 'prisonlike' structure considering its unique educational context. The drawback of this structure may keep teachers from interacting or collaborating with one another. Personally, I have only a few teachers I can talk to on a daily basis. I feel this current school structure causes the lack of collaboration among teachers. Sometimes, this lack of collaboration and communication left me to feel isolated and unassisted.

According to the above excerpt, Michael felt regretful over his lessened opportunity to collaborate with his colleagues due to his demanding daily schedule, which was in contrast to his prior expectation regarding school culture. According to the questionnaire, Michael's assumption toward 'school culture' was formed on the basis of his previous experience in Canada. He commented, "I expect to work closely with my colleagues. Unfortunately, this is not realistic within this context." In the semi-structured interview, Michael first tried to explain the inevitable hectic structure of this school. For instance, he indicated that teachers here would need to take on multiple roles, including parental care toward their students apart from minimal responsibilities (e.g., teaching, administrative chores). He claimed that this structural problem could lessen the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers.

Based on the above-triangulated data, it seems this 'uncooperative' school culture, which was far from his expectations, may have stemmed from the chronic school structure, causing of such hectic schedules for its teachers. However, when exploring this issue more deeply, it seems that there was a more essential reason behind it. For instance, Michael brought a unique background (e.g., Ph.D. degree) into this community when he was hired as an English teacher in *K School*. In several field-notes, Michael expressed his inhibition or hesitation about talking with others over any issue. Even among English teachers, it seems that he felt defensive, as indicated in one of the field notes: "*I am afraid other teachers may find me arrogant. I do not want to hear this infamous Korean sayings 'Bag with a long strap,' which means I have a long history of education* "(from a field note, Nov/15/ 2013). Therefore, he often chose to avoid any tensions or conflicts, and subsequently became passive in his relationships with other teachers, which made him seem uncooperative, which in turn made him feel more isolated. According to Excerpt 4 of a group conversation conducted on February 1, 2014, he has almost nobody to share his feelings with or candid opinions about with regard to his negative perceptions about his class or teacher's life in *K School*.

Excerpt 4. Group conversation regarding 'School Culture' (Feb 01, 2014)

> I was extremely cautious about my words because I was afraid of what others might think of me…I feel I can communicate but can't connect with colleagues.

Michael's unrealistic expectation about the 'uncooperative' school culture has been supported by previous studies. Lee's (2009) study indicated that nearly 60 % of 120 incumbent Korean teachers did not collaborate nor share any information with fellow teachers. He explained that this 'uncooperative' school culture was prevalent across South Korea due to the influence of Confucian philosophy. Traditionally, since teachers are recognized as having the higher status of king or are "similar to the independent omniscient being" (p. 64), they are less likely to work together with their colleagues. Lee's (2009) study also pointed out that 62% of the teachers blamed the school atmosphere and its hierarchical structure for the lack of collaborative work and professional teacher development. Choi (2009) also indicates that this hierarchical order or "unequal power relationship" (p. 38) can be one of the key hindrances to a collaborative classroom research project between teachers and researchers in Asian EFL contexts. The researcher (or professor) who holds a Ph.D. degree is "in the position of power" (p. 38) in comparison to the teacher collaborator, which tends to make it difficult to carry out collaborative research in the classroom. Although it seems difficult to make any sweeping generalizations, in light of these studies it can be implied that the sociopolitical context (e.g., Confucian society and its hierarchical structure) may play a detrimental role for Michael and other teachers in collaborating with their colleagues.

By far, this study has examined how Michael struggled at *K School* due to his 'unrealistic expectations' in terms of teaching environment, professional role, and the school culture during the first year of teaching. In particular, this ethnographic study attempts to comprehend "the complexities of [Michael's] mental lives" (Johnson, 2006, p. 236) employing a variety of data sources in a Korean EFL alternative school setting where little attention has been received. Most of all, one of the great contributions of this study is to reveal how his professional identities having formed through years of training and education in North America (to become an university professor) clashed with his new professional role (as a novice English teacher), the Korea's cultural norms and, more importantly, its unique but unknown sociocultural teaching context. An important but little discussed issue, however, is the impact(s) of moral and ethical values on Michael, which may arguably play a central part in one having 'unrealistic expectations' and dealing with 'reality' of his teaching environment, professional role and school culture (Crookes, 2009; Edge, 1996; Hafernik et al., 2002; Johnston, 2003). As Johnston (2003) argues, "[Language] teaching is a profoundly value-laden activity" (p. 1), further discussion is needed "to understand the values underlying [his] actions and decisions" (p. 23) inside the classroom and the broader context (e.g., his decision to a) choose materials, b) implement his pedagogical strategy, c) interact with students, and d) evaluate students). Although it is too complex and subtle to understand the moral and ethical issues, it would be worth investigating and thus raising the awareness of such issues for ELT practitioners and administrators in a Korean alternative EFL school context (and beyond) to consider and respond (Hafernik et al., 2002; Johnston, 2003). Nonetheless, when considering the fact that studies about alternative education in Korea are non-existent to the author's knowledge, exploring the novice teachers' beliefs and significance of the contextual factors could be a useful addition to the growing literature on ELT in Asian EFL context.

Conclusion

This study aims to understand how one novice Korean teacher of English with a Ph.D. degree experienced challenges as a result of 'unrealistic expectations' during his first year of teaching in a Korean EFL school. Drawing on multiple data sources (e.g., field notes, semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire, and a group conversation), the findings of this study suggest that the novice English teacher struggled because of his unrealistic expectations in terms of teaching environment, his professional role, and the school culture in which he found himself. Methodologically, this study also attempts to provide an ethnographic perspective and expand its scope into L2 novice secondary teachers in an EFL alternative school, which could be a possible means of research for other researchers investigating the SLTE filed.

Nevertheless, the limitations of this study need to be noted. First, the findings of this study can hardly be generalized because it only explored one in-service English teacher in a Korean EFL context. More significant findings may have been acquired if a larger number of teachers in other contexts had participated in the present study. Additionally, more qualitative data is needed to make the present study more convincing and persuasive. Also, more in-depth research is needed to explore how the moral and ethical values may play roles on Michael having ‘unrealistic expectations’ and dealing with ‘reality’ of his teaching environment, professional role and school culture. However, considering that fact that the research on an L2 novice teacher in in an Asian EFL alternative school context is at an early stage, the current study may be significant and could add diversity to the literature on SLTE by providing an ethnographic perspective and expanding its scope to that of an L2 novice secondary teacher in an Asian EFL alternative school. Lastly, it is important to justify validity issue as an observer’s subjective interpretation may mislead the findings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). To make the argument more convincing and compelling and maximize the advantages of ethnographic research, it is important to collect multiple sources and triangulate the data.

To conclude, I would like to propose some practical suggestions for novice English teachers, L2 pre-service teacher educators, school administrators, and ELT scholars in an Asian EFL context. First, for novice English teachers, I would like to emphasize the significance of self-directed teacher professional development (TPD), as discussed in several studies (Ahn, 2010; Johnson, 2006; Lee, 2015a; Lee, 2015b). In particular, Lee (2015a) emphasizes that in-service English teacher in an Asian EFL context should take on proactive, self-driven TPDs that “meet their own teaching contexts” (p. 92). In other words, once they become an in-service English teacher, it is vital to engage in self-initiated TPDs that may suit their unique school settings. Second, it is worth noticing that there is a large discrepancy between beginning English teachers’ expectation and an actual EFL classroom. Thus, L2 pre-service teacher educators, as well as school administrators, should consider how to effectively help novice

English teachers assimilate into the new school environment throughout their transitional period. Finally, ELT scholars should pay more attention to novice English teachers' "lived experiences" or "authentic voices" and share them with other colleagues, as well as the general public and policy-makers (Lee, 2015b). Johnson (2006, p. 236) also points out that it is worth identifying and sharing "complexities of teachers' mental lives," which are shaped by a variety of internal and external variables. If novice English teachers, L2 pre-service teacher educators, school administrators, and ELT scholars work together to understand the tensions and challenges experienced and identified by beginning English teachers and collaborate with them to remedy these dilemmas, they can better meet the needs and demands of new in-service English teachers and thus bridge the gap between unrealistic expectations and realities in the actual classroom in Asian EFL contexts.

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Appendix A

This questionnaire (including the question items below) was created on the basis of our informal discussions held in Manila from January 26 to February 3, 2014, during a TEFL international conference. Its primary aim is to better understand your life as a novice teacher in an EFL alternative school in South Korea. All of your private information will be protected.

1.Describe your personal and professional background relevant to the current institution. (If possible, attached your C.V.)

2. Why have you chosen this profession? Why did you decide to work in this school?

3. What did you expect about this school before actually coming here? Have you identified or experienced any gap between your prior assumptions and the current realities in the school during your first year of teaching?

4. If so, can you describe these tensions and challenges you have encountered, in detail? (i.e., classroom, relationship with colleagues, school's curriculum, school's culture)

5. How did you negotiate such difficulties? Describe your specific actions taken to tackle them.

6. In your estimation, does the school pay proper attention to the wellbeing of novice second language (L2) teachers? On a scale of 1-10, can you measure its attention level?

7. In your estimation, what are the things the school needs to improve for helping novice L2 teachers assimilate well into the school? What would you suggest to the principal for changes?

8. When it comes to enhancing the wellbeing of L2 novice teachers, do you have some suggestions for the school leaders or policy-makers?

9. What advice can you give to pre-service teachers or L2 novice teachers who are seriously considering a teaching career in an EFL alternative school context?

Thank you for your sincere answers.

ASIAN EFL JOURNAL The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Strategies for Developing English Language Writing Skills – Overall and Individual Perspectives

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Abstract

With the advent of modern technology, much of which is keyboard-based, the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing is extremely important, and this has highlighted the need for strategies to develop students' writing skills. The study reported in this article took place in a key university in China where 59 sophomore (second-year) students were studying in a writing class. They were initially surveyed by means of a custom-designed questionnaire regarding their strategies for developing writing skills in English, and the questionnaire ratings were analyzed for medians and also correlated with end-of-course scores. Subsequently, a qualitative analysis of comments by four of the top-scoring students regarding their strategy use was undertaken. Quantitative results indicated that a small group of strategies was significantly positively correlated with successful course results, and another strategy group was significantly negatively correlated. Although the responses from the four top-scoring students were generally in the same direction as the quantitative results, there was considerable variation in terms of individual strategy preferences, with complex inter-individual and dynamic intra-individual patterns being apparent. Pedagogical implications of these findings are suggested and recommendations made for ongoing research.

Keywords: Strategies; writing skills; strategy instruction; inter-individual; intra-individual; complex; dynamic

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Introduction

Although much has been written about the problems associated with "linguistic imperialism" (e.g. Canagarajah, 1999; Phillipson, 1992), English continues to be a valuable "global commodity" (Pennycook, 2013, p.145). As a result, the teaching of English has become a major educational industry around the world, but perhaps especially in China, where an "astronomical number" (Gu, 2014, p.1) of people are learning English. Of these, many need to develop writing skills in order to pursue business opportunities, to study abroad, to pursue leisure activities using the internet, to communicate with others, or to competently perform a range of activities which involve writing.

Even in the first language, writing is usually the last skill to be developed, after listening, speaking and reading, and it is often the skill which learners find the most difficult. Since this is true of even the L1, it should, perhaps, not be considered surprising that writing is not an easy skill for students of a language other than their first to develop. Over the years, a variety of approaches has been employed to promote students' writing ability, two of the best-known of which have been the process approach and the genre approach. Process writing involves an essentially cognitive approach to writing (e.g., Chien, 2012; Flower and Hayes, 1981; Zhang, 2003), while a genre approach (e.g., Swales, 1990) aims to raise awareness of the conventions of writing for particular contexts. However, the various approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive: in fact, they are often used together in the writing classroom (e.g., Han, 2001; Hyland, 2002). But whichever approach or combination of approaches may be employed, in order to maximize the benefits, students need to learn how to manage their written work by means of effective strategies, since "understanding writing strategies is indispensable to helping learners develop their writing abilities" (Lei, 2008, p. 217).

The interest in language learning strategies developed in the mid-70s (e.g. Rubin, 1975), and has continued right up to the present (e.g. Cohen, 2011; Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Cohen & Griffiths, 2015; Gao, 2010; Griffiths, 2008, 2013; Griffiths & Oxford, 2014; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Macaro, 2006; Oxford, 2011; Tang & Griffiths, 2013; Wen & Wang, 2003; Zhang, 2003). If we examine the literature, we can see that Rubin (1975) defined strategies as what students **do:** that is they are <u>active.</u> Although strategies may be deployed either deliberately or automatically (Wenden, 1991), they are goal-oriented and <u>purpose</u>ful rather than random (Macaro, 2006; Oxford, 1990, 2011), and are <u>chosen</u> (for instance Cohen 1998, 2011) by students themselves in order to <u>learn</u> or manage the learning process. Combining these elements produces a concise definition of learning strategies as <u>actions chosen by learners (either deliberately or automatically) for the purpose of learning or regulating learning</u> (a more detailed discussion of issues involved with this definition can be found in Griffiths, 2015). In the case of target-language writing, the purpose of strategy selection is the development of writing skills. There are many studies which have explored the relationship between strategies and successful language learning (e,g., Foong & Goh, 1997; Kyungsim & Leavell, 2006; Park, 1997; Yu & Wang, 2009). It is, however, surprisingly difficult to find studies which focus directly on writing strategies, although there are some.

Literature review

Writing strategy research has proceeded according to two main parallel paradigms: surveying quite large groups (mainly by means of questionnaires), and investigating individuals or small groups of learners (often using more qualitative techniques such as interviews, think-aloud protocols or journals).

Nisbet, Tindall and Arroyo (2005) investigated the relationship between language learning strategy preferences and English proficiency among 168 Chinese university students. They found that strategies accounted for 4% of the variance in TOEFL scores and suggested further research examining other factors that may contribute to variation in proficiency.

Using three groups of Chinese EFL learners, Wang (2005) explored the strategies they used when writing in English. According to the results, there was a statistical correlation between proficiency and a number of the strategies under investigation.

Using quite a large group (N=165) McMullen (2009) investigated the use of language learning strategies by Saudi Arabian foreign language students. The results of the study, which used the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning or SILL (Oxford, 1990), were used to set up a program for direct strategy instruction with an English writing class.

However, perhaps because, by its nature, writing requires focused attention on what has been written, most research into writing strategies has been done with individuals or small groups.

Using a think-aloud technique, Wong (2005) studied the composing strategies employed by four advanced target language writers. According to the findings, the writers employed a broad range of cognitive, metacognitive and affective strategies, although there were considerable differences in the ways that different writers used the various strategies.

Mu and Carrington (2007) investigated the writing processes of three Chinese post-graduate target language (TL) writers in an Australian higher education institution. The findings indicated that the participants employed rhetorical, metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies in their writing, and that, except for rhetorical strategies (organization of paragraphs), strategies are transferrable across languages.

The writing strategies of two Chinese university students were examined from a sociocultural perspective, using interviews, stimulated recall and process logs by Lei (2008). He concluded that the strategies of these students could be classified as artifact-mediated, rule-mediated, community-mediated or role-mediated.

Canagarajah (2011) describes the strategies employed by a Saudi Arabian undergraduate student in her essay writing. Data was obtained by means of essay drafts, journals, classroom assignments, peer review and stimulated recall. According to the study, feedback by the instructor and peers can help students question their choices, think critically about various options, evaluate the effectiveness of their choices, and develop metacognitive awareness.

Using think-aloud protocols and retrospective interviews with a somewhat larger (N=40) group, Chien (2012) investigated the writing strategies used by students in Taiwan. The high achievers were found to use more planning, text generation, revising and editing strategies than the low achievers.

Although these studies are interesting, none of them investigate how overall results which relate to a class as a whole (e.g. from a questionnaire) apply to individuals, or how individual results relate to more general classroom findings (which is the reality with which most teachers have to deal). A generalized class profile is important as a source of pedagogical information which might guide teacher decision-making. However, individuals within a class can vary greatly from each other, and, as a result, coordination of both overall and individual perspectives is essential if successful learning is to be promoted.

The Study

The study reported in this article was undertaken in order to further investigate the role of strategies (defined as activities chosen by learners for the purpose of learning) in the development of target language writing skills. Both overall and individual perceptions were investigated, and the implications of findings for pedagogical situations were explored. The study therefore focused on the following key questions:

- Which strategies do students report using more or less frequently in order to develop writing skills?
- How is strategy use related to successful learning outcomes?
- How do successful individuals perceive strategy use?

- What are the pedagogical implications which can be inferred from the results?

Research setting

The study was carried out at one of the key universities in Beijing, China among students preparing for a major public examination. They needed to do well in this exam in order to complete the requirements for graduation in their chosen degree, and to be able to cope with the demands of high-level academic writing tasks such as research papers and theses. Motivation was therefore generally high and students worked hard to fulfill the requirements of their course.

Participants

Stage one of the study involved 59 students in four intact classes studying English as their Major at sophomore level, that is, they were in the second year of a four-year degree. These students were taught writing using the same material and assessment procedures by the same native-speaking teacher of English (Griffiths, 2015). Students were mostly either late teenagers or in their early twenties and around three quarters of them were female.

Since these students were due to sit a major national exam (The Test for English Majors, or TEM 4), the results of which might have major ramifications for their future careers, the course content was to a large extent tied to what would be required for them to do well in this exam. As a result, writing activities started at the sentence level (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex), proceeded to paragraph writing (topic sentence, supporting ideas) to essay writing (especially on the kinds of topics that were common in the exam, such as the environment, education, family matters, social concerns etc.). In addition, mechanical matters such as punctuation, error correction and cohesion and coherence were dealt with. As limited time permitted, however, some more creative writing was encouraged, and some of the students submitted creative pieces which were worked on together with the teacher, and some were published in an online magazine (www.hltmag.co.uk) much to the students' delight.

In order to elicit more individual perspectives and to cross-check the questionnaire data, four of the highest-scoring of the 59 students were later asked to respond to a follow-up survey designed to elicit qualitative insights regarding their strategy use: Winnie, Tina, Terry and Steven (not their real names for privacy reasons). Of these four, Tina and Terry have since gone on to study at universities in the USA, Steven has gone on to study law at Peking University (China's top university) and Winnie is working as a journalist at an English-speaking publication in Beijing - in other words, in their various ways, they have all done well.

Instrument

A questionnaire was chosen as the initial research instrument since, although sometimes questioned in terms of reliability and validity it is the most "efficient" (White, Schramm & Chamot, 2007, p. 94) method of finding out about learners' strategies, and "uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processable" (Dornyei, 2007, pp. 101-102). However, in view of the reservations regarding the appropriacy of existing strategy inventories (e.g. LoCastro, 1994; Woodrow, 2005), for the purposes of the present study it was decided to construct a questionnaire specifically designed for the needs of the particular context (sophomore students studying a writing course in a Chinese university). Strategies for a 20-item writing strategy questionnaire (see Appendix 1) were gathered from existing strategy surveys (Griffiths, 2008; Oxford, 1990), as well as suggestions from students regarding strategies they had found useful for developing writing skills, and from teachers regarding their observations and experience of effective strategy use.

Each item of the strategy questionnaire specified an activity which students might choose in order to achieve the goal of developing their writing skills, thereby ensuring construct validity since the items conform to the definition of the strategy construct established previously. The issue of content validity was addressed by making sure the questionnaire contained a sufficient number of items to provide an overall picture of the use of strategies which might contribute to the development of writing skills. Students were asked to rate each item from 1 (very low frequency) to 5 (very high frequency) according to how often they believed they used it. The possibility of translating the items into Chinese (the students' L1) was considered, but deemed unnecessary and inappropriate since this was an English class in which students were at a reasonably high level of proficiency. The questionnaire was trialed with a colleague's class consisting of students (N=32) who were not involved in the final survey, following which an alpha reliability co-efficient of .85 was obtained and minor adjustments to the wording and format were made. The questionnaire was submitted to university authorities for approval before being administered to the students.

Data collection

The questionnaire was administered during class time. In order to ensure informed consent, the concept of strategy and the purpose of the questionnaire were explained by the teacher. Students were asked to sign their permission if they agreed for the data to be used in research (all of those who were present did this) and the questionnaires were collected upon completion. Since this data collection was actually taking place during class time, and students can resent being used as research “guinea pigs” if they cannot see some kind of benefit for their own learning, the class then proceeded to discuss the strategy idea and to consider the items listed in the questionnaire and how students might personally benefit from some of them.

End-of-course scores were obtained as a result of routine course summary procedures. These included an aggregation of:

1. marks obtained from periodic tests and essays during the semester
2. results of the final exam consisting of several multi-choice and short answer questions (including error correction, punctuation, sentence structure and paragraph sequencing) plus an essay question of around 250 words.

A number of researchers have commented on the limitations of questionnaires used in isolation (for instance Dornyei, 2007; Gu, Wen & Wu, 1995; White, Schramm & Chamot, 2007), and in recent years there has been a tendency to triangulate research findings by employing qualitative as well as quantitative methods (e.g., Grenfell & Macaro, 2007; Woodrow, 2005). Probably the most common qualitative data gathering technique is the interview. However, in the case of this study, after the questionnaire and the course assessment procedures described above had been completed, students had dispersed for the year and the researcher (Griffiths, 2015) had moved on to another university, so face-to-face interviews were not a practical option. Since, anyway, writing skills formed the research topic, and the participants were students from a course in academic writing, written (e-mail) responses seemed an especially appropriate data collection medium for this particular study.

For this reason, in order to add a qualitative dimension to the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire, and also to cross-check the questionnaire results, four of the students who obtained high end-of-course scores and whose e-mail addresses were available were contacted by e-mail and asked to comment on specified items of the questionnaire. Since the study focused on successful skills development, it was decided to involve just the high scoring students for the purposes of this study, although involving a wider range of ability levels might be an interesting direction for further research. A selection of their responses is included in the qualitative results.

Data analysis

The questionnaire data and end-of-course scores were entered into SPSS and analyzed for the following:

1. A test of reliability (Cronbach alpha) was carried out

2. In order to identify the strategies that students on the writing course reportedly employed more or less often, median ratings were calculated (medians are more suitable than means for non-parametric data such as obtained from a Likert scale).
3. In order to identify any strategy items or groups of strategies which might be typical of more or less successful students, end-of-course scores for the writing course were correlated with the questionnaire ratings using Spearman's rho for non-parametric data.

The qualitative data were analyzed for:

1. The degree to which the responses were positive, negative or qualified (inter-rater reliability was also calculated)
2. The relationship between the questionnaire results and the students' responses
3. The degree to which the students' responses varied from each other (inter-individual variation)
4. The degree to which students' responses were qualified or show change over time (intra-individual variation)

Quantitative results

The quantitative analysis of the data produced the following results:

Reliability

The alpha co-efficient for reliability of the instrument across all questionnaire items was .87, which is well above the standard reliability threshold of .70 (de Vaus, 1995). It indicates that the instrument is a reliable one for investigating the writing strategy construct in the context in which the study was conducted

Median ratings

According to the median ratings

- Seven of the strategy items (35%) were in the "high" range (median=4) (items 2, 5, 6, 12, 15, 18, 19).
- Another 12 items (60%) were in the medium range (median=3) (items 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20)
- Only one item (item 11 – *I write a diary in English*) fell into the low frequency category (median=2).

These results are set out in Appendix 2.

Correlations

(a) Using Spearman's test for correlation of non-parametric data, strategy use overall (as calculated by adding the ratings together into a single variable using the SPSS transform/compute variable function) did not correlate significantly with final scores.

(b) On an individual item level, only strategy 9 (*I record new language I hear or read in a notebook*) showed a significant positive correlation with end-of-course scores (R=.257, p<.05). This result indicates that the notebook strategy accounts for 7% of the variance in final scores, an effect size which Cohen (1988) considers small.

(c) Strategy item 14 (*I write creatively*) showed a significant negative correlation with end-of-course scores (R= -.283, p<.05), accounting for 8% of the variance, an effect size which is also small (Cohen, 1988).

(d) Although it was reportedly the least frequently used, item 11 (*I write a diary)* did not prove to be significantly negatively correlated with end-of-course scores.

(e) There were 4 strategies whose correlation coefficients with end-of-course scores were higher than 0.2 (see Appendix 3). These were items

5 *I plan my writing* (R=.242)

8 *I revise new language regularly* (R=.230)

9 *I record new language I hear or read in a notebook* (R=.257)

20 *I consult my teacher if I have problems with my writing* (R=.227)

When grouped by using the transform/compute variable function on SPSS, these four items together proved to be significantly positively correlated (R=.331, p<.05) with end-of-course scores, indicating that this group of strategies accounts for 11% of the variance in final scores, an effect size which Cohen (1988) describes as medium.

(f) Also in Appendix 3 it can be seen that there were five strategies whose correlations with end-of-course scores were negative:

10 *I memorize good texts as a model for my own writing* (R=-.071)

11 *I write a diary* (R=-.111)

13 *I analyze texts* (R=-.092)

14 *I write creatively in English* (R=-.283)

17 *I get someone to proof read what I have written* (R=-167)

When combined into a group using the SPSS transform/compute variable function, this group of five strategies proved to be significantly negatively correlated ($R=-.258$, $p<.05$) with end-of-course results, a small effect size (Cohen 1988) accounting for 7% of the variance in final scores.

Qualitative results

When collecting the qualitative data, four of the high-scoring students were asked for their own personal views regarding the strategies noted above (items 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20). These responses were coded by the author and separately by a colleague according to whether they were positive, negative or qualified (that is, some positive remarks were made as well as some negative comments). The two raters were in agreement on all but 3 out of 36 responses, producing an inter-rater agreement rate of 92%. Agreement was later negotiated on all items. A sample of the responses, which were cut-and-pasted directly from the originals without corrections (though sometimes abbreviated) will be presented here, divided into two groups according to whether they were positively or negatively related to final scores according to the quantitative results presented previously.

Strategies positively related to end-of-course scores

<u>Item 5 - I plan my writing</u>: According to Tina "Outline is helpful, especially when you don't have a clear idea what to write". Steven agrees: "A plan contributes a lot to a good paper. If the writer plans the writing, that is, has a clear idea of how to express the topic and arrange the whole structure, the paper will be more logical and expreesive or persuasive". Terry is even more positive: "It is a must for writing well, I think". Winnie, however, comments "I do not really do that….I guess I just go with the flow."

<u>Item 8 - I revise new language regularly</u>: Steven believes that "regular revision of new language helps improve the self-revising ability, thus finding mistakes in writing". "Yes. Definitely", agrees Terry. Winnie also finds revision "very useful….If I do not revise what I just learned, I barely remember it in a week or two". But Tina disagrees: "I don't do this and it is hard to do without guidance", perhaps suggesting that she is more dependent than the others on external mediation (perhaps from the teacher).

<u>Item 9 - I record new language I hear or read in a notebook</u>: According to Winnie "I find this one very helpful as well….In Chinese, we have a saying. It goes like 'The palest ink is better

than the best memory'. And I am a big believer of it". Steven is also positive: "the recording of new language will…..extend the writer's vocabulary". Tina is more qualified in her response: "I don't have this habit but it is a good way to memorize the expressions that you want to collect to use in your way". Terry also gives the notebook strategy a personal thumbs down, though he recognizes it may be useful for others: "for any subject at any point of my previous study, I didn't find notebook of great help. Maybe having a note book is a positive strategy for others, but it was not my habit".

<u>Item 20 - I consult my teacher if I have problems with my writing</u>: In Winnie's opinion "it is a good idea to consult teachers when you have problems. You can get a quick answer to your very problem immediately". Tina agrees: "Teachers usually give a lot of great suggestions which their students will never think about". And Steven is also in agreement: "Even the best writer has his own blind spot, therefore…..to consult the teacher is no doubt an effective way to perfect the paper". And from Terry: "Yes…..discussing and exchanging ideas, and that really helps me in writing".

Out of 16 comments (4 items X 4 respondents) from these successful students, 12 (75%) were positive, that is they agreed with what might have been predicted from the quantitative findings that this group of four strategies was positively correlated with successful end-of-course scores. In other words, they were rated more highly by more successful students. Two of the other responses were negative (that is, Winnie and Tina said they did not use planning and revising) while Tina and Terry gave qualified responses to the notebook strategy. These results are summarized in Appendix 4.

Strategies negatively related to end-of-course scores

<u>Item 10 - I memorize good texts as a model for my own writing:</u> Terry is emphatic: "Obviously this is a terrible strategy for improving writing skills…..Simply copying the writing style does not help improve one's writing skills I think". Steven is equally definite: "For many….the recital of model text is regarded as a panacea for writing. However…..the model text will provide a fixed pattern and the writer will never make any improvement once he relies too much on a changeless combination of words". Although Winnie says she writes "good texts" in a notebook, "Some of them are just one sentence….I do not memorize a whole article". And although Tina says she may memorize small "beautiful" texts, she does not "memorize any knowledge for the most part of my study".

Item 11 - I write a diary in English: All four of the respondents mention having written diaries at some stage. According to Terry, it is “the most ‘free’ kind of writing”, however, “if students make mistakes, no one gets to point those out. It is not a good thing if mistakes could not get realized and corrected”. Tina agrees that “it trains me to write without thinking”, but “if there is no guidance, there is no improvements”. Steven adds: “it is really a big problem that the incorrectness, through repeating day after day, accumulates into a habit”. Only Winnie (the journalist) has a contrary opinion: “I actually found it helpful and enjoyable…..And I think writing a diary in English also gives me sort of momentum in writing”.

Item 13 - I analyze texts (e.g. sentence structure, grammar, or figures of speech): This is another strategy which all the respondents mention having been exposed to, and they are unanimous in their reaction. Tina criticizes analysis as a strategy on the grounds that: “I forgot all the analysis I have done in my advanced English class, which make me feel these analysis are not helpful at all”. Steven adds: “one can not benefit much from this strategy…..Once the writer gets involved in the details too much, the whole structure will be inevitably influenced”. Terry finds analysis of texts “distracting, interrupting the flow of thoughts and ideas”. And Winnie agrees that “Many of us still do not get the point of doing so”.

Item 14 - I write creatively in English: Terry maintains that “I always try to write creatively”, but, perhaps contrary to expectations, according to Winnie (the journalist) creative writing “can be pain and torture”, while Tina complains: “I can't write creatively in the first place”. Steven is more on-the-fence: “Creativity is an important quality of a successful writing, but the writer should never go too far in this way. Anyway, writing is a serious activity that has fundamental rules to follow and too much concern on creativity would impede the effective expression”.

Item 17 - I get someone to proof read what I have written: Terry is positive about proof reading: “I think it is important to have someone read your writings and provide comments”. Winnie, however, is less positive: “I believe it would be helpful if someone proof reads what I have written…. But I do not think it is really necessary”. Tina is worried about privacy: “most of the time, for school work, I don't get people help me to do that, one reason is that I don't want my classmate to know what I wrote”. And Steven points out the negative consequences: “If we get someone to proofread what we have written, we will be inclined to depend on others to find our mistakes”.

Out of the 20 comments (5 items X 4 respondents) from these successful students, only 3 (15%) were positive, as might have been predicted from the quantitative findings that this group of five strategies was negatively correlated with successful end-of-course scores. Since they are rated less highly by more successful students, we would not expect our quartet of successful students to report using them often. Going against the trend, Winnie gave a positive response to diary writing, and Terry reported employing writing creatively and seeking proof reading, while four of the strategies (memorizing, diary writing, writing creatively and seeking proof reading) attracted qualified responses. These results are summarized in Appendix 5.

Discussion with pedagogical implications

According to the results of this study, learners overall in this context report frequent deployment of a large number of strategies in order to develop writing skills in their target language. In other words, according to these results, students in general, whether more or less successful, have large strategy repertoires which they report using often. There appear, nevertheless, to be some differences in the types of strategies related to more or less successful results. In particular, the strategies of planning, revising, recording, consulting (often called metacognitive) appear to be related to successful scores, while more mechanical strategies such as memorizing, diary writing and analyzing, as well as dependence on someone else for proof reading, are related to lower scores (although creative writing is also negatively correlated with results, at least for this particular academic course). This being the case, teachers should, perhaps, be careful about assuming that their less successful students do not use strategies, since these results indicate that, in general, students report using strategies at a medium to very high rate of frequency. Nevertheless, according to these results, teachers would do well to encourage their students to move away from more mechanical strategies and try to adopt higher level metacognitive strategies instead.

A striking aspect of the responses from the four successful students regarding the results of the statistical analysis is that there is a great deal of inter-individual variation. This reinforces the idea that although we can draw general conclusions from statistical data, strategy selection is actually a very individual matter and one size most certainly does not fit all. Although the replies were all from students who had been at the tops of their classes and who have gone on to do well since, they do not by any means always agree with each other or completely conform to the expectations the statistics might have led one to expect. Only two of them (that is only half) are clearly positive about the notebook strategy, for instance, although this item was significantly correlated with successful end-of-course scores; and two were positive about memorizing, creative writing and seeking proof reading, although these items were in the group negatively correlated with successful outcomes according to the results of this study. I would like to suggest that this is an important reality: the obvious, but often inconvenient actuality that people are different, and that what works for one may or may not work for another. It is important to remember that learning a language is a complex process, and the individuals undertaking the learning are also extremely complex and different from each other. This means that, although some generalizations may be made from quantitative data and statistical analyses, these should probably be viewed more as starting points for further research (as in this study, where the questionnaire was followed up by using the results to elicit qualitative comments from a selected sample) rather than as useful information in their own right.

The responses also show that not only are the learners different from each other, but that intra-individual changes have occurred over time, and that even at the point of response, a number of opinions are still quite “fluid”. Both Tina and Terry, for instance, are ambivalent about the notebook strategy, although this was the only item to show a significant positive correlation with successful scores. Winnie and Tina both use memorization (included in the group negatively related to successful outcomes) for some purposes but not others. All the respondents have used diaries at some stage, but two of them are qualified in their responses and one has abandoned this as a strategy. For Steven, creativity is important, but learners still need to follow “fundamental rules”; while for Winnie, proof reading is “helpful”, but not “really necessary”. These responses capture a more dynamic view of the learners, with preferences that are less cut-and-dried, more open to potential change.

When it comes to the pedagogical question of strategy instruction, previous research results are by no means entirely positive. According to Rees-Miller (1993, p. 679), for instance, attempts to train learners to use learning strategies more effectively have produced “only qualified success”. However, there are many others (for instance, Chamot, 2008; Cohen, 1998, 2011; Oxford, 1990, 2011; Wenden, 1987, 1991) who can point to successful efforts to teach strategies, while according to Manchon, Roca de Larios & Murphy (2007, p. 248) “the writer’s strategic behaviour…..can be modified through strategy instruction”. Furthermore, as a result of a meta-analysis, Plonsky (2011, p. 993) concludes that there is a “small to medium effect” for strategy instruction. Since the results of this study indicate that students frequently use a large number of strategies, it would seem to be important for teachers who might be planning any strategy instruction to first of all consider their students’ established strategy repertoires since students appear in general to be already very strategically aware and active, as indicated by medium to high frequency ratings given to all but one item. And once a strategy instruction programme has been established, it is important to remember to allow for individual variation and development.

Suggestions for further research

This study has highlighted a number of questions which future researchers might like to pursue further. In particular, the study needs to be replicated

1. in different contexts (e.g. national, institutional etc.), since some strategies might be rated quite differently in other environments. Peer review, for instance, is a widely used and valued activity in writing classes in many places, so it might attract quite a different response from the negative reaction it received here.
2. with different learner variables factored into the analysis (e.g. motivation, age, gender, L1 etc.) in order to capture the complexities of strategy use.
3. to focus more precisely on the dynamics of strategy use, in other words, how strategies change (a longitudinal approach would be required for this).
4. with larger numbers of participants.
5. including less successful students in order to investigate how students at various levels employ strategies.
6. exploring actual versus reported strategy use as generated by Likert scales.
7. using a wider range of research methods, such as observations, diary studies, or face-to-face interviews.

When considering further research in this area, it is vital to carefully consider the issue of research methodology. If a questionnaire is required, the one used in this study might perhaps be used as a model, but it would be unlikely to be entirely suitable for any other situation or purpose, and so would need some adaptation to suit the different context. Different research methods (e.g. interviews, observations, think-aloud protocols etc.) might also be employed in order to provide more triangulation and to cross-check the findings from different points of view.

Conclusion

The study has contributed some useful information to the body of existing knowledge regarding strategies for developing writing skills in a target language. At least in this particular context, it has revealed that, overall, students are frequent users of strategies, and suggested the existence of groups of strategies which are more or less typical of these successful students.

The study has also emphasized just how individual and different from each other are the strategy preferences of even the more successful students, each of whom may also display variability within their own strategy repertoires and how they choose to apply these to various tasks. An examination of the qualitative data suggests a need to respect the complexities of student individuality when it comes to strategy choice. It must be remembered that strategy repertoires are by no means identical even among students who are all in their own ways already successful, suggesting that their strategy orchestration is already working well and attempts at intervention should be approached with care to avoid possible confusion, anxiety and frustration. It is important to raise students' awareness of strategy options, to provide practice of a variety of strategies, and also to allow students the freedom to adopt or reject these strategies according to their own individual needs and preferences. It is also important to make allowances for the dynamic process of strategy development to continue in order that writing skill development might be maximized. This suggests the need to acknowledge the complexities of strategy deployment, to respect individual strategy variation, and to allow for dynamic strategy development in the classroom.

These findings have implications for the teaching/learning situation, for the decisions which teachers make within it, and for the effect of these decisions on students' success in developing writing skills in a target language. Further study therefore needs to be carried out to determine whether these findings are generalizable to other contexts and to different groups of learners.

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Creating a Professional Learning Community for EFL Trainee Teachers during the Teaching Practicum: The Roles of Practicum Mentors

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Abstract

This paper, which is based on data of a larger research, focused on the relationships in the practicum triad including the school mentor, the university mentor and the trainee teachers in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher education in Vietnam. Drawing on the three characteristics of an effective professional learning community including (i) shared values and vision, (ii) mutual trust, respect and support, and (iii) openness, networks and partnerships, it particularly explored how these features were reflected in the collegial and professional support for the trainee teachers during the teaching practicum. Data were derived from semi-structured interviews with twelve fourth-year English language trainee teachers enrolled in undergraduate teacher education programs in three Vietnamese universities together with interviews with their six school mentors and six university mentors. Two questionnaire items extracted from a larger survey exploring the perceptions of 141 trainee teachers on practicum support also generated useful quantitative data.

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Combination of findings showed that the trainee teachers hardly felt able to involve themselves in professional conversations to take the best advice from both the school mentor and university mentor, and were instead heavily reliant on the school mentor's feedback for their classroom practice. The implication is for both schools and universities to encourage collaborative partnerships between the triads to engage the trainee teachers, their school mentors and university mentors in in-depth professional dialogue in order to promote the learning of prospective English teachers.

Key words: teacher education, teacher learning, professional learning community, teaching practicum, mentoring

Introduction

Studies on the socialization of English language teachers either in ESL or EFL contexts attempt to explain various factors shaping the journey of becoming participating members of the teaching community that pre-service teachers experience, particularly during the teaching practicum. While it is well recognized that the teaching practicum contributes to the development of trainee teachers' initial teaching experience, it is also well acknowledged that school-based practice benefits depend largely on the relationship the trainee teachers have with their mentors, the experienced teachers who help them develop the practical skills, competencies and know-how required for effective practice. In fact, the practicum mentors not only play a crucial role in developing trainee teachers' instructional skills but also in acculturating them to the policies and practices of the school community because they assist "novices learn new pedagogies and socialize them to new professional norms" (Feiman-Nemser, 1996, p. 1). In foreign language education, researchers highlight the mentoring role of supervisors in terms of observing lessons, providing feedback, deepening knowledge of the English language, developing subject matter teaching skills (Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007), and improving self-reflection and problem-solving skills (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). The nature of a mentor-mentee relationship is typically described as following an apprenticeship model, consisting of mentees observing, being observed, taking advice from mentors and reflecting on it.

Unfortunately, existing literature in EFL teacher education has not paid much attention to how the practicum mentors can engage their mentees in professional dialogues characterized by i) shared values and vision, (ii) mutual trust, respect and support, and (iii) openness, networks and partnerships (Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas, & Wallace, 2005). By focusing on the roles of practicum mentors, this study seeks to explore whether a professional learning community involving collaborative learning among the triad of a trainee teacher, his or her school mentor and the university mentor can be formed during the teaching practicum so as to ensure optimal learning experiences for the trainee teachers. The main research question was: How does each member of the teaching practicum triad, which involves a trainee teacher together with his/ her school mentor and his/ her university mentor, perceive his/ her role in preparing the trainee teachers for their learning to teach during the practicum?

Background of the research

Pre-service EFL teacher professional socialization during the teaching practicum

The term "communities of practice" was first coined by Lave and Wenger (1991) to describe the informal learning process that takes place when people work together with their colleagues. This type of learning occurs across many fields including business, education, social science and life science. Similar to a community of practice is the idea of a professional learning community. While the two concepts both highlight the importance of collaboration and sharing, in teacher education, the term "professional learning community" seems to be more desirable because it aims at creating a shared perspective and focusing on professional growth (Little, 2002). In fact, the notion of a professional learning community can be traced back to studies into the workplace that aim to improve working environment and promote greater productivity. Researchers like Gardner (1995-1996), Darling-Hammond (1996), and Deal and Kennedy (2000) have provided thoughtful discussion about relationships within an organization that influence collegiality, teamwork and leadership. A salient feature embedded in a PLC is the idea that effective sharing and collaboration between members can encourage effective communication through i) shared values and vision, (ii) mutual trust, respect and support, and (iii) openness, networks and partnerships (Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas & Wallace, 2005; York-Barr & Duke, 2004), leading to a more positive feeling about the profession (Darling-Hammond, 1996), reducing members' isolation (Lieberman, 2000) and encouraging them to stay in the profession (Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001). In this paper, a PLC is described as a group of teachers who have a common set of teaching and learning visions and undertake shared responsibilities for educating students through regular meetings.

Studies on the socialization of English language teachers, both in ESL and EFL contexts, emphasizes the importance of learning to become members of the teaching community during the teaching practicum as one of the main determinants in shaping English language teachers' socialization. Richards (2011) believes that the process of learning to teach English involves becoming socialized into a professional learning community where the goals, shared values and norms of conduct have been established. For entering into the teaching profession, novice teachers need to develop an "identity kit", the ways they manage their actions, talks, thoughts, feelings, beliefs and values that comply with the norms of the teaching community and take on a social role recognized by other teachers. They will also focus on exploring and resolving issues related to the workplace practices that members of the community take part in. From this perspective, practicum experience is a good example of trainee teachers' socialization into a professional learning community because it requires the trainee teacher to develop collaborative and cooperative activities including team-teaching, peer observation, peer coaching, support groups and development discourses to fulfill their practicum responsibilities with the school mentor, the university mentor and other school teaching staff.

The role of practicum mentors in EFL teacher education

In teacher education, the teaching practicum is an opportunity to help teacher candidates grow into their professional role as teachers and to become active participants in the profession. The outcomes of socialization during the practicum are influenced by the interactions that trainee teachers develop with their pupils, school mentors, university mentors, peer trainees and school authorities. It is during these stages that trainee teachers may form personal teaching styles and philosophies that will guide them through the multiple, varied and complex pathways of teaching (Griffiths & Tann, 1992). For novice teachers, the teaching practicum provides them with actual teaching experience, and intensive developmental feedback because during this time, they feel involved, challenged and even empowered. A contextualized understanding of the intricacies of teaching and an opportunity to foster competencies across a range of tasks basically needed for a teacher such as classroom management skills, lesson planning strategies, which then enhance their personal teaching awareness, and interpersonal relationships are among the professional values that the teaching practicum offers to preservice teachers (Farrell, 2001; Richards & Crookes, 1988).

Despite the importance of the teaching practicum in shaping the socialization process of English language trainee teachers, research has shown that not many trainee teachers receive sufficient support and communication to effectively become a member of the teaching society at the host school. Farrell (2001) investigated the socialization of one English language trainee teacher during the teaching practicum and realized that ambiguous messages in communication and a poor practicum support at the school inhibited the participation of the trainee teacher both inside and outside the classroom. Jordell (1987) similarly pointed out that the relationship formed during the beginning of teaching as the most influential impact on beginning teachers' socialization. Support from and communication with the school authorities, the school mentor, the university mentoring lecturer, fellow trainee teachers and students are crucial during the practicum period. However, trainee teachers often received very little or no support and communication from the teaching staff because the school mentors and university mentors are not fully trained in the mentoring role; they have other workload and scant resources to help the trainee teachers (Farrell, 2001; Richards & Crookes, 1988).

It has also been reported that some beginning teachers have not been sufficiently supported by their mentors emotionally and psychologically (Hardy, 1999; Smith & McLay, 2007) while others have not been adequately challenged by their mentors (Edwards, 1998). Studies have also suggested that mentors tended to give their mentees the general feedback concerning classroom management and see their role as the provision of a safe site for mentees' trial and error learning rather than devoting attention to pedagogical issues (Edwards, 1998; Lee & Feng, 2007). These are among several disadvantages for trainee teachers as a result of poor mentoring practice.

The concepts of professional learning community, teacher socialization and mentoring practice have been widely explored but relatively little has been written about whether the practicum can become a professional learning community for EFL trainee teachers and their practicum mentors. This study is an attempt to address the gap in literature by exploring how the salient features of a professional learning community were reflected in the collegial and professional support for the trainee teachers during the teaching practicum. In addition, for the purposes of this study, two groups of mentors are involved:

(1) School mentors: experienced English language practitioners who work at the school that hosts placement for English language trainee teachers and who are responsible for helping English language trainee teachers to develop their teaching skills.
(2) University mentors: lecturers of English who teach English language trainee teachers at university and who are assigned to visit the school during the practicum to provide support for English language trainee teachers.

Research methodology

Research context

In 2008, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) initiated the ten-year National Plan for *Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Formal Educational System in the period of 2008 –2020,* also known as the National Foreign Language Project (NFLP), which is said to be worth around US $450 million. The project seeks to enhance the quality of teaching and learning a foreign language, particularly English, in all spheres from overhauling the curricula, textbooks, teaching methodologies to improving teacher management and training. The main aim of the project is to

> Implement an overall change in the teaching and learning of English in the educational system to make sure that by 2015, the English proficiency of some targeted groups is significantly enhanced. Moreover, the project aims to implement the new English curriculum in all school levels and in different training modes to make sure that by 2020 all school leavers in Vietnam will have an adequate command of English to be able to communicate independently and confidently, to study and to work in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual environment, making English among the driving forces to boost the country's commitment to industrialization and modernization. (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 32)

For the attainment of the NFLP, numerous efforts and studies are required to inform relevant stakeholders about the training of English language teachers in Vietnam.

In terms of EFL teacher education in Vietnam, the relationship between school mentors and English language trainee teachers during the teaching practicum was investigated by Hudson and Nguyen (2008) and Le (2013). Results from a study carried out by Hudson and Nguyen (2008), which examined the mentoring expectations that preservice teachers had towards their school mentors through a written survey administered to 91 Vietnamese preservice teachers, indicated certain desirable mentoring qualities such as enthusiasm, helpfulness, and friendliness. In addition, preservice teachers required a mentor to give constructive guidance, offer an understanding of the contextual requirements such as curriculum, school policies and assessment, model EFL teaching practices, articulate pedagogical knowledge, and provide direct and detailed feedback about EFL teaching performance based on sound English content knowledge. These desirable attributes and practices imply the need to develop personal interrelationships between preservice teachers and their mentors and provide formal training for mentors.

Moreover, employing a qualitative case study research approach with nineteen student teachers and ten teacher educators of English at three different English language teacher education institutions in Vietnam, Le (2013) attempted to examine the notion of "teacher as moral guide" in her study. The data collection instruments included guided journal writing, semi-structured interviews with the student teachers and interviews with school mentors. The study revealed that the trainee teachers did not merely learn from the school mentors' technical knowledge and expertise but also from their attire, behaviours and lifestyles. Le's research also pointed out several moral issues, revealed mostly in connection with the constraints in the relationships of the trainee teachers with their pupils, peers, school mentors, senior teachers, the schools, and in a broader sense, in the social relationship during the practicum. One notable concern was corruption, which occurred when the school mentors took bribes or were unable to resist materialistic temptations from the trainee teachers. Some participants were found to be recommended to pay a home visit to their supervising teachers and were supposed to express their thanks and gratitude by money or valuable gifts to avoid being treated less cordially. The school teachers in the roles of assessor and mentor had certain powers to impose on the relationship with the trainee teachers and on their performance in the school context (Le, 2013).

The research by Hudson and Nguyen (2008) and Le (2013), however, do not embrace trainee teachers' opinions about the university mentors, who were also expected to supervise them during the practicum. In this present study, the mentoring practices adopted by both school mentors and university mentors were explored to see how the development of trainee teacher was supported by this guidance as well as the main concerns central to trainee teachers and their relationships with their mentors. Moreover, the concepts of professional learning community, teacher socialization and mentoring practice have been widely explored but relatively little has been written about whether the practicum can become a professional learning community for EFL trainee teachers and their practicum mentors.

In addition, this research drew on the data collected from three institutions in HCMC in Vietnam offering English language teacher training programs. To maintain the anonymity of the universities and for confidentiality, the universities will be referred to as University One (U1), University Two (U2) and University Three (U3). This sample was found to be adequately representative because the three institutions had characteristics of both public and private universities as well as specialized teacher-training institutions and multidisciplinary institutions. The trainee teachers from U1, U2 and U3 undertake their teaching practicum at approved high schools in HCMC where English is taught as a compulsory foreign language. The schools can be public or private, consisting of grades 10, 11 and 12 (sophomore, junior, and senior). The two public universities have two practicums, the first of four weeks in the third year and the second of seven or eight weeks in the final year, while the private university has only one practicum in its EFL teacher training program in the final year of study (see Table 1).

Table 1: Details of the three participating institutions

Institutions	Type	Ranking	Teaching Practicum		
			Number of practicums	Total length	Placement locations
U1	Private (multi-disciplinary)	Below average	1	7 weeks	HCMC
U2	Public (teacher training)	Top	2	4 + 7 weeks	HCMC
U3	Public (multi-disciplinary)	Average	2	4 + 8 weeks	HCMC

Research participants

The first group of participants consisted of twelve EFL trainee teachers together with their six school mentors and six university mentors from the above three institutions, who were selected for face-to-face interviews based on their teaching and mentoring experience and their willingness to participate in the research. The trainee teachers age ranged from 22 to 30. Four came from U1, five from U2 and three from U3. All used Vietnamese as their mother tongue and had studied to become teachers of English as a foreign language. Each of these twelve trainee teachers, together with his or her school mentor and university mentor makes up an individual triad or case study.

Of the twelve practicum mentors (both school mentors and university mentors), four were male and eight female; they were in their twenties to late forties, with experience related to practicum mentoring ranging between three and twenty years. They all had either a Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree in TESOL or Applied Linguistics. The major aim of each of the twelve case studies was to capture the perspectives and experiences of the trainee teacher, the school mentor and university mentor regarding the mentoring relationship and its impact on trainee teachers' learning to participate in the school community.

Apart from the data collected from interviews with twelve trainee teachers together with six school mentors and six university mentors, all 141 fourth-year EFL trainee teachers from the aforementioned three universities were invited to participate in a survey. A total of 141 questionnaire packages (each consisting of the cover letter, the information sheet, and the questionnaire) were distributed to 141 EFL trainee teachers in the three institutions. Of these 141, 106 were validly returned, representing a response rate of 75.2% (see Table 2).

Table 2: Profiles of the survey respondents

Variables	N (Total=106)	% (Total=100)
Gender		
Male	22	20.8
Female	84	79.2
Age		
20-25	92	86.8
Over 25	14	13.2
Institution		
U1	34	32.1
U2	41	38.7
U3	31	29.2
Self-rated English proficiency		
Intermediate	10	9.4
Upper-intermediate	79	74.5
Advanced	17	16.0
Teaching experience		
No teaching experience	17	16.0
Previous teaching experience	89	84.0

Data collection and data analysis

This study employed mixed methods approach in collecting data, which is currently receiving more acceptance and becoming more popular in social science studies because “its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 5). For this study, the researcher collected both qualitative and quantitative data about the topic of interest by means of interviews and questionnaires.

First of all, individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with twelve EFL trainee teachers and their six school mentors and six university mentors. Interview was an appropriate method for data collection because it had the advantage of allowing face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the participants and creating an opportunity in which the participants can assess the effectiveness of the practicum through their own perspectives. All interviews were semi-structured in that the questions to be asked were flexible, new questions might be brought up during the interview although the topics and issues to be covered were detailed in advance (Patton, 2002). The length of interviews varied between 60 and 90 minutes.

Although there was a slight difference in the framing of questions and content to be asked, the interview schedules with all the participants covered the two main themes: (i) their experience with the teaching practicum, and (ii) the learning and mentoring of trainee teacher during the teaching practicum.

All interviews were conducted between November 2012 and May 2013 and were recorded using a digital recorder; they were then saved as mp3 files and uploaded to a computer for safe storage, with additional copies burnt to a USB. A majority of the interviews were in Vietnamese although code-switching to English and code-mixing were quite common. The interviewer kept notes during the interviews and during the last ten minutes of the interview, the researcher verbally reviewed the contents of the notes with the interviewee, for clarity and accuracy. The participant was then encouraged to add extra clarification to responses or fill in any gaps in responses. Interviews transcripts were analyzed using thematic content analysis which looked for themes across the data set based on content. In the research report, each participant was given a Vietnamese pseudonym or a code to ensure their anonymity.

Secondly, a survey was used for collecting data because it is cost-effective, easy to administer and anonymous. It is also an effective way to get the required information from a large number of respondents, allowing them time to consider answers and impose uniformity by asking the same questions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Another purpose for employing a questionnaire survey in this study was to use as a source for triangulation with the interview data. The questionnaires were distributed to 141 trainee teachers near the end of the teaching practicum. The questionnaire consisted of both close-ended and open-ended items. The close-ended questions were designed based on a five-point Likert scale to obtain the respondents' degree of agreement or disagreement ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The open-ended items asked trainee teachers' to give their comments about the practicum effectiveness. This paper only represented two close-ended items related to mentor and peer support. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the close-ended questionnaire items in the survey data.

Findings and discussion

Mentoring time and availability for trainee teachers

Data obtained from the two questionnaire items on practicum support showed that half the trainee teachers in the survey reported *having had adequate opportunities to discuss things with their practicum mentors* (either the school teaching mentor or the school educational mentor or both) while one third was unsure whether the mentoring support was sufficient and the remaining 17% showed their disagreement (see Table 3). This number suggested that although support from practicum mentors was important, trainee teachers still expected to receive more help from their mentors. In comparison, around three quarters of the trainee teachers *had adequate opportunities to discuss and learn from their practicum peers*, which highlighted the importance of peer support in the learning-to-teach process. *A paired-sample t-test indicated* a significant difference in the mean ratings of the students on *the opportunities to discuss and learn from peers* and *the opportunities to discuss things with practicum mentors* (SD=1.106, $t(105)=4.391$, $p<.001$) (see Table 4 and Table 5). The result shows that trainee teachers received more opportunities to *discuss and learn from their practicum peers* (*M=3.91, SD=0.91*) than opportunities to *discuss things with their practicum mentors* (*M=3.42, SD=0.94*).

In fact, limited time to support trainee teachers was also a central theme in practicum mentors' responses. The university mentors from English Language Departments at U2 and U3 usually initiated contact with the trainee teachers in the middle of the placement, mainly to arrange a suitable time for a visit to the school when at least one trainee teacher was teaching. The communication was often done via phone, email or sometimes face-to-face with one of the trainee teachers, who would then pass the information to their peers. During the visit, they would observe one or two teaching periods, give their feedback, comment about the teaching and listen to some of the trainee teachers' concerns. After that, there was virtually no communication between university mentors and trainee teachers. For the whole teaching practicum, it took each university mentor from U2 and U3 about two to three hours for contacting, visiting, observing and giving feedback to the trainee teachers.

Table 3. Practicum support (N=106)

Practicum support	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Uncertain (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Total (100%)	Mean	SD
I have had adequate opportunities to discuss things with my practicum mentors	9.4	43.4	30.2	14.2	2.8	100	3.42	0.94
I have had adequate opportunities to discuss and learn from my peers	25.5	49.1	17.9	5.7	1.9	100	3.91	0.91

Table 4. Paired samples correlations (N=106)

Pair	N	Correlation	Sig.
I have had adequate opportunities to discuss and learn from my peers - I have had adequate opportunities to discuss things with my practicum mentors	106	.286	.003

Table 5. Paired samples test (N=106)

Pair	Pair differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
I have had adequate opportunities to discuss and learn from my peers - I have had adequate opportunities to discuss things with my practicum mentors	.472	1.106	.107	.107	.685	4.391	105	.000

For the mentors from U1, they needed to contact their trainee teachers before the placement and keep working with them throughout the practicum. The main means of communication was via phone and email to one trainee teacher in the group, who would then pass the information to their peers. However, after the first few weeks, when the trainee teachers had settled into the new school environment and they had made one or two observations of classroom teaching, the university mentors had less communication with their trainees, leaving them at the host schools unless something wrong occurred. When the practicum was close to an end, the university mentors would come back to the high school for collecting the reports on trainee teachers' teaching. For the whole teaching practicum, it took each university mentor from U1 about eight hours working with the host school and the trainee teachers group.

In comparison, the communication between school mentors and English language trainee teachers was a continuous process, as perceived by both the school mentors and the trainee teachers. On average, each school mentor spent around one to two hours per week working with one trainee teacher. Those with more than one trainee teacher needed to spend more time because "*each trainee teacher is different. I can talk with them in groups but an individual meeting is still necessary*" (Interview, SM3). For the whole teaching practicum, it took each school mentor about sixteen to thirty hours working with the trainee teachers, including reviewing lesson plans, observing teaching, giving feedback, making assessments and completing reports. Some school mentors had a fixed meeting timetable with trainee teachers on a specific time of the week but others did not. One mentor explained

> *because all of my trainee teachers are given my teaching schedule, they are welcome to catch up with me during the break of any day when I have teaching periods. No prior appointment is essential. I prefer face-to-face communication, as it is easier for both of us to discuss and solve a problem. However, they can still make a phone call or send me an email when they have unexpected difficulties*. (Interview, SM5)

Some school mentors confessed that due to the lack of time, instead of observing trainee teachers while they were teaching in class, they used this as a valuable time to grade the students' papers or do other things not related to giving feedback and comments on the trainees' teaching. In fact, the heavy workload for English teachers at both higher institutions and high schools in the Vietnam EFL contexts, which hindered the mentoring practice of the university mentors and school mentors to a considerable extent, has been highlighted in research by Utsumi and Doan (2010) and Pham (2001).

Moreover, there is a general agreement among trainee teachers that the school mentors offered more influential pedagogical and emotional support because of the close interaction with them during the teaching practicum, as mirrored in the research literature (Huling-Austin, 1990; Smithey & Evertson, 2003). The results have confirmed that school mentors' role is more important in the learning process of trainee teachers than university mentors' (Calderhead, 1988; Watts, 1987). All the trainee teachers, irrespective of their institution, age, gender, and self-rated English proficiency, wanted the school mentors and university mentors to have a more specific role and that more structured support came from the university during the teaching practicum, a finding that resonates with a number of studies in the field (Gratch, 2001; Merseth, Sommer, & Dickstein, 2008). The current practice is that the trainee teachers do their placement in schools for extended periods of seven or eight weeks, but barely before or during that time does the university involved in an in-depth conversation with schools. Neither the school's role in the practicum nor the university's expectations of the school in assisting trainee teachers' learning to teach are imparted responsively to the school mentors, university mentors and trainee teachers.

With few exceptions, there was little evidence of a shared understanding of the roles and communication between university mentors and school mentors even with U1 participants where the university mentors were more engaged in the practicum. The trainee teachers, particularly those from U2 and U3, believed that the university mentors were only peripherally involved in the teaching practicum and most were not concerned about the relationship with them. Sharing the same issue, school mentors were very critical of university mentors who did not spend sufficient time to observe trainee teachers teaching and get a sense of the classroom dynamics, were rushed in their visit and made frequent changes to their visiting schedules. The weakness was partly due to the fact that U2 and U3 had not provided a forum to brief the university mentors of their responsibilities in supporting the professional development of the trainee teacher during the practicum, resulting in the unpreparedness of most university mentors in their supervisory roles. Had transparent expectations of roles been part of required staff support prior to the commencement of the practicum, the results might have been different. In addition, although practicum circumstances vary for the different universities, constraints limiting the time availability for individual university mentor supervision during the practicum are almost similar. Hence, if the two mentoring models were equally robust, opportunities of observation, feedback, and guidance to trainee teachers might be expanded. A general match between the beliefs of university mentors and school mentors can better support the development of trainee teachers through the consistent messages they receive from both their courses at university and their practicum experience at school (He & Levin, 2008, p. 51).

Features of mentor-trainee teacher relationship

The school mentors and the trainee teachers' perceptions on the nature of their relationship showed notable discrepancies. According to the school mentors, the relationship differs at different times and it normally goes from formal to neutral and finally informal as the practicum proceeds, a point that echoes the claim that mentor-mentee relationship may vary between formal and informal extremes (Chao, Walz & Gardner, 1992). During the first few meetings, most school mentors tried to appear strict and formal with their trainee teachers. It was because they wanted to stress the trainee teachers that they needed to work hard for success during the placement. At this point, they expected trainee teachers to "listen and do as what we tell them". However, as the practicum continued and more contacts were made, the school mentors became more open to their trainees. During this time, trainee teachers could negotiate, exchange their ideas or even argue with the school mentors about teaching-related activities. When it came to the final week, when trainee teachers had almost finished their teaching, the school mentors were friendlier in their conversations with the trainee teachers. They often expanded the topics of discussion outside teaching to other aspects of trainee teachers' life such as family, future teaching plans and so on. Therefore, school mentors though they could also assume the roles of "friends", "supporters" and "facilitators" of trainee teachers in addition to "teachers" and "coaches" as they were usually considered to be.

The diverse perceptions of roles that the school mentors considered themselves in the relationship with the trainee teachers further indicated that the mentoring practice was adjusted to cater for the different developmental stage of trainee teachers, typically starting with the apprenticeship model then moving to the competency model before settling on the reflective model. This shift in mentoring roles had been previously reported in the context of teacher education in England and Germany by Maynard and Furlong (1993) and Jones (2001).

However, the trainee teachers expressed the belief that they found it hard to go beyond the boundary of master-apprentice model of supervision and always considered the school mentors as "experts". The six school mentors, on the other hand, confirmed that this analogy was only true to a certain extent. They explained

> *we have been in the teaching profession for many years while the trainee teachers are new to the school, the students and teaching practice. They try to learn as much as they can and we are here to help them in whatever we can do*. (Interview, SM2)

The finding showed the need for practicum mentors to clearly articulate their expectations openly to the trainee teachers right from the beginning of the practicum, letting the latter know that they could offer both professional and emotional support instead of being an "expert" trying to observe, lecture or find faults. It also suggests the need to focus on promoting interpersonal relationship between trainee teachers and practicum mentors. Research has likewise confirmed that central to trainee teachers' learning are a good interpersonal relationship between them and the school mentors, respect for each other's opinion, a reflective approach taken both by both parties, and sufficient time (Zanting, Verloop, Vermunt & Van Driel, 1998).

Expectations about mentoring practice

Half the trainees interviewed thought they had a good relationship with their mentors. A number of these trainee teachers believed that the mentors gave them valuable advice during the teaching practicum, particularly comments about their teaching performance. Genuine affection and deep appreciation characterized some of the trainee teachers' remarks about their school teaching mentors.

> "*In this placement, I am lucky to work with a very nice school teaching mentor who is very friendly, sociable and dedicated. I get very satisfactory result partially thanks to the school mentor's support*" (Interview, Nhan).

However, a few of the trainee teachers experienced a distance in the relationship with the school mentors and did not know how to narrow the gap. They explained that the detachment was mainly created by both the differences in personal characteristics and the unfulfilled gap between their concerns and the school mentors' actual mentoring practice. Most unfavourable personal qualities commonly cited were unapproachable, unfriendly, and difficult to speak to. In terms of professional practices, trainee teachers were cognizant of the fact that inadequate formal preparation and guidance for school mentors considerably affected their ability to effectively provide mentoring support.

> *I have heard that the other two English language trainee teachers from our Department work with another school mentor and that mentor does not give them much support. He reads newspapers while they are teaching and gives them very general comments because he does not pay attention.* (Interview, Danh)

> *This is the very first time my school mentor has ever supervised a trainee teacher. She is helpful but I feel that she is not fully aware of her responsibilities. She always asks me what the mentor in my first practicum did.* (Interview, Minh)

Some trainee teachers criticized their school mentors for giving limited pedagogical guidance. Mentioned most frequently was that the teaching mentors gave very general comments on their teaching in the post-lesson discussions, which the trainee teachers considered as not helpful for their improvement. There also appeared to be conflicting expectations and interpretations of teaching and learning on the part of mentors, which made trainee teachers overwhelmed and confused.

> "*My school mentor does not give clear expectations but asks me to do as what I have been taught. However, when I teach my way, she questions why I do not use more effective techniques. I am so confused*" (Interview, Nhan).

Some school mentors were found to be excessively critical and quick in finding faults but slow and unwilling in giving positive feedback and encouragement. A few mentors delayed or even forgot about giving feedback to trainee teachers. The main theme that emerged from the trainee teachers' responses was that the trainee teachers saw individual school teaching mentor as having differing expectation, creating the lack of consistency and fairness between individual school mentors.

> "*Each school mentor has his own evaluation criteria. I don't think that they follow the appraisal form in grading our performance. The more friendly relationship we have with them, the more likely that we will get high marks*" (Interview, Yen). "*But I think they do not fairly treat all the trainee teachers. I feel inferior when they often compare my teaching with trainee teachers from other universities*" (Interview, Khanh).

Across the twelve trainee teachers, it also emerged that those from U2 and U3 felt more satisfied and comfortable working with their school practicum mentors than those from U1 who had not had any experience working with a mentor before. Perhaps this might reflect the needs of trainee teachers to receive mentoring support earlier in their education and why more than one teaching practicum is suitable during the four-year training program.

Implications and conclusion

The findings about the support from the practicum mentors (including both school mentors and university mentors) indicated that both the trainee teachers and their practicum mentors did not frequently have the opportunity to engage in in-depth conversation to help the trainee teachers' learning to teach. In other words, the triads did not view themselves as members of a learning community which features shared values, mutual trust and openness. There was hardly evidence of a shared understanding and collaborative efforts about the learning of the trainee teachers between the school teaching mentor and the university mentor. There was also little congruence in the supervisory roles adopted by the university mentors and the school mentors. As a result, the triad of trainee teacher, school mentor, and university mentor could not leverage each other's expertise and experiences in ways that encouraged the sharing of content knowledge, instructional techniques, and teaching resources. While time constraint is an obvious explanation for the lack of collaborative work in the practicum triad, another factor that might impede cooperative efforts was the conflict in mentoring practice and individual mentor concern. The practicum mentors did not always realize the reciprocal benefits of mentoring in helping them become increasingly reflective about their practice. Therefore, it is vital to remember that mentoring should be designed in a way that reflect the personalities and needs of the individuals involved. Consequently, creating an effective professional learning community involves the facilitation of the two layers of learning: personal and professional process for both the trainee teachers and their practicum mentors.

In conclusion, the teaching practicum can be promoted to become a professional learning community that offers trainee teachers, their school mentors and university mentors the opportunity to develop trusting and collaborative relationships that not only cultivate individual growth but also contribute to institutional development and partnerships. Indispensible to the effectiveness of the teaching practicum is the enhanced collaboration among university mentors, school mentors and trainee teachers regarding their roles and responsibilities in assisting trainee teachers' learning. Trainee teachers need to be provided with consistent guidance and support from both the school mentors and university mentors (Key, 1998). Such guidance and support should be extended to trainee teachers beyond the teaching practicum into the initial years of their teaching career. In light of this, mentoring should become a core component of EFL teacher education rather than merely a practice during the teaching practicum. To this end, university and school should work together to develop a planned and scheduled activity to support both the university mentors and the school mentors to supervise trainee teachers. More communication will result in less divergence in mentoring practices espoused by the university mentors and the school mentors, facilitating the induction of trainee teachers into the ethos of the training program.

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Evaluating Qualities of English Teachers in Commercial English Language Centres: The Development of a Scale

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Abstract

English teacher quality seems to correlate with the English learners' achievement of learning outcomes; however, there is still a lack of studies into the qualities of English teachers who work at commercial English language centres (CEC). This article reports the process of developing a scale that can be used to evaluate the qualities of English teachers working for CEC in Vietnam. The scale was developed in two stages. In the first stage, the researcher tested content validity of the scale fundamentally using the Delphi technique with the support of eight experts in English education. In the second stage, construct validity and reliability of the scale were tested with Cronbach's coefficient alpha, item-total correlations and factor analysis with varimax rotation. The resulting scale with three principal components - (i) knowledge and English competence, (ii) pedagogical practice and (iii) professional and personal attributes - appeared consistent and valid. Data obtained from using the scale could give implications for the recruitment and professional development of English teachers in CEC in Vietnam. However, sharing the steps and challenges faced during the process of developing the scale would be more important for those interested in developing a similar evaluation tool in a CEC context beyond Vietnam.

Key words: English teacher qualities, commercial English centres, scale, factor analysis

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Introduction

In the contemporary context, English has emerged to become the most popular and important international language. It has been long used as one of the official languages for resolving political issues internationally (Mair, 2005; Pennycook, 1994). English is also increasingly used as the main language in international business affairs (D. Clark, 2012); therefore, graduates now would have better employment opportunities if they can use English fluently in addition to their native language (Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2014; Roshid & Chowdhury, 2013; Tasildar, 2012; Vietnam Briefing, 2014). Together with the increasing number of international students who pursue education in a foreign country other than their home country, English has become the dominant language of instruction, even in countries where it is not the first language such as Taiwan, Malaysia, Korea, and Nordic countries (Clark, 2013; Coleman, 2006; Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2013; European Commission, 2012; Tan, 2005). Additionally, English now enhances cultural exchange through, for example, subtitles in movies and articles or books translated into English to serve a larger population of viewers or readers respectively. As a result, there has been an increasing need for English courses in virtually every country in the world, both in form of formal and informal education (British Council, 2006)

In the informal education sector, there have been numerous commercial English language centres (CEC) established every year, particularly in big cities to meet the increasing demand for English courses (Hoang Van Van, 2011; International TEFL Academy, 2015; Lan Huong, 2005). Not only tertiary institutions, vocational colleges, high schools but also business people now turn to English teaching services as a source of revenue. Private tutoring is also another form of commercial English tuition service, which has been growing fast due to information technology. Those private tutors use Skype, Youtube, Facebook or other e-platforms to provide private English lessons to learners from different corners of the globe (University World News, 2014).

Teaching quality in CEC should not be equated with that in the formal education sector because CEC teaching-learning activities are conducted following a demand-supply principle. The notion of quality in CEC is more associated with meeting customers' needs than meeting a set of academic standards as in formal education. Teaching quality of the service provided by CEC could be the combination of qualities of English course counselling services, learning materials, facilities, teachers, support of administrative staff, and customer care service. Among them, English teacher qualities (ETQ) seem to be most important because teachers are one of the key agents in the teaching-learning process, which constitutes a major component of the

English tuition service provided by CEC. Their qualities can shape students' learning habits and influence students' learning outcomes (Foster, Toma, & Troske, 2013; Provasnik & Young, 2003). Until now, there has been an absence of evaluation activities and tools that help assure the quality of English teaching services provided by CEC. The rapid growth, diverse course designs, and lack of clarity in teacher standards have confused learners and raised public concerns about the quality of teaching service provided by CEC (Trung Dung, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to explore the concept of ETQ in CEC and evaluate the quality of English teaching in CEC.

In 2013-2014, a research project was conducted to define and evaluate the teaching quality of CEC in the South of Vietnam. This article reports the process of developing a scale that was used to evaluate the qualities of English teachers in that project. While the use of the scale and results drawn from it may be of interests for many readers, this article particularly focuses on the steps to construct the scale and problems encountered along the process, which may be helpful for those who would like to develop similar scales applicable for a context of teaching English in CEC in other countries.

Literature review

What is English teacher quality?

Before defining ETQ, it is necessary to understand what quality is. Perspectives of quality can be traced back to the ancient time with Plato's and Aristotle's viewpoints. Both of them considered quality as value or goodness. However, Plato saw it from an idealistic view whereas Aristotle looked at it from a pragmatic angle. In the idealistic view, quality is endemic in the object under investigation, immeasurable, but can only be intuitively recognized by an 'educated mind' (Ehsan, 2004). Yet, the level of 'educated' of the mind varies between individuals, suggesting some subjectivity in perception of quality idealistically. In the pragmatic view, quality is assessed by the function, not the function of itself but the function meant by the observer (Ehsan, 2004). Thus, quality in both views can be observed or perceived with subjectivity by individuals. However, in the idealistic view, quality can only be recognized by experts whereas in pragmatic view, it is more associated with perception of each individual.

This study adopted the pragmatic view of quality for developing a scale used to assess the qualities of EFL teachers in CEC. As such, ETQ in this study is defined as value or goodness of English teachers observed by their students. The definition appears to reflect the concept of '*teaching effectiveness*' (Hunt, 2009; Kerry & Wilding, 2004; Sahin & Adiguzel, 2014). The researcher did not reject, but avoided using the terms '*teaching effectiveness*' as it could denote a combination of different elements in the teaching-learning process: teacher engagement, student engagement, textbook and facilities for example. The terms ETQ in this study is associated with teachers' competencies and attributes, which are endemic in teachers.

Distinctive standards for English teachers

Many studies about teacher qualities have been conducted across the globe (Borg, 2006; Kerry & Wilding, 2004; Rajić, Hoşgörür, & Drvodelić, 2015; Sahin & Adiguzel, 2014; Tunca, Şahin, Oğuz, & Bahar Güner, 2015). The studies found different perspectives toward teacher qualities between participants of different backgrounds. Nevertheless, there was consensus of research findings about qualities of teachers: expert knowledge of the subject, pedagogical skills, classroom management skills, professional attitudes and personal characteristics.

Although the aforementioned teacher qualities can be applicable to English teachers, teaching English has some unique features compared to other subjects. Borg (2006) inquired into 200 teachers of English and teachers of other subjects to explore distinctive features of English teachers. The findings suggested that English teachers are distinctive from their colleagues of other subjects in terms of the nature of English as a subject, the content of teaching, teaching methodology, teacher-learner relationships, contrast between native and non-native speakers, and some other aspects. Therefore, quality standards for English teachers may also be distinctive compared to those for teachers of other subjects.

In particular, a number of influential organizations in the field of English teaching have established quality standards for English teachers, but the most referred would probably be ones proposed by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organization and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher (NCATE) (Tellez & Waxman, 2005). Accordingly, English teachers should possess the following standards:

- Language: Teachers must understand English as a complete system and each of its components as well as possess deep insights into native and second language acquisition.
- Culture: Teachers must understand how culture may affect students' linguistic development and learning achievement. They must also understand key features of the culture where their students are from and are aware of how the culture may affect language learning.
- Planning, implementing, and managing instruction: Teachers must successfully employ pedagogical skills to teach English with standards as well as use resources effectively.

- Assessment: Teachers must be competent in using appropriate assessment activities and techniques to evaluate their students' progress. They also need to be aware that biases in assessment may influence students' learning.
- Professionalism: Teachers must study and research for themselves to advance in their profession. They should also cooperate with colleagues when appropriate.

The National Board for Professional Teaching standards (NBPTS) also proposed a set of quality standards for English teachers (Tellez & Waxman, 2005). Generally, the standards look relatively similar to those by the TESOL and NCATE, but the NBPTS appeared to emphasize the importance of expert knowledge in English language teaching:

- Knowledge of students: Teachers must discern that students' knowledge, skills, interests, aspirations, and values may be affected by their development, language and culture.
- Knowledge of language and language development: Teachers must have a good competence of English and understand the process by which a language, be it native or second, is acquired.
- Knowledge of culture and diversity: Teachers must know how to use culture to facilitate students' learning so that they may achieve greater learning outcomes.
- Knowledge of subject matter: Teachers should own a wide-ranging knowledge of subject knowledge, in addition to how to assist student learning.

Although the aforementioned quality standards could have been proposed for different purposes, they converge at some points. Generally, professional English teachers need to achieve the following quality standards:

- knowledge of English,
- knowledge of the subject matter,
- knowledge of culture in language development,
- knowledge of students and students' needs
- teaching competencies,
- skills in using assessment,
- professional attributes, and
- personal attributes

As prestigious organizations in English language teaching, the standards provided by the TESOL and NCATE and the NBPTS can be a good reference for developing an assessment tool for ETQ in countries where English is taught as a second or foreign language. However, recent studies, which will be discussed in the next section, suggest that students in different countries need different ETQ; thus, the standards above should be applied with adaptation to fit the local context.

Differences in perceptions of ETQ in different countries

In the last decades, qualities that contribute to making effective English teachers have received much attention of researchers. There are both convergences and divergences in these qualities across different countries, time, and groups of perceivers. For example, Brosh (1996) looked for desirable characteristics of foreign language teachers by investigating perceptions of foreign language teachers and students in Israel. The result showed the following desired qualities: good knowledge and command of the target language; ability to recognize, explain, clarify as well as stimulate and prolong students' interest and motivation; demonstration of no favoritism or prejudice to any individual student in the class; and availability to students.

In Korea, Park and Lee (2006) sent a self-report questionnaire, which consisted of three categories - English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills - to 169 teachers and 339 students in a high school to investigate most-seeking EFL teacher qualities. They identified different viewpoints between the two groups of participants. Similar to Brosh's (1996) findings, Park and Lee recognized that English proficiency and pedagogical knowledge were considered the most important qualities. However, teachers ranked 'English proficiency' as the most important teacher quality whereas students listed 'pedagogical knowledge' on top. The researchers also found that high achieving students demanded different characteristics of knowledge and socio-affective skills from low achieving students. Moreover, the researchers discovered that male and female students appreciated different socio-affective attributes of teachers in enhancing their English study.

Four years later, Barnes and Lock (2010) revisited students' perceptions of the attributes that make effective English teachers in Korea. They asked 105 first year university students taking EFL classes at a women's university to write the characteristics of effective EFL teachers in their native language. in the study found five categories of effective teacher attributes: rapport, lesson delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, and organization and preparation, with rapport and delivery as the most important characteristics of an EFL teacher. Particularly, rapport attributes were viewed as the most important to Korean university students who were anxious about English language learning. This study endorsed Park and Lee’s (2006) study in that Korean students highly valued their teachers’ ability to deliver the lesson effectively.

In Taiwan, Y.-J. Chen and Lin (2009) used a 50-item questionnaire to examine Tainan-based Chinese students’ viewpoints of the characteristics of effective EFL teachers. The results indicated that instructional competence, personality, and teacher-student relationship were most desired attributes. Among the identified qualities, however, instructional competence was considered less important than personality and teacher-student relationship.

In Thailand, based on Park and Lee’s (2006) study, Wichadee (2010) designed a questionnaire to investigate the characteristics of effective English teachers. Four hundred students at Bangkok University completed the questionnaire, which included four categories of English teacher characteristics: English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, organization and communication skills, and socio-affective skills. The results showed that Bangkok University students highly appreciated English teachers who were well-organized and possessed good communication skills. Wichadee found no difference between male and female students’ perception of the teacher qualities they needed. The researcher also found no difference in perceptions of good characteristics of English teachers among students of different disciplines.

In Vietnam, Walkinshaw and Duong Thi Hoang Oanh (2012) delivered a survey and self-report questionnaire to 50 EFL students to explore what EFL teacher qualities were most valued and test whether students valued native-speakerness more than other qualities. The results showed that students placed more values on teaching experience, qualifications, friendliness, enthusiasm, the ability to deliver interesting and informative classes and understanding of students’ local culture than on native-speakerness. The students also rated advanced English communicative competence lower than native speakerness because the students perceived that native speakers’ pronunciation was ideal.

More recently in Turkey, Çelik, Arıkan, and Caner (2013) conducted a survey to find out the qualities perceived as characteristics of a successful EFL teacher with the participation of 998 undergraduate students. The researcher concluded that pedagogy-specific knowledge, personal traits, professional skills, and classroom behavior were most-wanted characteristics identified by the students.

Not very far from Turkey, Stella and Dimitris (2013) attempted to identify characteristics and teaching behaviors that effectively support Cypriot students in English study using a questionnaire and focus group interviews. Despite different characteristics found, the findings showed that characteristics that enabled English teachers to conduct student-centered approach in language learning and teaching were most wanted. In the participants’ views, effective EFL teachers must take into consideration of their students' individual differences, language anxiety, abilities and interests and be able to create learning environments accordingly. In addition, language teachers who are able to effectively use technology and engage students in meaningful classroom interactions (such as group-work on a real-life topic) are preferred. It means that instructional and/ or pedagogical skills are more significant to Cypriot in defining good EFL teachers.

In conclusion, the literature review has shed some light on the qualities that EFL students need. The review, however, suggests that students from different countries and backgrounds need different qualities from their teachers. This implies that the concept of ETQ needs to be defined carefully to make it relevant to a specific context. Similarly, teachers and students could perceive ETQ differently. Therefore, if we want to evaluate the ETQ from the students' perspective, it is necessary to reach consensus on qualities considered relevant and significant by both students and teachers. Obviously, there cannot be an exhausted list of qualities of EFL teachers that fit all types of students and teachers but this gap should be narrowed as much as possible.

Developing a scale to evaluate ETQ in CEC in Vietnam

In 2013-2014, a research project was conducted to evaluate ETQ in CEC in Vietnam. One of the most important stages of that research project was to construct a valid and reliable scale to evaluate ETQ. This article particularly reports the process of developing that scale and discusses challenges encountered along the way.

The scale was developed through two main stages. Stage 1 aimed to establish the content validity of the scale. Such a goal was achieved by (i) reviewing the literature, (ii) interviewing students about the EQT they need from teachers in CEC, (iii) attaining the consensus between English teachers and students about ETQ and (iv) most fundamentally, using the Delphi technique to retain items most appropriate for the construction of the scale. Stage 2 aimed to establish the construct validity and internal consistency of the scale. In order to achieve the goal, the scale in Stage 1 was used to collect data from students. The data were then analyzed to test uni-dimensionality of items and extract principal factors of the scale.

Stage 1: Constructing content validity of the scale

Reviewing the literature

The literature was extensively reviewed to gather relevant information on ETQ. Despite a large body of research on qualities that students need from an EFL teacher, most of them were conducted in the formal education sector and outside Vietnam. They could not be adequately applicable to Vietnamese context. Hence, it was necessary to (i) verify the relevance of these ETQ and (ii) identify extra ETQ in CEC - if any - in students' perceptions by interviewing them. The literature was used to guide the researcher in conducting and analyzing the interviews to decide what ETQ were relevant and should be included in the scale. The information in the literature, together with the information from the interviews with students, was also used to write items of the scale.

Interviewing students

In September 2013, two group interviews were conducted with randomly selected students in a CEC in Can Tho city to identify ETQ relevant and important in the context of CEC in Vietnam. One interview with six students lasted 45 minutes; the other with eight students lasted for 65 minutes. In addition, the researcher interviewed 13 individual students. The participants ranged from 18 to 27 years of age and from diverse backgrounds. Most of them were studying or working in the city at the time. In the interviews, the participants were invited to discuss this question: "*What are the qualities of an EFL teacher that you recognize to facilitate your study of English?*" The participants were encouraged to express their opinions until they agreed there were no more qualities they needed from an EFL teacher.

The data were analyzed using content analysis approach (Krippendorff, 2013). The findings showed that the Vietnamese students wanted 12 ETQ as follows:

1. English competence
2. Knowledge of subject area content (history, economics, sociology, astronomy,…)
3. Knowledge of culture of English-speaking countries
4. Knowledge of local culture (i.e. Vietnam in this study)
5. Ability to apply English as a Foreign Language teaching principles
6. Ability to meet students' learning needs
7. Ability to exploit teaching resources
8. Ability to manage a class
9. Ability to use effective assessment
10. Ability to apply information technology (IT) into teaching
11. Professional attributes
12. Personal characteristics

Reaching consensus on perceptions of ETQ between students and teachers

After the 12 ETQ applicable for CEC in Vietnam had been identified, their relevance and importance were checked again with 210 EFL teachers and 339 students by an online survey. Although there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between the two groups, the results showed that both groups agreed on the relevance and importance of the 12 surveyed qualities. On a 5-point Likert scale, the lowest mean score given by students was 3.61 and by teachers was 4.15. The highest mean score given by students was 4.48 and by teachers was 4.89. Particularly, the ranking of three qualities with the highest (qualities 1, 5 and 8) and lowest mean scores (qualities 4, 10 and 11) were similar for both groups (Table 1).

Table 1. Consensus on perception of the importance of ETQ between teachers and students.

	Student (N=339)		Teacher (N=210)	
Qualities	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
1. English competence	4.48	1.05	4.89	0.41
2. Knowledge of subject area content	3.94	1.13	4.60	0.64
3. Knowledge of cultures of English speaking countries	3.88	1.11	4.43	0.67
4. Knowledge of Vietnamese cultures	3.83	1.08	4.21	0.81
5. Ability to apply EFL teaching principles	4.46	1.02	4.84	0.42
6. Ability to meet students' learning needs	4.11	1.15	4.59	0.62
7. Ability to exploit teaching resources	3.99	1.06	4.61	0.62
8. Ability to manage the class	4.19	1.08	4.67	0.64
9. Ability to use effective assessment	4.08	1.06	4.33	0.75
10. Ability to apply IT into teaching	3.78	1.16	4.15	0.77
11. Professional attributes	3.61	1.15	4.27	0.86
12. Personal characteristics	4.12	1.10	4.50	0.67

The Delphi technique

Eighty-eight items were written to describe the 12 ETQ above based on the literature review and information from the interviews with students. All the items were written in plain English language. The researcher had the items checked by four colleagues and rewrote items that were reported to lack clarity.

The Delphi technique (Amos & Pearse, 2008; Asselin & Harper, 2014) is often used to reach consensus of an expert panel for a specific purpose. This approach is widely applied to the development of research scales. In this study, the Delphi technique was used to reach agreement among EFL teachers about the ETQ scale items.

The researcher identified experts in English education and invited them to join the panel by email. In total, 13 teachers agreed to join the panel. All of them were academics working at different higher education institutions in Vietnam with at least eight years of work experience and had completed postgraduate study in EFL teaching. More than two-third of them were participating in teaching at a local CEC. The identity of each panel member was kept confidential.

The Delphi technique was run for two rounds. In the first round, the panel members were asked to independently evaluate (i) whether each item described a relevant ETQ and (ii) whether this quality was observable by students using a 5-point Likert scale. The panel members were encouraged to comment why an item was not or not much relevant as well as to modify the item if they wished to. The responses were sent back to the researcher by email. Upon the deadline of the first round, eight out of the 13 panel members responded. The data were computed by Microsoft Excel. An item was retained if it achieved at least 80% agreement, on both criteria, of the panel. Items which did not reach 80% consensus but less than 20% disagreed (i.e. 80% either 'agreed', 'strongly agree', or 'unsure') were also retained for the second round. Eight items were dropped after this round.

In the second round, the retained 80 items were sent to the eight panel members who responded timely in the first round. The researcher included the opinions of all panel members for each retained item and asked the panel members to repeat the same process as the previous round. By the deadline, emails from all eight panel members were received. The same criteria were used to decide whether or not an item should be retained. After the second round, 13 items were eliminated; 67 items were retained.

Stage 2: Determining construct validity and reliability of the scale

Piloting to check the uni-dimensionality of the scale

The purpose of this phase is to test whether the items were clear and understandable for students and whether the items were statistically correlative with each other. First, the items were translated into Vietnamese. The translation version was checked by a professional translator to ensure the essential meaning were unchanged. A convenient sample of 215 students studying in a CEC in Can Tho was recruited. The participants were asked to rate the qualities of an English teacher who they had studied or were studying with on a 5-point Likert scale. The students were invited to seek for clarification if they needed.

A good scale should include items that measure the same underlying concept. In other words, the uni-dimensionality of the items must be high. Testing for uni-dimensionality is to test whether the response on a particular item reflects the response on other items. Item-total correlation coefficients are widely used to check the uni-dimensionality of a scale.

Theoretically, a coefficient (r) of greater than 0.30 indicates that the item should belong to the scale (Coolidge, 2013).

Data from the pilot study was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Cronbach's coefficient alpha and item-total correlation coefficients were computed to determine internal consistency. In this test, the Alpha for the whole set of 67 items was 0.95. The researcher chose to exclude items whose coefficient r were smaller than 0.40 instead of the conventional (r) greater than 0.30 with an attempt to increase the level of uni-dimensionality of the scale. Eleven items were excluded, which also meant that 56 were retained.

Further refining the scale and extracting principal components

Attempting to refine the scale further, the researcher decided not to extract principle components with data collected from the pilot but to use the scale of 56 items to collect new data with a larger sample size from diverse backgrounds. The data were collected from September 2013 to January 2014 in five cities in the south of Vietnam. In total, 1,135 EFL students participated in this round.

The new data were again analyzed using the SPSS version 20. Cronbach's coefficient alpha and item-total correlation coefficients were computed to determine internal consistency. In this test, the Alpha for the whole set of 56 items was 0.96. The criteria $r \geq 0.40$ was used to exclude items that diverged from other items in the scale. Four items did not meet the criteria and was excluded (see Table 2, items in bold).

Table 2. Item-total correlation coefficient values of scale items

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted	Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted	Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Item01	.557	.957	Item20	.577	.957	Item39	.571	.957
Item02	.618	.957	Item21	.586	.957	Item40	.610	.957
Item03	.562	.957	Item22	.600	.957	Item41	.605	.957
Item04	.569	.957	Item23	.516	.957	Item42	.628	.957
Item05	.527	.957	Item24	.471	.957	Item43	.586	.957
Item06	.589	.957	Item25	.516	.957	Item44	.582	.957
Item07	.607	.957	Item26	.508	.957	Item45	.608	.957
Item08	.575	.957	Item27	.545	.957	Item46	.603	.957
Item09	.610	.957	Item28	.591	.957	Item47	.585	.957
Item10	.535	.957	Item29	.571	.957	Item48	.596	.957
Item11	.596	.957	Item30	.544	.957	Item49	.577	.957
Item12	.622	.957	Item31	.572	.957	Item50	.580	.957
Item13	.592	.957	Item32	.522	.957	Item51	.557	.957
Item14	.578	.957	Item33	.455	.957	Item52	.571	.957
Item15	.593	.957	**Item34**	**.363**	**.958**	Item53	.575	.957
Item16	.547	.957	Item35	.568	.957	Item54	.516	.957
Item17	.494	.957	Item36	.622	.957	**Item55**	**.118**	**.959**
Item18	.496	.957	Item37	.499	.957	**Item56**	**.149**	**.959**
Item19	.586	.957	**Item38**	**-.068**	**.960**			

After testing the uni-demensionality of items in the scale, the researcher continued to use factor analysis to extract them into principal components. Before the extraction, the Kaiser-Mayer Olkin (KMO) test was computed to decide whether the 52 items were suitable for principal component analysis. Theoretically, if the KMO test result is above 0.70, it is suitable to perform factor analysis as correlations among items are sufficiently high (De Vaus, 2014). For this study, the KMO test value was 0.96; thus, it was appropriate to extract principal components.

The researcher ran factor analysis to extract factors with eigenvalue greater than 1. The result suggested that nine components should be extracted. However, the balance of the suggested component was not achieved. One component comprised of more than 15 items while some components only comprised of two items, which is advised not to extract into a component (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Also, nine principal components were too many for a scale. Therefore, the researcher decided to check the scree plot to find an alternative solution. Usually, researchers look at the elbow in the scree plot to decide how many principal components should be extracted (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Ledesma, Valero-Mora, & Macbeth, 2015; Zhu & Ghodsi, 2006). In this study, the scree plot suggested that three components be retained for interpretation, which together accounted for 43.97% of the variance in the item pool (see Table 3).

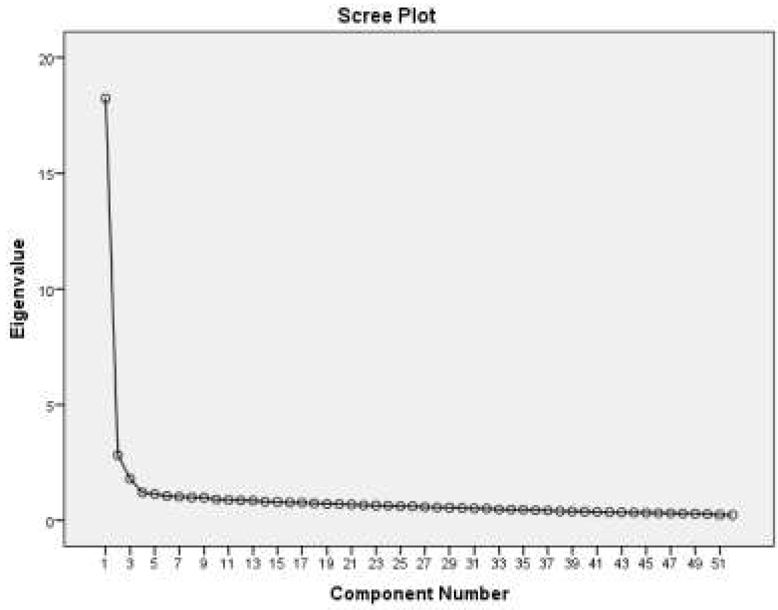

Table 3. Total variance explained by the three components

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigen values			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	18.245	35.087	35.087	8.730	16.788	16.788
2	2.818	5.420	40.508	7.469	14.363	31.151
3	1.801	3.464	43.972	6.667	12.821	43.972

As some of the components were potentially correlated, the researcher performed both direct oblimin and varimax rotation methods to look for a better solution. The results from the analyses indicated little degree of overlapping between the resulting components; thus, the outcomes of the varimax rotation, which are presented in Table 4, were used.

Traditionally, in social sciences, the threshold of 0.30 was used to determine loadings that should be retained for interpretation. In this study, the researcher chose the threshold of 0.45 which is relatively high in practice. At this cut-off, all items loaded uniquely on one of the three components. Seven items which did not reach the criterion of 0.45 were excluded from the scale.

As shown in the Rotated Component Matrix (Table 4), the first component was defined by 17 items which reflected attributes that helped teachers to conduct his or her job effectively as well as maintaining good relationships with students. It was labeled as '*Professional and personal attributes*'.

Fifteen items in the second component described teachers' pedagogical skills, ability to use effective assessment activities, ability of applying EFL teaching principles and ability to apply information technology into teaching. Therefore, it was labeled '*Pedagogical practice*'.

The third component was defined by 13 items. This component was labeled '*Knowledge and English competence*' as the items reflected teachers' expertise of English language, understanding of culture of English speaking countries and knowledge of subject matters.

Finally, the internal consistency for each component was estimated using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The computed values for the scale (n = 45), '*knowledge and English competence*' subscale (n = 13), '*pedagogical practice'* subscale (n = 15), and '*professional and personal attributes'* subscale (n= 17) were 0.96, 0.90, 0.89, and 0.92 respectively. According to de Vaus (1991), a scale with a computed alpha greater than 0.70 is considered to have an acceptable level of internal consistency. Thus, the computed alpha suggested that this scale has high internal consistency.

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix

Components	Component		
	1	2	3
Component 1: Professional and personal attributes			
1. The teacher talks to student politely.	**.746**	.093	.201
2. The teacher is willing to answers justifiable questions that students ask.	**.740**	.083	.181
3. The teacher is open to students' constructive feedback.	**.713**	.168	.127
4. The teacher shows respect to students.	**.702**	.125	.162
5. The teacher is helpful to all students.	**.685**	.109	.180
6. The teacher treats students equally.	**.677**	.113	.218
7. The teacher is reliable.	**.664**	.107	.257
8. The teacher is well-prepared for his/her lesson before coming to class.	**.559**	.288	.246
9. The teacher creates a comfortable class environment.	**.540**	.253	.224
10. The teacher works with everyone in the class.	**.527**	.255	.251
11. The teacher gives clear instructions to ensure students understand him/her.	**.525**	.340	.241
12. The teacher is punctual.	**.522**	.246	.222
13. The teacher does not behave in a way that goes against local culture standards.	**.502**	.217	.199
14. The teacher compliments students on giving a good answer to a question.	**.499**	.294	.239
15. The teacher encourages students who cannot give an answer to a question.	**.486**	.365	.230
16. The teacher announces his/ her absence to students in advance.	**.473**	.254	.166
17. The teacher creates opportunities for students to interact in the classroom.	**.464**	.436	.171

Component 2: Pedagogical practice			
18. The teacher asks students to evaluate each other's work.	.098	**.699**	.126
19. The teacher asks students to self-evaluate their work.	.149	**.656**	.181
20. The teacher uses email as a means to interact with students out of the class.	.033	**.653**	.129
21. The teacher gives tests along the course to help students check their progress.	.140	**.620**	.166
22. The teacher explores students' learning needs at the beginning of the course.	.254	**.609**	.197
23. The teacher recommends some websites for students to study English at home.	.145	**.597**	.199
24. The teacher tests students' level of English at the beginning of the course.	.175	**.590**	.139
25. The teacher points out weaknesses that a student needs to improve.	.265	**.579**	.218
26. The teacher suggests ways to improve weaknesses so that students can study English better.	.280	**.493**	.257
27. The teacher uses authentic teaching materials in addition to the textbook.	.104	**.474**	.378
28. The teacher applies information technologies into teaching to motivate students to learn.	.307	**.473**	.255
29. The teacher adjusts his/ her teaching methods to accommodate students' learning needs.	.323	**.469**	.253
30. The teacher organizes interesting activities to motivate students to learn.	.425	**.469**	.188
31. The teacher counsels a student in learning tactics that suits his/ her learning style.	.230	**.460**	.360
32. The teacher challenges students with some issues related to the lesson.	.376	**.450**	.264
Component 3: Knowledge and English competence			
33. The teacher pronounces English words correctly.	.327	.127	**.683**
34. The teacher speaks English fluently.	.326	.071	**.631**
35. The teacher discusses cultures of English-speaking countries confidently.	.115	.262	**.627**
36. The teacher gives examples of customs and traditions of English-speaking countries where relevant.	.121	.365	**.627**
37. The teacher satisfactorily answers students' questions about cultures of English-speaking countries.	.191	.331	**.626**
38. The teacher sounds native-like when speaking in English.	.190	.259	**.594**
39. The teacher gives example of how to apply the knowledge he/ she taught into reality.	.164	.319	**.585**
40. The teacher can address students' concerns related to the topic of the lesson.	.364	.217	**.542**
41. The teacher knows a wide range of English words.	.351	.154	**.539**
42. The teacher explains English knowledge systematically.	.295	.153	**.537**
43. The teacher updates information related to a topic in the textbook.	.349	.234	**.523**
44. The teacher links the lesson with real life.	.238	.397	**.465**
45. The teacher can present the topic of a lesson easily.	.420	.192	**.455**

Discussion

Challenges of developing the scale

Concerning testing the content validity of the scale, the researcher faced three major challenges. The first challenge was identifying ETQ relevant to the business environment of CEC in Vietnam. The group interviews and individual interviews with the students were conducted to achieve this goal. Among the 12 ETQ identified through the interviews, the researchers found three qualities relatively different from the literature: (i) teachers' understanding of cultures of English speaking countries, (ii) their ability in using information technology and (iii) professional attributes. Previous studies found the influence of culture on EFL learners' development of linguistic ability (J. F. Chen, Warden, & Chang, 2005; Mertin, 2014), this study found that Vietnamese EFL students appreciated teachers' knowledge of cultures of English speaking countries, which in their opinion indicated a good English teachers and motivated them to study. They also favored teachers who could use IT as a teaching tool although they stressed on the appropriate use of this tool. This is in line with the fact that in the past few years, IT has been developed so quickly in Vietnam and there has been an increasing trend in applying IT into teaching (Ly Thanh Hue & Ab Jalil, 2013; Peeraer & Van Petegem, 2012; Tri Hoang, 2013). Moreover, professional attributes in this study referred to the customer-oriented behaviours inside and outside the class. It is understandable because those students enrolled in CEC which were operated in a business environment. Those three qualities were found relevant for Vietnamese EFL students in CEC but may not in other countries, so they must be retested. However, their existence in this study support the notion that ETQ may vary across contexts or countries.

The survey of the 12 identified ETQ with EFL teachers and students was also aimed to confirm the relevance of the 12 ETQ between the two groups of participant. As the scale was developed to evaluate ETQ, the qualities included in the scale must be perceived to be relevant by EFL teacher themselves. Otherwise, the resulting scale would not make sense to EFL teachers, which also means that they would not appreciate being evaluated using the scale. In this study, although there was a difference in the average rating of each quality between the teachers and students, both group appeared to appreciate the 12 qualities (the lowest scores were 3.61 and 4.15 for students and teachers respectively). However, this consensus on the relevance of those qualities between groups of EFL teachers and students may not be the same in other context beyond Vietnam. There could be a mismatch in their perception about the relevance of those qualities. In this case, the researcher believes that a discussion with both groups about the relevance or irrelevance of the mismatching qualities is crucial prior to deciding to exclude those qualities from the scale. Therefore, researchers need to be cautious of those issues when replicating the study.

Secondly, it was difficult to write items to describe ETQ in forms of teachers' observable behaviours, particularly items to depict teachers' English competence. Those items appeared to cause disagreement among the Delphi panel members the most. In the original scale, 11 items had been carefully written to depict teacher's English competence; nevertheless, five items were dropped because according to the EFL experts, those items described behaviours that were too vague for students to observe or understand. Then, in testing the internal validity of the scale, one more item was dropped. Therefore, future researchers need to focus on describing this quality more carefully; otherwise, the items describing this important ETQ would be eliminated along the development process.

Thirdly, retaining or excluding a scale item was also a difficult task. In the current study, the Delphi technique was used in an unconventional way to exclude less relevant scale items. Traditionally, a panel member does not know the opinion of their colleagues when rating the relevance of the scale items. However, in this study, all opinions over an item were shared among members of the panel in the second round. The researcher believed that this practice informed panel members of their colleagues' perception on an item so that they each could justify for themselves and finally made informed decisions on the content validity of an item. In the second Delphi round, 13 items did not pass the threshold of 80% agreement between the panel members compared with eight items in the first round. This evidence suggests that including panel members' opinion of the scale items could help eliminate items diverging from the others in the scale. Although the scale was subjected to two Delphi rounds only, the content validity of 67 items was reached as all of them got 80% agreement between panel members. In addition, the researcher decided not to continue with a third Delphi round but to conduct a pilot test because statistical analysis would reveal a more accurate uni-dimensionality of the items than a third Delphi round would. The pilot test can also help detect items that cofuse students. Future researchers may substitute the pilot test by a third Delphi round, but this may reduce the chance to improve the uni-dimensionality of the items statistically and unclear detect scale items.

Concerning testing the construct validity and reliability of the scale, the researcher did not have many problems as it was done by the SPSS. The biggest problem encountered at this stage was choosing the appropriate extraction method (oblimin or varimax) and deciding the number of principal components that should be extracted. As reported earlier, the number of principal components could be decided based on either eigenvalue greater than 1 or the scree plot. For practical and convenient reasons, the researcher chose to use the scree plot to decide the number of principal components. However, future researchers decide the number of principal components by referring to the number of eigenvalues greater than 1. Additionally, the researcher attempted to extract the principal component using both oblimin and varimax rotation method. In the end, as the results showed little correlation between factors, varimax rotation method was chosen. It is recommended that future researchers should perform a similar process to ensure the most suitable extraction method to be used.

Finally, the face validity of the scale should also be noted. Results of different tests indicated a high level of content validity and internal consistency of the scale in this article; however, the face validity of the scale may be questioned at some points. For example, it could be argued that items 8, 14, 15 and 17 (Table 4) fit into the "Pedagogical practice' component rather than the 'Professional and personal attributes'. Although this argument is valid, it is noted that those items also describe professional attributes of a teachers in the class, and the factor analysis indicated that those items should be clustered with others in the 'Professional and personal attributes'. This difficulty suggests that researchers need to pay due attention to making a clear distinction between observable behaviours to avoid users' ambiguous understanding on the face of the scale items.

Another possible cause of such a problem with face validity was that the scale items were first written in English, then translated into Vietnamese to collect data for factor analysis. Although the Vietnamese version was checked to ensure the *essential meaning* of the original version was unchanged, this practice could have made slight change in the *original meaning* of some items. Thus, it influenced students' understanding and rating of the scale items by which quantitative data were produced. This in turns affected factor analysis, resulting in some items being extracted to a component that made them appear to diverge from the other items. If this study is replicated, the researcher would write the scale items in Vietnamese because it would reduce problems caused by the translation task and possible problems that entail. It is also because there is a higher possibility that in the end the Vietnamese version would be used by the CEC to assist students' rating task.

The use of the scale

Although the content and construct validity and internal consistency of the scale were found to be high, the scale should be used with some caution, particularly in judging teachers' English competence. As discussed earlier in this section, EFL experts believed that items describing this quality were difficult for students to rate because their English competence was not adequate to evaluate their teachers' English competence. Items describing teachers' English competence retained in the final version of the scale appeared observable by students, but they may also confuse students who are asked to evaluate their teachers' English competence. Also, the retained items together may not depict a teacher's English competence completely. Therefore, further studies should look into how to make items about teachers' English competence more observable by students. The researcher recommends that this scale should be used together with a measure that directly evaluates teachers' English competence. Most importantly, the scale should be completed by English learners of at least intermediate level of English because it seems that from this English level upwards, students could judge a teachers' English competence reliably rather than judging on like and dislike.

In addition, for future use of this scale, the researcher recommends that the components and items in each component should be rearranged to assist participants' flow of thoughts. Component 'Knowledge and English competence' should come first, followed by 'Pedagogical practice' and then 'Professional and personal attributes'. The items in each component could be rearranged as follows:

- Knowledge and English competence: 33, 34, 38, 41, 42, 35, 36, 37, 45, 39, 40, 43, 44
- Pedagogical practice: 24, 22, 29, 25, 26, 31, 27, 30, 32, 18, 19, 21, 20, 23, 28
- Professional and personal attributes: 1, 4, 5, 7, 12, 16, 8, 9, 10, 6, 11, 17, 13, 14, 15, 2, 3

The arrangement of the items only serves the purpose of easing students' task of evaluating their teachers' qualities. There could be some differences in the result between the unarranged and arranged scale as students' rating task is facilitated. This is not the focus of this article, but it is worth testing.

Equally important, future research can also look into whether the results obtained from using this scale could be used to predict students' learning outcomes because teacher qualities, as indicated in the literature, can affect students' learning outcomes (Foster et al., 2013; Provasnik & Young, 2003).

Conclusion

This article has reported the process of developing a scale that can be used to evaluate ETQ in CEC in Vietnam. The scale appeared to attain content and construct validity as well as internal consistency. The results drawn from using this scale can give implications for improving service quality and professional development of teachers in CEC in Vietnam. Still, as the scale may not be able to evaluate a comprehensive range of qualities that an EFL teacher possesses, the results should be interpreted carefully for justifiable purposes. What is more valuable in this article is steps to develop the scale and difficulties that the researcher experienced along the process of developing it, which would be helpful for researchers, teachers, and mangers of CEC around the world who are interested in constructing a similar scale applicable for English language teaching in the business context in their countries.

Abbreviations

CEC	Commercial English language centre
ETQ	English teacher quality
EFL	English as a foreign language
TESOL	Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages
NCATE	The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
NBPTS	The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

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Appendix 1

Writing Strategy Survey

Name: ______________________ Class: ________ Number: ____________

The following is a list of strategies which some students report using in order to develop their writing skills. Please read the strategies and rate them according to the frequency with which you use them

5=very high	4=high	3=medium	2=low	1=very low

	Rate	Strategy
1		I learn as much new vocabulary as I can
2		I learn from my mistakes
3		I learn grammar rules
4		I use language I hear in my writing
5		I plan my writing
6		I use language I read in my writing
7		I write as much as I can in English (e.g. letters, e-mails, lists, notes etc)
8		I revise new language regularly
9		I record new language I hear or read in a notebook
10		I memorize good texts as a model for my own writing
11		I write a diary in English
12		I check my writing for accuracy
13		I analyze texts (e.g. sentence structure, grammar or figures of speech)
14		I write creatively in English (e.g. stories or poetry)
15		I use references (e.g. dictionary or grammar book) to check my writing
16		I write a rough copy then re-write
17		I get someone to proof read what I have written
18		I learn idioms and other useful expressions
19		I notice the writing of native speakers
20		I consult my teacher if I have problems with my writing
Are there any other strategies you use to help you to improve your writing skills?		

Appendix 2

Median reported frequency of strategy use (items have been abbreviated because of space constraints, see Appendix 1 for original items) sorted from highest to lowest total rating.

No.	Median	Strategy item (abbreviated)
2	4	I learn from my mistakes
5	4	I plan my writing
6	4	I use language I read
12	4	I check my writing for accuracy
15	4	I use references
18	4	I learn idioms and useful expressions
19	4	I notice the writing of native speakers
1	3	I learn new vocabulary
3	3	I learn grammar rules
4	3	I use language I hear
7	3	I write as much as I can
8	3	I revise regularly
9	3	I record new language in a notebook
10	3	I memorize good texts as a model
13	3	I analyze texts
14	3	I write creatively
16	3	I write a rough copy then re-write
17	3	I get someone to proof read
20	3	I consult my teacher
11	2	I write a diary in English

Appendix 3

The relationships between reported frequency of strategy use and final course scores showing correlation co-efficients (Spearman's rho = R) and level of significance (Sig) arranged according to strength of correlation. (* indicates *p*<.05),

	Strategy item (abbreviated)	R	**Sig**
9	I record new language in a notebook	.257	.050*
5	I plan my writing	.242	.064
8	I revise regularly	.230	.079
20	I consult my teacher	.227	.087
1	I learn new vocabulary	.192	.146
18	I learn idioms and useful expressions	.192	.146
16	I write a rough copy then re-write	.167	.205
15	I use references	.155	.241
6	I use language I read	.126	.342
19	I notice the writing of native speakers	.121	.359
2	I learn from my mistakes	.094	.478
3	I learn grammar rules	.093	.484
4	I use language I hear	.063	.636
7	I write as much as I can	.038	.773
12	I check my writing for accuracy	.003	.980
10	I memorize good texts as a model	-.071	.595
13	I analyze texts	-.092	.490
11	I write a diary in English	-.111	.401
17	I get someone to proof read	-.167	.206
14	I write creatively	-.283	.030*

Appendix 4: Responses to strategies positively related to end-of-course scores

Strategy item	Positive	Qualified	Negative
5. Planning	Tina Steven Terry		Winnie
8. Revising	Winnie Steven Terry		Tina
9. Keeping a notebook	Winnie Steven	Tina Terry	
20. Consulting teacher	Tina Steven Winnie Terry		

Appendix 5: Responses to strategies negatively related to end-of-course scores

Strategy item	Positive	Qualified	Negative
10. Memorizing		Winnie Tina	Steven Terry
11. Diary writing	Winnie	Tina Terry	Steven
13. Analyzing			Terry Steven Tina Winnie
14. Writing creatively	Terry	Steven	Tina Winnie
17. Seeking proof reading	Terry	Winnie	Steven Tina

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Author's Position Expression in English and Russian Scientific Discourse: Challenges in Academic Writing

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Abstract

An essential feature of successful and effective communication within scientific discourse is the exact and positive decoding of how the author expresses his/her position, whereas this communication is targeted towards the reader. This article researches different means of expressing the author's position, actualized in scientific discourse. Considering that any text is a result of information interpretation, accumulation and selection by a particular author, contemporary linguistics and discoursology regard means of expressing author's position to be important part of a science. The author of scientific text forms the scientific content as informatively clear speech message, insures logical and compositional development of the text, highlights the most important pieces of scientific knowledge and controls the reader's attention. The author of scientific articles supposes that means of expressing his/her position depend directly on functional characteristics of a discourse and proper usage of them indicates the cultural level of speech of an author. Analyzing English and Russian texts (mainly in the area of geology and geophysics), means of expressing the author's position were elicited and classified. Another important defined aspect was the ethno-cultural factors that influence the choice of means expressing the author's position in scientific discourse in Russian and English languages, as well the difficulties that NNS come across in scientific writing.

Keywords: discourse analysis, scientific discourse, academic writing, discourse markers

Author’s Position Expression in English and Russian Scientific Discourse: Challenges in Academic Writing

Introduction

An essential requirement for a scientist of today is English language knowledge, since English has become the language of international communication: “English is frequently used as a tool for conducting business or research rather than as a language for personal identification” (McConachy, 2015). Over the past decades, in the field of Russian science, English was predominantly used to get information. Currently, Russian science holds the course for international cooperation and sharing national research outcomes. This in its turn makes the skill of academic writing in English highly-demanded among today’s post-graduates and young scientists. Besides the fact that academic texts created by native and non-native English speakers vary significantly in vocabulary, grammatical organization, and structure, there also exist definite ethno-lingual factors that influence discourse requirements. This concerns the means of expressing the author’s position in a scientific article in which the author follows the strict rules of text unfolding.

Considering that any text is a result of information the interpretation, accumulation and selection of a particular author, means of expressing the author's position is an important part of scientific writing. The authors of scientific articles are immediate participants of the scientific community embracing a wide spectrum of issues, which in itself, involves a rather significant diversity in the intention and means of expressing the author's position. The author of scientific text forms the scientific content as informatively clear speech message, insures logical and compositional development of the text, highlights the most important pieces of scientific knowledge and controls the reader's attention. The author uses markers to make his/her presentation of objective scientific information more comprehensible and interesting for a reader. In this case, understanding the practical usage of markers expressing the author's position in scientific writing would be of significant importance.

An understanding of markers expressing author's position is also important for ESP teaching as this notion in academic writing is distinctly different in two languages- Russian and English. It is this difference that in many cases impedes the author's proficiency level in academic writing. The study of markers expressing author's position can assist non-native speakers (especially, Russian speakers) to participate more effectively and successfully in the sphere of academic research.

This paper identifies the ethno-cultural linguistic factors that may influence the modes in expressing the author's position in scientific writing in Russian and English languages and defines actual approaches to the classifications of means which are used to express the author's position.

In this paper, we explore the scientific texts which vary depending on ethno-cultural aspects. This issue has become particularly topical recently and, currently, is in the center of scientific multidisciplinary discussion. We suggest that the peculiarities of scientific texts written in different languages are caused by ethno-lingual aspects and specific ethno-cultural communication models. Besides, we suppose that the modes of expressing the author's position reflect the thinking and communication stereotypes of a scientist, while the trends in the usage of these means result from specific ethno-cultural linguistic peculiarities (Connor, 1983; Schiffrin, 1987, 2004; Kresta, 1995; Thielmann, 2009; Gubareva 2011, Alexandrov, Alexandrova, 2012; Kogut, 2014).

Research Methodology

Research Objectives

Our main objective is to prove that the choice of the author's position markers and their distribution within the text depends on the discourse type and the national tradition of academic writing. We also suppose that discourse markers are not only the means to provide the integrity, cohesion and coherence of the scientific text, but also specific units, which allow to understand the mode of thinking and communication stereotypes essential for the scientists who belong to another ethno-cultural community.

Research Methods

In the course of our research, we analyzed the texts of scientific discourse and genre – scientific article. To eliminate the ideo-lingual factor, the texts of different Russian and English authors were considered. Therefore, the only variable value that determines the choice of the author's position markers is ethno-lingual identity of the author.

The corpus of research materials comprises about 167 thousand word combinations (i.e. about 83 thousand word combinations in each language). Having explored the articles from Russian and English scientific journals on geology, we identified the means expressing the author's position.

Russian corpus included scientific articles on geology published in “Geology and Geophysics” (Geology and Geophysics Journal, 2015). The total number of words included 83790, within which 1354 units (markers), reflecting the author’s position, were identified. English corpus included ten scientific articles on geology (83600 words) “Mineral Deposit Modeling” (Kirkham, Sinclair, Thorpe and Duke, 1995). Within this corpus, 1722 units (markers), reflecting the author’s position, were identified.

Based on this the ratio of a lexical unit to the total number of words in the text is considered as the absolute number of lexical units to their overall frequencies, while the ratio of a lexical unit to the total number of lexical units is the relative number of lexical units to the their overall frequencies. As the absolute and relative number of lexical units to their overall frequencies were determined, the meaningful differences in the usage of the lexical units were identified.

We applied the following methodology:

(a) combining the elements of philological analysis of the text to determine the semantic and functional types of discourse words;

(b) discourse analysis relevant to the discourse parameters of text building; and

(c) statistical analysis to process the obtained data.

In this research, the absolute number of lexical units expressing the author’s position within the corpus is the ratio of lexical units within a specific group of markers to the absolute number of lexical units, as well as the total number of words in the text under analysis. This shows the “relative frequency” of lexical units in different specific group of markers (i.e. makes it possible to see how frequently the lexical units of this or that group of markers are used within the text).

Literature Review

Issues of ethno-cultural varieties of a scientific communication are in focus of scientific multidisciplinary discussion nowadays. Modern science (linguistics, psychology and philosophy), has turned to questions of unity/varieties in scientific communication, in particular, to the differences in linguistic view of the world, in the spheres of national concepts, which might impede scientific communication and cooperation (Goddar, Wierzbicka, 1997). The latest research in this sphere has proved that scientific texts in different languages vary significantly in the plan of expression. Being different in how scientific discourse is built up and the ways of the author’s attitude to the material presented, the scientific texts reflect specific national modes of scientific thinking (Connor 1983, 2004; Kresta, 1995; Thielmann, 2009; Gubareva, 2011; Alexandrov, Alexandrova, 2012; Bolsunovskaya, Naydina, 2015, *et al*)

Results and Discussion

Classifications of markers expressing author's position in scientific discourse

The authors' position is the conclusion that the author draws in the result of his/her reflection resounded in the text. The thesis that any text is attributed to the author and, as a result, reflects the author's position, does not need to be proved. However, it seems that the ways of showing the author's position in the text may vary from one discourse to another and also depends on function of the text. Moreover, we suppose that ethno-cultural factor influences the choice of means predominantly used to demonstrate the author's position in this or that language. Any scientific text consists of linguistic units, which are more or less dependent on the discourse characteristics and can be referred to the first or second level of communication Clark (2004). In scientific text, the linguistic units of the primary level perform informative function and comprise terminology, scientific and common vocabulary. The units of the secondary level constitute the system which builds up, develops, and monitors communication, while the system itself is not the target of communication and fulfills the auxiliary function, for example, provides cohesion between different parts of the scientific text. The secondary level units include lexical means used to express the author's position.

Currently, there are various approaches to classify the means in expressing author's position in the text (Connor, 1983, 2004; Baranov, Plungyan, Rakhilina, 1993; Kresta, 1995; Kotyurova, Bazhenova, 2008; Thielmann, 2009; Chernovskaya, 2010; Gubareva, 2011, et al.). Some scientists classify the units on the basis of their semantics (Kotyurova, Bazhenova, 2008; Chernovskaya, 2010), while others point out the so – called discourse markers which are classified on the basis of three principle communication constituents– message, sender, and receiver. The scientists who introduced the notion of discourse markers and analyzed them in their works do not make the author's position the main objective of the research. However, we suppose that usage of such discourse markers directly reflect the author's position. There are also research works, in which the author's position is explored through the usage of lexical modifiers or words expressing uncertainty (Lakoff, 1972; Coates, 1990; Hyland, 1995; Holmes, 1996; Maryukhin, 2010).

All these classifications have their advantages and represent the lexical units expressing the author's position from different aspects. Let us represent a complete list of means expressing the author's position in the text (table 1).

Table 1. Classification of three categories expressing author's position

Types expressing the author's position	**Discourse markers**	**Hedging**
1. Ego-nomination 1.1 words indicating the author of the text 1. 2 pronouns which point at the author of the text **2. Mental state nomination** 2.1 parenthetical words; 2.2 simple and complex (or compound) with the verbs of mental activity 2.3 markers determining the rate of uncertainty **3. Reflection (self-analysis) nomination** 3.1 certain word combinations 3.2 parenthetical constructions	**1. Cohesive discourse markers** 1.1.introducing the topic 1.2 ordering the information 1.3 arranging the information on the page or in the text 1.4 turning to a new subtopic 1.5 making conclusion 1.6 adding new information 1.7 repeating or specifying the information, clarifying and paraphrasing 1.8 opposing or deviating from the main theme 1.9 giving examples **2. Discourse markers of the sender's attitude to the message of communication** 2.1 expressing logical probability 2.2 increasing/decreasing reliability of information 2.3 evaluating the information 2.4 pointing at the author's attitude to the information 2.5 expressing the author's opinion **3. Discourse markers of interaction between the sender and the receiver** 3.1 directly influencing the reader 3.2 stimulating cooperation 3.3 focusing the reader's attention on the main / additional information 3.4 appealing to the reader's background knowledge 3.5 referring the reader to the source of information 3.6 referring the reader (the receiver) to the author's (the sender's) previous research works	1 certain lexemes 2 adverbs 3 adjectives 4 modal verbs 5 modal nouns 6 pointing at limitations of some parameters 7 referring to the theory 8 admitting to a lack of information.

While each classification reflects a certain range of peculiarities in expressing the author's position, there is inevitably some overlap between these categories, which make the analysis procedure more complicated. As for the first classification, the criterion to differentiate the suggested types is vague. Some statements remain unclear (for example, "certain word combinations”), as well as some principles of classification (why the researchers take into account the units expressing uncertainty, while units expressing certainty are not considered). The classification of discourse markers seems to go into unnecessary details, with minor differences between some types (for example, makers “ordering the information” and “arranging the information on the page or in the text”), while other types seem to duplicate each other (for instance, the markers “pointing at the author’s attitude to the information” and “expressing the author’s opinion”). Hedging classification is of particular interest for us, however, it is still vague as the researchers consider only the units expressing uncertainty. We suppose that the units expressing certainty reflect the author’s position as well.

Such a diversity of contradictions (minor differences, duplication, vague meaning and others) hinders the understanding of means of expressing author's position. As scientific discourse is focused on the depth-search of objective truth, information awareness and logical argumentation, this diversity of markers within the above-mentioned classification categories leads to the misunderstanding of the existing cultural differences in scientific writing and its influence on the ability to communicate effectively.

In this case we suggest a more simplified classification which could be more universal in academic writing. The two categories expressing the author’s position are direct and indirect modes.

Direct modes of expressing the author’s position

The direct mode includes words naming the author of the text, pronouns pointing at the author, references to the author’s previous works, etc. (table 2).

Table 2. Direct mode expressing author's position

	Mode description	Examples of markers
1.	Naming the author of the text	the author, the authors of the work, the group of authors
2.	Pointing at the author	we, by us, in our research
3.	Expressing the author's opinion	it is obvious, it is noteworthy, it is worth noting that, let us note that
4.	Interaction with the reader	see, let us consider
5.	Referring the reader to the source of information	in the works by Ivanov, as Ivanov states, [Ivanov]
6.	Referring the reader to the author's previous works	as it was shown before; in the work … it was proved that
7.	Hedging	probably, may be, rather, approximately, predominantly, specifically, can, can be, supposing
8.	Pointing at limitations of some parameters or admitting to a lack of information	due to the lack of data, this stipulates the lack of information

The markers of this group were found in all analyzed scientific articles which proves their significant role in the communicative structure of scientific writing. These markers are predominant in number both in Russian and English scientific texts (comparable to makers of the indirect mode). These results support the conclusion that scientific communication is becoming more and more subjective. Scientists revealed the coexistence of emotional components with the elements of scientific style. On the one hand, emotionality and evaluation are irrelevant to the scientific style, which is characterized by general, abstract, logical conclusions and determinations, and, on the other hand, it is impossible for the author of a scientific article to create an alien text and not to express his/her opinion on the subject of the research discussed. The subjective component is an essential trait of creative individuality, where the thought is being expressed profoundly and ingeniously. The statistical analysis of the direct mode is given in table 3.

Table 3. Direct mode expressing the author's position: statistical analysis

Direct modes	Overall number of lexical units		Ratio of the direct mode to the overall number of words		Ratio of the direct mode to the overall number of lexical units	
	Russian	English	Russian	English	Russian	English
1. Naming the author	16	4	0.01%	0.004%	1.74%	0.33%
2. Pointing at the author	28	155	0.03%	0.18%	3.04%	12.9%
3. Expressing the author's opinion	74	51	0.09%	0.06%	8.04%	4.2%
4. Interaction with the reader	132	58	0.16%	0.06%	14.35%	4.8%
5.Referring the reader to the source of information	445	542	0.53%	0.65%	48.37%	45.31%
6. Referring the reader to the author's previous works	63	49	0.07%	0.05%	6.85%	4.09%
7. Units of hedging	150	312	0.18%	0.3%	16.3%	26.08%
8.Pointing at limitations of some parameters or admitting to a lack of information	12	25	0.01%	0.02%	1.3%	2.1%
Total	920	1196	1.1%	1.4%	100%	100%

In the course of our research, we identified two principle types of lexical units expressing the author's position in scientific writing. Firstly, there are lexical units expressing the author's position explicitly, through introducing the speech from the first person or naming the author.

(1) To determine the sensitivity of these results to variations in mining costs, gold price and royalty rate, I varied each of these components separately and calculated the resulting financial indices.

(2)....мы (we assume that) исходили из определений составов газовой фазы в расплавных включениях минералов....

(3) Cox and Singer present these as cumulative -frequency graphs and as summary statistics in an appendix. (D.A. Singer *Development of Grade and Tonnage Models for different Deposit Types)*

(4) Мы считаем (We consider it is necessary to refer to the publications of Sharapov et al.) необходимыми подробные комментарии к публикации [Шарапов и др., 2009] потому, что в работах последних двух десятков лет,.....

Secondly, there are lexical units expressing the author's attitude to the information or give evaluation.

(5) Our understanding of the attributes and origins of mineral deposit types is highly uneven.

New theories, concepts, and perspectives of research are impossible without reflection on the previous studies and interpretation of background research, as well as open or arcane debates and personal evaluation of the objective reality and the text, i.e. without subjective modality. This explicity is also due to the fact that the message is being sent to the receiver, who is within the author's social, cultural and professional circle.

This can be seen in the great number of lexical units referring the reader to the source of information (48.37% in the Russian corpus and 45.31% in the English corpus). The authors, both English and Russian, in this way, underline that together with other researchers they are a group of co-thinkers. In this case, if this or that fact is mentioned, there should be a reference to the authors who established the fact. In addition, scientific research is considered to be well-grounded if the author is aware of the achievements and challenges in the field of the research, and this information can be obtained from the already published works. This is the reason for the author to refer to as many relevant scientific works as possible.

(6) Taylor combined the theoretical aspects of the lognormal distribution …... He concluded that the cut-off grade must be near the median..... He also observed that many cut-off grades of mines...

(7) We are tempted to join with Krauskopf in considering the possible existence …....

(8) В обзоре рабочего семинара «Ошибки в гравиметрических данных» (In the review "Errors in gravimeter data"),...... описаны основные неприливные источники гравиметрических помех и их амплитуды.

Lexical units of hedging take the second place in terms of frequency (16.3%) in Russian scientific texts. The number of these markers is significantly lower than that of the lexical units referring to the source of information, and, it is worth noting that according to the analysis results, Russian authors tend to express a certain rate of uncertainty (use such words as *probably, rather, likely*) rather than to state directly that something is questionable (avoiding such words as *unlikely, doubtful, questionable*). We regard this peculiarity as an ethno-cultural characteristic, which traces back to the traditions of scientific writing, where the author is a scientist, who represents the results of his research instead of enumerating his/her doubts and possible options. Another evidence, which can substantiate this conclusion, is the number of markers pointing at the lack of information (only 1.2% - the smallest share).

(9) По-видимому (Probably), с учетом кинетики гетерофазных взаимодействия в реальных мантийных породах полученные оценки существенно возрастут.

In terms of frequency hedging makers are also ranked as the second group in English scientific texts and make 26.08%. This number is much higher than that in Russian scientific texts, which signifies the difference in the use of these markers. English authors tend to be more cautious in drawing conclusions, as well as expressing their opinions, and try to foresee possible changes in future, therefore, their conclusions are less categorical.

(10) Although it is not possible to guarantee that a model will never be revised, a model will probably be stable...

(11) One can mitigate the dangers of emphasizing parochial features or simple panaceas in an exploration program by examining the full empirical database, understanding the assumptions and limitations inherent in the genetic model.....

According to the statistic analysis, in the Russian corpus, the communication between the sender and the receiver takes place when the author refers the reader to tables, graphs, pictures, which are numerous within geological discourse. As a rule, the most important information is given in graphs and tables, while the text of the article serves to comment on this data. This group makers constitute a significant share and account for 14.35%.

(12) Спектральный состав свечения на рис. 5 (illustrated in Figure 5..) близок к спектрам на рис. 3 и 4 (as illustrated in Figures 3 and 4).

However, in English scientific texts the number of these markers is significantly lower and they account for only 4.8%. The lexical units referring the reader to the author's previous works and pointing at limitations of some parameters in English scientific articles make up 4.09% and 2.1%, respectively.

(13) From the preceding discussion, it is clear that most of the published grade and tonnage models..

In Russian corpus, there are few lexical units, naming the author (1.74%), or pointing at him/her with the help of pronouns (3.04%). Though there are works, which prove that the author becomes more and more personified in scientific texts, our obtained results fail to substantiate this point of view, or at least, represent this tendency as slowly flowing and unnoticeable. It seems to be reasonable to analyze the texts belonging to different decades and to clarify whether this tendency changes with the course of time.

In general, the direct mode of expressing the author's position is minor in number and account for only 1.1% and 1.4% (ratio of lexical unit to the total number of words) in Russian and English corpora, respectively. This result is quite predictable, as the figure of the author is less significant in the scientific discourse that the science, in general, or the subject of the research, in particular.

Indirect modes of expressing the author's position

Indirect mode includes markers determining the rate of uncertainty and parenthetical words. Indirect modes are those which structure the text (table 4).

Table 4. Indirect mode expressing author's position

	Mode description	Examples of markers
1.	Introducing the topic	in this paper, we....; the further study
2.	Ordering the information	as mentioned above; as noted
3.	Turning to a new subtopic	further; further analysis shows;
4.	Making conclusion	thus; in general; in summary; to summarize
5.	Adding new information	In addition; whereas
6.	Repeating or specifying the information, clarifying and paraphrasing	as well as; therefore
7.	Opposing or deviating from the main topic	however; alternatively; although
8.	Giving examples	this illustrates; for example
9.	Referring to the visual representation of data	show; indicates; illustrates

The statistical analysis of the indirect mode is given in table 5.

Table 5. Indirect mode of expressing the author's position: statistical analysis

Direct modes	Overall number of lexical units		Ratio of the direct mode to the overall number of words		Ratio of the direct mode to the overall number of lexical units	
	Russian	English	Russian	English	Russian	English
1.Introducing the topic	7	63	0.008%	0.07%	1.6%	11.9%
2. Ordering the information	28	4	0.03%	0.04%	6.44%	0.7%
3. Turning to a new subtopic	3	6	0.003%	0.04%	0.69%	1.14%
4.Making conclusion	58	15	0.07%	0.17%	13.3%	2.8%
5.Adding new information	8	82	0.008%	0.09%	1.84%	15.5%
6.Repeating or specifying the information, clarifying and paraphrasing	57	94	0.07%	0.11%	13.1%	17.8%
7.Opposing or deviating from the main topic	25	63	0.3%	0.07%	5.75%	11.9%
8. Giving examples	11	58	0.01%	0.07%	2.53%	11.02%
9. Referring to the visual representation of data	237	274	0.28%	0.32%	54.48%	52.09%
Total	435	526	0.52%	0.65%	100%	100%

In Russian and English corpora, the indirect modes referring to the visual representation of the data are predominant (54.48% and 52.09%, respectively). This fact might be explained by the peculiarities of the geological discourse which tends to be illustrative and is characterized by a great amount of quantitative information, being represented in graphs and tables to be easily comprehended by the reader. It is noteworthy that the quantitative proliferation of these lexical units is approximately the same in both English and Russian languages.

(14) Indeed, most of the diagnostic features of sediment-hosted stratiform deposits <u>listed in Table II.</u>.

(15) From data of Mosier *et al.* It can be shown that in Nevada one or more representatives of each of these deposits....

(16) Параметры всех спектров приведены в табл. 4 (The parameters of all spectra are illustrated in Table 4.)

Speaking about the Russian corpus, the lexical units making conclusion (13.3%) and repeating or specifying the information (13.1%). These lexical units vaguely focus the reader's attention on the important information.

(17) Таким образом (Thus), можно отметить, что на данном материале полученные спектры ускорений от землетрясений.......

There are lexical units ordering the information (6.44%), which makes the reader follow the author's logic. Approximately, the same percentage includes those lexical units used to oppose or deviate from the main topic (5.75%). The smallest share of lexical units is those adding new information (1.84%), introducing the topic (1.6%), and turning to a new subtopic (0.69%).

As for the English corpus, the same modes of expressing the author's position are used in a different way. In terms of frequency we can see the following tendency: lexical units repeating or specifying the information, clarifying and paraphrasing (17.8%), lexical units adding new information (15.5%), and those opposing or deviating from the main topic (11.9%).

(18) Clearly, we need a dual system that accommodates the individual pieces and also the big picture involving the whole mineralizing system.

(19) In addition to the observations made herein about the regional and temporal distinctions...

The smallest shares are those lexical units used to make conclusion (2.8%) and order the information (0.7%).If comparable to lexical units in the Russian corpus are those used to make conclusion (2.8%) and order the information (0.7%). This can be explained by the fact that the English tradition of scientific writing implies an exact and logical text structure, which includes introduction, materials and methods, discussion, and conclusion. Having titled the paragraphs, respectively, the English author does not need to clarify the position of this or that information or the role it plays within the framework of the scientific text.

(20) In summary, the oxygen isotope alteration footprint of mineralizing fluids which formed deposits that make up the Gold-strike property....

Thus, Russian texts could be characterized as "self (ego)-nominated" and "reflection (self-analysis)" through numerous markers expressing the author's own position without showing one's personal evaluation and response (understanding) of the stated information. This, in its turn, complies to the stylistic standards of scientific discourse, where the author's standoff position and objectivity is considered to be "an unspoken rule." English texts are more personal supporting the author's own ideas, thoughts, suggestions and references to other authors who are involved in the discourse process.

Related ethno-lingual differences

The significance of these findings to ESP teachers should be clear. Non-native speakers (NNSs) find it problematic to use markers expressing author's position, even though many L2 speakers have a good command of English grammar and lexis. The main reason for such a failing involving the discourse aspects of scientific writing is culture specific. The contrastive culture aspects suggest that, in most cases, ESL students simply transfer writing strategies from their L1 to the L2. These strategies may be effective or even tragic. These results in what Thomas (1983) calls cross-cultural pragmatic failure, or the inability to say what one means. Thomas refers to the problem of inadequate linguistic knowledge and different interpretations of equivalent speech acts.

L2 students may have quite different cross-culturally perceptions of linguistic rules because they learn to think and write differently in their own culture. So, NNSs may have false understanding of the different rules which operate within parallel communities in their own culture (Bloor and Bloor, 1991).

Conclusions

It is important to mention that the characteristics in common exceed over the national peculiarities, which means that the scientific discourse creates communication friendly space for exchanging ideas, thoughts, and opinions, therefore, the potential of scientific discourse as a space for effective international communication is indisputable.

The analysis we have conducted proves the initial hypothesis that the choice of the author's position makers and their distribution within the text depends on the discourse type and the national tradition of academic writing. Teaching academic writing in English, and working on scientific article, in particular, it is necessary to dwell on the article structure, subtitles, and cohesive means, which can be used differently to express the same thought in the Russian and English languages. Since Russian authors tend to use intensively the author's position markers to make conclusion or clarify the idea, they should not translate these units from Russian into English when writing in English. Writing a paper in English, which is supposed to be published in an international journal, Russian authors should concentrate not only on the article structure, but also on those lexical units (markers) which differ and convey controversial meanings due to the Russian culture aspects.

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ASIAN EFL JOURNAL The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Experiences of Second Language Teacher Education

Tony Wright and Mike Beaumont. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. xvii + 309

Reviewed by

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Biodata

Mariya Tseptsura is a PhD student in Rhetoric and Composition at the University of New Mexico, and her interests focus on Second Language Writing and Intercultural Rhetoric. She holds two M.A. degrees in TESOL, linguistics, and translation studies and has extensive experience teaching ESL and Composition courses both in the US and abroad.

Second language teacher education (SLTE) is influenced by a number of factors such as political, technological, and cultural environments and methodological advances. Tony Wright and Mike Beaumont's edited collection explores SLTE practices within an impressively broad scale of contexts across continents and countries. The volume is intended for beginners and experienced professionals.

The collection is divided into 12 chapters that loosely follow the trajectory of a SL teacher learning path from the initial training to teacher trainer education. Each chapter provides a description of the SLTE context and concludes with a reader's response from one of the collection's contributors, allowing for a comparison of experiences. One theme that runs through all of the chapters is change, which is evidenced in educational policies, teachers' attitudes or practices, or methodologies. Most of the chapters emphasize sensitivity to specific contexts and advocate reflection as one of the central learning tools.

In Chapter 1, Icy Lee gives an account of the changing beliefs of pre-service teachers in a BA/BEd program in Hong Kong. Arguing that students' beliefs about teaching can be changed through modeling activities if students are provided ample opportunities for reflection. The chapter also explores curriculum decisions that promote change in practice and belief. In

Chapter 2, Gee Macrory delves into the theoretical underpinnings for SLTE curriculum development, illustrating it with a brief case study of an SLTE course in the North West of England. The author considers the balance between school- and practice-based learning versus university-based pedagogy training for new teachers and argues for a curriculum that promotes practice-oriented theorizing.

Chapter 3 explores the conflicts between ESL teachers' espoused progressive beliefs and transmission-based teaching practices in a variety of education settings in Swaziland. The author, Sikelela Dlamini, questions "the wisdom of indiscriminately discrediting local sociocultural imperatives and implanting wholesale externally predetermined pedagogical blueprints" (p.81) by demonstrating how economic and political constraints push teachers towards didactic pedagogies. Referring back to the topics raised in Chapter 2, Thomas Fritz in Chapter 4 focuses on a program for preparing second language teachers to work with adult language learners in Vienna, Austria. The study exemplifies the program's struggle against the dominant monolingual ideologies in a context characterized by lack of formal regulation in SLTE and social and political issues raised by the inward migration in Austria.

Chapters 5 through 10 demonstrate methods and approaches used in a wide range of contexts. Chapter 5 emphasizes the role of theory in teacher education and describes the disconnect between theoretical and practical training and, in particular, the general aversion to theory persistent among teachers in Greece. The author, Manolopoulou-Sergi, suggests using metaphors that correspond to different attitudes towards theory as part of an intervention technique to challenge teachers' attitudes towards theory.

Deepening our understanding of the disjuncture between theory and practice, Chapter 6 examines the potential of public lessons as a teacher development technique. Qiang Wang discusses the difficulties of a top-down reform that prompts change in rhetoric or theory but meets with resistance in terms of changing teaching practices. The chapter re-envisions public lessons as a tool to promote learner-centered teaching and teacher autonomy while bridging the gap between teaching philosophy and practice. In Chapter 7, on the other hand, Padwad and Dixit investigate a 'bottom-up' continuing education environment as embodied by two English Teachers' Clubs (ETCs) established in Central India. Founded by teachers seeking professional support, the clubs function as an outlet for exchanging ideas and experiences. Unlike the 'top-down,' government-run teacher training, teacher-driven ETCs are, the authors argue, better suited to advance teacher learning.

In Chapter 8, Susmita Pani demonstrates a method of combatting context-driven constraints of SLTE in one of the least developed areas of India. Faced with the issue of low language abilities among student teachers and the persistence of transmission-based teaching practices, teacher educators reconstructed their "Reading Skills" course to focus on teachers' reading proficiency and demonstrate new teaching strategies. The chapter offers some very useful ideas for course developers.

The theme of fostering language and professional development is continued in Chapter 9, which explores an online course for English language teachers implemented in Brazil. The author, Chris Lima, reports some success with the two areas of teacher development, but the study leaves many questions to be investigated, chief among them retention in online environments. In Chapter 10, Chang and Rixon report on the results of a mentoring relationship between a South Korean teacher-in-training and her British mentor that developed as part of an online teacher training course. The authors compare the experiences of both mentors and mentees in online environments versus traditional settings.

The last two chapters move to the training of teacher trainers. In Chapter 11, Kuheli Mukherjee recounts her journey from teacher to teacher educator in Bengal. Set in a region where English had been excluded from the primary school curriculum for almost 15 years, Mukherjee's account highlights institutional, social, and financial constraints that hinder sustainable teacher development in the region. Chapter 12 gives a strikingly similar account of four teachers' journey in the Philippines. The author, Maria Luz C. Vilches, advocates phased curriculum and sensitivity both to context and to the affective domain of teacher training. However, the study also leaves some questions to explore, as it does not cover the last phases in the training project.

On the whole, the book is a valuable resource to novice SL teachers, experienced professionals, and teacher educators alike: the readers will find not only practical suggestions for teacher development but also solid theoretical underpinnings for a better understanding of SLTE processes. The sheer breadth of contexts and perspectives makes the volume attractive to diverse audiences who will likely find it relatable and enlightening.

ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Methodologies for Effective Writing Instruction in EFL and ESL Classrooms

Rahma Al-Mahrooqi, Vijay Singh Thakur, and Adrian Roscoe (Eds.): IGI Global, PA USA, 2015. Pp. xxviii + 417.

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Biodata

Michelle Denese Kane has just completed her Computer Engineering Technology course from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Canada and is keen to pursue a degree in Applied Information Systems Technology. She is a recipient of several scholarship awards and honors. Michelle may be contacted at mhya_victoria@hotmail.com.

The book is primarily intended for both native and non-native EFL/ESL teachers who want to help their students acquire and develop writing skills in English. This impressive collection of research-based practices can also be used as reference resource by novice teachers and under/postgraduate students (p.xix).

The collection features 4 sections and 20 chapters. Section 1 (chapters 1 to 4) explores the cultural influences involved in the teaching of ESL/EFL writing. Section 2 (chapters 5 to 8) analyzes the most commonly used approaches in teaching writing, namely the product and process approach including a blended strategy combining both approaches. Section 3 (chapters 9 to 15) is the most packed section of the volume with 7 chapters exploring 'tried-and-tested' strategies to help students achieve success in English academic writing. Section 4 (chapters 16 to 20) examines the daunting challenges faced by teachers and students in EFL/ESL – grammar and spelling mistakes, different types of errors, plagiarism and assessment/evaluation of students' writing.

The book has two Table of Contents – the standard type (with authors' names, chapter titles and page numbers) and a 'Detailed Table of Contents' which gives a one-paragraph overview of each chapter. Each chapter opens with an Abstract and Introduction (except for Chapter 10), and ends with References and 'Key Terms and Definitions' containing brief explanations of how certain terms or acronyms are used in the particular section. Relevant appendices, including sample writing from students, are included in some chapters making them a valuable resource for those who might like to undertake replication studies.

Section One takes a look at the challenges of writing in English and the inevitability of having to navigate between one's own culturally influenced literacy practices and English-language writing conventions. Chapter 1 presents arguments for and against explicit instructions on inner circle cultures and rhetorical patterns. Chapter 2 focuses on how school policy, teacher's identities as writers and type of students influence the teaching of academic writing. Chapter 3 explores how L1 might interfere with L2 writing while in Chapter 4, the author interrogates the utility of the traditional 5-paragraph essay and different essay types in writing instruction.

Section Two engages with the debate between product and process approach in writing. Chapter 5 discusses the benefits of the process approach and presents as evidence the results of a survey with EAP students. In chapter 6, it is posited that despite the curriculum-prescribed process-oriented approach, writing instruction classes in Oman actually leans towards a more product-oriented approach. Chapter 7 presents the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches and argues for a blended version of both. Chapter 8 demonstrates the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching to facilitate EFL students' writing skills, and presents examples of tasks that were used successfully in classrooms.

Section Three, aptly titled 'Pathways towards Success in ESL/EFL writing', shows how teachers from Japan, Oman, UAE and Egypt use different approaches and strategies to enhance their students' writing skills. The importance of the role that critical thinking plays in academic writing is the focus of chapter 9. Practical ideas on structuring a critical thinking and academic writing course are also presented. Chapter 10 provides evidence showing the benefits, i.e. linguistic development and increase in students' motivation, of a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach in scaffolding the writing literacy of undergraduate students. Scaffolding is also a key notion in Chapter 11 as a technique to revive students' previous knowledge of essay structure and grammar knowledge. Chapter 12 argues for the importance of making students aware of who their audience is and then and using this knowledge to write effectively. Chapter 13 discusses the different techniques that teachers use to give feedback to students positing that factors such as learning objectives, time availability and communication style need to be considered in the feedback process. The authors of chapter 14 argue that peer review has been underutilized as a feedback mechanism and propose that Online Peer Review methods can be facilitated by scaffolding students' learning of technology. Online asynchronous communication combined with a process-oriented writing approach is the main focus of chapter 15.

Section 4 brings together a collection of chapters dealing with potential problem areas that writing students and their teachers often face. While chapter 16 highlights the use of the bilingual approach as a strategy to help with spelling and grammar errors in English, chapter 17 examines interlingual and intralingual errors and their sources. In chapter 17, it is posited that knowing the types of errors the learner makes would be essential in syllabus design. The authors of chapter 18 reports on the level of awareness regarding plagiarism by English students at a Foundation programme in Oman. They propose that in order to avoid plagiarism problems in higher education, students should get some instruction on proper citing and referencing during their Foundation years. Chapter 19 centers on the findings of a mixed-method study exploring the factors that influence the assessment of students' writing as well as the specific features that teachers focus on when they assess students' written work. The last chapter, Chapter 20, offers a pedagogical perspective on the writing abilities of GFP (General Foundation Program) students at an Omani University.

The book is a showcase of theoretically and methodologically robust empirical studies that tackle long-standing issues in EFL/ESL academic writing. The research-based chapters come with appendices including survey questionnaires, editing symbols, evaluation forms, writing drafts/samples and peer-review checklists. This makes it ideal for those interested in conducting replication studies in any part of the world.

The articles are very accessible with relevant illustrative materials and a 'key terms and definitions' section at the end of each chapter. The book's strengths inherently come with an associated weakness -- the focus on hindrances and challenges (and how they can be overcome) necessarily leaves little room for the discussion of successes and resources in EFL/ESL writing, which might give the impression that writing is only about difficulties. Nonetheless, with 20 chapters and contributions from 33 authors/co-authors from different parts of the world, the volume is a rich mine of information deserving of a prominent place on your bookshelf.