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Foreword

By Asian EFL Journal Associate Production and Copy Editors

Welcome to another issue of Asian EFL Journal due to the broad array of contributions from authors across Asia. The first paper by Toshie Agawa and Osamu Takeuchi (*Validating Self-Determination Theory in the Japanese EFL Context: Relationship between Innate Needs and Motivation*) involves research on self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 2002) in the Japanese EFL context. The researchers delivered a large-scale questionnaire to a broad range of Japanese undergraduates in order to learn something about the relation between the various types of motivation included in the SDT model, which are intrinsic, extrinsic (consisting of integrated, identified, interjected, and external elements), and "amotivation" as well as the three psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness). Their preliminary data led the researchers to remove questions directed at external motivation. Final results found a positive relationship between the motivation levels of this group of learners and competence needs. In addition, relatedness had a slight positive influence on motivation levels. However, autonomy had a negative influence on the motivation of these learners.

In the second study, Le Pham Hoai Huong and Marie Yeo (*Evaluating In-Service Training of Primary English Teachers: A Case Study in Central Vietnam*) undertake an extensive examination of the teacher training programs in Vietnam. By investigating the programs using data from questionnaires and interviews, the authors discuss the effectiveness of the country's in-service teacher training program. In response to Vietnam's shortage of qualified and experienced primary teachers, the authors provide valuable insight, information, and suggestions to support the National Foreign Languages Project 2020 initiative.

Next, Vu Thi Hoang Mai's paper (*EIL Pedagogy in Teaching and Learning English Productive Skills: A Case Study of Pre-service Teacher Beliefs*) addresses the issue of whether an English-as-an-International-Language (EIL)-based curriculum and its associated pedagogy would be better suited to students on an English language teacher education program in Vietnam. It deals particularly with the teaching of English productive skills. Qualitative data found that, following an intensive workshop focusing on varieties of English and an

exposition of EIL as an alternative pedagogy, participants were more accepting of World Englishes as legitimate varieties and emerged with a new appreciation of this diversity. However, they remained resistant to the adaptation of an EIL curriculum in their institution, citing concerns about complexity, assessment difficulties, and a preference for a Standard English model. Mai, nonetheless, hopes that studies such as hers may eventually lead to the implementation of an EIL approach.

The fourth paper entitled, *The Role of EFL/ESL Settings in Using Language Learning Strategies*, by Moses Samuel and Jalal Kamalizad explores the language learning strategy use of Iranian students learning in both EFL and ESL settings. One group of learners were based in Iran, while the other group were studying in Malaysia. Using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) to collect qualitative data as well as interviews, the authors make some important insights into language learner strategies. The findings of this study would be of interest to those who teach English in non-native environments.

Then, in *Examining High-intermediate Japanese EFL Learners' Perception of Recasts: Revisiting Repair, Acknowledgement and Noticing through Stimulated Recall*, Rintaro Sato examines Japanese university students' perception of recasts through an interview test and a recall interview. Overall, it was noticed that learners who acknowledged and acted upon the recast tended to correct their error over those who only appeared to acknowledge the problem(s). Much has been reported over the validity or utility of recasts, which tend to be one of the most common forms of corrective feedback given by teachers in a spoken exchange. As such, it is important for an EFL teacher to make students aware of the purpose of a recast, in the hopes that they will not just acknowledge it, but also act on the recast.

In the final study, *Developmental Patterns of Interlanguage Pragmatics in Taiwanese EFL Learners: Compliments and Compliment Responses*, Hao-Che Wu and Tomoko Takahashi look at how EFL learners negotiate compliment giving and receiving. To do this, they focus on Taiwanese learners' (of different levels) usage as compared to American native English speakers and Chinese speaking Taiwanese. A Discourse Completion Test was used to collect the data and the results demonstrate a consensus with a previous study, supporting the "bell curve" hypothesis, as well as how language proficiency affects patterns in culture-based compliment practice.

Validating Self-Determination Theory in the Japanese EFL Context: Relationship between Innate Needs and Motivation

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to verify self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2002) in the Japanese EFL context, particularly focusing on the relationships between the innate psychological needs and motivation. In this study, 317 Japanese students responded to a questionnaire on their basic needs fulfillment and L2 motivation. As preliminary analyses, parallel analysis and factor analysis were run on the obtained data, the results suggested some modifications to the factor structure of the scale. Using the amended factor structure, structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to evaluate the fit between the theoretical expectation and actual data. The SEM model demonstrated that (1) the fulfillment of competence needs has considerable, positive influence on Japanese EFL learners' motivation; (2) the sufficiency of relatedness needs might have a similar, albeit weaker, influence on learner motivation; but (3) autonomy needs fulfillment has a negative impact on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of Japanese L2 learners, and, furthermore, might even demotivate them. Drawing on previous studies as well as the findings of this study, the authors suggest a review of the current definitions of autonomy and relatedness adopted in the questionnaire and further investigation into the motivational processes of Japanese EFL learners.

Keywords: EFL learners' motivation, self-determination theory, structural equation modeling

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Introduction

Second/foreign language (L2) learners' motivation is one of the most extensively investigated areas in second language acquisition (SLA) research (for a review, see Dörnyei, 2001; Uebuchi, 2004). Initiated by Robert Gardner and his associates in the 1950s, much research has been conducted to investigate the role of attitude and motivation in learning an L2 in a socio-educational framework (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972), focusing primarily on general motivational components of integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is characterized by learners' eagerness to integrate into the target language community and culture. Instrumental motivation, in contrast, refers to a more practical reason for learning an L2—namely, to gain social and/or economic rewards through L2 achievement. While Gardner and his associates argued that integrative motivation was a predictor of L2 acquisition (e.g., Gardner, 2000; Gardner, Lalonde, & Moorcroft, 1985), some researchers (e.g., Dörnyei, 1990; Kurahachi, 1994; Lamb, 2004; Yahima, 2000) pointed out that integrative motivation may not be relevant for EFL learners because they have little direct exposure to a community or culture of native speakers of English and thus tend not to have a clear target language community or culture.

In subsequent motivation research, self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2002) became one of the most influential theories. SDT was originally a large-scale theory used to explain human motivation in general. Many SLA researchers have applied the framework to the language-learning context, which has helped shed light on L2 learners' motivation (Noels, 2003). SDT studies have been conducted in Japan, the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. Such studies in Japan yielded results both in line and out of line with the theory (e.g., Dei, 2011; Hiromori, 2006a; Maekawa & Yashima, 2012; Ootshi & Heffernan, 2011), thus posing a question regarding the applicability of the theory to the Japanese EFL setting and/or how it is applied to this setting.

The importance of adding the cross-cultural perspective in motivational theories, including SDT, has been recently identified by researchers in North America (Sugita McEown et al., 2014), who argued that motivational constructs of theories were postulated in Western countries, suggesting the need to verify SDT in different cultural settings. They claimed that a considerable amount of research indicated that motivational processes differ in different cultural contexts. In this study, SDT in the Japanese EFL setting is examined to see whether and how it can account for university students' motivation.

Background of the Study

Self-Determination Theory

In SDT, motivation resides along a continuum with intrinsic motivation at one end, extrinsic motivation in the middle, and amotivation at the other end (see Figure 1). Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation to engage in something because the action itself is enjoyable and satisfying whereas extrinsic motivation is a drive to do something for an independent outcome (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Deci and Ryan postulated four regulations within extrinsic motivation, depending on the degree of internalization involved in the action: integrated, identified, introjected, and external regulations. As their labels suggest, integrated regulation is the most self-determined form of regulation whereas external regulation is the least autonomous. Placed at the opposite end of the scale from intrinsic motivation, amotivation is a state of no regulation/motivation.

SDT presupposes the existence of three basic psychological needs: the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Needs for autonomy are defined as people's desire to determine their behavior and take responsibility for consequential outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Little, 1991). Needs for competence refer to people's desire to feel confident in achieving and expressing one's capacity (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Finally, needs for relatedness are people's desire to connect with others and their community; care for, be cared for, and be respected by others; and have a sense of unity (Ryan & Deci, 2002; Uebuchi, 2004).

SDT offers different types of motivation and degrees of regulation to show how we can be motivated, depending on how much our needs are satisfied. Thus, the more the individuals' innate psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled, the more their behavior is intrinsically motivated.

In non-EFL settings, SDT applied research has been conducted in many parts of the world, such as Belgium, Israel, Singapore, and the United States. Such research has focused on psychotherapy, organizational behavior, religious internalization, and motivation in sport. Ample findings have indicated that SDT is applicable to different socio-cultural settings (e.g., Chirkov, Kim, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2003; Yamauchi & Tanaka, 1998).

Research Based on SDT in the Japanese EFL Context

Strong emphasis is put on English in formal education in Japan; it is one of the three main subjects in junior and senior high schools, and almost all universities require compulsory English courses for at least first- and second-year students, regardless of their majors. However, students are not always willing to learn English; some students even experience demotivation when learning English (Agawa & Ueda, 2013; Yamamori, 2004). Under such

circumstances, EFL learners' motivation is of great interest to many researchers and practitioners in Japan, and more knowledge on this matter has been actively sought. Several motivational studies have dealt with SDT in the Japanese EFL setting, as this theory is one of the most influential ones in motivation research.

In the English learning context, both inside and outside the classroom, the three psychological needs are generally interpreted as follows: Autonomy needs include learners' needs for opportunities to choose and determine various aspects of English classes and learning. Competence needs are their desire to be able to understand and make themselves understood in English, have the capability and confidence to successfully complete English assignments and tasks, and have opportunities to display competence. Finally, relatedness needs include wanting to connect with other classmates and the teacher, having a sense of unity, and being liked and respected (Dörnyei, 2001; Hiromori, 2006a; Otschi & Heffernan, 2011).

Tomohito Hiromori is a pioneering researcher who examined EFL learner motivation in Japan using the SDT framework. Hiromori (2006a) developed the first questionnaire based on the theory to measure Japanese EFL learner motivation. Using the questionnaire, he collected data from university students and used a structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis to confirm the causal relationship between the fulfillment of innate needs and motivation as hypothesized in the theory. Yet the model's fitness goodness of fit was relatively poor.¹ Otschi and Heffernan (2011) subsequently adopted Hiromori's questionnaire and collected data at two universities; participants were either business or English majors. The results suggested that the model was acceptable to a certain degree; however, the sufficiency of autonomy needs did not display a causal relationship with intrinsic motivation. Some studies that have used or adapted the questionnaire, such as Dei (2011), Hiromori (2006b), and Tanaka and Hiromori (2007), have demonstrated that satisfying the innate needs could generally enhance English learners' motivation. Conversely, Maekawa and Yashima (2012) did not observe an increase in their participants' self-determined regulations in their L2 study although their psychological needs were successfully satisfied. Literature in the Japanese EFL context suggests the need for model verification in two ways. First, the barely acceptable—if not poor—goodness of fit indicators obtained in the previous studies call for the verification of the model. The model is based on the SDT, which is a large-scale human motivation theory. When validating the model in the university EFL context in Japan, a sample should be taken from various types of students to reflect the population's diversity. As previous studies have collected data from only one or two universities, the significance of using a varied sample in

this study is obvious. Second, the relationship between psychological needs satisfaction and motivation should be investigated again.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study is to validate SDT in the Japanese EFL context. The fit of the model to the actual data will be investigated using a more varied population than previous samples. For the local level of the model, the focus will be placed on the causal relationships between the innate psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and motivation.

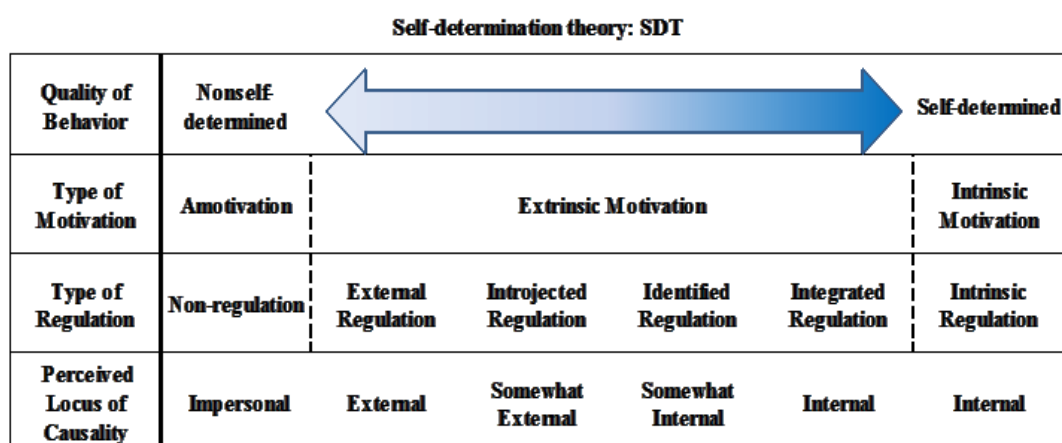


Figure 1. The self-determination continuum, with types of motivation, types of regulation, and locus of causality. Adapted from Deci, E. L., and Ryan, R. M., (Eds.), 2002, *Handbook of self-determination research*, p.16

Method

Participants

A questionnaire was administered to 317 students in Japan, with their consent. The number of participants was determined to be a desirable sample size for the analyses planned later (i.e., factor analysis and SEM). Regarding the factor analysis, Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2008) indicated that, as a general rule, the sample size should be 10 times (or greater) the number of variables, which makes 180 the minimum number of participants for this study. Hirai (2012) claimed that a sample size of 300 or more is preferable for the reliable calculation of the correlation coefficient. Regarding SEM, an a priori power analysis was conducted using G*power 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009) to determine the minimum number of participants required. The results showed that at least 231 participants would be required. To be safe, it was decided to collect data from at least 300 participants; the final number was 317.

In order to ensure participants' diversity, data were collected from several different departments (i.e., Business, Economics, Engineering, English, Law, Japanese, Medicine, Sociology, and Trans-Culture) at three academically varied universities (i.e., an extremely competitive school: University A; a middle-range school: University B; and an easy-to-get-into school: University C). Of the 317 participants, 94 were at University A, 116 were at University B, and 106 were at University C. One hundred thirty-three were males and 182 females, with the gender of the remaining 2 unknown. University A students' English proficiency was the highest of the three, with an average TOEFL ITP score of around 510, followed by that of University B, with an average TOEIC (not TOEFL) score of about 450, and University C, with an average TOEIC score of 340. Students were in their first, second, or third year of university studies.

Questionnaire

Hikomori's (2006a, 2006b) questionnaire was used to measure L2 learners' motivation and the degree of their psychological needs satisfaction. This was considered to be the most effective questionnaire based on SDT and designed to measure Japanese EFL learners' motivation.

Hikomori's (2006a) questionnaire was the first one to be developed within the SDT framework to measure Japanese EFL learners' motivation. In developing the pioneering questionnaire, he was careful to make it valid and reliable. After writing questionnaire items based on the SDT theory, he conducted a pilot study, during which a group of students responded to the questionnaire. He ran an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on the collected data to determine which factors were extracted and how. Then, using a modified questionnaire, he conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm that the factors were structured in accordance with the theory. In this way, he was able to obtain valid and stable constructs for his sample. In this study a sample that contains a much more varied population than Hikomori's will be used. It could be said that his survey instrument is being used for a different sample, but it is believed that our sample can better reflect the diversity of Japanese EFL learners and thus offers a better condition to verify SDT in the Japanese EFL setting.

As for internal consistency of the questionnaire, the alpha values in all constructs reached an acceptable level (Cronbach's alpha = .74–.89). Moreover, Hikomori's (2006a) questionnaire has been the most tested one by being used or adapted by different researchers. Since Hikomori's (2006a, b) research is highly influential, his questionnaire has been, by far, the most widely used one in the Japanese L2 motivation studies based on SDT. Indeed, all of the aforementioned SDT-based research in the Japanese EFL context (i.e., Dei, 2011; Maekawa & Yahima, 2012; Otoshi & Heffernan, 2011; Tanaka & Hikomori, 2007) used or adapted the

questionnaire, as did Hayashi (2011) and Sakai and Koike (2008). The current study will administer the questionnaire using a more varied population than previous studies, which will not only verify the theory but also further test the content validity of the instrument.

The questionnaire included two parts: the English Learning Motivation Scale and the Psychological Needs Scale (Hiromori, 2006b).

English Learning Motivation Scale

The first part of the questionnaire, immediately following the demographic section, asked participants to indicate their intensity of motivation to learn English. As the questionnaire was based on SDT, it asked about the intensity of participants' motivation in five regulations (i.e., intrinsic, identified, introjected, external, and non-regulations). The scale contained 18 items, with three or four questions under each regulation/subscale. Participants were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale by selecting the point that most closely matched their feelings (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The regulations and sample items are as follows.

Intrinsic motivation (four items)

People with this type of motivation perform a certain task because of their internal desire. Thus, these English learners are intrinsically motivated to study English because they enjoy it. Sample items to assess the motivation included "(I study English) because studying English is fun" and "(I study English) because I get a satisfied feeling when I find out new things."

Identified regulation (four items)

This regulation is categorized in extrinsic motivation, but is the highly self-regulated form of it. English learners with identified regulation understand and accept the importance of learning English. In order to measure identified motivation, items such as "(I study English) because I think it is good for my personal development" and "(I study English) because I choose to be the kind of person who can speak more than one language" were presented.

Introjected regulation (three items)

This involves external regulation with internalization, albeit to a limited extent. English learners regulated through introjection study English to avoid guilt or attain self-esteem. Items included "(I study English) because I would feel bad about myself if I didn't" and "(I study English) because it is common for one to have a good command of English."

External regulation (three items)

This regulation is the least autonomous form of extrinsic motivation and is closely related with an external demand. English learners with this type of regulation study English to obtain rewards (e.g., academic credits) or avoid punishments (e.g., failing a class). External

motivation items included “(I study English) because that’s the rule” and “(I study English) because I want to get a good grade.”

Amotivation (four items)

This is a state of no motivational regulation. Amotivated English learners do not study English at all or go through the actions of studying without intending to learn anything. The items measuring amotivation included “I have the impression of wasting my time when studying English” and “I cannot come to understand what I am doing studying English.”

Psychological Needs Scale

The second part of the questionnaire asked how much participants felt their basic psychological needs were fulfilled. This part included 12 items with three subscales. As with the English Learning Motivation Scale, a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree; 5 = strongly disagree) was used. The subscales and items are as follows.

Autonomy

Four items measured the degree to which learners thought they act from interest and integrated values toward English learning: “I have freedom of choice on assignments in English classes,” “My feelings are taken into consideration in English classes,” “My teacher asks for the opinions of students about the content and/or procedure of classes,” and “My teacher always decides what to study in English classes” (reversed item).

Competence

Four items assessed participants’ perceived sense of confidence and efficacy in English learning (e.g., “I think I can get a good grade in English” and “I often feel incompetent in English” [reversed item]).

Relatedness

Four items measured how participants perceive their relationship with their classmates (e.g., “I think I’ve been able to work together with my friends on a group activity” and “I think I get along with my friends who are in the same English course”).

Data Cleaning

Before the collected data were subjected to any analyses, each response was checked; 15 cases that did not seem to include sincere responses (e.g., choosing one and five on the scale in turn) were excluded, leaving me with 302 responses. In addition, the distribution patterns of the data were examined by looking through the skewness and kurtosis values of each item. The kurtosis value of item 5 on the motivation scale was high (i.e., 2.2), signaling the non-normality of the item score distribution. Therefore, it was excluded from further analyses.

Data Analyses

As preliminary analyses, a parallel analysis (PA) (Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004) and EFA were run on the data collected. A PA is used to determine the number of factors to retain for a factor analysis by comparing eigenvalues generated based on random, uncorrelated data and those generated on observed data. An EFA is a procedure used to uncover underlying sets of constructs by clustering variables into homogenous assortments. SPSS Statistics Version 20 was used for the analyses. The extracted factors' scores were then converted to usable data input to run the SEM analysis using Structural Equation Modeling Software (EQS) Version 6.2. It was decided to conduct a PA and EFA because the sample of this study was different from Hiromori's (2006a), where the participants were students at one university in a city in Japan, whereas data for this study were taken from several departments at three universities with different characteristics in the Tokyo area. Therefore, Hiromori's sample and our sample are quite different, and the two data sets can have different patterns, thereby yielding dissimilar factor structures. The following subsections detail the PA, EFA, and SEM analysis procedures.

Parallel Analysis

The PA was run on the first and second parts of the questionnaire separately. Figure 2 shows the results of the PA run on the 18 question items in the first part of the questionnaire (i.e., English Learning Motivation Scale), indicating that the retention of the first four factors is appropriate. This is actually one factor less than the original questionnaire construct of this part. However, it was decided to follow the PA results because the samples used to develop the original version and this study were not the same; therefore, a different pattern in the data could emerge. To reiterate, the objective of the study is to verify SDT by using a varied sample that better reflects the population of Japanese EFL learners than previous studies.

Another round of PA was run on the 12 question items in the second section of the questionnaire (i.e., Psychological Needs Scale). The results indicated that the retention of three factors was appropriate (see Figure 3), which was in line with the theory as well as the number of factors that the original questionnaire intended to include.

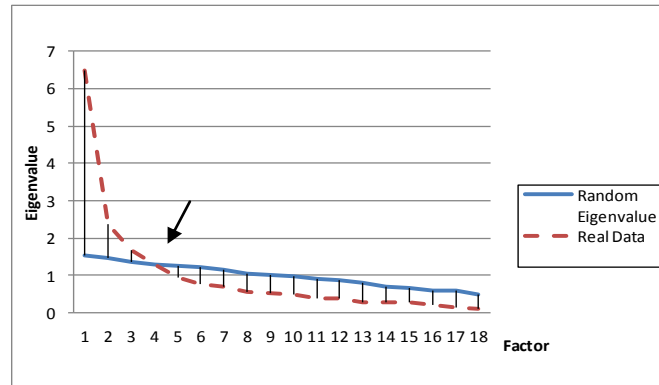


Figure 2. Plot of the actual versus randomly generated eigenvalues for English Learning Motivation Scale. The arrow indicates that eigenvalues from random data exceed the eigenvalues from research data after the fourth factor.

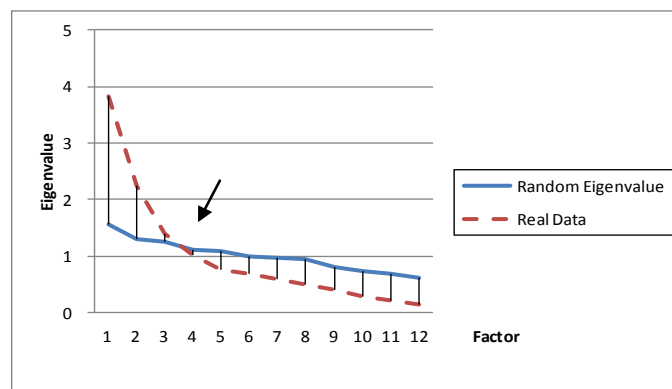


Figure 3. Plot of the actual versus randomly generated eigenvalues for Psychological Needs Scale. The arrow indicates that eigenvalues from random data exceed the eigenvalues from research data after the third factor.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Based on the results of the PA, a four-factor structure was assumed when the EFA analysis (maximum likelihood method with Promax rotation) was performed on the data. After the initial run on the data, communality for each item was checked. As shown in Table 1, the value of the tenth item (motivation_10) was very low, signaling that the item relates little to all other items. Brown (2006) listed two characteristics of each item that behaved poorly and should thus be eliminated: (1) an item with high loadings on more than one factor and (2) an item with small loadings on all factors. As small loadings on all factors are reflected by low communalities, the tenth item was excluded from further analyses. After re-running the EFA, items with loadings smaller than .40 were eliminated. The analysis was repeated on the remaining items until all items had a loading larger than .40. The same procedure was used for the Psychological Needs Scale.

SEM Analysis

Before conducting the SEM analysis, some major prerequisites (In'nami & Koizumi, 2011; Takeuchi & Mizumoto, 2012) were checked. First, a good number of participants (i.e., more than 231 as indicated by power analysis) were available for the analysis. Second, the normality of distribution was examined by checking Mardia's multivariate kurtosis.² Bentler (2006) suggested that values greater than 5.00 indicate that data are non-normally distributed. The data for this study had the standardized estimate of 25.06, suggesting a high level of non-normality in the sample. To tackle the problem, the maximum likelihood robust option of EQS was used, as it allows for coping with non-normal data and a reliable inference of the model (Bentler, 2006). Third, no value was missing in any of the participants' data. Finally, multicollinearity was checked by computing variance inflation factors (VIF), whose values ranged from 1.28 to 1.42, confirming that no strong correlation existed among the predictor variables.

The SEM analysis was then conducted using the maximum likelihood method. In the SEM analysis, a number of fit indices were used to evaluate the suitability of the model. Referring to Asano, Suzuki, and Kojima (2005), In'nami and Koizumi (2011), and Takeuchi and Muzumoto (2012), three indices were used provided in EQS: (1) comparative fit index (CFI); (2) root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA); and (3) standardized RMR (SRMR).

Table 1

Communalities for Items in English Learning Motivation Scale

item	Communalities	
	Initial	Extraction
motivation_1	.72	.77
motivation_2	.68	.72
motivation_3	.74	.72
motivation_4	.68	.67
motivation_6	.52	.55
motivation_7	.61	.68
motivation_8	.65	.76
motivation_9	.49	.51
motivation_10	.33	.29
motivation_11	.39	.40
motivation_12	.40	.40
motivation_13	.44	.66
motivation_14	.43	.48
motivation_15	.50	.57
motivation_16	.42	.46
motivation_17	.44	.50
motivation_18	.50	.62

Results and Discussion

Results of Factor Analysis

English Learning Motivation Scale

The EFA on the English Learning Motivation Scale items yielded the pattern matrix shown in Table 2. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha), also shown in Table 2, indicate sufficient internal consistency in the first, second, and third factors. The value for the fourth factor was lower ($\alpha = .68$). Dörnyei (2010) claimed that internal consistency estimates for scales used in L2 research tend to be low because short scales are typically used. Generally, L2 researchers want to measure various aspects of L2 learning, which is highly complex, in one questionnaire. They use short scales so that participants do not have to spend an unrealistically long time to complete them. However, this means lower reliability coefficients in a construct. Dörnyei pointed out that a researcher should be alarmed if the Cronbach's alpha does not reach .60 in a scale. As the factor in question had a larger value than .60 and was theoretically important, it was decided to keep it.

In the current study, items originally placed in identified motivation and introjected motivation were clustered together in the second factor of the English Learning Motivation Scale. A closer examination of the pattern matrix showed that the first three of the five items (i.e., the three items with higher loadings) were originally in Hiromori's (2006a) identified motivation subscale. Therefore, the second factor was named *identified motivation*.

All of the items in the first factor were in the intrinsic motivation subscale in the original questionnaire. Likewise, all the items in the third factor were in Hiromori's (2006a) amotivation subscale. Furthermore, the same was found in the fourth factor, with all items from the original extrinsic motivation subscale being included. Therefore, it was naturally decided that the first, third, and fourth factors would be named *intrinsic motivation*, *amotivation*, and *extrinsic motivation*, respectively.

Table 2
Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis for English Learning Motivation Scale (Most Likelihood Method with Promax Rotation, N = 302)

Question Item	I	II	III	IV
Factor 1. Intrinsic Motivation (Alpha = .91)				
motivation_1	.88	-.01	.00	-.13
motivation_2	.87	-.10	-.04	.01
motivation_3	.80	.10	-.01	.00
motivation_4	.75	.09	-.02	.12
Factor 2. Identified Motivation (Alpha = .86)				
motivation_8	-.03	.93	.05	-.05
motivation_7	.14	.80	.11	-.06
motivation_6	-.03	.73	-.07	-.01
motivation_9	-.06	.63	-.10	.15
Factor 3. Amotivation (Alpha = .80)				
motivation_18	.19	-.18	.78	.01
motivation_17	-.05	.05	.70	-.06
motivation_15	-.12	.01	.68	.07
motivation_16	-.14	.11	.65	.00
Factor 4. External Motivation (Alpha = .68)				
motivation_13	-.02	-.14	.04	.87
motivation_14	-.08	.10	-.03	.64
motivation_12	.20	.21	.01	.45
Inter-factor correlations	I	II	III	IV
I	—	.48	-.49	.00
II		—	-.46	.25
III			—	.07
IV				—

Note. Factor loadings > .40 are in boldface. The scale was taken from Hiromori, T., (2006a). “Gaikokugo gakushusya no doukizuke wo takameru riron to jissen [Theory and practice to improve foreign language learners]”.

Psychological Needs Scale

The pattern matrix for the Psychological Needs Scale is shown in Table 3, which also shows a sufficient to moderate level of reliability values, indicating acceptable internal consistency in each factor.

Table 3

Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis for Psychological Needs Scale (Most Likelihood Method with Promax Rotation, N = 302)

	I	II	III
Factor 1. Relatedness (Alpha = .87)			
needs_10	.90	.04	-.01
needs_11	.80	.11	.01
needs_12	.76	-.08	.04
needs_9	.68	-.09	.05
Factor 2. Autonomy (Alpha = .73)			
needs_4	.01	.76	.02
needs_2	.00	.66	.08
needs_3	.09	.64	-.10
needs_1	-.13	.52	.02
Factor 3. Competence (Alpha = .71)			
needs_6	-.02	-.02	.97
needs_5	.02	.09	.60
needs_8	.09	-.04	.44
Inter-factor correlations	I	II	III
I	—	.40	.31
II		—	.24
III			—

Note. Factor loadings > .40 are in boldface. The scale was taken from Hiromori (2006a).

Outcome of the SDT Model

The SEM analysis of the SDT model revealed a few problems. First, the expected values based on the theory and the actual data did not match well. Table 4 shows the selected goodness-of-fit indices for the model. As indicated in the evaluation column, two of the three indices suggest that the model poorly represents the actual data collected for this study. Second, external regulation might not be linked with the three innate needs fulfillment factors. As presented in Figure 4, the coefficient of determination for external regulation is extremely low ($R^2 = .05$), suggesting that fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs cannot explain participants' external regulation, leading to a question about the causal relationship between the needs satisfaction and this type of regulation.

Discussion of the SDT Model

External motivation is closely related to an external demand; a person with this motivation acts to obtain rewards or avoid punishments. As external demands come from other people and/or the community, when looking into a person's external motivation, we need to consider how the person perceives his/her relationship with others and the community. In the EFL context, "others and community" can include the teacher, classmates, friends, parents, and the learner's society. However, the study's questionnaire concerned only the relatedness with the learner's classmates. As classmates do not usually give rewards or punishments to other learners, they play a potentially limited role in promoting peers' external motivation. Moreover, the items in the external motivation subscale (i.e., "(I study English because) I want to get a good grade," "(I study English because) that's the rule," and "(I study English because) the society requires it") are linked to the teacher and society rather than classmates, which strongly suggests the cause of the weak relationship between relatedness and external regulation shown in this study.

Competence needs satisfaction and external motivation obviously have an indirect relationship with each other. A learner with a lower sense of competence might study English because of an external demand, but such a situation occurs only when external pressure exists. Therefore, it is not surprising that (the lack of) competence played a more distal role in affecting external motivation.

The lack of autonomy needs fulfillment suggests an increase in control by others, which might result in elevated external regulation. However, this was not the case in this study. Hiromori (2006a) reported the impact of autonomy deficiency on external regulation at the level of .10 or below, which was a bit weak to claim significance.

Considering the results, neither competence nor autonomy plays a major role in affecting the external regulation of Japanese university EFL learners. Instead, adding items or component(s) to relatedness can help better explain external regulation. As a preparatory step toward the modification (i.e., adding items or components under relatedness), it was decided to temporarily exclude the external regulation from the path diagram to see whether other parts of the model have any points to consider for modification.

Table 4
Selected Fit Indices for the SDT Model

Index	Obtained value	Threshold value	Evaluation
CFI	.87	$\geq .90$	Poor
RMSEA	.06	$\leq .10$	Good
SRMR	.12	$\leq .10$	Poor

Note: CFI = Comparative fit index; RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = Standardized RMR. The threshold levels are based on Asano, Suzuki, and Kojima (2005).

Outcome of the Altered Model

General outcome

Table 5 shows the selected fit indices of the model without external motivation (hereafter referred to as the altered model). Unlike this study's original model, all indices were acceptable, indicating that the altered model is an acceptable representation of the data collected for this study. Figure 5 depicts the altered model with standardized path coefficients.

Table 5
Selected Fit Indices for the Altered Model

Index	Obtained value	Threshold value	Evaluation
CFI	.91	$\geq .90$	Good
RMSEA	.06	$\leq .10$	Good
SRMR	.10	$\leq .10$	Good

Note: CFI = Comparative fit index; RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = Standardized RMR. The threshold levels are based on Asano et al. (2005)

Specific findings.

This study focuses on the relationships between innate psychological needs and motivation; therefore, only the results demonstrated by relevant paths will be listed. These paths start from needs (competence, relatedness, and autonomy) and move toward motivation (intrinsic, identified, and amotivation). All paths starting from competence were significant at .005 or below, indicating that the satisfaction of needs for competence has a considerable desirable impact on English learners' intrinsic motivation (.89), identified regulation (.46), and amotivation (-.59). The same tendency was found for relatedness, except that the coefficient

values indicated quite a small impact of need satisfaction on intrinsic motivation (.03), identified regulation (.21), and amotivation (-.09).

Unexpected results emerged in the relationship between autonomy and learner motivation. The path from autonomy toward intrinsic motivation was negative and statistically significant, albeit quite small in value (-.05), suggesting that the fulfillment of autonomy needs could negatively affect Japanese EFL learners' intrinsic motivation. In addition, the second path from autonomy—the one toward identified regulation—also had a negative and significant value (-.23), signaling that autonomy support might actually inhibit learners' regulation through identification. Furthermore, the path from autonomy to amotivation turned out to be positive and significant (.23), implying that giving Japanese EFL learners' discretion might even demotivate them.

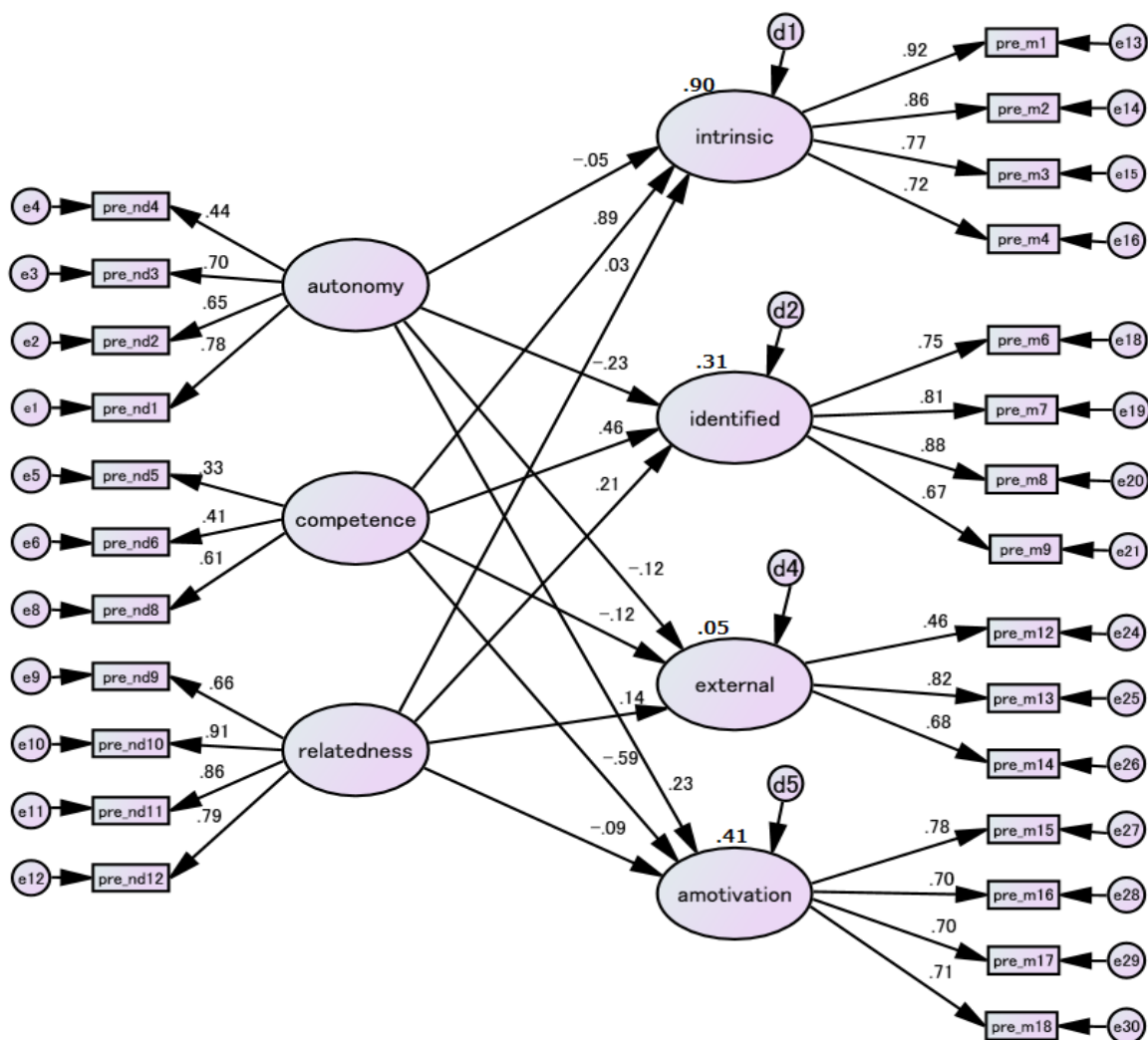


Figure 4. SDT model with standard estimates

Note. $N = 302$. All the path coefficients are significant at $p < .005$.

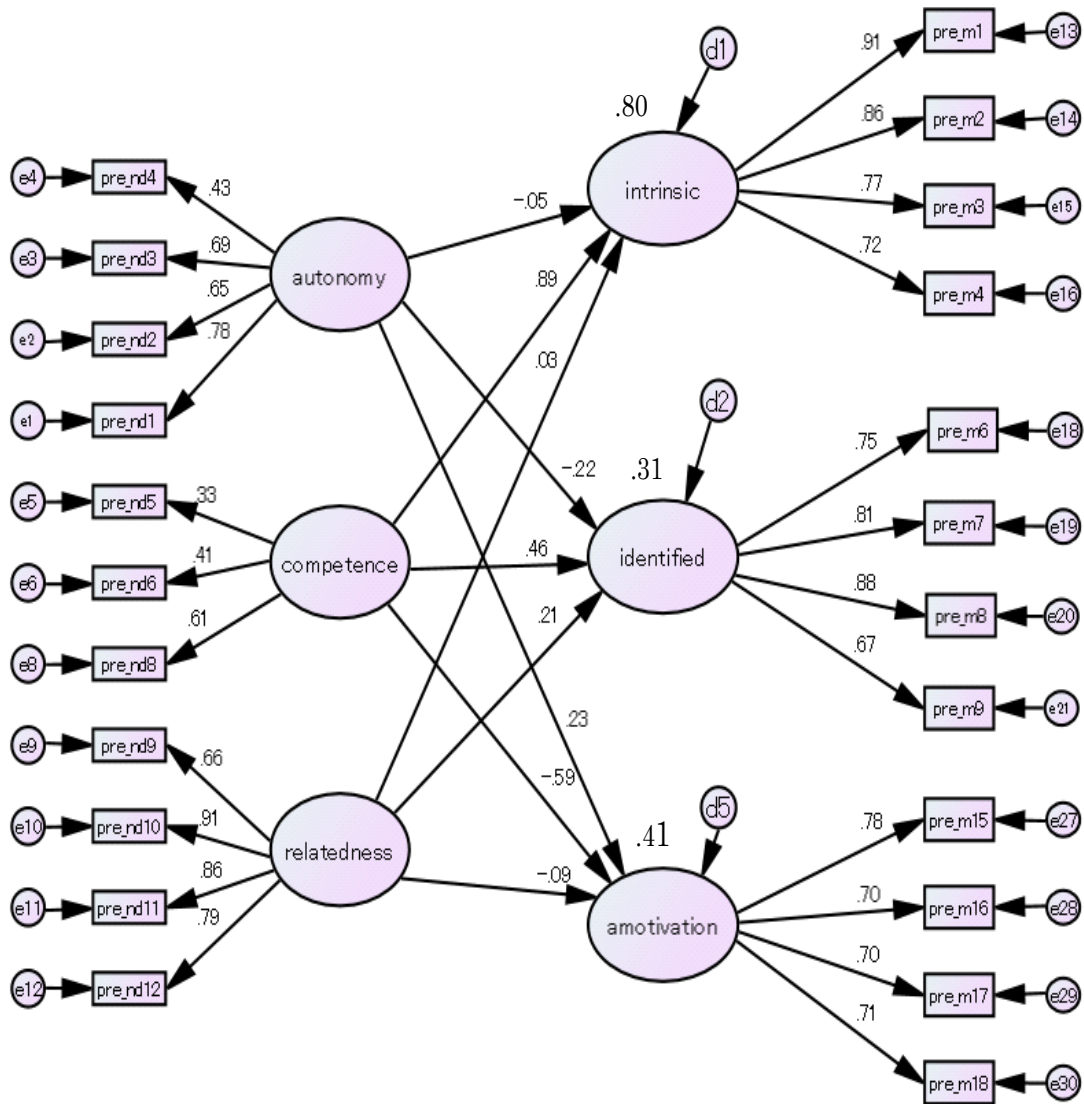


Figure 5. Altered model with standardized estimate

Note. $N = 302$. All the path coefficients are significant at $p < .005$.

Discussion of the Altered Model

The aim of the present study was to validate SDT in the Japanese EFL context, focusing on the causal relationship between innate psychological needs and motivation. Thus, the results of the specific findings of the modified model obtained from the SEM analysis are discussed in the following sections.

Sense of competence and motivation

The study's results confirmed that the sufficiency of competence needs has a considerable, positive influence on Japanese EFL learners' motivation. Thus, English learners at Japanese universities can be motivated by feeling that they can understand and use English. Research has suggested some ways to enhance students' sense of competence. For example, Elliot et al. (2000) found that positive feedback was effective in raising people's sense of competence, which in turn positively affected intrinsic motivation. In EFL classes in Japan, Dei (2011) and Tanaka and Hiromori (2007) used positive verbal and written comments to improve English learners' feelings of competence. In addition to positive feedback, Dei used challenging but achievable tasks to enhance his students' sense of achievement. In the Japanese EFL context, Maekawa and Yashima (2012) gave university students a few opportunities—not just one—in a year to present in English so that they could feel more accomplished and confident.

Feeling related and motivation

As described in the results section, the sufficiency of relatedness needs displayed a tendency to raise L2 motivation; however, the impact reached a significant level on identified regulation only. This could be due to the type of items served to measure participants' sense of relatedness in the questionnaire. As previously mentioned, relatedness in the scale considered a learner's relationship with others in English class only. Therefore, the questionnaire might have captured just a part of the picture rather than a general causal impact of relatedness needs satisfaction on L2 learner motivation. A wider range of aspects, such as the teacher, parents, and society, should be incorporated into the relatedness factor in the future.

Hiromori (2006b) suggested another possible cause for these results. His survey study revealed a negative correlation between relatedness and intrinsic motivation among highly motivated learners. In other words, being related to other classmates might negatively affect highly motivated learners' will to learn English. Combining the quantitative results with written comments from participants, Hiromori claimed that learners who have already developed motivation can engage in learning on their own and thus do not need to collaborate

with others. As such, he argued that teachers should use different approaches with students with different levels of motivation.

In the current study, participants were students with different majors at academically varied universities and, thus, naturally included learners with different levels of L2 motivation and proficiency. Due to the mixed levels, learners might have responded differently to being related to others in English class, neutralizing the impact of the relatedness needs fulfillment.

Autonomy and motivation

This study's results regarding the relationship between autonomy and motivation were far from what SDT postulates. In SDT, autonomy support has a positive impact on highly self-regulated forms of motivation, such as intrinsic motivation and identified regulation, and a negative influence on external regulation and amotivation. However, in this study, the results obtained were to the contrary.

Few people would question whether autonomous learners—who make decisions and choices for their own learning and take responsibility for the outcome—are motivated learners (see Dickinson, 1995, for a review). However, some researchers have challenged the assumption that autonomy precedes motivation. For example, Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002) suggested that motivation might lead to autonomy. In their study, they administered a questionnaire to 508 university students in Hong Kong, followed by small- group interviews. The survey results revealed that the vast majority of the respondents saw their teachers as responsible for making decisions relating to formal instruction, and the interview data repeatedly indicated that motivation was a precondition for practicing autonomy.

Some other studies have questioned the idea that the more autonomy given to someone in the form of freedom of choice, the more intrinsically motivated the person would be. In a non-ESL/EFL setting, Iyengar and Lepper (1999) examined the relationship between motivation and the degree of self-determination, comparing American children from an Anglo-Saxon background to those from an Asian background. The children in both groups were grade-schoolers, age seven to nine years. In the experiment, the children engaged in a task that (1) they chose, (2) their mothers chose, (3) their classmates chose, and (4) the experimenter chose. The results showed that, whereas Anglo American children displayed the highest intrinsic motivation when they made their own choices, Asian American children were most intrinsically motivated when choices were made for them by their mothers (trusted authority figures) or peers. Iyengar and Lepper argued that motivating factors are reflective of the culture and, hence, varied in different societies, which might require modifying motivation theories rooted in a certain culture.

In a non-ESL/EFL setting in Japan, Uebuchi (2004) pointed out that being given autonomy could be perceived differently by the individual, depending on his/her sense of competence. He acknowledged that autonomy support means, in a nutshell, giving a choice. However, he argued that, if an individual lacks a certain level of perceived competence, being given a choice can be understood as being forced to make a choice. This suggests that some Japanese students would not feel their autonomy was being supported by simply being given a choice. Rather, they might appreciate and accept choices made by others.

Related to perception of choices made by the self and others in different cultural settings, Azuma's (1994) work is worth mentioning. Azuma, a developmental psychologist who compared child-raising and motivation in the United States and Japan, identified several distinctive characteristics of Japanese people. For example, he claimed that, compared to Americans, the Japanese have a tendency to accept an assignment that is boring in nature and given by someone else as well as work on it diligently (receptive diligence). In addition, they tend to value others' feelings and try to read them (emphasis on feelings). Given such tendencies, Azuma argued that the Japanese tend to sense people's expectations, especially those close to them (e.g., parents, spouse, and children), then internalize such expectations, which in turn become a driving force for their actions.

Such studies arguably imply that East Asians, including Japanese individuals, have different motivational processes from Westerners; therefore, in East Asia, obtaining choice might not be as cherished as it is in the West and might not function as a strong motivational factor. By the same token, in ESL/EFL settings, giving students support might be more appreciated and motivating than giving them discretion. Some research supports this. Wen (2009) conducted a survey at Ningxia University in China to investigate the autonomous ability (i.e., ability to make plans, meet overall objectives, effectively evaluate progress) of 120 English-major sophomores also enrolled in an out-of-class extensive reading program in which they were given opportunities to exercise their autonomy. The results indicated that the students did not have the skills necessary to work autonomously outside the classroom. In addition, many of them felt that they did not receive enough guidance from teachers. Wen suggested that teachers should provide support for the success of students in out-of-class, independent learning programs.

Similar to Wen's (2009) suggestion that Chinese students at the tertiary level have a low level of autonomy, Nakata (2006, 2010) claimed that—upon admission into a university—many Japanese students have a low degree of learner autonomy. In his explanation of this phenomenon, he pointed to the educational context in Japanese junior and senior high schools,

where most learners are exposed to exam-oriented learning with a teacher-centered approach in a large class (usually 35–40 students). A similar situation was presented by Puteh-Behak (2013), who tried to introduce a Western-based teaching approach called the "multiliteracies" approach to university English classes in Malaysia. The "multiliteracies" approach involved oral presentation, critical thinking, peer collaboration, active participation in designing their own learning, and the use of technology. For example, the approach utilized collaborative learning in which each of the group members was asked to contribute equally to the design of their project and reach a successful outcome as a group. As the descriptions of the approach and task suggest, the "multiliteracies" approach required a certain level of learner autonomy. When Puteh-Behak introduced the approach for the first time, it did not work very well. Analyzing her research notes and students' journal entries, she concluded that the main obstacle for implementing the approach was that, in Malaysia, the students were used to examination preparation in a teacher-centered classroom. Thus, she designed a modified module more sensitive to Malaysian learning experiences and culture.

Littlewood (1999) introduced concepts of proactive and reactive autonomy. Following Holec's (1981) definition, which is usually referred to when autonomy is discussed in the West, Littlewood defined proactive autonomy as the "ability to take charge of learning, determining objectives, selecting methods and techniques, and evaluating what has been acquired" (p. 75). Expanding this conventional concept, he proposed an additional form of autonomy: reactive autonomy, which he defined as "the kind of autonomy which does not create its own directions but, once a direction has been initiated, enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal" (p. 75). Through his careful observation and discussion of learners in different cultures, Littlewood proposed that East Asian students would have a high level of reactive autonomy. The phenomena reported above confirm that Southeast and East Asian learners tend to have reactive autonomy.

Considering the previously mentioned environments for Southeast and East Asian learners, it can be argued that university students in Southeast and East Asia might not know how to exercise autonomy—or what Littlewood (1999) called proactive autonomy. As such, it is unlikely that choices given in university English classes are cherished by students in addition to enhancing their motivation.

A review of the questionnaire showed that all the items in the autonomy subscale ask for the degree of discretion that learners are given. As having the freedom of choice would not necessarily motivate Japanese EFL learners, a revision of the definition of autonomy needs and the replacement of the question items are necessary in future study.

The results and discussion call for further investigation into motivational processes in different educational, social, and cultural contexts from which SDT was developed. Given that previous studies focused on Asian cultures and educational environments, one can postulate that Asian—including Japanese—university students might not have a strong desire to obtain considerable autonomy in English classes; as a result, giving them discretion does not enhance their motivation to learn English. Furthermore, as decisions made by others play an important role in Southeast and East Asian learners' internalized form of extrinsic motivation, interplay between relatedness and autonomy might be formed differently between Asians and Westerners. Investigating whether and how Asian English students internalize expectations from others could reveal a unique motivational process that operates within them.

Conclusion

This study has aimed to verify SDT in the Japanese EFL context. The focus was on determining whether causal relationships exist among three innate psychological desires—namely, autonomy, competence, and relatedness—and motivation. The first round of SEM analysis revealed the model's poor representation of the actual data, with external regulation explaining very little. A closer examination suggested considering Japanese EFL learners' relationship with others and the society to grasp their external motivation. As a preparatory step toward the modification, external regulation was temporarily removed from the model to examine whether or not other parts of the model have any points to modify.

In the altered model, the fulfillment of competence needs strongly indicated higher intrinsic and identified motivation as well as lower amotivation, which was in line with the theory. As for the relationship between relatedness and motivation, the same tendency was shown, but the impact of the needs fulfillment on motivation was not as large as that of competence needs fulfillment. Analyses of the data on autonomy and motivation revealed that giving autonomy might not necessarily enhance Japanese EFL learners' motivation; rather, it could inhibit their motivation. These results call for a review of the current definitions of relatedness and autonomy adopted in the survey instrument as well as further investigation into motivational process in different cultural, social, and educational environments from which SDT is rooted.

Notes

¹ GFI = .75, AGFI = .70, CFI = .82, RMSEA = .90

² The univariate skewness and kurtosis were checked before the preliminary analyses; thus, the process was not repeated in this section.

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Evaluating In-Service Training of Primary English Teachers: A Case Study in Central Vietnam

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Abstract

As part of Vietnam's National Foreign Languages Project 2020, a country-wide program has been implemented to provide in-service training to primary teachers of English. This case study reports the perspectives of 60 teachers on the effectiveness of their in-service training. Data from questionnaires and interviews reveal that participants generally felt positive about the content, materials, methods, and management of their in-service training program. However, a minority commented on the lack of practical application, inequitable opportunities for participation, and duplication of content. Specific implications relating to management of stakeholders, access to training, applicability of training, and training approaches are discussed, along with limitations and suggestions for further study.

Introduction

On 30 September 2008, the National Foreign Languages Project 2008-2020 was launched by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) aimed at improving the quality of English teaching at all levels and introducing English as a compulsory subject from Grade 3. The government expects that by 2018-2019, all Grade 3 students will be learning English. In

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this context, preparation of primary English teachers is vital as well-qualified teachers with proficiency in pedagogical knowledge and skills are needed (Nguyen Thi My Loc, 2012).

At present, there is a shortage of qualified and experienced primary English teachers in Vietnam. If English is made compulsory in primary schools, Hayes (2008b) predicts that an additional 12,000 English teachers will be needed nationwide. He adds that there are some 6,000 teachers currently working in primary schools who recognize that they are inappropriately qualified and inadequately trained to teach young learners. According to statistics provided by the Department of Training and Education of Thua Thien-Hue province, the location of this case study, in 2011 there were 229 primary schools for 96,722 students aged from 6 to 12 (Department of Training and Education 2011, see <http://www.thuathienhue.edu.vn>). However, most of the primary English teachers in this province have not been formally trained to teach young learners. In the last two years, many have been required to attend short-term in-service training courses and workshops to upgrade their skills.

This shortage of well-trained teachers is a serious concern. Questions about what forms of in-service training would be most effective need to be answered to enable the MOET to address this problem. In light of this, it is important to gather accurate information about the perceptions of teachers on the effectiveness of the in-service training they have received to date.

To support the National Foreign Languages Project 2020, Vietnam's MOET rolled out an in-service training program for primary teachers of English. This training was carried out by different agencies, including the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), Department of Education and Training of Thua Thien-Hue province, Department of Education and Training of Hue city, Hue University's College of Foreign Languages, foreign organizations such as the British Council and Cheers for Vietnam, and local schools. The objectives of the training were to help primary teachers to improve their knowledge in teaching English to young learners and specifically to develop appropriate teaching methods for young learners. Additionally, the program was expected to help trainees improve their own language proficiency.

Specifically in Thua Thien-Hue, primary English teachers were required to participate in the Primary English Teaching Methodology Workshop lasting ten-hours a day for three-weeks each year. The workshops consisted of 15 modules: (1) Principles of teaching English to young learners; (2) Primary English classroom instruction and young learner lesson planning; (3) Teaching English grammar to young learners; (4) Developing listening skills for young

learners; (5) Developing speaking skills for young learners; (6) Developing reading skills for young learners; (7) Developing writing skills for young learners; (8) Teaching vocabulary to young learners; (9) Using language games and puppets to teach young learners; (10) Young learners language learning materials adaptation; (11) Using songs/chants to teach English to young learners; (12) Using stories and drama to teach English to young learners; (13) Assessment for young language learners; (14) Primary classroom management skills; and (15) Professional development for primary English teachers. Participants received a training package of course materials containing lecture notes of all the modules. Each module included both theoretical and practical elements. During the workshops, the participants took part in demonstrations and presentations. At the end of the workshop, participants visited a primary school and carried out their teaching practicum. They also had to take a Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT), which measured the participants' knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of the course. Those who passed the end-of-course exams were awarded certificates recognizing their participation in the training courses.

In addition to the above, participants also attended monthly meetings with teachers from other schools. These meetings were organized by Hue City's Department of Education and Training. During these meetings, teachers shared lesson plans and discussed issues related to the use of textbooks. The teachers also took part in teaching demonstrations.

Given the scale of the in-service program and its associated costs, it is timely and necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the training in terms of factors that have been found to contribute towards the effectiveness of in-service training. Such an evaluation would offer insight to both administrators and teacher trainers on critical features of an effective in-service program in terms of content, materials, methods, and management. Primary teachers themselves would benefit as the findings of this evaluation might result in changes to the existing in-service program to make it more relevant and applicable to their actual teaching situations.

Literature Review

Several studies have been documented in the literature regarding in-service primary English teacher training. The largest scale research, which covered 9 countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cuba, Egypt, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates), was carried out by Emery (2012). Other studies have also explored the issue of in-service primary English teacher training programs in countries such as Kuwait (Al-Mutawa, 1996), Sri Lanka (Hayes, 2002), Singapore (Ng and Sullivan, 2001), Brunei (Ng, 2001),

Thailand (Graham, 2009), Bangladesh (Hamid, 2010), and Vietnam (Nguyen Thi Mai Hoa, 2011). However, of these, only the studies in Kuwait, Sri Lanka, Brunei, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Vietnam are relevant as they occur within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

The Ministry of Education of Kuwait initiated a short in-service training (INSET) course in 1993 aiming at acquainting trainees with teaching methodology, evaluation techniques, child development, motivation, use of audio-visual aids, and ELT syllabus. The trainees were required to attend evening classes for 18 hours over three weeks. Al-Mutawa (1996) studied the project to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. Overall, the teachers recognized the importance of the course and were willing to pursue its objectives. The findings also showed that the more experienced teachers focused more acquiring theoretical components of the program than less experienced ones.

The Primary English Language project in Sri Lanka was reported by Hayes (2002). The course was based on such principles as participative development, context sensibility, normative models of training, reflexivity, classroom centredness, collaboration and continuing professional development. Hayes concluded that the success of the cascade training model resulted from the training method which was experiential, reflective, and flexible. Experts were diffused through the system and a cross-section of stakeholders involved in the preparation of the training materials. There was decentralization of responsibilities within the cascade.

A review of the Brunei Reading and Language Acquisition Project (RELA) was conducted by Ng (2001). The in-service teachers in Brunei participated in professional development workshops in order to shift teaching from traditional textbook-based techniques to an approach employing high interest stories and engaging language activities. Teachers' satisfaction with the program was reported. The program was eventually considered a success as it had gradually gained acceptance from the teachers and other school personnel though the initial impetus came from a ministry directive. However, there remains the issue of project sustenance and future growth of the project.

Primary teacher training in northeastern Thailand was reported in a case study by Graham (2009). The project aimed at providing primary teachers of English with teaching methodology, communicative activities and additional materials. The teachers attended the initial training for two hours with another 2 hours followed by questions and explanations. After a few weeks, the teachers put into practice what they had learned during the training. Time was given to them to allow reflection about problems both the teachers and their

students were having. Observations showed that the teachers were using different methods to teach the same lesson and the students were enjoying themselves. The feedback session after the observations however caused anxiety in the teachers. As Thai teachers were used to centralized government directives, the idea of adopting a learner-centered curriculum resulted in confusion and stagnation. The author pointed out that teachers seemed confused due to the different sets of information imparted by the trainers. The observation also showed that although the primary teachers were introduced to new communicative materials to supplement the traditional activities, they had to rely on the O-net materials to form the dialogues and conversations to be consistent with the O-net tests existing in the Thai education system. The study also reported that rural schools in Thailand were not ready to move from one type of teaching to another without some kind of transition.

In Bangladesh, Hamid's (2010) study reported on project-based teacher training at primary and secondary levels. Hamid pointed out that the projects did not have any significant impact on teachers' communicative ability and was a huge waste of national resources both in terms of materials and human resources. Some key issues were that the teachers were involved in several projects almost simultaneously. Each project had a very short lifespan and each developed its own training infrastructure and resources, which remained underused or unused. Hamid concluded that donor-funded projects have yet to make any significant impact on ELT in Bangladesh.

Finally, in the context of Vietnam, the study by Nguyen Thi Mai Hoa (2011) looked at the variation in the implementation of primary English education between one public and one private school. This was an exploratory case study on the 2010 pilot EFL policy in Hanoi. It explored teachers and supervisors' experiences and perceptions as they implemented this new language policy with factors investigated including teacher supply, training and professional development, resourcing, teaching methods, and materials. All the teachers and managers interviewed agreed on the continuity and the importance of teaching English at primary schools. The teachers at the private school had satisfied the requirements for the teaching degrees required by the MOET although initially none of the teachers at either school had been trained as primary English teachers. The respondents pointed out that there should be a subject on teaching primary English in their undergraduate programs and they needed more opportunities to attend methodology workshops. The findings concluded that the private school provided better outcomes thanks to teacher training opportunities promoted by the school. For the public schools working with limited quotas for permanent teachers and limited resources, teacher supply posed a major challenge. However, the teaching practices in these

schools recorded in videos were still in sharp contrast to the suggested methodology found in the new curriculum policy. Overall, the 2010 program seemed to have done little to improve policy implementation in these areas and even hindered the effectiveness of teaching English in these schools.

Clearly, the cases reviewed above reveal factors that contributed to the success and failure of the re-training programs for primary English teachers. The teachers in the case studies seemed to have positive attitudes towards the training and benefited from the program in terms of teaching methodology. In the case of Kuwait, context-sensitive content with more theoretical courses were appreciated by the teachers. The case of Sri Lanka was evaluated with success thanks to the diffusion of the trainers in the program and the reflective teaching methods. Similarly, innovation in teaching methods (shared book reading and language experience approach) in the Brunei program contributed to the success of the program in this country.

Ineffectiveness of the programs was reported in the cases of Thailand, Bangladesh and Vietnam. The in-service training in Thailand could not change the customary teaching practice and the traditional teaching methods used by Thai primary teachers. The program in Bangladesh could not achieve the necessary innovation in training due to inadequate resources and instructional capacity. In the case of Vietnam, limited number of teachers and resources made it difficult for the outcome of the primary training program to be effective in a public school.

Factors Contributing to Successful In-Service Programs

The literature on primary English language teacher training addresses a range of factors that contribute to successful programs. These include specific goals/objectives, context-sensitive and cyclical training, appropriate content and methods, adequate materials and resources, the qualifications of trainers, and the support given to trainees.

Identifying goals/objectives is necessary in any training program. Baldauf, Kaplan, Kamwangamalu and Bryant (2012, p. 213) suggested that training needs should go beyond short-term language assistance programs to develop local capacity to train teachers. The goals of the training programs have to be realistic and relate to general education purposes. They should also align with the goals of the school. Hayes (2008a) noted that “a curriculum for primary school children needs to be related to their age, their cognitive, physical, social and emotional development” (Hayes, 2007, p. 28). In a nutshell, primary English teacher training courses need specific objectives to ensure long-term effectiveness (Al-Mutawa, 1996; Hayes, 2002; Hayes, 2007; Tomlinson, 1988).

Besides concrete goals and objectives, effective teacher education needs to be context-sensitive and cyclical. In designing a program, there should be an awareness of the challenges of the individual settings and the constraining forces, challenges, and limitations of those settings (Dudzik, 2004; Moon, 2008). The program should deal with the realities that teachers face on a day-to-day basis, taking into account the specific teaching context (Pillay, 2007). Furthermore, training should be cyclical in nature as “one-off courses have minimal impact” (Hayes, 2007, p. 35). Ideally, there should be a pilot period before the program is implemented on a large scale, and there should also be follow-up courses in participants’ schools. Finally, impact assessment with the collection of baseline data against the impact of the training interventions should be measured. Within the training process, there should be regular short and long courses catering for specific areas of teaching English at the primary level throughout the school year, and these courses need to be evaluated (Al-Mutawa, 1996). The in-service course must be seen as the beginning of a process of teacher development and as “lifelong learning” (Hayes, 2007, p. 32).

The training content must be balanced in terms of theory and practice so that the training will be relevant. Teaching methodology in in-service training courses should move from teacher-centered to meaning-focused approaches to increase student involvement in lessons (Grassick, 2007). The training should be largely task-based and inductive (Hayes, 1995). Hayes (2007) suggests that the course be followed up with monitoring and guidance activities, for example individual classroom observation, constructive feedback, group discussion and further collaborative planning.

Materials and resources undoubtedly contribute significantly to the success of training programs. According to Hayes (2007), materials should be varied and responsive to the needs of students. The textbooks must be appropriate to the curriculum as well as to the students. More importantly, they must properly reflect the intentions of the curriculum designers in terms of models of teaching and learning. For long-term use, they need revision based on feedback in use (Hayes, 2007). Giving an example of effective materials, Hayes (2008b) points out that in-service teachers should be able to access on-line language development resources such as the British Council’s “English for Teachers” to supplement their face-to-face training.

Qualified trainers are also needed to ensure the effectiveness of the training (Al-Mutawa, 1996). The trainers have to be thoughtful professionals, not just technicians (Moon, 2008). In addition, they should have up-to-date knowledge of developments in the field and experience of teaching in similar situations to those of the participants. They also need experience or

awareness of the specific local situations of the participants. For the project to benefit from trainers' expertise, it must be decentralized through the system (Hayes, 2007).

From another perspective of evaluation of an in-service training program, Uysal (2012) suggests three major factors for consideration, namely planning, execution and evaluation. According to Uysal, effective planning should be based on a systematic structure of the training with consideration to teachers' needs. The execution takes into account such factors as materials, contents of the training, feedback during the training, and involvement of teachers during the program. When the training is finished, it is necessary to conduct course evaluation to improve the program and to prepare for future training.

On evaluating the implementation of the Communicative Oriented Curriculum (COC) initiative in the context of a major curriculum innovation in teaching English to young learners in Turkish state schools, Kırkgöz (2008) highlights the need to provide continuous teacher training and teacher development opportunities, particularly during the critical first few years of the innovation process to promote the implementation of curriculum innovation in primary education.

Finally, an in-service training program for teachers requires the backing of administrators who are willing to support vital change. The leadership of head teachers is widely acknowledged to be a key indicator of a school's success. As noted by Hayes (Hayes, 2008b, p. 95), "It [an innovation program] should also introduce head teachers to the skills of mentoring so that their periodic appraisals of teachers provide constructive support rather than acting as formal inspections".

In summary, the above factors are thought to contribute to the success of in-service training programs. It is against this backdrop that Vietnam's current in-service training of primary English language teachers will now be evaluated. Specifically, the following questions will be considered:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the in-service training they have received to teach English at primary level?
2. In what ways could the training be improved?

Research Methodology

Research approaches

In deciding what approach to use, factors related to reliability and validity had to be considered, hence it was decided to utilize a mixed methods approach, combining useful features of qualitative and quantitative analysis. A questionnaire in the respondents' first

language (Vietnamese) allowed the researcher to collect quantitative data in a reliable and systematic way. Follow-up interviews were then employed to allow the teachers to explore and describe their perceptions of their evaluations of the training given to them. By nature of being descriptive and employing quotes from participants, the study has features of a case study (Hancock and Algozzine, 2011, pp. 15-16) which “attempts to provide a portrait of what is going on in a particular setting” (Nunan, 1992, p. 77). Therefore, it has the potential to evaluate or to explain why a particular program worked or did not work (Ashey, 2012, p. 102). Decisions about sampling were guided by access and convenience. The researcher sought assistance from colleagues to distribute the questionnaire to primary English teachers they met at monthly meetings organized by the Department of Education and Training or at training courses.

Procedure

To validate the instrument, a pilot study was carried out with five participants who were teachers of English but who were not involved in the main study. The questions in the questionnaire and interview were clearly understood and yielded the kind of information relevant to the research questions, hence no amendments were made. Following the pilot, data collection for the main study took place. One hundred primary teachers in random primary schools in Thua Thien-Hue were invited to participate in the study by one of the researchers. Sixty teachers completed the questionnaires and, of these, fifteen participated in follow-up interviews. The research reported in this paper is based on the section of the questionnaire that elicited participants’ feedback on their in-service training. Participants were given 16 statements to which they expressed agreement or disagreement on a Likert scale (1 for “strongly disagree” and 5 for “strongly agree”) and an open-ended question: “Please give any comments on the retraining of teachers of English at the primary level”.

Fifteen of the 60 teachers (25%) subsequently participated in a follow-up interview lasting about 10 minutes. They were asked three open-ended questions aimed at eliciting information about what teachers thought about the in-service training and their suggestions for better preparation of primary English teachers in Vietnam. The interviews, conducted in Vietnamese, were audio recorded. The questionnaire from each participant was given an ID number from 01 to 60. Data from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS software and the interviews were transcribed and translated into English by one of the researchers whose native language is Vietnamese. Themes emerging from the interviews were identified and validated in light of data from the questionnaires and in relation to the research questions.

Findings and Discussion

The questionnaire broadly investigated respondents' views about the content (Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6), materials (Item 7), methods (Items 8, 10, and 11), and management (Items 9, 12, 13, and 15) of the in-service training. Items 14 and 16 captured perceptions about how valuable the training was and how satisfied respondents were with the training. Teachers were also asked to comment further on any other aspect of the retraining. The results of the questionnaire are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' Evaluation of In-Service Training

	Statement	N	Mean	SD
1	The re-training from the training courses/workshops that I received was sufficient and <i>relevant</i> to my English teaching at primary schools.	60	3.72	.94
2	The modules offered in the training courses/workshops were <i>helpful</i> with my current and future teaching at the primary level.	60	3.93	.800
3	The training courses/workshops provided me with lots of <i>practical</i> tips for my current teaching at the primary level.	60	3.98	.701
4	The theory of the training courses/workshops covered different aspects of teaching English to young learners such as how young learners learn, how to use materials to teach young learners, etc.	60	3.85	.709
5	There was appropriate theory-practice balance in the courses of the training courses/workshops.	60	3.38	.958
6	I found it difficult to thoroughly understand the contents of the training courses/workshops.	60	2.80	.971
7	The materials of the training courses/workshops are sufficient and practical.	60	3.42	.962
8	In the training courses/workshops, I learned and shared knowledge and experience with other primary English teachers.	60	4.02	.748
9	The re-training does not interfere with my teaching as I was given leave to attend the training courses/workshops.	60	3.55	1.016
10	The teaching practice/practicum from the training courses/workshops was useful.	60	4.03	.688
11	I found it useful to have teaching practice with real young learners during the training courses/workshops.	60	4.03	.712
12	The placement tests before the training courses/workshops were necessary.	60	3.13	1.065
13	I was awarded certificates for attending the training courses/workshops which were useful for my career development.	60	3.72	.904
14	I need more similar training courses/workshops for my career development.	60	4.10	.896
15	The time for the re-training was sufficient.	60	3.20	.935
16	Overall, I felt satisfied with my re-training.	60	3.75	.795

The items were designed on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 for “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree”. The majority of the mean scores in the table are higher than 3 and 4 indicating agreement and stronger agreement with the statements. The standard deviation of all items was below 1 (except for items 9 and 12) which suggests a good dispersal of the choices.

Based on the questionnaire and follow-up interviews, some key observations may be made about the following aspects of the in-service training.

Content

Content was evaluated in terms of its relevance, usefulness, and comprehensibility. Participants commented both on formal in-service courses as well as the monthly meetings facilitated by the Department of Education and Training. Responses to Statements 1, 2, and 3 show that participants generally agreed that the training had been relevant, helpful, and practical (3.72, 3.93 and 3.98). The practical nature of the modules, covering skills and techniques, motivated the teachers and engaged them in the course. Elaborating on this, Teacher Giao stated, *“The workshops are very useful. I may have forgotten the classroom techniques and teaching methods so the re-training courses help me remember them”*.

Training courses for primary English teachers should cover topics on how children think and learn, skills to understand children’s interests, and their cognitive, physical and social development (Cameron, 2011; Hayes, 2007). The mean scores of 3.85 and 3.38 for Statements 4 and 5 indicate participants’ agreement that the courses had equipped them with both theoretical knowledge and practical activities to teach young learners.

When rating Item 6, “I found it difficult to thoroughly understand the content of the training courses/workshops”, respondents tended to disagree (2.80), suggesting that they were able to understand the contents of the courses well. This evaluation accords with Hayes’ (2007) beliefs about the importance of appropriate level of course content for learners.

Although teachers were generally satisfied, three teachers among the 15 interviewed criticized the content relevance of the training program:

Teacher (Thien) - *They [the workshops] lacked a focus nor provided deep knowledge of one aspect.*

Teacher (Thy) - *The workshops are of rather high level in comparison with what we need to teach at the primary level. For example, the module “Story telling” is rather difficult to apply in our teaching. It would be better if you have training on phonetics, vocabulary, games and classroom management techniques.*

Teacher (Lai) - *The training on the methods is also repetitive and the content is not specialized, just general. Just the modules on games and songs are useful.*

These teachers felt that general topics such as the learning process of young learners and primary ELT were not relevant. Similarly, as storytelling is not practiced in primary English classes in Vietnam, Teacher Thy felt that such training was unrelated to the Vietnamese context. Finally, the response by teacher Lai indicates that participants who had attended multiple workshops found that some were repeated.

Another concern was training in how to use the new textbooks assigned to primary schools. Teacher Phi felt that this area should have been discussed in the training workshops to ensure that trainees learnt how to use them effectively: *“When we use new textbooks, we should have workshops on how to use the books. I don’t think we really need to upgrade English competence. We can learn ourselves.”* This teacher felt that attention to the new textbooks would have made the training more context-sensitive and hence more effective.

It was noted, however, that within Thua Thien-Hue, some primary schools used different textbooks to teach English. Commenting on this issue, Teacher Oanh said, *“As each school uses different textbooks, sometimes, it is difficult for us to share our experience in making lesson plans during the workshops”*. In this specific context, where different textbooks are used in various schools, it may not be useful for teachers to share ideas on how to use the textbooks during the monthly meetings.

Materials

Teachers also responded positively to Item 7 regarding the relevance and adequacy of the training materials (3.42). This result indicates the satisfactory execution of the project as Uysal (2012) points out that an in-service program should have adequate materials and resources. In the current study, each participant joining the training program was given a training package containing all the modules. More than 50 per cent of participants appreciated the practical contents of the training materials.

Methods

Items 8, 10, and 11 looked at methods used during the training, specifically group discussion and sharing (Item 8) and teaching practice (Item 10). Tomlinson (1988) emphasizes the importance of interaction in a training program. Trainees should have the opportunity to learn from and share knowledge and experience with other participants. The teachers in the study agreed strongly (4.02) that during the training program, they were able to talk to other participants about their teaching at primary school. As noted in the interview, *“I learned from other colleagues and teachers the skills and games to make my teaching more lively”* (Teacher Nha).

As for teaching practice, Hayes (1995) stresses the necessity of allowing trainees to put into practice what they have learned from a training course. Both Items 10 and 11, which enquired about teaching practice, received a very high level of agreement (4.03), suggesting that teachers favored teaching practice as a valuable form of training.

Management

Support for training, assessment, and certification are discussed in relation to management of training. It is important that school heads and administrators provide support for the professional development activities of teachers (Hayes, 2008b and Moon, 2008). Item 9 explored the level of support participants received. The mean score of 3.55 indicates that participants had received reasonable support, mainly through being granted leave from teaching to attend such training. However, one teacher commented, “*Some participants joined the workshops several times but some teachers did not have the opportunity to participate*” (Teacher Oanh). In this sense, course administrators should ensure there is equal access for teachers to participate in the training workshops.

Al-Mutawa (1996) asserts that assessment is necessary for any training course. Teachers in Thua Thien-Hue took a placement test at the beginning and an achievement test at the end in the form of the TOK (Theory of Knowledge) exam and the B2 English exam to measure their English proficiency level. Item 12, “The placement tests before the training courses/workshops were necessary”, received a mean score of 3.13 showing that the teachers agreed with the practice of having a placement test. One respondent, however, pointed out:

Teacher (Chi) - *It is useful to have the workshops but there should not be exams. We need to improve our teaching methods but we do not need to sit exams. We felt worried to sit the B2 exam which was stressful and unnecessary.*

This teacher felt that as the training was intended to enhance methodology for teaching young learners, it was irrelevant to test the English language proficiency level of the teachers. In fact, having to take the test was an unnecessary stress and burden.

Certification

The literature on primary English language teaching focuses primarily on the content of the training course and its management. Little is mentioned about the certification awarded to participants at the end of the course. The mean score of 3.72 for Item 13, which looked at teachers’ perceptions of the value of the certificate they received at the end of the training, indicates that course participants see recognition of their participation through certification as necessary and useful for their professional development.

Overall

To evaluate their perceptions of the overall usefulness of the training, the respondents were asked to rate the statement: *“I need more similar training courses/workshops for my career development.”* The mean score of 4.10 shows that most of the participants agreed strongly with this statement. The item *“The time for the re-training was sufficient”* received a mean score of 3.20 indicating general satisfaction with the length of training. However, one teacher complained about the lack of flexibility in the scheduling of training: *“The time was fixed and we were forced to join”* (Teacher Thien). The overall evaluation of the training course was explored in the Item *“Overall, I felt satisfactory with my re-training.”* The mean score obtained was 3.75, indicating a satisfactory rating for the training course.

Suggestions for Improvement

Through their responses to the open-ended question on the questionnaire and during the interviews, participants offered suggestions pertaining to contents, methods, and management of the training. Mainly, calls were made for the content to be practical, focused, applicable, and context-specific. Teachers Tam and Oanh believed that the content of the workshops should equip teachers with practical techniques to teach young learners and there should be more demonstrations from the trainers. Other comments such as *“Teaching reading at the primary level is difficult and we need training on teaching this skill”* and *“We need more training on teaching phonics, songs, listening and writing as well as teaching demonstrations from trainers”* testify to this. Teachers Tuy and Lai wanted the training to be more focused and felt that it would have been better if the skills and techniques to teach certain textbooks were the focus. Teacher Oanh’s comment shows the importance of context-sensitivity: *“The model classes at the workshops are small but, in reality, we teach large classes with forty or fifty students, so it is difficult to apply the techniques from the workshops”*.

The interviews also yielded suggestions on training methods. Teachers pointed out that there should be more teaching demonstrations in the training: *“There should be a teaching demonstration of a whole unit including all steps so that trainees can know clearly what to be involved in the teaching process”* and *“The training workshops should focus more on teaching practice”*. These comments reiterate the need for a task-based approach in training (Hayes, 1995) and greater emphasis on meaning-focused approaches to increase student involvement in lessons (Grassick, 2007).

Regarding participation, some teachers pointed out, *“Some participants joined the workshops several times but some teachers did not have the opportunity to participate”* (Teachers Ngan, Oanh and Hoa). On the other hand, some teacher who attended the different

workshops found “*The workshops are repetitive in contents*”. Looking at the macro level of primary English teacher preparation, three teachers felt that to make the teaching more effective, the workload of teachers should be reduced (Teachers Nhan, Thy and Tam). These comments point to the need for more equitable access to training opportunities and more support so that teachers are able to take up training opportunities without being burdened by a heavy workload.

All in all, it can be seen that in evaluating in-service programs, different aspects of program components should be taken into consideration. Hayes (2002) based his evaluation on such principles as participative development, context sensibility, collaboration and continuing professional development. His study found Sri Lanka’s model, with decentralization of responsibilities, particularly successful. In the case of Brunei, Ng (2001) pointed out that the shift of teaching from traditional textbook-based techniques to an approach employing high interest stories and engaging language activities make the program highly appreciated. However, in other cases, failure is reported. For examples, adopting a learner-centered curriculum in Thailand resulted in confusion and stagnation (Graham, 2009) and very short lifespan and coverage of several simultaneous projects in Bangladesh caused a huge waste of national resources in both materials and humans (Hamid, 2010).

The current study has identified other aspects leading to success of a training program. Firstly, relevant and practical training content with both theoretical knowledge and practical activities for classroom use made the program worthwhile. Besides, including teaching practice in a training program was considered a valuable mode in the current study. However, requiring teachers to take English proficiency tests caused a great deal of stress as they felt the training should have focused on enhancing methodology for teaching young learners.

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be reached from the current study in response to the research questions.

In response to the Question 1, the retraining in Thua Thien-Hue was considered to be effective. The program was reported to have a high level of relevance to primary English language teaching and the course content and materials were generally deemed appropriate. Additionally, the teachers found the practicum and teaching demonstrations in the program particularly relevant and useful. During the training process, they received support from their head teachers and colleagues. The program included a placement test and an achievement test. Nearly ninety per cent claimed that they did well on the final test although one of the

respondents felt it was stressful to sit the exam. Finally, the teachers greatly valued the certificate awarded to them when they completed the training.

In response to Question 2, respondents offered some suggestions on how to improve the training program in the future. The key improvements concerned content, method, and management. The program should include content that is practical and applicable for the context and greater coordination is needed to reduce duplication. The in-service training should also include more teaching demonstrations, teaching practice, and follow-up activities, such as regular and focused workshops for professional development, observation of teaching, and feedback. Finally, there should be equitable opportunities for teachers to attend the training so that more teachers are given support and access to training.

Implications

Four key implications may be derived from the findings. Firstly and perhaps most importantly, in managing training, the MOET needs to involve different stakeholders in the process. Foreign organizations and textbook publishers particularly should be encouraged as they are able to offer practical techniques for classroom teaching. Opportunities to participate in training should also be more equitable so that more teachers can have access to training. Coordination among stakeholders is needed to avoid repetitiveness of training content. Secondly, the content of training should include activities that are useful and applicable to the context, such as demonstrations and opportunities for teaching practice. Such teaching practice should be formatively assessed with certification awarded. Thirdly, as group meetings are a forum for teachers to share and interact, they should be made a compulsory professional development activity. However, such meetings should focus on topics of general interest rather than address textbook-specific concerns. Finally, there should be follow-up activities to encourage teachers to apply what they have learnt and to encourage lifelong learning.

Limitations of the Study

The study did not employ observation as a data collection tool. Classroom observation would have shown whether the teachers applied what they had learnt at the workshops to their teaching. Attending the monthly unit meetings would allow the researcher to obtain more insight as to what the teachers shared and learned from the meetings. As this was an initial exploration, the study did not differentiate the training given by different sectors such as the MOET, foreign organizers, or textbook publishers. It would have been useful to evaluate participants' evaluation of the programs developed by different providers, for instance, the MOET, Cheers Vietnam, or the British Council. Besides, the study did not examine the

correlation between teacher, teaching experience of the teachers, and his/her evaluation of the re-training programs.

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Pre-Service Teacher Beliefs toward EIL Pedagogy in Teaching and Learning English

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Abstract

Inspired by the mismatch between the current English curriculum in Vietnam and the local learners' communication needs, as well as the advent of EIL pedagogy in resolving such an imbalance, this qualitative study aims at exploring pre-service teachers' beliefs about the new approach to teaching English productive skills. Data were collected from a workshop on EIL for third-year students of the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) and the participants' reflections and in-depth interviews afterwards. It was discovered that though the informants have some positive belief changes toward varieties of English, and appreciate the new approach of EIL, they are still reluctant to embrace the implementation of EIL and alternative language models in their current undergraduate program. It is hoped that the study results can contribute to the development of an EIL/EIL-oriented curriculum for English productive skills at ULIS.

Keywords: EIL, pre-service teachers' beliefs, English productive skills

Introduction

As one of the consequences of globalization, the worldwide expansion of English has made the language an important medium that supports the increasing demand for international integration of a large number of nations. Specifically, written and spoken communication in English has become significant as international transactions take place among a wide variety of interlocutors in almost every walk of life. As a result, it is advisable for English speakers in both English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries to develop their international or intercultural competence in addition to other professional and technical skills.

This balance, however, seems to have been inadequately addressed in Vietnam's English

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language education context. It has been reported by Nguyen (2013), T. M. H. Nguyen (2008), Phan (2008), and Ton and Pham (2010) that the majority of Vietnamese students lacked international competence. In terms of English Language Teacher Education (ELTE) domain, Baurain (2010), Denham (1992), Le (2002, 2007, as in Dang, 2013), Kramsch and Sullivan (1996), Nguyen (2008), and To (2010) have also documented that student teachers of English entered their undergraduate course with relatively high English grammatical awareness but low proficiency in the four macro skills (i.e., reading, listening, writing and speaking). EFL teacher education courses consequently have been spending more than half of the course building and improving student teachers' language skills. What these studies mostly highlighted was the mismatch between the promotion of native-speaker models (i.e., British or American English) in the ELTE programs in teaching approaches, materials, assessment policy and the national curriculum, culture of learning and the students' communicative needs.

The training policy of the existing ELTE courses, on the one hand, has produced generations of teachers of English with excellent theoretical linguistic knowledge; yet on the other hand, has inadequately invested in developing their professional teaching skills and intercultural competence. Moreover, the emphasis on native-like English proficiency and academic inclination in training outcomes has placed such a burden on the student teachers that writing and speaking in English have become daunting and stressful. This situation necessitates the development of a new curriculum that is "sensitive to local teaching contexts and culture of learning" and "to achieving balance between local and global concerns" (Selvi & Yazan, 2013, p.9) like an English as an International Language (EIL) or EIL-oriented curriculum, focusing more on cross-cultural written and spoken communication strategies. In order to support the development of such a curriculum, scrutiny of Vietnamese students' beliefs about the diversity of English, and specifically pre-service teachers' perceptions of the new approach of EIL toward English language teaching have become crucial.

The fact that few lecturers at Hanoi University of Languages and International Studies (henceforth ULIS) have systematic understanding of the EIL paradigm, and their students have practically no exposure to the field inspired the researcher to conduct a workshop on EIL for pre-service teachers of English at ULIS. The workshop was expected to bring about changes in the participants' beliefs about the current teaching and learning approach at ULIS compared with the EIL pedagogy. The investigation into possible belief change sought to answer the following questions:

1. How did the workshop about EIL influence the students' beliefs about English and English language learning?
2. To what extent do the students believe in the applicability of the EIL pedagogy in the teaching of English productive skills at ULIS?

It is hoped that the study will contribute, in particular, to the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning English speaking and writing skills at ULIS in the light of the EIL pedagogy, and in general, to the development of an EIL/EIL-oriented curriculum at the institution in the near future.

Application of EIL Pedagogy: Curriculum Innovation and Implementation

Discussions of the EIL paradigm and pedagogy have varied greatly in terms of topics and approaches in the last thirty years. A number of scholars have proposed the principles of developing an EIL curriculum (e.g., Brown, 2012; Selvi & Yazan, 2013; Sharifian & Marlina, 2012), canvassed the criteria for EIL materials (e.g., Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; McKay, 2000, 2012; Kramersch, 1993), developed frameworks for EIL teacher education (e.g., Dogancay-Aktuna & Hardman, 2012; Matsuda, 2009), investigated perceptions of English speakers' identities (e.g., Ali, 2009; Petric, 2009; Phan, 2008), and explored English speakers' perspectives about the diversification of English (e.g., Briguglio, 2006; Kubota, 2001b; Marlina, 2013; Oxford & Jain, 2010; Shin, 2004). Simultaneously, the application of the EIL pedagogy has been realized through both curriculum innovation and the implementation of such curricula and EIL principles.

Firstly, in response to the promotion of the EIL paradigm in English language teaching in the new era, EIL/EIL-oriented curricula have been developed for students to learn *about* the diversification of the English language and its implications (e.g., Briguglio, 2006; Kubota, 2001b; Marlina, 2013; Oxford & Jain, 2010; Shin, 2004). The objectives of these curricula were to raise English learners' awareness of the diversification of English, thereby developing critical views towards different uses and users of English, acknowledging the legitimacy of English varieties, improving the ability to communicate across cultures and establish a sense of ownership of English. Interestingly, whether taught in non-English speaking countries (e.g., Japan and Korea) or in native-English-speaking contexts (e.g., Australia and the US), the implementation of these curricula was reported to have similar effects on the students' ambivalent attitudes towards different English varieties and speakers. In spite of gaining a greater sense of confidence and language ownership, these participants also expressed reservations about embracing the equality between other English varieties and the well-established Standard English which has been associated with the socio-political landscape that

the participants' life is based around. Specifically, the student teachers in studies by Marlina (2012), Matsuda (2009), Sharifian and Suzuki (2010) experienced great uncertainty and confusion regarding how to integrate EIL theories into a real class. These results suggest that awareness of the diversification of English does not necessarily greatly affect the preference for certain English varieties.

Unlike the aforementioned studies which implements theoretical courses *about* the EIL paradigm, a number of researchers in Expanding Circle countries have integrated the principles of the EIL pedagogy into their classroom activities, especially for English speaking skills. Typical examples include D'Angelo (2012) and Hino (2012) in Japan who developed classes in which Outer and Expanding Circles' Englishes were endorsed. Opportunities for exposure to local and international cultures were created for their students via both institutional academic activities and study trips abroad (D'Angelo, 2012), or daily news from different global sources (Hino, 2012). Although the approach was reported to make Japanese English a good potentially acceptable target model by Japanese learners of English (Hino, 2012, p.198), a number of participants still preferred Standard English accents and conventional grammar, and wished to visit and speak with Americans (D'Angelo, 2012, p.127). Another experimental World Englishes (WE)-based course focusing on oral communication skills by Bayyurt and Altinmakas (2012) in a Turkish university not only raised the students' awareness of the diversification of English and motivated them to have positive attitudes toward EIL/WE, but also affected the language education policies of their institution (Bayyurt & Altinmakas, 2012, p.178).

The implementation of the EIL pedagogy has also been present in the innovation of English language learning materials. Siemund, Davydova and Maier (2012) introduced facets of English spoken worldwide in their intriguing *The Amazing World of Englishes: A Practical Introduction*. In Japan, a textbook named *Understanding English across Cultures* was published and used in undergraduate English courses (Honna, Takeshita & D'Angelo, 2012). In The Philippines and Indonesia, for instance, nativized model based textbooks have also been developed to assist learners of English. In Vietnam, the development of new English textbooks for primary and secondary education level has started to attempt to enhance local cultural sensitivity by emphasizing Vietnamese traditional values and daily activities.

Nevertheless, in Vietnamese tertiary education, research of EIL is still limited based around the comparison of the current curriculum with an EIL one, and stakeholders' viewpoints on existing practice (Doan, 2011), or culture teaching in Vietnam's ELT. Although the cultures of English speaking countries including the UK and US are introduced in ELTE courses,

Nguyen (2008) suggested that the theoretical knowledge of cultural facts learned in such subjects as British Studies or American Studies did not succeed in equipping the students with necessary strategies and competence for international communication. Participants' reflexive journals collected from a study on culture teaching and learning in Vietnam by Nguyen (2013) showed that Vietnamese learners of English appreciated diverse cultures being addressed in ELT with Vietnamese local culture being prioritized. They also suggested the challenges against the integration of varied cultures into learning such as Vietnamese students' lack of access to multicultural socialization, limited face-to-face learning time in class and Vietnamese teachers' lack of diverse experience and in-depth knowledge of cultures to raise learners' interests.

Research Design and Methodology

Research Approach

This qualitative case study was a combination of the interpretive research paradigm and Barcelos' (2003) proposal of *metacognitive* and *contextual approaches* to learner beliefs in language learning. Interpretivism allowed the researcher to consider subjective reality (i.e., the participants' current practice of learning English at ULIS) as important, and explore knowledge (i.e., the student teachers' exposure to the EIL paradigm and pedagogy) based not only on observable phenomena, but also on subjective beliefs, values, reasons and understanding (i.e., the student teachers' beliefs about the applicability of the EIL pedagogy in their specific context) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Schwandt, 1994). Moreover, in view of *metacognitive* and *contextual approaches* to learner beliefs, the participants' reflections on the workshop and individual semi-structured interviews with the participants were the main instruments for data collection.

Theoretical Background

The research procedure consisted of three stages. Prior to the workshop, a personal small-scale survey of ULIS's lecturers and students' knowledge of the EIL paradigm was conducted and formed the basis on which the frameworks and contents of the workshop were decided. As the diversity of English had only been mentioned in passing in listening skills lessons and cursorily explored in terms of pronunciation and accents suggested that the primary purpose of the workshop on EIL would be to give the participants preliminary insights into the EIL paradigm. At the same time, they could experience the diversity of English and learn how to promote the heterogeneity of English in teaching the language through different activities of the workshop. Taking into consideration ULIS's ELT context and the salient theoretical

frameworks in the EIL discourse, it was relevant for the study to draw on the *situated meta-praxis model of EIL teacher education* proposed by Dogancay-Aktuna and Hardman (2012) (Figure 1) and the *major principles and practices of EIL pedagogy* by Selvi and Yazan (2013) (Figure 2) to develop the detailed contents and implementation approach of the workshop.

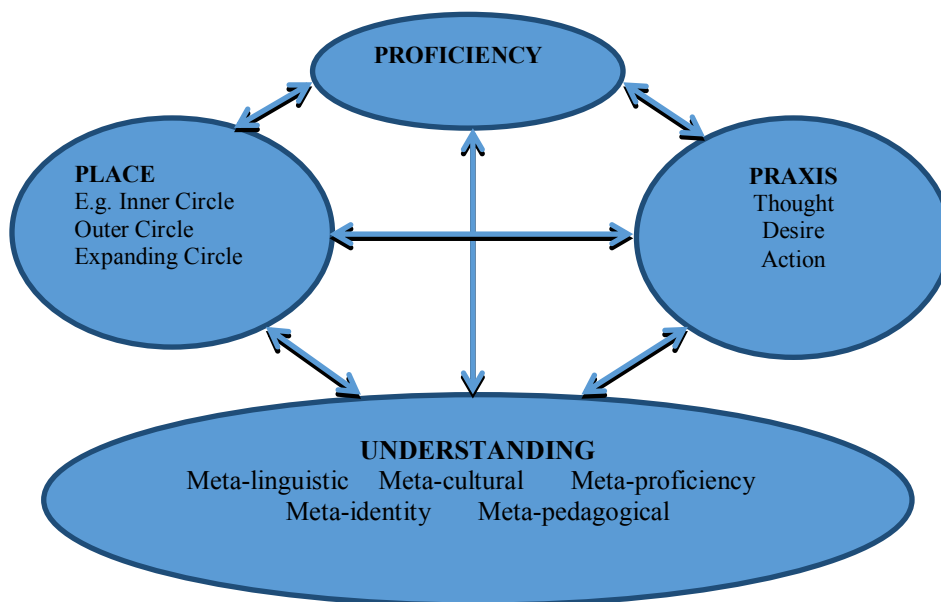


Figure 1. Situated meta-praxis model of EIL teacher education (Dogancay-Aktuna& Hardman, 2012, p.104)

The contents of the workshop were based on Dogancay-Aktuna and Hardman’s (2012) suggestions of language teachers’ *meta-understandings* of language, culture and language teaching. As a result, the workshop focused on discussing language variation and development of English globally and introduced the new paradigm of EIL, thereby encouraging participants to reflect on their identities as English learners and pre-service teachers of English. The workshop was also expected to help these student teachers revise their approach towards learning and teaching English in the light of Selvi and Yazan’s (2013) framework of EIL principles and practices regarding ELT pedagogy, language proficiency and assessment. Below are the five sessions of the workshop.

Session 1 – General History of the English Language

Language variation in English was introduced to give the students some first insights that English is a dynamic and heterogeneous language which continuously changes and has originated from many other languages and cultures which are now in turn developing their own English varieties. Sociolinguistic issues related to the global expansion of English were also introduced.

EIL Pedagogy
1. Is a radical shift from the traditional conceptualization of English language teaching
2. Is sensitive to the local teaching context and culture of learning
3. Is sensitive to achieving balance between local and global concerns
4. Offers a viable alternative to a NS framework in terms of norms and cultural tendencies in the curriculum, methods, material design, assessment, teacher qualities, and identity
5. Recognizes and promotes plurality of present-day local and global English uses, users and contexts
6. Equips learners with a repertoire of sociolinguistic and cultural strategies to better function as competent users in cross-cultural encounters
7. Encourages English-speaking ownership and participation in (mostly digital) global discourse community
8. Recognizes the importance of local teachers in designing and providing socially sensitive, diverse, and rich opportunities for English language teaching
9. Creates a global pedagogical space where multiple identities, realities, varieties, voices, and cultures coexist
10. Examines sociocultural identity in respect to diverse teaching contexts of use and profiles of users
11. Redefines the notion of proficiency, authenticity, acceptability, and appropriateness in the learning, teaching, and assessment of the language

Figure 2 - Principles and Practices of EIL Pedagogy (Selvi & Yazan, 2013, p.39)

Session 2 – World Englishes

This session introduced to the students the notions of World Englishes, Kachruvian concentric circles of English, a language variety component and three language models in English language teaching documented in Kirkpatrick (2006) (i.e., native speaker model, nativized model, and lingua franca model).

Session 3 – English as an International Language

This session aimed to elucidate the EIL paradigm in terms of research approach and foci, as well as the purposes of teaching and learning EIL.

Session 4 – Issues of EIL

The first part of this session demonstrated the notion of *conceptualisation* and *cultural conceptualisations* by Sharifian (2011) to support the reasons for the development of EIL in terms of socio-linguistic and socio-cultural influences, thereby promoting critical cultural awareness in English intercultural communication as well as the necessity of a revision of the concepts of native speakers, English language proficiency and English language teaching models. The second part introduced and discussed three concepts of *intelligibility*, *comprehensibility* and *interpretability* (McKay, 2002). The last part was about competence and proficiency in EIL contexts. The lesson also aimed at developing the students' ability to analyze conversational misunderstandings.

Session 5 – Writing across cultures and Englishes

The participants were acquainted with the notions of *oral societies* versus *literate societies*; the contrastive rhetoric in writing across culture proposed by Kaplan (1966), thereby understanding the reasons why writing is not a universal practice, and more importantly, why writing in English is varied across borders.

Participants

The participants in the study were ULIS's third-year students of the ELTE program in the academic year 2013-2014. Twelve students attended the workshop, including ten females and two males. These students' English proficiency was of between CERF's B1 and B2 levels. Ten out of twelve students volunteered to participate in the research; however, only four of them provided informative reflections during the workshop. These four students whose names were under the pseudonyms of An, Trang, Linh and Nga were then willing to take part in individual in-depth interviews two weeks later. It is necessary to emphasize that these students and the researcher had never met before the workshop. Therefore, the power relation between researcher and participants was minimized, and the participants' opinions were not obtained through coercion.

Data Collection

After the workshop, data were collected from two main sources: the participants' reflections and follow-up interviews. As suggested by Bell (2002), on writing reflections or narratives we "select those elements of experience to which we will attend, and we pattern those chosen elements in ways that reflect the stories available to us." Therefore, the participants'

reflections helped provide their opinions of the EIL paradigm associated with the real-world context attached to their learning practice.

The in-depth interviews took place two weeks after the completion of the workshop so as to provide the participants with a chance to read, explore and reflect more on the information given in the workshop. The interviews were conducted and recorded in Vietnamese, transcribed and translated into English, then sent back to the participants for confirmation. Paralinguistic features such as pauses (in a form of three dots) and fillers (*umm...err...ah...*) are transcribed only where they influenced the significance of the data (e.g., expressing the participants' reservation or uncertainty).

Data Analysis

The data analysis underwent a recurring sequence of repeatedly reading the transcriptions, coding and labelling significant patterns and clustering themes or topics. In order to trace any adjustment in the participants' beliefs, the study adapted the paralinguistic framework of belief development processes designed by Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000) by pruning out components that were irrelevant to the data (i.e., consolidation, re-ordering, and re-labelling), and adding new themes (i.e., demand and attention) in accordance with what were present in the data (see Figure 3). Interestingly, there were conflicting views in the participants' reflections as opposed to their interview answers two weeks later which demonstrated both *pseudo change* (i.e., pretended or unreal change which results from paradoxes between desire and reality) and no change in their beliefs. Based on the scope of the research questions and the participants' responses, two main themes emerged, namely, *changes in pre-service teacher beliefs toward EIL*, and *pre-service teacher beliefs about the applicability of the EIL pedagogy*.

Category label	Distinctive features	Example from my research data
Awareness/realization	Awareness of a discrepancy, conflict or coherence	“I have changed my mind a lot” “These models change my way of thinking” “It raises my awareness of...”
Elaboration/polishing	Reconstruction of beliefs by addition, omission and so on; deepening of belief by additional dimensions	“...these kinds of knowledge may be practical and useful...” “The interesting information is that...”

Addition	Integration of new belief	“It is interesting and quite new to me” “Principles of EIL is really new and unfamiliar”
Linking up	Establishing a connection between constructs	“...different from standard accents which I have learnt” “The workshop brings to me a new concept...”
Disagreement	Rejection of existing beliefs or presented information	“...but it is not useful in real life” “...following a format is not what I want”
Reversal	Adoption of opposite of previous beliefs	“Before the workshop I totally believed that...”
Demand	New demand rising from new information/practice	“I hope that...”
Attention	Attention/consciousness drifting to new information	“The new term that I concern most is...” “One of the issues....that concerns me is...”
Pseudo change	Pretended or false change in belief, not a real change	“I still prefer native speaker model” “Native speakers’ pronunciation is still nicer”
No change	No apparent change or development in belief	“We can’t do it all the time” “I’m happy with the way we study now”

Figure 3: Belief change processes (adapted from Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000)

Findings

Changes in pre-service teacher beliefs toward the diversification of English

Before the workshop, the students had different experiences of communicating in English which influence their varied perspectives of the English uses in these encounters. All participants reported to prefer speaking English in their comfort zone where “*similar cultures*” are shared and intimacy is felt (with Vietnamese classmates or some Asian interlocutors). In real communication in English with foreigners, when miscommunication arose, these students opted for either “*ignor[ing] it*” (Trang) or avoiding interaction so as not to “*cause troubles*” (An). They were also conscious of the discrepancies in world English uses; however, the diversification of English in these students’ previous understanding was noticeably limited to the different accents associated with specific groups of English speakers without the awareness of the distinctive lexical, syntactic, phonetic, pragmatic and discourse features and literary creativity of each variety.

After the workshop, a certain degree of adjustment in the participants' beliefs corresponding to the matters above was traced. The first change was the participants' greater sense of confidence and optimism in their use of English. The shift from the standpoint of learners of a language to the stance of bi-/multilingual speakers helped mitigate the inferior complex among these pre-service teachers, leading them to *"taking pride of [their] bilingual and cultural features [and] identity"* instead of continuing to *"learn hard to copy what native speakers say"* (An and Linh).

The second change in the participants' beliefs of the diversification of English involves the reconceptualization of "English variety" and "native speakers". Clearer understandings of varied English accents, syntax adaptation, vocabulary creations and pragmatic use throughout the workshop helped replace disapproving attitudes to vernacular dialects in English use with a more welcoming perspective. An and Linh are excited to find similarities between Vietnamese people and Malaysian people when writing in English (i.e., starting off with a delayed introduction rather than getting straight to the point), and *"it's a good thing if we can show our specialty in writing like this"* when we work on an article about a Malaysian mobile service advertisement.

Furthermore, the concept of "native speakers" was revised thanks to the examples of vernacular English dialects within the Inner Circle. Upon watching the video clip of a conversation in an elevator between two Scottish men, Linh found it *"interesting"* to realize that Inner Circle English can be very *"difficult to understand"*. Similarly, An describes Scottish English accent as *"strange"* and *"different from standard accent"* in her reflection. Obviously, the idiosyncrasy in English uses, various sociolinguistic and sociocultural contributions of other varieties to the diversification of English provided the students with better understanding of English varieties and dialects.

Additionally, more positive attitudes toward different varieties have emerged, especially due to the students' exposure to the statistics of components of English speakers and their deeper understanding of the role of culture in language use. On learning that the majority of English speakers are non-native, An declares she starts to *"see the matter in a more critical way [and] from more respectful viewpoint"*. Sharing the same belief change as An, the other participants expressed their acknowledgement of English varieties and speaker ownership by confirming the inevitable yet harmless influence of the speaker's cultural background in using English or linking the usefulness of the knowledge of the diversification of English to their prospective career. Nga believed that *"understanding English as an international language helped them be more and more professional in international communicating environment."*

Regarding language competence, these students, on the one hand, still acknowledge the privilege of achieving native-like English proficiency, and on the other hand, support the promotion of vernacular English use. Noticeably, they valued the importance of their local culture in making conversations – being in harmony with others and talking to build relationship with “*sympathy*” and “*good intention*” (Trang) – in international contexts although the idea is only implied. The fact that these students start to care more about engaging their culture in their English use, in my interpretation, suggested that closer attention should be given to promoting learners’ sociocultural identities in speaking and writing activities, apart from building language skills and problem solving.

The Students’ Conflicting responses to the diversification of English

In spite of the optimistic responses above, two weeks after the workshop, the participants’ individual interviews demonstrated a sense of uncertainty in both their approach to speaker ownership and their receptivity toward English varieties. Regarding the students’ confidence in using English in international contexts, An still expressed reservations about initiating contact with people from a different background.

Trang and Linh did not find it easy to take speaker ownership by confronting their teachers’ feedback and correction on their writing or speaking, which was based on native-speakerism, when they disagreed or got confused. Such feedback as “*irrelevant supporting idea*” or “*there is no such expression in English*” did not adequately explain inappropriate semantics nor did it help develop the students’ language skills. Instead, it left the students feeling anxious and lowered their self-confidence in expressing themselves.

Secondly, despite their acknowledgement of the legitimacy of different English varieties, the students still expressed aversion to certain varieties due to unintelligible accents and cultural differences. Varieties such as African American English, Indian English or Southern Asian English are perceived as the most “*difficult/hard to get*”. On asserting her preference of Standard English, Nga furthered her argument by considering it as “*authentic and professional*” and choosing to “*incline that way*”.

The pseudo change shown above suggested that although the students developed a broader understanding of what constitutes a variety of English, and appreciated the existence and idiosyncrasy of different English varieties, such a view remained confined within factual awareness of the status of English rather than results in metacognitive change.

Students’ Positive Beliefs of the EIL Pedagogy in teaching/learning English Productive Skills

These beliefs differ from the participants’ belief change toward the diversification of English above in that they did not shift from the old to the new. They emerged from the students’ new

experience with new knowledge. Therefore, it is more justifiable to label these beliefs the “metacognitive development” of the participants in experience with EIL pedagogy. This section accordingly presents the participants’ emergent perceptions of and attitudes toward the EIL paradigm and the alternative language models it offers rather than the native-speaker model.

The students’ first perception of the EIL pedagogy was that it highly appreciated the local culture and language as well as cultural diversity in English use. An and Linh particularly were intrigued by the endonormative English model which they believed promoted the culture of Vietnam or other Asian neighbours in learning English and provided learners with opportunities to speak about it in English. Not only Vietnamese culture is given attention when the students evaluate the merits of other English teaching/learning models than native speaker one, the importance of the Vietnamese language was also highly appreciated. Linh shared her advocacy of “*the teacher’s deep understanding about Vietnamese*” and “*clear explanation and imaginative examples*” in broadening the students’ sociocultural and sociolinguistic knowledge and maintaining the flow of the lesson.

This perception is also associated with the participants’ belief that the EIL pedagogy promotes the role of local teachers of English. Trang enthusiastically support the recognition and promotion of the role of ULIS’s teachers in the event of an EIL curriculum, especially in Vietnam where “*people tend to prefer Western teachers of English*” as a result of their attachment to native speaker model. Interestingly, Nga thought that the EIL pedagogy would be useful for her future career as a local teacher in communicating with her prospective students regarding teacher feedback and correction in writing activities which was “*helpful and related to [their] methodology course*”.

Last but not least, the participants believed that the EIL pedagogy could help develop international competence among Vietnamese learners of English. If the native speaker model focuses mostly on the Inner Circle countries’ culture and language use, in An’s reflection, the alternative language models would “*narrow the differences between peoples, races and cultures in English use*”. Linh similarly believed that the EIL pedagogy could “*help broaden students’ knowledge and equip [them] with new communication skills*”.

To sum up, through the workshop, the participants reported to have developed three new positive perspectives toward teaching and learning English productive skills based on the EIL pedagogy: the endorsement of local culture in learning activities, the importance of local teachers and their understanding of local culture and language, and the promotion of intercultural competence among learners.

Students' Reservation of EIL Employability

Despite their appreciation of the merits of the EIL paradigm, the students still expressed their tension and uncertainty about the approach. The data, specifically collected from the interviews, shows that their tension and uncertain perspectives result from the perceived complexity of the alternative models and the assessment policy of ULIS.

In terms of language teaching models, the students argued that for Outer Circle countries, a nativized model of English made a lot of sense as they already had their English varieties. However, since Vietnam does not have its own variety of English, the issue of which model should be applied became complicated. Moreover, the students associated diversity with complexity, which they believed would cause chaos in ELT. The most frequently used phrases to describe endonormative and lingua franca models by the four girls were “*confusion*” and its variations. In fact, according to An, Linh and Nga, the alternative models could “*bring about more miscommunication.*”

Another reason for the students' ambivalent attitudes towards the application of the EIL pedagogy was attributed to the burden of their English exams. Compared to the current teaching/learning practice which was “*good for passing exams*” and was “*how things work here*” (An), the implementation of EIL was believed by the students to complicate the system by contrasting the institution's assessment policy. Obviously, the immediate goal of passing exams and graduating with requisite English proficiency was always given precedence in the students' mindset. As a result, belief in the advantages of the EIL pedagogy did not fully bring about changes in the students' beliefs about their current practice of learning productive skills at ULIS. What needs to be highlighted here is the students' one-way thinking which indicated that the implementation of the EIL pedagogy did not entail adjustments to the current assessment system. It was this thinking that led the students to consider the EIL pedagogy as a conflicting approach rather than an alternative one to their current practice.

The students' opinions about the applicability of EIL in their program were influenced by the change in their beliefs about the diversification of English, their perceptions of the EIL paradigm as well as their tension with regard to the complexity of new language models. Going further into my data allowed me to discover three dimensions in the participants' perspectives of the applicability of the EIL pedagogy.

The first dimension is the participants' anticipation of the integration of the EIL pedagogy. On the one hand, An, Linh and Nga envisaged that the new approach would be applied in the program in the future. This expectation was firstly due to the fact that some EIL principles and practices are believed to have been present in the current curriculum already “*although they*

are not really in depth” (An). Those practices included (a) the sensitivity of the program to the local contexts as the lecturers directly design the curriculum (Trang and Linh), (b) the introduction of different varieties of English, though limited to Inner Circle countries, in speaking classes (An and Nga), (c) and teachers’ encouragement of students to be confident in their own English use (Trang and Linh). For Linh and Nga, the applicability of the EIL principles is possible because *“the lecturers are very competent”* (Linh) thanks to their experience in teaching English at ULIS as well as studying and working abroad.

However, Trang was not sure about the future application of the EIL pedagogy and adds a number of challenges to the picture, a view which was also true for and shared by An and Nga. The participants specifically highlighted the most influential aspects including the budget needed, the curriculum and assessment policies. While understanding that the implementation of other language models would have to undergo numerous challenges and take up enormous time, adjustments and investments, the participants did not seem to welcome such changes which may be carried out at the cost of their exam results. This tension again asserts the exam-driven mentality among a number of Vietnamese students.

The same tension is reflected in the second dimension which indicates the students’ uncertainty about the implementation of the EIL principles, especially in teaching strategies and materials exploration. Although agreeing on the necessity of teaching cultural contents together with language skills, An questioned the feasibility of the practice due to the time constraint in class, and Nga got confused about how to give feedback and correction in an EIL context.

What could be interpreted from this confusion was that without explicit elaboration on the analysis of materials and teaching strategies in class activities, the pre-service teachers could not comprehend the implementation of the new pedagogy nor develop their professional skills. In other words, despite the sociocultural repertoire provided by an EIL/EIL-oriented lesson, unless introduced to overt teaching strategies and immersed in regular reinforcement, the pre-service teachers would find the new approach confusing or impractical, and hence would opt for the conventional routine. An actually suggested that there be *“a standard for everyone to refer to [...] so no one gets confused”*.

The last dimension is the participants’ recommendation for the application of the EIL pedagogy based on their anticipation and uncertainty presented above. Firstly, if implemented, an EIL curriculum should be applied in the second year of the ELTE program when the students have achieved a certain level of English proficiency and start to prepare for the following courses of teaching methodology and other specialist subjects. Secondly, in terms

of English speaking and writing skills, if other models of English were integrated, they should only “include some large cultures in the world” and “be selective because there are many cultures or countries, for example, African countries, that we hardly have contact with” (An). Furthermore, all participants recommended that research groups be established in the class so the students could “experience by themselves” (An) the cultural issue or English variety in the lesson. However, due to the perceived complexity of the paradigm, Nga and Trang suggested that EIL and its principles or practices should be introduced in the form of a workshop or supplementary approach in cultural subjects like British and American studies as An proposed.

Discussion

The findings of the study reveal minor changes in the student’s beliefs about the diversification of English and metacognitive development in their perceptions of the new approach to learning English productive skills. In the meantime, *pseudo change* and misconception of the investigated issue were also detected.

To begin with, the participants’ positive belief modifications toward the diversity of English, the EIL pedagogy and language ownership suggested an interest in implementation of the EIL approach in teaching/learning English productive skills at ULIS in the future. These findings concurred with previous studies in different contexts conducted by Briguglio (2006), Marlina (2013), Kubota (2001b), Shin (2004), and Suzuki (2010). Nevertheless, these student teachers still highly appreciated Standard English as the predominant yardstick for language acquisition and proficiency, which makes them similar to the pre-service teachers in Japan in Matsuda’s (2009) study. Coexisting with this mindset was a preference for certain dialects over others based on similarities or differences in culture and language use, especially English accents. Remarkably, these responses were in agreement with those from more than a hundred Vietnamese teachers of English upon reflecting their viewpoints toward the changing status of English (Phan, forthcoming).

There are several possible explanations for this *pseudo change* in the student teachers’ beliefs. First, the participants’ lack of hands-on experience with different varieties of English and practice environments caused uncertainty and reservations about implementing new approaches. Secondly, despite their interest in the new paradigm of ELT, the reality of normative exam burden still remained the driving force in the students’ study motivation and practice. The third reason was the limitation of the workshop which was conducted in a very short time, and such time constraint may have caused the participants to become overwhelmed by the condensed contents, terminology and activities in the workshop.

Interestingly, the students' positive attitudes toward the principles of EIL did not lead to alterations in their beliefs about the current learning approach. Instead, these teachers-to-be perceived that the changing status of English and its diversity on the one hand promoted vernacular uses, but on the other hand dramatically complicated the present ELT practice. Hence, the privileging of and preference for Standard English and the native-speaker model were in fact reinforced after the workshop. This goes along with Kagan's (1992) argument that student teachers tend to use new knowledge in ELTE programs to confirm their existing beliefs rather than to confront and change them. At the same time, however, the participants' belief change about the diversification of English and the advantages of the new pedagogy are still in concurrence with Cabaroglu and Roberts's (2000) conclusion about pre-service teachers' metacognitive development under explicit intervention of an ELTE course.

The fact that the findings of the study agree with contrastive standpoints toward pre-service teachers' belief development portrays a remarkably complex picture of such a psychological process. Accordingly, having factual knowledge of the status of English and the principles and practices of EIL does not necessarily change the students' mindset. This effect could be explained that enquiries into what English varieties, model or culture to teach are more of attitudinal questions rather than a way of generating new facts. In other words, factual information such as the changing status of English and pedagogical shifts in TESOL are dynamic while beliefs, attitudes or perspectives tend to be more fixed or static.

Additionally, one of the most significant findings of the study was the students' appreciation of Vietnamese and of the teacher's understanding of the Vietnamese language and culture. This once again emphasized the importance of language learners' mother tongue and their teachers' knowledge of the local values in maintaining the flow of the lesson, creating rapport between teachers and students and motivating students to learn language. This is becoming crucial when the global expansion of English has made it such an important communication medium that a great number of language learners have seemed to over-glorify English and master the language while their knowledge of their mother tongue is being undermined. The importance of local language in relation to teaching EIL has been canvassed by Kirkpatrick (2012), Gill (2012), Bolton (2012), Hamied (2012) who suggest that globalization and the glorification of English should not be at the expense of ethnic languages and cultures.

The next issue worth discussing was the effect of the teacher's feedback on the students' confidence development. Although the discussion of teacher feedback and correction is beyond the scope of this study, it is noteworthy to highlight that the students' establishment of speaker ownership is greatly influenced by their teacher's approval of their English use. Three

out of four participants (An, Trang, Linh) reported having become confused or discouraged by their teacher's disapproval of their Vietnamese way of thinking in speaking or writing English. In order to encourage the students to take pride in their language capacity, it is crucial that the teacher knows how to tactfully communicate the students' mistakes or idiosyncratic language use and give them opportunity to justify their expressions.

Finally, the participants' documented responses implied an impression that there was a misconception in the students' beliefs about the implementation of the EIL paradigm. Apparently, they equated the integration of other language models with a complete replacement of native speaker models and denial of international standardized English tests. This mistaken belief leads to the anxiety of what varieties, what models, what cultures be taught and how they can benefit the students' exam results. This erroneous belief, therefore, should be corrected by providing the students with information about, as well as practice of, the association between these models (Kirkpatrick, 2012, p.2).

Conclusion

The current study explored (1) how an EIL workshop influenced the students' beliefs about English and English language learning, and (2) what the students believed about the applicability of the EIL pedagogy in teaching/learning English productive skills at ULIS. It was found that although the pre-service teachers acknowledged the diversity of English, they still preferred Standard English or the varieties of peoples who had similar culture and/or practice of learning English. Moreover, the student teachers also believed in the benefits of the EIL pedagogy in promoting the role of local culture, language and teachers, and in developing learners' international competence. However, these beliefs did not necessarily lead to changes in the way they learned English productive skills. The results also showed the students' tensions and misconception about the implementation of the EIL pedagogy and alternative language models.

Data analysis and major findings from this project point to five important implications. Firstly, Vietnamese student teachers of English should be systematically and properly exposed to the diversity of English and a pluricentric approach to language teaching and learning, integrated with a promotion of Vietnamese culture and teachers. Secondly, the introduction and analysis of English varieties should be explicitly linked to teaching methods and techniques so that the pre-service teachers have an understanding or anticipation of what to teach and how to implement the lesson in their future classes. The teacher's feedback and correction, either based on native-speakerism or multiple centric perspectives, should

encourage the students' linguistic idiosyncrasy and creativity to a reasonable extent, and at the same time guide them to self-evaluate and justify their own use of the language.

Thirdly, in this EIL-oriented approach, English materials for speaking and writing skills should comprise examples of various English varieties in the form of actual transactions in different contexts. As it will take a very long time for a homogeneous system of materials to be established in Vietnam, for the time being, materials sharing among teachers is highly recommended. Additionally, the objectives and roles of different forms of English assessment should be clarified to the student teachers to emphasize that the EIL approach does not deny the advantage of other language teaching approaches or normative tests.

Finally, based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that pre-service teachers' beliefs are subject to change during and after the intervention of an ELTE course. The belief change may be either subtractive or additive. In this case, the participants' additive belief change is their positive perceptions of the diversity of English and the advantages of the EIL paradigm which need to be inculcated and developed. Meanwhile, the subtractive belief alteration is their misconception about the relationship between the EIL pedagogy and traditional or current practice of English learning, which should be explicitly corrected.

Due to time constraints and the limited number of participants, the findings of the study may only demonstrate the students' immediate understandings of the new approach and temporal beliefs about the EIL pedagogy. As a result, although the research outcomes generated new knowledge of the field, they are more suggestive than conclusive and it is recommended that they be explored in further longitudinal investigations.

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The Role of EFL/ESL Settings in Using Language Learning Strategies

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Abstract

As part of a larger project, this paper reports the probable effect of ESL/EFL settings on a group of English learners' language learning strategy (LLS) use. Exploring the participants' perceptions towards language learning experiences in either setting is another issue of focus reported in this paper. A total of 157 Iranian students, 96 students from the EFL setting and 61 students from the ESL setting, participated in the survey during the investigation period. Twelve of them- six from each setting group- participated in the semi-structured interviews. This study adopted the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford (1990) for quantitative data. This inventory consists of six major categories including 1) Memory; 2) Cognitive; 3) Compensation; 4) Metacognitive; 5) Affective; and 6) Social; with sub-items in each category. Semi-structured interviews were also used to add a qualitative dimension. The data was collected and analyzed in separate parts: (1) the quantitative analysis discussed the data gathered by the Oxford's (1990) SILL; (2) the qualitative analysis contained the results of semi-structured interviews concerning ESL/EFL learners' experiences of language learning in different settings in light of the community of practice framework. The results of statistical analyses of t-test and MANOVA revealed that the ESL learners perform significantly better than the EFL learners on the overall SILL, and the six categories of the SILL. The results of the semi-structured interview analysis indicated that the EFL and ESL groups considerably differed from each other with regard to using language outside the class, and the obstacles they faced while learning and using the target language outside their language classes in their related settings. The main theoretical implication of the study is that LLSs are linked to both cognitive stance of the learners and social settings in which they occur.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, ESL Setting, EFL Setting, Community of Practice

Introduction

The first aim of this study is to investigate if LLSs of the learners of a particular nationality (Iranian) differ due to setting (ESL/EFL) differences. This is accomplished through survey data (SILL). The second aim of the study is to explore how the Iranian EFL and ESL learners

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use English outside language classes in either setting and how they face the obstacles they encounter while learning or using English. It is achieved through qualitative interview data. The study has been guided by the cognitive theories of LLSs in its quantitative dimension, and ‘community of practice’ framework to a possible extent in its qualitative dimension.

The literature on English learners' use of language learning strategies (LLSs) within an ESL or EFL environment is abundant. Among a multitude of studies conducted within either setting, researchers (Bedell, 1993; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Ellis, 1994; Griffiths, 2003; Khalil, 2005; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Macaro, 2001; Ok, 2003; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Phillips, 1991; Sheu, Wang, & Hsu, 2013; Wang, 2002; Yang, 2007; Yang, 2010 among others) have investigated the impact of age, gender, years of study, language proficiency, learning style and ethnicity as variables on the learners’ language learning strategy use. In a few studies (see Chang, 2009; Riley & Harsch, 1999), researchers have looked at the differences between LLSs used in English as a foreign language (EFL) setting versus English as a second language (ESL) setting by learners of the same nationality or language background.

The ESL context in the above mentioned studies are those countries where English is deemed as the first language of the native people. To the best of our knowledge, no studies have investigated the impact of some specific ESL contexts (such as the British past colonial countries where English is not the first language of the indigenous people) on the learners’ choice and use of LLSs. Specifically, the authors aim to look at the possible influence of ESL/EFL settings on the LLS use of Iranian language learners who are learning English in Malaysia (ESL setting) and Iran (EFL setting) respectively. Research in language learning strategies influenced by ESL versus EFL differences is rare, almost non-existent in Malaysia and Iran as ESL/EFL settings. Therefore, the results of this study might add to the current literature in the LLS field. Insights from such studies will hopefully improve the strategy knowledge of learners and teachers who are likely to learn and teach English respectively in similar Asian EFL and ESL contexts.

Literature Review

Language Learning Strategies

Emerging in the 1960s, cognitive psychology has changed language researchers' thinking about language learning strategies (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). Chamot (2005) notes that the second language acquisition (SLA) literature has been enriched with insights into the metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective processes involved in second language (L2)

learning by LLS research endeavors.

Earlier research in the field has tied LLSs to cognitive theories of second language learning. Huang and Andrews (2010) write that LLSs have been regarded either as variables of individual differences or as cognitive skills for a certain period of time. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) strongly argue that researchers must conceptualize strategies to include social and affective aspects of learning. They also argue that language learning should be seen as an adventure of the whole person, not just a cognitive or metacognitive exercise.

Oxford and Schramm (2007, p. 47) define second language learner strategy from the psychological perspective as “a specific plan, action, behavior, step, or technique that individual learners use, with some degree of consciousness, to improve their progress in developing skills in a second or foreign language.” Oxford (1999) states that “such strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language and are tools for greater learner autonomy” (p. 518). The sociocultural perspective, on the other hand, starts with society or culture, not the individual, as being central in learning. The sociocultural perspectives, as Oxford and Schramm (2007) view, contain several definitions of L2 learner strategy, the most general form being an individual learner’s socially mediated plan or action to meet a goal, which is related directly or indirectly to L2 learning. Some researchers (Donato & McCormick, 1994; Gao, 2006; Lantolf & Apple, 1994; Norton & Toohey, 2001), using Vygotskian (1978) stance, maintained that the development of LLSs is highly affected by social context in which they occur. Language learning strategy development is mostly a by-product of mediation in the sociocultural activities of communities of practice (Donato & McCormick, 1994). Our understanding of the above studies is that from the sociocultural perspectives, the development of learner strategies extends beyond the individual learner and has mostly to do with the classroom and the interactions that constitute it.

Research in the field started with strategies of “Good Language Learners” (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern & Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). Then, several classification frameworks of LLSs were outlined by experts in the field such as Bialystok (1978), O’Mally and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990) and Rubin (1981). In the last three decades, it has been the concern of many researchers to investigate the impact of various variables on learners’ choice and use of learner strategies. Nevertheless, the setting variable (EFL/ESL) has had less of a focus in past studies in the field; hence, it is the main concern of the present study.

A few studies (Bedell, 1993; Chang, 2009; Riley & Harsch, 1999) reported the influence of ESL versus EFL differences on strategy use. The ESL context in these studies is a country where English is the first language of the native people. For instance, the EFL and ESL

contexts in Chang's (2009) study were the U.S and Taiwan respectively. Chang found no significant difference between the two groups of participants in terms of five strategy categories in the SILL. The ESL participants in his study used significantly more social strategies than their EFL counterparts. The participants in the above studies are Asian learners of English. However, there is a dearth of knowledge on the strategy use pattern of Asian learners of English moving to an ESL context where English is the Lingua Franca but not the first language of the native people.

The SILL

Oxford (1990) sees the aim of language learning strategies as being oriented towards the development of communicative competence. She classified language learning strategies based on the synthesis of earlier work on good language learning strategies in general (i.e., Naiman et al., 1975; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975) and in relation to each of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Hosenfeld, 1976; Papalia & Zampogna, 1977). She proposed a comprehensive classification system of learning strategies utilizing the two major groups proposed by Rubin (1981): direct and indirect strategies. Each category was further broken down into a few subcategories as illustrated in Figure 1:

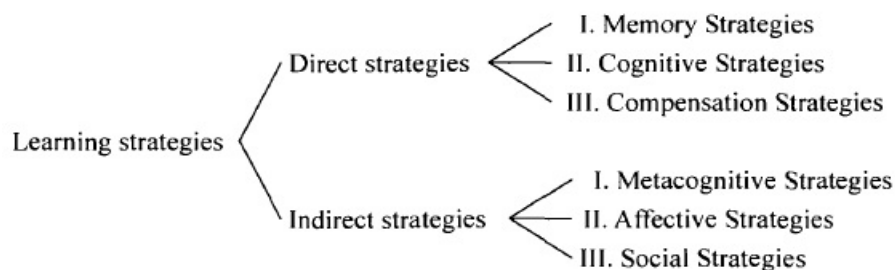


Figure 1. Diagram of the strategy system: Overview from OXFORD. *Language Learning Strategies*, 1E. p. 16. © 1990 Heinle/ELT

In Oxford's (1990) taxonomy, metacognitive strategies help students to regulate their learning. Affective strategies are concerned with learners' emotional requirements such as confidence, while social strategies lead to increased interaction with the target language. Cognitive strategies are the mental strategies students use to make sense of their learning. Memory strategies are those used for storage of information, and compensation strategies help students to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication.

Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning or SILL is a 50-item survey, proven to be reliable, to discover the frequency of language learner strategies used by second or foreign language learners in learning English. Although there are some limitations such as inability of learners to remember the strategies they previously used, learners' claim of never

employing some strategies, or lack of understanding of the strategy descriptions in the questionnaire items (Chamot, 2004; 2005), SILL is widely adopted for its high reliability and validity (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995).

Situated Condition in Communities of Practice

This study adopts the community of practice framework to explore the Iranian EFL and ESL participants' shared or different patterns of facing language learning obstacles as well as using English outside the classroom in their related settings. The authors also intend to triangulate the qualitative data with the data gained by the SILL to understand how setting differences affect learners in terms of using English and LLSs.

Community of practice is defined as an aggregate of people who come together by mutual engagement in an endeavor; ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, power relations, values and practices in sum emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor (Eckert & McConnel-Ginet, 1992, p. 464). Different individuals may be peripheral or core members in a given community of practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) believe that learning is socially situated, and contains growing participation in communities of practice, alongside experienced community members who already possess the necessary resources. Old-timers (experienced members) model strategies simply by doing their usual tasks. New-comers learn from old-timers or other new comers (apprentices) or from both.

Lave and Wenger (1991) propose the notion of community of practice as a set of relations among people, activity and the world, as a way to theorize and investigate social contexts. Norton and Toohey (2001) hold that social contexts, from Lave and Wenger's perspective, could be viewed as complex and overlapping communities in which variously positioned participants learn specific, local, historically constructed, and changing practices. They also argue that this view shifts attention away from questions about the personality traits or learning styles of participants to questions about how community organization provides positions for participants' involvement in community practices. From this vantage point, Norton and Toohey argue that L2 learning is not seen much as a gradual and neutral process of internalizing the vocabulary, rules, and structures of a standard language; rather, learners are seen to appropriate the utterances of others in particular historical and cultural practices, situated in particular communities. Thus, researchers, they argue, need to pay close attention to the ways communities and their activities are structured in order to study how this structuring facilitates or restricts learners' access to the linguistic resources of their communities.

Norton's (2000) study, which adopts the same overall view of language learning as a social

practice, is guided by the community of practice framework. Norton conducted the study with five adult women from diverse nationalities who were all immigrants to Canada. They were taking English classes and also using English at home and in the workplace. The data was collected through questionnaires, diaries and interviews at intervals within a two-year time span. During the course of the study, the five learners were assessed by means of a cloze passage, dictation, dialogue, crossword, short essay, and oral interview. What is perplexing, however, is that all five learners could be considered good language learners in terms of the strategies identified in 'The Good Language Learner' (The GLL; Naiman et al., 1978). However, one of the participants' (named Eva) performance on these measures was outstanding compared with the other learners. Eva, a young Polish woman, was living with a Polish partner and working at a restaurant called Munchies. At first she felt frustrated as she could not approach her co-workers to communicate with them. But as time passed, she gained enough courage to find conversational starters and join in talks with her co-workers about diverse issues such as holidays and hobbies. She found chances to appropriate the utterances of other fellow workers during daily tasks such as ordering meals and serving the customers directly. She enhanced her participation in the linguistic practices of her workplace and increased other learning opportunities as a result.

In another ethnographic study, Toohey (2000, 2001) has viewed the classroom as a community of practice to study a group of six young ESL learners over a three-year period. Toohey studied the children's growing identities and patterns of participation as they progressed from kindergarten to second grade of elementary school. Some children are more successful than others in proving themselves as legitimate participants in the classroom community. This in turn brought them more conversational and other learning opportunities. Among the participants, Toohey (2001) explains how Julie, a Polish L1 child, uses aggressive and adroit responses to threats of subordination to establish a powerful position in the classroom community. In the same line, Paris, Byrnes, and Paris (2001) explain their viewpoints on strategies in situated condition and communities of practice. They hold the view that in the sociocultural perspective the individual is not all-powerful; the social environment might restrict or facilitate individual efforts to learn the strategies of the old-timers.

Our understanding is that not many studies in the field adopt the community of practice as their framework to study their participants' second language development within ESL contexts. Researchers in the above studies have mostly used classroom as their framework to study situated learning in the community of practice. The context of the above studies are

countries where English is the first language of the native people. No study has been conducted in a setting where English is not the first language of the indigenous people. Thus, this study aims to enrich the literature in the field. In this study, community of practice has been applied to include various settings such as the community of friends, college or language classes in EFL and ESL settings. At the macro level, the term has also been used to refer to community of Iranian English learners in either EFL or ESL setting. Lastly, it should be mentioned that the qualitative interview collected at a particular point of time in this study is not intended for deep analysis of the participants' language learning development; rather, the data is mainly intended to help shed light on the EFL/ESL setting differences and their effect on the participants' English use outside the classroom and the obstacles they encounter while learning or using English.

EFL/ESL Dichotomy

While the term 'World Englishes' is becoming extensive, the willingness to make distinction between EFL and ESL contexts is weakening among many in the field. Nonetheless, making such division is still imperative when doing research in contexts in which there are a variety of English variations, with some falling within the EFL range and others being placed within the ESL range, as the case in Malaysia, which is a part of the present study context. Likewise, we need to distinguish between various EFL contexts based on sociocultural considerations that define each particular EFL context. For instance, English use by the population in the Iranian EFL context is entirely different from English use by people in the Taiwanese EFL context. In Taiwan, as stated by Chang (2009), the government, educational centers, companies, and even the general population value people with English abilities and skills. In Iran, nevertheless, English is not communicatively used beyond the walls of the classroom, partly due to the fact that the country has not played host to the international community at large especially within the last four decades.

Based on the above discussions, in this study, we follow Carter and Nunan's (2001) definition of 'ESL' referring to countries where English is the main lingua franca. This range of ESL contexts consists of British past-colonial territories like Singapore and India. Similarly, McArthur (1998) views ESL territories as ones in which English is used for specific purposes (i.e. legislative, education, judicial) but it is not necessarily recognized as a national language (as the case in Malaysia). Carter and Nunan (2001) define EFL countries as ones in which English is neither widely used for communication, nor used as the medium of instruction (as the case in Iran).

Context of the Study

The number of Iranian students enrolling in Malaysian universities has increased in recent years. In ESL Malaysia, foreign language learners such as Iranian students have ample opportunities to use English out of class for communicative purposes. English is the medium of instruction in Malaysian international universities and nearly all those universities require international students to submit an IELTS minimum score of 6.0 as a part of their enrollment regulations. Many Iranian students strive to fulfill that requirement through enrolling in Iranian language institutes in Iran before moving to Malaysia to continue their education; while many others prefer to improve their English through enrolling in Malaysian language institutes or colleges. The latter might think that learning English in an ESL country where they can benefit from English use in and outside the classroom will be a shortcut to this aim, compared to learning English in Iran where English is neither used for communication in the society, nor used as the medium of instruction. To explore which group is more successful in achieving this goal, we can ask what success means in terms of language learning.

Although there are a few researchers (see, e.g. Blanco, Pino, & Rodriguez, 2010) who do not strongly attribute language attainment to the changes in learners' strategy use pattern, Oxford (1985) argues that success in language learning, to a certain extent, can be attributed to conscious application of LLSs. Similarly, Nyikos and Oxford (1993) state that LLSs are related to successful language performance. Supposedly, if other variables that might contribute to differences of strategy use among Iranian language learners, such as age, gender and language proficiency could be kept constant or act as moderator variables in such studies, we might be able to look at the possible impact of the EFL/ESL settings on their language learning achievement through observing their application of LLSs. Additionally, to compare the Iranian EFL and ESL students in terms of success in language learning, we intend to look into the ways they use language outside the classroom and the obstacles they face while learning or using English in their related settings with reference to community of practice framework.

Objectives of the Study:

The purpose of this study could be summarized in the following research questions:

- (1) Is there a significant difference between the Iranian ESL and EFL groups in terms of their overall language learning strategy use?
- (2) Does the setting factor (ESL Malaysia/EFL Iran) affect the learners' use of six categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies) included in SILL?
- (3) What might be the similarities and differences between Iranian EFL and ESL learners in terms of English learning as experienced by the participants in this study?

Method

Participants

Two groups of Iranian male students, one group studying English in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia, and the other group studying English in Tehran, the capital city of Iran, constituted the whole sample in this study. Although it would be best to select the participants from both male and female Iranian students, we decided to keep the gender variable constant in this study so as to focus on the setting variable only. Thus, the ESL group of 61 Iranian English learners from different groups of language proficiency was selected from all available male language learners studying in the British Council Language Center in Kuala Lumpur, the only branch of that language center in the capital city of Malaysia. The group of participants in Iran, representing the EFL group, were 96 Iranian low, intermediate, and high proficiency English learners who were randomly selected from all available male language learners studying in different branches of ‘Kish Language Institute’ located in Tehran, the capital city of Iran. It should be mentioned that this paper is only a part of the main research project; hence, other areas such as the proficiency and LLSs will be discussed elsewhere.

All participants were adult college level male English learners within a 20-30 year old age range. In socioeconomic status terms, the participants in Kuala Lumpur were normally those motivated individuals from middle or above middle class families who could afford to pay for their education at university level in a foreign country. They could be compared to the participants in Tehran who were attending different branches of ‘Kish Language Center’, one of the most reputable and valid language centers in Iran. Also, those participants in Tehran belonged to the same socioeconomic class as they could afford living and learning English in Tehran, which is in fact the most expensive city in Iran. The same criteria were held to purposefully select our interviewees to help us collect our qualitative data; twelve students (six from each setting group) who had filled out the SILL volunteered to participate in the interview. The EFL interviewees were six adult Iranian male English learners who had never left their country to live overseas for a long time. The ESL interviewees were six adult Iranian male students learning English in Malaysia during the investigation period. The ESL participants had the experience of living and learning English in both Iran and Malaysia, having had enough exposure to different variations of English language. In each group, the interviewees were two elementary, two intermediate and two advanced learners of English.

It is worth mentioning that the participants in the Iranian EFL context do not have much exposure to the target language outside of the classroom to pick it up unconsciously. In Iran,

in most English classes in schools, universities, or even language institutes, a lot of emphasis is put on explaining about the language and making the learners conscious of the process of learning even in cases where so-called communicative approaches of teaching are adopted. In the capital city of Kuala Lumpur (ESL setting), on the other hand, the participants have enough exposure to the target language both inside and outside their language classes. English is the lingua franca for international people living, working, studying or visiting in Malaysia. This creates a spur on the part of those with other native languages to learn English for, so called, survival. Additionally, English is the medium of instruction in Malaysian international universities. Nearly all universities require international students to submit an IELTS minimum score of 6.0 as a part of their enrollment regulations.

Instruments

Personal Background Information Questionnaire (PBIQ)

The PBIQ used in this study was a modified version of the Oxford's (1990) Background Questionnaire. By means of this questionnaire, brief information of participants' individual background was collected. The collected information contained their age, gender, job, the length of time spent studying English, months or years of studying English in their current language institute, and their self-rated English proficiency level. One extra question was added to the PBIQ of the ESL participants' questionnaire to elicit information about their length of residence in ESL Malaysia. A minimum of a six-month stay in the capital city was set as the criterion for selecting the ESL participants to assure their adequate amount of exposure to English use in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur. Included in the PBIQ was a question to collect information about their language proficiency level as a means of assigning participants' self-rated proficiency level. It should be mentioned that the impact of proficiency factor on the learners' strategy use is discussed in a separate issue (Forthcoming).

Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory (SILL)

Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning or SILL (version seven) is a 50-item survey, proven to be reliable, to discover the frequency of language learner strategies used by second or foreign language learners in learning English. A rating scale from 1 to 5 is used for the Likert scale, as number one meaning 'never or almost never true of me', and number 5 standing for 'always or almost always true of me'. The SILL's alpha co-efficient for reliability is 0.92 (Griffiths, 2007) and its content validity is 0.99 (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). This inventory consists of six major categories each containing a number of items. The categories include: 1) Memory (nine items: 1-9); 2) Cognitive (14 items: 10-23); 3) Compensation (six items: 24-29); 4) Metacognitive (nine items: 30-38); 5) Affective (six

items: 39-44); and 6) Social (six items: 45-50). The SILL is used to conduct surveys for the purpose of summarizing results for a group by means of statistical treatment and objectively diagnosing the problem of individual students (Oxford, 1990).

The overall average indicates how often learners tend to use the language learning strategy. For example, if the learners score 2.5 on average for a memory strategy, then this score indicates that the learners, on average, use the strategy about half the time. To collect data on the participants' language learning strategies, Oxford's (1990) SILL along with the author's equivalent Persian translation of the SILL (see the Appendix) were used. To further ensure the reliability of the inventory, it was administered to 33 Iranian students randomly selected from language institutes in both settings with a time interval of two weeks. The test-retest reliability index turned out to be 0.81. The participants' performance on the questionnaires were scored and analyzed to explore the pattern of strategy use among this group of English learners.

Semi-structured Interview

To gain rich data, the researchers conducted a semi-structured interview with 12 students (six from each setting group) on a one-on-one mode after collecting the quantitative questionnaire. The purpose of the interview was to elicit information on the learners' areas of using the target language in their related settings (Iran and Malaysia) and the obstacles they encountered while learning or using English in either setting. Also, the qualitative data collected and analyzed was triangulated with the quantitative data to help shed light on the impact of a specific range of ESL and EFL settings on the learners' use of language learning strategies and their language use in either setting (EFL/ESL). In fact, we tried to incorporate both psychological (cognitive) and sociocultural perspectives in our investigation. The main interview questions were: 'How do you use English out of class in this country?' and 'What prevents you from learning or using English in this country?' Each interviewee's response sheet was given a code to substitute their real names for confidentiality. The interviews were conducted in both Persian (participants' first language) and English in order to let the interviewees freely express their thoughts and attitudes. In other terms, the respondents were free to choose either language or shift from one to the other to express their viewpoints.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 18) was utilized to analyze the quantitative data. The mean scores of each of the six categories of strategies were calculated in order to find out the frequencies of individual categories of strategies that the participants reportedly perceived to use. The mean scores of all strategy categories were calculated to find

out the overall use of language learning strategies by the participants. Independent samples T-test was utilized to see if there was any significant difference between EFL and ESL groups in terms of overall usage of the SILL. To find out if the EFL/ESL groups showed any significant difference with respect to their perceived use of the six strategy categories in the SILL, multivariate analysis of variances (MANOVA) best suited the study.

Qualitative Data Analysis

As mentioned earlier, all the interviewees were male participants to accord with the SILL's participants. EFL Interviewees were designated Student 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6; while the ESL Interviewees in Malaysia were designated as Student A, B, C, D, E, and F. The data from the interview were analyzed manually. The data collected and analyzed would help shed light on possible differences in language learning among Iranian language learners due to the different settings of the study (ESL/EFL settings). To achieve rich results, the interview data was triangulated with the data of the SILL questionnaire.

Results

Quantitative Results

Question (1)

Is there a significant difference between the Iranian ESL and EFL groups in terms of their overall language learning strategy use?

H0: There is no significant difference between the Iranian EFL and ESL groups in terms of their overall language learning strategy use.

Table 1 shows that on average the ESL students (M = 3.45, SD = .59) show a higher mean score on the overall language learning strategies than the EFL group (M = 3.22, SD = .42).

Table 1

Overall Use of Strategies by ESL/EFL Groups

	SETTING	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SILL	ESL	61	3.459	.5946	.0761
	EFL	96	3.226	.4249	.0434

The results of the independent t-test ($t(98) = 2.65, P = .009 < .05$), (Table 2) indicate that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the EFL and ESL groups on the overall use of the SILL. Meanwhile $R = .25$ represents an almost moderate effect size. Thus,

the null-hypothesis “there is no significant difference between EFL and ESL groups with regard to their overall use of SILL” is rejected.

Table 2

Independent Samples T-test on the Overall Use of the SILL by the ESL/EFL Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	4.954	.027	2.855	155	.005	.2326	.0815	.0716	.3935
SILL Equal variances not assumed			2.654	98.693	.009	.2326	.0876	.0587	.4064

One statement can be made regarding the result of the t-test: In ESL Malaysia, Iranian participants significantly apply more learning strategies than their counterparts in Iranian EFL environment.

Question (2)

Does the setting factor (ESL Malaysia/EFL Iran) affect the learners’ application of six categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies) in the SILL?

A multivariate analysis of variances (MANOVA) was run to compare the ESL/EFL students’ perceived use of the strategy categories of the SILL. Prior to presenting the results of the statistical test (MANOVA), the descriptive information (Table 3) containing the mean scores of the strategy categories of the ESL/EFL groups is displayed in the following part:

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Categories of Learning Strategies by Setting

Dependent Variable	SETTING	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
MEMORY	EFL	2.780	.066	2.649	2.911
	ESL	3.078	.083	2.914	3.243
COGNITIVE	EFL	3.179	.061	3.058	3.300
	ESL	3.390	.077	3.238	3.542
COMPENSATION	EFL	3.347	.071	3.206	3.488
	ESL	3.538	.090	3.361	3.715
METACOGNITIVE	EFL	3.693	.071	3.553	3.833
	ESL	3.949	.089	3.773	4.125
AFFECTIVE	EFL	2.651	.062	2.529	2.773
	ESL	2.921	.077	2.768	3.074
SOCIAL	EFL	3.760	.071	3.620	3.901
	ESL	3.915	.089	3.739	4.092

According to Table 3, ESL students show higher mean scores on all categories of strategies than their EFL counterparts. Meanwhile, both groups showed almost the same pattern in their preference for the strategy categories; they both favored metacognitive and social categories of strategies the most and memory and affective categories the least. Their compensation and cognitive categories fell in the middle of the hierarchy. Accordingly, statistical test of MANOVA (Table 4) was run to determine the significance of the difference in EFL/ESL groups' mean scores in all six strategy categories listed in SILL.

Table 4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (MANOVA) for the Categories of the SILL by Setting

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
SETTING	Memory	3.317	1	3.317	7.855	.006*	.048
	Cognitive	1.655	1	1.655	4.585	.034*	.029
	Compensation	1.361	1	1.361	2.776	.098	.018
	Metacognitive	2.439	1	2.439	5.059	.026*	.032
	Affective	2.714	1	2.714	7.425	.007*	.046
	Social	.895	1	.895	1.838	.177	.012

Based on the results displayed in Table 4, it can be concluded that the setting (ESL/EFL) factor has a significant effect on the students' use of memory ($F(1, 155) = 7.85, P = .006 < .05$), cognitive ($F(1, 155) = 4.58, P = .034 < .05$), metacognitive ($F(1, 155) = 5.05, P = .026 < .05$),

.05) and affective ($F(1, 155) = 7.42, P = .007 < .05$) categories of strategies. By contrast, the setting (ESL/EFL) factor has a non-significant effect on the students' use of compensation ($F(1, 155) = 2.77, P = .098 > .05$) and social ($F(1, 155) = 1.83, P = .177 > .05$) categories of strategies. In other terms, ESL students use memory, cognitive, metacognitive, and affective categories of strategies more significantly than their EFL counterparts.

Qualitative Results

The qualitative results of the study summarize the answer to the third question of the study which reads as “What might be the similarities and differences between Iranian EFL and ESL learners in terms of English learning as experienced by the participants in this study?” The qualitative results are intended to be triangulated with the quantitative results in order to offer a better picture of the EFL and ESL participants' language learning and using behavior.

With regard to English use in the out- of –the- class situations in Malaysia, the strong view among the ESL interviewees is that English is the medium of communication for them and they frequently put their English knowledge into practice to meet their daily needs. Among the various areas of English use, they pointed to shopping, exchanging emails, taxi renting, communicating with foreign friends (both local and international ones), opening a bank account, watching English TV programs and movies, doing academic tasks, going out with friends, summarizing and reviewing lessons, taking notes, reporting in English, providing word noticing cards, and using the Internet for different purposes such as doing academic searches. Some of the respondents voiced that they used English to establish stronger relationship within the community of friends, classmates and workmates whom they worked or lived with. For instance, Student E, who was currently studying IT and working in a local company as an IT expert, claims:

In the company where I work I am noticeable for speaking English well and the more I gain mastery in English the more I get promoted and respected by my local workmates and employers. In fact as a qualified programmer I have recently received a promotion and as a result an increase in my salary; this in turn makes me even more motivated to work on my English. At work place my local friends and I have tied good relationship together; sometimes we talk about the movies we watch, and go out to eat together. I have been invited to their special ceremonies a few times. For instance, last month I attended a female friend's wedding ceremony. There I learned more about their traditions and culture.

Some of our ESL participants were anxious about possible ways they could find to work on their spoken English and on the structures of their language as well. This is, for instance,

reflected in the voice of Student D, who is a master student and a part-time worker, when he uttered that:

For me, it has turned to a joyful habit to review all I have done during the day, especially when I am lying in my bed, preparing to sleep at night. This way I can think of the utterances I have learned from others during that day and more important than that is that I think of the mistakes I have made in my talk with friends, teachers, and co-workers; I try to correct them and not repeat them. Also, I am very outgoing and I like to meet different people especially those who can speak English better than me. Sometimes learning English outside the English class is more joyful than learning it in the class.

Regarding the obstacles these ESL respondents encountered while learning and using English, one basic problem seems to originate from the community of Iranian people who do not tend to speak English with each other. In support of this claim, respondent B said that *“There are a few Iranian friends in my English class and we speak with each other in English as long as we are in the class, but outside the class we rarely speak in English.”* Students C and E also pointed out that it seems odd to talk to Iranian people in a language other than Persian unless you are close friends in which case Persian is still the predominant language for communication. Another source of obstacles come from the community of uneducated or less educated local Malaysian people who, as strongly viewed by all the ESL respondents, incorrectly use English in their daily talks with international people. For instance, Student F explains that:

I frequently use English at work or in everyday life, and I am committed to using well-structured and native-like sentences in my interactions with local people among whom are those who can speak English well; however, in terms of pronunciation they do not add anything to my target language knowledge. In fact, in many occasions I should pronounce words in a way that are understandable to them at the cost of lowering my talking speed or producing erroneous sentences; this makes me disappointed.

In the EFL group, all the six interviewees referred to almost the same activities they used to do outside the class as manifestations of English use such as doing homework assignments, exchanging emails in English, and watching English programs, movies, and etc. They pointed to the lack of situations for English use outside the class, which prevented them from practicing their spoken English. They strongly held the view that English is not the instrument for survival in the society; thus people are not forced to use English in their daily interactions. Student 5, for example, explained that:

As an advanced English learner I am very determined to improve all my language skills; in trying to do so I read different texts especially using the Internet,

I sometimes send English emails to friends to improve my writing, I listen to English texts or watch English movies to enhance my listening skill, but unfortunately I don't find any situations in which I can work on my speaking ability outside the class. The lack of conversational opportunities outside the class sometimes makes me disappointed.

Reportedly, for these EFL learners, receptive skills are the main source for language improvement, while productive skills play minor roles in helping them master their language knowledge. In support of this claim, Student 4 voiced that:

Unfortunately, in Iran unlike many other countries, there is not much of a chance to orally use English outside English classes. I try to compensate for this lack by creating situations in which I can be exposed to English. For instance I watch one or two episodes of 'FRIENDS' every night and put down some of its phrases on a piece of paper and review them the following days. But when you cannot use these phrases in your daily conversations, they will be removed out of your memory after a while.

EFL interviewees seemed to benefit from the Internet as a significant source for reading and learning English outside the classroom. For instance, doing academic searches turned out to immensely benefit our EFL interviewees in terms of reading skill. Nonetheless, with regard to on-line communication, some respondents (Students 1, 2 and 3) voiced that they rarely use English for chatting or sending emails to other friends or classmates. They believed that using the Internet could only aid them in mastering their reading skill, and they could practice all aspects of the target language only in language classes. With regard to using the Internet as a means of communication in Iran, Student 3 expressed his ideas as:

I sometimes send English mails to friends and I also try to use English to chat with my friends. But after a few times I give up using English to communicate with Iranian friends because they reply in Persian. I think on-line communication is less common among Iranian people. However, sometimes I have the chance to chat with people outside the country using English through the Internet.

Based on the voices from the interviewees, we can conclude that in terms of similarities, EFL and ESL interviewees were not willing to use English to interact with Iranian people or friends outside their classes. Although ESL respondents occasionally used English in their interaction with Iranian friends, Persian was still the predominant language for communication among them. With regard to their differences, it turned out that while English was not regarded as the language for communication outside the classroom for our EFL respondents in Iran, English was the means of survival for the Iranian ESL participants. Hence, ESL interviewees inevitably needed and were willing to use English in many situations

outside the classroom in Malaysia. While the Iranian EFL participants were unable to establish any forms of target language user communities outside the classroom in Iran, ESL participants enjoyed using English to interact with international and local people within various target language user communities outside the classroom in Malaysia, despite having to cope with their own obstacles such as incorrect use of English by less educated people in Malaysia.

Summary and Discussion

In interpreting the study results, we tried to conceptualize strategies to include cognitive, social and affective aspects of learning as suggested by Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995). We also attempt to triangulate the qualitative data with the data gained by the survey to see how setting differences might affect learners' use of LLSs in general. However, we do not claim that the present study is profoundly grounded in sociocultural perspectives of LLS use or SLA research as the study is mainly a cross-sectional survey and has utilized quantitative techniques in collecting and interpreting the major part of the data.

The results of the study showed that Iranian ESL learners perform significantly better than Iranian EFL learners on the overall SILL, and the six categories included in SILL. Both groups showed almost the same pattern in their preference for the strategy categories; they both favored metacognitive and social categories of strategies the most and memory and affective categories the least with compensation and cognitive categories being in the middle of their hierarchy. However, the results of the independent t-test ($t(98) = 2.65, P = .009 < .05$) indicate that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the EFL and ESL groups in using the overall SILL. On average, the ESL students ($M = 3.45, SD = .59$) showed a higher mean score on the overall language learning strategies than the EFL group ($M = 3.22, SD = .42$).

Higher use of the overall strategies by the ESL students is in conformity with their higher performance over all the SILL's strategy categories. In statistical terms, Iranian ESL learners significantly performed better than their EFL counterparts in using memory, cognitive, metacognitive, and affective categories of strategies ($p < .05$), while they showed no significant difference in the means of their compensation and social strategy categories ($p > .05$).

Similarly, Riley and Harsch (1999) compared the strategies of 28 Japanese ESL students entering two language programs in Hawaii with the strategies used by 28 of their Japanese EFL counterparts attending a university in Japan. The researchers found that the two groups

used variant strategies with ESL learners showing higher frequency of strategy use; hence, they argued that the environmental differences could play a significant role when learning another language. Riley and Harsch suggested that ESL learners were more willing to take advantage of the availability of the English speaking sources that surround them. A more recent related study of Chang (2009) looked into the patterns of strategy use of Chinese ESL/EFL college students studying in the U.S and Taiwan respectively. Chang also argued that setting differences play an important role in the learners' use of language learning strategies. The ESL participants in his study showed higher frequencies of strategy use in all categories of the SILL than their EFL counterparts. However, Chang reported significant differences only in the means of social category of the EFL and ESL groups. One of the possible reasons, Chang argued, could be that living in the target language environment makes it easier for the participants to have social contact with native speakers. Based on the data he collected with the SILL, it turned out that ESL participants in his study had three social strategies listed in their top ten most used strategies. These three items were all about asking English speakers for help.

The difference between the participants in Chang's study and the participants in the present study with regard to using the SILL categories leads us to argue that the amount of English use in EFL contexts can be seen as being on a continuum. Some countries such as Taiwan (Chang's EFL context) and Vietnam tend to reach one end of the continuum, which is characterized by high frequent use of English by people in the society, while others such as Iran (our EFL context) and Iraq fall on the other end of the continuum, characterized by negligent use of the language in the society. In other terms, while we don't see significant differences between Chang's EFL and ESL participants in using five of six strategy categories in the SILL, EFL and ESL students in our study showed significant differences in most of the SILL strategy categories.

In this study Iranian English learners in ESL Malaysia perceived to employ cognitive ($M=3.39$) and memory ($M=3.07$) strategies significantly ($p < .05$) higher than Iranian students in EFL Iran (cognitive mean= 3.17 and memory mean= 2.78). Cognitive and memory strategies are regarded as direct strategies based on Oxford's (1990) classification, which entail all kinds of activities or techniques employed by the learner to directly manipulate the target language. One likely explanation for the higher use of memory and cognitive strategies by the ESL participants is their active involvement in manipulating the target language input that exists in abundance in their surroundings in ESL Malaysia. The interviewees' portfolio also supports the above explanation. Iranian ESL interviewees generally reported to take advantage of the

target language resources surrounding them. Meanwhile, they explained that English was the only means for academic survival in ESL Malaysia as they needed to communicate in the target language with their teachers, peers and others. In outer college settings, too, they needed to communicate in English with people around them. Nearly all of them reportedly performed frequent use of strategies such as reviewing and summarizing their lessons, taking notes, reporting in English, providing word journals, sending emails in English and many other activities which all characterize memory and cognitive strategies. In EFL Iran, by contrast, the activities mentioned above reportedly were less frequently applied by the EFL interviewees.

ESL participants in this study also reported significantly ($p < .05$) higher use of metacognitive category of strategies ($M = 3.04$) than their EFL counterparts ($M = 3.69$). The results generally suggest that ESL students pay more attention to their target language mistakes, more frequently evaluate themselves by self-monitoring, and are more focused on their language learning plan while consciously looking for people to talk to in English. This last strategy is normally more applicable in an ESL setting where there are many people who speak the Lingua Franca (English). The ESL respondents' portfolios also support the above explanation. We noticed, for instance, that how Student D's participation in the community of friends, and co-workers offered him opportunities to evaluate himself and consciously reflect on his language production and language errors.

Affective category of strategies is another area in which the ESL learners significantly ($p < .05$) performed better than the EFL learners ($ESLM = 2.92$, $EFLM = 2.65$). Possibly, ESL students more efficiently manage their emotions and anxiety in terms of learning English as they frequently use the target language both in and out of the classroom. One reason for the less frequent use of affective strategies by EFL students might be that they rarely encounter situations in out-of-the-class settings where they can orally communicate the target language; hence, they less likely talk to someone else about how they feel when they are learning English. They also hardly have any chances to encourage themselves to speak English especially when they are afraid of making mistakes, which all characterize affective strategies included in Oxford's SILL.

Unlike the four categories mentioned above, Iranian ESL and EFL learners in this study showed no significant differences in using compensation and social categories of strategies ($p > .05$), though, on average, the ESL mean score was higher than the EFL mean score over these two categories. Both groups reported using compensation strategies between moderate to high levels ($ESLM = 3.53$, $EFLM = 3.34$). The results of this study support the results

gained in some similar studies. Bedell (1993), for instance, compared LLSs of Chinese students studying in China with Chinese students studying in the US. He concluded that compensation strategies were highly frequently used among both groups of students in different settings. Bedell and Oxford (1996), in a study on 353 Chinese EFL university students, found that compensation strategies were highly used by their participants. They suggested that it was also true for Chinese students studying in Taiwan and the U.S. Chang (2009) also found similar pattern in Chinese ESL and EFL learners' use of compensation strategies; they both reported a moderate use (ESL/EFL $M= 3.34$) of compensation strategies. Thus, it could be argued that higher use of compensation strategies is typical of both ESL and EFL Asian background learners.

With respect to social category of strategies, ESL group ($M= 3.91$) showed a higher mean score than the EFL group ($M= 3.76$), which was normally predictable regarding the availability of myriad situations for both oral and written use of the target language by Iranian students in ESL Malaysia. The results gained by analyzing the interview data also support the above claim, as nearly all the ESL interviewees reported high frequent use of the target language out of the classroom settings as a means of communication. They also used to frequently ask questions in their interaction with the members of their language or college class communities or their friends and other target language users. According to Oxford (1990), asking questions helps learners get closer to the particular meaning of words and aids their understanding in the target language. It also encourages learners' conversation partners to provide sufficient input in the target language. Furthermore, the conversation partner's response provides indirect feedback about the learner's production skills.

By contrast, EFL interviewees' main obstacle in learning and using English was the lack of situations for English use beyond the walls of the classroom. One reason could be that the country has not played host to the international community at large after the Iranian revolution in 1979. This in turn has resulted in less, if any, interaction between Iranian people and the world. However, in statistical terms, ESL and EFL learners didn't show significant differences ($p > .05$) in their mean scores of social category of strategies. A possible explanation is that individual social strategies included in SILL do not seem to differentiate ESL learners from EFL students.

In sum, the results of this study show that Iranian ESL learners significantly performed better than their EFL counterparts in their overall use of the SILL and in using four (out of six) categories of the SILL. Findings of the study also underscore the role of sociocultural setting factor in learners' success or failure in language learning and using and in their aspects

of learning strategies as well.

Similar pattern of learners' language success after moving to an ESL country could be observed in other studies (See e. g. Gao, 2006; Norton, 2000; Toohey, 2000, 2001). These studies are longitudinal in nature and are located within the study abroad research framework; nevertheless, they could be compared with the present study in terms of the sociocultural context. The authors of those studies have also looked at the strategies of their participants in a different country, though strategy investigation is only a part of their concern. Gao (2006), using a sociocultural theoretical framework, investigated changes in 14 Chinese learners' use of language learning strategies after they moved from mainland China to Britain. The analysis of the learners' experiential narratives led him to conclude that the popular language learning discourses, assessment methods, and influential agents had been influencing the learners' frequency and choices of strategy use in China, but their mobilizing forces disappeared or were undermined in Britain and hence lost their past mediation effects on the learners' strategy use. In other terms, Gao indicated that the participants' strategic behaviors drastically changed after moving to an ESL context due to their encounter with different sociocultural mediators.

In a joint review of their studies, Norton and Toohey (2001) conclude that an explanation for Eva's (one of the five cases) outperformance lies in the extent to which she was able to negotiate entry into the Anglophone social networks in her workplace (Munchies) despite initial difficulties. They argue that what made Eva and Julie (one of the six young English learners) successful second language learners had to do only partly with their own actions. Central to their success was the fact that they both gained more and more access to the social and verbal activities of the target language community of practice.

In terms of the EFL and ESL learners' differences regarding various categories of learning strategies and language use, what could be drawn from the results of this study is that EFL learners were not as eager as their ESL counterparts to establish strong second language communities (communities of practice) outside their language classes in EFL Iran. In fact, reading is the only skill which is given priority in many educational settings such as schools and universities where students meet English classes only once a week. In such educational system, reading is a more realistic goal and most English tests at schools and universities measure students in terms of reading ability. Oral use of the target language is limited to English classes in private language institutes only. In such societies we do not see learners' willingness to establish any forms of target language user communities of practice beyond the walls of English classes. This relates to the very fact that despite the emerging patterns of

interaction with the outside world in the form of cultural and trade exchanges in many ESL/EFL contexts, the social fabric of the Iranian society is still quite traditional to a great extent. In such societies, people, particularly those involved in learning English, mostly identify themselves in terms of family and religious values and very less likely in terms of English language.

By contrast, ESL learners' growing participation in various target language communities, including their language or university class communities as well as their community of local or international friends, provides them with myriad chances to use English in all aspects of their daily life. In other terms, their massive involvement in the activities of their English user communities offers them strong incentives for gaining a better mastery of the target language. In reality, it is hard to imagine the ESL learners' massive involvement in the practices of their communities of practice such as going out together, discussing their unique cultural references, working together, and many other activities without any influence on their language learning and LLS use. This is reflected in the responses by some ESL interviewees regarding their consciously looking for people to talk to, monitoring themselves, and their willingness to be accepted and respected by the members of their communities of practice. Nevertheless, these ESL respondents had to cope with some obstacles while learning and using the target language; the main one being erroneous use of English by local people with less schooling in ESL in Malaysia.

The present study was the authors' endeavor to understand how EFL/ESL setting factor influences learners' use of learning strategies and language use as related to both cognitive stance of the learners and social settings in which strategies are used. We saw how active involvement of our ESL interviewees in learning and using the lingua Franca in Malaysian ESL context within various communities of practice (Co-workers, friends, classmates, and target language users) helped them learn the utterances of others (cognitive and social strategies), notice their English mistakes (metacognitive strategy), look for people to talk to in English (metacognitive and social strategies), talk like native English speakers (cognitive strategy), review their daily lessons or activities (memory strategy), evaluate themselves by self-monitoring (metacognitive strategy), and enhance their participation and interaction with other target language users (metacognitive, and social strategies). We also tried to offer sociopolitical reasons for the EFL participants' lack of willingness to establish and participate in any form of communities of practice in EFL Iran.

Implications

The present study is heavily grounded in cognitive theories of LLSs using a survey (SILL) to collect the major part of the data; nevertheless, in the qualitative part, the authors collected and interpreted some interview data, trying to make sense of the EFL and ESL participants' strategy use in general as well as language use outside the classroom in either setting. Thus, taking advantage of the sociocultural community of practice framework to a possible extent, the authors attempted to offer some insights about the influence of the participants' activities in various communities of practice (co-workers, classmates and friends) on their English use especially in the Malaysian ESL context. This study tried to explain how learners' involvement in communities of practices in ESL Malaysia provided them with numerous chances for using and learning the target language. Also, we offered some sociopolitical reasons for Iranian English learners' inability to establish their own communities of target language learners and users outside their language classes in the Iranian EFL context.

It is also admitted that the study has some limitations. First, all participants are male language learners; this limits the generalization that can be drawn from the results of the study. In such studies, it could be of paramount importance to study gender differences and LLSs within the community of practice framework, especially in societies in which female students are still striving for emancipation. Iranian female students may act differently from their male counterparts in terms of LLS or English use outside the class after leaving Iran where the fabric of the society is still mainly traditional. Second, since the authors collected the interview data at a particular point of time (not within time), the results might not depict sound picture of the differences between the EFL and ESL participants in terms of language or strategy use. Normally, sociocultural-oriented studies in the SLA field are longitudinal in nature and the ethnographers in such studies spend much time in the site while trying to observe and record natural changes in their participants' language learning behavior. Thus, to enrich our knowledge of learner strategies, their learning behavior in different sociocultural settings and their language development in society, the authors suggest that future studies could:

- benefit from both perspectives (psychological and sociocultural) in collecting and interpreting data;
- investigate gender differences in using LLSs or using English outside the classroom across EFL and ESL contexts;
- apply multiple instruments to investigate the learners' strategic knowledge;

- study various EFL contexts and try to conceptualize and redefine the term ‘EFL’;
- study various ESL contexts and try to conceptualize and redefine the term ‘ESL’;
- conduct ethnographic studies to understand EFL learners’ strategies after moving to an ESL context;
- explore the reasons for both EFL and ESL learners’ reluctance to use the target language to interact with their compatriots outside the classroom.

This study has some implications for English learners and teachers as well. The results imply that being exposed to English in a specific country of Asian ESL context, where English is not the native language of the indigenous people, has yet remarkable impact on the students’ language attainment and their use of language learning strategies. Based on the above discussion, in the following part, using Brown’s (2001) scheme, the authors suggest some guidelines for teachers who might teach in either EFL or ESL settings similar to the ones under investigation in this study.

When planning a lesson in an Asian ESL context such as Malaysia, where there are ready-made contexts for communicative use of the target language outside of the classroom, teachers can utilize the following guidelines to help the students:

- Encourage them to seek out opportunities for practical use of the language;
- Assign them specific tasks which involve using the target language outside the classroom, for instance writing a letter to their college dean, reading an article and summarizing it, talking to a tourist and providing a report for the class and etc.;
- Invite native English speakers to class and give students chances to freely talk to them;
- Encourage students to establish or join new target language communities outside their language classes;
- Ask them to provide diaries in which they can write about their language learning experiences, the members of their communities and the obstacles they see on their way to using or learning the target language;
- Use class time to encourage the students to talk about and discuss their outer class learning issues or obstacles and have both their teacher and peers’ suggestions.

When planning a lesson in an Asian EFL context where immediate use of the language seems far removed outside the classroom, the following guidelines may help teachers to compensate for the lack of ready-made situations for communicative use of the target language by the students:

- Take class time to work on the activities that cannot be done as homework;

- Teach the students learning strategies that could be applied both in and outside the class;
- Use authentic language inputs which are culturally bound and motivating in order to boost interaction between peers and their level of enjoyment for learning the language;
- Assign the students a plethora of extra-class activities which involve them in active use of the target language outside the class, such as having them watch a movie and write a report for the class, write a journal on their learning progress, send emails to other peers and etc.;
- Encourage the students to form language communities and schedule regular activities;
- Help learners to find out more intrinsic factors for language learning;
- De-emphasize the role of language tests and emphasize genuine use of the language and interaction.

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Appendix

The SILL Questionnaire (English-Persian)

This questionnaire serves to find out Iranian students' language learning strategies. It is hoped that the respondents provide reliable and valid information for this research. All information gained from this questionnaire is confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

SECTION A						
1.	I think of relationship between what I already know and new things I learn in English. آنچه در انگلیسی یاد میگیرم را با آنچه از قبل میدانم مرتبط میسازم.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them. من کلمات جدیدی که در انگلیسی یاد میگیرم را در جملات بکار میبرم تا آنها را به خاطر بسپارم.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word. من بین تلفظ یک کلمه و تصویر آن کلمه رابطه برقرار می‌کنم تا آن را به خاطر بسپارم.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used. من با ایجاد تصویر ذهنی از موقعیتی که یک کلمه در آن بکار میرود سعی می‌کنم آن را به خاطر بسپارم.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I use rhymes to remember new English words. من برای به خاطر سپردن کلمات در انگلیسی از کلمات هم قافیه استفاده می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I use flashcards to remember new English words. من برای به خاطر سپردن کلمات جدید در انگلیسی فیش برداری می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I physically act out new English words. برای یادگیری کلمات جدید از حرکتهای نمایشی استفاده می‌کنم. (عمل آن کلمه را نمایش میدهم)	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I review English lessons often. من اغلب، درس انگلیسی را دوره می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on the street sign. من کلمات و عبارات انگلیسی را با به خاطر سپردن موقعیت آنها در صفحه، روی بورد، یا روی تابلوهای خیابانی به خاطر میسپارم.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION B						
10.	I say or write new English words several times. من کلمات جدید انگلیسی را چندین بار تکرار می‌کنم و مینویسم.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I try to talk like native English speakers. من سعی می‌کنم، مانند انگلیسی زبانها حرف بزنم.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I practice the sounds of English. من صداها ی انگلیسی را تمرین می‌کنم.(تمرین تلفظ)	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I use the English words I know in different ways. من کلماتی که میدانم را به شیوه‌های گوناگون بکار میبرم.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I start conversations in English. من مکالمه‌ها را به زبان انگلیسی آغاز می‌کنم نه فارسی(در کلاس).	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English. من برنامه‌های انگلیسی زبان تماشا می‌کنم یا به دیدن فیلمهای انگلیسی میروم.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I read for pleasure in English. من در انگلیسی خواندن تفریحی نیز دارم. (مثل کتاب داستان یا روزنامه)	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English. من به انگلیسی یادداشت، پیام، نامه و گزارش مینویسم.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully. من ابتدا به سرعت یک متن انگلیسی را مرور می‌کنم، سپس بر می‌گردم و به دقت می‌خوانم.					
		1	2	3	4	5
SECTION C						
19.	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English. من در یادگیری لغات جدید انگلیسی به جستجوی لغات مشابه در زبان فارسی نیز میپردازم(لغات هم ریشه)	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I try to find patterns in English. من در زبان آموزی سعی در یافتن الگوها(مثالها) دارم.	1	2	3	4	5

21.	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand. من برای پی بردن به معنی یک کلمه در انگلیسی آن را به اجزایی که میدانم تقسیم می‌کنم	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I try not to translate word-for-word. من سعی می‌کنم از ترجمه کلمه به کلمه خود داری کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English. من از اطلاعاتی که در انگلیسی می‌شنوم یا می‌خوانم، خلاصه برداری می‌کنم	1	2	3	4	5
24.	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses. برای فهمیدن کلمات نا آشنا در انگلیسی حدس می‌زنم.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures. وقتی در طول یک مکالمه کلمه ای به ذهنم نمیرسد از حرکات بدن استفاده می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I make up new words when I do not know the right one in English. وقتی کلمه ای را بلد نیستم، کلمه جدیدی سر هم می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I read English without looking up every word. من انگلیسی می‌خوانم بدون اینکه همه کلمات جدید آن متن را با استفاده از فرهنگ لغات ببایم.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English. من سعی می‌کنم کلمه یا جمله بعدی را که طرف مقابل می‌خواهد بکار ببرد را حدس بزنم.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing. اگر هنگام استفاده از انگلیسی نتوانم کلمه صحیحی ببایم از کلمه یا عبارت هم معنی آن استفاده می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
SECTION D						
30.	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English. من سعی می‌کنم راه‌های زیادی برای استفاده از انگلیسی ببایم.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better. من به خطاهای زبانی خود واقفم و از آنها جهت یادگیری بهتر بهره می‌برم.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I pay attention when someone is speaking English. وقتی کسی انگلیسی صحبت می‌کند، من توجه می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5

33.	I try to find out how to be better learner of English. من سعی می‌کنم بفهمم که چگونه می‌توان زبان آموز بهتری شد.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English. من برنامه خود را به گونه ای طراحی می‌کنم که وقت کافی برای مطالعه انگلیسی داشته باشم.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I look for people I can talk to in English من به دنبال افرادی هستم که بتوانم با آنها انگلیسی حرف بزنم.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English. من به دنبال موقعیت‌های هستم که تا جایی که ممکن است متون انگلیسی بخوانم.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	I have clear goals for improving my English skills. من اهداف مشخصی جهت ارتقای مهارت‌های زبانی خود دارم.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	I think about my progress in learning English. من در مورد پیشرفت خود در زبان تفکر می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
SECTION E						
39.	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English. هر وقت در به کار بردن انگلیسی احساس ترس دارم، سعی می‌کنم خونسرد باشم.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake. من خودم رو تشویق به انگلیسی حرف زدن می‌کنم حتی زمانی که ترس از اشتباه کردن داشته باشم.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English. هر وقت در انگلیسی خوب عمل می‌کنم به پاداش به خودم میدم یا خودمو مهمون می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	I notice when I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English. هنگام مطالعه یا استفاده از انگلیسی، هر گاه عصبی میشوم، به آن واقفم.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary. من احساسات خود را در دفترچه زبان خود یادداشت می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English. من در مورد اینکه به هنگام یادگیری چه حسی دارم با شخص دیگری صحبت می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION F

45.	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down and say it again. وقتی متوجه مطلبی نمیشوم از طرف مقابلم می‌خواهم آهسته تر صحبت کند یا دوباره بگوید.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk. من از انگلیسی زبانها می‌خواهم هنگامی که من حرف می‌زنم، اشتباهات مرا اصلاح کنند.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	I practice English with other students. من با دیگر دانش آموزان انگلیسی تمرین می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	I ask for help from others who can speak English well. از کسانی که خوب می‌توانند انگلیسی حرف بزنند کمک می‌گیرم.	1	2	3	4	5
49.	I ask questions in English. من به انگلیسی سوال می‌پرسم. (در کلاس)	1	2	3	4	5
50.	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers. من سعی می‌کنم در مورد فرهنگ انگلیسی زبانها یاد بگیرم.	1	2	3	4	5

Examining High-intermediate Japanese EFL Learners' Perception of Recasts: Revisiting Repair, Acknowledgement and Noticing through Stimulated Recall

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Abstract

This study examined three high-intermediate Japanese university students' perception of recasts. The learners were engaged in an interview test in which recasts were given. Stimulated recall interviews were conducted after the interview test. The analysis of the stimulated recall found that in most cases of repair, which is correct reformulation of an error occurring immediately after recasts, learners noticed the recasts and that when they responded to recasts via verbal or non-verbal acknowledgement, such as "yes," "mm", or nodding, noticing rarely occurred. In addition, it was found that the learners were less likely to have noticed recasts when they failed to respond to them. The results suggested that a frequency count of learner repair after recasts is a valid measurement of their effectiveness. The analysis of comments obtained through the stimulated recall partially implied that learners mainly used their explicit knowledge in noticing recasts to repair their initial problematic utterances.

Keywords: noticing; stimulated recall; uptake; repair, acknowledgment

Introduction

Recasts are the most frequently used feedback in classroom settings, and previous studies counted learners' correct reformulation of an error occurring immediately after recasts as a "repair" in measuring the effectiveness of recasts (e.g., Lyster, 1998a; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). However, Long (2006) argues that recasts do not always have immediate corrective effects and that learners' immediate reproduction after recasts is unreliable as an indication of learning.

Learners often respond to recasts via verbal or non-verbal acknowledgement, such as "yes," "mm", or nodding. Previous studies categorized these learners' acknowledgments as "needs-

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repair”, not “repair” (e.g., Lyster, 1998a; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). However, it can be argued that acknowledgement of the teacher’s correct version may mean that learners noticed the gap between what they said and what they really wanted to say, understanding that the teacher’s recast is better than the learners’ initial erroneous utterance, or at least they must have learned that their utterance was incorrect (Kim & Han, 2007). We consequently cannot judge whether “noticing” has actually happened when learners repair or acknowledge after recasts. The present study investigates the occurrence of noticing when learners repair, repeat the same error or make another error, fail to respond to the recasts, or acknowledge the recasts. This would offer suggestions on whether repair can be counted as a valid measurement of recast effectiveness, and whether acknowledgement can be regarded as a favorable response to recasts in that it accompanies noticing.

Background

Recasts

Recasts are the most frequently used feedback in classroom settings and are defined as the teachers’ provision of corrective reformulation for all or part of the learners’ ill-formed utterances (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). The following is an example of a recast from the current study:

Example 1

Student 1: I like childs very much.

Researcher: Oh, you like children very much. ← *recast*

Student 1: Yes. I like children very much, so I wanted to teach them how to play the piano.

Researcher: Did you actually do it?

In Example 1 immediately after the researcher provided a recast, the student repaired her initial error or mistake¹ and they continued talking. This learner response after recasts is termed as repair, and repair is generally regarded as evidence of the effectiveness of recasts in previous studies (e.g., Egi, 2007; Loewen & Nabei, 2007; Loewen & Philp, 2006; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Philp, 2003): This is based on the point of view of cognitive interactionists in second language acquisition (SLA) that the learners’ comprehensible input in the form of recast is integrated into their interlanguage, enabling them to repair previous erroneous utterances (e.g., Gass, 1997; Loewen, 2005; Long, 1996; McDonough, 2005).

Some researchers have paid particular attention to recasts in the Japanese EFL situation. For example, Muranoi (2000) investigated how recasts benefit the acquisition of English articles

in a quasi-experimental study with college-level students in Japan, and found that recasts helped the development of learners' interlanguage, both in written and oral tests. Loewen and Nabei (2007), who examined how different types of feedback (i.e., clarification requests, metalinguistic clues and recasts) affect university students' interlanguage development, concluded that recasts are effective for learning in that they can lead learners to repair as frequently as other types of feedback.

However, some researchers have pointed out problems with recasts. Chaudron (1988) argues that, from a learner's perspective, recasts are ambiguous as corrective feedback, leading learners to perceive recasts as merely alternatives, not modification. Recasts can also be perceived as confirmation, paraphrase or correction (Lyster, 1998a, 2007). Saville-Troike (2006) states that recasts, which are indirect correction, might seem to be paraphrasing learner's utterances when they are actually correcting elements of language use. Thus, it has been concluded that it is difficult for L2 learners to notice the corrective intention of recasts (e.g., Lyster, 2004; Varnosfadrani & Basturkmen, 2009).

Researchers argue that learners have to notice the corrective intention of recasts by attending to the linguistic problems in their initial utterances so that recasts can be effective for learning (e.g., Gass, 1997; Schmidt, 1990). This means when learners notice the gap between their erroneous utterance and the recast, learning can occur (Schmidt, 1990). In the example above, it can be interpreted that the student noticed the gap between what she produced as "childs" and corrective input, or recast, "children", leading her to repair it.

Measuring the effects of recasts

Uptake

In evaluating the effectiveness of recasts, a number of previous studies (e.g., Egi, 2010; Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Lyster & Ranta, 1997) have examined uptake, which is defined as learners' immediate response that constitutes a reaction to a recast (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). The rationale for the use of uptake is closely linked with Schmidt's (1990) noticing hypothesis, which states that attention is necessary for language acquisition to occur. In the previous studies, uptake is coded as repair when learners correctly reformulate their original errors immediately after a recast, as is shown in Example 1. In the following example from the current study, the student failed to correct his error after a recast is given.

Example 2

Student 2: I was belonged to the ESS club.

Researcher: You belonged to the club. ←*recast*

Student 2: Yes. I was. I had a lot of friends.

In the previous studies, uptake is coded as needs-repair when repair is still needed in the learner's response as is shown in Example 2, whereas previous studies counted learners' repair in measuring the effectiveness of recasts (e.g., Lyster, 1998b; Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

However, Long (2006) expressed skepticism towards the use of repair counts in measuring the effectiveness of recasts, and Mackey and Philp (1998) showed that the existence of immediate response to feedback was not necessarily an indication of learning, and also that the absence of an immediate response did not necessarily mean learning had not occurred. Lyster (1998b) also acknowledged Mackey and Philp's (1998) point that equating learner uptake with L2 learning is not warranted. Long concludes that recasts do not always have immediate corrective effect, and that learners' immediate reproduction after recasts is unreliable as an indication of learning. Some other researchers are also cautious about the interpretation of uptake because of the possibility that learners can just repeat the recasts in a parrot-like fashion without understanding their corrective intention (e.g., Bao et al., 2011; Egi, 2010; Gass, 2003). In addition, it has been reported previously, both in laboratory and classroom settings, that learners could not respond only because interlocutors often did not provide opportunities for learners to repair their utterances (e.g., Loewen & Philp, 2006; Oliver, 1995; Sato, 2009; Zhao & Bitchener, 2007). We could assume, as Oliver (1995) has argued, that if students had been given the opportunity to respond, some of them could have repaired successfully.

Acknowledgement

Learners often respond to recasts via verbal or non-verbal acknowledgement, such as "yes," "mm", or nodding. These learners' acknowledgments were categorized as "needs-repair" not "repair", in previous studies (e.g., Lyster & Ranta, 1997). However, acknowledgement of the teacher's correct version can mean an indication of what the learner really wanted to say, and understanding that the teacher's version is better than the learner's erroneous utterance. Even if learners fail to repair their erroneous utterances after recast, they may have made a cognitive comparison between the utterances, or at least understood the feedback given. Pica (1988) states that agreeing with or replying to a recast by simply saying "yes" is more appropriate than repairing, and suggests a non-native speaker's (NNSs) response to a native speaker's (NSs) feedback, other than acknowledgement, would be conversationally inappropriate. Sato and Lyster (2007) also add that it is appropriate for learners to simply acknowledge recasts so that they would not interrupt the flow of the conversation. As Kim and Han (2007) have suggested when students acknowledged a recast, they may not have known which part of their utterance was wrong, but at least they must have learned that their utterance was

incorrect. We could also assume that learners have noticed corrective intention of recasts when they have acknowledged them.

Repair can be “evidence that learners are noticing the feedback” (Lightbown, 2000, p. 447), but the absence of a repair does not always mean learners’ noticing has not occurred: even when they failed to repair by producing the same error, another error, acknowledging or showing no response, learners could have noticed recasts.

Noticing elicited through stimulated recall

In general, learners’ repair of their initial errors immediately after recasts has been counted in evaluating the effectiveness of recasts. However, as mentioned earlier, the validity and reliability of this approach can be questioned (e.g., Bao et al., 2011; Egi, 2010; Gass, 2003; Lightbown, 2000; Oliver, 1995). Another approach for the evaluation of the effectiveness of recasts focuses on learners’ cognitive processes when they are provided with recasts. Stimulated recall is a retrospective method to elicit the thought processes involved in carrying out an activity (Gass & Mackey, 2000). By using a stimulus, such as an audio or a video recording, learners are asked to report what they were thinking at the time of the activity. This approach of eliciting learners’ commentaries as evidence of noticing in oral interaction has been used in previous studies (e.g., Bao et al., 2011; Egi, 2008, 2010; Yoshida, 2010).

Egi (2010) explored the relationship between uptake and noticing by using the stimulated recall approach. In her laboratory study, 24 Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) learners were engaged in task-based interactions in which they were provided recasts of their problematic utterances. After that, each of the learners watched a video recording of recast episodes and reported what they were thinking when the recasts were provided. The analysis of the stimulated recall reports revealed that learners who perceived that the recasts had corrective intention were more likely to produce uptake after recasts. In addition, learners who correctly repaired their errors, not only noticed the corrective intention of recasts but the gap between errors and the model provided in the form of the recasts, more than those who did not correctly repair errors. Egi cautiously states that uptake, especially repair, can indicate learners’ noticing of recasts, but that even when learners do not notice, they can repair, or, conversely, even when learners notice, they may not be able to repair. This is consistent with Bao et al. (2011) who summarizes that the rate of noticing is higher when it is measured by stimulated recall than when measured by learner uptake.

Yoshida (2010) investigated perceptions of corrective feedback using audio recordings and stimulated recalls of seven university JFL learners and two university JFL teachers. In the study, it was observed that recasts were more frequently provided than any other types of

feedback such as metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, explicit correction and repetition. Learners successfully repaired after 52% of recasts and did not respond to 13% of recasts. Analysis of the stimulated recall interviews revealed that when learners repaired after recasts, 25 out of 48 learners noticed recasts as realizing corrective intention, or found the gap between their initial production and the recast. However, noticing did not always happen when learners acknowledged recasts (10 out of 48 instances). Yoshida concludes that learners' responses to corrective feedback do not always indicate noticing or understanding of the corrective feedback. Although noticing did not always accompany acknowledgement or inquiry in Yoshida (2010), these two studies indicate that counting learner repair in measuring the effectiveness of recasts may be valid.

As these previous studies (e.g., Egi, 2010; Yoshida, 2010) were conducted with JFL learners, it is necessary to also examine whether Japanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners actually notice recasts when they repair. In addition, it is crucial to examine learners' noticing when they fail to repair correctly, did respond, or acknowledge recasts, as well as their perceptions of recasts as it has implications for the measurement of the effectiveness of recasts. Furthermore, noticing of recasts by advanced level Japanese learners has not been well researched yet. With this background, the following research questions have been formulated for this study:

Does noticing occur when learners: 1) repair, 2) repeat the same error or make another error (needs-repair), 3) fail to respond to the recasts (no uptake), or 4) acknowledge the recasts (acknowledgement)?

In addition to quantitative analysis, comments obtained through the stimulated recall are qualitatively analyzed.

Method

Participants

Kanako, Yuki, and Kouki (all names are pseudonyms), who were in the same national university of education in Japan, participated in the study. Kanako was a graduate student majoring in music who also held an English teaching license. In the same year, before the study was conducted (September, 2011), she had studied English teaching methodologies in Canada for 6 months. Yuki was a senior majoring in English education who had studied abroad at an American university for 10 months, from September 2010 to July 2011. Kouki, who was majoring in English education, had studied at a South Korean university for 10 months, from September 2010 to July 2011. He decided to study abroad in Korea because he

wanted to learn a different Asian culture, which he thought would be useful in teaching English at Japanese junior high schools. At that university, he took a lot of English medium classes with other international students, and used both English and Korean in his daily life there.

All participants had already passed the pre-first grade of the STEP Test² and were preparing to take the first grade of the STEP Test at the time of the study. As they also had no problem communicating in English, they can be regarded as, at least, high-intermediate learners of English. The breakdown of the participants in the study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Breakdown of the Students

Name	Major	Age	Gender	English Proficiency	Study Abroad Experience
Kanako	Music	23	F	pre-first grade STEP Test	Canada (6 months)
Yuki	English	22	F	pre-first grade STEP Test	America (10 months)
Kouki	English	22	M	pre-first grade STEP Test	South Korea(10 months)

The researcher is a male Japanese teacher of English with more than 20 years of professional experience.

Procedure

The study involved two sessions conducted privately in the researcher's office. Both sessions were recorded by both a digital video camera and an audio recorder. The first was a one-to-one interaction between the student and the researcher. After L2 small talk aimed at easing tension while creating a comfortable atmosphere, students were engaged in the session. The first task of the first session was a picture description activity adopted from the pre-first grade STEP Test (see Appendix). In the activity, students were given a horizontal sequence of four pictures, and were required to describe the story depicted. The second task of the first session was a semi-structured interview in English in which the researcher asked questions about the students' study abroad experience, as well as their daily life, covering topics such as hobbies, study, family, and future dreams. Several hours after the first session, stimulated recall interviews were conducted in Japanese. All recordings were transcribed and re-checked by the author to ensure their accuracy. Additionally, in a limited number of cases where there were unresolved transcription difficulties, individual participants were invited to help interpret the results.

Table 2.*Sequence of Procedures*

	First session	Second session
	Oral tasks (Picture description, Interview)	Stimulated recall
Kanako	44 minutes long (from 9:30, September, 30, 2011)	62 minutes (from 16:00)
Yuki	36 minutes long (from 10:00, October, 4, 2011)	44 minutes long (from 16:00)
Kouki	40 minutes long (from 9:00, October, 26, 2011)	51 minutes long (from 16:00)

Provision of Recasts

In the majority of the previous studies, recasts were provided intensively for learners' erroneous productions of pre-selected target forms. However, as recasts are "by far the most frequently used feedback across a spectrum of classroom settings" (Lyster, 2007, p. 93), it is clear that they are provided to a wide range of problematic learner utterances in natural classroom settings. It can be argued that pre-selecting target forms for intensive recasts in research settings may not be of high significance for practicing teachers seeking implications for actual teaching (Ellis & Sheen, 2006). In the current study, therefore, there was no target focus in providing recasts. They were provided extensively and randomly depending mainly on the researcher's common sense intuitions and experience as is usually done in EFL classroom settings.

Regarding their characteristics, the recasts provided in the study met all of the following criteria: (a) they were provided immediately after participants' erroneous productions; (b) they were repetitions of all or part of the participants' initial utterances, plus reformulations of students' erroneous productions; (c) and they did not add or change any information from the participants' initial target-like utterances, except for pronouns. After all of the recasts, the participants were given opportunities to respond. In addition to the recasts, prompts (i.e., clarification requests, repetitions, metalinguistic clues and elicitation) and explicit correction were also given, as is usually done in EFL classroom settings.

Stimulated Recall

In the afternoon, after completion of the first session (see, Table 2), the stimulated recall interview was conducted as previous studies suggest that learners can recall recent activity more accurately (e.g., Egi, 2008). The stimulated recall was carried out in the students' L1, Japanese, because the information they were asked to deliver was complex (e.g., Nabei & Swain, 2002). Before the interview, students were given the following recall instruction,

which was adapted from previous studies (e.g., Egi, 2004, 2008).

You are going to watch a video tape of the conversation session we had. While the video is playing, I will occasionally pause the tape. When I pause the video, tell me in Japanese what you were thinking during the clip you just saw. I'm interested in what you were thinking about at the time the video was taken. Please try to recall what you were thinking about at the time the video was taken not what you are thinking about now as you watch the video. If you do not remember what you were thinking at the time, you can say "I don't remember". *(Translated into English by the author)*

These instructions were given verbally in Japanese, after which participants received a brief training in stimulated recall using the video of the small talk at the start of the first session. The video was paused after any recasts, other types of feedback, and after some correct utterances randomly selected as distracters (Al-Surmi, 2012; Egi, 2008). The picture used in the picture description activity was also presented to the students to facilitate recall of thoughts (Al-Surmi, 2012; Egi, 2008). The interviewer listened passively to the participants' recall without being a conversational partner who could ask leading questions (Egi, 2008; Gass & Mackey, 2000). The whole session was audio and video taped, and all recordings were transcribed and re-checked by the author to ensure their accuracy.

Data Analyses

Coding

Learners' responses after recasts were categorized based on previous studies (e.g., Egi, 2010; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Uptake Types and Definitions

Uptake type	Definitions
Repair	The learner successfully corrected the original error after the recast.
Needs-repair	The learner repeated the same error or made another error after the recast.
No uptake	The learner did not show any response following the recast.
Acknowledgement	The learner simply acknowledged the recast. (e.g., by saying "yes", "no", "I see" or by nodding.)

In Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Egi (2010), acknowledgment was included in the category of needs-repair. In this study, however, acknowledgement was coded as an independent category. Learners' perception was coded as "noticing" when learners' comments obtained through the recall indicated that they had recognized the corrective intention of recasts and attended to the linguistic problems of their initial utterances. (e.g. "The teacher said "the child" and I realized I mistakenly used the plural form.") (Gass, 1997; Schmidt, 1990). As long as the comment implied that noticing had happened, even in a situation when a learner did not show repair after being given a recast, it was coded as noticing. This is based on Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990, 2001), which suggests that learning occurs when learners notice the gap between what they produced and the recasts received. The rest of the cases, in which they did not recognize the corrective intention of recasts or attend to their linguistic problems, were coded as "no-noticing."

The coding was conducted by the researcher using the transcriptions, and redone a week after the first classification. This method of classification follows Alderson, Clapham and Wall (1995), who assert that multiple rating sessions increase the reliability of rating. Where there were four cases of discrepancies between the two ratings, a second rater, a male graduate student majoring in English education, was invited to rate them. After discussion between the author and the second rater, the disagreement was resolved.

Statistical analyses

In addition to reporting the raw frequencies and percentages, univariate and bivariate chi-square statistics were conducted to examine whether there were statistical differences in frequencies. Due to the small sample data, an effect size analysis was employed in order to interpret the data more accurately. Values of effect sizes of "w" (univariate) and "φ" (bivariate) were interpreted as follows: small ($0.1 < w, \phi < 0.3$); medium ($0.3 < w, \phi < 0.5$); large ($0.5 < w, \phi$), following Cohen (1988).

Results and Discussion

The interaction between the researcher and each of the participants in this study lasted 120 minutes in total and resulted in a total of 70 recasts. Thirty-four of them (49%) were followed by repair, 9 (13%) resulted in needs-repair, 15 (21%) in no uptake, and 12 (17%) were followed by acknowledgement. Table 4 summarizes the raw frequencies of repair, needs-repair, no uptake and acknowledgement by each person.

Table 4*Raw Frequencies of Repair, Needs-repair, No uptake and Acknowledgement*

	Recast	Repair	Needs-repair	No uptake	Acknowledgement
Kanako	25	13	4	4	4
Yuki	15	7	2	4	2
Kouki	30	14	3	7	6
Total	70	34(49%)	9(13%)	15(21%)	12(17%)

The research questions asked whether noticing occurred when learners 1) repaired, 2) repeated the same error or made another error (needs-repair), 3) failed to respond to the recasts (no uptake), or 4) acknowledged the recasts (acknowledgement). Table 5 shows the raw frequencies of repair, needs-repair, no uptake and acknowledgement with the frequencies of noticing and no noticing.

Table 5*Raw Frequencies of Repair, Needs-repair, No uptake and Acknowledgement with the Frequencies of Noticing (N) and No noticing (Nn).*

	Recast	Repair		Needs -repair		No uptake		Acknowledgement	
		N	Nn	N	Nn	N	Nn	N	Nn
Kanako	25	10	3	0	4	1	3	1	3
Yuki	15	5	2	0	2	0	4	0	2
Kouki	30	12	2	0	3	2	5	0	6
Total	70	27	7	0	9	3	12	1	11

To calculate the percentage of noticing in cases of repair, needs-repair, no uptake and acknowledgement, each of the frequencies for the three students were combined. This measurement was regarded as valid, as their English learning backgrounds and English proficiencies were not so different. Table 6 summarizes the percentages of noticing of repair, needs-repair, no uptake and acknowledgement.

Table 6*Percentages of Noticing of Repair, No uptake and Acknowledgement*

	Repair		Needs-Repair		No Uptake		Acknowledgement	
Total	34		9		15		12	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Noticing	27	79%	0	0%	3	20%	1	8%

The results show that 79% of repairs were accompanied by noticing, and even when there was no uptake, 20% of these cases were noticed by participants. Only one case of acknowledgement (8%) was reported noticed, and there was no noticing in the case of needs-repair.

The research questions were motivated by the desire to establish a valid measurement of the effectiveness of recasts. To examine whether counting repair is a valid measurement of the effectiveness of recasts (e.g., Lyster, 1998a; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), we looked at whether statistically significant noticing happened when participants repaired. Out of 34 cases of repair, noticing happened in 27 cases, and in 7 cases it did not happen. The result of a binomial test showed a p-value smaller than 0.05 ($p = .00$), which indicates there was a statistically significant difference between them, confirming that learners' repairs were closely related to noticing. This implies that when learners repair their initial errors after recasts, it is significantly more likely that they noticed the recasts.

In the study, 70 recasts were provided among which 34 of them were repaired and 36 were not repaired. As for noticing, 31 were noticed and 39 were unnoticed. To examine whether the effectiveness of recasts measured by repair and noticing are different, we looked at whether there was a statistically significant difference in frequencies between repair and noticing (repair, 34/70, noticing, 31/70). Chi-square analysis revealed that there was not a statistically significant difference between them with a small effect size, $\chi^2(1) = 0.26$, $p = .74$, $\phi = .04$, meaning that the frequencies of repair and noticing were not statistically different. The result was compatible with Egi (2010), which showed that when learners successfully repaired their errors after recasts, they were more likely to have noticed the corrective intention of the recasts.

The high noticing rate in repair may be attributed to the fact that students are learning English in an EFL environment in which accuracy is regarded as crucial (e.g., Yoshida, 2002). Such learners are highly motivated to get high scores on written tests, which primarily measure accurate grammatical and lexical knowledge of English rather than communicative language ability (e.g., Sato, 2010; Yashima, Zenuck-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). In a stimulated recall interview, one student clearly mentioned that she felt it important to revise her initial utterance in the correct form if she noticed errors after recasts.

In the case of needs-repair, noticing did not occur even once. This is incompatible with Egi (2010), who mentions that learners' perceptions were not so different regardless of success or failure in repairing, in reference to Swain's (2005) assertion that the process of producing

output itself facilitates L2 learning. Previous studies found that opportunities of modified output themselves can let learners notice their linguistic problems and test hypotheses about the target forms, contributing to the development of L2 accuracy (e.g., McDonough, 2005; McDonough & Mackey, 2006). In the current study, however, students may not have benefitted from producing output in needs-repair cases because they did not perceive the recasts at all. It can be argued that they repeated the same errors or made different ones because they did not recognize the corrective intention of recasts without being able to attend to the linguistic problems of their initial utterances. The result implies that “it is not simply the presence of uptake but rather the quality of uptake that is important” (Loewen, 2005, p. 382). As Loewen (2005) states, we can argue that it is needed for learners to produce correct linguistic items for their language development.

As for the 15 instances of no uptake, noticing occurred three times (20%). The frequencies between noticing (three instances) and no noticing (12 instances) were found via a binomial test, to have a statistically significant difference between them ($p=.03$), which means that when learners did not notice recasts, uptake was less likely to have happened. This supports Egi (2010), which reported that learners were significantly less likely to have noticed recasts in no uptake cases compared to repair cases.

The following are examples of noticing recasts and the participants’ recall in the stimulated recall interview.

Excerpt 1 (Kanakano)

Kanakano: The children don’t go outside to play with his friends.

Researcher: The child?

Kanakano: Yes. The child don’t, doesn’t go outside.

Kanakano’s recall:

The teacher said “the child”, and I realized I had mistakenly used the plural form³.

Excerpt 2 (Yuki)

Yuki: I changed a little bit and knew a lot of things.

Researcher: Oh, you learned a lot of things.

Yuki: I learned a lot in America.

Yuki's recall

When I heard the teacher saying "learned", I remembered that in expressing movement or action, "learn" is better than "know". I realized I should have used "learned" not "knew".

In Excerpt 1, Kanako pointed out and analyzed her error, and in Excerpt 2, Yuki explicitly explained the difference in the meanings between "learned" and "knew", which imply they used explicit knowledge, the conscious knowledge about language that learners can potentially verbalize (e.g., Ellis, 2003). As these above excerpts show, when students noticed recasts and successfully corrected their problematic initial utterances, in 24 out of 31 cases their comments implied they had used their learned or partially learned explicit knowledge. Such deduction is valid, if we refer to, for example, Krashen (1985), who points out that L2 learners can monitor their own production consciously by using their explicit knowledge. This would suggest the importance of explicit knowledge in noticing recasts. However, as repair was successfully done seven times, even without noticing reported, the participants might have also used implicit knowledge, which is the intuitive knowledge of language (e.g., Ellis, 2003), in repairing their initial errors after recasts.

In the next excerpt, Yuki did not understand the recast at all.

Excerpt 3 (Yuki)

Yuki: The Spanish student was a troublemaker. We every... often, we often fight with her.

Researcher: Oh, you often fought with her.

Yuki: Yes. Fought with her.

Yuki's recall; I didn't know why the teacher said, "You often fought with her." I don't know why but I just said what the teacher said.

In this excerpt, Yuki just automatically repeated the recast even though she did not know that the past form of "fight" is "fought".⁴ As is shown in this excerpt, there are still repair cases for which learners did not notice the recasts, which is pointed out in the previous studies (e.g., Egi, 2010; Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen, 2001). Further study is thus needed to focus on the roles of different types of knowledge in repairing.

As for the issue of whether acknowledgement can be regarded as a favorable response in the process of learning (Sato, 2009), out of 12 cases of acknowledgement, noticing occurred only once. A binomial test discerned a statistically significant difference in the frequencies between acknowledgement with noticing and without noticing ($p = .00$), meaning that when learners acknowledged it, it was significantly less likely that they noticed the recasts. Excerpt 4 is the

only example of acknowledgement accompanied by noticing.

Excerpt 4 (Kouki)

Kouki: I enjoyed a lot of culture event.

Researcher: Enjoyed a lot of cultural events.

Kouki. Yes. I learned a lot.

Kouki's recall: I found I had made a mistake when the teacher said "cultural events." I don't know why I didn't correct my mistake but I should have done it.

Although he did not repair after he noticed the recast, his comment implies he believes he should correct his errors or mistakes when he notices them.

In the remaining 11 cases, noticing did not happen. The following is one example.

Excerpt 5 (Kouki)

Kouki: My Korean friends should ask the question before the discussion.

Researcher: They should have asked about it.

Kouki: (nodding) And we could talk more.

Kouki's recall: I thought the teacher wanted confirm his understanding. But now I understand I made a mistake.

These excerpts and comments imply learners tend to repair not acknowledge if they identify the corrective intention of recasts. As previously mentioned, it may be more likely that students correct their initial errors or mistakes if they actually notice recasts. We can interpret that when learners just acknowledge recasts by saying "yes," "mm", or nodding, they are less likely to have noticed them.

Conclusion

This study investigated learners' noticing of recasts to discern a valid measurement of the effectiveness of recasts. It can be assumed that the findings of the study provide support for the claim that counting repair is a valid measurement of the effectiveness of recasts, while mere acknowledgement is not. Although this may be speculation, the participants' comments obtained through stimulated recall suggest the importance of explicit knowledge of the items which recasts target so that learners can successfully repair their initial problematic utterances.

The results of the study can offer some pedagogical implications. EFL teachers can regard

students' repair after the provision of recasts as a sign of noticing. In cases when students failed to respond or just acknowledged, it can be regarded as a sign of the lack of noticing, and so teachers may have to provide recasts again or can give more explicit feedback, such as explicit correction, elicitation or meta-linguistic feedback, so that students can notice and repair their errors. Considering the crucial role of explicit knowledge in noticing recasts, EFL teachers may have to create a learning environment where EFL learners can learn explicit knowledge first. After acquiring or partially acquiring the knowledge, learners can effectively be engaged in interaction in which recasts are provided: Learners would be more likely to notice and correct their errors by using explicit knowledge.

The results of the current study should be, however, considered cautiously. In concluding that counting repair is a valid measurement for the effectiveness of recasts, it is arguable that the results of the statistical analyses just showed that learners' repair was significantly related to the existence of noticing, without strongly supporting the conclusion. Furthermore, although this is beyond the scope of this study, there is the fundamental question of what constitutes effectiveness of recasts. It can be arbitrary to equate learning with noticing since L2 learning can sometimes be unconscious or implicit. Finally, the number of the participants was admittedly small. It can be argued that individual differences, such as proficiency level, working memory capacity, grammatical sensitivity, and motivation can interact with learners' ability to notice recasts (e.g., Revesz, 2012; Sagarra & Abbuhl, 2013; Yilmaz, 2013). As this case study was conducted only with high-intermediate Japanese EFL learners, future studies should be conducted with more participants of different English proficiency levels who are learning in different EFL environments. If further investigation supports the findings and analyses of the results presented herein, recasts may become more effectively utilized in EFL environments.

Notes

1. Ellis (1997) explains that errors occur because the learner does not know what is correct and that mistakes occur when the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows. In this study, however, distinction between the two cannot be made because each student's detailed developmental levels in English are not fully examined due to practical constraints.
2. The STEP Test is an English proficiency test conducted by a Japanese non-profit organization, the Society for Testing English Proficiency, Inc. (STEP), and backed by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). The test consists of listening and writing sections followed by a speaking test, and has been generally regarded as one of the most reliable and valid English proficiency tests in Japan.

MEXT requires Japanese teachers of English to possess pre-first grade scores on the STEP test. Although there is no official comparison to other types of tests, pre-first grade can be considered almost equal as 550 points in TOEFL (PBT) and 730 points in TOEIC, because MEXT requires teachers to possess pre-first grade in the STEP test or 550 points in TOEFL (PBT) or 730 points in TOEIC.

3. The original comments in the stimulated recall were all in Japanese.
4. This was confirmed in the interview.

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Appendix

Picture description activity of the pre-first grade STEP Test

(The first second-stage interview test, conducted in 2007)

問題カードA

この問題カードは切り取って、本書の面接の練習用に使ってください。
質問は本文P47にありますので、参考にしてください。

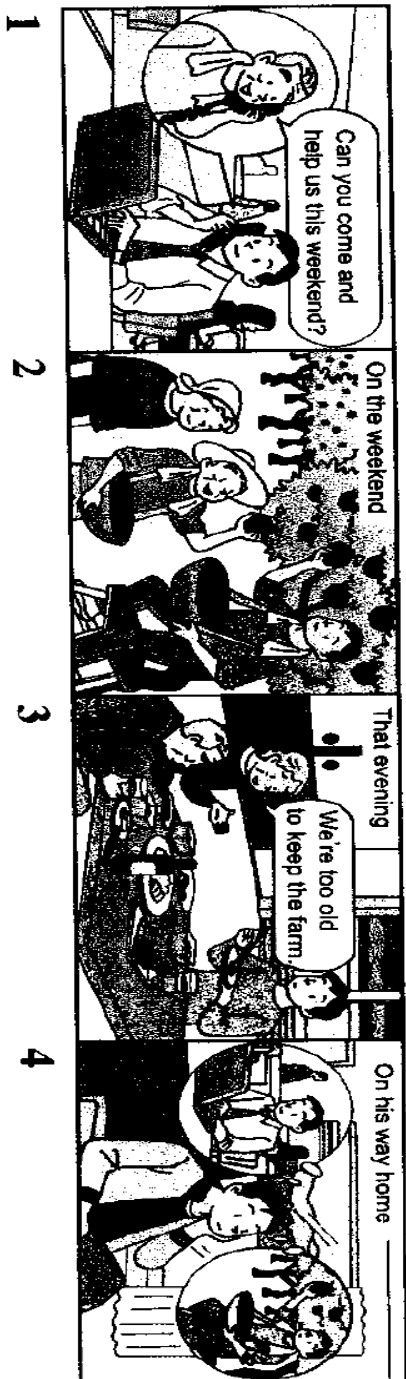
You have **one minute** to prepare.

This is a story about a young businessman whose elderly parents ran an apple farm.

You have **two minutes** to narrate the story.

Your story should begin with the following sentence:

One evening, a young businessman was working in his office.



Developmental Patterns of Interlanguage Pragmatics in Taiwanese EFL Learners: Compliments and Compliment Responses

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Bio Data:

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Abstract

This study investigated Taiwanese English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' developmental patterns of pragmatic transfer in the speech acts of giving and responding to compliments. By so doing, the study examined the validity of a well-known hypothesis, which has often been misunderstood, in second language (L2) pragmatics research. The corpus of the study involved 249 participants: 132 Taiwanese learners of English in Taiwan (TET), 85 Taiwanese speaking Chinese in Taiwan (TCT), and 32 American native speakers of English in the United States (AEA). A Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was used to collect the TET's interlanguage pragmatics data and the TCT's and AEA's normative data. The results indicated that the Taiwanese EFL learners' developmental patterns of pragmatic transfer supported the "bell curve" hypothesis by Takahashi and Beebe (1987). Furthermore, the study also found: (1) compared with the AEA, both the TET and TCT were more likely to ask questions when giving compliments; and (2) in addition to L2 proficiency levels, the types and contents of semantic formulas (e.g., culture-specific vs. structure-based) affect the developmental patterns of pragmatic transfer.

Keywords: developmental interlanguage pragmatics, pragmatic transfer, compliments, compliment responses

Introduction

Over the past several decades, researchers have investigated the nature of pragmatic transfer, using various types of speech acts, including requests (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1987), refusals (e.g., Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Chang, 2009; Gass & Houck, 1999), apologies (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Chang,

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2010), complaints (e.g., Olshtain & Weinbach, 1987), corrections (e.g., Takahashi & Beebe, 1993), disagreements (e.g., Beebe & Takahashi, 1989a, 1989b), and compliments (e.g., Cheng, 2011). In the mid-1980s, for instance, Beebe et al. (1990) conducted a study that examined the communicative competence of Japanese learners of English performing the speech act of making refusals in English. They compared refusals by Japanese speaking English in the U.S. (JEA) with refusals by Americans speaking English in the U.S. (AEA) and by Japanese speaking Japanese in Japan (JJJ). The study involved 60 participants completing a Discourse Completion Test (DCT), a written role-play questionnaire. The results showed that pragmatic transfer from Japanese did affect JEA's speech act performance in terms of the order, frequency, and tone of the semantic formulas—i.e., the potential components of the utterance used for completing a speech act.

In addition to examining pragmatic transfer in different speech acts, Takahashi and Beebe (1987) began investigating the developmental pragmatic competence of Japanese learners of English. Their study involved 80 participants, including 20 native Japanese speakers using Japanese, 20 native English speakers using English, 20 Japanese learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), and 20 Japanese learners of English as a second language (ESL). Within EFL and ESL contexts, half of the students were identified as higher L2 (second language) proficiency and the other half as lower L2 proficiency. Data were collected through a DCT. The results showed that pragmatic transfer appeared in both contexts—EFL and ESL—and proficiency levels. Furthermore, the ESL students with higher proficiency were more likely to be influenced by pragmatic transfer than those with lower proficiency. The researchers suggested that the developmental patterns of pragmatic transfer would reflect a skewed bell curve. According to their explanation, with low English proficiency, learners cannot transfer their L1 (first language) knowledge to L2. As their proficiency levels rise and they gain more control over L2, transfer increases. As their knowledge of the target language (TL) along with their cultural proficiency keeps rising, learners transfer less. To be clear, here is what Takahashi and Beebe suggested:

[Lower] proficiency learners lack the fluency in English to fall into the negative transfer trap . . . [They] may not be able to encode translations of socioculturally appropriate Japanese patterns. They will have to resort to a simplification strategy. More advanced learners, however, will be able to encode English phrases that reflect Japanese norms of politeness, or perhaps indirectness. Thus transfer will be possible. With very advanced learners, the amount of transfer will again decrease because they will reach near native

ability in the second language. In sum, we expect a skewed bell curve as the developmental pattern for pragmatic transfer. (1987, p. 137)

Their study results indicated that “higher proficiency ESL learners were more subject to native language transfer than lower proficiency learners...[because] their fluency gave them ‘the rope to hang themselves with’” (p. 153). The researchers then anticipated “a skewed bell curve for level of transfer against a horizontal axis of increased L2 proficiency” and the peak of the curve to “fall at higher proficiency levels than [that] of the curve for phonological or morpho-syntactic transfer” (p. 153).

Takahashi and Beebe’s hypothesis was reasonable, even commonsensical, but it appears that over time the representation of that hypothesis became cloudy. The most obvious instantiation of such misrepresentation is that it came to be referred to as the “positive correlation hypothesis”. As clearly described above, however, Takahashi and Beebe’s hypothesis was neither a positive correlation nor a negative correlation pattern, but rather a combination of both—i.e., positive until a certain level of proficiency, then negative at an advanced level of proficiency.

In order to test the hypothesis set forth by Takahashi and Beebe (1987), a number of researchers began examining pragmatic transfer and the development of L2 learners by employing different speech acts such as requests and apologies (e.g., Bu, 2012; Chang, 2010; Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper, & Ross, 1996; Otçu & Zayrek, 2008; Sabaté i Dalmau & Curell i Gotor, 2007). These researchers have argued about whether pragmatic transfer increases or decreases as L2 proficiency advances. To counter argue Takahashi and Beebe’s hypothesis, while regarding it as “positive correlation” Kasper and Rose (2002) cited Maeshiba et al. (1996), whose results indicated a negative correlation pattern. Several other scholars also interpreted Takahashi and Beebe’s hypothesis as positive correlation, focusing only on the first half of the skewed bell curve but disregarding the second half (e.g., Allami & Montazeri, 2012; Bou-Franch, 2012; Bu, 2012; Chang, 2010; Eslami, 2010; Eslami & Noora, 2008; Hashemian, 2012). To illustrate the discrepancy, the skewed bell curve hypothesized by Takahashi and Beebe is presented graphically in Figure 1, in comparison with its modified diagram representing the misrepresented pattern labeled as the positive correlation hypothesis and the counter-argued negative correlation of Maeshiba et al. used by Kasper and Rose.

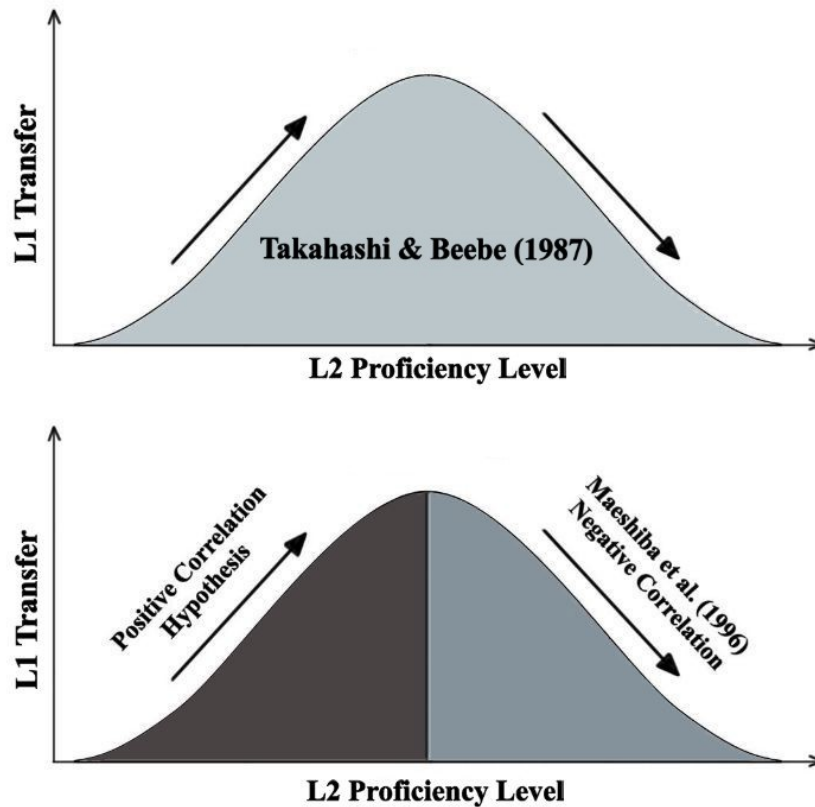


Figure 1. The often-misinterpreted relation between L2 proficiency level and the amount of L1 transfer concerning Takahashi and Beebe’s (1987) and other hypotheses

Compliments and Compliment Responses

In order to test the validity of Takahashi and Beebe’s “bell curve” hypothesis (1987), the present study examined Taiwanese EFL learners’ developmental patterns of pragmatic transfer in the speech acts of complimenting and responding to compliments. As defined by Holmes (1986), a compliment is “a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some ‘good’ (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer” (p. 485). The speech act of complimenting has been recognized as a complex and important speech act because it may create either positive feelings and harmonious relationships or face-threatening situations for interlocutors. As Holmes (1988) suggested, since compliments may serve as “positively affective speech acts, the most obvious function they serve is to oil the social wheels, paying attention to positive face wants and thus increasing or consolidating solidarity between people” (p. 462). Conversely, Yu (2003) suggested that because giving compliments is also an act of judgment, addressees might feel “uneasy, defensive, or even cynical” (p. 1687) about what and how to respond to the compliments they receive. Hence, the intricate

characteristics of compliments and compliment responses make the speech acts worthy of further research. More importantly, these particular speech acts were chosen for the present study because the act of complimenting is not as common in Chinese as in English (Yu, 2005), and when performed in Chinese, it would most likely display its own unique features that differ from that of those in English.

Pomerantz (1978) categorized compliment responses into two systems of constraints: acceptance/rejection and agreement/disagreement. Upon receiving a compliment such as “Your new hairstyle is so pretty,” an addressee may reply to the compliment with either of the systems. S/he may simply accept the compliment with a response “Thank you” or reject it with “No, I don’t think so.” S/he may also agree with the addresser by commenting, “I like it too,” or disagree by saying, “Do you really think so? I didn’t think the barber did a good job.” In addition to the compliment responses that fall into either of the two systems of constraints, Pomerantz described two complimenting “solution types,” including “praise downgrades” and “referent shifts.” In the former, addressees accepted/agreed with the received compliments but tried to avoid self-praise at the same time. This type of compliment solution may involve both agreement and disagreement in a compliment response. In the latter solution type, addressees subsequently praised others after receiving compliments. Examples of the two solution types (found in responses to a compliment “Your sweater is so pretty”) are listed below:

- (1) Praise downgrades:
 - (a) Agreement (e.g., *Isn’t it nice?*)
 - (b) Disagreement (e.g., *The quality is not that good though.*)

- (2) Referent shifts:
 - (a) Reassignment of praise (e.g., *My mother made it.*)
 - (b) Returns (e.g., *Yours looks nice, too!*)

Wolfson and Manes extensively researched Americans’ compliment behavior (Manes & Wolfson, 1981; Wolfson, 1981, 1983, 1984; Wolfson & Manes, 1980). In one study (Manes & Wolfson, 1981), for instance, the researchers and their students collected 686 compliments in everyday interactions from Charlottesville, VA, and Philadelphia, PA. The findings of the study suggested that even though 72 adjectives appeared in compliments made in English, five terms, “nice,” “good,” “beautiful,” “pretty,” and “great,” occurred in two-thirds of the compliments gathered. The most frequently used verbs were “like” and “love,” which occurred in 86% of all compliments. Manes and Wolfson also uncovered the three most employed syntactic formulas (53.6%, 16.1%, and 14.9%, respectively):

- (1) *NP is/looks (really) ADJ.* (e.g., *This is really cool.*)
- (2) *I (really) like/love NP.* (e.g., *I really like those shoes.*)
- (3) *PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP.* (e.g., *That was really a great meal.*) (1981, p. 120).

Following Manes and Wolfson's study (1981), Holmes (1986) analyzed 517 compliments and compliment responses collected from adult Pakeha (residents of European descent) New Zealanders, applying an ethnographic approach. She also included data from non-native English speakers to demonstrate cross-cultural differences in complimenting behaviors. The results of the study indicated that, regarding paying compliments, the majority of the Pakeha New Zealanders (41.4%) preferred using the formulas *NP BE (INT) ADJ* (e.g., *Your hair is really great.*) and *NP BE LOOKing (INT) ADJ* (e.g., *You're looking terrific.*). The formula *I (INT) LIKE NP* (e.g., *I simply love that skirt.*) was the next most frequently used formula with a frequency of 15.9%. Regarding the compliment responses, Holmes categorized them into three major types: accept, reject, and deflect/evade. Out of the 478 usable responses, 61.1% of them were acceptance of compliments. The deflect/evade response strategy (28.8%) was performed more often than the reject approach (10.0%). A list of responses to a compliment such as "What a beautiful jersey!" (Holmes, 1986, p. 492) is presented below:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| A. Accept | e.g., |
| 1. Appreciation/agreement token | <i>Thanks, yes, or smile.</i> |
| 2. Agreeing utterance | <i>I think it's lovely, too.</i> |
| 3. Downgrading/qualifying utterance | <i>It's not too bad, is it. [sic]</i> |
| 4. Return compliment | <i>You're looking good, too.</i> |
| B. Reject | |
| 1. Disagreeing utterance | <i>I'm afraid I don't like it much.</i> |
| 2. Question accuracy | <i>Is beautiful the right word?</i> |
| 3. Challenge sincerity | <i>You don't really mean that.</i> |
| C. Deflect/Evade | |
| 1. Shift credit | <i>My mother knitted it.</i> |
| 2. Informative comment | <i>I bought it at that Vibrant Knits place.</i> |
| 3. Ignore | <i>It's time we were leaving, isn't it?</i> |
| 4. Legitimate evasion | <i>You know, that shop in Cubacade.</i> |
| 5. Request reassurance/repetition | <i>Do you really think so?</i> |

Han (1992) examined Korean females' compliment responses based on the response types used by Holmes (1986). Han's study involved ten Korean female participants studying in the U.S. and eight American female students. Of these participants, 15 were graduate students, and three were undergraduate. She collected Korean female participants' speech act data in English and Korean conversations. She then interviewed them after the data were gathered. Twenty responses to the compliments from each language were collected. The findings of the study suggested that when Korean female participants replied to compliments in Korean, they were more likely to reject compliments (45%) than to deflect/evade (35%) or accept (20%). When they replied in English, however, they tended to accept (75%) compliments rather than reject (20%) or deflect/evade (5%). Han's study indicated that the participants altered their response types depending on the language they were using. The results did not show a significant amount of pragmatic transfer because, as Han suggested, the Korean participants had lived in the U.S. at least a year, and therefore, they were accustomed to the norms of the American speech community. In addition, Han speculated, their English textbooks' stereotypes of Americans as being direct and open might also have influenced their choices of compliment response types.

Focusing on the characteristics of Chinese compliments, Ye (1995) investigated the speech act of complimenting performed by 96 native Chinese speakers in the People's Republic of China. A DCT containing 16 situations (the first eight were compliments, and the latter eight compliment responses) was utilized to assess the participants' compliment formulas (semantic carriers and compliment focus), response strategies, and gender-preferential strategies. Ye categorized 763 answers to the first eight situations into four types: no response, non-compliment, implicit compliment, and explicit compliment. More than half of the answers (56.6%) were explicit compliments. Many participants chose not to give compliments or any other comments (no response, 23.9%). Some provided answers that were not compliments (13.6%) but questions such as "When did you have them [glasses] made?" and "How much are these sneakers?" A few participants (6.0%) used implicit compliments, including "Do you do this [cooking] a lot at home?" and "When did you learn it [to dance]?"

Regarding the latter eight situations, which prompted the participants to respond to various compliments, Ye (1995) classified 765 answers into five categories: no response, acceptance with amendment (e.g., downgrades), acceptance, non-acceptance (e.g., denial, qualification, and avoidance), and combination (e.g., confirmation plus appreciation). Almost half of the responses (47.2%) were acceptance with amendment, while many others (24.4%) were acceptance. Compliment rejoinders such as "I really don't deserve this!" were non-

acceptance and accounted for 13.5% of the data. The last category, combination (9.0%), involved the participants asking “Really?” before thanking or appreciating compliments. Moreover, requesting information such as prices of items can be an alternative to explicit compliments.

Yu (2005) compared and contrasted the compliment behavior of native Chinese speakers in Taiwan and native English speakers in the U.S. He and his assistants spent two years collecting 1,199 compliments (410 in Chinese; 789 in English) in the Taipei and Boston metropolitan areas. The findings suggested that, although both speech groups preferred employing direct compliments (81.5% in Chinese; 91.1% in English), Chinese speakers were more likely to use indirect compliments (18.5%) than Americans (8.9%). Furthermore, Chinese speakers used significantly more supportive moves and small talk (60.7%), or non-complimentary utterances related to topics, than Americans (9.8%). The study also suggested that Chinese speakers pay fewer compliments in daily life compared with Americans.

To investigate how L1 pragmatic transfer influenced Chinese learners of English, Ren and Gao (2012) examined two groups of Chinese undergraduates in the speech acts of paying and responding to compliments. They recruited 30 Chinese EFL seniors majoring in English and 30 Chinese freshmen majoring in animation and photography. The senior EFL students completed a DCT in English, whereas freshmen answered in Chinese. Ren and Gao compared the data of both Chinese groups to those of Americans in Manes and Wolfson’s study (1981). The results showed that Chinese speakers used “good” more than “nice,” while their American counterparts used “nice” more than “good.” The term “excellent” appeared in compliments of Chinese speakers but not those of Americans. Ren and Gao suggested that Chinese teachers of English might unconsciously use the term “excellent” when complimenting students’ academic performances. In addition, the insufficiency of the questionnaire design, which contained the word “excellent”, might also have influenced the participants’ responses. With regard to compliment responses, Ren and Gao used as a comparison group the data of Americans in Holmes’s study (1986). The findings indicated that the EFL students employed a rejection strategy substantially more than either Chinese freshmen or Americans.

In contrast to compliments, compliment responses have been well documented in studies of Chinese speakers. Yang (1987) suggested that although Chinese speakers may be appreciative of compliments, the appropriate norm for their response is to refrain from showing expressions of pleasure or gratitude. Consequently, they are less likely to say “Thank you” in English as a compliment response. However, recent studies on the speech act

of complimenting indicated that accepting compliments, including using “Thank you” in either English or Chinese, has become more common in Chinese speech communities (e.g., Chen & Yang, 2010; Cheng, 2011; Guo, Zhou, & Chow, 2012).

Method

Based on the studies of interlanguage pragmatics (see Introduction) as well as the research on compliments and compliment responses reviewed above, the following questions were formulated and explored in the present study:

1. What are the characteristics of compliments and responses to compliments made by Taiwanese learners of English?
2. Compared to the native English speakers, are Taiwanese learners of English more likely to use questions when giving compliments or responding to compliments?
3. Do Taiwanese learners of English transfer their L1 knowledge to English when giving or responding to compliments?
4. Are more advanced learners less likely or more likely to transfer their L1 knowledge to L2 than learners with lower proficiency?

To address these questions, two hypotheses were formulated:

1. Taiwanese learners of English would display characteristics unique to Chinese compliments and compliment responses and would more likely ask questions when paying compliments or responding to compliments than would American native speakers of English.
2. Taiwanese learners of English would transfer their L1 knowledge to the TL, and the developmental patterns of pragmatic transfer would reflect the skewed bell curve, particularly the first half of the curve (see Figure 1 above), suggested by Takahashi and Beebe (1987).

In order to test these hypotheses, this study examined the relation between the Taiwanese EFL learners’ English proficiency levels and their amount of L1 transfer, with the former being the independent variable and the latter the dependent variable. Serving as an indicator of pragmatic transfer, the EFL learners’ responses were the main focus of the present study.

Participants

Many studies that examined Takahashi and Beebe's hypothesis (1987) used participants with relatively higher proficiency levels, thus resulting in the "negative correlation" pattern, as indicated by the second diagram in Figure 1 above. To accurately demonstrate the developmental pattern of lower-level participants, or the first half of the skewed bell curve, the present study involved Taiwanese EFL students with varied proficiency levels, including those with a low level of English proficiency.

The following three groups of subjects (249 in total) participated in the study:

- (1) 132 Taiwanese learners of English in Taiwan (TET)
- (2) 85 Taiwanese native speakers of Chinese in Taiwan (TCT)
- (3) 32 American native speakers of English in the U.S. (AEA)

The TET participants were English learners from National Dong Hwa University of Taiwan (NDHU) and English Generation Language Institute (EGL) in Taiwan. They consisted of Taiwanese undergraduate students, and their average age was 21.17 years. The TCT subjects were native Chinese speakers from National Chengchi University of Taiwan (NCCU) consisting of undergraduate and graduate students with an average age of 21.59 years. The participants in the AEA involved undergraduate students from Soka University of America (SUA). They were identified as native English speakers with an average age of 20.10 years. None of the TCT students majored in English or had a significant amount of exposure to English (since it was impossible to find Taiwanese college students with no experience learning English as it is a mandatory subject in junior and senior high school (for a total of six years) and in college (for at least one year), we selected participants from NCCU students with the least exposure to English in order to minimize the influence of English in their responses in Chinese). The AEA undergraduates were all native English speakers with no Chinese language background, such as taking Chinese classes or studying abroad in a Chinese-speaking country. Participants were randomly selected from each institution. The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1*Participant Characteristics*

Group	TET			TCT	AEA
	Low	Intermediate	Advanced		
Total number	45	60	27	85	32
Gender (Male: Female)	29:16	27:33	11:16	30:55	12:20
Average age (Range)	21.36 (18–30)	20.70 (18–34)	21.81 (18–45)	21.59 (18–28)	20.06 (18–23)

Students in the TET group were categorized into three different proficiency levels: low, intermediate, and advanced (it must be noted here that these levels are operationally defined in this study and may not necessarily match or correspond exactly to the levels that are labeled the same in other studies). The TET students' English proficiency levels were determined by their English learning backgrounds, such as study abroad experience, frequency of exposure to English language media and native English speakers, as well as their standardized test scores, including the TOEFL, the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT). The GEPT is a national standardized examination that corresponds to Taiwan's English education framework and covers the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Neither the low- nor intermediate-level TET majored in English. The low-level students from NDHU were taking first-year English writing or communication classes; the intermediate-level students were in third-year English classes. The advanced-level NDHU students majored in English, and most of them were in their junior or senior year. The EGL students' proficiency was measured according to the difficulty of the classes that they were taking and their scores from a TOEIC simulation test required by the institute as a placement exam.

Instruments

Data were collected using a questionnaire with a set of questions relating to demographic data and a DCT. Because the EFL participants resided outside the English speech community,

natural observation was not an applicable data collection method, and therefore, the DCT was employed. The DCT consisted of three role-play situations focusing on the speech acts of giving and responding to compliments (see Appendix 1). These situations were chosen because they introduced a variety of complimentary categories (e.g., referring to one's appearance, possessions, and ability) to the participants. Unlike many other studies, the DCT used in the present study asked the participants to answer in both compliment and compliment-response situations rather than in either one. The intent of this design was to provide various situations and to eliminate the possible influence of prefabricated expressions on the participants' answers. In order to execute this design and to avoid any influence of an interviewer's traits, a written DCT was employed rather than an oral test. To provide the participants with a realistic situation, the present study used equal-status campus situations since the participants were all students.

The first situation asked students to compliment a friend on his/her jacket and imagine how s/he would respond. In the second situation, the prompt did not ask the students to pay a direct compliment but to offer a dish of food to their friend. They were then asked to predict the response of their friend after eating the offered food (which a preliminary study showed would most likely be compliments). The last situation called for complimenting a friend for winning the second place in a school-wide speech contest and predicting how the friend would reply to the compliment. Although the word "compliment" was used in the descriptions of the first and third situations, the employment of the word showed no special influence on Taiwanese EFL learners' responses in the preliminary data collection process—e.g., no one used "compliment" as a performative.

Due to the possibility that participants at the low level in the TET group might not fully understand the questions, the DCT for the TET participants included a Chinese translation. The DCT for the TET group also had a section for feedback. The AEA group used the English version of the DCT—to be responded to in English without a feedback section, whereas the TCT participants used the Chinese version—to be responded to in Chinese and without a feedback section.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

The questionnaire was administered to the NCCU participants in December of 2013, the NDHU and EGL groups in January of 2014, and the SUA students in February of 2014. All the participants were given a hard copy of the questionnaire to complete after signing the informed consent form. After the questionnaire was administered and collected, the TCT's responses were first categorized into different semantic formulas. Their responses were then

compared with the AEA's answers to look for distinctive semantic formulas to show Chinese and English pragmatic characteristics. Next, the DCT responses of all the TET categories were coded based on the distinctive formulas from the control groups, AEA and TCT. The frequencies of all the semantic formulas used by the three proficiency groups are reported in Appendix 2.

The frequency of each distinctive formula from the TCT's answers was used to validate the amount of pragmatic transfer from Chinese to English in the TET's responses. It was operationally defined that if their answers resembled the TCT's distinctive formulas, their responses reflected L1 transfer; if their answers were similar to the AEA's distinctive formulas, it signified L2 learning. For example, in the first compliment situation, a number of native Chinese speakers in the TCT group commented on the friend's jacket and questioned “多少錢?/*Duōshǎo qián?*”, meaning “How much (money)?” in English. This frequent reference to money seemed a Chinese characteristic because none of the AEA participants used such a question. Therefore, if a TET subject commented on his/her friend's jacket and asked “How much?” in English, this utterance was considered and counted as an instance of L1 transfer.

Because the data were nominal and did not meet the assumptions of parametric statistics, the present study employed the non-parametric chi-square test to determine whether the amount of L1 transfer among the three TET proficiency levels was significantly different. The alpha level was set at .05. To measure the amount of L1 transfer, the frequencies of distinctively Chinese semantic formulas used by each TET group were calculated.

Results

The analysis indicates that the AEA's and TCT's responses showed distinctive pragmatic characteristics in all three situations in terms of the semantic formulas used, such as comments (with distinctive syntactic patterns), questions, expressions of gratitude, and denials. This analysis has yielded characteristics unique to Chinese compliments and compliment responses, which were also found in Chinese responses by Taiwanese learners of English (Question #1 of the present study). The results also show that TET students were more likely to ask questions in the speech acts of complimenting such as “How much was it?” and responding to compliments such as “Really?” (Question #2). Furthermore, Taiwanese learners of English transferred (or tried to transfer), with varying degrees, their L1 knowledge to English when giving or responding to compliments (Question #3), and the frequencies of the distinctive semantic formulas used in the TET's responses indicate that intermediate

learners tended to transfer their L1 knowledge into the TL more than low-level learners, but advanced learners tended to do so less than their intermediate counterparts (Question #4). The overall findings appear to support the bell curve hypothesis of the present study, thus validating Takahashi and Beebe's hypothesis (1987).

The following is a quantitative presentation of the results, as summarized above, from each of the three DCT situations. The Discussion section is a qualitative and descriptive examination of the findings, portraying the developmental patterns of interlanguage pragmatics found in the three proficiency groups.

Situation 1: Jacket

In the first situation, the prompt read:

You run into your classmate on campus. S/he is wearing a new jacket. You compliment your friend on the jacket.

The TCT's responses in this situation suggest that when native Chinese speakers paid compliments, they tended to comment on the item (92.94%) more than its owner (4.71%). Most of the TCT participants typically used phrases (with the jacket being the subject), such as “你的外套好好看/ *Nǐ de wàitào hǎohǎo kàn*” (“Your jacket looks good”) or “這件外套很適合你/ *Zhè jiàn wàitào hěn shìhé nǐ*” (“This jacket suits you very well”). On the other hand, much fewer native English speakers (37.5%) used the jacket as the subject when giving compliments. Although the AEA used this pattern, it was considered a distinct formula for the TCT since almost all native Chinese speakers (92.94%) used it. As for a distinct pattern for the AEA, more native speakers (46.88%) in the present study preferred using “I” as the subject such as “I like/love your jacket.” Since the TCT rarely (only 1.18%) used the latter with “I” as the subject, it is considered a distinct formula for the AEA. As for a distinct semantic formula for the TCT, native Chinese speakers were more likely to ask questions relating to monetary matters (17.65%) such as “多少錢?/ *Duōshǎo qián?*” (“How much [was it]?”) or “很貴嗎?/ *Hěn guì ma?*” (“[Was it] very expensive?”). Unlike the TCT, none of the AEA participants (0.00%) asked questions relating to money.

With regard to compliment responses, some TCT respondents (14.12%) avoided accepting compliments directly by replying “真的嗎?/ *Zhēn de ma?*” or “是嗎?/ *Shì ma?*” both meaning “Really?” in English. Such questions never appeared in the AEA's responses. Instead, 84.38% of the native English speakers started their answers with “Thank you” or “Thanks.” The distinctive semantic formulas found from the comparison between the TCT's and AEA's compliments and responses to the compliments are presented in Table 2.

Table 2*Situation 1: Jacket—Distinctive Semantic Formulas Used in the TCT and AEA Responses*

	TCT (as translated into English)	AEA
Compliments	(1) Your/That jacket looks (INT) ADJ. (2) Your/That jacket suits you/your N (INT). (3) How much (was it)?	I (INT) like/love your N/NP.
Responses to Compliments	(4) Really?	Thanks/Thank you.

Regarding making compliments, the low-level TET's frequencies of using the first pattern *Your/That jacket looks (INT) ADJ* and the second pattern *Your/That jacket suits you/ your N (INT)* were 8.89% and 4.44%, respectively, whereas the intermediate-level TET had higher frequencies of 28.33% and 18.33%, respectively. As the proficiency level increased, the advanced-level students preferred the first formula less frequently (22.22%) than the intermediate-level learners (28.33%). Since the AEA also used this pattern, although much less than the TCT, it is difficult to determine whether the advanced learners are transferring less or more, and yet it must be noted that they used the pattern that the AEA most preferred, *I (INT) like/love your N/NP*, more frequently (7.41%) than the other two groups, which might be regarded as a sign of their L2 learning and thus less transfer. As for the second formula, the advanced-level TET had a frequency of 18.52%, which was not significantly different from that of the intermediate-level learners (18.33%). The difference among the three proficiency levels was found to be significant for the first formula, $\chi^2(2, N = 132) = 6.04, p < .049$, but not for the second one, $\chi^2(2, N = 132) = 4.90, p = .086$.

Concerning the third semantic formula, a question that involved references to money, the low-level TET had 2.22% frequency. Although the intermediate-level students' frequency was not high (5.00%), it was above that of the low-level students. The advanced-level students, however, employed the third formula in their compliments significantly more often, with a frequency of 25.93%. The difference among the three groups was found to be significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 132) = 14.01, p < .001$. With regard to responses to compliments, the frequency of the fourth formula "Really?" occurring in the low-level students' answers was 2.22%, whereas for the intermediate-level and the advanced-level TET, the frequencies were 13.33% and 11.11%, respectively. The difference among the three groups was perceptible though not significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 132) = 4.01, p = .135$. For ease of interpretation, the results

are reproduced in Table 3 and Figure 2.

Table 3

Situation 1: Jacket—Frequencies of Distinctively Chinese (L1) Semantic Formulas Used in the TET Responses

		TET-Low	TET-Intermediate	TET-Advanced
Compliments	Formula 1-1	8.89%	28.33%	22.22%
	Formula 1-2	4.44%	18.33%	18.52%
	Formula 1-3	2.22%	5.00%	25.93%
Responses to Compliments	Formula 1-4	2.22%	13.33%	11.11%

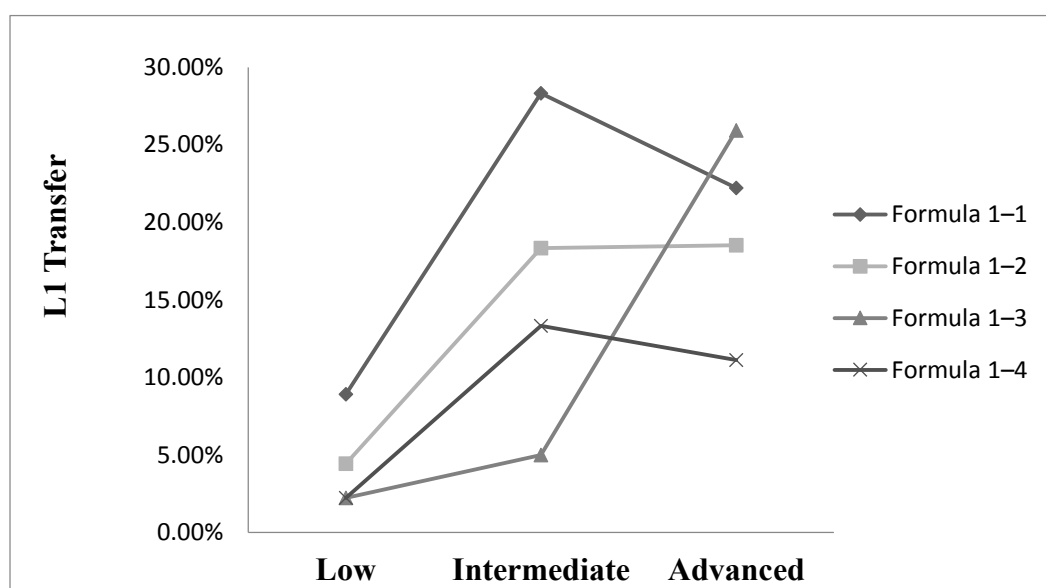


Figure 2. Frequencies of distinctively Chinese semantic formulas (L1 transfer) used by TET in the first situation

Situation 2: Dish

In the second situation, the prompt read:

You invited your friend to your dorm room. You offer him/her a dish that your mother made earlier that day when she was visiting you.

Because offering food was not an act generally requiring a compliment, the present study only examined a friend's response after eating the food, which would most likely involve a compliment. Based on the TCT's and AEA's answers, three distinctive semantic formulas

were identified: commenting on the mother and/or her cooking, thanking the friend, and thanking the mother. In contrast to the AEA (18.75%), the TCT (49.41%) were more likely to comment on the mother’s cooking skills such as 你媽媽真會煮/*Nǐ māmā zhēn huì zhǔ* (“Your mother is good at cooking”). In addition, the TCT asked the inviter to thank his/her mother more frequently (11.76%) than they thanked the inviter (8.24%), whereas the AEA participants never referenced the mother (0.00%) but instead thanked the inviter (40.63%). For example, the TCT participants often said 請幫我跟你的媽媽說謝謝/*Qǐng bāng wǒ gēn nǐ de māmā shuō xièxiè*, meaning “Please say thanks to your mother for me” in English, while almost half of the AEA participants told their friend, “Thank you” or “Thank you for the food.” These distinctive semantic formulas found from the comparison between the TCT’s and AEA’s compliments and responses to the compliments are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Situation 2: Dish—Distinctive Semantic Formulas Used in the TCT and AEA Responses

	TCT (as translated into English)	AEA
Responses	(1) Commenting on the mother and/or her cooking	
	(2) Thanking the mother	Thanking the friend

Regarding the TET’s responses in the second situation, some of the low-level TET (8.89%) employed the first formula, which was commenting on the friend’s mother and/or her cooking. On the other hand, almost half of the intermediate-level TET (45.00%) praised the mother’s cooking skills. However, the frequency was lower for the advanced group scoring 29.63%. The difference among the three groups was found to be significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 132) = 16.11, p < .001$.

Regarding the second formula, which was thanking the mother, a substantial variance in the three groups’ answers was found: $\chi^2(2, N = 132) = 7.543, p = .023$. Although none of the low-level (0.00%) and advanced (0.00%) students included the second formula in their responses, some intermediate learners (10.00%) did. The fact that none of the low-level TET, the advanced TET, or the AEA participants used the second formula but some intermediate TET did indicates significance in the usage of the formula. For ease of interpretation, the results are reproduced in Table 5 and Figure 3.

Table 5

Situation 2: Dish—Frequencies of Distinctively Chinese (L1) Semantic Formulas Used in the TET Responses

		TET-Low	TET-Intermediate	TET-Advanced
Responses	Formula 2-1	8.89%	45.00%	29.63%
	Formula 2-2	0.00%	10.00%	0.00%

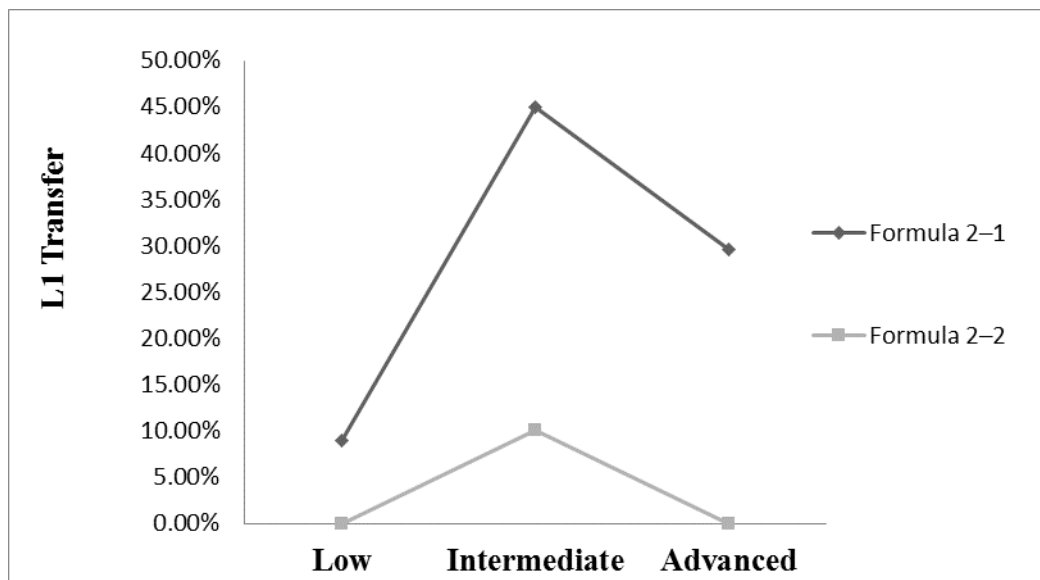


Figure 3. Frequencies of distinctively Chinese semantic formulas (L1 transfer) used by the TET in the second situation

Situation 3: Speech Contest

In the third situation, the prompt read:

Your friend wins the second place in a school-wide speech contest. You compliment your friend on his/her speech.

The TCT and the AEA participants' responses demonstrated several distinctive characteristics. When the native Chinese-speaking participants complimented their friend's speech, they commented on their friend's ability to deliver a speech even though the prompt asked them to compliment their friend's speech. For instance, 76.47% of them wrote: 你好厲害/*Nǐ hǎo lihài* or 你好棒/*Nǐ hǎo bang*, both meaning "You are excellent." The native English speakers, on the other hand, focused on praising their friend's speech (40.63%) rather than the friend him/herself or his/her ability (28.13%). For example, most of the AEA used the phrase "Your

speech was amazing/awesome.” These tendencies exposed each group’s preference for complimenting either the friend or the speech, and these utterances, therefore, were identified to serve as the distinctive semantic formulas.

Regarding responses to compliments, 32.76% of the TCT participants avoided directly accepting compliments by using the phrase “沒有啦/ *Méiyǒu la*” (“Not really”) or the phrase “還好啦/ *Hái hǎo la*” (“It was alright”). In addition, they also made utterances (10.59%) such as “運氣好/ *Yùnqì hǎo*,” meaning “(I was) lucky,” attributing their success to luck. These three kinds of formulas did not appear in the AEA participants’ answers. Instead of avoiding accepting compliments, 87.50% of them started their responses with the phrase “Thank you” or “Thanks.” Because the avoidance of compliments and references to luck were only evident in the TCT students’ responses, they were regarded as the unique semantic formulas for the native Chinese speakers. The distinctive semantic formulas occurring in the TCT and the AEA responses are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Situation 3: Speech Contest—Distinctive Semantic Formulas in the TCT and AEA Responses

	TCT (as translated into English)	AEA
Compliments	(1) You were (INT) ADJ.	Your speech was ADJ.
		Great/Good job.
Responses to	(2) Not really/It was alright.	Thank you/Thanks.
Compliments	(3) References to luck.	

The rate of the low-level TET using the first formula, which was complimenting their friend or the friend’s ability in the speech contest situation, was 22.22%. Compared with the low-level TET, the intermediate-level participants’ complimentary acts displayed more uses of the first formula, with a frequency of 45.00%. The advanced-level TET had a similar rate of using the first formula as the intermediate learners, and their transferring frequency was 44.44%. The difference among the three groups was significant: $\chi^2(2, N = 132) = 6.496, p = .039$.

Regarding the second formula, which was avoiding directly accepting compliments, the low-level TET learners’ answers contained such utterances with a frequency of 4.44%. Similarly, few intermediate students used the same in their DCT responses although the frequency increased slightly to 5.00%. The advanced-level students, however, did not employ

the second formula in their responses to the compliments at all. The chi-square test did not show a substantial variance among the three groups: $\chi^2(2, N = 132) = 1.358, p = .507$.

The TET's frequencies of using the last formula, attributing success to luck, were similar to that of the second formula. Very few low-level students (2.22%) made references to luck in their responses, whereas the intermediate learners' answers (6.67%) showed a slightly higher frequency of using the last formula. Furthermore, none of the advanced students (0.00%) exercised any utterances relating to luck in their responses. There was no significant difference among the three proficiency groups: $\chi^2(2, N = 132) = 2.730, p = .255$. The frequencies of the distinctive semantic formulas used by the TET are presented in Table 7 and Figure 4.

Table 7

Situation 3: Speech Contest—Frequencies of Distinctively Chinese (L1) Semantic Formulas Used by the TET

		TET-Low	TET-Intermediate	TET-Advanced
Compliments	Formula 3-1	22.22%	45.00%	44.44%
Responses to Compliments	Formula 3-2	4.44%	5.00%	0.00%
	Formula 3-3	2.22%	6.67%	0.00%

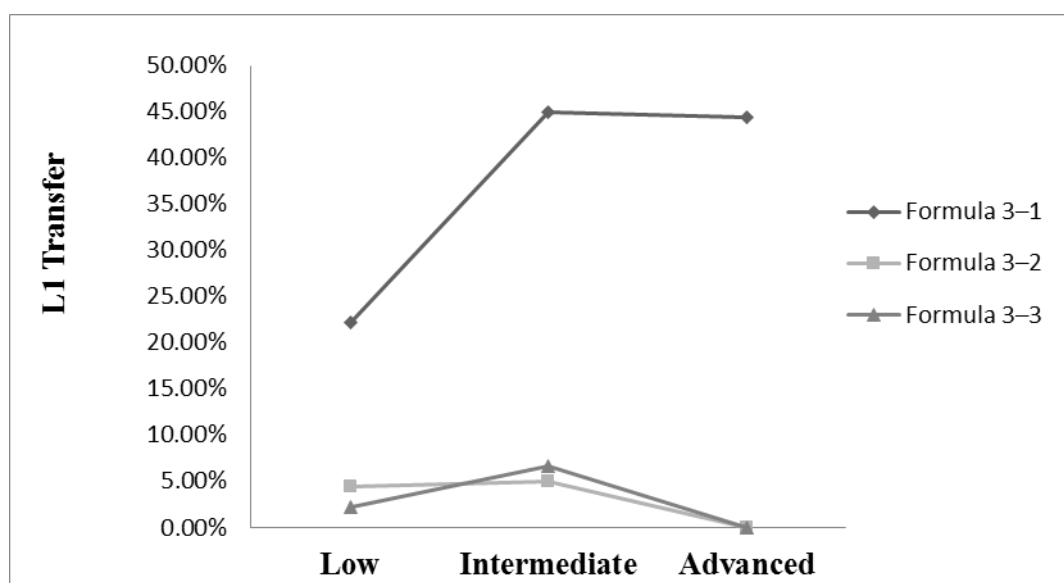


Figure 4. Frequencies of distinctively Chinese semantic formulas (L1 transfer) used by the TET in the third situation

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between Taiwanese students' English proficiency level and the amount of L1 transfer and to confirm the hypothesis regarding the skewed bell curve developmental pattern, thus validating Takahashi and Beebe's bell curve hypothesis (1987). The results of the study, particularly based on the responses by the intermediate TET group, supported the first hypothesis of our study—i.e., Taiwanese EFL learners would display characteristics unique to Chinese compliments and compliment responses and would more likely ask questions when paying compliments or responding to compliments than would American native speakers of English. Moreover, the second hypothesis of our study was, in general, supported by the three figures (see Figures 2 – 4 above) showing the frequencies of the distinctively Chinese (L1) semantic formulas clearly exhibiting a dominant pattern—the amount of L1 transfer increased from the low to the intermediate level and then decreased from the intermediate to the advanced level. This pattern corresponds to the bell curve suggested by Takahashi and Beebe (1987). The frequencies of the entire distinctive semantic formulas used by the TET in all three situations are presented in Figure 5.

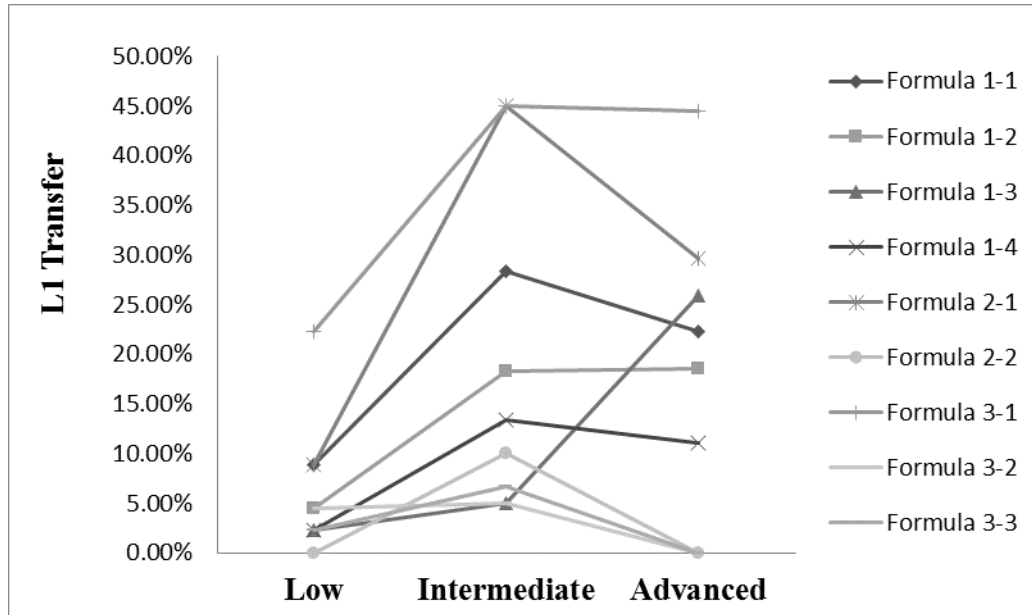


Figure 5. Frequencies of distinctively Chinese semantic formulas (L1 transfer) used by the TET in all three situations

Based on Figure 5, three developmental patterns of interlanguage pragmatics are identified and indicated in Figure 6. Regarding the first pattern (a–c), as seen in cases such as Formula

2-1 (see Figure 5 above), the amount of L1 transfer increased from the low to the intermediate level and then decreased from the intermediate to the advanced level. This pattern apparently corresponds to the bell curve suggested by Takahashi and Beebe (1987). In the second pattern (**a–b**), as seen in cases such as Formula 3-1 (see Figure 5 above), the amount of L1 transfer increased from the low to the intermediate level and persisted at the advanced level. Concerning the third pattern (**a**), which was demonstrated in the case of Formula 1-3 (*How much [was it]?*), the amount of L1 transfer increased from the low to intermediate level and continued to escalate beyond the intermediate level.

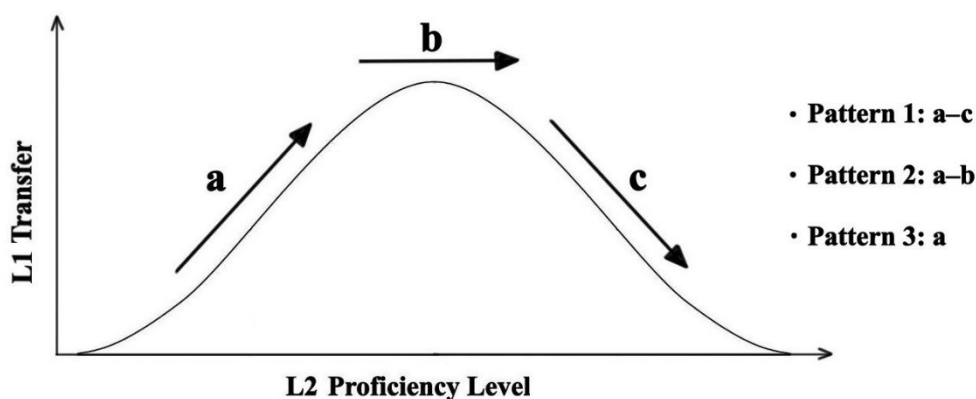


Figure 6. Three developmental patterns of interlanguage pragmatics.

Besides the statistical analysis of semantic formulas, the TET descriptive data also provides evidence supporting the bell curve developmental pattern. As they indicated in the DCT feedback section, for instance, the low-level students noted their inability to describe, or transfer, what they intended to communicate, and therefore their compliments and compliment responses exhibited less L1 transfer despite their desire to do so. The intermediate-level TET's DCT responses displayed more sophisticated responses, and many of the phrases used showed a sufficient level of English proficiency to enable them to transfer more of their L1 knowledge into English. This tendency for transfer to increase from the low to the intermediate level was observed in the use of every distinctively Chinese (L1) semantic formula. From the intermediate to the advanced level, after the transfer increase (**a**), three different patterns were found: (1) transfer decrease (**c** of Pattern 1 [**a–c**]), (2) persistence (**b** of Pattern 2 [**a–b**]), and (3) further increase (Pattern 3 [**a**]).

Low-Level Learners

Compared with students from the other two proficiency levels, the low-level students primarily used one to two sentences to answer the DCT prompts. In the first situation of

complimenting a friend's jacket, the low-level learners mostly responded with the formula *Your jacket is ADJ* (e.g., “beautiful,” “cool,” and “nice”). Although the majority of the low-level students were able to produce this kind of simple sentence, some of them could not successfully complete such sentences and instead could only answer with short phrases (e.g., “very beautiful”) or a word (e.g., “nice”). In general, low-level students had to “resort to a simplification strategy” (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, p. 137).

Some low-level students employed the syntactic pattern *ADJ + N* (e.g., “Nice jacket”), which native English speakers also used in their compliments. Although the low-level students' usage of this formula might seem native-like, it was most likely due to their limited variety of vocabulary and sentence structures. In their feedback, some wrote comments such as: 單字背太少，無法表達我真正想說的/*Dānzi bèi tài shǎo, wúfǎ biǎodá wǒ zhēnzhèng xiǎng shuō de* (“[I] memorized too little vocabulary, [so] I couldn't express what I really wanted to say”). For those who were able to produce complete sentences in their responses, many of them blamed their lack of ability to express their intended thoughts. For example, one student wrote, “You are so beautiful today,” but in the feedback area, he explained that he wanted to say: 你今天穿的新夾克很適合你/*Nǐ jīntiān chuān de xīn jiǎkè hěn shìhé nǐ* (“The jacket that you are wearing today suits you very well”)—one of the most dominant patterns used by the TCT. This seems to validate that those low-level TET students wanted to transfer L1 knowledge and yet were unable to do so due to their limited proficiency in English. This finding supports the claim that “lower proficiency learners lack the fluency in English to fall into the negative transfer trap” (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, p. 137).

With regard to the responses to compliments in the first situation, almost all of the low-level students simply responded with “Thanks” or “Thank you”, which many native English speakers also did in their responses. However, this phenomenon occurred also because of a lack of English proficiency. One student commented: 第二句，單字量問題，沒有會的字讓我寫/*Dì èr jù, dānzi liàng wèntí, méiyǒu huì de zì ràng wǒ xiě* (“No words I know could be used for the second sentence [responses to compliments], due to my limited vocabulary”). That is, low-level students were unable “to encode translations of socioculturally appropriate [L1] patterns” (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, p. 137).

Regarding the second situation, although the present study mainly focused on a friend's response after eating the food, the low-level students' responses in this speech act of offering provided additional evidence of their limited English proficiency to transfer their L1 knowledge into the TL. One of the low-level TETs wrote, “Eat this” when inviting her friend

to enjoy the food, while another student only wrote, “Eat!” These two ways of offering food did not appear in the TCT’s responses, so such usages would not be a result of L1 transfer but rather due to their inadequate TL proficiency. This, again, supports Takahashi and Beebe’s claim that lower proficiency learners are unable to transfer what they intend to say due to their limited proficiency in the TL (1987, p. 137).

Concerning the low-level TET students’ responses to the offer, most of them had only one or two sentences. Many of them answered, “It is delicious,” which is also the simple sentence structure *NP + BE + ADJ*. Some students only wrote a word such as “Delicious,” “Good,” and “Thanks.” As previously mentioned, two TCT’s distinctive pragmatic characteristics were that they tended to compliment or thank the inviter’s mother. However, the low-level TET rarely displayed these characteristics in their responses except for four students writing sentences such as “She is good cooking” and “Your mother’s dish is so delicious.”

In the third situation, regarding the speech contest, many low-level TET students only wrote a simple sentence to compliment their friend for winning the second place. For instance, some students wrote, “You are very good”, and other students complimented, “Your speech is good.” In addition, due to their limited proficiency, they did not include the expression “Congratulations” in their compliment as much as the intermediate or advanced students did. Instead, many of the low-level TET complimented their friend with phrases such as “Good job” or “Great job”. These phrases, again, were also frequently employed by the AEA. Such tendencies suggested an intriguing finding that, due to limited language skills, the low-level TET substituted difficult sentences with relatively easier phrases or words, which often resulted in native-like utterances in the particular speech act.

The low-level students had a strong urge to transfer their L1 knowledge into the TL, and such intention was observed through their choices of semantic formulas, direct translations from Chinese to English, and their feedback at the end of the DCT. And yet, despite their desire to transfer their L1 knowledge into the TL, their limited language skills prohibited them from doing so, and consequently, their DCT responses displayed a small amount of transfer. This is consistent with what Takahashi and Beebe (1987) suggested.

Intermediate-Level Learners

Contrary to the low-level TET, the intermediate-level students were able to produce a larger number of sentences in their DCT responses. Their answers also demonstrated a wider range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Even though their answers were not free of grammatical errors, these students possessed sufficient language ability to perform a speech act that expressed their intended thoughts. Consequently, intermediate students’ responses

showed a greater degree of L1 transfer due to their more adequate language proficiency—i.e., “the rope to hang themselves with” (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, p. 153). That is, unlike the low-level learners, the intermediate students were able to describe their thoughts with more intricate sentence structures and a wider array of vocabulary, resulting in more direct translations and L1 transfer.

In the first situation, many intermediate-level TET students did not start with a compliment per se, but instead they began with a casual greeting such as “Hey dude!”, “Hello, long time no see”, “Today is good”, etc. Some students also asked where the jacket was purchased or what the price was. In addition, some learners included their hypothetical friend’s name (e.g., “Nancy”, “Leon”, “Jack”, and “Wendy”) in their responses. The use of a non-compliment sentence starter and the friend’s imaginary name indicate that the intermediate students felt more comfortable using English, had more control over their speech acts, and were more familiar with the TL culture than their low-level counterparts.

Although many of the intermediate students described in the feedback section that they could not fully convey their thoughts in English, they were actually able to produce sentences that were close to their intended answers. Regarding their compliments, the intermediate learners used syntactic patterns such as *Your/That jacket looks (INT) ADJ* and *Your/That jacket suits you/ your N (INT)*, which were different from what the majority of the low-level students used (*NP + BE + ADJ*). One participant’s feedback expressed that what she wanted to write for the first situation was: 這件夾克很適合你/*Zhè jiàn jiákè hěn shìhé nǐ* (“This jacket suits you very well”). The student’s actual answer on the DCT was: “It is very suit of you”. Although her sentence did not fully match her intended response, she was still able to express the same idea that the jacket (“It”) suits (“suit”) her friend (“you”) very well (“very”). In general, therefore, the intermediate learners were able to express their Chinese thoughts in English much better and more frequently—i.e., more L1 transfer—than their low-level counterparts. That is, because of their ability to encode English phrases reflecting L1 norms, transfer became more possible (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, p. 137).

In terms of the responses to compliments, besides an increase in using the distinctive formula “Really?”—i.e., an increased amount of L1 transfer—the intermediate TET also created various sentences in their responses. For instance, they commented on where or how the jacket was acquired (e.g., “I bought it downtown last week” and “My mom buy it to me when I went home this time”). Some of the TET even made an offer in their friend’s responses (e.g., “I will plan a day and take you to buy another” and “Maybe I can show you

where I bought”).

In the second situation, a few intermediate students directly translated what they would say in Chinese into English. For example, when they offered food to their friend, they described the food, saying, for instance, “This is my mother made.” When compared to the TCT’s answers, this sentence, which is grammatically incorrect in English, can be seen as a direct translation from the sentence in Chinese 這/*Zhè* (“This”) 是/*Shì* (“is”) 我/*Wǒ* (“my”) 媽媽/*Māmā* (“mother”) 做的/*Zuò de* (“made”). With regard to the responses to the offer, many intermediate students directly or indirectly praised the mother’s cooking skills, which signified L1 transfer. For instance, one student wrote, “You’re a really fortunate guy”, which suggested that the person who offered the food was lucky to have a mother with good cooking skills. Another student also commented on the mother but in a different way; she wrote, “I hope that your mom is my mom.” Another student complimented the mother by writing, “You can talk to mom that she can open a shop to sell.” This is a typical Taiwanese expression to compliment the cook, saying that his/her cooking ability is good enough to be a chef at a restaurant.

In the third situation concerning the speech contest, the intermediate students included “Good job” or “Great job” less frequently than the low-level TET. They also used the expression “Congratulations” more often in their answers although some misspelled the word. Another main difference between the low- and intermediate-level students was the variety of descriptions used to compliment their friend. Instead of simply saying, “You are good” or “Your speech is good,” the intermediate learners were able to make different remarks about their friend, including his/her stage presence and speech ability. For instance, one student described, “You look confident on the stage,” while another student wrote, “You spoke fluently on your speech.”

With regard to the responses to the compliments, a number of TET participants commented that they should have worked harder to win first place rather than second; being humble and attributing success to effort is another socially appropriate Taiwanese characteristic. Some students described nervousness when giving the speech, which none of the low-level students mentioned, but the native English speakers did. Some incidents of direct translation also appeared in the last situation as one of the students replied to the compliment, “You are too over, my friend.” The phrase “too over” was a result of translating the Chinese phrase 太超過/*Tài chāoguò*, which can be used to describe people making an exaggeration in their

compliment. Moreover, the phrase “too over” is frequently used as “太/*Tài* (“too”) over” by the younger Taiwanese generation. By using this phrase, therefore, these students directly transferred their L1 conversational phrases to the TL, having the proficiency to do so.

Advanced-Level Learners

Advanced-level students’ frequencies of using L1 formulas were different from those of their low- and intermediate-level TET counterparts. As shown in Figure 5 above, except for Formulas 1-2, 1-3, and 3-1, the number of distinctively Chinese (L1) formulas that the TET transferred into the TL increased at the intermediate level and decreased at the advanced level. The developmental patterns of these formulas, therefore, conformed to Pattern 1 (a–c), which supports Takahashi and Beebe’s bell curve hypothesis (1987) (see Figures 1 and 6 above).

Based on the TET feedback, 20 out of the 29 advanced students were satisfied with their answers. One student expressed that he felt it was relaxing to answer those DCT questions because they were closely related to daily conversations. Another student stated that it was her first time to take this kind of test (DCT), and it was fresh and enjoyable. Overall, the advanced students were able to write without difficulty about what they would say in an actual conversation and were generally unrestricted by limitations of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. With their higher L2 proficiency and TL cultural knowledge, the advanced TET learners transferred less and resembled English native speakers more than their intermediate counterparts. This observation, again, supports the claim by Takahashi and Beebe (1987).

As for the advanced students who were not completely satisfied with their answers, their concerns were mainly about how to make their sentences more sophisticated rather than about whether they had sufficient English ability to express their thoughts. For instance, one student commented that she wanted to describe herself in a more exaggerated expression such as she was “crazily (發狂/*Fākuáng*) happy” rather than “I’m really happy.” Another student wrote: 第三題，我原本想多表達一些朋友的緊張感，但我想不出該使用哪些句子/*Dì sān tí, wǒ yuánběn xiǎng duō biǎodá yīxiē péngyǒu de jǐnzhāng gǎn, dàn wǒ xiǎng bù chū gāi shǐyòng nǎxiē jùzi*, meaning “In the third situation, I was going to express more about the friend’s nervousness, but I couldn’t think of what sentences I should use.” Although this student was not entirely satisfied with her answer, her DCT responses did demonstrate her intention as she wrote, “I was so nervous!”

The frequencies of three particular formulas, 1-2, 1-3, and 3-1, appeared to persist (Pattern 2 [a–b]) or increase (Pattern 3 [a]) in the advanced students’ DCT answers (see Figures 5 and 6

above). A notable common factor shared by these three formulas was that they were culture-specific. The other formulas with decreased frequencies were similar in that they tended to be structural or syntactical. Both the intermediate and advanced students had a similar frequency of using Formula 1-2, *Your/That jacket suits you/your N (INT)*, which indicated Pattern 2 (**a–b**). Although this formula seems to be structure-based, the word “suit,” which is equivalent to 適合/*Shihé* in Chinese, is a common word that Taiwanese would use to compliment one’s clothing. Achieving harmony is important in the Taiwanese culture in terms of not only social relations but also art and beauty. Therefore, comments about whether clothes match or fit a person can be used as sources of a compliment.

Another formula that also had a persistent tendency (Pattern 2 [**a–b**]) throughout the intermediate and advanced levels was Formula 3-1, e.g., *You were (INT) ADJ*. In the speech contest situation, students could compliment either the friend him/herself or the speech that s/he gave. When a situation involves tests, competition, or performance, Taiwanese tend to attribute the success to the person rather than to his/her performance itself (e.g., speech, test). That is, they tend to believe that if a person works hard enough, whether talented or not, s/he will most likely be successful. Therefore, Formula 3-1 could be treated as a culture-specific type of transfer for the TET students.

Among all the distinctive formulas, only the transferring frequency of Formula 1-3 (e.g., *How much [was it]?*) increased from the intermediate level to the advanced level (Pattern 3 [**a**]). Compared with Formulas 1-2 and 3-1, Formula 1-3 displayed an even stronger and unique Taiwanese characteristic. It is acceptable to discuss monetary matters such as the price of a possession and one’s salary in the Taiwanese speech community. Price is a major factor used by Taiwanese to determine the value of an item, while one’s salary is used to assess the importance of his/her job. In fact, the Chinese idiom 物美價廉/*Wùměi jià lián* (“Good quality and low cost”) is often used for sales advertisements and commercials. Consequently, Formula 1-3, which asks how much the jacket costs, conveys culture-specific L1 knowledge that is deeply rooted in Taiwanese society.

Besides the developmental patterns of pragmatic transfer, the results, especially in Situation 1 (Jacket), demonstrated the Taiwanese learners’ tendency to ask questions when giving or responding to compliments. The findings of native Chinese speakers asking questions such as “How much?” and “Really?” correspond to Ye’s study (1995). Because native Chinese speakers generally pay fewer compliments in daily conversation, as Yu (2005) mentioned, it is not common for them to give direct compliments. In fact, when one student from EGL was

completing the DCT, he asked if he had to make compliments because it was not what he would usually do and he felt 奇怪/*Qíguài* (“strange”) to praise his friend.

In addition, the norm of being modest after receiving compliments seems to be fading away among the younger Taiwanese generation though a few TET students still felt that it was more appropriate to not frankly accept compliments. Instead of directly rejecting, they avoided accepting compliments by asking “Really?” It is also important to note that the questions used by the TET were mainly found in Situation 1, which required students to compliment their friend’s appearance. Contrary to the first situation, the other two (the “Dish” and “Speech Contest” situations) concerned one’s capability such as the mother’s cooking skills and the friend’s ability in delivering a speech. It is possible that the participants perceived the compliments on efforts (performance) as more justifiable than on material goods (appearance).

Conclusion

The results of the present study provided evidence that the developmental patterns of pragmatic transfer resemble a skewed bell curve, which supported the second hypothesis of this study and thus validated Takahashi and Beebe’s hypothesis (1987). Moreover, compared to the native English speakers, the Taiwanese EFL students were more likely to ask questions when paying or responding to compliments; therefore, the results also confirmed the first hypothesis. The findings of the present study suggested that although the developmental patterns of pragmatic transfer generally resemble a bell curve, patterns might differ depending on the types and contents of semantic formulas that are being transferred.

In addition to confirming the two hypotheses, the present study found that culture-specific formulas tended to make L1 transfer persist or even increase as proficiency rises, especially where EFL students who have limited exposure to the TL culture are concerned. Contrary to the structure-based transfer, which can be greatly minimized by improving linguistic proficiency, reducing the culture-specific transfer requires learners not only to improve linguistic proficiency but also to be conscious of cross-cultural differences and to maximize their exposure to the TL culture. This particular finding leads to a pedagogical implication for EFL teachers that cross-cultural differences need to be taught with a special emphasis and conscious effort. It also calls for more teaching materials focusing on and explaining cultural differences between the learner’s L1 and the TL found in different speech acts. In order for such materials to be developed, more research on interlanguage pragmatics is essential.

Although the present study made some preliminary findings, its research design is not without limitations. We acknowledge that using DCT for data collection rather than a

naturalistic approach could be regarded as a limitation to generating an authentic communication context. Because English is not an official language in Taiwan, however, real-life conversations in English, especially from low-level students, were not accessible. The small number of DCT situations used in the present study (due to the limited time given by the institutions) was also a limitation to yielding a wider range of data. Regarding the proficiency level, this study only focused on low, intermediate, and advanced levels among college students.

For future research, a variety of speech acts should be examined using a data collection method that would yield a wider range and a larger amount of data, possibly based on an authentic communication context. In order to present a more comprehensive bell curve developmental pattern, proficiency levels of participants should involve more varied levels, especially adding a level of participants with more exposure to the TL and its culture (e.g., study abroad experience in ESL contexts). Furthermore, similar to the present study, future studies must include low proficiency levels in order to provide genuine developmental patterns of L2 learners. It is also suggested that further research categorize semantic formulas of speech acts into structure-based and culture-specific types in order to validate the findings of the present study, which suggest that culture-based semantic formulas tended to cause L2 learners' amount of L1 transfer to persist or increase beyond the intermediate level.

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Appendix 1

Discourse Completion Test (DCT) for Taiwanese English Learners in Taiwan (TET)

Instructions: Please carefully read the following situations. After reading each situation, please imagine and write a dialogue between you and your friend **in English**. Answer as you would in an actual conversation.

指示：請仔細閱讀以下情境。在閱讀完各情境之後，想像現實會發生的情況，並用英文寫出你/妳和朋友間的對話。

1. You run into your classmate on campus. S/he is wearing a new jacket. You compliment your friend on the jacket.

你/妳在學校遇到你/妳的同學。他/她正穿著一件新夾克。你稱讚你/妳朋友的夾克。

You /你/妳:

Your friend / 你/妳的朋友:

2. You invited your friend to your dorm room. You offer him/her a dish that your mother made earlier that day when she was visiting you.

你/妳邀請你/妳的朋友到你/妳的宿舍房間。然後，請你/妳的朋友吃你/妳媽媽當天來看你/妳的時候做的一道菜 (媽媽已回家)。

You / 你/妳:

Your friend / 你/妳的朋友 (after eating the dish/吃完之後):

3. Your friend wins the second place in a school-wide speech contest. You compliment your

friend on his/her speech.

你/妳的朋友剛贏得了演講比賽全校第二名。你/妳稱讚他/她的演講。

You / 你/妳:

Your friend / 你/妳的朋友:

感想：做完測試後，請問您有什麼感想呢？有沒有哪一題想敘述卻沒辦法完全表達呢？

如果有，請以中文表達原本想說的內容，越詳細越好。⁹

測驗已結束，感謝您的參與及配合！

⁹ This section asked the TET participants to offer their opinions about their experience responding to the questionnaire. It reads: "Now that you have completed the test, do you have any feedback to give? Were there any questions that you would like to answer but could not fully express your thoughts in English? If so, please express your original thoughts in Chinese. The more detailed, the better."

Appendix 2

Frequencies of All the Semantic Formulas Used by the TET

TET Results		Low	Intermediate	Advanced
Situation 1: Jacket				
Compliments				
1	<i>Your/That jacket looks (INT) ADJ.</i>	8.89%	28.33%	22.22%
2	<i>Your/That jacket suits you/your N (INT).</i>	4.44%	18.33%	18.52%
3	<i>Your/That jacket is (INT) ADJ.</i>	66.67%	50.00%	59.30%
4	<i>You look (INT) ADJ.</i>	11.11%	11.67%	11.11%
5	<i>I (INT) like/love (your) jacket.</i>	2.22%	3.33%	7.41%
6	<i>(It is) (a) ADJ jacket.</i>	11.11%	11.67%	11.11%
7	References to the location of purchase	6.67%	28.33%	40.74%
8	References to money	2.22%	5.00%	25.93%
9	Others	4.44%	21.67%	14.81%
Compliment Responses				
1	<i>Thanks/Thank you.</i>	82.22%	73.33%	77.78%
2	Avoid accepting (e.g., “Really?”)	2.22%	13.33%	11.11%
3	Rejection (e.g., “Not really.”)	0%	0%	0%
4	Others	17.78%	83.33%	88.89%
Situation 2: Dish				
Compliment Responses				
1	Compliment on the food	71.11%	85.00%	74.07%
2	Thank the friend	28.89%	18.33%	33.33%
3	Compliment the mother	8.89%	45.00%	29.63%
4	Thank the mother	0%	10.00%	0%
5	Others	8.89%	11.67%	29.63%
Situation 3: Speech				
Compliments				
1	<i>You are (INT) ADJ.</i>	22.22%	45.00%	44.44%
2	<i>Your speech was ADJ.</i>	46.67%	50.00%	40.74%
3	<i>I like/love your speech.</i>	4.44%	5.00%	18.52%
4	<i>Great/Good job.</i>	17.78%	11.67%	11.11%
5	References to efforts	0%	3.33%	3.70%
6	<i>Congratulations.</i>	6.67%	23.33%	29.63%
7	Others	11.11%	20.00%	48.15%
Compliment Responses				
1	<i>Thanks/Thank you.</i>	80.00%	81.67%	74.07%
2	Rejection (e.g., “Not really.”)	4.44%	5.00%	0%
3	References to luck	2.22%	6.67%	0%
4	References to nervousness	0%	13.33%	18.52%
5	References to efforts	2.22%	18.33%	11.11%
6	Avoid accepting (e.g., “Really?”)	0%	0%	0%
7	Others	13.33%	18.33%	55.56%

Book Review

Teachers as Mediators in the Foreign Language Classroom.

Michelle Kohler. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2015. v + 236 pp.

Reviewed by Nicholas Bradley

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Over the last twenty years there has been great interest in the relationship between language and culture, a relationship which has been problematized by the growing awareness of the role of English as a lingua franca. Multiple suggestions for the direction language teachers should take their teaching have been put forward yet the majority of these are theoretical in nature and merely give considerations for practice.

Early on in my TESOL career, I became aware of this growing body of literature and experienced a growing dissatisfaction with the cultural dimension of my teaching. My preoccupation with getting students talking overshadowed everything else, particularly any deep consideration of what we were talking about. Following this realization, learning how to inject some deeper intercultural awareness into my teaching became a preoccupation of mine. One of the first questions I asked was “What are other teachers doing with culture in the classroom?” It is precisely this question that this book sets out to answer and it is a question that, with some notable exceptions (Byram & Risager, 1999; Menard-Warwick, 2009; Weninger & Kiss, 2013), has largely been left unanswered. This is particularly the case regarding teachers as intercultural mediators and of mediation itself which is defined by Kohler (pg 12) as the transformative “process of sense making with others, of creating new knowledge”. Drawing on observations of the classroom teaching and professional discussions of three secondary school teachers of Indonesian in Australia, the book attempts to shed light on this little understood or researched area.

Chapter 1 of the book provides a concise yet well researched overview of the relationship between culture and language and the dominant understandings of these two key subjects within the field of applied linguistics. Kohler suggests that, although opinions differ, ultimately, teachers tend to view language as code or as social semiotic. Likewise, culture can be viewed mostly as facts and information about a particular group of people in a particular location or as semiotic practices. Regarding language and culture Kohler puts forward the

reasonable claim that how teachers view one will influence how they view the other. As someone who has investigated this particular area, I found this to be an excellent review of these key concepts as they are understood in the field and it certainly helped me focus my thoughts on what is a subject area of great breadth and which cuts across many different disciplines. After effectively establishing the conceptual landscape in chapter 1, chapter 2 sees Kohler bring excerpts from interviews with her three subjects in to the discussion on culture, language and intercultural teaching. Chapters 3 and 4 follow a similar pattern with a discussion of the concept of mediation followed by the introduction of excerpts from student-teacher dialogues taken during class observations.

Chapter 5, the final chapter discusses the findings and their implications. Regarding culture, Kohler argues that teachers' mediation is mitigated by their own linguistic and cultural identities and that this finding should lead us to move away from an understanding of mediation that focuses on the more traditional skills of the language teacher such as scaffolding, translation skills or teaching strategies. Kohler also suggests that the way teachers conceptualize culture affects how they understand teaching in class.

Kohler's analysis is rigorous throughout yet there are two issues I wish to draw attention to. Although Kohler wishes to illustrate through case studies how teachers mediate and states that she doesn't seek to generalize her findings, the conclusions of chapter 5 do indeed sound like generalizations. Another area of possible concern would be highlighting the extended use of the target language in the process of mediation by one teacher as evidence of some deeper awareness of, or tendency towards intercultural teaching. The classes of the three teachers were of different levels and this could play a more significant role in the findings. It may not necessarily be a result of the diverse linguistic background of the teacher in question as Kohler suggests.

Ultimately, however, I found this book to be accessible, well written, deeply researched and providing great insights into an area of teaching that is not well understood. The interview and teaching excerpts, as well as the well-stocked appendices, provide lots of food for thought on culture, language and the process of mediation. Although the book investigates intercultural mediation through the teaching of Indonesian and so does not consider the added problems of culture which are brought by teaching a lingua franca such as English, it did help me to reflect on my own intercultural teaching. It particularly helped me consider how I negotiate cultural meaning with my students as well as show me what other teachers are doing with culture in the classroom. This book makes a very welcome contribution to the field of intercultural teaching and learning.

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Book Review

Silence in the Second Language Classroom

Jim King. Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. Pp. xi + 224.

Reviewed by Elizabeth Wohlers

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Teachers generally dread awkward moments of classroom silence. We speculate about why students do not talk, but it is often difficult to know the actual reasons. In *Silence in the Second Language Classroom*, Jim King presents his research into silent behavior in Japanese English-language classrooms. Based on the premise that spoken output is necessary for second language acquisition, and thus student silence is undesirable, King conducted a three-part study in order to establish the existence of silence and identify attractors that maintain this silence. The resulting book is a fascinating exploration of language classroom silence in Japan that contains valuable insights for educators throughout the world.

Before explaining his research, King takes the reader on a multi-disciplinary tour of theoretical frameworks related to the definition and interpretation of silence. King demonstrates that silence is more than a mere lack of sound. At times silence itself is a communication act, and at other times contextually irrelevant speech is “silence”. King also explains dynamic systems theory (DST), the principal theoretical framework used for interpreting his findings, which holds that, “the stronger and more numerous the attractors drawing a learner’s discourse activity towards the state of saying nothing, the more energy is needed to push the system into a state of flux whereby the learner talks” (p. 85). King concludes by stressing that research on silence “must be culture-specific and must carefully consider the relative value of speech versus silence within that culture” (p. 31). King notes that silence is typically viewed positively in Japanese culture.

In chapters three and four, King delves into the Japanese context. He demonstrates how the high valuation of silence in Japan is historically rooted and deeply culturally embedded, with Japanese children trained to be shy and highly aware of others, leading to “excessive self-monitoring” (p. 50). In Chapter 4, King examines the Japanese language education system, seeking to uncover why Japanese students often can’t speak English even after studying it for six or more years. King notes that a critical inhibitor of a communicative focus in Japanese classrooms is the hyper focus on university entrance exams, which encourages the teaching of

English “as an academic subject rather than a tool for real life” (p. 72).

Next, King describes his own three-part research study. The first part of the study was 48 hours of structured classroom observation conducted in 30 classes at 9 Japanese universities, comprising a total of over 900 students with the aim of proving that silence does predominate in Japanese English language classes. The research found silence to be present to a shocking degree, with just 0.25% of the class time observed consisting of student initiated talk, roughly half consisting of teacher talk, and roughly a quarter consisting of silence. Based on his findings, King categorized the causes of classroom silence into five types: disengagement (e.g. sleeping), teacher-centered methods, non-verbal activities, confusion, and the presence of cliques.

Part two of the study consisted of semi-structured interviews with eleven learners about their perspectives on L2 classroom silence. The interviews revealed a number of themes related to the causes of student silence. The dominant theme was that students are silent due to fear of embarrassment- particularly fear of making an error in front of peers. Other causes included low student English language proficiency, students’ intention of signaling displeasure with the class, lessons not structured to facilitate talking, cultural views prizing silence in the classroom, and cliques that encourage silence. King noted that gender was not a variable affecting student silence. He summed up his findings by stating that “there may be fluctuating, multiple, interrelated forces acting at any one time to lure individual students” into silence and silence may be so “entrenched” that simply changing teaching methods doesn’t have much effect (p. 121).

In the final part of the study, King conducted stimulated recall interviews in which students were asked to explain what they were thinking during specific moments when King observed them to be silent during class. Interviews were conducted with seven students, but only five were usable. King noted several dynamics that may cause classroom silence: power/status dynamics, group dynamics, and the dominance of teacher talk. He also noted several internal factors leading to student silence: a silent nature even in the first language, a lack of interest in the class, and a self-conception that inhibits speaking.

Though the overarching conclusion drawn by King is that silence is complex and many factors are beyond teacher control, I found several findings particularly relevant in informing my own methodology as a classroom teacher. First is the impact of assessment on student motivations. King observes that if students are not evaluated on speaking, they may perceive not speaking in the classroom as “risk free” and speaking as providing a high risk of embarrassment. Second is the observation that silence is sometimes due to students’ need to

have time for mental processing, in which case teachers must allow ample pauses for student speech. Finally, I appreciated King's suggestion that teachers change classroom dynamics by intentionally arranging and rearranging student seating.

Overall, King's study was rigorously conducted, with great attention given to ensuring that student interviewees would be comfortable discussing a potentially sensitive topic. One of the few shortcomings of the study was the rather small number of interview participants. In addition, the study did not consider teachers' perceptions of silence in their classrooms, nor did it consider their expectations of student speech and whether teacher attitudes could be an additional attractor to silence. In the future, it would be valuable for a similar study to be conducted in Japanese non-language classrooms to allow for a comparison between silence in L1 and L2 classrooms and for the same study to be conducted in other countries for cross-country comparison.

To sum up, *Silence in the Second Language Classroom* is an interesting and highly recommended read, providing unique insights into the complex factors contributing to silence in the second language classroom.

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