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The EFL Professional's Written Forum

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## Foreword

Language teaching in a globalized world has seen an enormous increment in terms of strategies and of diversity in resources in the past four decades. As Kern (2006:183) puts it: "Rapid evolution of communication technologies has changed language pedagogy and language use, enabling new forms of discourse, new forms of authorship, and new ways to create and participate in communities." Browsing the topic "teaching languages in the 21st century" gives us an idea about the recent trend par excellence: the use(s) of technology (ies) in the langue classroom. The profession has seen the evolution from the initial CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) whose focus was more on drills and practice of structures and vocabulary, to an integrative perspective to CALL. But soon the more restricted technological tools gave way to the use of multiple online resources advocated as effective tools both for language teaching and learning. Despite the fact that constructivist frameworks of language teaching have gained, where the learners are seen as active participants in the learning process, the era of *generation Y* and wireless communication has challenged teachers in using media and technologies, as the pressure from higher education institutions in particular, and most educational contexts is being felt. To that respect, teacher training programmes of EFL teachers are incorporating these new challenges in their *curricula*. Yet, some socio-educational contexts constrain the effective use of this set of technological resources of language teaching, since teachers and sometimes students show some resistance on its use. The current volume of *The Asian EFL Journal* brings a timely discussion, evaluation of different types of media resources in different Asian contexts: Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand and Turkey.

The first article by Nina Inayati evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of the use of Social Media Technology (SMT) by ELT teachers in a higher education institution in Indonesia. Based on the Planned Behaviour Theory, Nina Inayati concludes that even if teachers were cognizant on the use of SMT in the language classroom, they were rather skeptical on making use of such resources when teaching English.

Kevin Balchin and Carol Wild's study, focusing on a context of EFL teacher training in Malaysia, investigates trainees' beliefs on the integration of technology in the curriculum and its use in the language classroom. Balchin and Wild conclude that despite the fact that the generation of teacher trainees may be considered literate in social media and digital technology, they still show some resistance when it comes to its use in the language classroom. Such resistance seems to be related to the fact that teacher trainees feel under pressure to keep up-to-date with the technological advances and its consequent application in the language classroom, apart from contextual constraints. Based on these results Balchin and Wild propose a "three-part framework" to help integrate technology in teacher training programmes.

In order to understand the intricacies of cultural integration in a country that is investing in the development of EFL teaching, that of Vietnam, Nhu-Hien's article discusses the concept of teacher support from the perspective of Grounded Theory. Results of the study show that

Native English Teachers (NETs) working in Vietnam mention that the challenges faced are related both to pedagogical and non-pedagogical issues. While the pedagogical issues are generally related to differences in the learning and teaching culture in Vietnam, the non-pedagogical issues involve difficulties in adaptation to adapting to life in Vietnam.

Tzu-Chia Chao's article discusses the importance of intercultural communication for language learning from the perspective of the teachers. Tzu-Chia Chao presents a proposal to develop a 24 item self-assessment inventory on intercultural communication awareness raising. Based on the results of the Cronbach Alpha's coefficient, Tzu-Chia Chao concludes that due to the high reliability between items, the self-assessment inventory questionnaire can be used to evaluate both in-service and pre-service ELT teachers.

Suchada Tipmontree's article addresses the development of communicative competence in a specific higher education context in Thailand. Sachada describes and evaluates the implementation of simulation strategies with her own group of students attending a course of English for Business Communication. Having applied a pre-test and a post-test, the study intended to measure changes in "fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary". Results of the study show that the approached adopted had positive effects in the students' communicative competence and ability at different levels of proficiency.

The final article of the current volume, by Asuman Aşık, discusses the level of awareness related to the use of corpora in the EFL classroom in the context of ELT in Turkey. The results of the study show that only a small percentage of teachers were aware of the pedagogical possibilities of corpora in the language classroom and used this resource for teaching English. Asuman Aşık concludes that, in spite of the fact that corpus linguistics has been recognized as an important teaching resource, teachers voiced the need for training on how to use corpora for teaching language. According to Asuman Aşık, the use of corpora in language teaching is particularly interesting for the development of the discourse-pragmatic competence.

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# ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

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**Abstract**

Social media technology (SMT) has exerted a great influence on many aspects of life, including English education. The literature has shown various types of SMT employed in a range of English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts. This study explores the emerging trend of SMT use in ELT in Indonesian higher education contexts. This survey study observes the ELT faculty members of a language centre in a prominent private university in Indonesia. The findings showed that Facebook and YouTube were the most frequently used types of SMTs by the language centre faculty members. In addition, analysis showed that, although most the faculty members were aware of the benefits of SMTs in teaching and used a range of SMTs for various personal and professional purposes, they were reluctant to use it in the classroom. This phenomenon was explained using the framework of Planned Behaviour theory. The analysis using SPSS 20 revealed that the behavioural control of using SMTs was limited due to insufficient institutional infrastructure and support. This small scale study offers some insights into the faculty members' perceptions of SMT use in ELT in the Indonesian context, which could, to some extent, be generalized to other similar developing countries.

**Keywords**: Social Media, English Language Teaching, Higher Education

## Introduction

Information and communication technology (ICT) integration in education is no longer considered a novelty. For decades, educators have incorporated various forms of ICT into their teaching with the aim of enhancing student learning. To some extent, this trend has reciprocally influenced the development of education to make it more open towards ICT, which is reflected in the growing number of studies conducted in the area. One of the latest forms of ICT with rising popularity is social media. The influence on education of this form of ICT will be examined further in this study.

Social media literally refers to any media that allows interaction among people. However, currently, the term has been given to a particular set of attributes that tend to narrow its meaning towards a range of networked tools that emphasise the social aspects of the Internet as a medium of communication (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 2012). Following Davis III et al.'s (2012) suggestion, the term social media technology (SMT) is used in this paper to refer to web-based and mobile applications that allow users to create, engage, and share digital content through multi-way communication. Some examples of popular SMTs include resource-sharing tools such as microblogging platforms (e.g. Twitter) and blogs (e.g. Wordpress), social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn, media sharing tools such as YouTube and Flickr, and wiki software such as PBworks (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2011).

English language teaching (ELT) is an area which often actively embraces social media in its teaching and learning activities. This may be due to the nature of social media which allows the implementation of educational theories in second/ additional language teaching such as constructivism and socio-cultural language theories—both are discussed further in the Literature Review section. An increasing number of studies have shown this trend, some of which have been reviewed in specific studies on social media use in teaching and learning conducted by Sim and Hew (2010), Inayati (2013) and Macaro, Handley and Walter (2012). While there is increasing acceptance of and research on SMT integration into the educational sector in many parts of the world, such studies are scarce in Indonesia.

Therefore, the focus of the current study is on SMT integration, with specific focus on the discipline of ELT in the Indonesian context.

## Literature Review

Technology for teaching is one of the essential skills that teachers ought to have in addition to knowledge of content and pedagogy, a concept popularly known as the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge—TPCK (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). As technology increasingly becomes an integral part of our daily lives, especially with the Internet, its influence in the education sector, especially in teaching, seems unavoidable. Thus, knowledge of technology in teaching is essential for teachers. This knowledge is different from that of pure technology, the type of technological knowledge embodied in TPCK is one that is specifically designed to aid in the teaching and learning process of the content. As Mishra & Koehler (2006) suggest, TPCK is an effective teaching practice which reflects a good understanding of pedagogical techniques by employing technologies to teach content. Within this concept, SMT represents a form of technology which possesses a great educational potential.

SMT has been employed for various educational purposes such as instructional, education management and reaching out to potential future students (Davis III et al., 2012). Due to its transformative effect on the manners in which users experience internet technology, Selwyn (2011) argues that SMT has created a new type of learner and a new type of learning. This new type of learner is referred to as a digital native (Prensky, 2001; Kilickaya & Seferoglu, 2013), the net generation (Hsu, 2013), or generation Y (Davis III et al., 2012). Although some experts has questioned as to whether these distinctions really exist (Lockley & Promnitz-Hayashi, 2012), Selwyn (2011) suggests that the members of this group are perceived to be more proficient at multitasking, more socially autonomous and more self-organised in satisfying their desires, which includes the desire to learn. He further argues that these learners have created a new culture of learning due to their nature for networking and learning via the web; thus, it is believed that this phenomenon imposes

a major influence on higher education, which must adapt its practices to cater to the characteristics of these new learners.

Amidst the majority of positive views about SMT integration into education, some cautions are raised by academics. For example, Friesen and Lowe (2012) believe that SMT is more for promotional and commercial uses and less for educational purposes. They use the example that television was a disappointment in education and argue that the relatively similar features and acceptance of SMT may lead to the same euphoria and future disappointment. Selwyn (2011) raises the same concerns, arguing that educators' expectations of SMT are currently exaggerated due to its pervasiveness and that higher education should be particularly wise in addressing this issue. However, many educators seem to remain certain about the promise of SMT in education. This trend is best reflected in the numerous studies on SMT integration in education as reviewed by Tess (2013), Davis III et al. (2012), and Sim and Hew (2010).

Theories such as constructivism, connectivism and socio-cultural learning theories have been used as a basis for SMT integration into education in general and into ELT in particular. First, constructivism theory is arguably applicable to the use of SMT for teaching and learning purposes (Shih, 2011; Tess, 2013; Zorko, 2009). This theory, as elaborated by Tess (2013), prescribes the conversational nature of learning, which includes dialogues and shared activities. According to Shih (2011), this theory suggests that learning occurs when there is meaningful social interaction that includes community sharing of different perspectives and experiences—an idea that also applies to SMT-supported pedagogy designs.

Another theoretical basis used in the implementation of SMT in education is connectivism, defined as the idea that learning in the information age relies on the ability to access knowledge and information on a 'just-in-time' basis (Selwyn, 2011). Selwyn (2011) explains that this perspective emphasises an individual's ability to connect to specific information sources when and where required, thus, reconceiving learning as the capacity to know more, rather than the accumulation of knowledge. SMT, as one form of ICT, assists in the implementation of this idea. Finally, in foreign language learning, socio-

cultural theory has frequently been used as a theoretical basis in SMT integration (Hsu, 2013; Shih, 2011). In line with constructivism, this theory suggests that rich exposure to and interaction with the target language and its speech community are essential in language learning (Hsu, 2013). Selwyn (2011) further explains that this theory prescribes that learners' active participation in the community of English speakers is crucial for their success in learning and that SMT could serve as effective media to design such pedagogical language activities.

In the field of ELT specifically, SMT has been acknowledged to have contributed to a great shift in its practices (Dudeney & Hockly, 2012). Discussing the historical integration of ICT in ELT, Dudeney and Hockly (2012) argue that during the three stages of computer assisted language learning (CALL) development (first in behaviouristic CALL, then in communicative CALL), SMT is one form of technology that has greatly influenced the shift to the current third stage, which is integrated CALL. Dudeney and Hockly (2012) further argue that integrated CALL is deeply characterised by the improved focus on the development of the four language skills, enhanced teacher–student interactions and a higher emphasis on technology-mediated learning. A great deal of literature has demonstrated the manner in which ELT educators have incorporated SMT into their teaching practices. Therefore, in line with the purpose of this study, this literature review closely examines the various uses of SMT in ELT and discusses some affordance and barriers to SMT integration into ELT.

**SMTs Used in ELT**

Various forms of popular SMT have been integrated into ELT, for example, blogs, wikis, Facebook, Twitter and Skype. These are employed in various ELT contexts such as teaching courses in English skills and English content. The analysis of SMT usage in this section is limited to higher education ELT. For practical purposes, the presentation of the analysis is arranged based on the type of SMT.

*Blog*

The literature suggests that blogs are one of the most commonly used forms of SMT in ELT. As a type of online journal, a blog allows users to post multiple entries of content (Yang, Miller & Bai, 2011), thus enabling knowledge sharing beyond classroom contexts (Sun & Chang, 2012). Generally, the integration of blogs into ELT has been demonstrated as feasible in various contexts such as skills and content courses. To some degree, blogs were found to support advanced students' independent learning. An interesting finding was obtained in a positivistic study that directly compared two groups of students with and without blogs (Lin, Lin and Hsu, 2011). This study found no significant difference in writing achievement between the two cohorts. However, it should be noted that significant improvement in writing skills were achieved by both groups. This study focused only on the final products (i.e. the students' assessment marks), while other studies that are more interpretative in nature and generally show more positive results—such as Sun & Chang (2012), Ozkan (2011), and Shih (2010)—, emphasise additional aspects such as students' learning experiences and motivation.

*Wikis*

Another type of SMT widely integrated into ELT is the wiki, which is an online publishing media intended for knowledge sharing that allows users to continuously edit the pages (Zorko, 2009). Wikis have been used in various designs of ELT such as reported by Zorko (2009), Kessler (2009) and Chik and Breidbach (2011). Using wikis to teach an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course for a cohort of sociology students in Slovenia, Zorko (2009) concluded that wikis were proven to enhance students' effective collaboration in language learning. Another study about wikis conducted by Kessler (2009) found that students' willingness to collaborate was high, but their priority was the content, with less emphasis on language structures. Chik and Breidbach (2011) combined wikis with Facebook and Skype and involved cohorts of students from Hong Kong and Germany. The study suggests that the three SMTs employed effectively served as a platform to allow both cohorts to compose multimodal texts.

*Facebook*

Facebook is currently the most popular social networking site worldwide and has been integrated in many ELT settings. As discussed earlier, Facebook was used by Chik and Breidbach (2011) in addition to wikis and Skype. Another study employing Facebook was conducted by Shih (2011), who taught an English writing course to a cohort of Taiwanese students. The findings suggest that Facebook integration in this English writing course contributed to improving the effectiveness and enjoyment in learning and, at the same time, offered additional learning modes that potentially improved students' English writing skills. Another study on Facebook in ELT was conducted by Hsu (2013) who found that students greatly exploited Facebook for various forms of English learning. In addition, almost all participants perceived Facebook as an effective platform for EFL learning.

*Twitter*

Another popular SMT integrated in ELT is Twitter, a microblogging platform that enables users to post short text messages to be distributed throughout its community (Borau, Ulrich, Feng and Shen, 2009). In this study, Twitter was employed to offer wider opportunities for students' active learning in English. Borau et al., (2009) asked 98 Chinese students to post at least seven Twitter entries in English every week during the course. The data analysed included all of the students' Twitter entries and the results of an attitude questionnaire. The findings showed that students were in favour of Twitter usage in ELT and that they perceived it as an effective tool to develop their English skills.

This literature analysis on the types of SMT uses in ELT contexts provides evidence of the affordance of various forms of SMT in ELT settings, whether the use is for English-skills courses or English-content courses, blended-learning design or entirely online-learning design, classroom English learning or completely independent English learning. The types of SMT involved include both synchronous media such as Skype and asynchronous media such as blogs, wikis, and Facebook. This demonstrates the manner in which SMT has permeated ELT practices and the manner in which English-language educators have openly welcomed and adopted SMT in their teaching contexts.

In broader Indonesian contexts, social media enjoys extremely high popularity. In fact, Saleh (2013) states that 95.7% of Indonesian netizens (internet users) use social media. He further states that the residents of Jakarta, the Indonesian capital, is rated as the number one user of Twitter by Semiocast, a global social media agency based in Paris. In addition, Mediabistro (2013) listed Indonesia as the country with the third highest use of Facebook. However, the high popularity of social media in Indonesia does not seem to extend to its education sector. Studies on the educational uses of social media in Indonesia remain very rare, especially ones published in international peer-reviewed journals. This study serves to fill the gap in literature by reporting the manner in which Indonesian educators employ social media for their personal and professional non-teaching use, and pedagogical use, especially in teaching English Language. In addition, the perceived advantages and disadvantages of SMT use in ELT are also investigated.

## Methodology

This study used survey design to obtain answers to the research question. A survey is a procedure in quantitative research that involves the use of a questionnaire to explore a population's characteristics, attitudes, behaviours, and opinions (Creswell, 2012). This design has been selected for several practical reasons. First, a survey is best for describing trends in practices of a population; therefore, it is the appropriate option to answer the present study's research questions. Second, a survey provides a time-effective instrument with wide geographical reach (Fink, 2013). Therefore, it can reach many respondents in a relatively limited time, which improves the effectiveness of the current study's data collection process.

### Participants

The target population of this study was the English teachers of a language centre in a renowned private university located in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. In addition to the practicality reasons, they were selected because they represent the Indonesian higher education ELT educators due to the fact that they taught English Language to university students. There were 67 faculty members all of whom were Indonesian native speakers with

advanced English-speaking skills and one or more formal degrees in English literature and/or English education. This study aimed to obtain census data that involved all the members of the population. The population encompassed both part-time and full-time faculty members of the language centre. Their principal duty involved teaching English to students of various disciplines at the university, most of whom were also Indonesian native speakers. 70% of the respondents completed the questionnaire, and the complete profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Profile of Respondents

| Variable | Value | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 31.9 |
| | Female | 68.1 |
| **Employment Status** | Full time | 40.4 |
| | Part time | 59.6 |
| **Age** | 20–24 | 27.7 |
| | 25–29 | 53.2 |
| | 30–34 | 14.9 |
| | 35–39 | 2.1 |
| | 40–44 | 2.1 |
| **Qualification** | Completed bachelor degree | 51.1 |
| | Currently doing master degree | 34.0 |
| | Completed master degree | 14.9 |
| **Tenure** | Fewer than two years | 31.9 |
| | 2–5 years | 44.7 |
| | 6–9 years | 21.3 |
| | 10–15 years | 2.1 |

### Instrument

The survey instrument was developed with a reference to the existing literature on SMT use in ELT, taking into account the Indonesian ELT contexts. Some of the studies employed as a basis for developing the instrument were Alfahad (2009), Alzaidiyeen, Mei and Fook (2010), Davis III et al. (2012), Fuchs and Akbar (2013), McCarthy (2010), Moran, Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2011), and Rosen, Whaling, Carrier, Cheever, & Rokkum (2013). Some modifications of the questions and statements were made in order to better accommodate the unique characteristics of the target population, the Indonesian English-language teachers. The modifications were due to factors such as the fact that the previous studies focused only

on one specific SMT, were conducted in countries other than Indonesia, were a large-based study with a wide range of demographical and professional elements and were conducted on general web-based ICT in education. These studies were used as a basis to develop questionnaire items with a strong theoretical foundation to support the questionnaire's construct validity.

The survey questionnaire draft was sent to five experts in ELT, ICT in education and quantitative research for the purposes of content and face validity check. The experts were experienced researchers in education with a background in the discipline of ELT and a high interest in innovative educational ICT. The questionnaire was further modified in both format and content in light of their input. After the validation process was completed, the instrument was pilot tested for internal consistency and reliability check with nine Indonesian English-language teachers. The pilot test results were then analysed to determine the instrument's internal consistency by calculating its Cronbach Alpha coefficient, which describes how well a series of items complement one another in measuring the same quality or dimension (Fink, 2013). The analysis was conducted using software SPSS 20 and the results showed that the alpha coefficient for the 'use' variable items was 0.915. These figures indicate very good internal consistency following George and Mallery's (2006) rule of thumb for the alpha coefficient in social science (>0.9—excellent; >0.8—good; >0.7—acceptable; >0.6—questionable; >0.5—poor; and <0.5—unacceptable).

The final draft of the instrument consisted of three sections. The first section contained seven multiple-choice questions asking for respondents' personal information such as gender, age, tenure, level of education, and employment status. The second section contained three multiple-choice questions asking about the respondents' familiarity with several popular SMT, their frequency in using them and their actual use of the media. The question about actual use was comprised of 24 items examining the respondents' personal use, professional non-teaching use, and pedagogical use of SMT. A scale was used for questions that measure respondents' familiarity (three-point scale) and frequency of use (five-point scale). Finally, the last section contained two open questions probing into the respondents' perception about the advantages and disadvantages of SMT use in their teaching contexts. Open question format was chosen as it enables respondents to give spontaneous responses

and avoid bias that may result from suggested responses (Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec, & Vehovar, 2003), thus is believed to provide deeper and more meaningful insights into the study.

### Data Collection

The data collection process was conducted during September to October 2013. All respondents were initially contacted via email to invite them to take the survey. By the end of the data collection process, 70% of all of the targeted participants completed the survey.

### Data Analysis

The data obtained from the survey were analysed mostly using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics provide simple summaries about the population examined and the responses to some or all of the questions (Fink, 2013). The present study uses numbers and percentages to analyse the demographical information to observe the frequency distribution of each category. Information on the use of SMT was analysed using a weighted mean to capture the general tendency of the population. The weighted mean was chosen because respondents' answers were worth different weightings, and this procedure offers the most reliable method for understanding and presenting such data.

As for the open-ended responses, they were analysed using content analysis in order to draw inferences about the recorded information written freely by the respondents. This was conducted by carefully reading and identifying certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, and sentences contained (Fink, 2013). The content analysis was conducted using NVivo 10 software due to its practicality in effectively analysing a large amount of qualitative data. The findings of the analyses are presented in the next section.

## Findings

As noted in Table 1, the most common profile of the participants was female, part-time, and younger than 30 years of age with a bachelor degree qualification. Since the present study focuses on the use of SMT in ELT, it was deemed necessary to ensure that the respondents were familiar with some forms of SMT. Thus, a question addressing the issue

was devised. Therefore, following the demographical information, the questionnaire probes into the respondents' familiarity with social media. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they were (1) unfamiliar, (2) familiar, or (3) very familiar with SMTs and Table 2 presents the summary of the responses.

**Table 2.** Respondents' Familiarity with SMT

| **SMT** | Facebook | YouTube | Twitter | Wiki | Blog | Google+ | SlideShare | MySpace | LinkdIn | Podcast | others |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mean** | 2.87 | 2.7 | 2.23 | 2.21 | 2.19 | 2 | 1.68 | 1.47 | 1.45 | 1.45 | n/a |

Among the popular SMTs listed in the survey, all of the respondents reported familiarity with Facebook and YouTube, and generally, they indicated high familiarity with both SMT (Facebook $\bar{x}$ = 2.87 and YouTube $\bar{x}$ = 2.70). The next group of SMT for which the respondents reported a moderate level of familiarity were Twitter ($\bar{x}$ = 2.23), wikis ($\bar{x}$ = 2.21), blogs ($\bar{x}$ = 2.19), and Google+ ($\bar{x}$ = 2.00). Finally, the SMT with which respondents showed a low level of familiarity were SlideShare ($\bar{x}$ = 1.68), MySpace ($\bar{x}$= 1.47), podcasts ($\bar{x}$ = 1.45), and LinkedIn ($\bar{x}$ = 1.45). Several respondents indicated familiarity with other types of SMT not listed in the survey such as Skype (2%), Instagram (2%), Edmodo (2%), and Academia.edu (2%).

**The Use of SMT**

After familiarity, the actual use of SMT was analysed. Table 3 summarizes the findings of the types of SMT used by the respondents and their frequency of use. The respondents were asked to indicate the types of SMT that they use and their frequency in using it by ticking (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) often, and (5) very often. It is worth noting that for clarity purposes, the survey indicates the range of time for each frequency to ensure that the response was clear for both the respondents and the researcher, for example, 'very often' was defined as every day and 'rarely' was defined as less than once per month.

**Table 3.** Respondents' Frequency of SMT Use

| **SMT** | Facebook | YouTube | Twitter | Wiki | Blog | Google+ | SlideShare | Podcast | LinkdIn | MySpace | others |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mean** | 4.57 | 4.15 | 3.38 | 3.04 | 2.94 | 2.74 | 2.09 | 1.72 | 1.68 | 1.53 | n/a |

As can be seen from Table 3, Facebook was the most frequently used SMT with $\bar{x}$ = 4.57, indicating everyday use of the media by most of the language centre faculty members. The form of SMT that was used with second highest frequency was YouTube, $\bar{x}$ = 4.15, which was generally used once per week or more often by most of the language centre faculty members. Some forms of SMT, which were generally moderately used were Twitter ($\bar{x}$ = 3.38), wikis ($\bar{x}$ = 3.04), blogs ($\bar{x}$ = 2.94), and Google+ ($\bar{x}$ = 2.74). The means of the last four types of SMT indicated that they were used approximately one to three times per month by the language centre faculty members. Other types of SMT rarely used by the language centre faculty members were SlideShare ($\bar{x}$ = 2.07), Podcast ($\bar{x}$ = 1.72), LinkedIn ($\bar{x}$ = 1.68), and MySpace ($\bar{x}$ = 1.53), which were generally used less than once per month.

The survey also measured the types of SMT usage for personal, professional non-teaching, and pedagogical purposes. The summary of the findings is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Summary of Types of SMT Usage

| | | Mean |
|---|---|---|
| **Personal use** | | |
| **I use social media to** | learn more about people I meet socially | 3.36 |
| | find past friends | 3.64 |
| | find new friends | 2.96 |
| | stay in touch with my friends | 4.34 |
| | stay in touch with my family | 3.38 |
| | connect to people of similar interests | 3.38 |
| | view entertaining videos | 3.47 |
| | stay updated with entertainment news | 3.64 |
| | ***Grand mean*** | **3.52** |
| **Professional non-teaching use** | | |
| **I use social media to** | improve my English skills | 4.11 |
| | learn more about my colleagues | 3.36 |
| | stay updated with current matters in my office | 3.28 |
| | communicate with my colleagues | 3.53 |
| | organize events with my colleagues | 3.00 |
| | connect to other teachers | 3.19 |
| | stay updated with current issues in English teaching | 3.66 |
| | ***Grand mean*** | **3.45** |
| | | |
| **Pedagogical use** | | |
| **I use social media to** | learn more about my students | 3.09 |
| | upload teaching materials for students to view | 3.00 |
| | post assignments for students | 2.98 |
| | improve student engagement | 2.98 |
| | post class announcements to students | 2.77 |
| | facilitate class discussion | 2.81 |
| | provide additional academic support for students | 3.15 |
| | encourage more active student participation | 2.91 |
| | encourage peer feedback | 2.70 |
| | ***Grand mean*** | **2.93** |

As noted in Table 4, there are 24 items in the survey used to measure this variable with a five-point scale of frequency graded as: never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4) and very often (5). Analysis of the survey results showed that personal use of social media scored the highest mean ($\bar{x}$ = 3.52) which indicates that most of the language centre faculty members

often use various SMT for personal purposes. Following personal use was professional non-teaching uses ($\bar{x}$ = 3.45), with the indication that that most of the language centre faculty members used social media for this purpose only sometimes. Finally, analysis of the use of social media for pedagogical purposes showed that the language centre faculty members rarely used it for this purpose ($\bar{x}$ = 2.93). In addition to the various uses of SMT listed in the table, one respondent indicated that they used SMT to find teaching materials.

**Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages of SMT in Teaching**

Following the use, the questionnaire also probed into the respondents' perception over the advantage and disadvantage of SMT use in education, particularly in the area of ELT. An analysis of the narrative data using NVivo 10 generated 26 themes for the advantages and 15 themes for the disadvantages. These themes were then classified into four areas: 1) pedagogy, 2) practicality, 3) learning awareness, motivation and independence, and 4) teacher professional development. Figure 3 details the distribution of each theme relative to the percentage of references as observed in the data analysis.

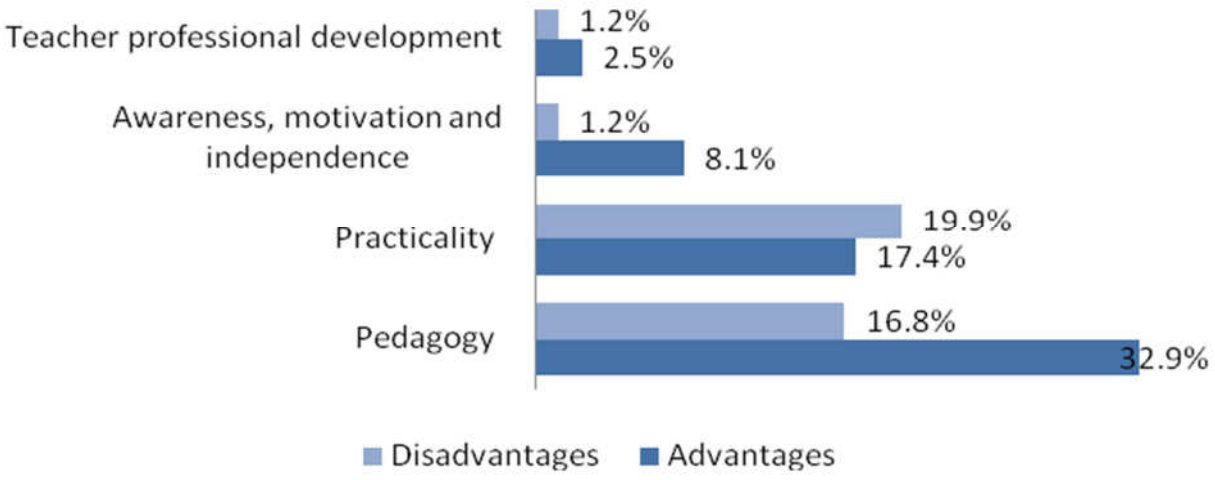


**Figure 3.** Respondents' Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages of SMT

The area of advantage most frequently referred to by respondents was pedagogy; 32.9% of the overall responses were related to the potential benefits of SMT when used in teaching and learning English. Fifteen references were made about the manner in which SMT

integration was believed to contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. There were several specific reasons mentioned. First, the attractiveness of SMT, which was believed to lead to more enjoyable learning and this aspect was mentioned on at least seven occasions. Second, the perception that SMT provided a better and more effective communication platform was mentioned 17 times, and it was also believed to improve classroom communication effectiveness, strengthen the teacher–learner bond, and offer a connection between the real world and the classroom. Third, the engaging quality of SMT (referred to nine times) was believed to enable more active learner participation in the class and was deemed to suit the so-called 'digital native' learners. SMT was also believed to provide more learning opportunities and offer a range of authentic materials for English language practice. Thus, the integration of SMT into the teaching and learning process was believed to encourage positive and educative use of SMT by students (five references).

The next area of advantage frequently referred to by the teacher respondents was related to the practical aspects of social-media use in ELT, with 17.4% of the overall responses related to this area. No fewer than 14 references were made to the manner in which SMTs were believed to enhance the time and distance flexibility of classroom execution such as making teacher-learner communication outside class hours easier, enabling the upload of teaching materials that students could access at any time and from any location. Other practical aspects referred to were that SMT allows exposure to rich information, opens doors to a range of online-learning support, enables the creation of a learning community, and may open communication with a wider community; thus, offering real world connections (eight references). In addition, SMT integration was believed to offer greater exposure to technology, which helped learners to become more technologically literate (two references). Finally, at least four references were made to the paperless nature of SMT integration in teaching and learning, making it environmentally friendly as well as paper savvy.

Another area of advantage found in the survey responses was related to learners' increased awareness and motivation and independence in learning English. This aspect covered 8.1% of the overall responses. At least seven respondents believed that using SMT in teaching could improve learners' awareness of English and motivation to learn the language. SMT was also believed to support independent learning due to its attractiveness,

popularity and the provision of various English practice opportunities (four references). In addition, the fact that it allows for the creation of a learning community among students and teachers also supported the notion of independent learning (one reference).

The final area of advantage to which respondents referred to with the least frequency was related to teacher professional development (2.5%). Three references were made in relation to the manner in which SMT could help teachers in their professional development. These references were principally due to the interactive nature of SMT, which allows for professional sharing among teachers about teaching and other work-related matters.

*Disadvantages*

The biggest concern in SMT integration posed by the teacher respondents was in the area of practicality (19.9%). The lack of necessary technical resources and the vulnerability of SMT to technical problems were the most stated disadvantages, with no less than 15 references to these. Some fears of the potential disadvantages of SMT were also expressed, for example, privacy concerns and online crimes (four references). Other practical issues perceived as disadvantages that were observed during the analysis were concerns about learners not accessing their SMT accounts regularly, not being familiar with certain types of SMT, and being too dependent on technology (eight references). From the teacher and management perspective, SMT integration was considered costly (particularly in relation to technical resources) and time consuming (particularly because of the additional work related to the teachers developing mastery of technology skills, teaching preparation as well as administration); five references were made to these factors.

After practicality, the area of pedagogical disadvantages was mentioned with the second greatest frequency as a disadvantage of SMT; this accounted for 16.8% of the overall remarks on the positive and negative perceptions about SMT integration into ELT. The most mentioned themes in this area were SMT's vulnerability to distraction and dishonest practices by learners, with 17 references made to these issues. Teacher respondents were also concerned about other online activities that students might find more tempting than the designated learning activities. Some teachers also voiced concerns over plagiarism and other types of dishonesty that are made easier in blended-learning settings.

Another pedagogical area addressed was classroom practices in which SMT was believed to contribute towards a less serious attitude towards learning, which might negatively affect productivity. This could be related to the previous issue of distraction by other online activities considered more entertaining by some learners (three references). The issue of difficulties related to assessment in blended-learning settings using SMT was also raised, followed by the issue of a deteriorating teacher–learner bond due to the possible decrease of face-to-face communication (five references). Finally, there were also some concerns that SMT may evoke socially unacceptable behaviour among the younger generation, for example, communicating in a less appropriate way to the teachers and other members of older generations (two references).

Several remarks on the other two areas of learner awareness, motivation and independence, as well as in the area of teacher professional development were found (2.5% coverage). As mentioned, some teacher respondents expressed concerns that SMT may negatively affect learners' seriousness towards learning because of the enjoyable nature of the technology and the fact that it is more commonly associated with leisure activities. Next, a lack in teacher training was also mentioned as a possible disadvantage of SMT integration. This concern was believed to contribute to teachers' lack of skills in implementing blended-learning designs using SMTs.

In conclusion, analysis of the open responses on the perceived advantages and disadvantages of SMT integration into ELT generated a trend that the teacher respondents in general showed a more positive attitude towards the integration of SMT in their teaching. This was shown by the higher percentage of overall positive remarks (61%) compared to negative remarks (39%), which suggests a greater awareness of the potential benefits of SMT in teaching English and the positive attitude towards its educational uses in comparison to the lack of awareness or fears surrounding the potential problems. However, the relatively large percentage of perceived potential disadvantages also shows that many of the teacher respondents are aware of these and, therefore, more ready to manage the issue should they want to implement blended-learning designs using SMTs. Further discussion about the overall findings of the current study is presented in the discussion section.

## Discussion and Implication

The purpose of this study is to explore the use of SMT by higher education faculty members in Indonesia. Therefore, this section discusses the issue, the relationship between the types of uses as well as the potential implications drawn from the study. The discussion of the patterns of SMT use is presented in two areas. First, the types of SMT used by the language centre faculty members are discussed in conjunction with their familiarity with a range of SMTs. Second, the types of SMT use for personal, professional non-teaching, and pedagogical purposes are discussed and possible explanations for the trends are offered.

### Types of SMT Used

All the language centre faculty members reported familiarity with at least two types of SMT and use of at least one type of SMT. Further analysis of the frequency of SMT use showed that Facebook and YouTube were the two most popular forms of SMT among the survey respondents. This result was explicable as Indonesia is currently ranked in the highest three Facebook user countries by Mediabistro (2013), a leading media industry provider based in New York (United States). The findings were also in line with survey results from Moran, Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2011) of the higher education faculty members' use of SMT in the United States. In a survey involving almost 2,000 respondents, they found that Facebook and YouTube were the most used forms of SMT, which confirms the popularity of both forms of SMT among higher education faculty members worldwide.

The next forms of SMT of which the language centre faculty members reported moderate use as well as familiarity with were Twitter, wikis, blogs, and Google+. Low use and familiarity was reported for SlideShare, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Podcasts. On average, 18.6% of the faculty members reported never using the former group of SMT, and 58.5% reported never using the latter group of SMTs. This is interesting because some SMTs with moderate use such as Twitter and Google+ have been found quite popular in Indonesia as well as worldwide (Globalwebindex, 2013), although their popularity levels were below Facebook and YouTube. The low frequency of use could be caused by several factors such

as a lesser popularity of some of these forms of SMT and/or the language centre faculty members' lack of interest in them.

**Types of SMT Usage**

To gain better insights into how the language centre faculty members used SMT, the current study also explored the types of SMT uses, which was divided into three aspects: personal, professional non-teaching, and pedagogical uses.

*a. Personal Use of SMT*

Further analysis of the three types of usage revealed that SMT was most commonly used by the language centre faculty members for personal purposes. On average, the language centre faculty members' use for this purpose was quite frequent. Detailed analysis of each component showed that respondents most frequently used SMT to keep in contact with their friends, both current and old, remain updated with entertainment news, and view entertainment videos. Considering the types of SMT for which high use was reported, that is, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, such personal uses would be expected. Facebook and

Twitter are social networking sites that offer convenient manners in which to maintain contact with friends, both new and old; YouTube offers a wide range of entertaining videos such as music, movie clips and trailers, and news clips. In addition, all these forms of SMT offer various manners in which to contact other people, whether these are relatives, friends or potential friends, or even well-known people such as celebrities and other public figures.

*b. Professional Non-teaching Use of SMT*

The types of SMT with the second highest reported use by the language centre faculty members were for professional purposes that are not directly linked to teaching. Overall, this type of usage was less frequent than the personal ones but with a relatively small interval in terms of means. Closer analysis of the detailed types of professional use indicates that the language centre faculty members possessed a relatively high interest in employing SMT for their endeavours in professional development. The first two items listed as the most frequent types of professional use were related to the area in which respondents said that they had been using SMT independently to improve their English skills as well as their awareness of

the current issues in ELT. The latter could be related to new teaching approaches and new trends in the area. These aspects should be of particular interest since SMT could serve as inexpensive yet effective elements in the existing professional development programs. Detailed elaboration of potential uses of SMTs for professional development program is presented in the section of 'Implications of the Study.'

*c. Pedagogical Use of SMT*

Finally, for the pedagogical use of SMT, the analysis of results showed that this type of use is the least frequent in comparison to the other two. A closer analysis of the data showed that some teachers had tried integrating SMT into their teaching, and most of them reported only occasional use of SMT with very few (on average 5%) reporting high frequency of use for this purpose. In fact, a moderate number of teachers (11.6%) reported never integrating any forms of SMT into their teaching. In comparison to the previous types of use, for which 97% reported to have used SMT for some forms of professional use, this indicates the low pedagogical use of SMT by the language centre faculty members.

Detailed analysis of the types of pedagogical use of SMT revealed that the teachers were aware of the potential pedagogical uses of SMT (e.g. providing academic support for students, finding or uploading teaching materials, posting announcements and assignments, and encouraging students' active participation and peer feedback); however, their willingness to integrate it was still relatively low. Some potential reasons for this could be closely related to their perceived barriers of SMT implementation in ELT settings—such as SMT's vulnerability to technical problems, susceptibility to creating distraction and dishonest practices in students—which were a prevalent topic in the discussion of the perceived disadvantages of SMT in teaching. This explanation is in line with the Technology Acceptance Model proposed by Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989) which suggests that people's attitude and willingness to use technology is influenced by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of the technology. In this case, although some evidences of perceived usefulness of SMTs for ELT are known by the teachers, the perceived ease of use of SMT for teaching purposes is likely to be the hindering factor that impeded the real use of the technology in their teaching contexts. Some potential solutions to address this discrepancy are discussed in the following section.

## Implications of the Study

As highlighted previously, the pedagogical use of SMT was relatively low despite the faculty members' relatively high familiarity towards SMT and frequent use of SMT for personal purposes and moderate use of SMT for non-teaching professional purposes. This finding agrees with the study of Ajjan and Hartshorne (2008) who also found a low pedagogical use of SMT by higher education faculty members based in the United States despite their relatively high awareness of the potential benefits of SMT. This demonstrates that other forms of SMT usage do not guarantee faculty members would use SMT in their teaching; there are other factors driving the use of SMT.

One possible factor that could explain this discrepancy is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), which suggests that an individual's intention to perform an action is driven by the presence of a subjective norm, attitude, and perceived behavioural control. Previous and other types of media use of SMTs would, to some extent, influence an individual's attitude and perceived behavioural control. However, to increase the likelihood of SMT use, other aspects such as subjective norm—the influence of other relevant parties such as colleagues, superiors and students—should be addressed, along with other aspects of attitudes—teachers' view of SMT and its influence in their teaching—and perceived behavioural control—perception of feasibility and ease of use of SMT in classroom.

Insights obtained from the study have partially showed that concerns of practicality and pedagogical aspects—both in the area of perceived behavioural control—have negatively affected the low usage of SMT in ELT contexts. This problem could be addressed, for example, by providing better supporting infrastructure such as sufficient and reliable ICT hardware, internet connection, and technical staff. In addition, provision of more relevant training by the institution through professional development programs could also help the faculty to effectively incorporate SMT into their teaching. Ideally, the training should be sustainable and continuous as SMT, like any other technology, is continuously upgraded. However, such a solution is usually limited due to tight budgets and thus other possible solutions are required, for example, creating workplace learning policies that include design-based experimental programs (Kreijn, Van Acker, Vermeulen & Van Buuren, 2012). Such a program is believed to help raise teachers' involvement in the use of various forms of ICT,

including SMT, in education by offering various opportunities for them to design and execute experimental teaching plans using various forms of ICT. Kreijn et al. (2012) state that this could help teachers be more confident in using ICT and SMT in their teaching and help to better convince them about the positive contribution of ICT or SMT to teaching and learning, and eventually to student learning outcomes.

## Conclusion

The goal of this study was to explore the use of SMT in teaching English by the Indonesian higher education faculty members. A discrepancy in the types of SMT usage was noted; although the other forms of experience in using SMT were present, both personally and professionally, the pedagogical use of SMT was still relatively low. Further analysis of the open question responses showed that this trend might result from relatively high concerns on the practicality and pedagogical aspects of SMT use in ELT. Based on the discussion, some practical implications to address the potential factors causing the problem were offered, for example, through the introduction of new policies that support an experimental atmosphere among the faculty to integrate SMT, thus, raising their professional and pedagogical capacity.

Finally, the limitations of the study were highlighted as a basis for future research. First, the present study used only a survey to obtain the data; thus, generating only self-reported information that is quite rigid and less open to variation. Therefore, future research could consider doing a triangulation study such as via interview and/or observation to generate better and more in-depth data about the state of teachers' familiarity with and use of SMT in ELT and in general education. Second, the study covered only the faculty members of one working centre in an Indonesian higher education institution. Therefore, future studies could consider conducting the same study on a larger scale, involving more than one centre or, if possible, more than one institution, in order to gain better information on the current trends in the area.

Despite these limitations, this study provides some insight into the perceptions of academic staff regarding SMT use in the ELT classroom. Although this is a small-scale

study, it has implications for other language centres in the higher education context in Indonesia and could offer insight into other similar developing countries.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Social Media Use Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to observe Indonesian higher education English Language Teachers' use of social media. In this survey, social media refers to the community-based online tools that allow users to create both the form and content of the media. Some examples of popular social media are blog, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, wiki, podcast, Skype, Flickr, and MySpace. Your participation in this study is very much appreciated and your individual responses will be kept confidential. Please answer each question as accurately as you can.

### I. Personal Information

1. What is your gender?

◯ Male ◯ Female

2. Which age category are you in?

◯ under 25 ◯ 25-29, ◯ 30-34, ◯ 35-39, ◯ 40-44, ◯ 45+

3. How long have you been teaching?

◯ <2 years ◯ 2-5 years ◯ 6-9 years ◯ 10-15 years ◯ ≥16 years

4. What is your highest education?

◯ Completed bachelor degree
◯ Currently doing master degree
◯ Completed master degree
◯ Currently doing doctoral degree
◯ Completed doctoral degree

5. What's your employment status in the Language Center?

◯ Full time, ◯ Part time

## II. Social Media Technology Familiarity and Use

6. How familiar are you with the following social media technology? *Please tick the appropriate answer.*

| | **Unfamiliar** | **Familiar** | **Very familiar** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blog | | | |
| YouTube | | | |
| Facebook | | | |
| Twitter | | | |
| LinkedIn | | | |
| Podcast | | | |
| Wiki | | | |
| SlideShare | | | |
| Google+ | | | |
| MySpace | | | |
| Other: ... | | | |
| Other: ... | | | |

7. How often do you use with the following social media? *Please circle the appropriate number.*

1 - never
2 - rarely (less than once in a month)
3 - sometimes (one to three times a month)
4 - often (once a week or more)
5 - very often (everyday)

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blog | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| YouTube | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Facebook | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Twitter | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| LinkedIn | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Podcast | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Wiki | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| SlideShare | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Google+ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| MySpace | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Other: ... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Other: ... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

8. To what extent have you used social media for the following purposes? *Please circle the appropriate number.*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Personal Use** | | | | | |
| I use social media to learn more about people I meet socially | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to find past friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to find new friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to stay in touch with my friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to stay in touch with my family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to connect to people of similar interests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to view entertaining videos | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to stay update with entertainment news | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to improve my English skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | |
| **Professional Non-Teaching use** | | | | | |
| I use social media to learn more about my colleagues | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to stay update with current matters in my office | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to communicate with my colleagues | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to organize events with my colleagues | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to connect to other teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to stay update with current issues in English teaching | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Professional Teaching Use** | | | | | |
| I use social media to learn more about my students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to upload teaching materials for students to read/ view | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to post assignments for students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to improve student engagement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to post class announcement to students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to facilitate class discussion | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to provide additional academic support for students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I use social media to encourage more student participation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Other, please indicate... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Other, please indicate... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## III. Perception of Social Media Technology

9. What do you think about the advantages of using social media technology in your teaching?

……

……

……

……

……

10. What do you think about the disadvantages of using social media technology in your teaching?

……

……

……

……

……

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire**

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# Expanding the vision: A study of teacher trainees' beliefs about using technology in the English language classroom in Malaysia

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## Bio Data

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**Abstract**

This study investigates the beliefs of a group of English language teacher trainees from Malaysia with regard to the use of technology for teaching and learning English. The Malaysian school system, like many schools systems, is strongly committed to the implementation and integration of technology across the curriculum in order to equip its next generation of citizens to compete globally in the technological age. Teacher trainees today, who have often grown up with technology and might be considered as *digital natives* (Prensky, 2001) or second generation users of technology, appear ideally placed to expedite this aim. In this study, three instruments are used for investigating teacher trainees' beliefs: questionnaires, discussion boards and reflective writing. Findings suggest that whilst some traditional concerns relating to technology use remain, a number of additional concerns have arisen, such as the perceived need for a wide knowledge of technological tools and a feeling of pressure to keep up to date. The study also highlights several negative influences on participants' perceptions of technology and its use in the classroom, such as the effect of their own classroom experiences as learners or 'apprentice of observation' (Lortie, 1975). Based on the findings, a framework for incorporating a more appropriate technology component into language teacher education programmes emerges which might help second generation users in developing appropriate skills for an ever-changing digital environment.

**Keywords**: beliefs, technology, second language teaching, teacher training

## Introduction

In recent years, there have been a number of studies relating to teachers' beliefs about language education (for example, Riley, 2009; Warford & Reeves, 2003) as well as Borg's wider review (Borg, S. 2006). Teachers' beliefs about the role of technology in education more generally have also been examined (for example, Chen, 2010; Sang et al., 2010; Liu & Szabo, 2009). In addition, there are studies which specifically address teachers' beliefs about the role of technology in English language education (Yunus, 2007; Kern, 2006). With the inexorable growth in technology use in all major spheres of life, a basic level of competence and a readiness to embrace technology as a teaching tool is increasingly expected to be part of an English language teacher's repertoire in many English language teaching contexts. Whilst it should not be assumed that today's teacher trainees, as digital natives or second generation users of technology, are all confident and competent with regard to use of technology (Robinson & Mackey, 2006), their concerns may differ from those of digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001) or first generation users of technology.

The present study investigated the beliefs of a group of English language teacher trainees from Malaysia with regard to the use of technology for teaching and learning English. The Malaysian school system is strongly committed to the implementation and integration of technology across the curriculum in order to equip its next generation of citizens to compete globally in the technological age. The Malaysian Ministry of Education aims to develop technology use across all schools such that "ICT will be a ubiquitous part of schooling life … with all teachers and students equipped with the skills necessary to use this technology meaningfully" (Malaysian Education Blueprint 2012, p. E-19). The teacher trainees who took part in the study were cognisant of the Ministry of Education's aims and the resultant expectations with regard to their future teaching role and the focus on technology within their programme aimed to support the trainees in developing the required competencies.

A focus on particular technological tools is gradually becoming more prevalent in teacher training programmes for language teachers, often through innovative use of particular tools on particular courses within such programmes, such as the use of digital multimedia on a

digital storytelling course to develop language proficiency and teaching techniques (Hanington et al., 2013). Similarly, in the language classroom, technology is being used in innovative ways appropriate to particular contexts, such as the use of wikis and digital video technologies to develop language proficiency (Johnson & deHaan, 2011). However, there is a need for a more systematic focus within teacher training programmes on equipping teacher trainees with the skills to operate confidently using technology in the language classroom. The overall aim of the study was therefore to investigate teacher trainees' beliefs in relation to technology in teaching and learning in order to develop a framework to address this issue. The following areas were explored:

1. What are the teacher trainees' beliefs about using different forms of technology in their future teaching of English as a second language?
2. What challenges do the teacher trainees perceive in using different forms of technology in their future teaching of English as a second language?
3. What changes, if any, are there to teacher trainees' beliefs during the study?

Before detailing the investigation, the key terms of belief and technology need clarifying. M. Borg (2001, p. 186) defined belief as: "a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour". This provided a point of reference for evaluating the nature and impact of the teacher trainees' beliefs within the study. Following the call of Russell et al. (2003), and Chen (2010), among others, to be specific in defining exactly what is being addressed in studies involving technology, the present study focused on areas Russell et al. (2003, p. 301) described as "teacher use of technology for delivery" and "teacher-directed student-use of technology". The term technology as used in this article refers specifically to in-class uses of technology[1].

[1] The term ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is also used by the teacher trainees in the study and, for the purposes of this study, carries the same meaning as the term technology.

Other activities involving technology use, such as for lesson preparation and administration, are not discussed as these lay outside the scope of the study.

## Literature Review

In this section, the influences on teacher trainees' beliefs and how these beliefs might change or be changed during the teacher education process are explored.

### *Influences on Teacher Trainees' Beliefs*

While teachers' beliefs are likely to play a key role in determining what goes on in any classroom, it would appear that they can be particularly influential when considered in relation to the use of technology. Some of the possible influences on teachers' beliefs, both general and technology-specific, are discussed below.

#### *Apprenticeship of observation and presentism*

The term apprenticeship of observation, first discussed in Lortie (1975), refers, as M. Borg (2004, p. 274) put it, to the "phenomenon whereby student teachers arrive for their training courses having spent thousands of hours as schoolchildren observing and evaluating professionals in action." Lortie argued that this concept to a large extent underlies teacher trainees' beliefs about teaching. Bailey et al. (1996) also felt that the apprenticeship of observation influenced the ways that they taught, while Warford and Reeves (2003) found its effect to be particularly marked among non-native speaker teachers. Relating this to technology in teaching and learning, it could be argued that this has the effect of holding back the implementation and use of technology in the classroom as many of the technological tools that are potentially available now have only been developed in the very recent past and were not in common use or, in some instances, in existence when current teacher trainees were at school.

Presentism, again a term coined by Lortie (1975), refers to the idea that teachers' beliefs are strongly influenced by their present outlook at the expense of a more reflective viewpoint and an ability to envision future developments in teaching and learning. This concept seems particularly important in relation to technology in teaching and learning as, with

developments in technology taking place at such a pace and new tools appearing all the time, the ability to project ideas and beliefs onto what might be the future reality would seem particularly necessary, especially given that many current teacher trainees may still be teaching in more than 30 years' time.

Taking these two concepts together, there would seem to be a danger that an influential apprenticeship of observation combined with an attitude firmly situated in the present, could lead to a belief system concerning technology-use that is likely to be far away from any future reality. Furthermore, teacher trainees coming from currently resource-scarce technology environments may believe that technology-use is not something that is likely to happen to any great extent in their context, regardless of global technological advancements.

*Barriers to technology use*

There have been a number of studies into barriers to incorporating technology into teaching (e.g. Goktas et al., 2009), with a small number focusing specifically on language teaching (e.g. Yunus, 2007). In these studies, barriers have often been divided into internal barriers, such as teachers' attitudes to or competence with technology, and external barriers, such as availability of resources or institutional governmental directives on technology use (e.g. Ertmer, 1999).

The significant effect of a person's beliefs on their adoption of a new idea or practice has also been well-documented. Ertmer et al. (2006) identified internal belief systems – inner drive, personal beliefs and computer self-efficacy – as significant factors influencing a teacher's use of technology and Mumtaz (2000) highlighted the importance of teachers' pedagogical beliefs in their adoption of technology for teaching and learning. In Sang et al's study (2009) of student teachers, attitudes towards computer use in education were recognised as "the strongest predictor of prospective computer use" (p. 11).

A particular barrier, central to this discussion, is lack of computer self-efficacy among teachers, which Chen (2010) identified as the most significant influence on a person's

technology use. If self-efficacy is taken to refer to a person's judgement of their ability to carry out an action to produce an expected outcome (Bandura, 1997), then computer self-efficacy correspondingly relates to a person's judgement of their ability to use computers effectively to achieve a given end. Self-efficacy could influence a teacher's openness to adopting new ideas and practices in general (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Pajares & Schunk, 2001) and could impact positively on computer-self efficacy (Sang et al., 2009; Paraskeva et al., 2008). Equally, computer anxiety could negatively affect computer self-efficacy (Conrad & Munro, 2008). Taking these factors into consideration, there would seem to be a need to develop teacher trainees' self-efficacy, both with and without technology.

The importance of face and perceived roles of the teacher have also shaped beliefs about and attitudes to technology adoption in the classroom. Davidson and Tomic (1994) suggested that teachers feared loss of professional standing with their students if their technological expertise appeared rudimentary, with Hughes (2005) noting that this was a pertinent issue even with novice teachers, who might be expected to be more at home in the digital age.

### *Changes to Teacher Trainees' Beliefs*

Several studies (Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000; Peacock, 2001; Riley, 2009) have suggested some beliefs about teaching and learning may be susceptible to change given the right conditions, and always subject to the individual's personal attributes and context (S. Borg, 2006). Peacock (2001) pointed out the value and importance of raising students' awareness of their pre-existing beliefs at the outset of a teacher training course and encouraging persistent confrontation with these beliefs in the light of ongoing course input. S. Borg (2006) similarly promoted the importance of guided reflection on beliefs as a means to provoking change in beliefs, together with trainer modelling of desired practice and the intertwining of theory and practice within training courses. Knowledge gained from course input and opportunities for "first-hand experience" were also cited as significant in impacting on

teacher trainees' beliefs (Sugiyama, 2003, cited in Riley, 2009). Meanwhile, Burkhalter (2013) highlighted the impact fear could have as a barrier to change, suggesting that negative "fear-based" experiences of teachers led to "greater than usual resistance to adopting new methodologies" (p. 248). These studies highlight the need to overcome barriers in order to change teacher trainees' beliefs.

In relation specifically to technology in teaching and learning, helping teachers recognise and consider their beliefs and attitudes with regard to technology and how these beliefs affect their implementation or otherwise of technology in the classroom, was similarly considered beneficial for provoking change (John & Wheeler, 2008). In addition, providing training in specific technological tools and ensuring opportunities for teacher trainees to experiment with specific technologies, with the aim of developing user competence, confidence, and awareness of how technology can enhance learning, was also deemed positive in promoting a change in beliefs (Russell et al., 2003; Torkzadeh et al., 2006; Teo et al., 2009).

## Method

### *The Participants and Context*

The study involved 47 Malaysian teacher trainees, 34 female and 13 male, aged between 20 and 21. They were all in their first year of a 4-year B.Ed. Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) twinning programme, with the first three years taught at a university in the U.K. and the final year taught at a teacher training institute in Malaysia. None of the teacher trainees had any classroom teaching experience prior to starting the programme. The study was carried out over three months during the course of a 50-hour module based around the use of technology in English language teaching. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants, with the researchers using "their judgement to choose participants for the specific qualities they bring to the study" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 148) in order to "provide data that are more specific and directly relevant to a research concern or interest" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 149). Informed consent was obtained from all of the participants.

***Data Collection***

Three instruments were used for the collection of data: questionnaires, discussion boards and reflective writing.

*Questionnaires*

Initial and end of module questionnaires were used. The initial questionnaire (Appendix A) sought to identify teacher trainees' attitudes towards technology and to allow self-assessment of their knowledge about and competency in using technology at the start of the module. The end of module questionnaire (Appendix B) was divided into three sections: Section A focused on the technological tools themselves, Section B focused on context and the potential for technology-use in the teacher trainees' own context and Section C was comprised of open response questions concerning teacher trainees' future use of technology.

Initially, information concerning the initial knowledge base and attitudes of the participants towards technology was required. Therefore an initial questionnaire was constructed as this allowed salient data to be collected efficiently, easily and quickly (Bell, 1999; Wagner, 2010). In terms of questionnaire design, the first part was adapted from an existing questionnaire in Dudeney and Hockly (2007), while the design of the second part followed established principles of questionnaire design (Brown, 2009; Cohen et al., 2001).

At the end of study, a questionnaire was constructed to facilitate an assessment of the degree to which attitudes to technology use had changed over the course of the module. This end of module questionnaire contained both open and closed questions, with open questions designed to "allow for a deeper exploration of one … issue" and "generate more expansive, and often unpredicted, responses" (Brown, 2009, p. 203), and closed questions designed "to collect numerical data to determine the differences and similarities among items" (Brown, 2009, p. 202).

In order to increase the validity and reliability of the study, both questionnaires were piloted among a small number of teacher trainees and colleagues, who were asked to comment on the design, language use and overall suitability of the questionnaires. As a result,

a small number of amendments were made, such as the simplification of the instructions in the initial questionnaire and the rephrasing of two questions, which were felt to be open to misinterpretation, in section C of the end-of-module questionnaire.

Furthermore, the data from the questionnaires served to corroborate findings from other sources of data as part of the triangulation process, which in turn sought to "bring greater plausibility to the interpretation of results" (Hyland, 2009, p. 195).

*Discussion boards*

The practice of using within-group interaction for encouraging rich discussion and generating rich data as recognised within the context of focus group interviews (Dörnyei, 2007) can equally be applied to online discussion boards, which allow participants to contribute to the discussion thread posted by the facilitator and at the same time respond to the comments of fellow participants in the discussion and to any ensuing points that emerge within the discussion. Indeed, the use of asynchronous communication tools within higher education contexts as a means of encouraging collaborative knowledge-building, reflection, critical thinking, and higher-order thinking has been well-documented (for example Szabo & Schwartz, 2011; Johnson, 2006; Lee, 2013). In order to gather data using discussion boards, we posted questions or comments after five of the ten teaching sessions relating to the module, asking participants to comment on and discuss them with their fellow participants. For example, one discussion thread asked participants to comment on the question: How do you see yourself using (or not using) ICT in your future teaching career?

*Reflective writing*

S. Borg (2006) defined reflective writing as strategies requiring participants to "express in written form their thoughts, beliefs and attitudes, typically in relation to particular topics or experiences" (p. 249) and highlighted its value as a research method for studying language teacher cognition in that it allows for retrospective and introspective reflection on an event or experience and could thus offer some insights into thought processes and beliefs. With

this in mind, the teacher trainees were asked to write retrospective accounts on their experience of learning about technology for learning and teaching English.

### *Data Analysis*

The data analysis procedures adopted followed standard steps for analysing qualitative data as described by Holliday (2009, p. 102-103) that is, the data was coded using key words or phrases, which led to themes being generated and arguments being constructed around these themes, with extracts from the data used to support the arguments. The process of data analysis also followed several of the principles suggested by Dörnyei (2007, p. 242-244) with the focus being based on textual data, the process being iterative in the sense of moving back and forth between data collection and data analysis, and the analytical approach combining subjective intuition and more formalised analytical procedures.

The bulk of the data collected, from the discussion boards, reflective writing, and the final section of the end of module questionnaire, was qualitative, with quantitative data from the questionnaires used to support it. Full details of the quantitative data can be found in appendices A and B.

## Findings and Discussion

Findings from the questionnaires, discussion boards and reflective writing demonstrated a range of influences on the participants' beliefs as well as indicating some degree of change in beliefs in more than 50% of the teacher trainees. This section considers the influences on beliefs noted and key changes to the participants' beliefs.

### *Apprenticeship of Observation and Presentism*

The initial questionnaire (Section A, questions 3 and 12) indicated that the teacher trainees clearly perceived some challenges with only 38% agreeing or strongly agreeing that technology could be used easily within the time constraints of a lesson and 31% agreeing or strongly agreeing that technology was reliable. Given that trainees had had no first-hand experience of teaching, these responses would appear to relate to their observations as

learners within the classroom. Teacher trainee 41 (TT41), for example, reflected in the end of module questionnaire:

> "Before this I was quite sceptical on the idea of using technology in the classroom because I personally had been in those particular situations whereby teachers were trying to use technology. I did not see the effectiveness of it".

This suggests that the apprenticeship of observation can play a role in shaping teacher trainees' beliefs about technology use in the classroom. However, whilst the apprenticeship of observation is clearly a factor, particularly in the initial stages of the module as the above comment from TT41 shows, it does not appear to hamper teacher trainees developing a growing awareness of the potential of using technology for teaching and learning purposes. Changes in the teacher trainees' beliefs in this regard can be divided into two particular areas, namely a greater awareness of the range of technological tools available and a more general awareness of the overall potential of technology for teaching and learning, as the TT9 reflected in the end of module questionnaire:

> "Before this, the only ICT applications that I thought can be used for educational purposes are the Power Point, Word Process and the Internet websites...through this module, I discover that there are many more tools that can be applied and have more interesting features that can be used in the lower secondary school Malaysian context."

This suggests that with regard to technology use, the impact of the apprenticeship of observation, whilst present, can be lessened given certain conditions as discussed later within section 5.

In the literature review it was seen that presentism could have a significant impact on a teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning. In this study presentism clearly had a role in the participants' beliefs with regard to use of technology in teaching. Teacher trainees had concerns over the reliability of the technological resources currently available and the practicality of their use in the classroom. Even in the end of module questionnaire (Section B, question 4), 71% of teacher trainees agreed or strongly agreed that it was difficult to imagine using many current ICT tools because of the lack of resources. This seems to indicate that many of the teacher trainees found it difficult to see beyond the current reality.

Comments from the discussion boards supported this notion of the influence of presentism with a number of comments concerning accessibility, particularly in more rural areas, and technical problems such as reliability, connection speeds and lack of technical support. With the rapid and constant developments in technology, finding ways to combat presentism in relation to teacher trainees' beliefs about technology use and to enable them to envision the possibilities within a technology-rich teaching environment of the future is needed.

### *Factors Affecting Technology Use*

As discussed in the literature review, barriers to incorporating technology are often broken down into internal barriers, concerned with factors such as the knowledge, competence and self-efficacy within an individual, and external barriers, concerned with factors such as resources and training available. This distinction is continued in this section.

#### *Internal factors influencing technology use*

*Confidence.* Responses from the initial questionnaire (Section A, question 1, and Section B) suggested that the attitude of the teacher trainees towards technology use was generally very positive, with 93% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they enjoyed using technology, and that they had good levels of knowledge about certain tools, such as 89% claiming a high level of familiarity with both the Internet and Microsoft Word. This supports previous findings that second generation users are generally *tech-comfy* (Dudeney, 2009, cited in Pegrum, 2009, p. 43), that is, they show both enjoyment and competence in using technology for social, entertainment and informational purposes, such as Facebook, YouTube and Google.

As the initial questionnaire (Section A, questions 6, 7 and 9) demonstrated, the vast majority of the teacher trainees agreed or strongly agreed that teachers should know how to use technology in class (98%), that they would be better teachers if they knew how to use technology properly (95%) and that they wanted to learn more about using technology in class (93%). However despite these positive attitudes towards technology, the initial questionnaire (Section A, question 8 and Section B) also showed that teacher trainees'

confidence in their ability to use technology for professional purposes was clearly an issue for many, both in a general sense, with only 54% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they felt very confident about working with technology in class, and concerning specific tools, with for example only 9% claiming a good knowledge of interactive whiteboards. This suggestion of low computer self-efficacy could be seen in the reflective writing with TT29 suggesting a need to "fight the technophobe feeling". This resonates with the discussion in the literature review of the importance of and influence of internal barriers on a trainee teacher's use of technology in their teaching and Crawford and McKenzie's (2011) conclusion that second generation users were not as *tech-savvy* (Dudeney, 2009, cited in Pegrum, 2009, p. 43) or as able to use technological tools for professional purposes without appropriate training and opportunities for experimentation as might be assumed. Indeed, this need for training and practice opportunities was highlighted, with TT1 noting in her reflective writing that:

> "practice is very important for us to gain the confidence in working with technology and learn how to control it and not to let it control us because lacking in practice to handle it will make us feel unsecured of the technology and bring down our self-esteem in front of the students."

Several teacher trainees also referred to an increase in confidence in their ability to use technology throughout the course of the module. As TT29 continued:

> "through this module ...I have begun to find the core of strength and courage to use ICT for teaching and learning process... Besides, I have started to see more clearly advantages of using ICT in class and benefits it has to offer me."

*Personal knowledge and competence*. Just as the practical training given appeared to facilitate the development of the teacher trainees' self-confidence with respect to technology use, it also appeared to benefit the trainees in terms of their knowledge and competence in using technology, and awareness of its usefulness, for teaching purposes. For example, TT31, in her reflective writing, talking about exposure to different technological tools, highlighted that:

> "these applications were unfamiliar to me before this but through ICT lessons I was exposed to how I can use these applications ... I managed to create variety of classroom activities and worksheets using the different types of applications."

In the end of module questionnaire (Section A), there was also a developing sense of the usefulness of specific tools, with for example 86% agreeing or strongly agreeing that interactive whiteboards were useful for English language teaching and learning in the Malaysian context. There seems thus to be a clear sense of progress through the module and belief that internal barriers could be overcome. This supports the suggestion within the literature (Russell et al., 2003; Torkzadeh et al., 2006; Teo et al., 2009) that plentiful opportunities for hands-on experimentation with an array of technological tools can, by building teacher trainees' competence and confidence, promote a change in beliefs.

*External factors influencing technology use*

Teacher trainees' views on external barriers remained fairly constant across different data sources and over time. The central view was that there were a number of external barriers, perceived as difficult to overcome, that needed to be addressed if technology was going to be adopted and its use to become widespread. In the end of module questionnaire (Section B, question 5), for example, 86% agreed or strongly agreed that, in rural settings in particular, it was difficult to imagine using many ICT tools because of the lack of resources.

There was nevertheless a sense of optimism among the teacher trainees concerning technology use in their context, which seemed to originate from two main sources: a belief in the fundamental importance of technology in classroom teaching and increased confidence in their own ability to use it. Several reasons were given on the discussion boards for this belief that technology should be a central element in classroom teaching in the future. The most significant reason, mentioned by 45% of respondents, was its value as something fun and exciting, in attracting students' attention, and in making the lessons more interesting and motivating. Another important reason, given by 33% of respondents, was the effectiveness of technology in enhancing learning through the resources and software available.

*Internal versus external factors*

The overall suggestion from the study was that teacher trainees were generally less concerned with internal than with external barriers. For example, teacher trainees were concerned about a lack of resources, but from their own point of view, they considered themselves as becoming able to incorporate technology into their teaching.

*Second generation concerns*

Despite the teacher trainees appearing to be less concerned about the internal barriers frequently mentioned in the literature and discussed above, they did have a number of concerns which had not been expected among *tech-comfy* technology users and which could be described as internal. These concerns seemed to go beyond the internal factors already discussed, which related more to aspects such as attitudes to and confidence in using computers, and could be described as "second generation concerns" as they were concerns of *second generation* users of technology, those who have grown up with technology, who were already enthusiastic technology users and who generally appeared positive about the potential uses of technology in the classroom. These new "second generation concerns" are discussed below.

*Need for a wide knowledge.* Despite teacher trainees' growing confidence in their own ability to use technology in their teaching, there was also an awareness that the scope of their knowledge about technology and its use in teaching needed to be widened, with the trainees still considering themselves as partially rather than fully competent. TT41, discussing her views in her reflective writing at the end of the module suggested that: "it made me realise that what I know and think about technology is just a tip of an iceberg".

*Pressure to keep up-to-date.* There was often a presumption that today's teacher trainees were naturally drawn towards and up-to-date with current technological innovations, and that this would effortlessly translate to their classroom teaching. However, several teacher trainees in this study felt a pressure to keep up-to-date with technological developments. As TT4 put it in his reflective writing: "I know the technology will keep on growing and there will be a lot more for me to learn in the future".

*Issues of face.* Particularly in teaching contexts where the teacher is regarded as a figure of authority and the fount of all knowledge, the idea of using technology in the classroom could potentially lead to concerns about loss of face. Several teacher trainees also commented on this, suggesting that teachers, both now and in the future, may hold back from using technology because of a fear of loss of face. Referring to the current situation, TT8 wrote in her reflective writing: "I believe that is what accounts for why there are so many technophobes among teachers, and why they choose the conventional method of teaching instead...Students are simply more exposed, thus might know more than their own teachers".

*Classroom management.* The teacher trainees appeared more concerned about controlling their class than more experienced teachers might be and, perhaps as a result, felt that using technology in the classroom might make the class less easy to control and create discipline problems. As TT45 commented in his reflective writing, "[students] can misuse the computer when the lesson is on to access any other websites."

## Conclusion

This study has explored the influences on teacher trainees' beliefs regarding the use of technology in the English Language classroom, and identified particular concerns of second generation users of technology. Whilst some of these influences are seen to be strong, there is clearly some potential for positively affecting these at the training stage, and the framework proposed below seeks to foster opportunities for teacher trainees to grow in competence, confidence and awareness - *to expand their vision* - of how technology can be used to maximise its pedagogic value.

## *A Framework for Incorporating Technology into Language Teacher Training Programmes*

Based on the findings and discussion above, a three-part framework around which to build teaching and learning using technology into teacher training programmes is put

forward: *Addressing the past*; *developing in the present*; and *broadening perspectives in the future*. This framework aims to help teacher trainees, who as second generation users already have some familiarity with technology, in developing the appropriate skills to use technology in the classroom in an ever-changing digital environment. Though this particular study involved teacher trainees from Malaysia, they share many characteristics with other teacher trainees, particularly in Asian EFL contexts, and have also highlighted a number of concerns that resonate with previous studies discussed in the literature review, therefore the framework suggested could be applicable to a range of contexts.

*Addressing the past*

*Overcoming any negative past experiences.* This study reaffirms previous suggestions (Lortie 1975; Bailey et al., 1996; Warford & Reeves, 2003) that our apprenticeship of observation plays a role in the formulation of our views on teaching and learning and, in particular, on the potential for using technology in the language classroom. It also suggests that the overwhelming view among the trainees, based on observation of their teachers at secondary school, was that there were a number of obstacles preventing technology from being used effectively. Therefore, any training programme needs to be aware of this and to foster open-minded yet critically aware attitudes to technology-use in the language classroom. Giving examples of technology-use in a positive light, such as showing the potential of certain technological tools to engage and motivate students, can help trainees see beyond any previous negative experiences.

*Developing in the present*

*Fostering computer self-efficacy.* This study mirrors previous findings (Ertmer et al., 2006: Chen, 2010) that internal factors are more responsive to change and development than external barriers, and consequently recommends a primary focus within training programmes on internal factors in order to promote positive changes to beliefs in relation

to technology. This focus should involve building teacher trainees' knowledge, competence and confidence in using technology in the language classroom. These key elements might be encouraged through the creation of a dynamic yet "safe" learning environment; that is, with the emphasis on "hands-on" activities, providing teacher trainees with plentiful opportunities to try out technological tools within a supportive environment. This would involve starting with tools trainees are familiar with in a personal context, establishing clear pedagogical benefits of using the technological tools for teaching and learning and demonstrating how they can be integrated into lessons. In this way, as trainees in the study noted, fears and anxieties related to technology use can be lowered and a "can-do" mentality is nurtured with trainees encouraged to push the boundaries of their knowledge and experiment with new tools.

*Integrating technology.* Knowing about and having the confidence to use tools is one thing, however beyond that, trainees still need to develop an awareness of how to integrate technology into their teaching. This might be done by allowing trainees to observe classes which incorporate technology, and more generally in training sessions to keep a focus on wider issues such as what language skills are being developed or what classroom management issues might arise.

*Developing contextual awareness.* Any training programme needs to recognise the importance of context and the realities of classroom environments, explicitly relating technology use to what is achievable in particular contexts and focusing on what adaptations might be necessary.

*Working with external factors.* There are a number of external factors relating to technology use in the language classroom which are relatively resistant to change and these factors, including lack of resources, cannot be ignored. The training programme needs to provide opportunities for the airing and discussion of such issues together with the collaborative quest for solutions, for example via discussion boards.

*Broadening perspectives in the future*

*Widening the outlook.* It is fundamental that training programmes attempt to expand the vision of trainees and thereby reduce the influence of presentism. This can be done, for example, via reflection tasks, to encourage a broader view of the future possibilities, and case studies, ideally based on language teaching in the trainees' own contexts, to show what can be done.

*Creating "agents of change".* Part of any training programme should aim to build trainees' skills and self-efficacy to the point where they feel empowered to act as teacher developers in their future working environments. This can be encouraged, for example, via discovery tasks involving trainees investigating a particular technological tool and giving feedback to the group on its potential uses in teaching and learning.

*Keeping up-to-date beyond the programme.* Guidance needs to be given to help trainees update their knowledge beyond their training programme. For example, teacher trainees can be directed towards specific blogs and discussion forums which develop good practice in using technology in the language classroom. Online training, conferences and resource-sharing sites also provide opportunities for ongoing development, particularly in teaching contexts with limited technology-related support in situ.

### *Limitations*

There are of course limitations with the type of research undertaken in this study. In particular, it must be acknowledged that researchers are inescapably part of the social world that they are researching (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 14) and as such need "to understand their part in, or influence on, the research" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 225). In this case, with the researchers also being the course tutors, there are risks around the participants potentially giving the opinions that they think their tutors might want to hear, rather than offering their true views. This risk was counteracted by the fact that data was collected through several different means, adding to the reliability of the data. Participant feedback on the findings and implications of this study was also obtained after the module

had been completed, and therefore at a time when the participants were no longer being taught by the researchers, providing a useful check on the validity of the study.

### *Further Research*

This study investigated the beliefs of pre-service teacher trainees about the use of technology for teaching and learning in the language classroom. A follow-up study exploring the extent to which these teacher trainees' beliefs change once they are in-service would provide insights into novice teachers' technology use in practice and so allow the framework suggested above to be refined in the light of classroom experience.

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**Appendix A: Initial Questionnaire**

[The results from this questionnaire have been collated and are given in percentages in the tables below.]

**Section A - *Technophobe* or *techno-geek* - How do you feel about technology?**

***Please complete the questionnaire below (adapted from Dudeney and Hockly (2007))***

***Circle: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = not sure, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree***

| | | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **No response** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I enjoy using technology. | 62 | 31 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | I avoid using technology when I can. | 0 | 2 | 16 | 40 | 42 | 0 |
| 3 | I think technology can easily be used within the time constraints of a lesson. | 11 | 27 | 51 | 9 | 2 | 0 |
| 4 | I think that technology can help me to learn many new things. | 73 | 25 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Technology intimidates and threatens me. | 0 | 11 | 16 | 31 | 42 | 0 |
| 6 | Teachers should know how to use technology in class. | 62 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 7 | I would be a better teacher if I knew how to use technology properly. | 64 | 31 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | I'm very confident when it comes to working with technology in class. | 7 | 47 | 42 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | I want to learn more about using technology in class. | 64 | 29 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | I believe that the Internet can really improve my teaching practice. | 60 | 27 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | Changing the curriculum to integrate technology is impossible. | 2 | 7 | 33 | 40 | 18 | 0 |
| 12 | Technology is reliable. | 0 | 31 | 51 | 16 | 2 | 0 |

**Section B - Using ICT**

***Please complete the table below by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate box.***

| How much do you know about the following? | A lot (%) | A bit (%) | Nothing (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| E-mail | 74 | 26 | 0 |
| The Internet | 89 | 11 | 0 |
| Word | 89 | 11 | 0 |
| PowerPoint | 79 | 21 | 0 |
| Blackboard | 4 | 79 | 17 |
| WebQuests | 0 | 21 | 79 |
| Wikis | 66 | 30 | 4 |
| Blogs | 36 | 53 | 11 |
| Podcasts | 11 | 15 | 74 |
| Referencing tools | 2 | 26 | 72 |
| Authoring software | 2 | 15 | 83 |
| YouTube | 79 | 19 | 2 |
| DVDs | 70 | 28 | 2 |
| CD ROMs | 64 | 34 | 2 |
| IWBs | 9 | 19 | 72 |
| Chat | 70 | 24 | 6 |
| Discussion forums | 23 | 64 | 13 |
| Web 2.0 | 2 | 6 | 92 |

**Appendix B: End of Module Questionnaire**

[The results from this questionnaire have been collated and are given in percentages in the tables below.]

**Section A - About the tools**

***Please complete the questionnaire below.***

***Circle: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = not sure, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree***

***For English language teaching and learning in a Malaysian context:***

| | | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **no response** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tools such as Word and PowerPoint are useful. | 93 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | - |
| 2 | Material from authentic websites is useful. | 60 | 34 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 3 | Material from ELT-specific websites is useful. | 79 | 19 | 0 | 2 | 0 | - |
| 4 | Blogs are useful. | 14 | 53 | 31 | 2 | 0 | - |
| 5 | Wikis are useful. | 26 | 53 | 17 | 2 | 2 | - |
| 6 | Podcasts are useful. | 24 | 57 | 17 | 2 | 0 | - |
| 7 | Discussion boards are useful. | 57 | 38 | 5 | 0 | 0 | - |
| 8 | Email is useful | 57 | 38 | 5 | 0 | 0 | - |
| 9 | Email exchange projects are useful. | 36 | 43 | 19 | 2 | 0 | - |
| 10 | WebQuests are useful. | 29 | 52 | 14 | 5 | 0 | - |
| 11 | Authoring software, such as *hot potatoes* is useful. | 71 | 25 | 2 | 2 | 0 | - |
| 12 | Referencing tools, such as online encyclopaedias, are useful. | 64 | 26 | 10 | 0 | 0 | - |
| 13 | Video clips websites are useful. | 45 | 41 | 12 | 2 | 0 | - |
| 14 | Interactive whiteboards are useful. | 36 | 50 | 12 | 2 | 0 | - |
| 15 | CD-ROMs are useful. | 26 | 50 | 17 | 7 | 0 | - |
| 16 | DVDs are useful. | 26 | 48 | 17 | 9 | 0 | - |
| 17 | Technology such as mobile devices is useful. | 33 | 33 | 22 | 10 | 2 | - |

**Section B – About the context**

***Circle: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = not sure, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree***

***For English language teaching and learning in a Malaysian context:***

| | | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **no response** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Some schools are well-equipped with ICT resources. | 22 | 38 | 24 | 14 | 2 | - |
| 2 | My secondary school was well-equipped with ICT resources. | 12 | 33 | 19 | 26 | 10 | - |
| 3 | The ICT resources available in my secondary school were well used. | 5 | 14 | 33 | 33 | 12 | 3 |
| 4 | It is generally difficult to imagine using many current ICT tools because of lack of resources. | 26 | 45 | 17 | 12 | 0 | - |
| 5 | In rural settings in particular, it is difficult to imagine using many current ICT tools because of lack of resources. | 69 | 17 | 9 | 5 | 0 | - |
| 6 | It is possible to use some ICT resources in more urban settings. | 55 | 31 | 9 | 5 | 0 | - |

**Section C – Your views**

***Please add your own comments on the subject of using ICT for English language teaching and learning in a Malaysian context.***

1. What are your general views on using ICT for English language teaching and learning in a Malaysian context?
2. Which tools do you think you would/could use?
3. Thinking back to the start of this module, what did you feel about the potential for using ICT in Malaysian schools?
4. Now, at the end of the module, what do you feel about the potential for using ICT in Malaysian schools?
5. Do you feel you might have any specific future role to play in terms of increasing the use of ICT in Malaysian schools?
6. How do you feel about the fact that you are likely to know more about ICT and its potential uses in English language teaching than many more experienced teachers in the schools you will be working in? What are the implications of this?

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# Challenges and support needs of native TESOL teachers in Vietnam: An exploratory case study

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## Abstract

This article reports a pilot study examining challenges faced by native English-speaking TESOL teachers (NETTs) and their support needs in the context of English language education reform in Vietnam. The data comprise semi-structured interviews with three experienced American NETTs who teach at public and private foreign language centers. Informed by grounded theory, the results indicate multiple pedagogical and non-pedagogical challenges faced by these teachers. The findings also identify diverse support needs of NETTs when teaching in Vietnam. The article has implications related to professional preparation for NETTs teaching abroad and highlights the need to support NETTs in educational leadership policy and practice.

**Key words:** TESOL, educational leadership, English language education, support needs, teaching abroad challenges, Native English-speaking Teachers (NETs), Native English-speaking TESOL teachers (NETTs)

## Introduction

Concomitant with rapid change in the era of globalization and internationalization, there has been strong growth in the cross-border delivery of education which leads to a substantial market in the export and import of educational products and services (Vught, Wende, & Westerheijden, 2002). An example of this is the import and export of services related to language learning. The rise of transnational corporations has had much impact on promoting the spread of the lingua franca English worldwide, especially to non-English speaking countries (Gray, 2001). Indeed, English has been considered as "a hard currency in securing a job for social success in the ever-more capitalized world" (Sung, 2012, p.23). Acknowledging the imperative role of world Englishes in current times, a number of Asian countries have made an attempt to reform English language education to catch up with the rapid global development (Kam & Wong, 2004). Accordingly, there has been a growing interest in employing native English-speaking teachers (NETs) in Asian countries (see Jeon & Lee, 2006) and Vietnam has participated in this trajectory of educational reform.

The increasing needs of English language education in Vietnam in enhancing the prospects of greater international integration (see N. H. Nguyen, 2011) has resulted in work transitions of NETs to Vietnam. In recent years, in accordance with Vietnamese policies emphasizing the need to enhance English proficiency, the number of NETs working at both public and private educational institutions in Vietnam has soared. Notably, however, little is known about challenges these teachers may encounter; furthermore, their support needs when teaching in Vietnamese educational settings have not yet been investigated in current research. This article, therefore, reports on a pilot study that examined the challenges faced by three volunteer qualified native English-speaking Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) teachers and their support needs when teaching English at foreign language centers in Vietnam. The article first considers contemporary trends and demands of English language education in Vietnam, followed by teaching abroad challenges and finally the role of teacher support. The subsequent sections present the purpose, research

method and results of the study. The article concludes with a discussion section with implications for both NETs and Vietnamese educational leaders.

## English Language Teaching and Learning in Vietnam: Trends and Demands

### Trends of English language teaching and learning

In order to respond to the increasing trends of globalization and internationalization, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has increasingly promoted educational policies to enhance and improve the quality of teaching and learning English across the Vietnamese education system. One of the most recent educational reform projects is the so-called National Foreign Language Project 2020 or the project entitled "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008- 2020" (N. H. Nguyen, 2011). A goal of the project is that by 2020, most Vietnamese graduates from secondary to higher education level will be able to use a foreign language confidently in their daily communication, their work and studies in an integral, multi-cultural and multi-lingual environment (N. H. Nguyen, 2011).

In line with the National Foreign Language Project 2020, there has been a gradual shift in English language teaching methodologies and in Vietnamese learners' purposes for studying English. These trends, in turn, place increasing demand on NETs in Vietnam. Firstly, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has been promoted to replace traditional methods at Vietnamese schools such as the Grammar-Translation Method or the structural approach (e.g., Hoang, 2013; Khoa, 2008). Simultaneously, in 2008, new English textbooks, which no longer prioritize only grammar and reading skills, first introduced listening and speaking skills. Significantly, however, not all Vietnamese teachers of English (VTOE) are qualified enough to sustain teaching that conducts English communicative interactions (see Dang, Nguyen, & Le, 2013; Hoang, 2013; Le, 2012, Pham, 2007). Indeed, a recent 2011 English proficiency investigation on nation-wide VTOE

revealed a very small percentage of school teachers who can meet the B1 level, B2 level and C1 level according to the adopted Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (e.g., 22 out of the 1996 teachers of the schools in the Central region and Central highlands could meet C1 level and 322 out of 1996 teachers could meet B2 level) (VietnamNet Bridge, 2013). Secondly, while previous purpose of Vietnamese learners of English (VLOE) was largely to pass standardized English tests (e.g., university entrance exams) or to obtain better jobs (Hoang, 2013), their purposes for studying English have been expanded to meet the broader demands of overseas study, postgraduate studies and professional positions in international companies (either in Vietnam or overseas). It is important to note that from the perspectives of VLOE, advanced English competence can only be achieved under the instruction of NETs whose pronunciation is considered as the ideal model for these learners to integrate into native English environments (see Walkinshaw & Duong, 2012). This calls for the increase of NETs in the English language education system of Vietnam.

**Demands of native English-speaking teachers**

The fact that Vietnam seriously lacks qualified working Vietnamese teachers of English to implement the National Foreign Language Project 2020 results in an increasing need to recruit NETs in recent years (see H. T. M. Nguyen, 2011; VietnamNet Bridge, 2013). The Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has conducted subordinate policy frameworks to welcome foreign teachers to Vietnam (VietnamNet Bridge, 2013). Among these frameworks is a recent agreement that has been signed between MOET and the English Language Center (ELC) Australia in which the Australian organization would provide thousands of volunteer NETs from the U.S., Canada, the UK, Ireland, New Zealand and South Africa to Vietnam under the program entitled “Teach and Travel in Vietnam” (Baker, 2013). The program is to increase English levels for students and to improve the communication skills of VTOE across the Vietnamese education system.

Apart from the formal education system, native English-speaking teachers are also in great demand in the non-formal education system. The number of NETs in non-formal education settings, in fact, may outweigh that of NETs in formal education settings. Multiple private English-medium schools in big cities coupled with a large number of public and private foreign language centers, language centers of universities or government agencies, have responded to the requirements of VLOE and their parents by prioritizing the recruitment of NETs over EFL teachers (teachers of English as a Foreign Language) whose mother tongue language may or may not be English (see Omar, 2013). It should be noted that in the context of Vietnam, not all NETs and EFL teachers have a credited TESOL qualification. In this study, the term *TESOL teachers* refers to those who are internationally-accredited TESOL teachers. Notably, the number of NETs in non-government organizations that have launched a variety of volunteer English language projects (e.g., Projects Abroad Organization) to help boost English language education in Vietnam has also increased in recent years. The work transition of these NETs may imply some challenges during their overseas teaching.

**Challenges of Teaching Abroad**

Teaching abroad is a *cross-cultural journey* (Garson, 2005) and teachers have coped with various challenges, including culture shock, life adjustment (Garson, 2005), challenges in the classroom (Dyrud, 2007), cultural differences, accent switch, diverse students' experiences, students' learning approach, faculty issues and fears (Texter, 2007). In the context of EFL teaching in Asia (e.g., China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam), several native EFL/TESOL teachers have shared on EFL forums some concerns when teaching in Asian countries, such as racism (Omar, 2013), as well as challenges regarding discipline, teaching styles and teaching tools (Basha, 2011). In addition, EFL/ TESOL teachers may struggle to enter the local professional community of practice due to communication gap (Le, 2013). However, little about challenges faced by native EFL/TESOL teachers in the setting of

foreign language centers in the Asian region, specifically in Vietnam, is examined in contemporary research.

## The Role of Supporting Native English-Speaking Teachers (NETs)

Previous research has identified close connections between the work of leaders or administrators, and teacher satisfaction and school outcomes (e.g., Bogler & Nir, 2012; Ingersoll, 2001). Johnson and Kardos (2005) have pointed out that teachers will work more productively when leaders can develop positive work environments in which teachers feel supported. Indeed, teachers' perceived organizational support in educational settings, including instrumental support (e.g., time, space, materials), emotional support (e.g., trust, considering teachers' ideas), informational support (e.g., professional development programs) and appraisal support (e.g., frequent and constructive feedback) (Dolar, 2008), has significant impact on their motivation and job performance (Bogler & Nir, 2012). Furthermore, positive administrator support has a correlative influence on teachers' intentions to remain in the profession (Soucier, 2008).

In the context of Vietnam, supporting NETs would play a significant role in attracting and retaining qualified TESOL teachers to meet the diverse needs of the Vietnamese government, learners and language organizations. Noticeably, while there is an increase in the number of recruited NETs in the English language education system—both public and private sectors—little is known about the voice of these teachers and difficulties they may encounter when teaching English abroad. The aims of this exploratory case study were to investigate, firstly, challenges faced by qualified native English-speaking TESOL teachers (NETTs) in the setting of foreign language centers and, secondly, their support needs when teaching in Vietnam.

## Methods and Methodological Issues

The study was conducted in light of social constructionist epistemology and the symbolic interactionism theoretical perspective in accordance with the choice of grounded theory methodology and the use of a semi-structured interview method. Social

constructionism highlights the idea that society is actively and creatively produced by human beings within interpretive nets woven by individual and groups (Marshall, 1994) and that it is culture that shapes the way we view the world (Crotty, 1998). Symbolic interactionism is similar to social constructionism in the sense of studying how people construct social reality but different from social constructionism regarding its focus on micro interactional level (e.g., language, communication, interrelationships and community) rather than on social structure (see Schweingruber, 2005). In this study, through social interaction and social meaningful reality of teaching abroad, native TESOL English speaking teachers recognize their challenges and support needs. These teachers' past experiences and cultural backgrounds are sustained and reproduced through their social life and teaching abroad experiences, which facilitate their *becoming* of foreign teachers in Vietnam. Crotty (1998) stated that symbolic interactionism is a theoretical perspective that comes to be embodied in a number of methodologies, including grounded theory approach. The interview method, in addition, is claimed to be the most prominent data collection instrument in grounded theory (Creswell, 2008).

**Procedure**

Subsequent to obtaining participants' signed consent forms, the researcher and the participants arranged interview time and locations convenient to the participants. In light of grounded theory methodology, purposeful sampling was used to recruit participants who are relevant to the research topic (Birks & Mills, 2011). Five native English-speaking teachers who work voluntarily for two different foreign language centers in urban areas of Vietnam volunteered to participate in the study; however, only data of three out of these five teachers were selected for data analysis. Firstly, although the two omitted participants are native English-speaking teachers, they did not have internationally-credited TESOL training and

qualification. Secondly, compared to the three selected participants, the two omitted participants had been spending much less time teaching in Vietnam (approximately one month) and thus, their experiences were not as relevant as those of the three selected participants. It was assumed that well-trained and experienced native TESOL teachers would provide more insightful and precise reflections on the research topic. The selected

participants primarily teach Vietnamese teachers of English (VTOE) and Vietnamese learners of English (VLOE) English teaching methodology, English speaking skills and communication. The mainstream teaching methodology of the participants is the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. Backgrounds of the three selected participants—Alison, Thomas and Steven—are presented as follows. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the anonymity of the participants.

Case 1: Alison is an American student whose majors are TESOL and linguistics. Alison visited Vietnam before choosing a public foreign language center in a province of Vietnam as her destination for TESOL teaching internship for two months.

Case 2: Thomas is a qualified TESOL teacher who teaches ESL classes to international students at two universities in America. He also works for an American organization which conducts voluntary programs for American people and students to come and help people in need in Asian countries, including Japan, Vietnam and Cambodia. Thomas—a team leader—has visited Vietnam with his teams several times since 2009 and primarily works at public and private foreign language centers when he does voluntary teaching in Vietnam.

Case 3: Steven is a qualified ESL and TESOL teacher. Steven—another team leader—and his volunteer teams of American students and friends have visited Vietnam several times since 2002 to help Vietnamese students and teachers of English with communication and speaking skills, both in formal (public) and non-formal (private) study settings. Steven and his teams primarily teach at public foreign language centers in the North and in the South of Vietnam.

**Interviews**

The one-hour interviews were semi-structured, audio-recorded and later transcribed. Each interview started with questions related to the backgrounds of the participants, followed by their teaching abroad preparation and teaching experiences in Vietnam. Subsequently, interview questions chiefly sought the participants' perceptions about challenges they have encountered and their support needs when teaching abroad in Vietnam. In line with the grounded theory approach, data analysis was conducted immediately after each interview,

which helped the researcher understand what additional data should be collected in the following interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

**Data analysis**

In light of the grounded theory approach, the interview transcript text was initially coded by dividing the text data into segments. To be specific, constant comparison of incident with incident in the data resulted in the initial generation of codes. Upcoming incidents were later compared with existing codes (e.g., teaching communication, teaching grammar); then, codes were compared with codes (e.g., communicative language teaching, grammar-translation method), clusters of codes were collapsed, refined into sub-themes (e.g., Teaching Method Difference) and broad themes (e.g., Challenges in Pedagogical Issues). Subsequently, themes were compared with themes and categories emerged from themes (e.g., teaching abroad challenges). It is the constant comparison of the different conceptual levels of data analysis that drives theoretical sampling and the ongoing generation or data collection (Birks & Mills, 2011). Parry (1998) and Kolb (2012) posited that the procedure of the constant comparison and theoretical sampling is an imperative means of enhancing validity in research. In this study, after purposeful sampling, theoretical sampling was considered; however, the data did not indicate other theoretical propositions required to be addressed through more defined sampling. Therefore, participants were continued to be sought in line with the original parameters (e.g., qualified native English-speaking TESOL teachers that have at least two months experiencing teaching English in Vietnam). To ensure the authenticity and trustworthiness of the study, respondent triangulation was applied by member checking. This involved sending back the interview transcriptions and the draft findings to the participants for checking whether the interpretations were fair or representative.

## Results

### Challenges Faced by Native English-speaking TESOL teachers (NETTs) in Vietnam

Two broad themes emerged from the study including: 1) challenges in pedagogical issues; and 2) challenges in non-pedagogical issues. The results of the study are now presented according to the broad themes and supported where appropriate with representative statements of the participants.

### 6.1.1 Pedagogical Challenges

The data revealed that within the theme challenges in pedagogical issues, from the perspectives of the investigated NETTs, teaching method difference, language issues, students' classroom activity preference and audibility barriers are their concerns. Figure 1 presents the themes and sub-themes related to challenges faced by native TESOL teachers in Vietnam.

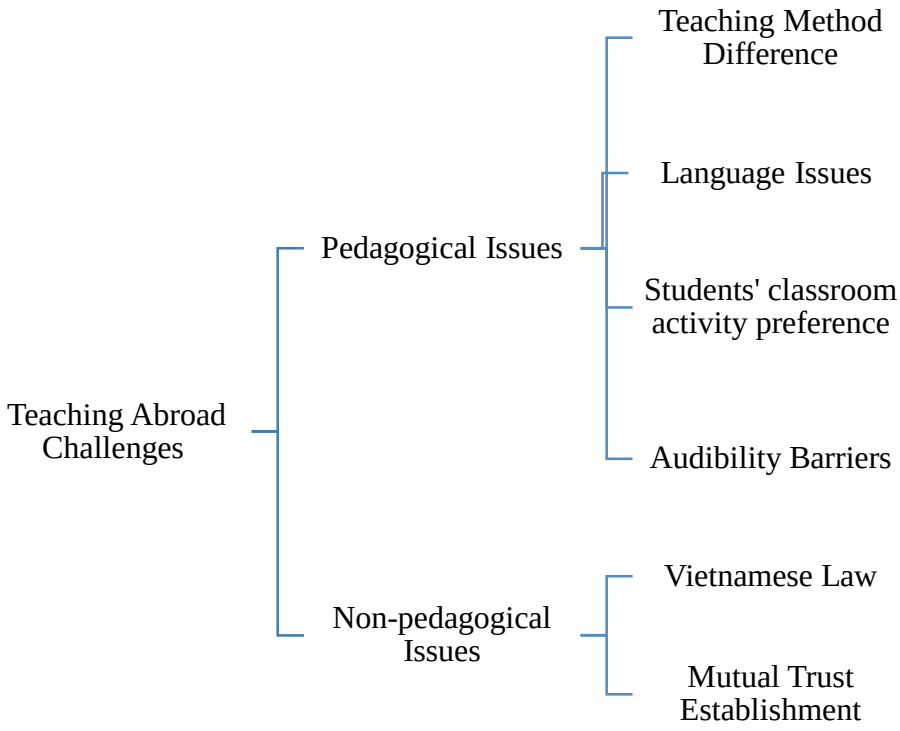


Figure 1. Challenges Faced by Native English-speaking TESOL teachers (NETTs)

*Teaching Method Difference*

As recounted by the participants, the sub-theme teaching method difference is their initial challenge and it would be more significant for NETTs who teach English in Vietnam for the first time. As reflected by Alison,

> ...my school in the US has taught me to teach language through communication rather than through grammar.…Whereas here, the students expect grammar and they want to learn grammar first....The first couple of times, it took me a long time to do lesson plans because I need different techniques to draw languages out of them [VLOE] rather than just teaching them the language.

*Language Issues*

There are obvious differences between English and Vietnamese language, which leads to challenges for both NETTs and VLOE. Two prominent concerns, from the participants' points of view, are sound and structure. Firstly, regarding *sound*, according to Thomas, Vietnamese language is mostly "closed mouth" and "in the back and somewhat nasal" while "to speak English correctly, you have to go cross cultural, open your mouth". Thomas recounted that for VLOE, challenges facing them are to know "what sounds are getting into another" and to know "how to form the sounds in your mouth". Simultaneously, the language nature difference results in challenges faced by NETTs.

> In order to teach English effectively, I have to be conscious with my English sounds, how do I shape my mouth to shape words so that I can teach them to do the same?....I tell them [VLOE] how to shape their mouths...and their tongue. I have to say it has been difficult for me and for them to do, to think about how their mouth is formed.…Sounds are an issue.

Secondly, there are differences in English and Vietnamese language structures. As explained by Thomas, some VLOE cannot say the word that sounds like English because

VLOE “have the Vietnamese sound mouth and they are thinking of the structure of the sentence.” Consequently, a challenge for a NETTs is to “have to discover some structures” in order to help VLOE.

*Students’ Classroom Activity Preference*

From the points of view of the participants, Vietnamese learners of English prefer group work to individual work in classroom activities. Group work not only motivates VLOE to be more cooperative with NETTs and more confident in their speaking but also makes the speaking of VLOE more productive. As reflected by Alison, VLOE pronounce sounds better when they say the sound in a group rather than individually. For instance, when students work individually, they are likely to go right back to using incorrect sounds and, “that has been difficult to teach”, Alison comments.

Another benefit of conducting group work, from the experiences of the participants, is to *break the ice* with VLOE. The silence of VLOE in their first classes is one of the challenges for NETTs, which is more challenging for those NETTs who teach VLOE for the first time.

*Audibility barrier*

A challenge faced by of NETTs within the Vietnamese teaching context is the audibility barrier. “The biggest challenge that I have is being able to hear”, commented Steven. The participant found it hard to be able to hear VLOE due to outdoor classroom music or noise and students’ shyness.

> Music playing is one distraction....And I find that Vietnamese people speak so softly. I had a hard time hearing. And then, when I ask them to say it again, they think they haven’t been saying it correctly and they seem to be more timid....They even speak softly, more softly.

To the participants' surprise, although most students' grammar and vocabulary knowledge is rich, their speaking skills are quite limited and even "real communication is impossible", as noted by Alison. VLOE are shy and not confident enough in their speaking of English. Alison commented, "when I ask students to answer questions, no-one answers.…They are shy to answer questions in front of the whole class".

The fact that VLOE keep silent when being asked questions requires NETTs to make more effort or adapt their teaching methods to motivate VLOE to speak. This phenomenon, notably, is illustrated in not only VLOE but also in the case of VTOE. As reflected by Thomas,

> And I have two ladies in my group. They didn't want to try because they didn't want to be wrong. They would try if they knew that it was correct. They didn't want to try and not say it right because they didn't have confidence. And so, they'd rather be quiet than being wrong.

This section has described pedagogical challenges of NETTs when teaching in Vietnam. The next section will present the second thematic challenge: non-pedagogical issues.

## Non-pedagogical Challenges

Two sub-themes of non-pedagogical challenges facing the investigated NETTs are updated knowledge about laws in Vietnam and mutual trust establishment with local and institutional educational leaders.

### *Knowledge about laws in Vietnam*

Being NETTs in Vietnam requires participants to have knowledge about the laws in Vietnam, including traffic laws and teaching permission granted by local authorities.

However, a challenge for these teachers is the degree to which they can access related information. First, regarding traffic laws, “the rules of the road here—driving rules—are completely different from driving in the U.S.”, commented Alison. Noticeably, Steven reflected that, “there has not yet been made available a law handbook for foreigners” and the participants were once fined for breaking a law regarding riding motorbikes because they could not realize that the law had changed in the year between their depart from and return to Vietnam. Second, in terms of teaching permission, the investigated participants acknowledge that foreign teachers are not allowed to teach in Vietnam without granted permission from institutional and local leaders; nevertheless, these teachers are not sure where to start and how to get help. As noted by Alison, “I know we need to ask for permission but I don’t know what to do to ask for permission”.

*Mutual Trust Establishment*

From the points of view of the investigated NETTs, because institutional leaders must ask for permission from local authorities for NETTs to teach at an institution, the fact that NETTs can establish trust and credibility from institutional leaders in advance can facilitate these teachers in gaining permission from local authorities to teach and gain local classroom entrance. As observed by Thomas, “first thing is the credibility with the leadership of the school and then, the leadership of the school has credibility with the government”.

With previous social network and teaching experience at educational institutions, the investigated NETTs faced less challenges in gaining trust and credibility from institutional educational leaders in foreign language centers. In fact, “at the foreign language centers, we have a very good relationship. There is mutual trust and respect”, observed Steven. However, these teachers seem to have more difficulties in gaining trust and credibility from local educational leaders where they would like to conduct volunteer teaching. The challenge, for the investigated participants, is the fact that they have not yet had opportunities to meet and introduce themselves to local educational leaders in order to establish a relationship, as explained by Steven and Thomas.

This section has illustrated challenges faced by NETTs when doing volunteer teaching in foreign language centers in Vietnam. The challenges include both pedagogical and non-pedagogical issues. The next section describes the support needs of these teachers when teaching in Vietnam.

**Support Needs of Native English-Speaking TESOL Teachers**

The results revealed specific support needs of native English-speaking TESOL teachers working in Vietnam. In this regard, the themes and sub-themes generated from the data are depicted in Figure 2.

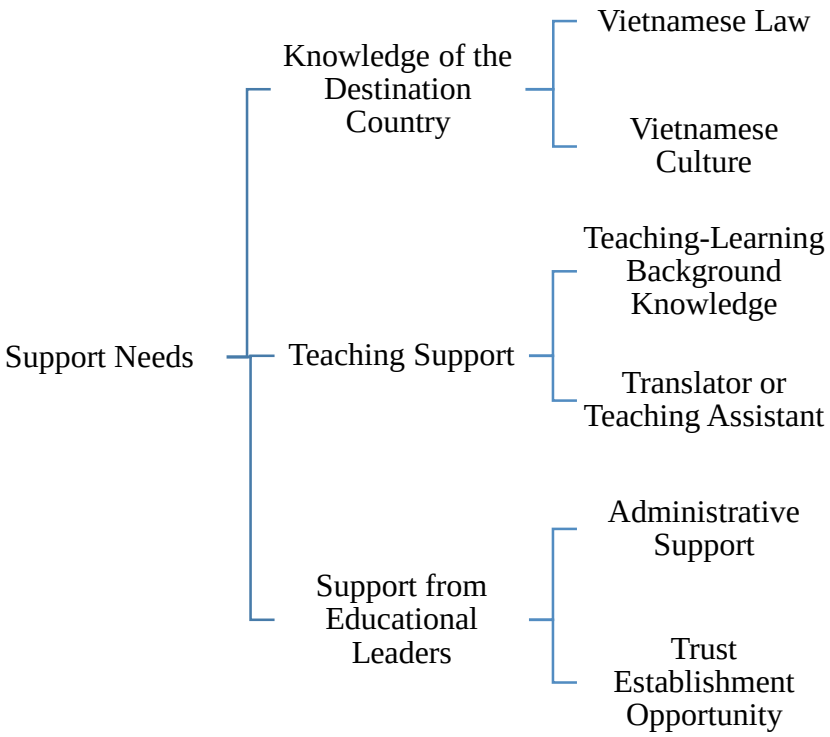


Figure 2. Support Needs of Native English-speaking TESOL teachers (NETTs)

In this study, three themes related to the support needs of native English-speaking TESOL teachers emerged: 1) knowledge of the destination country; 2) teaching support; and 3) support from educational leaders. Each of the themes will be described in turn, beginning with support needs related to *knowledge of the destination country*.

## Knowledge of the Destination Country

Two sub-themes emerged within this theme: the support needs of obtaining knowledge about Vietnamese law and Vietnamese culture.

### *Vietnamese Law*

Two major concerns of the participants of the study are how they accessed information about the procedure of obtaining teaching permission; and how to be clear about the law of the country they are teaching in, especially when, as commented by Steven, the law (e.g., traffic rules) of this province may be different from that of other provinces. Moreover, Alison explained, "Because I am not used to dealing with the government, it would be good to have someone who could tell me what I need to do".

### *Vietnamese Culture*

The results revealed that all of the participants fully acknowledge the role of culture preparation before going to Vietnam. The method that the participants used to prepare is diverse, ranging from taking Intercultural Communication courses to integrating into Vietnamese communities in the USA and from building up friendships with Vietnamese people to watching music videos in Vietnamese language. However, when living in Vietnam, the participants have some particular support needs. Firstly, as explained by Alison, "I would like someone to be with me once a week, to help me with culture, to help me with the language". Moreover, Steven commented that materials on cultural awareness are available; however, it would be valuable to have materials on "how we get over the troubles".

## Teaching Support

The participants have a consensus observation that Vietnamese learners of English have different learning styles from American students—the former is group work-favourable

while the latter is individual work-oriented. Therefore, when teaching in a foreign country, apart from the knowledge about the country—its history and culture—it is of importance for NETTs to have background knowledge of English teaching and learning in Vietnam—to know "how students learn, what the classroom is like and how the teachers conduct the class" in advance. As commented by Thomas,

> That is one major issue....I need to be aware of the culture and the learning style of the people I would like to help in learning English. I need somebody at the school in the country who already knows English to tell me how the students learn.

Another support need in this teaching context is the presence of Vietnamese translators or teaching assistants. It should be noted that the presence of Vietnamese translators or teaching assistants "would not be necessary but it would be very helpful", as agreed by Thomas and Alison.

**Support from Educational Leaders**

In addition to support in the teaching context, it emerged from the study that the investigated NETTs also need support from local and institutional educational leaders. These forms of support include support in administrative work and opportunities to establish trust and credibility.

*Administrative Work*

As reflected by the NETTs participants, most paper work is in Vietnamese and these teachers do not know the Vietnamese language. Therefore, it would be helpful to have someone to help them with the paper work. Importantly, as posited by Alison, it would be ideal to have either English paper work or even someone to help these teachers translate it.

*Trust and Credibility Establishment Opportunities*

Thomas reflected that “we don’t have a relationship with the authorities”, “it would be good if there is an increase amount of trust”. The investigated participants would love to be supported with opportunities to meet and introduce themselves to local educational leaders because “trust always comes from relationship, dialogue, mutual relationship”, as explained by Thomas. It is important to note that Steven considered that trust is established not only on the part of the local officials but also on the part of the foreigners: “mistrust can happen on both sides without opportunities to build up understandings in relationship”.

## Discussion

Asian countries have enhanced the recruitment of NETs to catch up with global development; however, together with the increase in the number of NETs, several countries have to face difficulties in retaining NETs, especially qualified TESOL teachers. For example, as reported by the South Korean Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in 2010, more than a third of native English-speaking teachers quit jobs after six months or so on the job, which significantly challenged the effectiveness of English language immersion programs promulgated nationwide (Kim, 2010). Additionally, a recent paper on Hong Kong's native English-speaking teachers (Yeung, 2014) identified fifteen percent attrition rate to drop. The findings of this study propose several implications for educational leaders and native English-speaking teachers working in Vietnam, which can be practical to other Asian countries as well.

## Why This Study Matters in Educational Leadership Practice

Policies are designed to steer actions and behaviours, to ensure consistency in the application of authorized norms and values across various groups and communities (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Educational reform policies enhancing the recruitment of NETTs in Vietnam would be more effective when educational leaders and authorities further take NETTs’ support needs into account. Indeed, perceived organizational support has significant impacts

on teacher satisfaction, improvement of teachers' work performance and teacher retention (e.g., Bogler & Nir, 2012; Dolar, 2008; Soucier, 2008). Reasonably considering challenges and support needs of qualified NETTs will promote friendship and more strategically-international cooperation which, in turn, potentially boosts the quality of English language education reform in Vietnam. As recommended by Philip Yeung (2014), native English-speaking teachers will be at their most effectiveness in enhancing students' language ability if they are given more support, training, and cultural exchange encouragement.

The comments of the participants give a sense that in order to contribute to progressive educational change, in line with promoting policy frameworks to welcome foreign teachers to enhance the quality of English language education in Vietnam, educational leaders should consider supporting NETTs at both micro and macro levels. At a micro level, firstly, classroom renovation should be taken into account to minimize such barrier as outside-class background noise and to facilitate language teaching and learning environments. Indeed, classroom conditions not only influence teachers' attitudes, teaching productivity (Earthman & Lemasters, 2009) but also have impact on students' learning enjoyment and achievement (Hopkins, 2008). Moreover, there should be assigned institutional Vietnamese teachers of English who can provide NETTs with prompt support. At a macro level, authorities and educational leaders at national, local and institutional levels could design and popularize agreed specific guidelines, documents and practical rules of teaching and living in Vietnam for foreign language teachers, in both Vietnamese and English.

Two noteworthy factors revealed from the study that may enhance long-term cooperation between NETTs and educational institutions in Vietnam are "trust" and "social networks". As reflected by Thomas, "trust always comes from relationship, dialogue, mutual relationship"; and "he [Steven] returned because they [Steven and the Director of a Foreign Language Center] have a relationship… and he [Steven] is personally comfortable [there]". In the same vein, Alison commented that "I feel a relationship with people, some friendship

and they are so caring…that's why I came back". In fact, non-pedagogical challenges facing the investigated NETTs are within Putnam's (1993) concept of social capital which expresses the sociological essence of communal vitality: trust, social norms and obligations (e.g., Vietnamese law, teaching permission) and social networks of members' activity, especially voluntary associations (Siisiainen, 2000). Putnam (1993) argued that trust creates reciprocity and voluntary associations and in turn, associations and reciprocity produce and reinforce trust. Concomitant with contemporary educational agreements between MOET and foreign countries (e.g., Australia, Canada, etc.) in enhancing English proficiency among Vietnamese learners, social capital should be further enhanced. As posited by Coleman (1988, cited in Siisiainen, 2000), the more social capital is used, the more trust grows. Moreover, voluntary associations are considered as sources of trust as they allow reputations to be transmitted and refined, which can promote future collaboration (Putnam, 1993). In this sense, the process of supporting NETTs would be more productive when there are governmental Foreign Teacher Associations located across the country. These associations would not only be beneficial for Vietnamese educational leaders to promptly respond to diverse needs of NETTs but also benefit NETTs in their sharing experiences, expressing support needs as well as learning about Vietnamese culture and teaching-related information. Through activities of Foreign Teacher Associations, in addition, NETTs may simultaneously have more opportunities to interact with local educational leaders and thus be able to build up and enhance mutual trust and credibility. This implication is in line with current research highlighting the significant role of interpersonal trust and interorganizational trust in policy networks (e.g., Rethemeyer & Hatmaker, 2007; Zaheer, McEvily, & Perrone, 1998).

**Why This Study Matters in Teaching Abroad Transition**

The findings of the study can help NETTs set realistic expectations, prepare for difficulties and be more effective teachers in foreign teaching environments. Indeed, understanding teaching conditions in Vietnam, Vietnamese learners' classroom activity preference and authority-related issues (e.g., law, teaching permission) may assist these

teachers with better social, cultural and pedagogical preparation and adaptation strategies. As advocated by John Adamson (2005), teacher development for native English-speaking teachers would benefit from gaining local knowledge of classroom behaviour norms and a background of the history of English language teaching in that country. Similarly, according to Craig Kelley (2007), being knowledgeable about the coming foreign country and understanding how language, culture, customs and life style differences may impact on teacher life will help teaching abroad-interested educators benefit from teaching tasks, and thus, strengthen the quality of teaching and learning. A noteworthy consensus advice of the three participants is that native-English speaking teachers should come to a foreign country in a position of "a learner, a listener, an observer" instead of being simply "a speaker, a teacher". As commented by Thomas,

> When I first came to VN, I was confident that I had something to contribute; so, I came as a speaker, a teacher. But after being here in a classroom setting, I discovered that I needed to come as a learner, a listener and not a teller.…This dynamic is necessary for foreigners to understand if they are to help with English in a class or to teach anything. They have to come with the mentality of a learner, an observer: be inquisitive—thinking, asking questions, 'I want to know, I want to learn'.

Pedagogically, challenges faced by NETTs in this study are consistent with prior research related to current concerns about English language teaching and learning in the context of Vietnam. First, there has been a mismatch between language teaching policies promoting Communicative Language Teaching approach and such constraints of VTOE and VLOE as limited communicative skills and traditional grammar-based teaching methods (Hoang, 2013; Khoa, 2008). Second, compared to Western students, because of the collectivistic orientation culture, Vietnamese students are more likely to be fearful of losing face and are less likely to express their opinions, beliefs or to ask questions (McCornac & Phan, 2005). Further, due to language difference between English and Vietnamese language

(e.g., sound system, the manner of articulation, the place of articulation of the sounds) (Duong, 2008), English teachers of VLOEs have encountered multiple difficulties in teaching VLOEs with English pronunciation. Notably, however, these concerns in the past scholarship were broadly drawn upon the reflections of Vietnamese teachers of English or of English language practitioners in the public sector; little is known from the perspectives of qualified native English-speaking TESOL teachers, particularly of those teaching in the setting of foreign language centers. The present study makes a significant contribution to the body of literature on English language education in Vietnam.

## Limitation and Future Research

The study lends support to the value of using qualitative research to obtain a nuanced understanding of challenges faced by NETTs and their support needs—a topic which is timely but has been paid relatively little attention in the field of English language teaching in Vietnam. However, a limitation of this pilot study is the fact that the sample size is small; thus, the findings may not be generalizable. Nevertheless, the results of the study are rich and of practical application not only in Vietnam but also in Asian countries carrying out national English language education reforms. To add greater depth of knowledge about the investigated phenomenon, researchers could conduct future interviews along with classroom observation and investigate larger samples of NETTs from different language settings, including both private and public sectors.

## Conclusion

This study provides vital insights into challenges faced by NETTs and the support needs of these teachers in the context of English language education reform in Vietnam. The study, significantly, implies the imperative role of Vietnamese educational leaders or administrators in listening to the voice of NETTs and in facilitating these teachers with prompt support in order to attract and retain qualified native TESOL teachers for better English language teaching workforce of Vietnam. Indeed, when the number of qualified

NETTs is in high demand for English language education reform, their teaching abroad challenges and support needs should be further taken into consideration, both in policy and in practice.

The study also has implications related to work transition and leadership practice for not only current but also prospective educational leaders and NETTs teaching or taking volunteer teaching in Vietnam. In order to facilitate teaching abroad transition, apart from cultural and pedagogical preparation, NETTs should possess dynamic social capital, particularly social networks and trust establishment. In addition, to promote more effective collaboration and mutual support, both Vietnamese leaders and NETTs should develop strategies and policies that, as aforementioned, could enhance credit and reciprocal understandings. At a theoretical level, this article contributes to the literature regarding teaching abroad challenges and the support needs of qualified native English-speaking TESOL teachers in the context of an Asian country—Vietnam—about which little is published in contemporary research literature.

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# Constructing a Self-Assessment Inventory of Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELT for EFL Teachers

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## Abstract

Because the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) has rapidly increased in the globalized world, the beliefs and practices in English education have been changing. In particular, developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has become a focus in English language teaching (ELT) to facilitate English learners to become competent communicators in intercultural contexts. Because an excellent command of English and competent teaching skills do not inherently lead to mastery of ICC, helping English teachers evaluate and develop their ICC in ELT has become crucial.

This paper presents a discussion on the procedure for developing a self-assessment inventory of ICC in ELT for English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers by presenting a literature review, model construction, item pool generation, data collection, and analyses. The results yielded a 24-item inventory of ICC in ELT for EFL teachers (ICC-ELT-EFL), consisting of 4 factors. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha$ = .932) of this inventory indicated high reliability. The four dimensions of ICC in ELT involved (a) affective orientations to intercultural communication, (b) capabilities for intercultural communication, (c) perspectives on ELT, and (d) employment of intercultural strategies in ELT. Accordingly, the hypothetical model of ICC in ELT was modified to represent the item characteristics of each factor in the 24-item ICC-ELT-EFL. This paper concludes with a discussion of the relevant limitations and suggestions for future studies.

**Keywords:** a self-assessment inventory, EFL teachers, English language teaching (ELT), intercultural communicative competence (ICC)

## Introduction

Globalization has created new challenges in the roles of English language teachers. Because of the widespread use of English as a lingua franca (ELF), an international tool for intercultural communication (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2007), the topic of language and culture teaching in English education has become more complex. The traditional view of English teaching based on that of native English speakers, such as the model of communicative competence and center-based cultural competence, has become unrealistic and problematic (Baker, 2009, 2012; Kumaravadivelu, 2012). The development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), assumed to be a type of awareness and empowerment of language, culture, and identity (Baker, 2009; Chao, 2011), has become a vital part of language education and interpersonal communication among cultures (Alptekin, 2002; Brooks, 2004; Byram, 1997, 2012; Byram et al., 2001). To "avoid becoming a fluent fool" in the era of a global community (Bennet, 1997:16), educators have been encouraged to consider developing ICC in foreign language (e.g., EFL) education (Baker, 2011; Kachru & Smith, 2008; Lázár et al., 2007; McKay, 2002).

Recently, interest in the study of ELF (Jenkins, 2006, 2007), world Englishes (WEs; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Seargeant, 2012), and English as an international language (EIL; Alsagoff et al., 2012; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008) has been increasing. Moreover, intercultural education has been suggested as the ultimate goal of EFL teaching in the context of globalization (Han & Song, 2011; Luk, 2012). However, Zarate (2003) stated that EFL teachers with an excellent command of English ability and competent teaching skills do not inherently master ICC. Even when some EFL teachers are relatively aware of the importance of ICC teaching, they still devote most of their efforts and time to improving the linguistic competence of students at the expense of developing their ICC–the key capabilities to connect people worldwide (Sercu, 2006). The potential reasons are ambivalent attitudes of teachers to English education and insufficient knowledge of other cultures and culture teaching (Luk, 2012). Therefore, helping EFL teachers evaluate and improve their ICC by focusing on their attitudes to and capabilities in ICC-oriented English language teaching (ELT) has become crucial (Young & Sachdev, 2011).

Thus far, several approaches have been used to understand the mastery of ICC for specific purposes in diverse contexts (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). These major approaches are generally presented in direct (e.g., portfolios and interviews), indirect (e.g., self-assessed instruments), and blended processes. However, indirect instruments remain the most frequently used because of their ease and speed in assessing and supporting ICC development (Sinicrope et al., 2007). Although the various ICC-related assessment tools are effective, they have mostly been developed by western scholars (e.g., from Europe and North America) in the disciplines of psychology, behavioral sciences, communication studies, and businesses management (Fantini, 2007; Paige, 2004). A reliable and valid ICC assessment tool for EFL teachers in the expanding circle is unavailable. To fill this gap in the literature, developing an ICC inventory for EFL teachers seems to be necessary because it can function as a helpful tool to facilitate in improving their ICC by making them aware of the objectives, means, content, and other related aspects of ICC-oriented ELT. Based on the assessment results, EFL teachers can be informed of their strengths and weaknesses and then seek suitable strategies to enhance their ICC in ELT. The aim of this study was to develop a self-assessment inventory of ICC in ELT for EFL teachers (ICC-ELT-EFL) that can be used to explore and evaluate personal intercultural capabilities in ELT.

## Literature Review

### *Intercultural Communicative Competence and English Language Teaching*

ICC is considerably complex and tends to be variously interpreted because of the distinct goals and interests of scholars from diverse disciplines (Hua, 2011). In the literature, scholars from the branches of psychology, communication studies, and international business and management have contributed to most of the definitions, theories, and frameworks of ICC and related studies (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Generally, the basic dimensions, affect, cognition, and behavior, have been accepted or included in several definitions or conceptualizations of ICC. The three dimensions of ICC should be developed together to achieve effective and appropriate communication in intercultural settings (Lustig & Koester, 2006). Although EFL teachers are expected to teach ICC (Han & Song, 2011; Luk, 2012; Sercu et al., 2005), research investigating the components of ICC and its application by

linguists or language educators is scant (Young & Sachdev, 2011). To elucidate the relationship between ICC and ELT and the potential features of ICC in ELT, a brief review of several crucial ICC models and related studies is presented as follows.

The most influential ICC model was developed by Byram (1997) and was an attempt to extend previous ICC models and learner-centered communicative language teaching (Canale & Swain, 1980; van Ek, 1986). The model emphasized an inextricable link between *foreign (target) language abilities* (i.e., linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence) and *intercultural competence* (i.e., attitudes, knowledge, skills in interpreting and relating, skills in discovering and interacting, and critical cultural awareness). Byram used an intercultural approach to interpret the state and goals of language teaching and learning. He suggested that EFL (foreign language) educators should no longer depend on the norms and rules of native speakers and promote the development of intercultural speakers (Byram, 2008).

Another ICC-related framework that can elucidate intercultural learning in ELT is cultural intelligence (CQ) theory in which CQ is identified as "the capability of an individual to function effectively in culturally diverse settings" (Van Dyne et al., 2012:295). This theory has received attention primarily in the field of international business management studies because of the increasing globalization of organizations; however, language teachers and intercultural educators can still benefit from the insights offered by CQ theory, which describes the core capabilities of achieving effective intercultural communication. The four-factor construct of CQ comprises *metacognitive* (planning, awareness, and checking), *cognitive* (cultural-general and context-specific knowledge), *motivational* (intrinsic and extrinsic interest, and self-efficacy to adjust) and *behavioral* (speech acts, and verbal and nonverbal behaviors) dimensions (Van Dyne et al., 2012). In addition, the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) was developed and validated (Van Dyne et al., 2008) to measure the four primary factors that characterize the capabilities of CQ: strategy, knowledge, motivation, and action.

Recently, Baker (2012) proposed an intercultural awareness (ICA) model to account for the communicative practices of using ELF in diverse linguistic and cultural settings. The ICA model entails 12 elements (representing knowledge, skills, and attitudes of ELF users

in intercultural contexts) arranged into three levels (i.e., basic cultural awareness, advanced cultural awareness, and intercultural awareness). Based on the perspectives of Baker (2012), the *awareness* to regard cultures as dynamic, diverse, and emergent resources, and the *abilities* to negotiate and mediate between emergent and hybrid resources of intercultural communication should be valued and emphasized in ELT, particularly for ELF users in intercultural contexts.

Alptekin (2002), another English educator, also mentioned the necessity to offer a new pedagogical model in ELT to account for learning and using ELF in intercultural settings. Different from the pedagogical model based on the utopian, unrealistic and constraining notion of communicative competence, he suggested that a valid model should "accommodate the case of English as a means of international and intercultural communication" (Alptekin, 2002:63). For example, instructional materials and activities should involve local and international contexts that are relevant to the lives of ELF users, contain suitable native-nonnative and nonnative-nonnative discourse samples, and take the insights and knowledge of competent intercultural speakers as pedagogical models.

Fantini (2000, 2007), a well-known language educator, addressed the value of ICC in EFL education and argued for the need to help English language learners overcome challenges posed by intercultural communication. He claimed that the construct of ICC consists of intercultural competence (knowledge, attitude, skills, and awareness) and proficiency in the host tongue. However, Fantini (1997) indicated that numerous English language educators consider culture incidental to language proficiency. Although some educators express interest in culture teaching, they often disregard intercultural dimensions. Therefore, he emphasized the value of assessing the cultural and intercultural competencies of teachers in professional areas of ELT and designed a checklist of cultural and intercultural teacher competencies (Fantini, 1997). This checklist entails four key themes describing specific teacher competencies in cultural and intercultural dimensions: (1) inclusion of a sociocultural dimension in lessons, (2) presence of a cultural dimension in classroom dynamics, (3) inclusion of an intercultural dimension, and (4) awareness of and sensitivity and responsibility toward intercultural challenges of the teaching situation. This checklist was suggested to be used as a monitoring tool to help preservice or practicing teachers evaluate their own competencies in this area.

Finally, Sercu (2006) coined the term *foreign language and intercultural competence teacher* to denote the new professional identity that foreign language teachers must acquire to teach ICC effectively in language classrooms. Sercu et al. (2005) conducted an international research project in seven countries to investigate foreign language teachers and their intercultural competence, particularly focusing on the knowledge, attitudes, and skills characterizing their profiles of foreign language and intercultural teaching. The research outcomes were expected to serve as a guide in designing in-service teacher education and training programs concerning ICC teaching in foreign language classrooms. Certain essential teacher qualifications for intercultural foreign language teaching can be recognized based on the content of the questionnaire employed in their study, namely the self-concept of foreign language teachers (e.g., attitudes and motivation) in intercultural communication, their perceptions of the aims, content, and approaches regarding ICC and foreign language education, and their willingness and strategies to interculturalize their teaching practices.

*English as a Lingua Franca and Cultures in English Language Teaching*

English in contemporary times does not belong to any single nation or group (Crystal, 2003; Jenkins, 2000). Because varieties of English are emerging in non-western contexts (Kachru, 2005) and cross-cultural encounters are increasing among nonnative speakers worldwide (Alptekin, 2002; Crystal, 2003), the traditional views regarding the goals and content of ELT are problematic. Recently, several articles have compelled English teaching professionals to rethink the answers to questions regarding the goals that should guide ELT (Alsagoff et al., 2012; Pan & Block, 2011), English that should be taught (Farrell & Martin, 2009; He & Zhang, 2010; Young & Walsh, 2010), culture that should be learned (Alptekin, 2002; Holliday, 2009; Nault, 2006), and English and culture learning materials that should be designed and selected (Chao, 2011; Mckay, 2002; Yuen, 2011). Numerous studies and discussions have been generated to explore these questions and provide implications.

First, mastery of English language knowledge and skills has been assumed to be the primary goal of ELT, and a native speaker model (e.g., American or British English) should be the optimal choice for English learners. However, when English is commonly and extensively used between people in non-inner circle countries where effective

communication is the goal instead of native-speaker behavior (Kachru & Smith, 2008; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Mckay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008), contexts and learner needs are suggested to dictate the variety of English to be taught in classrooms (He & Zhang, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Young & Walsh, 2010) and English teachers must exhibit necessary knowledge and skills to adapt to varieties of English and express appropriate attitudes toward this variability. For example, the goal of English pronunciation instruction has shifted from achieving a native-speaker accent to improving mutual intelligibility, the degree to which a message can be understood among ELF users, in ELF interaction (Harmer, 2011; Jenkins, 2002). Related findings suggest that in teaching broader phonological aspects of connected speech, the suprasegmental features (e.g., stress, rhythm, intonation, pitch, and voice quality) should be more critical than segmental features (e.g., consonants and vowels), because they can improve the nonnative intelligibility of English speakers and then facilitate the progress of intercultural communication (Jenkins, 2002). In addition, further exposure to hearing and understanding the diverse varieties of English was proposed as a helpful approach for improving mutual intelligibility in ELF interaction. English learners should receive opportunities to adjust to some pronunciation and intonation that is unfamiliar to them in intercultural interaction (Kachru & Smith, 2008). Furthermore, the comprehensibility (recognition of a meaning attached to a message) of the varieties of English can improve if learners (Kachru & Smith, 2008) accept opportunities to practice paraphrasing sentences and answer questions based on texts of various Englishes. Similar ideas have been applied to the design of pedagogical materials on the English language. Examples of different English accents were advised to be included in the audio-visual resources of ELT pronunciation materials in activities that can meet the psychological requirements and sociolinguistic situations of local English learners. Thus far, ELT scholars have asserted that the descriptive features of English (how it functions as a tool for communication worldwide) should be emphasized, instead of only the prescriptive rules (Canagarajah, 2006; Rajagopalan, 2004). Briefly, English teachers should always offer their learners opportunities to experience and acquire diverse English varieties in a positive manner.

Regarding the cultural topic, several scholars have mentioned that the cultural dimension (goals and content) of English teaching should be as crucial as its linguistic dimension (Baker, 2009; Kachru & Smith, 2008; Mckay, 2002; Nault, 2006). Because

linguistic factors are not the sole cause of failure or success in intercultural communication, the development of intercultural knowledge, awareness, and behavior can play critical roles in effective intercultural interaction and should be considered in ELT (Alptekin, 2002). Moreover, several English textbooks widely used in the outer and expanding circles were edited by native ELT professionals focusing on the cultures of inner circles (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Pennycook, 1994; Yuen, 2011). Because these ELT textbooks are often regarded as the fundamental teaching resources of linguistic and cultural knowledge in EFL classrooms, numerous values, norms, attitudes, and manners portrayed as conventions of English-speaking countries are transmitted to English learners in the other circles unconsciously and can then negatively affect the development of their personal identities, behaviors, and social expectations. For instance, English learners might feel inferior to native English speakers and believe that western people in the inner circle countries have contemporary and desirable behaviors that they lack and should learn (Chao, 2011). Cortazzi and Jin (1999) indicated three types of cultural content that should be integrated into English textbooks to satisfy the needs of learners in culture instruction: target cultures, local cultures, and international cultures. Scholars have also asserted the necessity of including multiple cultural perspectives in ELT and have agreed that integrating varied cultural information (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, products, knowledge, politeness strategies, and cultural conventions of communication) and reflective activities into ELT materials can reduce the long-lasting imbalance of cultural content and assist English learners in improving their intercultural competence (Chao, 2011, 2013; Kachru & Smith, 2008; Mckay, 2004; Shin et al., 2011; Yuen, 2011).

## The Study

### *Building a Hypothetical ICC in ELT Model for EFL Teachers*

All of the studies mentioned in the previous section suggested that in addition to teaching communicative competence, English teachers should learn and know how to be interculturally competent in ELT and then help their learners develop ICC effectively. Based on the aforementioned models and related studies, a draft structure was first posited to describe the potential ICC qualifications for EFL teachers. After receiving advice on the temporary ICC framework from 10 local experienced English teachers and five scholars with a background in intercultural education, the key points regarding the ICC of EFL teachers in ELT were identified. Accordingly, the original framework was revised and a hypothetical model, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in English language teaching (ELT) for EFL teachers (ICC-ELT-EFL), was proposed to describe the ICC that EFL teachers should develop in ELT. This model included two principal categories and five potential dimensions: (1) personal capabilities of intercultural communication (*EFL teachers' motivation regarding, comprehension of, and behavioral skills in intercultural communication*), and (2) personal capabilities of ICC-oriented ELT (*EFL teachers' perspectives on ELT and intercultural teaching*, and *EFL teachers' abilities in ELT and intercultural teaching*). The operational definitions for the five dimensions of the ICC in ELT for EFL teachers are briefly explained as follows.

*EFL teachers' motivation regarding intercultural communication*. EFL teachers' motivation regarding intercultural communication refers to their emotional reaction to the thoughts and experiences that accompany intercultural communication (Lustig & Koester, 2006). These emotional responses are associated with personal feelings (e.g., eagerness, happiness, anxiety, prejudice, and relaxation) and intentions (e.g., desires, expectations, and goals). Generally, feelings are critical factors that affect the attitudes and sensitivity of people toward interacting with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Intentions play a guiding role in directing the attention, behavior, choices, and decisions of people regarding cultural differences. Developing positive feelings and intentions has been considered to enhance effective intercultural communication, because it can promote

appropriate behaviors and facilitate the development of judging and interpreting different cultures (Samovar et al., 2009). *EFL teachers' motivation regarding intercultural communication* was conceptualized in the hypothetical model as their desire for and interest in understanding and appreciating the varieties and richness among cultures and their self-confidence in intercultural situations.

*EFL teachers' comprehension of intercultural communication.* Several intercultural scholars have mentioned the value of cultural knowledge and awareness in decision making, performance, and interaction in intercultural settings. Intercultural knowledge entails culture-general and culture-specific information, which is the foundation for developing intercultural awareness of cultural similarities and differences (Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2000; Van Dyne et al., 2012). In addition to knowing the universals and idiosyncrasies of cultures in the contemporary world, a person's knowledge of their own cultural system cannot be disregarded because it can facilitate self-awareness, followed by other-awareness (Lustig & Koester, 2006). In the hypothetical model, *EFL teachers' comprehension of intercultural communication* refers to the knowledge that they possess of cultures in their own country and in others, as well as reflective (metacognitive) abilities to understand and interpret similarities and differences among diverse cultures through cultural comparison, intercultural consciousness, critical analysis, and evaluation. For instance, if English teachers were acquainted with various cultural conventions of communication (Kachru & Smith, 2008), they would realize that the cultural factor is a critical cause of intercultural breakdown, rather than only the linguistic (English language) factors. Consequently, they would dismiss stereotypes and develop creative solutions to reconciling cultural differences (e.g., thinking patterns and customs) and cross-cultural misunderstanding (e.g., ethnocentrism and prejudice).

*EFL teachers' behavioral skills in intercultural communication.* Most studies on ICC have reported that positive attitudes and sufficient knowledge are inadequate for being a competent communicator in intercultural settings. The actual demonstration of appropriate behavioral skills has been regarded as a necessary ability to accomplish the goals of successful intercultural contact (Lustig & Koester, 2006; Samovar et al., 2009). *EFL*

*teachers' behavioral skills in intercultural communication* is characterized as mastery of the English language and application of various strategies for appropriate and effective communication during intercultural contact. Mastering ELF and EIL means exceeding the functional applications of the four skills of Standard English. EFL teachers are suggested to be familiar with the practical concerns of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability in WEs (Kachru & Smith, 2008; Nelson, 2011). For example, in addition to American and British English, EFL teachers must understand the accents of English spoken by people in the outer and expanding circles in practical situations. In other words, they must not only employ various verbal and nonverbal behaviors (communication strategies) in resolving difficulties or problems that occur in intercultural communication (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997), but must also understand how to integrate other approaches, such as politeness, face-saving, and interaction management strategies, to facilitating the ongoing progress in intercultural communication as well as establishing a harmonious interactive atmosphere (Chen & Starosta, 2005).

*EFL teachers' perspectives on English language teaching and intercultural teaching.* Currently, increasing discussions on the role of ELF and intercultural learning in ELT is reflective of the urgent needs of globalization and internalization. To promote internationalization and increase international competitiveness, English has been playing a prestigious role in Taiwan and numerous other countries. Because of the ever-increasing "English fever", investigating EFL teachers' perspectives on ELT and intercultural teaching is necessary because the attitudes and beliefs of EFL teachers affect the processes, practices, and outcomes of ELT (Richards, 2000). In the hypothetical model, *EFL teachers' perspectives on ELT and intercultural teaching* is defined as the perceptions of EFL teachers on learning goals, teaching models, the content of culture teaching, course design, selection of textbooks and teaching material, and assessments. All of the related items of this dimension were developed to determine whether the attitudes and perspectives of EFL teachers are sensitive to sociolinguistic contexts, indicate respect for the local culture of learning, can reduce global-local tensions, and are reflective of the practical needs of English learners in intercultural communication (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008).

*EFL teachers' abilities in English language teaching and intercultural teaching.* Possessing an excellent command of English is a crucial qualification for being an effective English teacher; however, this qualification is insufficient. Harmer (2011), a distinguished English language expert, asserted that exceptional English teachers should exhibit the following characteristics: personal qualities (e.g., adaptability), interpersonal skills (e.g., rapport and recognizing students), professional knowledge (e.g., knowledge of the language system and appropriate teaching materials and resources), ability to accomplish regular teacher tasks (e.g., course preparation), and pedagogical skills (e.g., presenting various activities to suit the needs of learners). Thus, this dimension of *EFL teachers' abilities in ELT and intercultural teaching* is used to determine whether the performance of the knowledge, skills, and tasks of teachers in ELT can satisfy the practical needs of EFL learners in intercultural communication. Example topics are the selection of culture teaching materials and the employment of strategies in intercultural teaching.

### *Developing a Self-Assessment ICC Inventory for EFL Teachers*

*Item pool generation.* An instrument used for measuring the personal capabilities of EFL teachers in intercultural communication as well as in ICC-oriented ELT was developed and validated based on the conceptualization of the hypothetical ICC-ELT-EFL model. Because an initial item set should be at least one and a half or two times as large as the final scale to enable psychometric refinement (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010; Nunnally, 1978), the initial item pool comprised 87 items (15–20 items per aspect), based on the operational definitions of the five dimensions of the hypothetical model. To prevent the unfavorable effects of acquiescence bias, both negatively and positively worded items were included in the initial item pool (DeVellis, 2003; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). A non-overlapping panel of six colleagues and three English professors from other universities in Taiwan were invited to independently assess the 87 items for clarity, readability, content validity, and definitional reliability. After collecting their comments and suggestions, items were modified, adjusted, and deleted to ensure that each was concise and written to contain one idea in simple and natural language. Finally, 50 items were retained and a 6-point Likert scale was used to respond to each item of the instrument. The 50-item ICC-ELT-EFL was employed to collect

data for scale examination and model modification. In addition, reversed scoring was applied to 10 of the items: Items 3, 4, 9, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 39.

*Participants.* Several key informants from schools and institutions suggested by university colleagues and students of the author were contacted to enroll participants. The participants of this study were EFL teachers in Northern Taiwan (N = 422: M = 92, F = 330) who taught in various institutional contexts including language and cram schools (16%), kindergartens (15%), elementary schools (15%), high schools (29%), and universities (31%). Some of these teachers taught in more than one context. All of the participating teachers were requested to complete the 50-item ICC-ELT-EFL on paper or by e-mail. The average time required for teachers to complete the survey was approximately 15–20 min. Because the target subjects of the study were Taiwanese EFL teachers, the scale was written in Chinese to eliminate any language-related interference and ensure that all of the participants could answer each item fluently. However, the English version was also provided for their reference.

*Data processing.* After the 50-item ICC-ELT-EFL was administered to the 422 teachers, 396 (M = 87, F = 309) were defined as valid and without missing values. All of the valid data were put into a computer file after identification codes were assigned. Before the statistical analyses, 10 items were reverse-scored (Items 3, 4, 9, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 39). All of the collected data were then analyzed using SPSS/PASW 18.0.

*Data Analyses and Results*

First, the items were analyzed using a *t* test to assess the range of responses and the mean difference of each item between the low-score group (the lowest 27% of the total score) and the high-score group (the highest 27% of the total score). The results revealed that the critical ratio of most of the items achieved significance ($\alpha < .05$), except for Items 3, 37, and 39, which lacked response variation and did not exhibit significant mean difference. In other

words, these 3 items were answered similarly by nearly everyone in the two groups and were considered less predictive than the other items and should be omitted or reworded after factor analyses.

To explore the factor structure of the 50 items, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett tests were used with SPSS/PASW Version 18 to assess the factorability of the data. The results indicated that the KMO value was 0.932 (KMO > 0.5) and those of the Bartlett test of sphericity were significant ($p$< .5); thus, the strength of the interrelations among the items was appropriate for factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Subsequently, exploratory factor analysis incorporating principal component analysis (PCA) with orthogonal varimax rotation was performed to extract the factors of the 50 items on the ICC of Taiwanese EFL teachers in ELT. Initially, 9 factors exhibiting initial eigenvalues exceeding 1 explained 73.866% of the variance. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), the ideal values of factor loadings are higher than .55. In addition, Wu (1999) suggested that factors containing only 2 or fewer items should be deleted. After factor rotation, 5 factors including more than 2 clustered items that yielded factor loading values higher than .55 were selected for further interpretation. Three factors containing 2 or fewer items and one factor that yielded low loading values were removed. The 28 selected items of the 5 factors were then subjected to a second factor analysis incorporating PCA by using SPSS. Before PCA was performed, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was reassessed. The KMO value was 0.885, higher than the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974), and the results of the Bartlett test achieved statistical significance. The results of the PCA revealed the presence of five components that yielded eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 36.66%, 16.26%, 8.64%, 6.65%, and 4.89% of the variance. To interpret these components, varimax rotation was performed. The rotated solutions indicate 4 factors that yielded strong loadings (> .55), explaining 66.423% of the variance. The factor comprising only 2 items (Items 9 and 3) clustered together was deleted (Wu, 1999). Moreover, Items 1 and 4 were discarded because of their low factor loadings (< .55; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Finally, 24 items of the ICC-ELT-EFL were retained (Appendix A).

After reliability analysis was conducted, the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the revised 24-item inventory was .932, higher than .7; thus, the inventory can be considered

a reliable instrument for use with the study sample. Moreover, the four dimensions (components) extracted from the 24 items exhibited Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .914 (Factor 1: Items 13, 14, 15, 19, 25, 28, 29, and 30), .926 (Factor 2: Items 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 40), .902 (Factor 3: Items 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, and 50), and .738 (Factor 4: Items 2, 7, and 10), indicating the internal consistency of each dimension.

## Findings and Discussions

This section elucidates the primary components and their internal consistency in the 24-item inventory, followed by a discussion of the revised ICC-ELT-EFL model.

### *The 24-Item ICC Inventory and the Revised ICC-ELT-EFL Model*

The original 5 factors of the 50-item ICC-ELT-EFL were reduced to 4 after item and factor analyses. Although the 4 factors mostly followed the proposed hypothetical framework of the ICC of EFL teachers in ELT, some differences were observed. To portray the item characteristics of each factor in the 24-item ICC-ELT-EFL appropriately, both the names of the 4 factors and the hypothetical ICC-ELT-EFL model were revised after discussions with colleagues and are explicated as follows.

First, Items 2, 7, and 10 indicate the interest, self-confidence, and desire or enthusiasm of EFL teachers during intercultural encounters, respectively, and thus belong to the *EFL teachers' affective orientations to intercultural communication* factor. The results of this factor can assist in understanding whether EFL teachers' affective orientations regarding intercultural communication are positive.

Second, Items 13–15, 19, 25, and 28–30 indicate the features of a competent intercultural communicator, encompassing cultural knowledge (Items 13–15), intercultural awareness (Item 19), and appropriate or effective behaviors for intercultural communication (Items 25 and 28–30), and thus belong to the *EFL teachers' capabilities for intercultural communication* factor. These items can determine how EFL teachers evaluate their competency level regarding the knowledge and awareness required in intercultural communication and how they self-assess the effectiveness of personal performance in

intercultural conversation, appropriateness of communicative strategies, development of establishing rapport with foreign people, and abilities in resolving conflicts or misunderstandings during intercultural communication.

Third, because Items 31–40 were related to the attitudes and beliefs of EFL teachers regarding key topics in ELT (goals: Items 31, 34, and 35; language models: Items 33 and 40; cultural models: Item 32; choice of materials: Item 36), they belonged to the *EFL teachers' perspectives on ELT* factor. In this dimension, the original scores (1–6) of Items 31–36 were reflective of the intensity of agreement concerning ELT-related statements that excluded intercultural perspectives. Thus, the reversed scores (score 1 → score 6) of the 6 items were adopted to reveal the competence levels of EFL teachers regarding integrating intercultural perspectives into ELT.

Finally, because Items 45–50 all concerned whether EFL teachers approach their English teaching interculturally (inclusion of intercultural content: Items 45, 47, and 49; teaching various English accents: Item 48; comprehension of intercultural breakdowns: Items 46 and 50), they belonged to the *EFL teachers' employment of intercultural strategies in ELT* factor. The results of this dimension can help determine the frequency at which some widely used intercultural strategies are used by EFL teachers in ELT.

Figure 1 presents the revised ICC-ELT-EFL model that indicates the intercultural capabilities that EFL teachers should possess in ELT to assist students in developing ICC effectively. Table 1 presents the 4 factors of the 24-item ICC-ELT-EFL and their Cronbach's alphas.

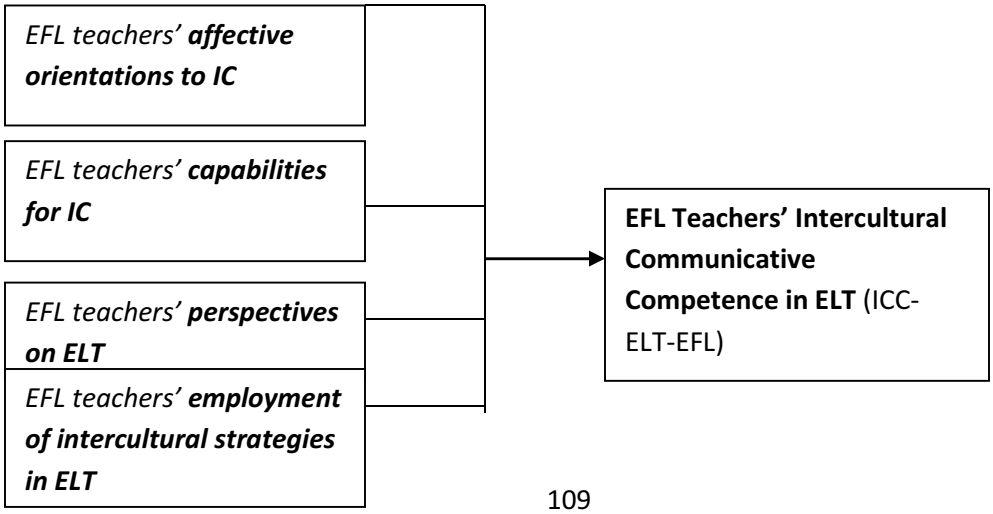

**Figure 1. The revised ICC-ELT-EFL model**

**Table 1. Internal consistency of the 24-item ICC-ELT-EFL**

| Factor | Affective orientations to IC (2,7,10) | Capabilities for IC (13, 14, 15, 19, 25, 28, 29, 30) | Perspectives on ELT (31,32,33,34,35, 36,40) | Intercultural strategies in ELT (45,46,47,48,49 ,50) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Items | 3 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 24 |
| Cronbach's alpha | .738 | .914 | .926 | .902 | .932 |

## Conclusions and Suggestions

The 24-item ICC-ELT-EFL could be used as a convenient tool for pre-service and in-service teachers to explore their belief and practices in ICC-oriented ELT, and influence their definition of culture and culture teaching in ELT. The results from the self-assessment could be used to increase personal awareness of the appropriateness of their ELT in response to the globalization of the English language. In addition, these findings can assist teacher trainers and policy makers in understanding the extent to which and how the current development of the ICC of EFL teachers in ELT has met the specifications of the ICC-ELT-EFL model proposed in this paper. When the information on the ICC-oriented ELT of EFL teachers in various school types is collected using the 24-item self-assessment inventory, their similarities, differences, strengths, and weaknesses can be determined to elucidate English teacher education and propose directions for future ICC studies in the field of ELT.

Although the 24-item ICC-ELT-EFL can be considered as one of the useful strategies for professional growth in ICC-oriented ELT, a few limitations of the study must be mentioned. First, the sample used in this study was derived primarily from the northern part of Taiwan; thus, a random sample from different regions is necessary to validate the inventory and model. Second, the self-assessment tool was limited; Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) stated that participants might provide socially acceptable answers that do not represent their actual behaviors in intercultural contexts. Thus, some strategies can be used when

administering the inventory to increase the quality and quantity of participant response. For example, researchers or administrators should communicate the research purpose, read written instructions, and emphasize confidentiality (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Finally, behavioral assessment tools for observers or interviewers should be developed to collect qualitative data to represent the ICC of EFL teachers in ELT accurately. Thus, we can comprehensively understand the developing ICC of EFL teachers in ELT, as well as their needs, difficulties, dilemmas, and challenges. If the ICC of EFL teachers in ELT are examined using these approaches, optimal practices in English teacher education and training programs can be developed to promote the ICC of EFL teachers in ELT effectively.

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## Appendix A

### 英語教師跨文化溝通教學力自評量表(修正版)

A Self-Assessment Inventory of ICC in ELT for EFL teachers (The revised version)

### Instructions

(1) Intercultural contact/interaction/communication mentioned in this inventory signifies using English to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds (e.g., different countries, linguistic backgrounds, ethnic groups, religious groups, or educational institutions).

(2) The questions in this inventory simply allow you to assess your intercultural communicative competence in English language teaching. There are no right or wrong answers. Please read each question carefully and select an answer that best describes your situations/abilities (intensity of agreement or frequency of employment). Thank you!

**A. How do you think of your affective orientations when facing intercultural communication?**

**(1=**strongly disagree, **2=** disagree, **3=** slightly disagree, **4=** partly agree, **5=** agree,

**6=** strongly agree)

| | |
|---|---|
| 2. 我喜歡與來自不同文化背景的人士交流互動。<br>I enjoy interacting with people of different cultural backgrounds. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 7. 我相信自己能夠靈活地與不同文化背景人士交流互動。<br>I am confident I can interact appropriately with people of different cultural backgrounds. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 10. 我積極學習了解世界上不同的文化。<br>I'm an active learner in understanding different cultures in the world. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

**B. How do you think yourself as an intercultural communicator?**

**(1**=strongly disagree, **2=** disagree, **3=** slightly disagree, **4=** partly agree, **5=** agree, **6=** strongly agree)

| | |
|---|---|
| 13. 我瞭解其他文化的信仰、規範與價值觀。<br>I know the beliefs, norms and values of other cultures. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 14. 我瞭解其他文化的有形產品 (例如建築物、音樂、文學作品等)。<br><br>I know the tangible products of other cultures (e.g., architectures, music, arts and literature). | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 15.我瞭解其他文化的非語言溝通規則。<br><br>I know the nonverbal communication rules of other cultures. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 19. 我能夠意識到自己在跨文化溝通時，文化知識運用的合適性。<br><br>I am conscious of the appropriateness of the cultural knowledge I have applied to intercultural communication. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 25. 在跨文化溝通過程中，我會根據情況需要，改變自己的英語語言溝通方式（例如：口音、語速）。<br><br>I change my ways of communicating in English to fit the situational need of intercultural communication (e.g., speed & intonation) | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 28. 在跨文化溝通過程中，我能夠化解彼此間的矛盾或誤解。<br><br>I resolve conflicts or settle misunderstandings during intercultural communication. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 29.在跨文化溝通過程中，我有效地與外國友人打開話匣子與結束對話。<br><br>I effectively open and end a conversation during intercultural contact. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 30. 在跨文化溝通過程中，我與外國友人建立良好關係。<br><br>I build a good relationship with foreign friends during intercultural contact. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

**C. What are your perspectives on ELT?**

**(1**=strongly disagree, **2=** disagree, **3=** slightly disagree, **4=** partly agree, **5=** agree, **6=** strongly agree)

| | |
|---|---|
| 31. 英語語言知識的精熟是目前我國英語教學的主要目標。<br><br>The mastery of English language knowledge is the main goal of English teaching and learning in my country. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 32. 在英語教學中，文化學習應該以英語為母語國家的文化為主（例如美國）。<br><br>English native speakers' cultures (e.g., USA) should be the main focus of culture learning when teaching English. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 33. 英語為母語國家人士所使用的標準英語，是跨文化溝通英語使用者的最佳模仿對象。<br><br>The Standard Englishes used by native speakers should be the best model(s) for EIL/ELF users. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 34. 學生若具備優異的英語語言能力，就能夠面對未來不同跨文化溝通情境（例如：工作、教育）的需要。<br><br>Students with fluent English abilities can face all future challenges in different situations of Intercultural communication (e.g., job and education). | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 35. 幫助學生高分考取國際認可的語言證照，是學校英語課程的主要目標。<br><br>The main purpose of school English courses is to help EFL learners pass internationally recognized English tests with high scores to get English language certificates. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 36. 由英語為母語人士編纂的英語教材(教科書)，內容較專業與正確。<br><br>The English textbooks edited by native speakers are more accurate and professional. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 40. 學習了解不同口音的英語，有其必要性。<br><br>It is necessary to help students comprehend the variety of English. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

**D. How often do you approach your English instruction through intercultural strategies?**

**(1=**never do this, **2=** seldom do this, **3=** sometimes do this, **4=**often do this, **5=** usually do this, **6=** always do this)

| | |
|---|---|
| 45. 選擇英語教材時，書中世界文化內容編排的多寡，影響我決定是否使用。<br>When selecting English material(s)/textbook(s), I take the allocation of world cultures into consideration. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 46. 英語教學中，我引導學生針對造成跨文化溝通失敗的文化因素作思考，進而討論解決方法。<br><br>I guide students to explore and understand those cultural factors that may cause the breakdown of intercultural communication. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 47. 選擇英語教材時，書中是否編排本土文化內容，影響我決定是否使用。<br><br>When selecting English material(s)/textbook(s), I take the allocation of local cultures into consideration. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 48. 選擇英語教材時，書中英語口音的多元性，影響我決定是否使用。<br><br>When selecting English material(s)/textbook(s), I take the variety of English accents into consideration. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 49. 我運用跨文化理論(例如: Hofstede 的文化維度論) 於英語課程的文化教學中。<br><br>I apply intercultural communication theories, such as Hofstede's Cultural Taxonomy, to culture teaching of English education. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 50. 英語教學中，我引導學生針對造成跨文化溝通失敗的語言因素作思考，進而討論解決方法。<br><br>I guide students to explore and understand those linguistic factors that may cause the breakdown of intercultural communication. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

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# Enhancing Communicative Competence through Simulation in an EFL Business English Class

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## Bio data

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## Abstract

Simulation exercises focused on business English were employed as a learning method in an EFL course at a Thai university. Subjects were 45 students who were enrolled in a university-level English for Business Communication course. The subjects were given a pre-test before the course began and a post-test at the end of the semester to measure changes in four different oral language skills: fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Results indicated that the learning method had a positive effect on communicative competence in business English of the university EFL students with different levels of proficiency. Simulation is discussed as a possibly effective method for getting students to interact and participate in meaningful, real-life-type conversations in the target language.

**Keywords**: simulation, communicative competence, business English, EFL

## Introduction and Contextualization

A widely accepted goal in EFL education is communicative competence, which is the ability to use language purposefully in real-life communicative contexts (Savignon, 1997). Good EFL teaching practices are expected to employ methods that encourage communicative competence, and provide opportunities for the students to practice communicating in the target language (Kayi, 2006). However, despite the promotion of the goal of communicative competence for many years, the lack of university students' abilities to produce language in actual real-life situations exists across the entire EFL landscape.

Many educators have raised concerns about the standards of English language instruction in EFL universities. As Shen & Suwanthep (2011, p. 4) point out, "in many Chinese universities, EFL students rarely communicate in English with other people effectively." Li (2001) emphasizes that in China, most students still finished their university English courses as good test-takers, but poor communicators. Wharton (2010) also highlights the fact that the majority of Japanese university students are not communicatively competent in English. Similarly, Rozi (2011) claims that many nursing students from Indonesia cannot communicate well in English.

Teaching English in Thailand, one such EFL country, has also been undervalued as for the most part, neither university EFL teachers nor our learners have succeeded in accomplishing the goal of communicative competence. As Kimsuwan (2003), Kullavanijaya & Surasiangsun (2006), Kunnaovakun (2003) and Teo (2006) point out, in all six regions of Thailand, undergraduate students show an overall inability to use English to participate appropriately in social interaction. Moreover, most Thai university graduates lack proficiency in oral English skills to meet the needs of organizations that might offer employment (Kullavanijaya et al, 2003). Methithan & Chamcharatsri (2011), Drapter (2012) and Kirkpatrick (2012) claim that Thai university students fail to use English purposefully in real communicative contexts because they lack communicative competence.

The reasons behind this lack of communicative competence are wide ranging and complex. A number of factors including lack of teaching resources, negative wash back from

the testing system (Foley, 2005), lack of opportunity to practice spoken English both in and out of the classroom (Kayi, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2012), over-sized classes, the content in textbooks that does not cover students' learning needs, non-confident teachers (Lee, 2011), giving top priority to grammatical competence (Richards, 2001; Ozdemi, 2013), the goal of students to pass tests rather than improve communicative competence (White, 2011), and teacher-fronted and uncommunicative methods employed in the classroom (Wharton, 2010) all contribute to attaining communicative competence in English. Furthermore, Galien & Bowcher (2010, p. 4) claim that EFL teachers "have long been concerned about whether our approach is student-centered, task-focused, top-down, bottom-up, teacher-directed or theoretically principled", and have focused on "ensuring that our curriculum includes cross-cultural issues, environmental consciousness, political awareness, and critical thinking" which are important aspects of any EFL classroom; nevertheless, we do not add new ways of communicating to this mix. In contrast, EFL teachers often string together a series of activities and exercises, and present material from the textbook simply to occupy classroom time (Richards & Bohlke, 2011).

Considering my teaching experience, there are two main problems which seem to work against this goal. First, my teaching method is not learner-centered. It is obvious that I exercise control of language and interactions in the classroom, and I am likely to organize my lessons to have students practice given language patterns that the students are expected to perform accurately and automatically within the time frame of a classroom session. I often use repetition of drills and memorization of dialogs to teach speaking. Second, the students learn language not by using language, but demonstrating language patterns correctly without real purposes. In the learning process, they practice by a process of repetition of drills and memorization of dialogs. The common experience of the students is to learn to mimic language patterns without absorbing the substance of those patterns. Through repetition of drills and rote memorization of model dialogues, the students are able to reproduce language patterns, but they are not able to use English to express their own thoughts. Nor are they able to comprehend spoken English that departs from the language patterns that they memorize. In real-life, outside-the-classroom situations, faced with deficiencies in linguistic

knowledge and speaking skills, my students encounter great difficulties in expressing themselves in English.

It is apparent that current common teaching practices do not sufficiently lead university EFL students to communicative competence in English. As the world has become more and more closely integrated and English has become a global language (Crystal, 2003; Nunan, 2003) and a common language for communication nearly all over the world (Sifakis & Sougari, 2003), there is an increased urgency in EFL countries to raise people's abilities to communicate effectively, cooperatively and competitively in English. As Haruyama (2010, p. 31) notes, "the need for communicative skills in English has been increasing, both for business and in private life". Learning a global language helps to improve a nation's competitive power against other countries socially and economically (Graddol, 2000). Moreover, because English is "the language of economy, diplomacy, industry, education, sports and the like" (Ozdemir, 2013, p. 127), professions around the world demand that people be able to use English efficiently as "an essential tool for establishing meaningful communication in today's global context" (Rozi, 2011, p. 54). With the spread of the need for communicative competence in English, as university EFL teachers who serve our countries by preparing students to be productive citizens, we have to find ways, in addition to the teaching methods we already use, to aid and encourage our students to develop solid communicative competence in English.

Communicative competence is a term in linguistics which refers to a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology, lexicon, discourse and the like, as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately in real-life situations (Hymes, 1971). Canale & Swaine (1980) define communicative competence in terms of four components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. However, in investigating the level of communicative competence in English, Boonchit (1999) suggests only one aspect - fluency - as fluency exists in relation to other areas of competence including pragmatic, linguistic, and strategic competence. Adding to this, Leung (2005) suggests including communicative form and functioning in integral relation to communicative competence. A more recent survey of English communicative competence by Somboonpaisan (2006); on the other hand,

focuses on four attributes namely fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary to assess the ability in using spoken English. She claims that a speaker who is considered highly proficient in oral communicative English always produces fluent, continuous and effortless speech as well as selects grammar and vocabulary for conversation appropriately and occasionally with intelligible pronunciation.

This competence is difficult to achieve if EFL students are exposed to artificial and decontextualized language (Ur, 1981). However, it can be achieved if EFL teachers provide opportunities for the students to practice communicating in the target language (Kayi, 2006), and provide conditions for learning that promote communicative competence (Taylor, 1983). Taylor suggests three conditions necessary for communicative competence to be achieved: 1) authentic and meaningful situations, 2) motivation for self-expression rather than forced mimicry of sets of dialogues or of other people's words, and 3) the freedom to speak in a non-threatening classroom environment.

There are four elements to a real communication context: the speaker produces her own language; the speaker controls the content of the speech; the speaker determines the development of discourse; and there is a real outcome as a result of the discourse (Brumfit, 1984). A way to elicit self-expression is to provide a situation that students find interesting and intriguing and that stimulates the students' desires to communicate their thoughts. When the students are able to express themselves by using expressions that they have learned, they satisfy a real need to communicate and this intrinsic satisfaction acts as reinforcement for using English for communicative purposes (Harmer, 1983). Furthermore, communicative competence is most achievable in an environment in which the students are free to speak their minds. Kayi (2006) suggests that an environment or situation in which the students engage in real-life dialogue gives the students the opportunity to select and experiment with language elements that they have learned. Providing a rich environment or intriguing situation that stimulates meaningful communication is more likely to encourage communicative competence than would the common practices of rote repetition and memorization.

To achieve communicative competence, many educators recommends applying simulations, in which real-life situations are simulated and language students are called upon

to use real language to fit the situation as if it were real (Jones,1983), to EFL classroom settings to create conditions to further develop oral English skills. Pereira (2006) explains simulation as a way to "transpose the normal classroom into an authentic setting in which language skills are exhibited under more realistic conditions" (p. 1). It can be said that simulation is a means to elicit language under conditions that approach reality. In simulation, students are assigned roles and situations from which they have to improvise their own language to achieve their goals in accordance with the demands placed on them by their own roles and use of other participants (Sawatsi, 2007). This is how language is produced in real life. Simulation, by definition, is an attempt to create an environment that represents aspects of the real world. In simulated circumstances, an interactive process is created that provides students with experiences to prepare them to cope with similar experiences in the real world (Ruanpan, 2003; Tantiwong, 2009).

Kayi (2006) and Schellin (2006), who view simulation as a mockup of reality designed to arouse students' interest, consider simulation the most effective and useful EFL learning tool. They stress that simulation serves best for communicative English teaching as it provides students with whole-task exercises that are relevant to real situation communication. In practical terms simulation exercises are a rehearsal for real life; it inspires students to acquire the target language in a comprehensive manner and then transfer their experience to real situations (Rodtook et al, 2010). Haruyama (2010) goes so far as to advocate simulation as the best and most appropriate method for improving students' English speaking skills while cultivating awareness of grammatical accuracy, as well as strengthening comprehension of the concept, and fostering personal growth of learners as they participate in creative and cooperative assignments. Adding to this, Chayanuvat (2012) suggests that simulation is a very appropriate teaching and learning approach for students of the 21st century in places where learner-centered education in language classes has been proclaimed the standard.

Drawing from a considerable body of knowledge of past and current teaching practices, as an EFL teacher at a public university in southern Thailand, I have attempted to provide

meaningful and successful learning experiences for Thai university students by employing simulation exercises in an "English for Business Communication" course. The objectives were to raise the students' competence in speaking English – specifically English as an international business language, and to prepare the students for communicating in the actual work place for successful careers. With the advent of the single ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Economic Community, Thai university students will need to be proficient in communicative English skills in order to qualify for and maintain productive roles in the ASEAN labor force (Kullavanijaya, 2006), and to overcome the current disadvantage that Thai people have in comparison with people of other ASEAN member states (Faktorngpan, 2012a; Marukatat, 2012).

Simulations have never been tried in my teaching situation. It is quite new and little known among my colleagues. Therefore, I wanted to study the effects of using simulation to discover whether it can develop the EFL students' communicative competence. In this article, I operate under the assumption that simulation exercises are effective in aiding EFL students to improve their communicative competence in business English. While it may seem self-evident that real-life situations provide opportunities for students to practice speaking English, my assumptions are supported by the aforementioned literature. I further project that by participating in simulations, students approach the conditions and demands of a real-life communication context, in which they exercise control of the language, adapt to the simulated situation, and use language in a meaningful way. In this way, simulations prepare students to not only communicate with one another but also to participate in the broader international community.

Although simulation has been used to improve language learning and performance for a while now and several studies have already demonstrated the effectiveness of simulation exercises on university EFL students' communicative competence, few studies have focused on English for Business Communication classes with EFL learners of varying proficiency levels. Moreover, few studies have attempted to identify the specific attributes of oral English that are affected by the use of simulations.

This article provides a detailed sequence of teaching practices that were used in a university English for Business Communication class over the course of a semester. Forty-five students of highly varying proficiencies in English skills participated. I focused on four different oral language skills suggested by Somboonpaisan (2006): fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary to determine how each attribute was affected by simulation exercises.

**Objectives and Research Questions**

The focus in this article is on the effectiveness of simulation exercises in improving university EFL students' communicative competence in business English. I observed four attributes of spoken English including fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, and how each attribute was affected by using simulation exercises in the classroom. Results of a post-test of the students' ability in speaking business English were compared with results of a pre-test to determine changes in four different attributes. Students were also asked for their perceptions of their own abilities and for their opinions about the benefits of simulation exercises.

Knowing whether or not simulations significantly enhance students' communicative competence in English could potentially affect how EFL courses are taught in EFL universities. If it can be shown that using simulations effectively improves the speaking performance of students with different levels of proficiency; it may be to EFL universities' advantage to encourage simulations as a viable teaching practice to better prepare university students for real-life situations.

The students' attitudes towards learning English through simulation exercises, how they justify their own performances and how they identify factors that benefited them in developing English speaking skills, could all have implications on what teachers could do to realize the goal of communicative competence. Achieving such a goal would mean that university EFL students are able to appropriately communicate in English and are amply

prepared for real communicative contexts. To take steps toward these goals, this study is guided by the following research questions:

(1) Can simulation exercises enhance communicative competence in business English of university EFL students with different levels of proficiency?

(2) What specific factors in simulations do the students perceive as beneficial to their oral business English improvement?

## Method

### *Participants*

All 45 fourth-year Languages, Communication and Business (LCB) major undergraduate students who were enrolled in an "English for Business Communication" class during the first semester of 2012 were chosen to be the sample in the study. This class contained learners of highly varying proficiency levels in spoken English skills based on the scores from the speaking pre-test (19 students were "high", 10 students were "medium", 13 students were "low", and 3 students were "very low"). None of the participants had ever before been exposed to the kind of simulation exercises that were used in this study for purposes of learning English. These participants were chosen because some surveys found that graduates from this university had very low proficiencies in speaking English, claiming that the graduates were not competent to communicate in English in real situations (Planning Division at Anonymous University), and English communicative competence of the graduates was below employer satisfactory levels (Tasanameelarp, 2012).

Clearly, English teaching practices had failed to prepare the university students for real-world situations and their careers in the future. The fourth-year LCB students were in line to be part of the labor force in the ASEAN Economic Community. As such they would be confronted with situations in which they would need to communicate in English – including business English – in an international environment. Hence, there was urgency for these

students to improve their English communication skills. It was incumbent upon me to try something to help these students improve their skills in speaking English, so that this group of undergraduates might be better prepared to participate in the broader international community after graduating.

### *Instruments for collecting data*

To determine the effectiveness of the proposed teaching method, researcher-made pre- and post-tests on communicative competence in business English, and the students' diaries on their attitudes toward simulation exercises were used as instruments in this study.

### *A pre-and post-test on communicative competence in business English*

The locally-created pre- and post-tests on communicative competence in business English consisted of five scenarios. Each scenario held one situation card and two role cards – one role card for the student, and one role card for the examiner. The five scenarios were:

- talking about advertising strategies,
- introducing a new product,
- dealing with shipping problems at a call center,
- negotiating and bargaining, and
- placing an order. (Please see Appendix A for more details on situations and roles.)

This skills test was devised specifically for this project to measure the students' facility in speaking and understanding business English. The variable that was being observed was the students' communicative competence in business English in terms of fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary on a five-point rating scale. (Please see Appendix B for the assessment scales.) To validate the test, three experienced English lecturers proofread the content for errors in English. The test was administered to a trial group of fourth-year

LCB students who were not part of the study. The English experts and I turned to our observations to revise the content of the test. With the consensus of the three English lecturers, the final draft of the test was considered applicable to this study. The pre-test was administered to each student in the study before the start of the English for Business Communications course. The post-test was administered to each student individually after the fifth simulation exercise.

***Students' diaries***

In addition to the pre-and post-test, the students' diaries also provided data for analysis. The students were assigned to keep diaries for this class, writing entries directly after each simulation. For their diaries, the students were asked two focus questions pertaining to their attitudes toward two issues; 1) how the students evaluated their own performance in each simulation, and 2) which aspects of simulation they saw as beneficial to their language learning. (Please see Appendix C for more details.)

***Teaching materials***

I prepared and conducted teaching materials for the English for Business Communications course. The materials included a workbook and five scenarios. In designing the lessons, all the topics in the workbook and simulated situations in the scenarios were developed or chosen on the basis of the students' interest and challenge to the students through the need survey. Three English experts made adjustments to the lessons before they were tried on fourth-year LCB students who were not part of the study. After initial trials, the lessons were revised and refined and made ready for use in the course.

***A workbook***

A workbook provided preparatory language input for the students. The topics contained in the workbook all pertained to business: Advertising, Public Relations, Customer Service, Making Deals, and Trading.

These five chapters were designed to enhance the students' knowledge about the topic and enable the students to identify with relevant roles. The aim of the teaching materials was to equip the students with rudimentary knowledge of adverts and brand images, public relations letters, product presentation, call centers, letters of complaint and adjustment, negotiations, proposals, ordering, shipping, and various facets of business-related transactions.

Each chapter contained two units. Each unit consisted of five main sections.

- Vocabulary Preview: Students became familiar with 8 key words in two exercises. The first exercise required the students to match each word with its definition. The second exercise required students to complete sentences with the appropriate keywords.
- Reading Practice: Students read essential information related to the topic. A set of questions checked the students' reading comprehension skills.
- Listening and Speaking Practice: The material listed key phrases related to the unit topic. A dialogue with incomplete sentences followed. Students were to insert the appropriate key phrases in the incomplete sentences. Then they were to use the completed dialog to practice speaking with each other. While this may seem similar to rote memorization of phrases, the key difference is that the intent was to learn a specialized vocabulary for business English, as opposed to common phrases in everyday English.
- Writing Practice: The students were tasked with learning about the kinds of documents they may need to write for business purposes. Writing exercises consisted of forms and/or letters or emails related to the unit topic. Although

- writing documents in the way that they are written in actual business

environments may constitute a kind of simulation that was not the intent here. The writing exercises were meant to reinforce learning of the language – including the key phrases.

- Golden Rules: "Golden Rules" was a set of useful rules or tips about good business practices or communication skills associated with the unit topic to further reinforce the students' communicative competence.

At the end of the workbook, "Useful Language" section which listed phrases in useful categories for easy reference could be found. This worked best when students referred to, and tried to put into practice, the relevant language while doing the simulations. There was also a list of definition of words in the "Glossary" section where the meanings were stated in terms of a uniquely revised and clearly defined vocabulary. In addition, there was a "Can Do Checklist" with a series of "I can ..." statements that stated target outcomes of the related unit. Students could view this checklist before learning the material in order to understand beforehand what they were expected to learn. They were also encouraged to go through this checklist after completing the unit, to recognize those areas that they needed to work on.

***Five scenarios***

A scenario for simulation came at the end of each chapter. Each of the five scenarios contained a card that described the situation to be simulated, and five different role cards. Each student in a group of five received a different role card. The situation and the roles were related to the chapter topics, and were varied so as to create real information gaps between the role-players. Variation in the roles would also call into play a wide range of Business English terminology.

A synopsis of each simulation follows (Please see Appendix D for more details on the five different role cards of each scenario.):

- Simulation 1 – Emphasis on talking about advertising strategies: In the meeting room of *Maybelline New York*, an executive director, an advertising manager, a brand manager, a design manager, and a regional sales manager

- are discussing an advertising campaign for the new long last lipstick collections.
- Simulation 2 – Emphasis on introducing a new product: In *Paradise Hall*, a project manager, a marketing team member, and a sales representative are introducing a new *iPhone* designed by *Apple in California*. Two members of the audience ask questions pertaining to the prototype of the *iPhone* itself, and listen to feedback from other customers.
- Simulation 3 – Emphasis on dealing with shipping problems at a call center: In the call center of the shipping department of *Levi Strauss & Co.*, there are telephone conversations between two employees and customers who are the purchasing manager and the sales coordinator of *Central Plaza*. The customer service manager of *Levi Strauss & Co.* also gets involved.
- Simulation 4 – Emphasis on negotiating and bargaining: In the meeting room of *Advice Company*, the marketing manager of *Thailand's Got Talent* program and his executive secretary are meeting with the sales director, the credit control manager and the company president of *Advice Company* to negotiate a deal on a DVD e-tail package.
- Simulation 5 – Emphasis on placing an order: In the shipping department of *BRAND'S*, it involves telephone conversations between two operators, as well as the sales director of that company, and two customers from two different companies who call to place custom orders.

  **Note:** All the companies, brands, or programs are mentioned as concrete examples to make the lessons understandable to students; however, the persons and the stories are all fictional, and any resemblance or similarity in real life is purely coincidental.

### *Data collection and analyses procedures*

#### *Pre-testing*

Students were pre-tested for communicative competence in business English one week prior to attending the first English for Business Communication class. The procedure entailed a meeting between each student and three examiners (two Thai lecturers and a native English speaking lecturer who taught English).

The procedure was as follows:

- The student would choose one of the five scenarios.
- Using the situation card and the role card for the student for reference, the student had five minutes to prepare.
- One examiner would take the second role card and had to lead a discussion with the student, relevant to the situation that was described on the situation card. The lead examiner had a guided conversation.
- After five minutes of preparation, the lead examiner would have a 10-minute conversation with the student. The content of the conversation was based upon the information on the situation card. In effect, this was a 10-minute role play.
- The three examiners would observe and assess the students' responses to the simulated situation by rating each student's performance in each attribute on a five-point rating scale.

#### *Teaching and learning*

As mentioned earlier, the study took place at a university in Thailand during the first semester of 2012. The participants were all the students in English for Business Communication class. The course covered a period of fifteen weeks. The students attended class three hours each week for a total of 45 hours during the semester. Before the semester

began, the students received instruction about the procedures in a simulation. Thus by the time the course began, the students had some familiarity with the mechanisms of simulation, and they understood their roles and responsibilities.

To prompt interaction and collaboration toward achieving goals, the students were told to form groups of five. In addition to the social and educational benefits to the students, Richards & Bohlke (2011) suggest groups of four or five for ease of classroom management. The students were allowed to choose their own groups to work in groups with which they were comfortable, but were also guided to include students of differing proficiency levels so that peer tutoring might take place. Peer tutoring was, in fact, promoted as a means to keep group members focused on the task at hand, and to make collaborative efforts on different tasks.

Before the start, each group drew a lot to be assigned to make a presentation for one chapter explaining with their friends the passage in the Reading Practice section together with a set of rules or tips in the Golden Rules section. This group was also assigned to transpose the classroom into an authentic setting regarding to the situation in the chapter on the day of the communication stage. Each of the five chapters in the learning material was prepared for nine hours (three weeks) of instruction. The teaching sequence, as suggested by Prombungrum (2008), began with preparation, which was followed by communication, and ended with evaluation.

Stage 1 – Preparation

The principle aim of this stage was to prepare the students to enact a situation. Background information pertinent to the situation they would enact came from the five main sections in the workbook: Vocabulary Preview, Reading Practice, Listening and Speaking Practice, Writing Practice, and Golden Rules. To build their English skills, the students worked individually, in pairs or in groups. The students did the exercises in the Vocabulary Preview section individually before learning through the assigned group's presentation on the

essential information related to the topic in the Reading Practice section and a set of rules or tips in the Golden Rules section to further reinforce their communicative competence. Then, they worked and practiced in pairs on the dialogues in the Listening and Speaking Practice section in order to learn a specialized vocabulary for business English, as opposed to common phrases in everyday English. In the Writing Practice section, the students were tasked, individually or in pairs, with learning about the kinds of documents they needed to write for business purposes in actual business environments in order to reinforce learning of the language, including the key phrases. Linguistic practice came from exercises and drills that included vocabulary, expressions and contexts that were relevant to the situation they were preparing to enact. This step required six hours of class time, or two weeks, to complete.

At the end of the second week, a scenario was given to each group. Each group was allowed to study only its situation, but individual group members did not learn of their roles until five minutes before they were called to perform in the third week. The students were allowed to learn the situation for each simulation in advance in order to revise the lesson through the Useful Language section which listed phrases in useful categories for easy reference as well as the Glossary section in which the meanings were stated in terms of a uniquely revised and clearly defined vocabulary. In addition, each group could prepare some materials to make their simulation real, and the assigned group could plan how to create an international environment that represented aspects of the real work place.

Stage 2, Communication

In the third week, the assigned group created the environment of the assigned situation. For example, in the first simulation, where five executives were discussing an advertising campaign for a new lipstick collection in the meeting room of *Maybelline New York*, the assigned group showed the Power Point presenting the meeting room of *Maybelline New York* as the background. Some tables with five seats were arranged as a real meeting room in the middle of the class, and there were also some *Maybelline New York* lipsticks on the table.

Lots were drawn to decide which group would perform first, second, third, and so on. When it became time for a group to enact its situation, each member of the group drew a lot to determine the role that he or she would play. The group would then have five minutes to discuss the situation and their assigned roles before performing their simulation. This part of the preparation had its advantages in forcing the students to learn their roles quickly and use language spontaneously, and it also had another advantage; the students were prevented from practicing their roles while another group was performing.

After 5 minutes of preparation, the group had 15 minutes to simulate the situation it was given. Skillful acting was not expected, but each student was expected to try to respond according to their role. Using only the information about the situation and the information in their assigned roles, the group of 5 students would come into the situation as if it were real. As in real life, the speech was improvised, not scripted or rehearsed. The situations stimulated discussion and cooperation to resolve issues.

While adapting to an unfamiliar setting, the students also needed to apply their linguistic knowledge as well as their knowledge of the subject. They were prompted to utilize communication strategies to express their ideas. To resolve the issue at hand, with each role expressing a different point of view, the students discussed, argued, gave reasons, and tried to reach agreements and conclusions. This set-up would force the students to use vocabulary that they had learned in the chapter, thus encouraging the students to reinforce their knowledge and to extend their speaking skills.

I observed that the students formed actual communicative contexts while doing their simulations. To prevent extra preparation, the students in the audience were asked to watch the performance and to keep notes about the language that was used in the simulation. The notes would be used as feedback for the group that was performing the simulation.

Stage 3, Evaluation

In subsequent debriefing periods, the students saw video recordings of themselves and of their friends, as in the following example of simulation 1 performed by Group 1.

**Simulation 1 Emphasis on talking about advertising strategies**

(S32 is an executive director, S2 is an advertising manager, S13 is a brand manager, S8 is a design manager, and S4 is a regional sales manager. They are in the meeting room of *Maybelline New York*.)

S32: Good morning, everyone. I would like to start welcoming everyone to today's meeting. OK.

Today we will talk about the new long last lipstick collection. OK! Let start! What image does *Maybelline* has?

S13: There're … modern. There're sleek. There're … stylish and popular. … convey exclusive to the public.

S32: What feelings do people … associate with our brand?

S13: People … satis … faction *Maybelline*.

S32: So, which group of customers to use our new lipsticks and makes profits come to company?

S2: I focus in teenager because teenager love beauty and should to design many collection. It's easy to promote with teenager.

S8: In my opinion, I focus working woman. They have money. They don't … mind about price as they want to be … young … younger.

S32: How do you think about two ideas?

S8: I think boss should just one idea.

S4: I think teenagers and working women.

S32: I agree with you. Good! Let's look at our present advertising strategy. How are we promoting the

brand at the moment?

S13: TV and in … the … magazine.

S2: I think the best place to advertise our new collections is we should book more 30-second TV

commercial to the audience we want to … reach.

S4: That right! But … language used in the advert … important role to sustain interest and … audience's attention to … persuade customer to buy our products.

S8: We should hire popular presenters for promote the new collection. Miss Sprite! She's popular in *Hormones the Series*. How do you feel?

S8: And I think packaging is … very … important. It can … the customers to buy. If I design product have interest. Market competitive is high.

S32: I agree with you. Your idea make me imagine. I think we should have fashion show. The new long

last lipstick have diamond on the piece. Each color can mixture with other color.

S4: Great!

S32: Thank you for attending the meeting.

The students were encouraged to comment or ask questions pertaining to the conversation in the simulation. Some questions were concerned with fluency, pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary, while other questions were about the substance of the conversation.

In teacher-led discussions, peer-to-peer evaluations were supplemented by the teacher's observations. The teacher pointed to English errors that were made and suggested alternative ways to express what they wanted to say. The teacher also explained essential points about the target language, and provided exercises related to the problem areas. The teacher also directed the students' attention to discussion strategies that would be useful in future simulations or in real life.

The same three evaluators who had observed the pre-test also observed the students. The aim was to attain assessments following each of the five lessons to ascertain the students' rate of progress. The evaluation stage could be seen as a feedback and reinforcement stage, in which language skills might be strengthened.

While the experience of using language was practical, challenging and fulfilling their needs, it motivated the students to always use English. This made them become familiar with

the language, and feel more at ease in speaking, as in the following example of simulation 5 also performed by Group 1.

**Simulation 5 Emphasis on placing an order**

(S13 is a customer from *Zen Central World*, S4 is a call center staff *of BRAND'S*, S2 is a purchasing manager of *Robinson*, S32 is a shipping assistant of *BRAND'S*, and S8 is a logistics and merchandising manager of *BRAND'S*. It involves telephone conversations between *BRAND'S* staff and customers who call to place custom orders.)

S4: Good Morning. *BRAND'S Company*. Beyonce speaking. Can I help you?

S13: Good Morning. I'm Marry. I call from *Zen Central World*. I'd like to place an order, please.

S4: Sure. What you like to order?

S13: I want order 5000 New Year gift sets of bird's nest beverage.

S4: Could you give me your address?

S13: Yes, of course, account number is 99248. Purchase order number is ZCW 140. Address is Unit 9,

North East Industrial Estate. Malaysia.

S4: What is the shipping method do you want?

S13: I choose sea … freight.

S4: OK. The order's entered in the system now. It should be delivered by the end of the day.

S13: Thank you very much. Bye.

S4: Thank you .We always especially delighted to serve old friend.

S32: Good morning. *BRAND'S Company*. Lila speaking. May I help you?

S2: Good morning. I am Chompooprae. I call from *Robinson*. I would like to place an order.

S32: Certainly. Can I just take some details from you so that we can track the order? Do you have an

account with us?

S2: Yes, we do. My account number is 777411, and my purchase order number is RBS1010.

S32: OK. What would you like to order?

S2: I want to order 2,000 New Year's gift sets of essence of chicken beverage with the *Robinson* New

Year's cards on.

S32: Sure. Would you confirm the shipping address, please?

S2: Robinson Company, 259 Sukhumvit Road, North Klongtoey, Wattana, Bangkok 10110.

S32: OK, that's fine. I'll just go over that – it's 2,000 New Year's gift sets of essence of chicken

beverage with the *Robinson* New Year's cards on, order number is RBS1010, shipping to Robinson

Company, 259 Sukhumvit road, North Klongtoey, Wattana, Bangkok 10110.

S2: Great! Hmm … I want to get the products as soon as possible. I will pay you by letter of credit.

S32: Sure. Your product will be delivered within 3 days.

S2: Alright. Thank you very much, good bye!

S32: Thank you. We are always especially delighted to serve an old friend. Good bye.

S2: Hello. Chompoopare speaking. How can I help you?
S8: Hi! I'm a logistics and merchandising manager for *BRAND'S Company*. I'm call to apologize to

you for missing some details about warehousing and shipping method. Could you tell me the

shipping method would you like to use?
S2: We would like to use air plane … air freight with *Express Air Forwarding*.
S8: Would you confirm the shipping … address for me again, please?
S2: Robinson Company, 259 Sukhumvit Road, North Klongtoey, Wattana, Bangkok 10110.

S8: OK, that's fine. I'll just go over that – shipping by freight via *Express Air Forwarding*, to Robinson

Company, 259 Sukhumvit road, North Klongtoey, Wattana, Bangkok … 10110.

S2: Right! Hmm … . I want to get the products as soon as possible.

S8: The order's entered in the system now, and it should be … shipped tomorrow morning.

S2: Thank you very much. Good bye.

***Diary keeping***

As known, students were not willing to write diaries. Being aware of this, I carried out a student orientation to diary keeping. The orientation was held at the beginning of the course. As a teacher, I explained to the students why diaries were needed and how and when to keep them. The usefulness of keeping diaries to aid learning was emphasized e.g. how information collected could help the teacher and learners know their attitudes or feelings on the teaching methodology, and to discover their problems so as to find ways to solve and improve them. After this, I assigned the students to keep their own diaries after each simulation. The Thai language was allowed since some students did not have enough competence to express their perceptions of teaching methodology and other issues in English.

Right after each simulation, the students were instructed to evaluate their own performance by writing in their daily diaries. This was done anonymously so that the students could be open with their opinions. The students recorded honestly and openly reactions to teaching and learning. Specifically they were asked to evaluate their use of English to convey their ideas in order to see whether simulation exercises helped them communicate more effectively with regards to fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Then, if improved, they were asked to assess the benefits of doing a simulation to improve their communication skills in business English, and if not improved, they were asked to identify the obstacles to attaining communicative competence. This daily reflection by the students enabled me to gain clear insights into student reactions to simulation and their involvement. It also enabled me to focus my own classroom observation in the light of the daily feedback gained.

***Post-testing***

At the end of the semester, after the fifth simulation exercise, the students were required to take the post-test on communicative competence in business English to determine the effects of simulation exercises on their speaking performance. The post-test was administered to each student individually. The procedure for the post-test was the same as the pre-test.

***Data analyzing***

The pre-test and the post-test scores

Each student's scores from the pre-test and the post-test rated by the three examiners were averaged. The data obtained from the pre-test and the post-test scores were used to calculate for the following descriptive statistics: the mean, the standard deviation, and t-test results for further quantitative analysis. The post-test mean scores were compared to the mean scores of the pre-test to answer RQ1, whether or not simulation exercises can enhance communicative competence in business English of university EFL students with different levels of proficiency.

A 5-point Likert scale was used to interpret the weighted mean of each issue.

| Scale | Range | Verbal Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4.21-5.00 | Very high |
| 4 | 3.41-4.20 | High |
| 3 | 2.61-3.40 | Medium |
| 2 | 1.81-2.60 | Low |
| 1 | 1.00-1.80 | Very Low |

Diary studies

The process of analyzing the diary data from the students was as follows. Firstly, I collected all comments from the students' diaries related to the first focus question – how the students evaluated their own performance in each simulation – to see whether or not simulation exercises helped them improve their spoken English skills. The similar comments were grouped together in themes of fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Secondly, I compiled all comments from the students' diaries related to the second focus question about the benefits of doing a simulation to improve their communication skills in business English and the obstacles to attaining communicative competence. The similar issues were also grouped together. The students' perceptions in the first simulation were compared to their perceptions in the last one for the qualitative analysis. This day-by-day monitoring of students' reaction placed me in a confront position to answer RQ2, what specific factors in simulations the students perceive as beneficial to their improvement in communicative competence in business English.

All the responses were written in Thai as the students might feel easier to open their attitudes.

Thus, I translated the responses into English when presented. I handled translation issues with regard to the students' opinions.

## Results

After the 15-week experiment on the effectiveness of simulation exercises in improving university EFL students' communicative competence in business English, from the data analysis, the results of the study can be summarized following the two research questions.

***Results of research question 1***

To verify RQ1, whether or not simulation exercises can enhance communicative competence in business English of university EFL students with different levels of proficiency, the results of the comparison between the pre-test and the post-test scores on communicative competence in business English in terms of fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, and in terms of different language proficiency levels are shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1: Comparison between the two tests scores among fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary**

| Communicative Competence in Business English | Scores | Mean | S.D. | n | df | Mean Difference | Effect Size | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fluency | Pretest | 2.78 | .927 | 45 | 44 | 1.64 | 2.14 | -11.525* | .000 |
| | Post-test | 4.42 | .543 | | | | | | |
| Pronunciation | Pretest | 3.22 | .704 | 45 | 44 | 1.16 | 1.84 | -8.830* | .000 |
| | Post-test | 4.38 | .535 | | | | | | |
| Grammar | Pretest | 2.84 | .878 | 45 | 44 | 1.83 | 2.57 | -13.407* | .000 |
| | Post-test | 4.67 | .477 | | | | | | |
| Vocabulary | Pretest | 2.96 | .928 | 45 | 44 | 1.77 | 2.41 | -14.033* | .000 |
| | Post-test | 4.73 | .447 | | | | | | |
| Average | Pretest | 2.95 | .734 | 45 | 44 | 1.60 | 2.79 | -16.206* | .000 |
| | Post-test | 4.55 | .331 | | | | | | |

*t values are significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 1, from the paired samples t-test analysis among fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, there are statistically significant differences between the two speaking tests scores, significant at p = 0.000. The post-test mean scores for each of the four oral attributes (fluency/pronunciation/grammar/vocabulary) are

(4.42/4.38/4.67/4.73) respectively higher than the pre-test mean scores (2.78/3.22/2.84/2.96). Additionally, the average mean score among the four oral attributes of the post-test (4.55, described as "very high") is higher than the pre-test (2.95, described as "medium"). In order to show the size of the effect caused by the experimental treatment, further measurement of the effect size was carried out using Hedges' g formula (Ellis, 2009). The obtained result indicates that the effect size is really large (g = 2.79). Among others, the students' grammar is most highly developed through simulation exercises with the really largest effect size (g = 2.57).

In addition, in terms of different language proficiency levels, from the paired samples t-test analysis among high, medium, low and very low proficiency levels as shown in Table 2, there are statistically significant differences between the two speaking tests scores, significant at p = 0.000/0.003. The post-test mean scores for each level (high/medium/low/very low) are (4.68/4.63/4.37/4.33) respectively higher than the pre-test mean scores (3.66/2.98/2.21/1.58) with the really large effect sizes (g = 3.97/7.94/6.41/6.50, respectively). Among others, the medium proficient students most highly improve their oral business English through simulation exercises with the really largest effect size (g = 7.94).

**Table 2: Comparison between the two tests scores among high, medium, low and very low proficiency levels**

*t values are significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

| Proficiency Level | Scores | Mean | S.D. | n | df | Mean Difference | Effect Size | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| High | Pretest | 3.66 | .171 | 19 | 18 | 1.02 | 3.97 | -13.057* | 0.000 |
| | Post-test | 4.68 | .312 | | | | | | |
| Medium | Pretest | 2.98 | .184 | 10 | 9 | 1.65 | 7.94 | -29.850* | 0.000 |
| | Post-test | 4.63 | .213 | | | | | | |
| Low | Pretest | 2.21 | .200 | 13 | 12 | 2.16 | 6.41 | -17.214* | 0.000 |
| | Post-test | 4.37 | .416 | | | | | | |
| Very low | Pretest | 1.58 | .289 | 3 | 2 | 2.75 | 6.50 | -19.053* | 0.003 |
| | Post-test | 4.33 | .382 | | | | | | |

From the data shown in Table 2, it is noticeable that students at all language proficiency levels displayed a significant improvement on their speaking performance. This result validates the answer to the first research question, that simulation exercises can enhance communicative competence in business English of university EFL students with different levels of language proficiency.

***Results of research question 2***

To draw clear conclusions answering RQ2, what specific factors in simulations the students perceive as beneficial to their oral business English improvement, the students were asked to evaluate their own language performance in order to see whether or not simulation exercises helped them communicate more effectively. Then, if improved, they were asked to identify its benefits attributed to their speaking improvement, and if not improved, they were asked to identify the obstacles to attaining their communicative competence. Comments from the students' diaries are presented under themes related to the focus questions.

***Simulation exercises help university EFL students communicate more effectively.***

The data from the students' diaries revealed that all students admired simulation as a powerful tool to help them communicate more effectively. To see the improvement of the students' oral business English competence, it is worth comparing the perception of their own ability in the first simulation with that in the last one.

In the first simulation, only three students were satisfied with their spoken English. They responded positively to questions regarding their language improvement. Nevertheless, the majority (or 42) of the students were not satisfied with their own language performance. They reported in their diaries that their oral communicative competence in business English was poor. Interestingly, in the last simulation, all the students' perception of their development on oral business English competence showed positive results. A summary of their comments under four oral attributes follows.

Fluency

In the first experience of using business English in simulation, all the 42 students perceived their lack of fluency in spoken English. They assented that they felt hesitant and/or were often forced into silence by language limitations when performing the assigned roles. These kinds of issues emerged in the students' responses, as shown in the following box:

| |
|---|
| "I always hesitated to continue my expressions." |
| "I spoke very slowly with many unnatural pauses." |
| "I often had a pause to imagine the next sentence." |
| "My communication was meaningless as I could not continue my dialog." |
| "My speech was fragmented." |
| "I always repeated and corrected my speech again and again." |

However, in the last simulation, the students confirmed that their fluency was improved as they felt at ease in using English. They could use the appropriate language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses. The positive responses are presented in the boxes below:

| |
|---|
| "I could express myself in business English more fluently." |
| "My speech was fluent, continuous and effortless." |
| "I spoke more fluently and correctly as I increased more confidence in using language." |
| "I could develop speed and quantity of talk." |
| "I could speak out very fluently." |
| "My talk was more natural." |
| "I could continue to express my opinions without pauses and hesitation." |

Pronunciation

The students' pronunciation in the fifth simulation was more intelligible than that in the first one. In the first simulation, the perception of their own severe pronunciation mistakes emerged in the students' responses, as shown in the following box:

| |
|---|
| "My speech was virtually unintelligible." |
| "My friends did not understand my meaning because of my pronunciation problems." |
| "My pronunciation problems occasionally led to misunderstanding." |
| "I could not pronounce difficult words." |
| "My accent was difficult to understand." |
| "I was not able to use word and sentence stress." |
| "I did not learn how to pronounce new words." |

Their accents were hardly noticeable through the habitual practice of simulation. By repeating and using the target language with their friends through playing various roles and behaving as he or she did, the students naturally learned a living pronunciation, as seen in their comments in the boxes below:

"I could produce the English speech sounds and sound patterns."

"My pronunciation was usually intelligible."

"I always pronounced with traces of foreign accent."

"I was able to speak with smart English accent like the native speakers."

"My accent sounded more impressive."

"I could speak beautiful English."

"I was able to use intonation patterns and the rhythm of English appropriately and occasionally."

"My accent was very pronounced."

"In the activity, I could practice how to capture the listeners with my traces of foreign accent."

"Simulation exercises helped me learn how to pronounce difficult words."

"I improved English pronunciation."

Grammar

At the beginning, in the first simulation, most of the students were displeased with their ability in using English grammar, claiming that the simulated environment affected their capacity to talk and interact with grammatical accuracy. Their perception of errors and limitations in grammar emerged in the students' responses, as shown in the following box:

"Errors in grammar and word order made my speech virtually unintelligible."

"I always made frequent errors in grammar and word orders."

"Meaning was occasionally obscured because of my misuse of grammar."

"I was not pleased with my speaking because I could not express self with correct grammar as I do in Thai speaking discourse."

"I did not know how to construct sentences and how to correct in appropriate use while speaking."

"I used very limited structure, just only simple sentences."

While the first simulation was quite difficult for the students, with practice the students gained knowledge of more usable English grammar. By the fifth simulation the students had overcome many of the difficulties, and they reported that they were better in using English grammar. The positive responses are presented in the boxes below:

"I could select appropriate sentences according to the proper social setting and situation."

"I could use sentence patterns in conversation appropriately and occasionally."

"I used all learned structures to express myself while performing simulation."

"All of learned sentence patterns were employed in my conversation in the last simulation."

"I acquired more complex sentences."

"I used almost all of structures in the lessons because they are useful for my work."

"My grammar was improved by everyday practice of simulation."

"I improved grammar used for business communication."

"From participating in groups, I knew how to express opinions in correct grammar."

"I could construct more sentences with correct grammar."

Vocabulary

In the first simulation, the students' responses generally pointed towards their poor and limited vocabulary, as shown in the following box:

| |
|---|
| "My friends did not understand my meaning because of misuse of words." |
| "I frequently used the wrong words." |
| "I usually used inappropriate terms because I could not recall correct vocabulary." |
| "I learned nothing about language because of limited vocabulary." |
| "Vocabulary limitations made my conversation virtually impossible." |
| "My conversation was somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary." |
| "I did not understand what my friends spoke because I was not familiar with their words." |

Nevertheless, in the last simulation, the students said that simulation exercises had a positive effect on improving their vocabulary. By being involved in simulation, the students were motivated to try out a word in their conversation knowing that the more words they remember, the better their conversation. Their perception of vocabulary improvement emerged in the students' responses, as shown in the following box:

"Using language meaningfully made me remember all vocabulary."

"I acquired a lot of useful vocabulary for business communication."

"I developed vocabulary."

"I remembered new vocabulary from the lesson quite well because it is useful."

"I was very attentive, so I remembered all useful vocabulary."

"I wanted to be involved in more simulations as I could learn more and more vocabulary."

"I could use vocabulary and idioms in conversation appropriately and occasionally."

"I could use better English since I could collect more vocabulary."

"I could select appropriate words according to the proper social setting, audience, situation and subject matter."

From the data above, it is clear that through simulation exercises, the students can develop their oral business English competence. After the first simulation, most of them mentioned their poor ability on all four oral language dimensions. However, after some practice through the five simulations where the students were exposed to the real language use, all of them were satisfied with their own language performance. They showed positive attitudes towards their fluency as they could use the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses; they reported that their speech was fluent, continuous and effortless. In addition, they reflected that their pronunciation was usually intelligible. They could produce the English speech sounds and sound patterns, and use word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of English. For grammar and vocabulary, they claimed that they could use vocabulary, idioms and sentence patterns in conversation appropriately and occasionally.

***Simulation exercises have various beneficial effects attributed to university EFL students' oral business English improvement.***

The students were given the opportunity to write responses openly to the question. Most of them drew up detailed responses with a few reasons while some others recorded with one

reaction. However, all the responses that were given were quite insightful with regard to the students' opinions.

To see which points the students justify simulation exercises beneficial to their oral business English improvement, it is worth comparing their attitudes towards the usefulness of simulation in the first simulation with that in the last one.

All of the 42 students who were displeased with their ability in the first simulation claimed that the simulated environment affected their capacity to talk and interact. It did not work for their speaking improvement but rather it seemed to make them feel nervous or uncomfortable due to anxiety, lack of skills, lack of necessary language, and lack of confidence. These are discussed below.

Anxiety

There were 61.90% (or 26) of the students who said simulation exercises could not help improve their speaking skills. These students expressed that simulated situations made them anxious due to unscripted dialogs, unfamiliar roles, and real situations. The students' anxiety emerged in their responses, as shown in the following box:

| |
|---|
| "I felt very anxious with the first simulation as the teacher didn't allow a prepared script." |
| "I felt frustrated when I was put in the activity without any scripted dialogs." |
| "I felt anxious as I could not glance at what I had written to refresh my memory." |
| "I felt too nervous when talking with unscripted dialogs to imagine suitable vocabulary and construct correct sentences." |
| "I was threatened by the demands of the assumed role and the simulated environment." |
| "I was not accustomed to simulation activity. It was the first time I had to communicate in real situation." |
| "I felt like I was in the real situation so I was very nervous. I could not respond to even a simple statement." |

Lack of skills

Additionally, 42.85% (or 18) of the students who said that simulation exercises did not work for their speaking improvement felt frustrated with their own language performance because of their poor listening and speaking skills. The negative responses are presented in the boxes below:

| |
|---|
| "I felt bad because I could not communicate in English among my group." |
| "I felt unhappy for I could not express myself as I wanted." |
| "I could neither talk nor understand spoken English." |
| "My speech was not good enough." |
| "I could not understand the questions or utterances of others. My listening skills were very poor." |
| "I was not pleased with my ability because I could not express self as I do in Thai speaking discourse." |
| "I could not carry my dialog following my assigned role." |

Lack of necessary language

One third (or 14) of the students reported that their oral business English was not improved because their vocabulary or grammar was limited. Their perception of lack of necessary language emerged in the students' responses, as shown in the following box:

| |
|---|
| "I could not remember vocabulary and construct correct sentences." |
| "My speed and fluency were strongly affected by my language problems." |
| "I could not respond to even a simple statement." |
| "I didn't understand words and sentences used by my friends." |
| "I could not talk with complex sentences for business communication." |
| "I could not learn any business expressions." |
| "I could not express with suitable grammar." |

Lack of confidence

In addition, 26.19% (or 11) of the students explained that their speaking was not improved because they were not confident when making an oral presentation in front of the class. The lack of confidence emerged in the students' responses, as shown in the following box:

| |
|---|
| "I was not sure if the listeners could understand my meaning." |
| "I was not confident to speak out in English in public." |
| "My ability to use English was not good enough." |
| "I was uncertain about my own language performance." |
| "I was not sure whether or not the language produced was right or appropriate." |

Interestingly, after some practice through the five simulations where they could use language meaningfully, all of the 45 students focused on the success of their performance.

Real communicative contexts and freedom to use language in a non-threatening classroom environment in simulation exercises were seen as beneficial to their oral business English improvement. The reasons drawn from their diaries follow.

Development of language

Clearly, after the fifth simulation, 71.11% (or 32) of the students revealed that their oral business English was improved because freedom to use language in real life communication through everyday practice of simulation helped acquire essential vocabulary, grammar and expressions for business communication. These kinds of issues emerged in the students' responses, as shown in the following box:

"Authentic meaningful situations helped increase my vocabulary."

"I acquired new vocabulary and expressions."

"I developed vocabulary and sentence patterns."

"I used English more, so it made me know how to construct sentences and how to correct in appropriate use."

"I could talk in longer sentences and the listeners understood my meaning."

"I learned different forms of English language used for business communication through simulation practice."

"I could create new dialogues by using different words and sentences."

Development of skills

Moreover, 53.33% (or 24) of the students agreed that simulation exercises had a positive effect on improving their speaking performance as they helped develop listening and speaking skills. The responses are presented in the boxes below:

"The assigned roles helped me develop my speaking skills."

"Simulation enhanced not only my speaking skills but also my listening skills."

"I developed both listening and speaking skills as I had to prepare myself very well in order to impress the listeners and my teacher."

"I had much more chance to talk, so I improved speaking skills."

"I was satisfied with my oral English because I could talk and the listeners understood my meaning."

"My spoken English is much better now."

"My listening skills were better."

"I was proud of my own ability because I could talk much more than I thought.

"Real interactive situation in simulation allowed me to communicate more naturally."

Development of communication strategies

Besides being forced to improvise their own language, 44.44% (or 20) of the students said that real communicative contexts through simulation exercises encouraged them to use communication strategies to achieve their goals in accordance with the demands of assigned roles and situations. As a result, they could develop their communicative competence in business English. The responses are presented in the boxes below:

| |
|---|
| "I could adjust the way I spoke to accommodate my listeners." |
| "I got familiar with thinking in English." |
| "I knew how to express opinions, how to act out, and how to ask other people to clarify the points I did not understand." |
| "The activity helped me understand how to use English in the conversation." |
| "I felt good that I could use English to argue with my friends." |
| "I was forced by the situation to find more effective ways to continue my dialogue." |
| "I could produce more natural negotiation." |
| "I naturally learned the gestures and facial expressions that went along with the language." |

Increased motivation in speaking practice

Apart from development of language, skills and communication strategies, it is interesting to find that 42.22% (or 19) of the students perceived that using language meaningfully through simulation activity could fulfill their needs in developing oral business English, that is very important for their future careers. Thus, simulation exercises motivated them to speak more. With a greater motivation to practice, they improved their communicative competence in business English. Their perception of increased motivation in speaking practice emerged in the students' responses, as shown in the following box:

"I felt simulation exercises increase my desire to use English as I gained the feeling that I was using English in real situations."

"I paid more attention to the lessons because I thought I could apply the knowledge learned to my real life situation."

"I could talk in English much more than I thought because real environment motivated me to increase my communicative ability."

"I want to practice in more simulations as all expressions can fulfill my needs for my future work."

"The lessons were very useful for working in international environment, so it motivated me to learn."

"I tried to practice more and more and prepared myself very well to join each simulation. I know speaking skills are very important for my future work."

"I want to learn and use better English because I want to work at an international company where most of the employees are foreigners."

"I was interested in improving my speaking skills for the sake of international communication."

"To get a better job means I have to be able to speak English like a native speaker. Simulation can fulfill my needs because it can help improve my communicative ability."

"I think an ability to speak English well is one of the important measurements for job promotion. Therefore, the activity motivated me to be willing to practice speaking in order to have better English."

Increased interest in learning English

One third (or 15) of the students reported that being actively involved in the whole learning process instead of passively accepting what the teacher taught made them increase interest in learning English. Increased interest allowed them to respond enthusiastically in the assigned roles, which in turn enhanced their communicative competence in business

English. These kinds of issues emerged in the students' responses, as shown in the following box:

"Learning through simulation made me more interested in English, so I performed enthusiastically."

"Each scenario for simulation interested me and made me prepare myself for the work very well."

"I felt I was at the center of the learning and teaching process instead of the teacher, so I involved myself fully."

"I participated more and more responsively and actively in each simulation in order to improve my oral English."

"I was very attentive to improve my speaking skills. I always prepared myself very well before performing each simulation."

"I always tried to create new dialogues by using different words and sentences instead of repeating the same materials again and again in order to develop my speaking skills."

Increased confidence in using language

In addition, freedom to use language in non-threatening classroom environment in simulation exercises allowed the students to reduce their nervousness and hesitance, and grow in confidence in their use of English. There were 24.44% (or 11) of the students who stressed that using their own language through simulation exercises helped them gain so much confidence in their language use. Increased confidence in using language served best for their oral business English improvement. Their perception of increased confidence emerged in the students' responses, as shown in the following box:

| |
|---|
| “I’m sure now I can communicate in international environment.” |
| “Now I can use English to communicate with people around the world.” |
| “When doing activities, my anxiety and nervousness decreased.” |
| “I was less embarrassed and felt that I wanted to speak whenever I was involved in the activity.” |
| “I reduced hesitance and gained confidence enough to show my opinions in English.” |
| “I was not shy when using English with my friends.” |
| “I want to speak more, construct sentences more.” |
| “I’m confident enough to try out my own ability in real situation in the real world.” |

As can be seen from the descriptive data above, the students found everyday practice of simulation beneficial to their oral business English competence. In the first simulation, the students claimed that simulation exercises could not enhance their communicative competence in business English, but rather it seemed to make them nervous due to anxiety, lack of skills, lack of necessary language, and lack of confidence. Nevertheless, after the fifth simulation, the students agreed that simulation exercises had a positive effect on improving their communicative competence. They reflected that freedom to use language in real life communication through simulation exercises helped acquire essential vocabulary and sentence patterns for business communication, improvement of listening and speaking skills, and development of communication strategies. When the students found that simulation could fulfill their needs in developing speaking skills, their interest and motivation to learn English increased. They responded enthusiastically in the assigned roles through the learning atmosphere which was perceived as authentic rather than artificial. This ideal learning situation allowed the students to grow in confidence in their use of English. Some students gained so much confidence in their language use that they wanted to try out their abilities in real situations.

This result validates the answer to the second research question, that university EFL students perceive that simulation exercises help acquire useful language, improve listening and speaking skills, develop communicative strategies, increase interest and motivation to speaking practice as well as gain more confidence to use English. These favorable affective factors are beneficial to their oral business English improvement.

## Conclusion and Pedagogical Suggestions

The hypothesis that practical utilization of simulation as a learning strategy in an EFL course effectively enhances communicative competence in business English for university EFL students with different levels of proficiency is supported by this study. This is seen in the difference found between the scores in the pre-and post-tests. Scores among the four oral language attributes and among different language proficiency levels in the post-test were, on average, significantly higher than scores in the pre-test. Since the subjects entered the study at varying English proficiency levels, and on average, exited at higher proficiency levels than when they entered, support for the hypothesis may be generalized across oral English skills proficiency levels.

Utilization of simulations as a learning method is also supported by the students' assessments of their own performances as well as their perceptions of the simulation exercises. An analysis of the students' daily diaries and responses to questions concerning their feelings about their performances shows that all of the students perceive a benefit to doing simulations, i.e. they perceive that their oral business English skills improve by doing simulations. This is important for there is general agreement that when students perceive that they are improving at a skill, they are more likely to be motivated to continue their efforts at that skill.

Because a simulation imitates a real communicative context, students are forced to rely on their knowledge and use the language that would actually be used in that context. In this study it was shown that with time and practice, students made gradual progress in their knowledge and use of business English. While the post-test showed significant improvement over the pre-test, also the evaluations of the five simulations showed progressive

improvement from one simulation to the next. Moreover, the students' self-evaluations also showed progressive improvement, specifically in their confidence in using business English in conversation. While the first simulation was quite difficult for most of the students, with practice the students gained knowledge of more usable English vocabulary and they became more familiar with the simulation platform. By the fifth simulation, the students had overcome many of the difficulties, and they demonstrated an accumulation of knowledge and a level of confidence much nearer to what an actual life situation would require than they did at the beginning. The results of this study show that the students benefited from the simulation exercises by becoming more prepared to express themselves in English in the real world.

In a simulation, the students' roles change. The students are at the center of the learning so they are actively involved in the learning process instead of passively accepting what the teacher teaches. The role of the teacher is facilitator of language learning. Preparation for a simulation includes exercises and drills that increase the students' familiarity with the language. During the simulation, the teacher controls the simulation while observing and evaluating the students' use of the language. Just as in real life, the students apply their knowledge to respond to a situation, so too in a simulation, the students apply their knowledge of business English to respond to a situation. As in real life, in a simulation the students create their own dialogue to express their ideas and to respond to questions and arguments that they had not heard before. After a simulation, the teacher provides feedback to help the students strengthen their knowledge of the English language, and to help the students be better prepared for the next situation.

In addition to the observable improvement in language use as obtained from the pre-and post-test comparisons, the students' observations should also be noted. In this study, the students responded favorably to the teaching sequence that began with background information pertinent to the situation they would enact, and model expressions and grammar explanations in order to allow them to practice proper linguistic communication to suit a situation. Then, they graduated to free use of the language to apply to a real life situation. After a simulation, the students reflected on their successes and also on the gaps they encountered.

In the debriefing stage after the simulation, the students were able, with the teacher's help, to think of ways to fill the gaps with appropriate responses. I claim that giving the students feedback together with immediate remedies to their language performance is meaningful, and more importantly, well remembered. It is in accordance with Ellis (2008) who also heightens the significance of language input, language productivity, and feedback in combination, stating that interaction affords students opportunities to receive input in the form of models, then the model input affords students opportunities to produce their own language, and language productivity affords students opportunities to receive feedback in their attempts at production, while specific feedback that points out and corrects their errors leads to long-term memory.

The beneficial factors attributed to the students' improvement to the "very high" proficiency in each oral language dimension are discussed. This article claims that simulation is one of the most appropriate methods for improving the university EFL students' communicative skills as well as for paying attention to grammatical accuracy. It supports Haruyama (2010) who highlights that simulation is the best activity for improving students' English speaking skills while cultivating awareness of grammar. Although in everyday conversation, it might be possible that we put more priority on conveying meaning than speaking correctly, in classroom instruction, correctness of forms should also be respected. In this study, grammatical correctness is considered important in order to permit the students to use grammar in conversation appropriately and occasionally. The students actively learn and memorize the appropriate expressions, and as a result, they can acquire grammatical accuracy while performing an assigned role in a communicative way.

As simulation boosts the students' interaction, they increase their learning because they pay attention to the demands placed on them by their own roles and use of other participants. This article also indicates that the students learn not only grammar but also vocabulary. The students consider simulation exercises as a rehearsal for real life experience. Thus, once they are given a role, they start with trying to understand it, deciding how to communicate, and making it like they are the persons they play. It is consistent with Chayanuvat (2012) who stresses that simulation prioritizes students' learning into processing steps of thinking, analyzing, understanding, memorizing and utilizing. Students are able to gain vocabulary

knowledge through hearing, reading or discussing in their group, and then actually using it in real communication in the simulation. From the diary reflections of the students, it is clear that they believe simulation helps create situations where they use and learn language naturally. By being involved in simulation, they speak in order to express their opinions or give information, see whether other group members understand what they say and ask questions about the meaning of words or expressions that require a certain amount of vocabulary to work with. Thus, they are motivated to try out a word in their conversation knowing that the more words they remember, the better their conversation. When they find their language use is purposeful and useful, the meaning of the ideas they listen to, speak or read will be remembered quite well and will have a sustainable long-term effect in learning language (Kawakami, 2008), which result in the vocabulary improvement.

In this article, I emphasize that self-evaluation can raise awareness. The students learn more deeply and improve their interest and motivation in self-development leading to more English speaking. Tanaka (2002) also affirms the effect of self-evaluation, stating that it is important in looking back on their own performance: it prompts the students not only to reflect on their conduct, but also to raise awareness and remind them of the usefulness of the activities. As seen in the students' diaries, in the first experience of using English in simulation, most of them demonstrated a lack of security through hesitation, correction, pausing or repetition. However, after more participation, their confidence increased. Even the shyest or most reluctant students participate more, seeming to enjoy their independence as users of English. Consequently, the more they speak out, the more they develop listening and speaking skills. Improvement in grammar, vocabulary and strategies permits students to fight against their fear of speaking in front of the class and allows them to feel at ease in using English, leading them to use the appropriate language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which in turn enhances their fluency in English speaking. This article supports Nunan (2003) in that simulation can increase both quantity and quality of talk which is the important indicator of fluency, as fluency exists in relation to other areas of competence.

Moving to the improvement in pronunciation, the students' pronunciation is more intelligible and accents are hardly noticeable through the habitual practice of simulation.

Right from the start, it is a routine that, after some input and teacher's explanations, the students practice their pronunciation with their pairs or groups repeatedly during the preparation in the first stage. Being placed into the world and environment of English involving real people expressing real feelings, English pronunciation can easily become absorbed and familiar to the students. In the first simulation, the majority of the students feel nervous or uncomfortable when making an oral presentation in front of an audience, even though they are not introverted or shy. Nevertheless, the fear of making severe pronunciation mistakes in front of others is diminished through repeated performance. By repeating and using the target language with their friends through playing the role and behaving as he or she does, the students naturally acquire a living pronunciation together with the gestures and facial expressions that go along with the language. This result supports Haruyama (2010) who point outs that habituation to oral presentation in front of the class would be the best method to handle the anxiety of wrong pronunciation.

The findings lead me to proclaim that I admire simulation as the most effective EFL classroom activity in enhancing university EFL students' communicative competence in business English. Real communication through simulation exercises helps students acquire useful vocabulary and grammar, improve communicative skills and strategies, increase interest and motivation to speaking practice, and foster self-confidence to use English. These factors influence students' development in oral business English.

**Limitations**

As the present study was limited to only 45 participants in only one Thai university, the results must not be overgeneralized. Similar studies should be conducted on greater numbers of participants in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of simulation and to examine the participants' self-evaluations. Moreover, we should investigate students' motivations and self-confidence in the form of tests before and after the practical use of simulation so as to prove their improvement in motivation or self-confidence.

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## Appendix A: A pre-and post-test on communicative competence in business English

The test consists of five scenarios. Each scenario holds one situation card and two role cards -one role card for the student, and one role card for the examiner.

**Student's rules and procedures:**

1. The student chooses one of the five scenarios in a box including:
    a. Talking about advertising campaigns
    b. Introducing a new product
    c. Dealing with shipping problems at a call center
    d. Negotiating and bargaining
    e. Placing an order
2. Using the situation card and the student's role card for reference, the student has five minutes to prepare.
3. After five minutes preparation, the student has a 10-minute conversation with the Examiner. The content of the conversation is based upon the information on the situation card and the student's role card.

**Examiner's rules and procedures:**

1. The examiner learns the situation card, the examiner's role card, and the guided conversation related to the one chosen by the student.
2. The examiner waits for the student's preparation.
3. After five minutes preparation, the examiner has a 10-minute conversation with the student. The content of the conversation is based upon the information on the situation card and the examiner's role card.
4. The examiner observes the student's responses during the conversation, and assesses the student's performance on four attributes of spoken language.

## Scenario 1 Talking about advertising strategies

**Situation:** In the meeting room of *Singha Corporations*, the brand manager and the executive director are discussing an advertising campaign for the new *Singha* drinking water collections.

**Student's role card**

You work as a brand manager for *Singha* drinking water. You discuss an advertising campaign for the new *Singha* drinking water collections with the examiner who is an executive director, your boss. Talk about advertising strategies including advertising plans, targeting the audience, advertising media, and promoting the brand. Then, show your opinions on brand images, and brand awareness. Make up any details that you need.

**Examiner's role card**

You are an executive director for *Singha* drinking water. Talk with the student, who is working as a brand manager, about the advertising campaign for the new *Singha* drinking water collections. You ask the brand manager about advertising strategies including advertising plans, targeting the audience, advertising media, promoting the brand, brand images, and brand awareness. Make up any details that you need.

**Guided Conversation: Talking about advertising strategies**

Executive Director: OK, first, let's look at our present advertising strategy. How are we promoting the brand at the moment?

Brand Manager: As you know, we advertise in the press – most of our press ads are in magazines read by the 18-30 age group.

Executive Director: How much do we get from this strategy? What emotions and feelings do people associate with our brand?

Brand Manager: Our brand can convey desire, reliability, and exclusivity to the public. Moreover, people associate satisfaction with our brand.

Executive Director: So great!

Brand Manager: We also use adverts on billboards. And, of course, we market the brand by sponsoring sports events like football, basketball, snowboarding and surfing.

Executive Director: I see, but we have to pay a lot. The way to do it more cheaply is to use product placement. The products are seen in films. They're just seen on a table.

Brand Manager: That's right. In our case, they're drunk by an actor.

Executive Director: And you see the logo.

Brand Manager: Sometimes, it depends. You can't always control what happens. You know, an actor is going to drink our drinking water, for example, but we don't know if we'll actually see the logo.

Executive Director: Can't you say to the film company that we want to see this part of the bottle?

Brand Manager: Well, we can, but then, usually, we have to pay a lot.

Executive Director: Then, what are the advertising plans for our new collections?

Brand Manager: Well, I think we should book a 30-second commercial on TV.

Executive Director: On TV? When? Have you been thinking of any particular program?

Brand Manager: Yes, I was thinking of *Healthy Body Healthy Mind*.

Executive Director: Mmm, … I'm not sure about that; it'll be very expensive.

Brand Manager: I know, but it will advertise *Singha* drinking water to our target audience that we want to reach.

Executive Director: When is *Healthy Body Healthy Mind* on?

Brand Manager: Um, it's on at 8:00 on Wednesday evenings.

Executive Director: OK. Phone their media sales people and check how much an ad will cost.

Brand Manager: I will contact them right now.

Executive Director: Thank you. Please meet again when you get the information from the media. Bye. See you.

Brand Manager: Alright. Bye. See you.

## Scenario 2 Introducing a new product

**Situation:** In the hall, a marketing executive is introducing a new *Watchman GPS* tracking device. One audience asks questions pertaining to the prototype of the *Watchman GPS* itself, and feedback from other customers.

### Student's role card

You work as a marketing executive for *Watchman GPS* tracking device. Prepare a short presentation to introduce a new product in the hall. Divide your presentation into three sections: reminding the background to this project and the current offer on the market, talking about the prototype and the specifications you have collected from tests, focus groups and market studies, and presenting a business plan. During the presentation, you have to answer the questions asked by the examiner who is an audience. Make up any details that you need.

### Examiner's role card

You are one of the audience in the hall. Listen to the student's presentation to introduce a new product in the hall and make notes. The student is working as a marketing executive for *Watchman GPS* tracking device. You are interested in this product and would like to see the prototype. Ask some questions during the presentation to show your interest. Make up any details that you need.

**Guided Conversation: Introducing a new product**

Marketing Executive: Good morning, everybody. How would you like to know at all times exactly where your young child or teenager is? How comforting would it be to know that your elderly mother is safely back home from the shops? And how much time would you save if you knew where, to the nearest meter, your dog was hiding?

Audience: That sounds interesting!

Marketing Executive: Well, now you can. I'm here this morning to present the *Watchman*,

revolutionary new personal GPS tracking device – an eye in the sky which

will bring peace of mind to parents, business men, animal lovers and many,

many other potential customers.

Audience: Can I see your prototype right now?

Marketing Executive: Now, I know you're going to be very excited by the *Watchman*, so I'm

going to give a quick overview of the product and the market. After that, there'll be a demonstration. First of all, I'm going to remind you of the background of this project and the current offer on the market. After that, I'll be talking about the prototype, and the specifications we've collected

from tests, focus groups and market studies. Finally, I'd like to present a business plan. Are you happy with that agenda?

Audience: During your presentation, can I ask some questions?

Marketing Executive: Sure! If you have questions, feel free to interrupt. OK? So, let's start with

the background. Now, GPS tracking systems are not new. We've been able

to install them in vehicles and containers for some time.

Audience: Then, what's new about the *Watchman*?

Marketing Executive: Now we can build it into a wrist strap or collar, small and light enough to be worn comfortably by a small child or a dog. It will be possible to locate the wearer via the Internet, anywhere in the world, indoors or out, 24 hours a day and up to every ten seconds. Does that answer your question?

Audience: Yes. Thank you.

Marketing Executive: OK, now, I'd like to wrap up the presentation and move on to the demonstration. … Thank you very much for your attention.

## Scenario 3 Dealing with shipping problems at a call center

**Situation:** In the call center of the shipping department of *Christiana Company*, there is a telephone conversation between an employee and a customer who is complaining about the shipping problem.

### Student's role card

You are working in the call center of the shipping department of *Christiana Company*. The examiner, who is a customer, calls to complain that he ordered 150 *Christiana* dresses from the company two months ago, but he has only received 130. He has reminded you twice, but you still have not shipped the rest others. The customer reminds you again that he wants to get the other 20 within 5 days. You have to answer the customer's call professionally, respond to customer inquiries, research required information using available resources, and handle and resolve customer complaints. Make up any details that you need.

**Examiner's role card**

You are a customer. You call the student who is working in the call center of the shipping department of *Christiana Company* to complain that you ordered 150 *Christiana* dresses from the company two months ago, but you have received only 130. You have reminded them twice, but they still have not shipped the others. Call them to remind them again that you want to get the other 20 within 5 days, and that if they do not send you the other 20 dresses, you will take a legal action against them and they have to give you a refund. Make up any details that you need.

**Guided Conversation: Dealing with shipping problems at a call center**

| | |
|---|---|
| Call Center: | Hello. *Christiana Company*, Shipping Department. May I help you? |
| Customer: | Hello. I'm calling from *Central Plaza*. We ordered 15 dresses two months ago, but we've received only 130. |
| Call Center: | Oh, I'm very sorry about that. Could I have your account number, please? |
| Customer: | Yes, it's 09823783 and the purchase order number was 88375. |
| Call Center: | Let me just check. … Ah, I see, order number 88375. Due to low stock levels, we could ship only 130 dresses last month, with the other 20 to follow shortly. |
| Customer: | I have reminded you twice, but you still have not shipped the other 20 dresses. |
| Call Center: | I'm terribly sorry. We usually email to explain, but for some reason we didn't. I do apologize. |
| Customer: | That's OK. When can I expect them? |
| Call Center: | Let me check the stock. … We will ship the other 20 dresses within two weeks. |

Customer: I can't wait! I want to get the other 20 within 5 days. If you do not send me the other 20 dresses within 5 days, I will have to take a legal action against you and you'll have to give me a refund.

Call Center: I'm very sorry, sir. We do not have any dresses in our stock right now. Would you mind changing the other 20 dresses into 30 *Christiana* blouses at the same price? Now we have new collections of blouses.

Customer: That's a good idea.

Call Center: OK, well, I'll take care of the replacements for you, and arrange an urgent delivery by courier. The new order will be shipped to the airport tonight and according to the computer, it will be loaded on a flight leaving tomorrow morning. So, you should get them tomorrow afternoon. There'll be no shipping charge for that, of course.

Customer: Good. Thank you very much.

Call Center: You're welcome. Bye.

Customer: Bye.

## Scenario 4 Negotiating and bargaining

**Situation:** In the meeting room of *Sony Music Company*, an e-tailer is meeting with a sales manager to negotiate a deal on an MP3 e-tail package.

### Student's role card

You are an e-tailer. You would like to set up an e-business to sell MP3s to customers worldwide and to compete in a global market. You will buy a complete e-tailing package solution from *Sony Music Company*. You ask them to design, build and manage your website, and process your sales. Negotiate the best deal possible with the examiner who is a sales manager of *Sony Music Company*. Remember you cannot pay over a global budget of $300

monthly fee with a three-year contract. You have to set a target for what you want, present a proposal, accept and refuse, and negotiate a win-win solution. Make up any details that you need.

**Examiner's role card**

You are a sales manager of *Sony Music Company*. Negotiate the best deal possible with the student, who is an e-tailer. The e-tailer would like to buy a complete e-tailing package solution from you. Remember you do not want to bring the monthly fee down lower than $400 monthly fee with a four-year contract. You have to set a target for what you want, make and respond to proposals, and look for a creative solution. Make up any details that you need.

**Guided Conversation: Negotiating and bargaining**

E-tailer: I'd like to set up an e-business to sell MP3s to customers worldwide.

Sales Manager: I see. You want to compete in a global market?

E-tailer: Exactly. But the problem is that we don't have the skills, the staff, or the money to do it ourselves.

Sales Manager: Well, that needn't be a problem. Our company, *Sony Music Company*, is used to working with small businesses, and we have a complete e-tailing package solution.

E-tailer: That means you will design, build and manage our website, and process our sales.

Sales Manager: That's right.

E-tailer: It's much easier for us, and the customer gets immediate delivery.

Sales Manager: Exactly. So all you have to do is make sure you have the product in stock, and count your profits!

E-tailer: And pay you a monthly fee, is that right?

Sales Manager: That's right. And once you start selling music all over the world, that monthly fee is going to look insignificant compared to the money coming in.

E-tailer: All right, I think we're in business. So, what's next?

Sales Manager: You have to sign a four-year contract with $400 monthly fee.

E-tailer: Wow, as much as that! There's no way I could pay that.

We cannot pay over a global budget of $300 monthly fee with a three-year contract.

Sales Manager: I might be able to bring it down a little, but only if we had a four-year contract.

E-tailer: A four-year contract! I couldn't agree to that. I can't commit myself to four years.

Sales Manager: Well, in that case, I can't bring the monthly fee down, I'm afraid.

E-tailer: I don't really want to increase the budget. But ... is it possible to bring it down a little, $350 a month?

Sales Manager: Um… It's OK if you sign a four-year contract.

E-tailer: May I sign a three-year contract with $350 monthly fee in the first three years? Then, if we can do well with this business, we are going to continue and sign a four-year contract with $400 monthly fee.

Sales Manager: That sounds good. So, can you just sign – here, and here?

**Scenario 5 Placing an order**

**Situation:** In the shipping department of *Thai President Foods Public Company*, it involves a telephone conversation between an operator and a customer who calls to place custom orders.

**Student's role card**

You are a customer. You call *Thai President Foods Public Company* to place an order. You want to order seven cases of medium-sized papier-mâché boxes of butter cookies, the ones with your company name on. You work for *Green and White Limited*, and the account number is 551203. Your purchase order number is TPFPC 1006. The shipping method you choose is air freight with *Express Air Forwarding*. Your address is Unit 6, North East Industrial Estate, Central Avenue, Malaysia. Use this information to place an order with the examiner who is working as an operator for a shipping department of *Thai President Foods Public Company*. Make up any details that you need.

**Examiner's role card**

You work as an operator for a shipping department at *Thai President Foods Public Company*. The student is your customer and will call you to place an order for seven cases of medium-sized papier-mâché boxes of butter cookies with the company name on. Ask questions to make sure you get all the necessary details you need to complete the form. Ask the customer about company name, account number, purchase order number, shipping method, and shipping address. Make up any details that you need.

**Guided Conversation: Placing an order**

Operator: Good morning. *Thai President Foods Public Company*. Can I help you?

Customer: Good morning, yes, I'd like to place an order, please.

Operator: Certainly. Can I just have some details, please?

Customer: Sure.

Operator: First of all, do you already have an account with us?

Customer: Yes, we do.

Operator: Could I have your company name and account number?

Customer: Yes, it's *Green and White Limited*, and the account number is 551203.

Operator: OK, what would you like to order?

Customer: Just one item – seven cases of medium-sized papier-mâché boxes of butter cookies with our company name on.

Operator: That will be item number GWM 8592, medium-sized boxes, seven cases?

Customer: GWM 8529, that's it.

Operator: Can you give me your purchase order number, for reference?

Customer: Yes, that'll be TPFPC 1006.

Operator: Thanks, TPFPC 1006. Could you tell me what shipping method you'd like to use?

Customer: Air freight, please. The shipping forwarder I want you to use is the usual, *Express Air Forwarding*.

Operator: *Express Air Forwarding*. Would you confirm your shipping address, please?

Customer: Yes, our own address is Unit 6, North East Industrial Estate, Central Avenue, Malaysia.

Operator: OK, that's fine. Seven cases of medium-sized boxes, item number GWB 8592, order number TPFPC 1006, shipping by freight via Express Air Forwarding, to Green and White, Unit 6, North East Industrial Estate, Central Avenue, Malaysia. Is that all correct?

Customer: Yes. That's right.

Operator: Good. The order's entered in the system now, and it should be dispatched by the end of the day.

Customer: Thanks very much.

Operator: With pleasure. Bye.

Customer: Bye.

**Note:** All the companies, brands, or programs are mentioned as concrete examples to make the lessons understandable to students; however, the persons and the stories are all fictional, and any resemblance or similarity in real life is purely coincidental.

## Appendix B: The assessment scales of communicative competence in business English

Directions: Please assess the student's speaking skills by ✓ in the 'Marks' boxes.

| **Criteria for Rating** | | **Marks** |
|---|---|---|
| | **1. Fluency** | |
| Level 1 | Speech is fragmented. Communication is meaningless. | |
| Level 2 | Usually hesitant, often forced into silence by language limitations. | |
| Level 3 | Speed and fluency are strongly affected by language problems. | |
| Level 4 | Speed of speech is slightly affected by language problems. Quite understanding. | |
| Level 5 | Speech is fluent, continuous and effortless. | |
| | **2. Pronunciation** | |
| Level 1 | Severe pronunciation problems. Speech is virtually unintelligible. | |
| Level 2 | Very hard to understand because of pronunciation problems. | |
| Level 3 | Pronunciation problems necessitate concentrated listening and occasionally lead to misunderstanding. | |
| Level 4 | Usually intelligible. Accent is very pronounced. | |
| Level 5 | Always intelligible. Traces of foreign accent. | |
| | **3. Grammar** | |
| Level 1 | Errors in grammar and word order make speech virtually unintelligible. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Level 2 | Misuse of grammar and very limited structure make comprehension rather difficult. | |
| Level 3 | Makes frequent errors in grammar and word order. Meaning is occasionally obscured. | |
| Level 4 | Sometimes uses inappropriate grammar. Quite understanding. | |
| Level 5 | Selects grammar for conversation appropriately and occasionally. | |
| | **4. Vocabulary** | |
| Level 1 | Vocabulary limitations make conversation virtually impossible. | |
| Level 2 | Misuse of words and very limited vocabulary make comprehension rather difficult. | |
| Level 3 | Frequently uses the wrong words: conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary. | |
| Level 4 | Sometimes uses inappropriate terms. | |
| Level 5 | Uses vocabulary and idioms in conversation appropriately and occasionally. | |
| | **Total** | |

## Appendix C: Students' Diaries

Right after each simulation, please write in your diary to reflect on your attitudes based on the specific focus questions.

1. How would you evaluate your own language performance?

Improved/Not improved

Fluency/Pronunciation/Grammar/Vocabulary

2. If improved, which aspects of simulation did you see as beneficial to your language learning?

If not improved, why?

## Appendix D: Scenarios

### Scenario 1 Advertising

**Situation** - Emphasis on talking about advertising strategies: In the meeting room of *Maybelline New York*, an executive director, an advertising manager, a brand manager, a design manager, and a regional sales manager are discussing an advertising campaign for the new long last lipstick collections.

***Student A***

You are an executive director for *Maybelline New York* beauty solutions. Lead a discussion with the advertising manager, the brand manager, the design manager, and the regional sales manager about an advertising campaign for the new long last lipstick collections. Invite each staff to share his/her opinion. Make up any details that you need.

***Student B***

You work as an advertising manager for *Maybelline New York* beauty solutions. You present advertising plans, targeting the audience, and advertising media for the new long last lipstick collections. Make up any details that you need.

***Student C***

You work as a brand manager for *Maybelline New York* beauty solutions. You present the current brand promoting strategies. Emphasize the importance of brand images and brand awareness. Talk about the emotions and feelings customers associate with *Maybelline New York*. Make up any details that you need.

***Student D***

You work as a design manager for *Maybelline New York* beauty solutions. You propose your ideas on the different ways for promoting the brand for the new long last lipstick collections in order to persuade the customers to buy the products as today's marketplace is highly competitive. Make up any details that you need.

***Student E***

You work as a regional sales manager for *Maybelline New York* beauty solutions. You emphasize the importance of the language used in the advert for the new long last lipstick collections. You stress that effective language plays an important role to sustain interest and capture the audience's attention. Make up any details that you need.

## Scenario 2 Public Relations

**Situation -** Emphasis on introducing a new product: In *Paradise Hall*, a project manager, a marketing team member, and a sales representative are introducing a new *iPhone* designed by *Apple in California*. Two members of the audience ask questions pertaining to the prototype of the iPhone itself, and feedback from other customers.

***Student A***

You work as a project manager for a new *iPhone* designed by *Apple in California*. Prepare a short presentation to introduce a new product in the hall. You have to remind the background to this project and the current offer on the market. Then, you have to present a business plan for a new *iPhone* at the end of the presentation. Make up any details that you need.

***Student B***

You are one of the marketing team for a new *iPhone* designed by *Apple in California*. Prepare a short presentation to introduce a new product in the hall. You have to talk about the prototype and the specifications you have collected from tests, focus groups, market studies and customer feedback. Make up any details that you need.

***Student C***

You work as a sales representative for a new *iPhone* designed by *Apple in California*. Prepare a short presentation to speak about the methods to get customer feedback about product through informal communication opportunities. You have to present the background of how feedback is usually obtained by your company and why informal feedback is useful. Make up any details that you need.

***Student D***

You are one of the audience in the hall. You are interested in the product presented by the marketing team, and would like to see the prototype. Ask some questions during the presentation to show your interest. Make up any details that you need.

***Student E***

You are one of the audience in the hall. You are interested in the customer feedback. Ask for clarification about the method to achieve the result through informal customer feedback. Then, ask the presenter to contrast the results from the company's formal product feedback with the results in informal conversations. Make up any details that you need.

## Scenario 3 Customer Services

**Situation** - Emphasis on dealing with shipping problems at a call center: In the call center of the shipping department of *Levi Strauss & Co.*, there are telephone conversations between two employees and customers who are the purchasing manager and the sales coordinator of *Central Plaza*. The customer service manager of *Levi Strauss & Co.* also gets involved.

***Student A***

You work in the call center of the shipping department of *Levi Strauss & Co.* A customer calls to complain that he ordered 350 *Levi* jeans from the company two months ago, but he has only received 200. You have to answer the customer's call professionally, respond to customer inquiries, research required information using available resources, and handle and resolve customer complaints. Make up any details that you need.

***Student B***

You are a purchasing manager of *Central Plaza*. You call the shipping department of *Levi Strauss & Co.* to complain that you ordered 350 *Levi* jeans from the company two months ago, but you have received only 200. Remind them that you want to get the other 150 within 10 days. Make up any details that you need.

***Student C***

You work in the call center of the shipping department of *Levi Strauss & Co.* The sales coordinator of *Central Plaza* calls to complain that he has not received the other 150 *Levi* jeans. He has reminded you twice, but you still have not shipped the rest others. You have to answer the customer's call professionally, respond to customer inquiries, research required information using available resources, and handle and resolve customer complaints. Make up any details that you need.

***Student D***

You are a sales coordinator of *Central Plaza*. You call the shipping department of *Levi Strauss & Co.* to complain that you have not received the other 150 *Levi* jeans. You have reminded them twice, but they still have not shipped the rest others. Remind them again that you want to get the other 150 within 5 days. Then, you talk with the customer service manager of *Levi Strauss & Co.* about this problem. Make up any details that you need.

***Student E***

You are a customer service manager of *Levi Strauss & Co.* The sales coordinator of *Central Plaza* reminds you that he wants to get the other 150 *Levi* jeans within 5 days, and that if you do not send him the other 150, he will take a legal action against you and you have to give him a refund. You have to answer the customer's call professionally, respond to customer inquiries, and handle and resolve customer complaints. Make up any details that you need.

## Scenario 4 Making Deals

**Situation** - Emphasis on negotiating and bargaining: In the meeting room of *Advice Company*, the marketing manager of *Thailand's Got Talent* program and his executive secretary are meeting with the sales director, the credit control manager and the company president of *Advice Company* to negotiate a deal on a DVD e-tail package.

***Student A***

You are a marketing manager of *Thailand's Got Talent* program. You would like to set up an e-business to sell DVDs to customers worldwide and to compete in a global market. You will buy a complete e-tail package solution from *Advice Company*. You ask them to design, build and manage your website, and process your sales. You start with greetings and positive

opening, reviewing and agreeing on the agenda, establishing your positions, and clarifying priorities. Accept and refuse the proposals. Make up any details that you need.

***Student B***

You are a sales director of *Advice Company*. Negotiate the best deal possible with the marketing manager of *Thailand's Got Talent* program. The marketing manager would like to buy a complete e-tail package solution from you. Remember you do not want to bring the monthly fee down lower than $400 monthly fee with a four-year contract. You have to set a target for what you want, make and respond to proposals. Make up any details that you need.

***Student C***

You are an executive secretary of the marketing manager of *Thailand's Got Talent* program. Negotiate the best deal possible with the marketing manager of *Advice Company*. Remember you cannot pay over a global budget of $300 monthly fee with a three-year contract. You have to set a target for what you want, present your proposal, bargain, accept and refuse, and negotiate a win-win solution. Make up any details that you need.

***Student D***

You are a credit control manager of *Advice Company*. You are in charge of the contract negotiation between the customer and your company. You suggest an alternative proposal setting the discount rate 5% lower each month after the first two years if the customer signs a four-year contract. Present your proposal, bargain, accept and refuse, and negotiate a win-win solution. Make up any details that you need.

***Student E***

You are the company president of *Advice Company*. You look for a creative solution for this contract negotiation. You outline the contract terms your company prefers proposing that you will guarantee the sales of 10,000,000 DVDs each year with the discount rate 5% lower each month after the first two years if the customer signs a four-year contract. Handle the conflict, summarize, and then close the negotiation. Make up any details that you need.

## Scenario 5 Trading

**Situation** - Emphasis on placing an order: In the shipping department of *BRAND'S*, it involves telephone conversations between two operators, as well as the sales director of that company, and two customers from two different companies who call to place custom orders.

***Student A***

You work for *Zen Central World*. You call *BRAND'S* to place an order. You want to order 5,000 New Year's gift sets of genuine bird's nest beverage, the ones with your company name on. Your account number is 992248. Your purchase order number is ZCW1140. The shipping method you choose is sea freight. Your address is Unit 9, North East Industrial Estate, Central Avenue, Malaysia. Use this information to place an order. Make up any details that you need.

***Student B***

You work as a call center staff for *BRAND'S*. A customer from *Zen Central World* is calling you to place an order for 5,000 New Year's gift sets of genuine bird's nest beverage with the company name on. Ask questions to make sure you get all the necessary details you need to complete the form. Ask the customer about company name, account number, purchase order number, shipping method, and shipping address. Make up any details that you need.

***Student C***

You work as a purchasing manager for *Robinson*. You call *BRAND'S* to place an order for 2,000 New Year's gift sets of essence of chicken beverage with the *Robinson* New Year's cards on. Your account number is 777411. Your purchase order number is RBS1010. The shipping method you choose is air freight with *Express Air Forwarding*. Then, you have to answer the call from the logistics and merchandising manager of *BRAND'S* who calls you back to ask about your warehousing and shipping method. Give the necessary details. Make up any details that you need.

***Student D***

You work as a shipping assistant in the shipping department of *BRAND'S*. A customer from *Robinson* is calling you to place an order for 2,000 New Year's gift sets of essence of chicken beverage with the *Robinson* New Year's cards on. Ask questions to make sure you get all the necessary details you need to complete the form. Ask the customer about company name, reference, quantity, delivery, documents, and confirmation of the terms of payment. Make up any details that you need.

***Student E***

You work as a logistics and merchandising manager for *BRAND'S*. You call the purchasing manager of *Robinson* to apologize her for missing some necessary details about warehousing and shipping method. Ask questions to make sure you get all the information. Make up any details that you need.

**Note:** All the companies, brands, or programs are mentioned as concrete examples to make the lessons understandable to students; however, the persons and the stories are all fictional, and any resemblance or similarity in real life is purely coincidental.


# The Use of Corpora in EFL Classrooms: What do Turkish EFL Teachers Know and Offer to Promote Pragmatic Competence?

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**Abstract**

This study attempts to investigate the level of awareness and the opinions of Turkish EFL teachers about the use of corpora in language teaching to promote discourse-pragmatic competence in EFL classrooms. To these ends, the study used two instruments: a survey with 42 Turkish EFL university lecturers and interviews with 10 of them. Data analysis was conducted through both quantitative and qualitative type of analysis. The results of the survey showed that 11 % of the participants were familiar with the corpora and used them in their teaching while the others did not have any particular knowledge of corpora and concordancers due to lack of awareness, knowledge and time. The results support the idea that in spite of the developments in corpus applications, the issue of the use of corpora has not been fully recognized by EFL teachers. The EFL teachers need corpus consultation and trainings about the use of corpora in language classrooms. Moreover, the analysis of the interviews showed that the teachers had positive opinions about the corpus examples as they provide authentic and functional elements of spoken English. Thus, the study includes some pedagogical implications about the use of corpora in language classrooms to promote discourse-pragmatic competence in EFL classrooms.

**Keywords:** corpus linguistics, spoken discourse, pragmatic competence, EFL teachers

## Introduction

Corpora, in a broad sense, have been on the agenda of language teaching and learning since the late 1980s. It has been suggested that corpora can be used for several purposes ranging from teaching vocabulary and grammar to developing pragmatic competence in language teaching and learning (Johns, 1986; Leech, 1997; McCarthy, 1990). Particularly, the use of corpora in EFL classrooms may be useful in terms of its potential to provide more authentic texts in the target language rather than a restricted collection of texts given through textbooks (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001).

The attitude towards the importance of corpora in language classrooms has a positive shift in current years, yet its potential has been noticed mostly by researchers, and a number of studies investigated the use of corpora in language teaching for writing, grammar or lexical competences (Chujo, Anthony & Oghigian, 2009; Huang, 2014; Smart, 2014; Tono, Satake & Mihra, 2014). There are comparatively fewer studies on the issue of identifying the level of awareness of EFL teachers towards the use of corpora and determining potential uses of corpora to develop pragmatic competence of language learners. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap and contribute to the field by providing the current level of awareness of Turkish EFL teachers and their opinions about using corpora for promoting pragmatic competence in EFL classrooms.

In this regard, the aim of this study is two-fold. The first is to investigate the current knowledge and the use of corpora and concordancers by Turkish EFL teachers through a questionnaire, and the second is to identify the opinions of Turkish EFL teachers about using corpora to promote discourse-pragmatic competence in their classrooms with interviews. It is hoped that the study will contribute to the corpus researchers' understanding of what EFL teachers need to know about corpora and how to use them in language classrooms.

## Literature review

### Corpora and concordancing

A corpus, in its simplest term, is an electronic collection of texts. For a detailed and comprehensive definition, Sinclair (2005) defines a corpus as "a collection of pieces of language text in electronic form, selected according to external criteria to represent, as far as possible, a language or language variety as a source of data for linguistic research" (p. 10). One of the important features of a corpus is its representativeness. The texts collected should represent certain features of the language or language variety through several variables like age, gender, location, type of school (e.g. state or private sector), level, teacher (e.g. gender, qualifications, years of experience, native or non-native speaker), class size (large groups, small groups or one-to-one) and so on (O'Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007, p.1). Corpora are classified according to their underlying purposes or design principles. For example, in a language corpora, both written and spoken texts can be found according to its type. Written texts include several types of articles, essays, assignments and notes while spoken texts are the transcriptions of the conversation taking place through dialogues, oral presentations or interviews. Some examples of online corpora which are frequently used with free interfaces are listed as follows: MICASE (The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English), BNC (British National Corpus), COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English), TIME Corpus and ELISA (English Language Interview Corpus as a Second Language Application).

Along with the advances in corpus linguistics, "concordancing" was seen as a core tool and it simply means 'using corpus software to find every occurrence of a particular word or phrase' (O'Keeffe et al., 2007, p. 8). Some corpora (e.g. COCA) have embedded concordancers through which users can search for a specific word or a phrase and find out its frequencies and even compare the results according to the genre included in the corpus. Apart from the concordancers provided with the corpus, there are both commercial solutions (users must pay) and freely available online concordancers; some of which are listed in the following: WordSmith Tools, The Sketch Engine (SkE), Monoconc Pro, AntConc, TextSTAT, ConcApp, Simple Concordance Program.

## Corpora in ELT

Over the last three decades, corpora have been found useful in language learning and teaching in a number of ways by not only teaching vocabulary and grammar but also in material design (Chan & Liou, 2005; Cobb, 1999; Sun & Wang, 2003). Corpora with word frequency lists and contextual evidences allow a systematic way for language teachers to decide what vocabulary to teach, which is called data-driven learning (DDL) by Johns and King (1991). DDL facilitates vocabulary teaching in language classrooms since the use of corpora enables several examples about a particular word, which leads to bottom-up learning for vocabulary. Thus, corpora and its tools provide these opportunities to language learners which dictionaries do in a rather restricted way (Kilgarriff, 2009).

Pertaining to the ways of using corpora in language teaching, Leech (1997) offers two ways which are called *a soft version* and *a hard version*. The soft version includes the teacher's skill of using the corpora and concordancers to develop corpus-based materials autonomously. Teachers can create new tasks for their classrooms such as comparing text-based and corpus-based approaches to teaching collocations, lexical inference, revision and critical examination of grammar rules (Gabrielatos, 2005).

The hard version gives learners direct access and the skills to use corpora. The learners can be given opportunities to search for themselves according to their needs and interests. For example, learners may search the collocations with of 'do' and 'make' in detail which can be a complex subject for non-native speakers (Nurmukhamedov & Olinger, 2013). Thus, the use of corpora by learners can promote learner autonomy and learning by discovery.

Although there are several studies on corpora in language teaching, the attempts to justify the benefits of corpora for language pedagogy are still going on. Particularly, the use of corpora by teachers needs to be discussed. For instance, Mukherjee's (2004) study reveals that teachers face challenges when attempting to fit corpus-informed approaches and DDL into their classrooms and curriculum. Since language teachers are the ones who will apply corpus in their classrooms and introduce it to their learners, their level of awareness is also significant. Furthermore, Tribble's (2012) study reveals that the number of those who

actually make use of corpus resources, including teachers, in their professional practice is increasing. Römer (2009) points out that corpus researchers can help teachers solve their everyday problems such as better teaching materials, support in creating materials, native speaker advices and more reliable reference resources. Hence, in spite of the unquestionable progress in the corpus studies and corpus applications, there should be more discussion on the role of the teachers in corpus-based teaching and learning and how corpora can be made accessible to them.

**Pragmatic competence through online corpora**

It is acknowledged that language learners should have pragmatic competence to be competent users of English (Crystal, 1997). However, the instruction of pragmatic competence has been discussed as problematic on the issue of whether it should be done explicitly or implicitly (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001, Kasper, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 1999). The inability of language learners to be exposed to more discourse options or use language in real-life interactions, and the problem about the availability and authenticity of instructional materials could be the major causes that make teaching pragmatic competence in language classrooms difficult (Belz, 2007, p. 46).

Particularly, in EFL classrooms, being away from the target language community, learners may experience "pragmatic fossilization" (Trillo, 2002, p. 770), which is using particular forms in pragmatically inappropriate ways systematically. For example, Aşık and Cephe's (2013) study displays that Turkish EFL speakers have a tendency to overuse and fossilize discourse elements in their spoken discourse. Thus, corpus-driven approaches to language teaching may help the language learners decide on or find out about the most appropriate discourse element in a certain context (Geluso, 2013; Römer, 2004; Trillo, 2002).

In this sense, the instructional materials play a key role in presenting pragmatic elements of discourse to language learners. Thus, coursebooks or other instructional materials should be able to provide information on how to use the target language from pragmatic view and how to comprehend and use conversational norms and practices of English. Römer (2004) points out that coursebooks may not reflect authentic language use,

so corpus-informed comparisons of authentic English and school English would be helpful for language teachers and learners. For instance, O'keeffe et al. (2007) suggest some of the functional and relational categories with pragmatic functions such as discourse markers, vagueness and approximation by giving samples from different corpora in Table 1 below.

**Table 1** *Functional and relational categories with pragmatic functions (adapted from O'Keeffe et al., 2007, p. 160-165)*

| Category | Examples | Corpus Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Discourse marking | *right, well, so, anyway, yeah, you know,i mean, and then*<br>*but I mean, you know*<br>*what I mean, do you know what I mean, at the end of the day, if you see what I mean* | . . . I remember when I was young when I was younger ***you know*** er where I come from ***you know*** . . . (WSC)<br>S1: if nothing else we can find the road ***if you know what I mean***<br>S2: ***yeah*** but two hundred numbers is a is a big street<br>S1: it's two hundred and seventy it's ***actually*** almost more three hundred numbers it's ***basically*** three hundred numbers (WSC) |
| Vagueness and approximation | *just, whatever, basically, quite, pretty, and things like that/or something like that,*<br>*(And) that sort of thing*<br>*(And) this that and the other*<br>*All the rest of it*<br>*(And) all this/that sort of thing* | It's ***a bit*** worrying really. (CANCODE), . . . do you want a sleeping bag ***or*** *a couple of* ***something*** in case it's cold? (WSC)<br>S1: I ***kind of*** got the bug to travel, to travel around more and to move around and live in different places.<br>S2: Uh-huh<br>S1: Went over to Italy and lived with my brother over there for *a* ***couple*** *of* years.<br>(CIC North American spoken segment) |

The examples in Table 1 are given from different corpora, which means that they provide actual use of language in certain contexts. Integration of these categories in language teaching can be done over certain awareness-raising activities or implicit instruction. For example, discourse markers such as *you know*, *so*, *well*, *I mean* are used frequently by native

speakers in spoken discourse for several purposes ranging from marking shared knowledge (*you know*), denoting thinking process (*well*) (Fung & Carter, 2007). With DDL activities, these pragmatic items might be explicitly presented to language learners.

However, there are some concerns about the issue of the native speaker model as the appropriate model in language teaching. The discussion is over the questions 'who is a native speaker, only the ones who have learned L1 from childhood?' or "is it possible for the ones who acquired L2 later can become competent users of L1?'. Lee (2005) suggests on the issue that instead of the native speaker model, the learners should be given achievable models through re-evaluating and revising the issue. The learners should be treated as what they are, not as potential native speakers (Andreou & Galantomos, 2009). Along with these concerns, it is argued here that if particular functional and relational discourse elements are included in foreign language teaching, EFL learners may "enhance their fluent and naturalistic conversational skills, to help avoid misunderstanding in communication, and, essentially, to provide learners with a sense of security in L2" (Fung & Carter, 2010, p. 433).

Although corpora can provide these pragmatic samples from native speakers' discourse, the materials gathered from corpora should be enriched to be used in language classrooms. Braun (2005) suggests how the corpus materials can be converted into more pedagogically relevant teaching materials via authentication process involving the following steps. Teachers and learners may firstly study the corpus description and the texts within the corpus. With this familiarisation process, they will be able to analyse the language in detail so that they may focus on the expressions or structures in these texts and decide on which ones worth exploring more in a discourse-based approach. Besides, teachers and learners may exploit pedagogically relevant corpora. For example, English Interview Corpus (ELISA) provides transcripts of 28 videotaped interviews with native speakers talking about their professional careers along with some activities. The texts of these interviews may be used for comparing the use of English according to their professions, for teaching language learners about how a person should introduce himself/herself and for reaching genuine language samples from native speakers to discuss about a topic. Furthermore, Dose (2013) offers another pedagogical corpus called CATS (Corpus of American Television Series) for spoken discourse awareness. CATS consists of dialogues taken from four contemporary

American television series and can be used as real-language materials by providing appropriate and accessible spoken models in EFL classrooms.

Al Saeed and Waly (2009) also suggest that awareness towards pragmatic situational utterances can be increased through individual or group activities. For example, in a group work, each group can have the following corpus-based dialogues on flash cards to focus on the meaning and the level of sincerity of the apology.

1. Mr. Jones: *Go and get me the papers, Matthew*.

Matthew: *I'm sorry, are you talking to me?*

2. Manager: *We regret the delay, naturally.*

Lucy: *Is that all you have to say?*

3. George: *Sorry, you failed your exam.*

Barbra: *You should be too.*

4. Ed: *Excuse me. I think that is my seat.*

Ashley: *I'm sorry, but I don't see a reserved sign.*

A recent study, by Geluso and Yamaguchi (2014), revealed that corpus-based learning can be used for developing speaking skills of the learners in terms of formulaic language. They concluded that language learners increased their repertoires of formulaic language and ability to employ them in their conversation in a pragmatically appropriate manner by using COCA in a course based on DDL activities. COCA was first introduced to the learners and the learners were required to investigate formulaic spoken language existed in the corpus to compose their speaking journals and teach these phrases to their peers.

DDL can also be integrated into L2 pragmatic instruction with meta-pragmatic awareness activities. Belz and Vyatkina (2005) pointed out that DDL was found effective by showing hard-copy examples of spoken discourse items to EFL learners, explaining them in detail and making the learners use of these items. Furthermore, teachers may create exercises

based on the concordance information and blanking a particular discourse element out and then learners can be asked to deduce the missing phrase from the contexts (Mishan, 2004).

## Research questions

Except for a few studies (Mukherjee, 2004; Tribble, 2012), there is little known about the knowledge, level of awareness, insights of EFL teachers on the use of corpora in language teaching. Given the importance of the issue and scarcity of research, the present study aimed to explore the issue in the Turkish context through a questionnaire with 42 university instructors and semi-structured interviews. The research questions which guided the study were:

1. What is the level of awareness of Turkish EFL teachers about the use of corpora?

2. What are their opinions about using corpus-based examples for particularly pragmatic competence in their classrooms?

## Method

### Participants

The participants of the study were 42 non-native EFL instructors randomly selected out of 140 working at School of Foreign Languages of a large state university. This school aims at preparing university students who will study at their own faculties where the medium of instruction is fully or partly English for their future academic studies. The participants were instructors teaching English to the university students at different levels of English proficiency ranging between beginners level (A1) to upper-intermediate (B2) on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The teachers participated in the study on a voluntary basis. They were teaching the students who were academic purposes language students and general purposes language students. As for the demographics of teachers, 88 % were females and 12 % were males. In terms of the highest level of academic qualification, 43 % of the instructors were BA holders, 45 % of them were MA holders and 12 % of them were PhD holders. The largest age group was 20-29 year olds with 57 % while 26 % of them was 30-39 year olds and 7 % of them was 40-49 year olds.

Moreover, interviews were conducted with 10 of the respondents of the survey. The teachers interviewed were 2 BA holders, 8 MA holders and 2 PhD holders in terms of academic qualification; 9 female and 1 male and in terms of age range, from mostly the age group of 20-29 year olds.

**Instruments**

To reach the objectives of the study, two types of instruments were used. A survey was used to investigate the current knowledge and the level of the use of corpora by Turkish EFL teachers. A survey is a method to get "a snapshot of conditions, attitudes and/or events of a total population at a single point in time by collecting data from a sample drawn from that population" (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p.125). The survey was adapted from Tribble (2012) which also attempted to better understand what had been happening in corpus applications and language teaching. Tribble's (2012) survey is the only comprehensive survey about the use of corpora in language teaching and is in line with the objective of the study. The survey was adapted according to the review by two experts in the field of corpora and language teaching for content and construct validity. The survey adapted in the study includes first a kind of introduction about what a corpus means and examples from a corpus since the respondents might have never seen a corpus. The survey contains 24 items including 17 multiple-choice questions differing according to the question and seven open-ended questions. The survey consists of four sections: demographic information, using computers and operating systems, using corpora and suggestions for accessible corpus use. The researcher administered the survey by herself in case there were any questions or unclear points during filling in of the survey.

Moreover, to identify the opinions of Turkish non-native EFL teachers about using corpora to promote discourse-pragmatic competence in their classrooms, a semi-structured interview was used. With a semi-structured interview, the interviewer not only provides guidance and direction but also lets the interviewee elaborate on certain issues (Dörnyei, 2007, p.137). The researcher interviewed 10 teachers. The interview questions were developed by the researcher and piloted in order to ensure that the questions were clear and covering the issues aimed at. The interview was also carried out by allowing respondents to

discuss and raise relevant issues about the questions. Moreover, before the interview questions (see Appendix 1), the researcher briefly gave information about what a corpus is and its types. Along with the interview, Table 1, Examples 1 and 2 were also introduced to elicit their opinions. During the interview, the interviewees were given necessary explanations by the interviewer. The interviews were conducted in English as the teachers voluntarily wanted to do so, in order not to code-switch between L1 and L2 frequently. The interviews were recorded with the informed consent of the interviewees.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected through the survey were analysed descriptively in Microsoft Excel 2013. The frequency analysis was conducted on the closed-ended questions in the survey while the answers for the open-ended questions were listed as the results of the study. The interviews were analysed qualitatively through content analysis which is a type of analysis including coding for themes, searching patterns, and making interpretations to draw conclusions (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). For the reliability issue, the researcher and another researcher who has a PhD in the field of TEFL listened to the recordings twice to identify and interpret common, recurrent and underlying themes. They worked together throughout the coding. During the qualitative analysis of the interview, the level of subjectivity was tried to be reduced by including another critical researcher into the analysis.

**Results and Discussion**

**The survey**

The survey provided the answers for the first research question which was to investigate the current level of knowledge and awareness of teachers about corpora. The survey has two dimensions within itself. The respondents who claimed that they were familiar and used corpora in their teaching were asked for specific information about their use of corpora. Furthermore, the respondents who declared that they did not use corpora at all were asked about their reasons and their opinions. Regarding the knowledge of computer and operation systems, 78 % of them rated their expertise as a functional computer user, 17 % of them as a

beginner while 5 % of them as an expert. In terms of computer skills, 53 % rated themselves as a confident user of Office applications, 33 % of them as a basic user, and 14 % of them had training capacity in the use of Office applications.

Within the survey, the participants were introduced to a sample of corpus and asked when they first saw this kind of corpus data. According to the results of the study (Figure 1), 47.6 % of the participants stated that they had never seen it before, 42.9 % of them had seen it between 2001 and 2012 and 9.5 % of them between 1991 and 2000.

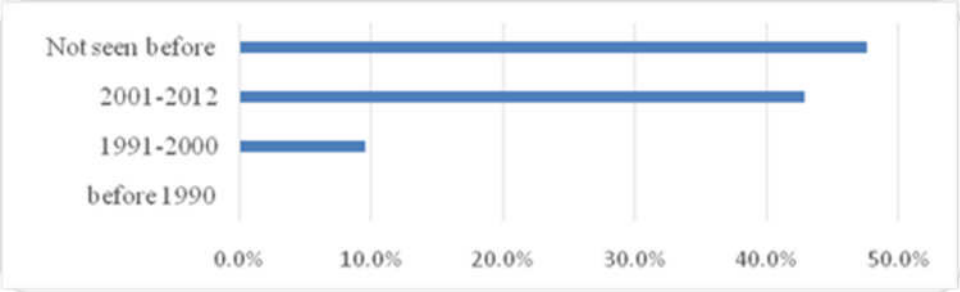


**Figure 1.** Familiarity of the teachers with the corpus

On the other hand, when asked whether they used this kind of data in their teaching, only 5 (11 %) of the participants stated that they used it. This result is highly significant that the majority of the teachers have not used corpus in their teaching. It can be expected that the knowledge and the use of corpus in such a sampling that includes university lecturers and

mostly qualified teachers participated in graduate programs would be comparatively higher because of the nature of the university context to be able to reach or experience more innovative methods. Furthermore, pertaining to their experience with corpus, the results displayed that 3 out of 5 teachers have been using it only for one year and the others have been using for 3 and 5 years. In terms of the ways they use corpus in language teaching, the teachers stated that they used corpora in language teaching as a resource when developing their own teaching and learning materials (paper based and electronic), as a reference resource for professional use and for their students. However, when they were asked about the details of using corpora, the answers were mostly limited. They reported that the corpora

they used were BNC (British National Corpus), METU Turkish Corpus and MICASE. As for the concordancers, they were familiar with Longman mini-concordancer, Oxford Concordancing, Wordsmith Tools and AntConc, and they stated these programs were useful for them. However, only one of them stated that the use of corpora has changed their teaching a lot while the others stated that it contributed a bit. Similarly, three of them stated that a corpus-informed approach to language teaching has helped their students a bit while the others reported it as a lot. The teachers also pointed out that corpora are relevant for language teaching since they are useful in vocabulary teaching. On the other hand, they reported that the corpora issue is very new and the teachers do not know how to benefit from it so it should be more promoted.

Since there are few similar studies aimed at finding out the current knowledge of English teachers about corpus, the results of the data could only be compared with Mukherjee (2004) and Tribble (2012). The results of the study are consistent with Mukherjee's (2004) study with 248 qualified English language teachers in Germany which ended that 80 % of the English teachers claimed non-familiarity with corpora.

Tribble's (2012) study was conducted with 560 respondents from 63 countries which showed that over 75 % of the respondents were using corpora in their practices for personal reference and student reference. The participants also stated that they used corpora mostly for the preparation of course books or paper-based class material. When compared with Tribble's (2012) study, the current study is a small-scale one and ended with significant low

number of the respondents using corpora. However, due to the scarcity of the research on the issue, the results of the study display the issue from another context, Turkish EFL context, which do not exist in Tribble's (2012) study. According to the results of Tribble (2012), the largest group using corpora in practice is university lecturer, followed by the groups such as language teachers, researchers, teacher educators and manager. Although the respondents of the survey of the current research are only limited to university lecturers, the percentage of the respondents using corpora is very low, which is not in line with Tribble (2012). Tribble (2012) also states that the findings are imperfect because of the selective nature of the sample

through which the data are drawn from a certain community of practice. It may be concluded that this selective nature of the sample who are willing to participate in the Tribble's (2012) survey might have ended with a lot more ratio of the number using corpora.

Regarding the reasons why the respondents did not use corpora in their classrooms, Figure 2 displays their opinions and reasons on the issue. According to the scale of the reasons, lack of knowledge about the potential of corpora for language teaching with 36.9 % is the most significant one, followed by lack of confidence about using computers to analyse language (15.4 %) and lack of access to appropriate software (15.4 %). Moreover, lack of time and knowledge generally about computers are other reasons that the teachers have also stated. Similarly, Tribble's (2012) study lists that lack of enough time and knowledge of potential corpora are the most important reasons for the teachers. These results may shed light on the field about what is needed to raise the awareness of teachers towards the use of corpora. There should be more transfers from corpus linguistics into the language pedagogy. The advances in corpus research are not sufficiently recognized by teachers and learners and they are not aware of the availability of useful resources and hands-on experiences (Boulton & Peres-Paredes, 2014; Römer, 2011).

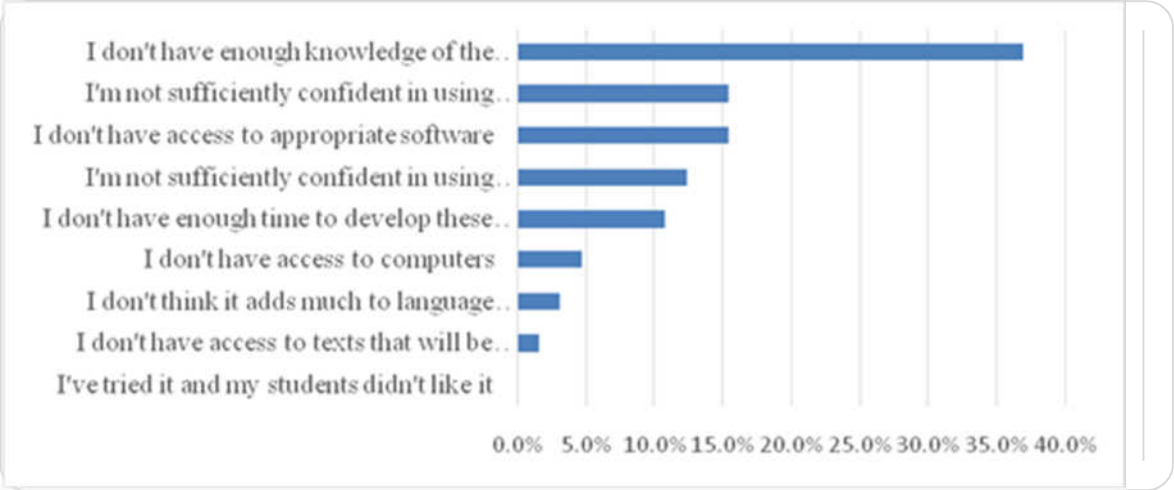


Figure 2. Reasons for not using corpora

Furthermore, the teachers were also asked what might be helpful to make more use of corpus data in their teaching (see Figure 3). They stated significantly that training in corpus analysis is necessary with 49.1 %. Also if they can contact with other teachers who are using

corpora (22.6 %) they can make use of corpora. Mukherjee's (2004) study also points out that virtually all participants have stated English language teaching may make use of corpora a lot after they are trained in using corpus in language teaching. Recently, Lenko-Szmanska's (2014) study also reveals that the trainee teachers have stated positive reactions over using corpus for language teaching purposes after a 14-week training on corpus use. As a result, the results of the survey show that although there have been numerous studies and developments in corpus linguistics, the corpus and the relevant software should be made more accessible to teachers. Römer (2011) also suggests that we should focus more attention on language teachers and their needs to support them in their work.

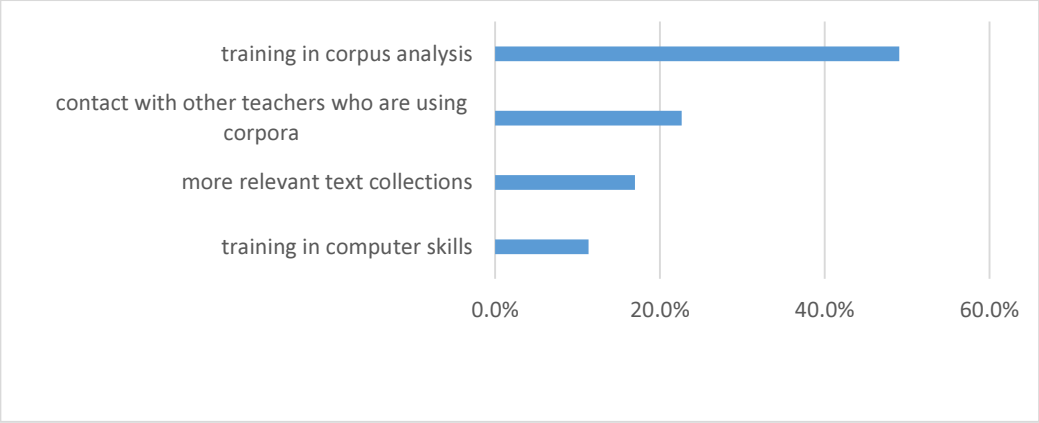


Figure 3. Suggestions for more use of corpus data

Although there are several possible kinds of uses of corpora in language teaching directly and indirectly (Gabrielatos, 2005), the findings of the study point out that the teachers are mostly not aware of the potential of corpora. Moreover, the studies (Chan & Liou, 2005; Sun & Wang, 2003; Yeh, Liou & Li, 2007) revealed that the use of corpora is versatile in teaching vocabulary, grammar and in material design. The current study shows that there is still a gap in the actual practices of corpora in language classrooms.

**The interview**

For the second research objective about identifying the opinions of the Turkish EFL teachers about the use of corpus-based examples of discourse and functional relations in terms of pragmatic competence, interviews were conducted. Among 10 interviewees, 3 of

them stated that they were familiar with corpus, but they did not have any detailed knowledge about it. The interviews were guiding to discuss and identify the opinions of the teachers particularly towards using corpus examples in language classrooms. Teachers' opinions might be helpful in identifying the ways of integrating corpus into language classrooms. According to the answers to the guiding questions asked by the researcher, the following themes were composed and some statements were given in coded number of the teachers.

***Use of authentic, functional, free-standing examples of English in EFL classrooms***

Regarding the question about the opinions towards using authentic, functional and free-standing examples of English used by native speakers in EFL classrooms, all of the teachers stated that they were definitely necessary and effective. Their opinions were in line with Sinclair (1997) since they stated similarly "there is inconsistency between the actual use of language and the use in language classrooms". The following reasons were stated for the importance of the use of authentic examples of English in EFL classrooms:

*We really need these examples because the coursebooks sometimes can be unrealistic. (T8)*

*Mostly we teach academic English but it's not enough. (T3)*

*Since we are non-natives, we need to see the native uses of language. (T4)*

*We trust more to these materials as they are authentic. (T5)*

*Our students don't have any contact with native speakers; that's why we need these kinds of examples. (T7)*

All of them also stated that they could obtain these kinds of examples mostly through internet, certain web sites, TV series, movies, leaflets, magazines and newspapers. Moreover, 60 % of the respondents pointed that they included these examples in their classrooms through latest published coursebooks. Some recent coursebooks contain these kinds of examples implicitly or explicitly. They especially used these kinds of items for speaking and listening purposes.

***Use of corpus-based functional and relational elements***

The interviewees were asked to state their opinions about the functional and relational elements (Table 1) to promote discourse-pragmatic competence of their students. All of them agreed that they were definitely necessary and stated similar reasons for this necessity such as follows:

*These elements are the things that we really need to teach as coursebooks are giving these kinds of elements in a very limited way. (T5)*

*Generally the language we teach is too bookish. (T3)*

*We are teaching language in the classroom but it's not the language in the real world. (T10)*

*Teachers also should use these elements in the classrooms but since we are non-native teachers, it is also difficult for us to use them in the classrooms. (T*4)

*As teachers, even we, are not totally aware of these. If teachers use it, they will use it. (T8)*

The statements of the teachers indicate that there are two ways of including corpus-based functional and relational elements in the classrooms. Firstly, through coursebooks they should be promoted. Although recent coursebooks have a certain level of these items, the teachers stated that they were limited. Bardovi-Harlig (2001) also states that generally textbooks cannot be considered as reliable sources of pragmatic input for language learners. O'Loughlin's (2012) study on analysing coursebook reveals that language learners are exposed to only three quarters of the most 1500 frequent words in English. Thus, teachers and learners spend most of the class time on low-frequency words. Römer (2004) suggests that the corpus-researchers need an EFL textbook corpus to compare 'school English' with authentic or real English. This kind of evaluation of the coursebooks might provide more pragmatic competence of non-native language learners of English. Trillo (2002) states that non-native speakers have a kind of pragmatic distance to the target language. So the level of exposure of non-native speakers to pragmatic items may determine their easiness and contextual proficiencies in English. Secondly, the teachers also believe that the teacher has

a vital role on the issue by using these elements himself/herself in their classrooms. However, since they are also non-natives, they do not feel confident about using these pragmatic items in their spoken discourse as well.

Furthermore, the following examples taken from corpus (see example 1 and 2) were presented to the teachers to take their opinions about and how to include them in the classrooms. Example 1 includes a dialogue that took place in a photocopy service room from MICASE Corpus and belongs to Science Learning Center Service Encounters in a university atmosphere. Language learners can be required to analyse the dialogue in terms of discourse markers such as *cuz, actually, yeah*, lexical chunks such as *there you go, by chance* and *to have change for*.

*Example 1*

**SU-m:** can i get a P-C computer?
**S1:** actually we don't have one right now. [SU-m: oh ] there's a waitlist if you wanna sign up.
**SU-m:** okay oh
**S1:** i just need your M-Card <SCANS CARD>
**SU-m:** thanks. <PAUSE:14> you wouldn't happen to have change for a dollar would you?
**S1:** actually no, sorry.
**SU-m:** do you know where i can get change, anywhere?
**S1:** um, Chem Stand downstairs maybe or, i wo- are you using it for vending machines? cuz they take dollars.
**SU-m:** i'm using it for the, copier.
**S1:** the copier takes dollars.
**SU-m:** okay
**SU-m:** hi.
**S1:** <SCANS CARD> just a computer?
**SU-m:** yeah. <SCANS CARD> thanks.
**SU-f:** hey <PAUSE:15>
**S1:** <SCANS CARD> there you go
**SU-f:** thanks.
**SU-f:** Teresa do you have a Post-it by chance?
**S1:** yeah actually i think i do, right here

Example 2 below includes a more functional analysis of a discourse item, *well*, in the following concordance lines. The lines below display several examples of *well* taken from in-class oral presentations of native speakers of English from MICASE corpus. In particular,

the first line illustrates the use of *well* for opening a topic or in the third line, *well* is used to denote the thinking process. Through these kinds of examples, language learners might notice these features of discourse elements.

*Example 2*

know you have to wrap it up okay? <PAUSE:07> S4: um **well** thank you for being present for our nation of cross-sectional, studies and pragmatics, and **well** through this class we all know that there have to read it i think S4: okay <PAUSE:13> S4: um **well** this is <PAUSE:07> S1: uh put out the other in the way they should response . so we did that but, **well** later you'll know but, it didn't really work define the terms... by ourselves, and <PAUSE:19> um... **well** first you see, there are six (not yet,) six ess, cuz it was confusing for us, so we'll, um... S5: **well** that one comes out i mean maybe if well that one comes out i mean maybe if we S4: mhm... **well** i'll just move it as i read it... so um maybe you can almost see it SU-f: okay S1: yeah_ oh, **well** they're locked, but i'll bring the esting, and definitely um excuses for the classmate as **well**. um, but, the most interesting, results, is when mbarrassing to tell anybody that i have diarrhea, and, **well** i was trying to get hold of her and ask or both your friend and for your professor. S3: okay. **well** um if we were to do this experiment again ed to catch on to what we were doing so we we might as **well** send both scenarios to everyone, and h)

All of the teachers stated positive reactions about the examples above and the use of corpora for teaching the functional elements of spoken language. The following statements were taken as examples about their opinions:

*In a coursebook, we don't see such a dialogue. (T6)*

*These examples are really nice and motivating for students. (T9)*

*Students are actually enthusiastic about learning and then using these examples in their own spoken language but sometimes some learners have tendency to exaggerate their use which may seem artificial, the reason for this they do not really have the function of such expressions.(T1)*

Moreno Jaen and Perez Basanta (2009) also point out that coursebook conversations use artificial scripted dialogues about what people are likely to say or in most cases drawn from written language. This issue is also supported by Römer (2004) stating that instead of invented or constructed sentences, the examples of spoken corpora should be used. Furthermore, recent studies such as Müller (2005), Fung and Carter (2007), Aşık and Cephe

(2013) have shown that non-native language learners of English use fewer discourse markers than native speakers in their spoken discourse and also in a more limited way of functions.

***Suggestions for the use of corpus-based examples in classrooms***

The teachers also stated their suggestions for the use of corpus-based examples in classrooms. These suggestions might be helpful for both corpus-researchers and language practitioners to develop in-class or out-of-class activities which may work to improve discourse-pragmatic competence of EFL students. The suggestions are gathered as in the following:

- Spoken text transcripts can be used as a reading passage and then writing a similar dialogue
- As a speaking activity, the texts can be given to make students analyse the language by discussing "What would you say in such situation?"
- By creating some real-life situations like role-play, we can make them use these items.
- As a self-study, students may use corpora and concordancers on their own.
- Through discourse completion activities, students may find out the right functional pragmatic elements according to the context.
- Through discovery learning, students may be required to find out the functions of these pragmatic elements.
- Teachers may create their own materials based on these elements by using corpora or adapting them according to their needs.

According to the overall evaluation of the interviews conducted with the teachers, the use of corpus in language classrooms would be helpful and creative for developing materials related to the functional elements of language. However, they also agreed on that it might be difficult for them to use it all the time as they would need plenty of time to search and adapt

the examples in the classrooms and they had to follow a certain pre-determined syllabus and course books which might not allow them to use extra-materials in the classrooms. Thus, major publishers should produce more DDL materials and coursebooks to be directly used in classrooms (Boulton, 2009).

## Conclusion

In line with the developments in corpus linguistics and information technology, there emerged a necessity to update the resources, instructional materials or the techniques in the mainstream of language teaching. Using online corpora and concordancers in language classrooms are helpful within this renewal process. Corpora and its tools can be used for several purposes in language teaching since it provides available and authentic examples of language in a wide range of contextualised texts. However, there is a gap between the developments in corpus linguistics and their use in language classrooms.

This paper has attempted to investigate the level of awareness of EFL teachers towards the use of corpora. Moreover, it also displays how corpora and its tools can be used in language classrooms for awareness-raising towards pragmatic view of discourse elements. The study results indicate that although the developments in corpus linguistics and technology are increasing, still, EFL teachers are not familiar with the use of corpora. However, non-native speaker teachers of English support the ideas that the use of corpora in classrooms will enrich and empower language teaching for both teachers and learners if they are exploited accordingly.

Particularly, the use of corpora in language classrooms can highly be effective in EFL contexts since the corpora may provide EFL teachers and learners be exposed to authentic language and materials (Zhang, 2008). Teachers and learners in EFL context are having difficulties to reach the genuine examples of English and they may not be sure about the correctness and authenticity of their discourse in English. Therefore, in order to bridge the gap between the corpora and its use in language classrooms, trainings or workshops about the practical use of corpus in language classrooms can be given to the EFL teachers. Corpora can also be introduced in pre-service teacher education

The current study is a small-scale research in Turkish EFL context. However, further research can be done with an increasing number of subjects and in different contexts about the current situation of corpus linguistics in language teaching. Activities can be developed more from different corpora and their contribution to the pragmatic and communicative competence needs to be searched.

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## Appendix 1: Interview Questions

1) What do you think about using authentic, functional and free-standing examples of English used by native speakers in EFL classrooms?

2) How do you reach these kind of examples? How do you include them in your classrooms?

3) What do you think about these functional and relational elements (Table 1) to promote discourse-pragmatic competence in classrooms?

4) Through examples of activities taken from a corpus, what do you think about using these examples in your classrooms?

5) How would they help, how would you apply them in your classrooms?

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## Book Reviews

Douglas, N., & Bohlke, D. (2015). *Reading Explorer 3* (2nd ed.). Boston: National Geographic Learning/Cengage Learning, 208 pages.

Reviewed by **Kenneth Boyte**, Middlebury Institute of International Studies

The second edition of *Reading Explorer 3* by Nancy Douglas and David Bohlke (2015) includes new and updated topics and a new section focusing on strategic-reading and critical-thinking skills. Based on authentic articles adapted from *National Geographic* magazine, the popular intermediate-level textbook package is part of a six-level series of interactive reading texts for young adults and adult ESL learners designed to help them develop reading comprehension skills and vocabulary knowledge.

The sequencing of activities in *Reading Explorer 3*, as well as the types of activities included in the textbook, is appropriate for the target population, familiar to students and teachers, and consistent with conventional practices in the field of second language acquisition (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009). Units, which include two passages each and can be extended with an optional DVD activity, begin with a full-color photograph. Warm-up questions also are included to introduce the topics to be covered. Combinations of cloze-completion, discussion, labeling, predicting, scanning, sequencing, skimming, and surveying sections additionally precede each illustrated reading passage. Lines of text within each passage are numbered in intervals of 5, key words are highlighted in red, and low-frequency words are glossed in footnotes. Each passage is followed by seven multiple-choice items that assess the student's ability to identify main ideas, details, vocabulary, inferences, cause and effect, purpose, paraphrase, and correct sentence order in a paragraph.

Careful attention appears to have been given to contextualizing reading content by providing students opportunities to make connections between the texts and their own experiences, activating prior knowledge before reading. Such a top-down approach to teaching reading has been dominant since the introduction of the psycholinguistic model in the late 1960s. Bottom-up skills also are

targeted in *Reading Explorer 3* with a focus on words and affixes. The full-color textbook additionally provides activities promoting interactive language skills. For example, in addition to the warm-up questions presented prior to each passage to lead class discussions and the optional DVD activity afterwards, chapters include exercises that require students to produce short written responses. The optional online workbook also offers more reading practice and extends chapter reviews into the hypertext realm of the Internet.

Each of the 12 units in *Reading Explorer 3* is thematic, content-based, and covers topics ranging from sports and fitness, to islands and beaches, popular culture, natural disasters, endangered species, engineering, cognitive science, and medical challenges. The selection of topics, presumed to be of high-interest to readers, is important for engaging students in actively reading. Unit 9, for example, focuses on the exploration of space. Beginning with a full-page view of Earth from the International Space Station, unit 9A ("Far Out") presents an account of a terrifying spacewalk experienced by Italian astronaut Luca Parmitano. Continuing the theme of space exploration, unit 9B ("The Ultimate Trip") examines privately funded robotic and manned explorations of the solar system, in what Mason Peck of NASA describes as "the beginnings of a new space age" (p. 149). Following the passage, a two-page graph illustrates the 276 space missions that have been made internationally since 1961. The optional DVD activity tells the story of astronaut Bruce McCandless, who in 1984 "ventured further away from the safety of his ship than any previous astronaut" (p. 155).

A sample analysis of the passage in unit 9B indicates that the text has a Flesch-Kincaid Readability Ease score of 64.8% on a scale of 0-100. According to this scale, texts with scores closer to 0 are more difficult to read, and texts with scores closer to 100 are easier. Typically, native speakers of English 13-15 years of age can easily read texts with scores over 60. An average grade-level rating of 8.8, based on Flesch-Kincaid and other leading readability measurements provided by Readability-Score.com also indicates that the text is appropriate for ELLs.

Although the seemingly self-contained nature of the lessons and the familiar formatting, activities, and item types are strengths of *Reading Explorer 3*, the textbook does not escape a wave of criticisms in the field of SLA amplified by the RAND Reading Study Group in 2002. At issue is the extent to which reading comprehension can actually be assessed and the validity/reliability of the inferences made based on conventional item types. However, to the credit of the authors of *Reading Explorer 3*, both who have extensive experience developing EFL materials, the debate over best practices for teaching and assessing reading comprehension has been ongoing since reading was first

scientifically studied in 1879 by Wilhelm Wundt in the world's first laboratory of experimental psychology (Venezsky, 1984).

The professionally presented textbook is supported by a teacher's guide, audio CD, DVD, assessment software, and an Internet-based workbook.

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Kenneth Boyte is a graduate student in the MA TESOL program at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California (expected graduation date: May 2015). He has a background in teaching ESL to adults in South Korea and the United States. He also has worked extensively in educational publishing and journalism (MA Journalism, Southern Illinois University; BA Journalism, Auburn University). His current research interests include issues related to reading comprehension and the computer-mediated uses of English for political purposes via social media.

*The Impact of Self-Concept on Language Learning*. Csizér, K., & Magid, M. (Eds.), Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2014, Pp. ix + 424

Reviewed by **Ying Zhan**, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China

Along with the emergence of World Englishes, the recent paradigm shift of second language (L2) motivation research from "integrativeness" (Gardner & Lambert, 1959) to "possible L2 self" (Dörnyei, 2009) has manifested itself in the increase in the number of related publications. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers these days seldom doubt the applicability of self-concept in L2 motivation; however, they hesitate to address certain issues, such as how self-concept impacts L2 learning and how teachers can use self-concept in motivating learners to learn English in classrooms (Csizér & Magid, 2014). With these issues in mind, Csizér and Magid provided the stimulus for heated discussions from diverse ideas and perspectives, citing evidence collected through various research methods across Central Europe, Canada, Asia, and Australia. As a result, they edited this exciting volume which has the potential to enhance our understanding of the role of self in L2 learning in a profound manner and enlighten us about the pedagogical use of self-concept at the classroom level.

The volume is clearly structured in a "theory–research–practice–further research" logic. Part 1 describes different theories on which most of the empirical studies reported in this volume were built. Dörnyei emphasizes the essential role of vision and mental imagery in future self-guides that regulate language learning. McEown et al. compare the Social-educational Model, Self-Determination Theory, and the L2 Motivational Self System and suggest the similarities and differences among these three theories, which imply the flexible researcher usage of the theoretical constructs by considering specific research foci. Part 1 is concluded by Mercer's theoretical discussion on the multi-dimensional self-model that includes personal, social, contextual, and temporal variations.

Part 2, the major section of this volume, explains how self-concept impacts L2 learning based on empirical evidence. *Chapters 5, 6, 8 and 11* illuminate the relationship among self, self-regulation, L2 motivation, and autonomy at different levels of schooling (i.e., primary, secondary, and tertiary education) and in various contexts (i.e., Hungary, South Korea, Canada and Poland). *Chapters 5 and 6* explore the age difference when interpreting the complex relationships among self, self-regulation, autonomous learning or English test scores, while *Chapter 8* focuses on the mediation of culture in the connection between autonomy and the self. *Chapter 11* examines the roles of self-efficacy beliefs

and self-concepts in self-regulated learning. *Chapters 7, 9, 10, 12* investigate identity and its construction. They show the crucial role of the self-concept in students' L2 motivation and the factors (e.g., learning contexts, significant others, learners' emotions, language experiences and societal norms) contributing to the self/identify construction. In addition, it is claimed that language identity is bicultural and dynamic. *Chapters 13, 14 and 15* discuss L2 self from a social perspective. *Chapter 13* explains why Japanese learners remain silent in college English classes through the analysis of social anxiety and self-focus image. *Chapter 14* examines the interplay of self-concept, students' willingness to communicate, and the sociocultural context. *Chapter 15* investigates how the L2 self-system is linked to socialization, identification pattern, and L2 accent acquisition.

However, the chapters in Part 2 are not organized according to a thematic categorization. It might have been better to group the chapters which have similar research foci to facilitate the reader's understanding of self-concept and its relationship with L2 learning.

Part 3 discusses self-concept from the perspectives of teachers. *Chapter 16* explores how the motivational strategies employed by teachers mediate motivated language learning behavior and suggests the non-linear relationship between teaching and learning. *Chapter 17* describes a longitudinal case-study on the development of the L2 teaching motivations of two Chinese teachers, drawing insights from Complex Dynamic Systems Theory. It seems, however, that this particular chapter is a slight deviation from the topic of the volume "the impact of self-concept on language learning".

Part 4 focuses on the application of the L2 Motivational Self System in classrooms using intervention studies. *Chapters 18 and 19* report the motivational programs where imagination played a key role in motivating Chinese learners to learn English. These programs enabled the participants to clearly visualize their Ideal L2 self and their goals for learning English, which greatly enhanced their learning motivations. *Chapter 20* echoes the power of visualization in the program of enhancing the motivation of Catalan University students.

Part 5, the concluding part, proposes further research directions in five aspects, namely, theoretical paradigms, self-regulation, identity, language learning experience, and L2 motivation programs.

Overall, this volume will likely benefit SLA researchers and language teachers who seek to understand the inner-self of language learners as they learn a second language. Self-concept is interpreted from multiple theoretical perspectives and presented in a multi-dimensional manner. Another strength of this volume is evident in the rigor of various quantitative and qualitative methods

that were adopted in the empirical studies. The book has succeeded in giving the readers only a brief glimpse of the intricate interplay between self-concept, learning behavior, and learning. Further investigation is of course required.

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# Guidelines for Submissions

**Submissions for the Quarterly Issue**

**Submissions guidelines**

The *Asian EFL Journal Quarterly* is a fully peer-reviewed section of the journal, reviewed by a team of experts in EFL from all over the world. The *Asian EFL Journal* welcomes submissions written in different varieties of world Englishes. The reviewers and Associate Editors come from a wide variety of cultural and academic backgrounds and no distinction is made between native and non-native authors. As a basic principle, the *Asian EFL Journal* does not define competence in terms of native ability, but we are a strictly reviewed journal and all our reviewers expect a high level of academic and written competence in whatever variety of English is used by the author. Every effort will be made to accept different rhetorical styles of writing. The *Asian EFL Journal* also makes every effort to support authors who are submitting to an international journal for the first time. While major revisions may be requested, every effort is made to explain to authors how to make the necessary revisions.

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**Referencing:** Please refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.) – Contributors are also invited to view the sample PDF guide available on our website and to refer to referencing samples from articles published from 2006. Due to the increasing number of submissions to the *Asian EFL Journal*, authors not conforming to APA system will have their manuscripts sent back immediately for revision. This delays publication and taxes our editorial process.

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