

2012

The Conference Proceedings of MIDTESOL

Cultivating Best Practices in ESL



Our second edition reflects the annual conference theme from 2012, “Cultivating Best Practices in ESL,” a theme that emphasizes MIDTESOL’s commitment to its mission:

The mission of Mid-America Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages is to strengthen the effective teaching of English in Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri to people whose native language is a language other than English while respecting their individual language rights. As a regional affiliate of TESOL and a professional organization, MIDTESOL:

- Supports those involved with English language teaching, teacher education, administration and management, curriculum and materials design, and research;
- Provides leadership and direction through the dissemination and exchange of information and resources;
- Encourages access to the standards for English language instruction, professional preparation, and employment.

As you peruse the pages of this edition, we hope that you will find new ideas and information that will help support and encourage you in your profession.

A sincere thank you goes out to all those who had a hand in preparing this edition, including the reviewers and those who spent countless hours preparing the following articles.

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Six Themes from the Mouths of Experienced ESL Teachers

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Abstract

Representatives from different backgrounds with varying levels of experience working in K-12 settings with English Language Learners (ELLs) participated in a panel presentation by sharing their “Top Five Things Teachers of ELLs Should Know.” During the ninety-minute discussion, six themes emerged relative to needs witnessed by the panelists including cultural awareness, classroom concepts, student engagement, collaboration, advocacy, and parental involvement. This article will expand on the common themes identified by practicing teachers while making connections to current research.

Teacher training focused on meeting the instructional needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) is a topic of increased interest over the past five years given the growing number of ELLs attending schools where initiatives such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and new models of teacher evaluation have been adopted (Haynes, 2012; Hutchinson, 2013; Samson & Collins, 2012). Haynes (2012) lists three critical areas for improving teacher effectiveness in relation to ELLs: better preparation of preservice teachers, training for mainstream teachers of ELLs, and “improvements...to ensure better preparation, coaching, and ongoing professional development for all teachers of ELLs” (p. 15). According to Hutchinson (2013), the diversity of ELLs is an area most teachers have not been adequately trained to address. Samson and Collins (2012) mention several key topics that would be beneficial for content teachers working with ELLs including being culturally sensitive to student backgrounds.

In this article, the authors present six themes that emerged out of a panel discussion of currently practicing K-12 ESL teachers from Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri, including experienced elementary and secondary teachers and an ESL/Diversity consultant. The six themes are cultural awareness, classroom concepts, student engagement, collaboration, advocacy, and parental involvement. While these themes are not meant to be all-inclusive, they were selected because they represent many of the needs and concerns presented in the discussion. Since they are a compilation of ideas shared by a group of panelists, many of the themes are interrelated.

Cultural Awareness

In order to be better equipped to teach ELLs, teachers must be aware of students’ cultural backgrounds. Cultural background may include: previous school experiences, family values, music, food, religion, etc. One of the most effective ways for learning about a culture is to build a strong relationship with students (Ferlazzo, 2010). Strong relationships allow ELLs to become more

comfortable in a demanding academic setting and enable them to take more “risks” when speaking a second language. Established relationships will also allow teachers to learn more information about the student and his or her prior school experiences. Knowing an ELL’s previous educational history and literacy level can help teachers make informed decisions about services needed as well as create adequate lesson plans (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010).

In addition to building relationships, teachers must also strive to be culturally relevant and create an environment that conveys respect for all cultures, experiences, and languages brought to the classroom. For ELLs, “initial assessment of their acceptance into the school environment depends on whether or not they perceive pictures, symbols, and other visual representations that remind them of their homes, communities, and values” (Hollie, 2012, p. 138). A supportive classroom environment demonstrates respect for all students’ cultures and languages. Culturally relevant teachers know how to support student learning by creating lessons that lead to academic success (Hollie, 2012). These lessons meet the students’ needs and do not underestimate the role of background knowledge. Culturally relevant teachers also have materials in their classroom that reflect the students’ cultures. For example, if the class composition includes Latino students, the classroom library might contain books by Julia Alvarez, Gary Soto, and Sandra Cisneros. Because these authors often write about language acquisition, cultural issues, and acculturation, students feel more comfortable and included in the school climate (Hollie, 2012).

Classroom Concepts

One of the more challenging aspects of teaching ELLs is that they come from a wide variety of backgrounds as mentioned in the previous section. The one commonality among ELLs is that they are not yet proficient in English (Wright, 2012). However, even this designation does not account for the various levels or stages of English proficiency. Some students may be true beginners, or what World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) refers to as Level 1 Entering, meaning

they are learning the very basics of English and may not be able to speak or read many words in English yet. Other students are on the verge of exiting an ESL program (WIDA Level 6 Reaching) because they are nearing the performance of their grade-level, English-speaking peers (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010; WIDA, 2011; Wright, 2010). The challenge for teachers is the fact that ESL classes are often comprised of students at a variety of levels requiring teachers to differentiate assignments and assessments to meet the needs of all their students (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010). These differences become more pronounced at the secondary level where there may be a large gap between ELLs and their grade-level peers. In fact, some students may have plateaued, no longer making significant gains towards English proficiency. This issue is so prevalent that the term “long-term English learners” has been coined to describe this group of students who have been in ESL programs for more than seven years without reaching proficiency (Freeman & Freeman, 2009). Unfortunately, many long-term English learners were born in the U.S. and have been in U.S. schools for their entire educational careers (Freeman & Freeman, 2009; Hutchinson, 2013). This widespread lack of progress among ELLs suggests that it is time to make changes in the educational system, especially in terms of training for mainstream teachers (Hutchinson, 2013).

In spite of varying levels of English proficiency, all ELLs should be challenged to extend their thinking beyond basic recall to higher levels of thinking (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010). The linguistic demands of questions need to be reduced for students at lower proficiency levels, but it is still essential for them to answer higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) questions (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013). Teachers who understand how to modify HOTS questions so that they do not require linguistically complex answers can maintain a high cognitive demand in order to balance language requirements. The aforementioned example of how to differentiate questioning by lowering linguistic demands illustrates the relationship between content and language learning objectives. Including both types of objectives is critical for ensuring ELLs’ school success. ELLs must be held to the same

grade-level content standards as their peers; however, their language proficiency level may mean that the manner in which they meet the standards is different based on their needs (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010).

Because the backgrounds of ELLs are so diverse, teachers must be very flexible in their instructional approach. Lesson pacing is an important consideration for teachers because moving through content too quickly may hamper student learning, but a slow pace may lead to boredom and loss of interest. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2013) recommend explicitly teaching students instructional routines and task procedures at the beginning of the year in order to maximize instructional time, which is essential for closing the achievement gap. Zacarian and Haynes (2010) point out that classroom routines give a feeling of control to ELLs, some of whom may have experienced the trauma of war, genocide, or natural disaster (Zacarian & Haynes 2010). Master teachers constantly monitor how the lesson is going and make adjustments as needed to ensure that students are adequately grasping key concepts. As one preservice teacher reflected after observing an ESL classroom, “I must be flexible to my students’ capabilities, not the other way around” (cited in Hutchinson, 2013, p. 46). Quick comprehension or “temperature” checks are one type of formative assessment that give teachers critical data for making such decisions. Another consideration is how much repetition or spiraling of content to provide in order for students to master the information. Practice and application involving both content and language objectives are critically important opportunities for students to assimilate their learning (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013).

Student Engagement

As stated previously, cultural awareness is paramount when teaching ELLs and is of foundational importance when considering student engagement. One criticism of the current educational system is the lack of connection with ELLs and their cultural backgrounds. ELLs must

be able to see their cultures reflected in the curriculum so that learning is relevant to them, yet the majority of teachers are middle class white women from literacy-oriented backgrounds (Zacarian & Haynes, 2012). This puts the burden on teachers to become more informed about their students' culture and lives so connections can be drawn between content and student experiences. It also suggests the need to be proactive in terms of validating students' cultural and linguistic identities by incorporating materials that are relevant to them. Students' comfort levels with the culture of the classroom have an impact on their learning, whether positive or negative (Hamayan & Freeman Field, 2012). A teacher who is cognizant of cultural differences and actively strives to incorporate them within the curriculum invites students to find their own voices and thus a place within American schools.

Fully engaging students in learning is critical for program success. Effective lessons are highly engaging and promote active learning, providing many opportunities for ELLs to interact with text, other students, and the teacher in a safe and comfortable environment (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2013; Haynes, 2012). This is especially true for struggling readers who lack motivation and engagement because they may be marginalized socially or do not feel respected by teachers or peers. Ways to increase engagement for these readers are to tap into their interests and life experiences when selecting reading materials and to connect them with someone who is highly motivated that they can interact with about text (Freeman & Freeman, 2009). As mentioned previously, a strong relationship between a teacher and an ELL can have a positive impact on the student's academic success (Ferlazzo, 2010).

Authentic, real-world tasks are another way to engage students, especially when they address a variety of learning styles and connect content with literacy practice (Haynes, 2012). For example, students learning about the environment will be much more engaged if they are personally involved in an environmental conservation project. Such hands-on experience provides a valuable learning

opportunity that is much richer than just reading about the environment in a textbook or even discussing it in class. Technology can be an important tool to make tasks more authentic, especially if it provides a broader, real-world audience with which students can interact about their work (Hamayan & Freeman Field, 2012). Writing up information about their conservation project and posting it online for comments from people outside of their school would provide critical, meaningful practice, both with content concepts and the proper language use surrounding those concepts (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2013).

Staff collaboration

With the increasing rigor of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and an increasingly diverse student population, collaboration among school staff is a necessity in order for teachers to help students meet high demands (Haynes, 2012). This is true not only among ESL and content teachers but also with instructional coaches, administrators, and other professional development trainers. Beyond the school walls, there are also many universities, businesses, social service agencies, and community groups that can provide valuable resources and support for students (Haynes, 2012). A successful teacher is one who can capitalize on all of these connections to maximize support for ELLs.

Collaboration among teachers can be classified from informal, non-instructional activities like impromptu conversations about students or lessons, to formal, instructional practices, such as co-teaching where an ESL specialist works side by side with a content area teacher (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). One of the benefits of collaboration is the exchange of ideas among teachers who may feel very isolated depending on the culture and organization of teachers in the school, particularly with departmentalization at the secondary level. Honigsfeld and Dove (2010) assert that when ESL teachers are encouraged to share their expertise with content teachers via professional learning communities, it will lead to increased understanding of student needs and collaborative planning for

better instructional practices to improve learning. According to Haynes (2012), ESL and content teachers must work together, or we will not be able to implement the changes that need to occur in order for ELLs to achieve at desired levels. As Haynes (2012) explains, “The press to improve ELLs’ educational attainment affords an enormous opportunity to work toward a shared notion of good teaching, establish points of focus for training and support, and align systems of assessing practice and providing feedback” (p. 13). Finding this time to collaborate is, indeed, essential.

In addition to collaboration with other teachers, professional development provides opportunities for teachers to access resources such as professional materials, trainings, instructional coaching, etc. However, many building meetings or district trainings may be general in nature and not tailored to the specifics of working with ELLs. Topics such as second language acquisition or how to provide sheltered content instruction are not likely to be covered in depth at the vast majority of school-based professional development sessions. According to the 2008 School and Staffing Survey (SASS) (cited in Haynes, 2012), only one in five teachers completing the survey received more than one full day of training about teaching ELLs over the three years prior to the survey. Clearly, there is a need for additional resources and training to be provided so that teachers are better prepared to work with ELLs. With technology advancements bringing the world ever closer, many times information is available through the Internet if teachers will reach out and search for it. While there is always room for improvement, scholarly research related to ELLs is increasing, and large, mainstream professional organizations like the International Reading Association (IRA) and the ASCD regularly acknowledge ELLs in their publications and conferences.

Outside of schools, though, there is another area where collaboration benefits ELLs. That is through working with community agencies to address other issues that can impact a student’s ability to learn. Since approximately seventy percent of ELLs are from low-income families (Zacarian & Haynes, 2012), housing, food, transportation, and adequate clothing may present challenges that can

interfere with school. If an ELL is also a refugee or an undocumented immigrant, the likelihood that the student has experienced violence, trauma, or daily concerns of being deported is high. Families who are newly arrived in the community and who may not be fully proficient in English are often unaware of agencies that could assist them. ESL teachers, though, are much more likely to have connections in the community. Schools then, including ESL teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, psychologists, and other personnel, have a vital role to play in facilitating the connection between families in need and civic and community organizations that can assist them (Zacarian & Haynes, 2012).

Advocacy

Advocacy fits hand and hand with collaboration and is a vital part of the ESL field. The goal of advocacy is to empower people to become self-advocates instead of relying on others (Hamayan & Freeman Field, 2012). An advocate is “one that pleads the cause of another” (Hamayan & Freeman Field, 2012, p. 238). All stakeholders in a school must be advocates for ELLs; however, in most schools the ESL teachers are the only advocates because they are considered *the* experts. ELLs and their families often do not advocate for themselves because they may be unaware of the school system, lack sufficient language skills, or may be afraid to speak up against a school leader. In order to advocate for ELLs, teachers and school leaders should know the legislation that protects language minority families. Teachers and school leaders must also understand best practices for ELLs and information about second language acquisition. Third, teachers and school leaders need to understand the goals and requirements of the various models for ELLs. Knowing this information will help the teachers to select adequate resources that will improve instruction and achievement (Hamayan & Freeman Field, 2012).

Community leaders, teachers, parents, and students need to be empowered with comprehensive knowledge about the programs and resources serving ELLs. Community leaders

should be informed about the rich diversity that ELLs bring to the area. Schools should use media outlets to share with the community academic progress being made by ELLs. Parents should also be informed about various programs and community resources available. ELLs should feel empowered through celebrations of culture, research-based supports, and culturally responsive teachers.

In addition to empowering the stakeholders above, ESL teachers are often put in the place of advocate because they are thought of as solely responsible for an ELL's education. Although advocacy is not solely the ESL teacher's responsibility, there are some steps that ESL teachers can take to empower other teachers, parents, and students. ESL teachers can share information on second language acquisition, including strategies for helping students access language. In addition to strategies, ESL teachers could also show teachers how to modify tests appropriately for different students' language levels. ESL teachers need to share critical information with general education teachers including test scores, writing samples, and relevant information about the family (Hamayan & Freeman Field, 2012). ESL teachers could also make sure information is sent home in the student's native language so parents have equal access to information.

As stated previously, the ultimate goal of advocacy is to create advocates who stand up for themselves. In order to create advocates, schools must build and in some cases repair relationships with parents. Schools should create situations where the community has opportunities to speak freely and openly no matter the language spoken (Hamayan & Freeman Field, 2012). This could be done through open meetings, phone calls, home visits, and surveys. Once parents realize their voice is being heard, they will be more willing to share thoughts and ideas. Eventually, strong partnerships will develop into beneficial relationships where parents are heard and feel comfortable advocating for their children.

Parental Involvement

Effectively involving parents in education includes thinking about how the relationships between schools and families are influenced by various cultural and linguistic factors. As stated in the advocacy section, parents of ELLs are often restricted by the language barrier and are unfamiliar with the school system. Although schools want parent participation and are required by law to provide communication to parents in a language they understand for school-related matters (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (NCLB)), they often fail to involve ELL parents because of traditional models (National Education Policy Center, 2008). One way to involve parents of ELLs is to send all communication in their native language so that parents can be informed about what is happening at school (Pawan & Sietman, 2007). Written communication in the home language ensures equal access to all families. Interpreters should also be available at all school events in order to make parents feel welcome. Communicating with parents in their own language portrays a strong message that the school is willing to put forth effort to include all parents. Parents want to be involved, but often do not have access to the information because of a language barrier. However, when parents are included in the knowledge base, they will more likely be involved.

Another way to encourage involvement from ELL families is to provide events of interest to them (Pawan & Sietman, 2007). For example, schools might hold meetings explaining procedures about state testing, since many of the ELL parents may have never had this type of test in their prior school experiences. Schools may also hold transition meetings for new students entering a school for the first time (middle school and high school) or students new to the American school system. During these meetings, various community agencies could be available to offer assistance and showcase their services. Schools may also hold various events to help parents know how to support their children in the American education system since about 25% of ELLs have parents who did not

complete 9th grade, and up to 50% have parents who did not graduate from high school (The Urban Institute as cited in Wright, 2010). Because many of the ELL families have low literacy skills, an important event for ELL families might include literacy skills for both parents and children. Research shows that students who read at home are more successful at school (Scholastic, 2010). Teaching parents valuable literacy strategies would benefit both families and schools.

... While these six themes of cultural awareness, classroom concepts, student engagement, collaboration, advocacy, and parental involvement do not fully cover the professional development needs and practical concerns of practicing ESL teachers, they do address some of the major issues public schools face when it comes to improving the education of ELLs. As researchers and school administrators consider the needs of ELLs, the authors hope school leaders will take it from the mouths of the experienced ESL teachers on this panel and provide better training for all teachers.

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New Grammar Classes: Action Research on Explicit Grammar Instruction

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Abstract

In this presentation at the 2012 MIDTESOL conference, I shared data collected from four college-level Intensive English Program (IEP) grammar classes, including pre- and post-class grammar assessment exam scores and a mini-survey on 49 students' attitudes toward grammar learning. Along with interviews with instructors and the IEP coordinator, I presented an action research project that aimed to provide first-hand information on explicit grammar instruction and reflection on its merits and weaknesses. The presentation also supplied some practical suggestions in offering and teaching explicit grammar classes.

Whether or not to teach grammar explicitly has been a question concerning English as a Second Language (ESL) researchers and educators for more than half a century (Corder, 1967; Krashen, 1981; Long, 1988). The practice has swung from heavily relying on rigid grammar instruction to entirely disregarding grammar learning, settling on a rather recent consensus of acknowledging the usefulness of teaching grammar to ESL learners (Ellis, 2006). Now the discussion has shifted its focus to a new sub-area: *how* should grammar be taught? In spring 2012, the Intensive English Program (IEP) at a Midwestern public university implemented a carefully considered initiative in offering five classes specifically devoted to explicit grammar instruction, which was a deviation from its previous conviction of integrated grammar instruction (C. Kmiecik, personal communication, April 3, 2012). This IEP provides English language training to international students of all proficiency levels who wish to improve their language skills. It provides English instructions necessary for academic success and career advancement. The action project examined the attitude of learners and the effectiveness of the grammar classes by conducting a survey and comparing student placement and exit exam scores.

Need for the Study

Not only have the pedagogical aspects of ESL grammar instruction been fervently debated, but also related research methodology in grammar classrooms has been a constant focus of discussion in the field. Basically, there have been two opposing camps in regards to teaching grammar: implicit vs. explicit instruction. Implicit instruction usually uses a communicative approach and integrated style as well as inductive reasoning, whereas explicit instruction focuses more on the grammatical structure and uses more deductive reasoning (Brown, 2007). How effective are explicit grammar classes? What are students' and instructors' reactions to them?

What kind of research can be done to explore these questions? Ellis (2010) pointed out that studies of explicit instruction have mostly investigated the “increased control over forms that have already been partially acquired, ” which usually requires “a pre-test of some kind to establish learners’ existing knowledge of the target feature followed by a period of instruction, and finally one of more post-tests (ideally an immediate and a delayed post-test)” (p. 10). Ellis (2010) further suggested that “acquisition in the sense of increased control is established if it can be shown that there is a statistically significant gain in accuracy from pre-test to post-tests” (p. 10).

The author designed the action research project based on Ellis’s premise. Action research lends itself nicely to the studying of such classes because of its pragmatic, problem-identifying and problem-solving nature. Burns (as cited in McKay, 2006) summed up the characteristics of action research as follows:

1. Action research is contextual, small-scale and localized—it identifies and investigates problems within a specific situation.
2. It is evaluative and reflective as it aims to bring about change and improvement in practice.
3. It is participatory as it provides for collaborative investigation by teams of colleagues, practitioners and researchers.
4. Changes in practice are based on the collection of information or data which provides the impetus for change. (p. 30)

In her latest book dedicated to action research in ESL, Burns (2010) emphasized that action research was “related to the ideas of ‘reflective practice’ and ‘the teacher as researcher’” (p. 2). Dörnyei (2007) agreed with Burns but offered his more relaxed interpretation in stating that “action research is conducted by or in cooperation with teachers” as long as the goal remained the same: to better understand and improve teaching. Therefore, despite the technicality that I

was neither a program coordinator at the IEP nor an instructor, my collaboration with the IEP coordinator and all four instructors involved in this study as well as the aim to change and improve teaching would qualify this project as action research.

Statement of the Problem

According to the program coordinator at the IEP, up to the spring semester of 2012, grammar there used to be taught the integrated, inexplicit way, dispersed throughout classes that focused on teaching speaking, listening, reading and writing skills (C. Kmiecik, personal communication, April 3, 2012). However, many international students, especially those at a comparatively low proficiency level, had been asking to take explicit grammar classes. Most of these students were from countries which have a tradition of grammar-heavy curriculum, such as Korea, Saudi Arabia and China. These students typically learned English through explicit grammar instruction in schools and probably did not feel comfortable with the integrated grammar teaching at the IEP, nor did they find it adequate or helpful (C. Kmiecik, personal communication, April 3, 2012). Furthermore, some studies have shown that explicit grammar teaching and opportunities to practice led to the acquisition and application of grammar (e.g., Spada & Lightbown, 1999).

Research Questions

I attempted to answer the following research questions through this research project:

1. How do the students perceive the importance of grammar learning?
2. What are the students' perceptions of explicit grammar teaching?
3. What are the teachers' perceptions of the grammar classes?

Learner attitude has long been speculated to have close connection to motivation and to impact learning outcome. Similarly, a teacher's perception of the class can affect teaching. The

answers to these questions can help the researcher explore the potential connection to the effectiveness of the grammar classes.

Literature Review

Grammar used to be assigned an overpowering role in language learning. The so-called Grammar Translation method was developed in the nineteenth century and dominated foreign language instruction for nearly a century (Brown, 2007). As implied by its name, this method was used by European scholars to translate and understand classic literature, thus devoting itself mostly to reading and understanding texts in a foreign language. Through analysis and rote memorization of grammar rules, this approach was completely detached from the context and meaning of the target material for the sole purpose of learning a language correctly. Deductive reasoning was paramount in this method. Teachers were trained to present grammatical rules, and students were expected to memorize the rules before they had the ability or opportunity to practice using them in any form of meaningful communication.

In the late 1970s, in response to the increasing focus on learners' need to communicate, Communicative Language Teaching was developed and, not surprisingly, it emphasized interaction and communication as the goal in learning ESL and generally rejected explicit grammar teaching (Brown, 2007).

Furthermore, based on the assumption of a built-in syllabus for learning grammar developed by Corder in 1967, Krashen (1982) came up with a minimalist proposition which claimed that most learners were limited in their ability to learn complex rules (as cited in Ellis, 2006, p. 87). Krashen disregarded grammar learning altogether, citing instances where such learning and error correction in the learning process harmed rather than helped the ESL learner. In the meantime, Chomsky proposed a theory of "universal grammar," which argued that

“grammatical competence develops naturally according to an innate programme, so teaching is simply irrelevant” (as cited in Wang, 2010, p. 315). Krashen’s claim and Chomsky’s theory seemed to echo some scholars’ and instructors’ earlier doubts of the usefulness of grammar instruction in L2 learning and gained its share of popularity.

However, more studies have to be carried out before making such a significant pedagogical decision, as cautioned by Ferris (1999), who deemed the abandoning of grammar correction as premature.

Recently, more research was conducted, and evidence indicating the effectiveness of grammar instruction abounded, which led to an enlightened compromise: focus on both form and meaning. Rodríguez (2009) declared that “most research now supports some attention to grammar within a meaningful, interactive instructional context” (p.1). Incidentally, as a result of her corpus-based studies of grammar, Conrad (2000) also predicted that the teaching of grammar “will become more integrated with the teaching of vocabulary” and that emphasis “will shift from structural accuracy to the appropriate conditions of use for alternative grammatical constructions” (p. 549). What this means is a teaching approach that does not single out grammar points just to have students memorize them; instead, it integrates grammar instruction in authentic communication, making the understanding, acquisition and application of grammar more meaningful as well as more interesting for learners. This approach has gained increasing popularity in the past decade.

While the merit of grammar instruction was debated by TESOL scholars and professionals, learner perception of grammar instruction was also studied (Ismail, 2010; Parkinson, 2010). In a study examining Asian students’ perceptions of ESL grammar teaching, Pazaver and Wang (2009) found out that, despite the different preferences regarding grammar

teaching, all students did feel that “there is a role for grammar instruction in language education” (p. 34). In another study, Wang (2010) surveyed 298 middle school students in China and reported that, although students did not always enjoy grammar instruction, they recognized that “it is necessary” (p. 317). This kind of result, however, was hardly surprising, given the pedagogic tradition of heavily relying on rote learning in so many of the countries in which the research was conducted.

In the past decade, the verdict seemed clear: grammar should be taught, but not in the traditional way. More recent studies have attempted to find a concrete direction for grammar teaching. Andrews (2007) conducted a study and concluded that “explicit instruction is significantly better than implicit for the complex rule, that both methods are equally effective for the simple rule, and that structures do not have to match proficiency levels or be sequenced by complexity for significant learning to take place” (p. 1). Although Andrews’ research methodology had its limitations and could not be readily generalized to other populations or grammatical structures outside of her study, it nonetheless provided encouraging evidence that grammar instruction did have its merit.

Based on the above literature and other studies, the IEP grammar courses discussed here could give insight into the effectiveness of such standalone grammar classes. The study’s outcome can provide not only ESL but also EFL instructors and researchers with insights concerning explicit grammar instruction.

Methodology

Participants

The participants in the study were 59 of the 61 new ESL students enrolled at the IEP in spring 2012. They varied in age and first language backgrounds but were generally between the ages of 18 and 22 and were mostly from South Korea, Saudi Arabia and China. All of the students were taking speaking, reading and writing courses to improve their overall English skills in the academic setting as well as in daily communication. Most of them planned to study at an American university in the near future, and some planned to return to their home countries to continue their college education. Prior to their enrollment at the IEP, they had studied English in their own countries for varied lengths of time, between eight months and 16 years. Their English proficiency also varied, ranging in levels from the novice high to intermediate high as specified by the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

As shown in Appendix B, 13 of the 61 IEP students scored 10 points or less on the 30-point grammar exam, which indicated that their grammar knowledge was at a relatively low level. On the other hand, more than half of the students, 32 in total, scored more than 20 points on the exam and were thus placed at an intermediate to high-intermediate level. However, all students had various degrees of difficulty in using the English language to communicate in speaking and writing. There seemed to be great incongruence in what grammatical structures the ESL learners had learned and their ability to apply those structures.

Instruments

Students took two tests. A grammar assessment exam (pretest) was administered at the beginning of the semester, and the same exam (posttest) was administered at the end of the semester, in week 15. Analysis was performed on every group's pre- and post-test scores. The

test results of the two grammar classes and those of the two parallel classes that did not receive explicit grammar instruction were also compared.

Procedure

The 59 students were assigned to two different levels of grammar classes according to their knowledge of grammar: Level 2G (n=10), and Level 3G (n=27, divided into two classes and taught by the same instructor). The two control groups were assessed at similar levels in terms of their grammatical knowledge and divided into Level 2 (n=12) and Level 3 (n=10). They were taking the same IEP classes as the test groups except the grammar courses. The instructors of these five classes, Level 2, Level 2G, Level 3, and Level 3G, also participated in the study by providing interviews.

At the beginning of the spring semester in 2012, I collected the test results of grammar assessment exams for all the 61 students currently enrolled in the IEP. The results of the first exam were presented in a frequency distribution table (see Appendix B).

During the twelfth week of the semester, I conducted a survey regarding students' perception on grammar teaching (see Appendix A). During that same week, I also interviewed all four instructors separately about their perception of student performance and progress. The interviews were able to provide insight and information on teacher assessment.

Results

Regardless of whether they received the IEP grammar instruction, 46 of the 50 students taking part in the survey answered "yes" to the questions "Is grammar important in learning English?" and "Should teachers teach grammar?"

The effectiveness of the new grammar classes was reflected by the exit exam scores (see Appendix C). Of the 55 participants taking the exit exam, 41 made progress and 5 did not show

any change in score. Of the 9 participants whose scores decreased, 8 were high-performing students scoring more than 26 points in the first exam and one to two points less on the exit exam. Only one student of the lower level was in this group, scoring 12 points on the exit exam, down from the original 13 points. Unfortunately, 6 of these 55 students who *did not* take grammar classes could not be identified; their scores should be excluded from the examination to make the conclusion more valid. During the interviews, the two grammar course instructors expressed satisfaction with the grammar class and reported noticeable grammatical improvement in student production of the English language.

Discussion

Based on the survey result, 92% of the participating students considered it important to learn grammar when learning English. The only “no” answers were from the two classes of high proficiency level. The reason could be that after a certain point, such students did not find explicit grammar learning as helpful and would prefer to concentrate on other aspects of the English language such as writing or speaking.

Although most students’ grammar exam scores improved over the course of one semester, the comparison of the grammar classes versus non-grammar classes presented a counter-intuitive picture: the average points of progress of the Level 2G and 3G students were 2 and 2.56 points, respectively, much lower than the 9.56 and 6.75 point increases of the Level 2 and 3 students (see Appendix D). Could it be that, despite the explicit grammar instruction, the students who attended the grammar classes hit the temporary plateau of learning and were not able show much progress during that period of time? Could it be that the students who did not take part in the explicit grammar instruction benefited from their IEP classes in reading, writing,

and integrated skills and were able to better understand and apply their grammar knowledge in testing? More studies have to be conducted to answer these questions.

The students in the IEP were of an almost unanimous view that grammar teaching could help learners understand and use the English language better in communication tasks; their test scores also indicated the effectiveness of the semester-long explicit grammar instruction they received. Importantly, the grammar class instructors were able to teach grammar in a way that was related to students' other courses and communication needs. Therefore, explicit grammar instruction can be helpful, important and maybe even necessary for certain cohorts of incoming international students who are used to this kind of learning because it can facilitate explicit learning and help students transition into implicit grammar instruction. Furthermore, grammar lessons can be both explicit *and* integrated. As Ellis (2010) put it, "Even if explicit instruction only results in explicit knowledge, this can be seen to be of value as (1) explicit knowledge is an integral part of language proficiency and (2) it primes the processes responsible for the development of implicit knowledge" (p. 3).

From the research methodology point of view, because of the researcher's limitation in time and lack of experience with research in TESOL/applied linguistics, this study contains several flaws. First of all, the participants were taking different classes taught by different instructors. Factors such as the differences in proficiency level and varied learner motivation were not accounted for. Secondly, the student population was not representative of various regions of the world. The IEP students in this study were mostly from China, South Korea and Saudi Arabia, where they typically receive explicit grammar instruction and would present a biased attitude as well as aptitude in grammar learning. Third, it was too simplistic to use the assessment exam score alone as measurement of students' ability to understand grammar and to

utilize it in oral and written communication. As Brown (2007) pointed out, the true test of the success of such grammar instruction would come outside of these classes. A longitudinal study of the students would be able to reveal more about student grammar acquisition and language production.

Since the survey was administered toward the end of the semester, it would be beneficial to add one more item on the list of questions to ask about students' evaluation of the grammar class on a Likert scale. This would be a subjective assessment from the learner's point of view; it would nonetheless provide insight regarding the effectiveness of the class.

Two other questions could also be asked in the survey concerning students' reaction to the instructor's teaching approach and to the material/textbook choice. This would help the teachers and the IEP program coordinator gain insight on the effectiveness of the current learning material more directly and more accurately.

Conclusion

Because of the limitations discussed above, and also because of the complexity of learning and teaching grammar, no clear-cut conclusion can be offered by this research project alone. However, this study indicated that explicit grammar instruction was strongly desired by some specific cohorts of international students (Chinese, Korean, and Arabic); it also proved that learners made progress at varying degrees by the end of the grammar classes. As Ellis (2010) concluded, "Perhaps, all we can say with confidence at the moment is that explicit instruction does help learners to develop explicit knowledge. Even if this is all it does, I would consider this a sufficient basis for recommending it" (p. 20). Therefore, explicit grammar instruction should be considered not only in EFL but also in ESL institutions.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

1. What country are you from?
2. What is your first language?
3. How many years have you studied English?
4. Is grammar important in learning English? Please choose one answer.
() yes () no
5. Should teachers teach grammar? Please choose one answer.
() yes () no

Appendix B:

Table 1 <i>Frequency distribution of the grammar assessment exam scores</i>	
<u>Test score (total of 30 points)</u>	<u>Number of students scoring</u>
0-10 points	13
11-20 points	15
21-30 points	32
<i>Note.</i> One student did not have the test score on the report card.	

Appendix C:

Table 2	
<i>Percentage of point increase in exit exam scores</i>	
<u>Percentage increase</u>	<u>Number of students</u>
<0%	9
0%	5
1-14%	19
15-29%	14
≥30%	8

Appendix D:

Table 3		
<i>Average progress points by group</i>		
<u>Group</u>	<u>Number of students taking both Placement and exit exams</u>	<u>Points of progress per student</u>
Class 2	9	9.56
Class 2G	9	2
Class 3	8	6.75
2 Classes of 3G	27	2.56

Appendix E: List of original placement and exit exam scores in four groups**Group I. Class 2 (novice high to intermediate low, no grammar class)**

Student ID	Placement test	Exit test	Point progress	Comments
1	9	14	5	
5	0	14	14	
6	7	9	2	
8	6	7	1	
13	1	15	14	
15	8	x		transferred
17	6	21	15	
19	0	18	18	
20	5	15	10	
21	12	x		transferred
30	0	x		transferred
58	0	7	7	

Group II: Class 3 (intermediate to intermediate high, no grammar class)

Student ID	Placement test	Exit test	Point progress	Comments
2	11	x		Did not take test
7	15	21	6	
11	11	20	9	
12	10	15	5	
14	14	16	2	
16	12	18	6	
18	13	27	14	
22	14	x		Did not take test
27	12	17	5	
33	17	24	7	

Group III. Class 2G (novice high to intermediate low, taking grammar class)

Student ID	Placement test	Exit test	Point progress	Comments
4	24	x		Transferred
9	28	28	0	
10	20	20	0	
26	23	25	2	
28	18	22	4	
29	24	29	5	
32	24	26	2	
48	28	29	1	
50	23	25	2	
61	27	29	2	

Group IV: 2 Classes of 3G (intermediate to intermediate high, taking grammar class)

Student ID	Placement test	Exit test	Point progress	Comments
23	22	27	5	
24	26	27	1	
25	23	29	6	
31	29	28	-1	
34	24	27	3	
35	27	29	2	
36	24	28	4	
37	7	25	18	
38	28	27	-1	
39	26	25	-1	
40	29	27	-2	
41	28	28	0	
42	24	28	4	
43	29	27	-2	
44	16	23	7	
45	21	24	3	
46	18	26	8	
47	29	27	-2	
49	23	28	5	
51	7	16	9	

52	25	27	2	
53	26	28	2	
54	27	26	-1	
55	29	29	0	
56	25	26	1	
57	29	28	-1	
59	27	27	0	

Appendix F: Grammar Assessment Exam

Grammar Assessment – Student Worksheet Score: _____/30 Name: _____

TENSE. Circle the letter (A-D) next to the correct tense of the underlined verb(s) in the following sentences.

1. The sun appeared in the sky after the rain ended.
A) simple present tense
B) future tense
C) simple past tense
D) progressive tense
2. I am taking pictures of every new thing I see.
A) simple present tense
B) future tense
C) simple past tense
D) progressive tense
3. She enjoys cooking a big meal for her closest friends.
A) simple present tense
B) future tense
C) simple past tense
D) progressive tense
4. Students from the campus club are playing soccer in the gym.
A) simple present tense
B) future tense
C) simple past tense
D) progressive tense

PARTS OF SPEECH. Circle the letter (A-D) which identifies the correct part of speech of the underlined word in the following sentences.

5. The sun appeared in the sky after the rain ended.
A) noun
B) verb
C) adjective
D) preposition
6. I am taking pictures of every new thing I see.
A) verb
B) adverb
C) article
D) noun

7. She enjoys cooking a big meal for her closest friends.
A) adjective
B) article
C) preposition
D) adverb
8. Students from the campus club are playing soccer in the gym.
A) adverb
B) verb
C) noun
D) article

PARTS OF SPEECH II. Circle the letter of the answer that shows the correct number to answer the question.

9. How many adjectives are in the following sentence:
She enjoys cooking a big meal for her closest friends.
1 adjective
2 adjectives
3 adjectives
4 adjectives

10. How many nouns are in the following sentence:
The sun appeared in the sky after the rain ended.
1 noun
2 nouns
3 nouns
4 nouns

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Circle the letter of the answer that correctly completes each sentence or answers the question.

11. The telephone _____. Could you answer it, please?
A) rings
B) was ringing
C) is ringing
D) rang
12. Can you call us back later? We _____ dinner.
A) have
B) 're having
C) had
D) 've had

13. Many identical twins are very close. They _____ the same thoughts and interests.
A) 're sharing
B) shared
C) were sharing
D) share
14. _____ when it started to rain?
A) Are you driving
B) Were you driving
C) Did you drive
D) Are you going to drive
15. We were having dinner while it _____.
A) was raining
B) raining
C) rains
D) will rain
16. What _____ when you got to the stadium?
A) were the players doing
B) are the players doing
C) do the players do
D) the players were doing
17. When you were a child, _____ eat a lot of candy?
A) have you use to
B) did you used to
C) you use to
D) were you used to
18. When the famous gymnast was younger, she _____ practice for six hours a day.
A) has to
B) use to
C) used to
D) have to
19. Will you buy an electric car when they _____ available?
A) become
B) will become
C) are becoming
D) have become

20. Maggie wants to get a job as soon as she _____ next June.
A) graduated
B) will graduate
C) is graduating
D) graduates
21. When I _____ Alex, I'll tell him you're here.
A) are seeing
B) see
C) will see
D) saw
22. When Tito was younger, he used to _____ swim 50 meters underwater.
A) could
B) be able to
C) can
D) had to
23. Do you mind if I change the radio station?
A) No, you don't.
B) Yes, actually, I do. It's my favorite station.
C) Yes, I will go right ahead.
D) No, I do mind.
24. Would you turn off the lights before you leave?
A) Go right ahead.
B) Yes, I would.
C) Yes, I will.
D) Yes, you would.
25. I've been a teacher since _____.
A) 1990
B) a long time
C) three years
D) a while
26. Laura's flight hasn't landed _____. It's late because of the weather.
A) already
B) soon
C) before
D) yet

27. Have you ever _____ to a movie studio?
A) go
B) gone
C) went
D) had go
28. We're sorry that we _____ your game last night.
A) missed
B) were missing
C) miss
D) are missing
29. Thank you! That's _____ gift I've ever received.
A) the nicest
B) a nice
C) nicest
D) a nicest
30. I passed my driver's test. It seemed much _____ this time.
A) easy
B) easily
C) easier
D) easiest

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A Case for Using Non-ESL Textbook Chapters in University ESL Reading Classes

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Abstract

This paper makes a case for using non-ESL textbook chapters in high-intermediate university ESL reading classes. The kind of ESL is English for academic purposes (EAP). Six reasons to use non-ESL textbook chapters in EAP reading classes are (1) to integrate EAP students into the university, (2) to offer more intellectually challenging content, (3) to expose students to textbooks from required courses, (4) to demonstrate the use of academic words in their disciplinary context, (5) to introduce students to discipline-specific ways to represent knowledge, and (6) to demonstrate the volume of reading material in non-ESL classes. Five challenges are also discussed.

Textbooks are perhaps the single most important educational tool at the university, especially for undergraduates. Making this point, Issa (2009) demonstrates effective ways to use textbooks in ESL classes. These include (1) orienting students to the organization of the textbook, (2) noting strategic features of the textbook such as pictures, activities, headings, and textboxes, and (3) offering explanations for why the textbook was chosen and how the instructor intends to use the textbook. The kind of texts to use in the L2 classroom depends on the needs of the students and the pedagogical context. This paper makes a case for using textbook chapters from the humanities, social sciences, sciences, and communications studies in a university EAP Reading classroom.

The pedagogical context for this paper is high-intermediate university-level ESL students who are enrolled in EAP courses in the Intensive English Program (IEP) at the University of Kansas. In general, the IEP services the language needs of approximately 550 students from around the world with the majority of students coming from China and Saudi Arabia. The reading course we report on has seven sections for a total of 130 students. Within the sections, some students are only taking EAP classes and some are concurrently enrolled in EAP classes and General Education classes from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Students who are not concurrently enrolled are expected to be enrolled in General Education courses within one semester. General Education classes are required courses for all university undergraduate students and include courses from the humanities, social sciences, sciences, and for most students at our university, a course in communications studies.

The Question

The question that eventually led to our use of non-ESL textbook chapters in our high-intermediate reading/writing class is, “how can we give our students a linguistic and academic experience representative of what they will be exposed to in typical undergraduate textbooks?” To answer this question we first had to address the fact that the language in ESL textbooks differs significantly from the language in undergraduate textbooks in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences (Durrant, 2009; Hyland & Tse, 2007; Miller, 2011; & Woodward-Kron, 2008). To give students a linguistic experience that more closely resembles what they will experience in required university classes, we decided to use authentic university textbook materials.

There is much research on the use of authentic materials in the language classroom (e.g., Badger & MacDonald, 2010; Gilmore, 2007; Rilling & Dantas, 2009; Roberts & Cooke, 2009). Our work follows the use of authentic materials in a content-based model of instruction called sustained content (Camiciottoli, 2002). The sustained content approach to content-based instruction is characterized in the following way:

With this approach, English language students progressively explore a relatively limited number of topics in a single subject area and use the same authentic materials as their native-speaker counterparts in mainstream courses, while learning and practising language skills at the same time...[S]ustained content instruction has the broader objective of also acquiring content knowledge and expertise (Camiciottoli, 2002, p. 169-170).

Stoller's (2004) review of models of content-based instruction places "content-driven" approaches on one end of the continuum and "language-driven" approaches on the other end of the continuum (p. 268). Our work falls more on the "content-driven" side of the continuum. To create a "content-driven" textbook for our course, we put together two anthologies for EAP. Each anthology is composed of textbook chapters from the humanities (e.g., world history), social sciences (e.g., economics), and sciences (e.g., biology and astronomy). An EAP anthology provides for sustained content and exposure to the language typical of freshman-sophomore level textbooks.

Reasons for Using Authentic Textbook Chapters from Non-ESL Courses

Below we give six reasons for using textbook chapters from non-ESL courses in English language classes.

Reason 1: To Integrate EAP Students into the University

One reason for using authentic textbook chapters in our EAP courses is to address the attitude among many international students in our program that their English language classes are not "real" university classes. Turner (2004) addresses this issue but frames it in terms of EAP being marginalized at the university. Many of our students feel marginalized in the sense that they perceive their EAP classes to be outside the university's curriculum. This marginalization is evidenced in the way they talk about their placement and their schedules during in-house academic counseling sessions with faculty from our program. Students make a distinction between IEP classes and university classes. Even instructors and administrators at our institution discuss placement using the same distinction.

Our students and faculty continue to make the IEP-university distinction despite the fact that by completing our program, students at our institution can get as many as nine credits

toward graduation and can fulfill the university's *foreign* language requirement as well as ESL requirement. The feeling of marginalization and strict IEP-university division is maintained even though the buildings that house our program and classrooms are centrally located on campus. Occupying prime real estate on a university campus is an indication of relevance, not marginalization. Clearly at our institution, however, there is an entrenched perception that EAP classes are not "real" university classes despite significant reasons to think otherwise.

The use of textbook chapters from required General Education courses in the EAP classroom adds another reason to consider EAP classes to be a "real" part of the university. The content from introductory history or biology chapters in the EAP textbook is no different from the content in history or biology courses. Feedback from student evaluations is starting to show a change in the way our classes are perceived. The following quote from a class evaluation illustrates this point: "very academic and it seems like it's a real university class."¹

Reason 2: To Offer More Intellectually Challenging Content

Another reason to use authentic textbook chapters from non-ESL disciplines is to offer our students more intellectually challenging content. Reviewing key studies on writing experiences in EAP classes versus non-EAP classes, Turner (2004) discusses the intellectually challenging nature of writing assignments. Noting that writing assignments in EAP classes are perceived to be less intellectually challenging by international students, Turner (2004) argues

¹ The quote is taken from a course evaluation at the end of our eight-week summer semester in 2012. The reading textbook consisted of chapters from various disciplines but the focus was only on biology and western civilization because of the short semester.

that we EAP professionals can put a “greater focus on the language of intellectually challenging content” (p. 105) but teach the content in ways that a content specialist would not.²

To illustrate less intellectually challenging content in typical university level ESL textbooks, consider Table 1. Table 1 includes titles of readings about gender and gender roles, which are common topics in ESL and non-ESL courses. The left-hand column lists titles found in two common ESL textbooks. The right-hand column lists titles in an undergraduate psychology and sociology textbook. The intellectual challenge of the readings is reflected in the titles.

Table 1. Titles of Readings in ESL and Non-ESL Textbooks

ESL Textbooks: (1) Withrow, J., Brookes, G., & Cummings, M. (2004), <i>Inspired to Write</i> ; (2) Gardner, P. (2005), <i>New Directions</i>	Non-ESL Textbooks: (1) Lahey, B. (2012), <i>Psychology: An Introduction</i> ; (2) Anderson, M., & Taylor, H. (2005), <i>Sociology: The Essentials</i>
Taming Macho Ways	Gender Identity and Gender Roles
Battling Chauvinism	Gender Similarities and Gender Differences
First Lullaby	Origins of Gender Differences
Sex Roles	Gender Differences in Physical Characteristics
Boys Will be Boys	Gender Differences in Cognitive Ability and Achievement
Sex, Sighs, and Conversation	Gender in Global Perspective
The Princess and the Admiral (a fable)	The Social Construction of Gender
The Greater God (from a book of poems)	Gender Stratification
Gender of Computers (a joke)	Theories of Gender

Readings in the ESL textbooks are from magazines or newspapers. There is also a poem, fable, and joke in the ESL readings. One reading, Sex Roles, however, is from an academic textbook. Readings in ESL textbooks are intended to teach language (e.g., vocabulary and

² A focus on the way language is used distinguishes EAP professionals from content area specialists. For example, the EAP professional could focus on the role that words, collocations, grammar, organization, and the development of an example play in the expression of the content.

reading/writing skills) and not intended to provide fundamental principles of any particular discipline.

The psychology and sociology textbooks teach the basic principles of the discipline. They also contextualize the topic and help readers understand the topic from the discipline's perspective. For example, the readings from the psychology textbook are contextualized in a larger chapter on the *Interplay of Nature and Nurture*. The specific section of the chapter these readings come from is *Sex, Gender, and Human Diversity*. Students can already learn something about psychology's perspective on gender through this contextualization. The list of sociology readings comes from headings of chapter subsections. The relationship among subheadings demonstrates the perspective sociology takes on gender. In short, an emphasis on disciplinary knowledge makes the point that the material will be intellectually (and linguistically) challenging, whereas readings from fables, jokes, and newspaper and magazine articles can give a non-academic impression to students.

Reason 3: To Expose Students to Textbooks from Required Courses

A third reason to use authentic textbook chapters from the sciences, social sciences, and humanities is to expose our students to textbooks from required disciplines. At many universities, there are common requirements that all or most students must fulfill. These requirements typically include one or more classes from the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The use of non-ESL textbook chapters can show international students how textbook writers in the various academic fields organize, explain, illustrate, and represent their disciplines.

Some students in our IEP are concurrently enrolled in the IEP and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (or other schools such as Engineering, Business, Music, etc.). These students

already have some experience with non-ESL textbooks, so it may seem that they would not need more, although extra experience is helpful. The point we make here is that the experience students get in EAP courses is different from the kind of experience they would get in non-EAP classes because the perspective on content in the language class differs from the perspective found in non-language classes (Turner, 2004). As EAP professionals, we specialize in teaching how words, collocations, grammar and organization are used to express content. We also teach how to extract meaning from paragraphs and texts. These language and academic skills are emphasized in content-based language instruction. Students can then transfer what they learn in content-based EAP to their other classes (James, 2006).

Reason 4: To Demonstrate the Use of Academic Words and Jargon in Their Disciplinary Context

Another argument for using non-ESL textbook chapters in EAP classes is to expose students to academic words and jargon in context. Hyland & Tse (2007) examine Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List and show that different disciplines use academic words in different ways. One particular finding was that the word "'analyze' appears to be used differently across fields. In the social sciences, it tends to occur more regularly as a noun, while in engineering, students are six times more likely to come across the form analytical" (Hyland & Tse, 2007, p. 244). Other studies point out additional shortcomings of ESL textbooks and the AWL with respect to exposing students to the vocabulary and collocations they need (cf. Durrant, 2009; Miller 2011; O'Loughlin, 2012).

A natural way to expose students to vocabulary and collocations in disciplinary context is to use non-ESL textbook chapters in the EAP classroom. For example in one chapter we use from communications studies, the word "methods," a word from AWL Sublist 1, occurs 13 times

in 29 pages. Through guided examples, students begin to notice that the word “methods” is often followed by the word “of.” In fact, “methods of” occurs 5 out of the 13 times in the chapter. The following are some examples of the exposure students get to the word “methods” from the chapter on communications studies.

“...confrontational methods of + managing disagreements...”

“...an ethnocentric view (assuming your cultural methods of + managing conflict are superior to those used by others)...”

“...logical methods of + managing conflict...”

We also point out that the word “methods” is used in other ways:

“... sort the conflict out in person rather than using e-mail or other mediated methods.”

“...effectively use good discussion methods, such as testing and challenging evidence and ideas.”

“...use a variety of methods to reach agreement: One researcher has found...”

General academic words such as those on the AWL are important for our students to know. It can be argued, however, that jargon or discipline-specific language is beyond the EAP curriculum. In response, Woodward-Kron (2008) points out that EAP students will eventually encounter discipline-specific jargon when they begin non-ESL classes at the university. Woodward-Kron (2008) goes on to note that technical jargon in some disciplines can be quite difficult to understand. For instance, the jargon in the sciences can be composed of unfamiliar Greek and Latin-based prefixes and suffixes. Teaching unfamiliar vocabulary, including words that are grammatically complex and difficult to understand, is precisely an expertise of EAP professionals. We also specialize in helping students develop strategies for managing unfamiliar

words. Since students are going to encounter jargon, they will need guidance and support to develop strategies for engaging these discipline-specific expressions. EAP professionals are perfectly positioned to supply such help and authentic textbook chapters provide the most appropriate context to teach and learn specialized vocabulary.

Reason 5: To Introduce Students to Discipline-Specific Ways to Represent Knowledge

A case for using non-ESL textbook chapters in the EAP reading classroom must include the point that different disciplines use language to structure knowledge in different ways. The use of authentic texts automatically introduces different knowledge structures contextualized by the discipline.

Martin (2007) illustrates hierarchical knowledge structure in science (in Figure 1) and horizontal knowledge structure in the humanities. Martin (2007) uses the classification system of animals in biology to give an example of hierarchical knowledge structures (p. 39). At the bottom, representing the largest number of members is the Kingdom. Above Kingdom is the Phylum, then Class, Order, Family, Genus with Species at the top. The classification is intended to be comprehensive, deep, precise, categorical, and exhaustive. It is relevant to categorizing all animals on earth. In short, this classification is fundamental to structuring the discipline of biology.

Figure 1: Hierarchical Knowledge Structure in Biology

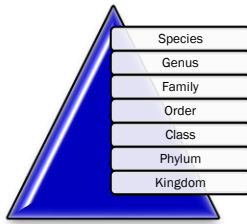


Figure 1. An example of hierarchical knowledge structure commonly used in science.

In contrast, horizontal knowledge structure is not comprehensive, deep, precise, categorical, and exhaustive. Classification systems, for example, are borrowed from other fields and are not intended to structure the discipline as a whole. To illustrate borrowed classification systems in history, Martin (2007) uses the political history of migration in Australia. It is noted that the classification systems for the different kinds of police forces in Australia, different types of asylum seekers, and government agencies are all borrowed systems from relevant governmental institutions (p. 42). These Australian classification systems do not fundamentally structure the discipline of history. They are only relevant to one corner of Australian history. Students of history need to learn how to borrow and use various classification systems that are immediately available and relevant to the topic under discussion.

Because the sciences and humanities structure knowledge in different ways, it is important to expose students to disciplines from both. By including a chapter from biology and history, for example, we can give our students a linguistic and academic experience more representative of what they will be exposed to in typical undergraduate textbooks

Reason 6: To Demonstrate the Volume of Reading Material in Non-ESL classes

Another reason to use non-ESL textbook chapters is to expose international students to the amount of reading required in non-language classes. The length of chapters can differ. For

example, we examined many chapters from textbooks across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The number of pages per chapter can vary from as few as 20 to as many as 40. Because the chapters are devoted to content, no space is allotted to language learning and skill building activities such as skimming/scanning, predicting, reading quickly, understanding the main idea of paragraphs, and extracting meaning from a paragraph, etc.³ The point is that 20-40 pages of content provide an example of the amount of reading per chapter that is required in non-ESL classes. We are unaware of university level ESL reading textbooks that consist of readings that are typically 20-40 pages long.

Challenges

The advantages to using textbook chapters from General Education disciplines outweigh the disadvantages. This does not mean, however, that the disadvantages should be ignored. We discuss five particular challenges that should be noted.

No Textbook

The first challenge to using textbook chapters from different disciplines is that, to our knowledge, there are no textbooks that consist of one or two chapters from the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. It would be impractical and expensive to use three different textbooks (a science, social science, and humanities textbook) in one EAP reading course. The practical option is to choose custom publishing and put together chapters from target disciplines to create an anthology for EAP. In custom publishing, the EAP instructor is in charge of putting together textbook chapters that make sense for the students and specific course goals and objectives.

³ See McCarter & Jakes (2009 , p.18) for a long list of reading skills in EAP.

In more typical cases of custom publishing, a professor of biology, for example, could choose the best chapters from a biology textbook or from a variety of biology textbooks and create his/her own textbook for a particular course. In our case, we built a book to expose our high intermediate ESL students to a variety of courses required for the first two years of undergraduate study at our university. An important consideration when creating this kind of EAP anthology is that all of the selected chapters must be from the same publisher since it is against one publisher's commercial interest to contribute chapters to another publisher's textbook.

Fortunately, most major publishers will offer custom publishing. On most publisher websites, one can build content without ever speaking to a representative; however, we have found it advisable to shop and compare the specific services offered. For example, the instructor should ask very specific questions regarding timelines of availability, color options, pagination, and instructor resource materials.

Difficulty Level for Students

Another challenge to consider is the difficulty level of the language in textbook chapters geared for a native English speaker audience. This is a valid concern and the reason why we use non-ESL textbook chapters in our upper level course. Students in our high-intermediate reading course are finishing up the university's ESL requirement. This means that our students will soon be in non-EAP classes or are concurrently enrolled in non-EAP classes and EAP classes. Students enrolled in EAP and non-EAP classes are already exposed to language in freshman-sophomore level textbooks. They too can benefit from an EAP approach to difficult language because EAP professionals are the experts in teaching word meaning, use, and form along with collocations and phrases, grammar structures, development of examples, extracting meaning

from paragraphs, and relationships among points and examples. Such an emphasis on language is not typical of non-language courses.

Initially More Work for Teachers

A significant challenge to using non-ESL textbook chapters is that they present more work for teachers who have not taught the course before. This may be especially true for those who come from a background in communicative language teaching (CLT) (Alexander, 2012, p. 100). Teachers have to reconsider their instruction when teaching English for academic purposes. Using original research and citing Belcher (2006), Alexander (2012) states that “some teachers believe that teaching EAP involves simply applying their current expertise to new materials and contexts, rather than embracing a new paradigm and developing towards the E[A]P ideal.” Alexander goes on to add that the EAP ideal requires a “specialised syllabus designer, authentic materials developer, and content-knowledgeable instructor, capable of coping with the revolving door of content areas relevant to learners’ communities (Belcher, 2006, p. 139).” Finally, Alexander (2012) reports on

the breadth and depth of commitment required, especially from teachers with humanities backgrounds, to engage with technical content areas, a process which takes much longer than a year and which can be a daunting prospect. In the absence of formal training, it is important to support critical reflection on the appropriateness of general CLT beliefs for the EAP context. (p. 100)

EAP teachers will have to read 20-40 pages of content per chapter, and the material may come from unfamiliar disciplines. Although there is an initial increased workload, the reading is often interesting, and once instructors become more familiar with the materials and with teaching EAP, the workload quickly decreases.

More Work for Materials Writers

The use of non-ESL textbooks in the EAP class requires more work for materials writers. Materials writers have to create materials to help students access, understand, re-create (e.g., summaries, paraphrases, etc.), and critically question the information in the chapter. Materials are also needed to help students develop specific reading skills and to teach vocabulary and grammar. Assessments must be created to measure knowledge of content and linguistic expression of the content. The assessments must also be relevant to the curriculum's outcomes, goals, and objectives. Although more work is involved, once the materials are written, they can be used in subsequent semesters, thereby reducing the workload for materials writers.

Proficiency/Placement Tests

Another challenge we face is our institutional placement exam, which is administered at the beginning of the semester for incoming students and at the end of the semester for students already in the program. Students must pass the exam to fulfill the university's ESL requirement. This is perhaps the biggest challenge we face since there is a great deal of pressure put on our students to fulfill this requirement. A change in the kind of textbooks we use could affect performance on the placement test.

Preliminary data, nevertheless, show that the use of non-ESL textbooks in our high-intermediate reading classes has not affected our students' ability to demonstrate progress on our placement exam. In fact, we have seen more progress since we have converted to our anthologies. At this point, however, more data must be gathered before we make a definitive statement.

Conclusion

The use of textbook chapters from the sciences, social sciences, and humanities in EAP reading classes has many benefits. It can help integrate EAP students into the university by helping to bridge any real or perceived gaps between the IEP and the university. It offers students more challenging content and introduces students to the kinds of textbooks they will be working with once they fulfill the university ESL requirement. Authentic textbook chapters also contextualize academic vocabulary and collocations. Finally, authentic chapters illustrate the amount of reading students must do for each assigned chapter in various disciplines. Although there are challenges to consider, the challenges can be overcome and do not outweigh the benefits.

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An Inside Look at the Education of International Students at a Small Liberal Arts University

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Abstract

Many U.S. universities have a need to increase student enrollment, and as a result, try to attract international students. These students are a diverse population with unique needs and challenges. The comprehensive literature review, conducted by Özturgut and Murphy (2010), has found that the U.S. colleges and universities are not using existing research to accommodate international students to their campuses. Based on the literature review, a study at a small liberal arts university has been conducted to investigate how this university accommodates its international students. The data from this study have revealed that the international students and their professors have similar perceptions on some issues, while there are some gaps in perception and practice as related to the comfort level of faculty speaking to students, consideration of the international students' English proficiency during assessments, and appreciation of the international students' cultures and diverse backgrounds.

Many U.S. universities have a need to increase student enrollment; as a result, they try to attract international students. According to the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (2012), approximately 879,000 nonimmigrant international students were enrolled in educational programs in the United States. International students on U.S. university campuses are a diverse population with unique needs and challenges. As Campbell (2011) emphasizes, international students face challenges that non-international students do not face. These challenges are mainly academic and social and are influenced by language ability, cultural differences, and pre-conceived expectations of international student life on U.S. campuses (Lacina, 2002; Mori, 2000). Therefore, university administration and faculty need to be aware of the problems many international students face in order to retain them as well as to attract more students to boost their enrollment numbers. Özturgut and Murphy (2010) have conducted a comprehensive literature review on the accommodations for international students on U.S. college and university campuses. They have concluded that “United States (U.S.) institutions of higher education are not ‘practicing what they preach’ when it comes to meeting the needs of international students. They are not using the research to drive practice in accommodating international students” (Özturgut & Murphy, 2010, p. 150).

Literature Review

A literature review on international students’ adjustment to Western higher education institutions suggests there is a discrepancy between theory and practice. According to Tran (2011), there is less emphasis on the development of relevant academic and research opportunities in response to the changing student population and demands in the global context.

In practice, many higher education institutions appear to be struggling with internationalizing their curriculum (Webb, 2005). At the same time, the decrease in government funding for higher education has resulted in an increased ratio of staff to students, thus increasing teaching loads and lectures, and making it even more difficult to respond to unfamiliar and diverse student characteristics (Tran, 2011). As Ryan and Carroll (2005) posit, many faculty members are dealing with the dilemma of how to address international students' needs while at the same time keeping up with what they believe to be institutional academic standards. According to a meta-analysis on adjustment factors conducted by Andrade (2006), faculty members often misinterpret the behaviors of international students and need greater understanding of their academic, social, emotional, and psychological challenges. Robertson, Line, Jones, and Thomas (2000) found that faculty members made pedagogical adjustments to support the learning needs of international students. Ramburuth (2001) discovered that some faculty members made accommodations for weak English-language proficiency in course requirements and on assessments.

Moreover, as Özturgut and Murphy (2010) state in their comprehensive literature review on international students, "All of the articles analyzed in this discussion agree that there is a great need to understand the international students on U.S. campuses" (p. 380). Lin and Yi (1997) argue that academic demands, changes in their support system, and lack of familiarity with U.S. customs and culture, can lead to social isolation among international students. Mori (2000) explains that student-teacher relationships, academic credits, grading scales, class attendance, class discussions, and types and frequency of quizzes, examinations, presentations, and assignments may present problems.

Another significant cause of the students' academic problems is their unfamiliarity with the American educational system. Wan's (2001) study shows that it is rather difficult to be a

cross-cultural learner, and educators can assist international students by trying to understand their home cultures, different learning styles, frustrations in adjusting to academic life, and overcoming “culture shock.” Wan (2001) recommends building relationships between individual professors and international students and promoting friendships among colleagues and other friends. Tomich, McWhirter, and Darcy (2003) postulate that professors need to understand and learn to communicate more effectively with their international students, as the cultural similarity-distance is a powerful determinant in the adaptation and adjustment of international students.

Introduction to the Study and Research Questions

Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of international students to find out how they perceived their new learning environment in the U.S. and to explore the experiences of the faculty in teaching and working with these students. Specifically, a group of eight students enrolled in Methods for Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL 330) along with their professor decided to investigate what a small liberal arts university in the Midwest, where they studied and worked, did to accommodate international students in the spring of 2012. The study also explored the possibility for reciprocal adaptation, where international students adapt to academic requirements, and faculty members attempt to modify their teaching, assessment, and evaluation approaches in response to the changing needs of the relevant student population. Therefore, the researchers were interested in the following questions: What perceptions do the international students and their professors have regarding teaching and learning at this particular university? In what ways do the faculty members accommodate the learning of the international students at this particular liberal arts university?

In order to explain the data collected in this particular study, some demographic information pertaining to the university is needed. The university main campus where the study

was conducted enrolled around 819 non-international and 49 international students. The university employed 100 non-international and 9 international faculty members. The student/faculty ratio was 10:1 (Academic catalog, 2011/2012). The university's students were primarily from the Midwest, specifically the state of Iowa, and came from a Caucasian (non-Hispanic) background. The university's ultimate goal was to attract more diverse students as well as faculty members to its campus.

Data Collection

The students in the abovementioned methods course developed two Likert-style surveys based on the issues and challenges discussed in the above-mentioned literature review in order to collect data from international students and their professors. These surveys were first piloted with a sample of international students and professors to make them clear and understandable in order to gather future data. This sample was excluded from the study findings. Once the pilot was completed, the researchers chose international students by securing permission to attend a meeting of the International Club and requesting international students' voluntary participation. Informed consent letters were collected at that point. Fifteen students present at that meeting voluntarily agreed to participate in an anonymous survey. The professors were chosen based on the students' responses to the question about the names of the professors whom they had during the spring semester of 2012. The researchers sent emails to the chosen professors asking for their voluntary participation in filling out a survey to help them understand international students' education on campus. All fifteen professors who were contacted responded to the researchers' requests and provided information for this study. Demographic information on the professors' academic status, first language, age range, and gender was requested as part of the study. This information is as follows, shown in Figure 1.

Academic status	First language	Age	Gender
13.33% Instructors	86.66% English	6.66% 31-40 years	46.66% Male
33.33% Assistant Professors	6.66% Japanese	46.66% 41-50 years	53.33% Female
26.66% Associate Professors	6.66% English/Japanese	33.33% 51-60 years	
26.66% Professors		13.33% 60+ years	

Figure 1: Faculty Demographics

The students' demographic information provided student academic status, first language, age range, gender, and ethnicity. This information is shown in Figure 2.

Academic status	First language	Age	Gender	Ethnicity
20% Freshman	27% Chinese	73% 17-21 years old	33.33% Male	87% Asian
20% Sophomore	20% Korean	20% 22-25 years old	66.67% Female	7% Native American
33% Junior	13% Japanese	7% 26-30 years old		7% Other
27% Senior	13% Punjabi			
	7% Creole			
	7% Fante			
	7% Nawari			
	7% Nepali			

Figure 2: Student Demographics

Data Analysis

The figures below show how international students and their professors responded to ten Likert-scale questions, asking them to rate experience or lack of it with learning style accommodations, speech, visual aids, help outside the classroom, comfort level speaking with faculty and students, assessment and evaluation, and language and cultural diversity in their particular classrooms. To make these charts more user-friendly, strongly agree and agree responses as well as strongly disagree and disagree responses were combined.

Learning style accommodations are referenced in Figure 3. This provides a glimpse into how international students perceive their learning styles have been taken into consideration by professors while teaching, as well as how the faculty members perceive their own efforts in making sure their international students' learning styles are accommodated during their lessons.

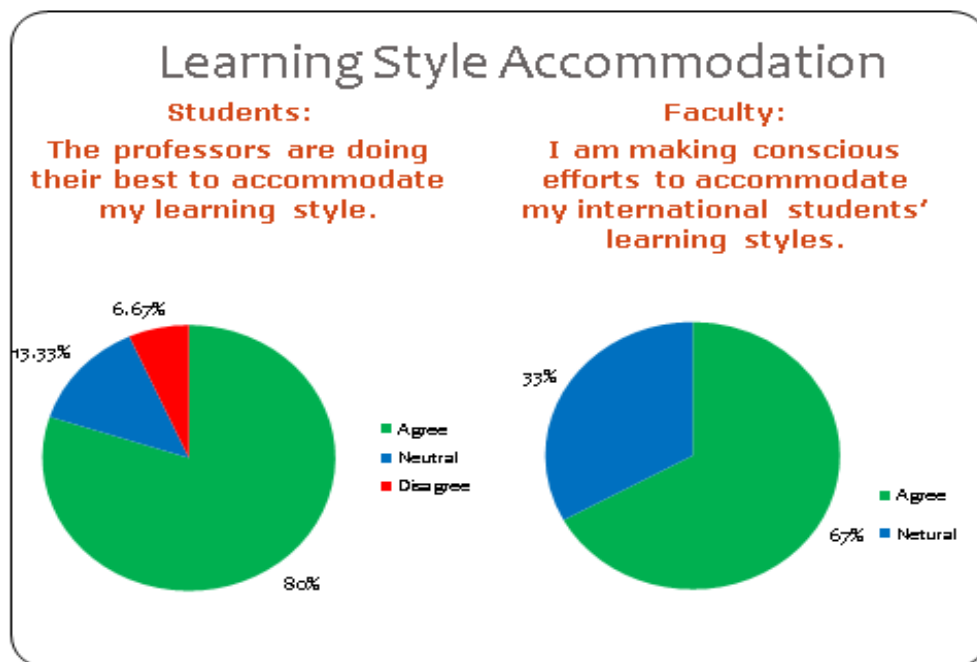


Figure 3: Learning Style Accommodations

As evidenced in the Figure 3, eighty percent of students feel more favorably about their professors' accommodations of their individual learning styles while only sixty-seven percent of professors agree with the survey statement.

The second question on the survey deals with speech, specifically how comprehensible the professors' speech is to international students and how much the faculty members perceive that they make a conscious effort to change their speech to accommodate their international students. Speech accommodation is shown in Figure 4.

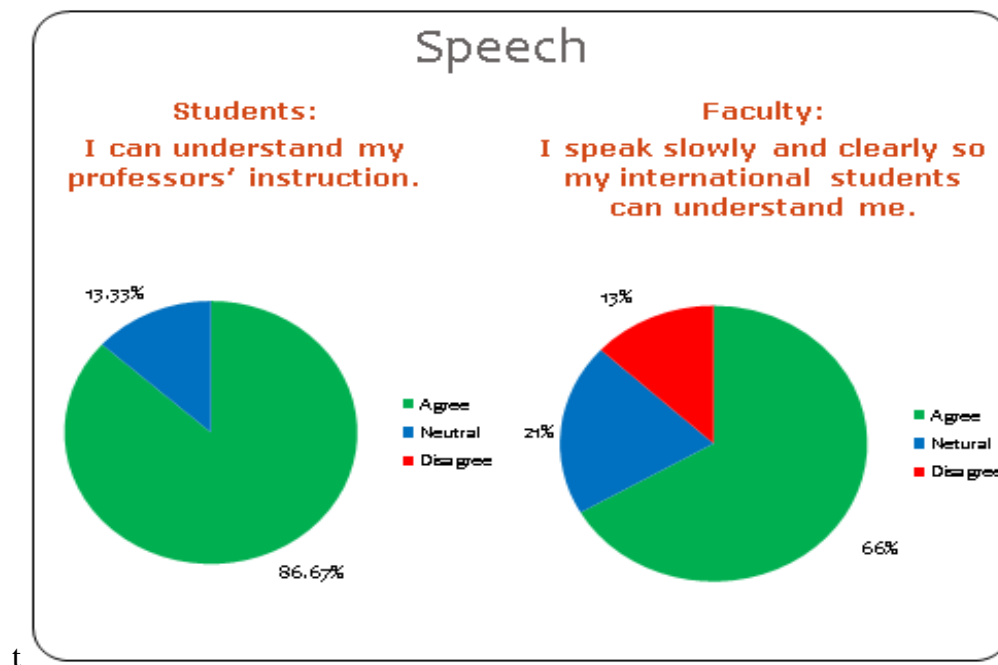


Figure 4: Speech Accommodation

Based on Figure 4, almost eighty-seven percent of students feel more favorably about their professors' speech than the professors themselves (66%).

The third question on the survey is based on the use of visual aids, specifically how visual aids are used to support international students' learning and whether professors utilize

visual aids in their instruction to help their international students. Visual aids accommodation is shown in Figure 5.

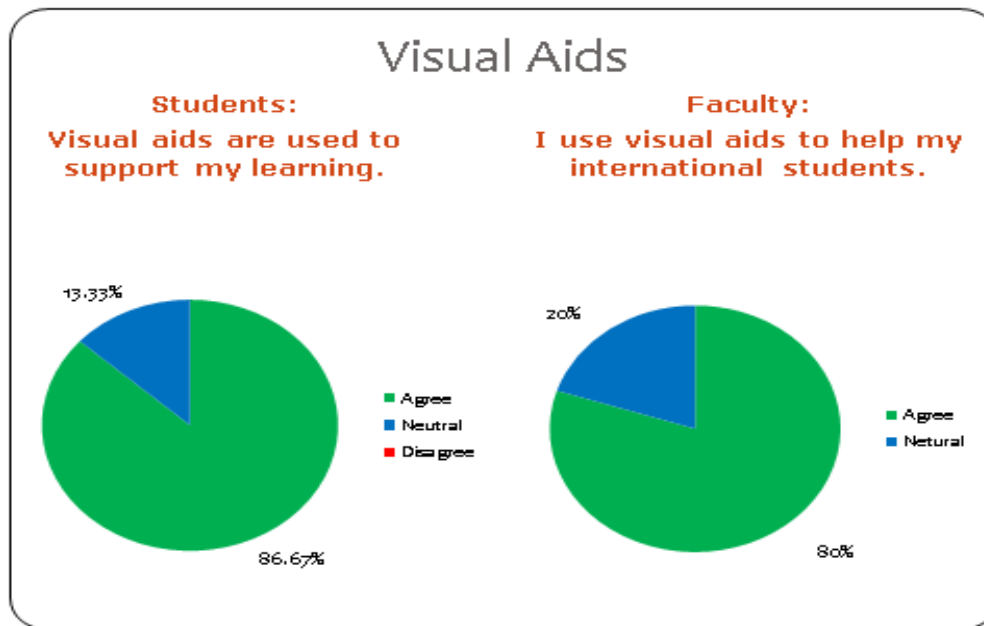


Figure 5: Visual Aids Accommodations

Figure 5 shows almost the same distribution of positive and neutral responses among international students and their professors. Almost eighty-seven percent of students perceive that visual aids are used to support their learning while eighty percent of faculty concur that they use visual aids to help their international students.

The fourth question on the survey is based on help outside of class, specifically whether international students perceive that professors are available to help them outside of the classroom and whether professors see themselves as receptive to providing help to their international students outside of class. Help outside of class is shown in Figure 6.

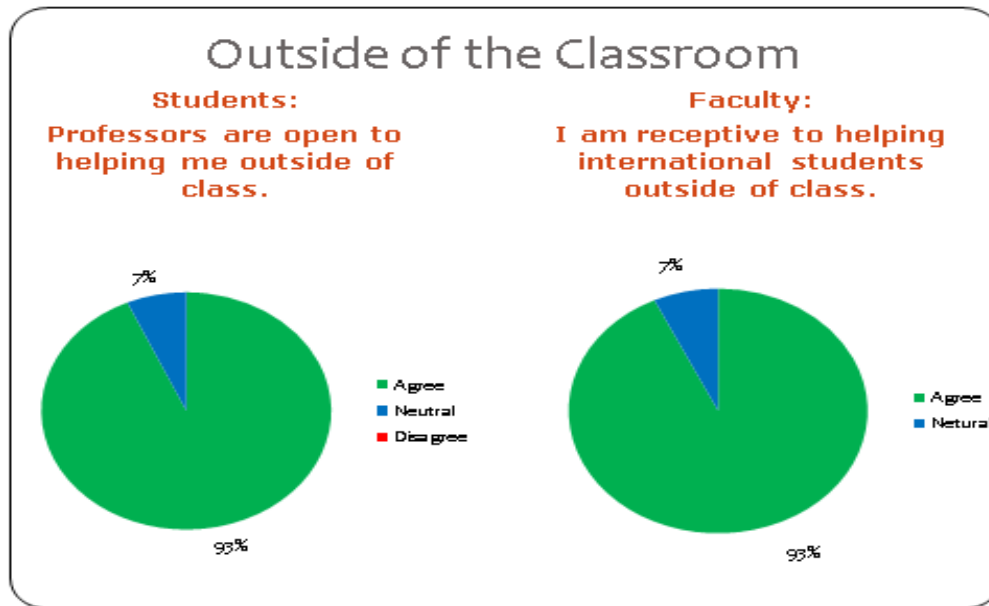


Figure 6: Help Outside of Class

Based on the students' and faculty responses to this question, the results are identical. Ninety-three percent of the international students perceive their professors to be helpful outside of class and an equal percentage of faculty members perceive themselves as being receptive to helping students outside of class.

The fifth survey question addressed the comfort level in student-faculty communication, specifically whether international students feel comfortable speaking to their professors and whether their professors perceive their international students as being comfortable speaking to them. Comfort level speaking to faculty is shown in Figure 7.

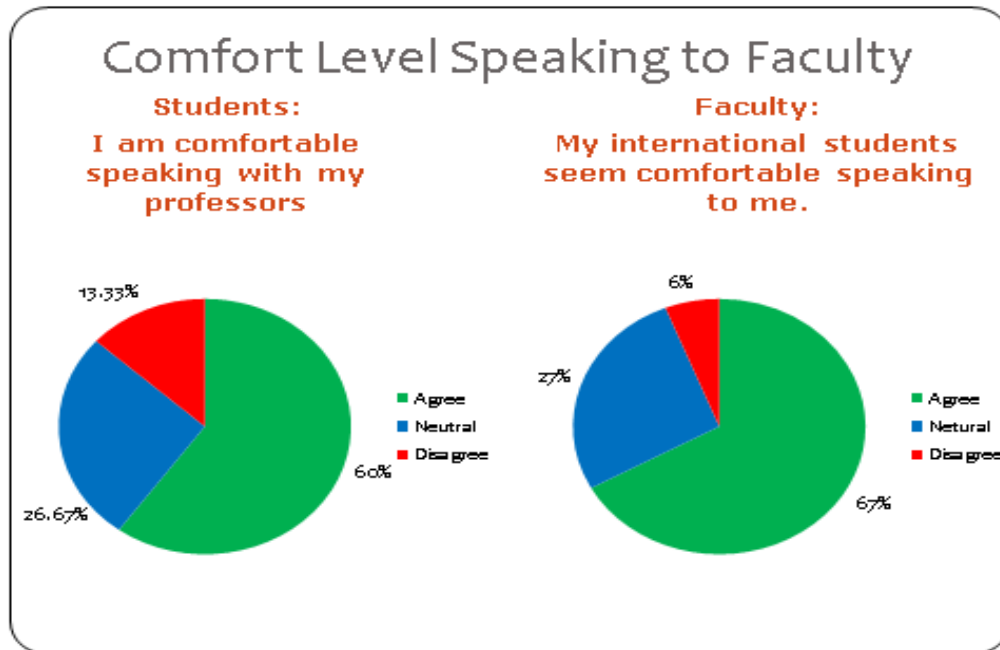


Figure 7: Comfort Level Speaking to Faculty

Based on the students' and faculty's responses to this question, the data show that sixty-seven percent of faculty feel their international students are comfortable speaking to them while sixty percent of students feel the same. Six percent of faculty members disagree with this statement indicating that they do not perceive their international students being comfortable talking to them, while a higher percentage of international students (13%) perceive being uncomfortable speaking to their professors.

The sixth question on the survey inquired about the comfort level of faculty speaking to students as perceived by international students and professors themselves. Faculty comfort level speaking to students is shown in Figure 8.

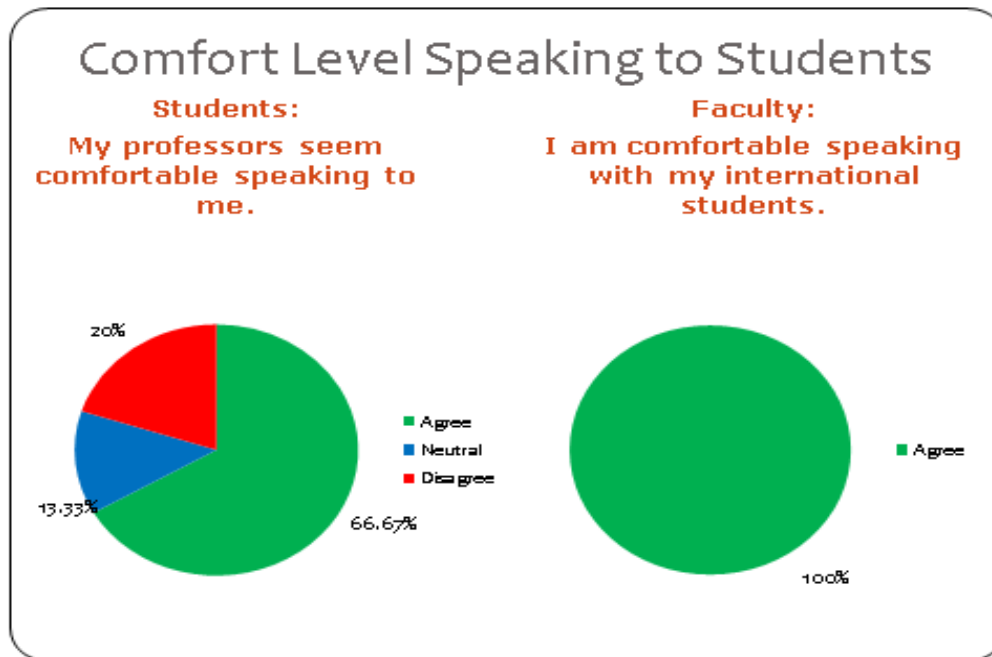


Figure 8: Comfort Level Speaking to Students

The results show a difference in how international students perceive their professors' comfort level in speaking to them compared to the professors themselves. Almost sixty-seven percent of students believe their professors seem comfortable speaking to them while one hundred percent of professors feel comfortable speaking to their international students. On the other hand, twenty percent of students disagree with this statement while thirteen percent neither agree nor disagree.

The survey's seventh question deals with evaluation and whether international students perceive themselves as being evaluated fairly, as compared to faculty's perceptions. Fair evaluation is shown in Figure 9.

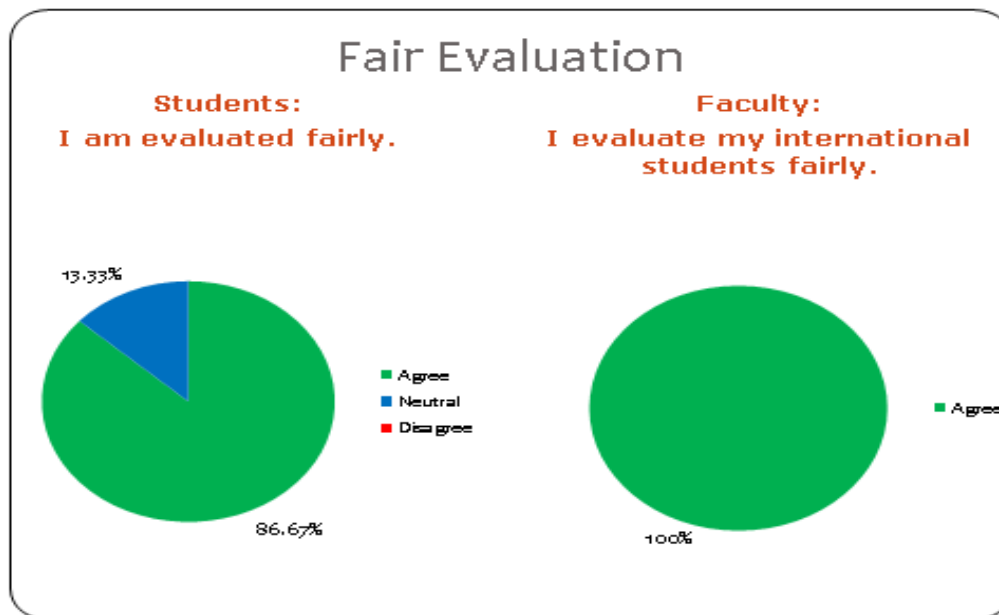


Figure 9: Fair Evaluation

The results show a slight difference in how international students perceive the fairness of their evaluation, with almost eighty-seven percent of them believing this is the case compared to one hundred percent of faculty feeling that their evaluation of international students is fair. Thirteen percent of the students neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

The eighth question on the survey aimed to discover whether professors take into consideration the international students' English proficiency when assessing them. Consideration of English proficiency as a second language is shown in Figure 10.

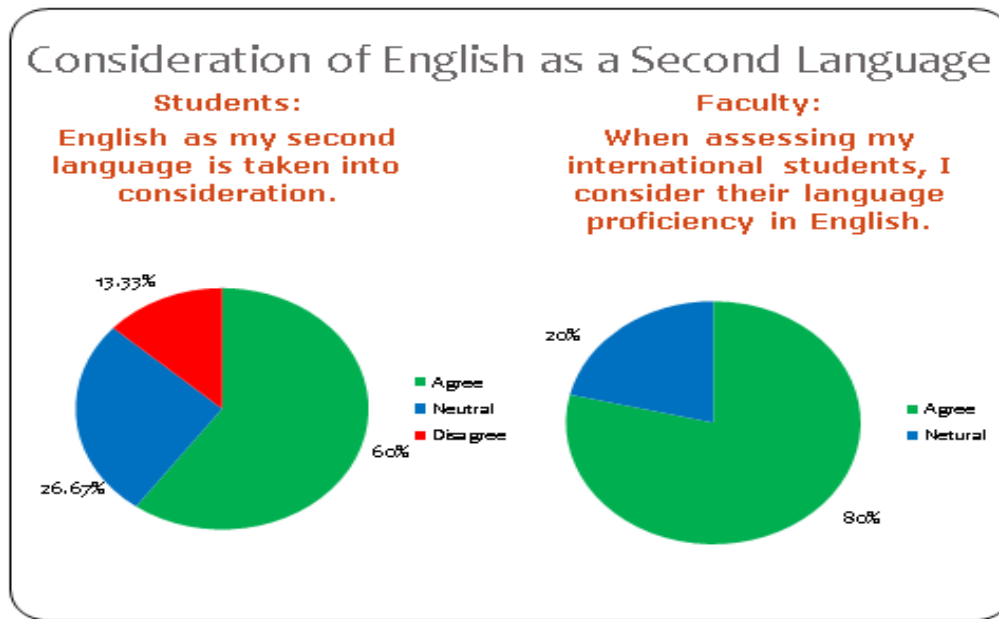


Figure 10: Consideration of English as a Second Language

The results show a difference in how international students perceive they are treated as non-native speakers of English, as compared to faculty perceptions. While eighty percent of faculty members feel that they consider their students' English as second language proficiency when assessing them, only sixty percent of students believe this is the case. Twenty percent of faculty, as opposed to twenty-six percent of students, neither agree nor disagree with this statement. Thirteen percent of students disagree with this statement.

The ninth survey question inquired as to whether the faculty members appreciate the international students' culture and diverse backgrounds. Appreciation of culture and diversity is shown in Figure 11.

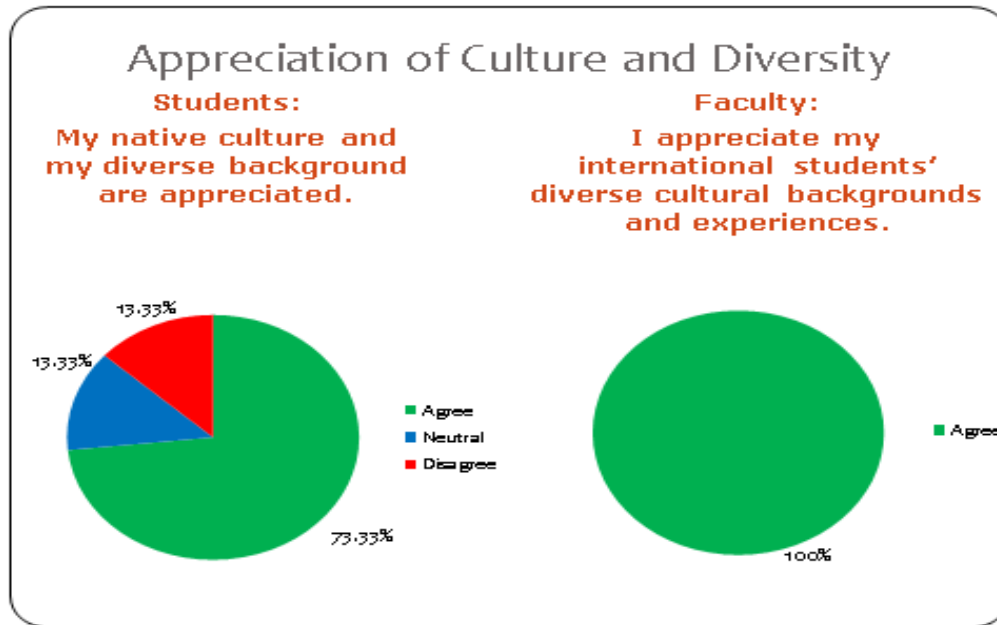


Figure 11: Appreciation of Culture and Diversity

The results show a difference in international students' perception in how their native culture and diverse background is appreciated by their professors as compared to the professors' perceptions. Seventy-three percent of students believe their professors appreciate their native culture and diverse backgrounds while one hundred percent of professors feel they appreciate their international students' diverse cultural background and experiences. On the other hand, thirteen percent of international students disagree with this statement while thirteen percent of them neither agree nor disagree.

The last question on the survey deals with the issue of whether the international students are aware of how they are assessed by their professors. Assessment is shown in Figure 12.

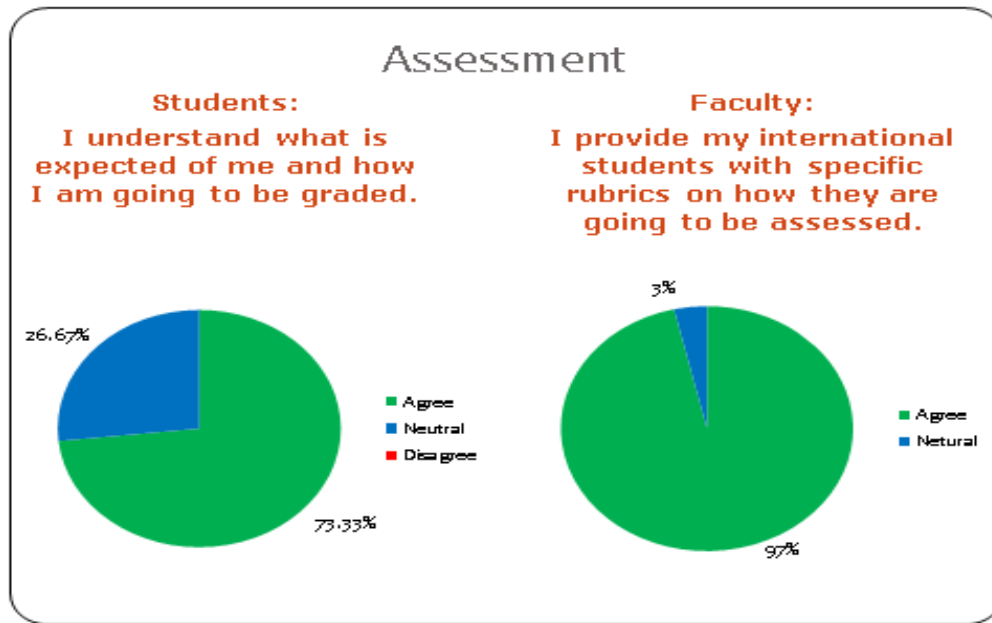


Figure 12: Assessment

The results show a slight difference in how international students understand what is being expected of them and how they are graded compared to the perceptions of their professors. Seventy-three percent of students believe they understand the assessment and grading process while ninety-seven percent of faculty feel that they provide their international students with specific rubrics on how these students are going to be assessed. Almost twenty-seven percent of the students neither agrees nor disagrees with this statement.

Discussion

Based on the survey results gathered from the international students and their professors, it becomes apparent that while results from some questions are almost identical, others raise concerns about the perceptions of the faculty and their accommodations of the international students at this small liberal arts university. Specifically, issues such as the comfort level of faculty speaking to students, consideration of international students' non-native-English speaker

status during assessment, and appreciation of the international students' cultures and diverse backgrounds show a discrepancy between what the international students perceive compared to how faculty members feel. Professors appear to rate themselves more positively than students, thus revealing a gap between the international students' experiences and their professors' perceptions. Özturgut and Murphy (2010) posit, "Educational professionals do not have a clear understanding of cross-cultural differences. This creates a communication gap between the institution and the international student" (p. 375).

As Lacina (2002) states, "If we want to attract and retain international students on our university campuses, we must focus on the students' needs and successes in the American university experience" (p. 6). As this study points out, university administrators and professors need to be aware of the problems many international students face when adjusting to the culture and the English language spoken in the U.S. and plan for smoother integration of the international students into their campuses. "As American universities continue to attract international students as well as expand into global markets, this growing community deserves attention" (Halic, Greenberg, & Paulus, 2009, p. 73-4).

Recommendations

Based on the current study findings, the following recommendations were brought up as suggestive measures to assist both the international students and faculty teaching those students to cope with the demands of cross-cultural exchange.

First, the university needs to educate the international students about its academic, physical, and social environment before students arrive to campus. A pre-departure seminar that includes cultural information will facilitate an easier transition to this new environment. McClure (2007)

also recommends assigning a “buddy” for each international student to establish email contacts for any questions, which might arise.

Second, once the international students have arrived to campus, they should be roomed strategically with American-born students who are culturally and linguistically sensitive to their new roommates. While this type of arrangement might be intrinsically sufficient for some American students, others might need more extrinsic perks, such as being able to choose a better suite in a dormitory or extra travel money as an incentive to travel abroad and learn about different cultures. Both the American-born and international students need to discuss cultural assumptions in teaching and learning, expectations of student/faculty relationships, and sources of anxiety in social interactions. This can be done within an orientation course into American culture specifically designed for international students but attended by both the international and American roommates.

Third, faculty and staff need training in understanding and responding to cross-cultural issues in students. This training program should specifically address issues such as cross-cultural differences and difficulties international students face, cultural assumptions related to teaching and learning, roles in student/faculty relationships, and encouraging students to ask for help outside of class. These recommendations concur with McClure’s (2007) study, where she states: “Lecturers could also evaluate the skills needed to develop a higher level of learner independence and concentrate on the development of the required skills in students” (p. 216).

Fourth, the international students should be aware of where to find help to hone their presentation, writing, social, and problem-solving skills as well as coping strategies. Students need to be trained in how to use technology in order schedule appointments with appropriate parties, such as their professors, counselors, academic tutors, etc. According to Poyrazli and

Grahame (2007), “In some cases, it might be more beneficial for the professor to make the initial contact and invite the students to visit the professor in his/her office during office hours and to feel free to ask questions” (p.41).

Fifth, there needs to be a venue for American and international students to establish and maintain social interaction, such as a student club which facilitates cross-cultural events, for example, learning how to cook ethnic and American dishes, engaging in traditional dances and musical events, participating in language tables, and attending cultural and sports events.

These recommendations draw both on the interpretation of the study findings and on the actual suggestions made by the international student participants and student researchers. These suggested ideas are merely possible ways of addressing the needs at this particular university and need to be taken with caution when applying to other higher education institutions. Implications arising from this study may inform intervention programs specifically directed to resolve a discrepancy between the international students’ perceptions and their professors’ perceptions as identified in students’ and professors’ cross-cultural experiences. By addressing the academic as well as cross-cultural issues, administrators and faculty at this and other U.S. colleges and universities will be able to attract and retain their international students, which is a win-win situation for all.

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Plagiarism: Focused Teaching and Enhanced Understanding

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Abstract

A more accurate understanding of student motivation for plagiarism can lead to success among students in preventing cases of accidental plagiarism. Volkov, Volkov & Tedford (2011) explain that of the many motivations for plagiarism, few are within our control as instructors. By focusing our efforts on developing student skills in the area of plagiarism awareness, we maximize our efforts in helping students avoid plagiarism. This presentation offered attendees activities that focus on plagiarism identification and prevention for college students at an intermediate level.

According to McCabe (2001), a self-report survey on academic dishonesty, 40 percent of American college students report having “copied a few sentences without citation.” Add to this the challenges international students face such as: less exposure to Western academic culture, lack of confidence in referencing abilities (Volkov, et al., 2011), and a difference in cultural values surrounding the concepts of intellectual property and authorship (see Liu, 2005; Sowden, 2005a; Sowden, 2005b), and we can begin to see the discrepancy between institutional policies on academic fraud and students’ understanding of plagiarism. Unfortunately, a reactive or punitive approach does little to persuade would-be offenders, especially if they are not aware of the offense. Awareness of what constitutes plagiarism is often lacking among new university students (Devlin & Gray, 2007; Volkov, et al., 2012), and the cultural and language issues that international students face potentially present even more difficulty (Sowden, 2005a). In this paper, we will discuss previous research supporting this argument, and provide examples of classroom activities that remedy misunderstandings with the aim of giving students the tools they need to prevent plagiarism in their own work.

Plagiarism and its causes

Variously described as literary theft, fraud, or even grave value judgments of sin, the term “plagiarism” is not without its ambiguities. For the purposes of this discussion, we shall take a legalistic definition from our own College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at the University of Iowa, which we will take as representative of the U.S. liberal arts academy at large.

Plagiarism, here, is defined as the use of any material including, but not necessarily limited to, words, sentences, arguments, rhetorical structures, ideas, data, facts, graphs, computer programs, spreadsheets, images, photos, film or video without proper acknowledgement and citation.

Further, the failure to use quotation marks, citation, and paraphrase correctly and completely is included in the definition (College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, 2013).

The idea of plagiarism may seem straightforward to those of us who, being instructors, have graduated from the academy. So, why is plagiarism still an issue? Devlin and Grey (2007) conducted a survey of 56 university students in Australia that answers this question. Australia shares much of the same academic and literary traditions as the United States and the United Kingdom, and like much of the West has seen a significant increase in international students in recent decades. While the survey covers all students, not just international students, Devlin and Grey reveal some illuminating responses from the international student community. Differences in the style of teaching and writing between the schools in the native country and the host country could be a contributing factor. An interview with an international student in the study suggests there is a conflict between the perfectly standard rote memorization from his former schools at home and the concept of plagiarism in the host university. Plagiarism committed from this misunderstanding seems to be largely unintentional. Another interview revealed that plagiarism could also occur as a result of poor language skills (particularly in paraphrase) or a lack of confidence in these skills. Further, the awareness of plagiarism may exist, but the crime can be committed in spite of efforts to cite, paraphrase or quote by an unpracticed knowledge of these skills.

In 2011, a study by Volkov, et al., compared the results of students on a survey of confidence in avoiding plagiarism, taken both before a plagiarism lesson and formative assessment and after. These authors concluded that both ESL students and students who have taken fewer courses in the past had lower confidence in their ability to avoid plagiarism. This finding is particularly relevant to institutions which hold under-performing, incoming

international students for ESL classes who quite often have previously completed few to no courses at the university level. Students who have not had practice with these language and referencing skills cannot, reasonably, be expected to perform them consistently and accurately.

Teaching Methods

Rather than assume previous mastery of those skills necessary to avoid plagiarism, we wish to present a method of assessing which, if any, of the skills are lacking and simultaneously teaching the missing skills. A study done by Landau, Druen, and Arcuri (2002) compared 4 methods of teaching students how to identify and avoid plagiarism. In their study, 94 participants were given a “plagiarism knowledge survey” (PKS) which included a passage from an academically-relevant journal article along with 6 re-written versions of the passage. The participants’ task was to identify which of the 6 versions were plagiarized and why.

The participants were split into four groups. In group 1, the assignment was returned with written feedback. The students in group 2 were provided with more examples and engaged in a discussion of plagiarized material. Group 3 received feedback in addition to examples and discussion. Finally, group 4 functioned as the control with no intervention at all. Each group was given its designated treatment (feedback, discussion, feedback and discussion, or nothing; respectively), and then asked to complete another PKS, similar but with different content. Next, the participants were given a short paragraph and asked to paraphrase it with the specific instruction of avoiding plagiarism. These passages were collected and analyzed for plagiarism by the following metrics: co-occurrence of single words, two-word strings and three-word strings. Landau, et al., found group 2 (examples and discussion) to be the only group to reach statistical significance; they produced material with less content from the original passage. There was no significant difference between the feedback and the combined feedback and examples groups.

Unfortunately, no discussion is offered on the lack of significance in the combined examples and feedback group which bears similar numbers. If future repeated studies also failed to reach significance in the feedback/examples group, some possible answers may be that the feedback distracted from the examples or perhaps the feedback gave conflicting messages on the acceptability of various aspects of the paraphrase. This question remains unanswered without further study, though we can still take away the evidence supporting the use of examples in plagiarism prevention.

The least effective method was simply telling the students not to plagiarize, with no feedback, examples or discussion. While this may be considered plainly evident, the unfortunate reality is that many institutions and teachers operate with this method under the assumption that plagiarism had either previously been taught or is intuitive and unworthy of overt instruction. The next two sections, we hope, will provide TESL professionals with concrete examples for classroom activities on plagiarism that apply these empirical investigations into the “causes and cures” of plagiarism.

Activity: Plagiarism Identification

One technique for teaching plagiarism awareness is through the process of identification. The goal of this activity is to alert students to the many forms of plagiarism and to help them develop familiarity with what constitutes plagiarism. To do this activity the instructor should find a passage from an academic journal. The instructor will then use this passage in a worksheet with a selection of in-text citation, quotation, and paraphrase examples, which should range from the most blatant forms of plagiarism to some of the more subtle forms. In order to include a comprehensive sample of the types of plagiarism, a common understanding of the typology of plagiarism will be necessary here.

First, the term ‘mosaic plagiarism’ refers to the use of text from multiple, unacknowledged sources, pieced together and containing no original content. For this reason, we recommend including two original passages in the worksheet. The paraphrase items can then have the option of including material and ideas from both passages. Patch writing, while similar to mosaic plagiarism, differs in that there is original content mixed into the plagiarized material. Further types of plagiarism can be categorized as mechanical, or related to the improper use of punctuation (such as in a citation) or quotation conventions (such as ellipsis for deleted material, or brackets for added material).

It may also be of value to include examples that are correctly cited so that students are provided with realistic models of correct citation and paraphrase. An example worksheet, with answers, can be found in appendix A. The example in appendix A is based on two related articles (Tew, 2011; Scharabok, 2000). One quote from each article is selected and provided on the worksheet. From these two quotes, five citations or paraphrases are created. The task for the students is to identify not only which of these would be considered plagiarism, but what the specific offense is and how it might be corrected.

The instructor should use these examples to lead the students through an in-class discussion of what constitutes plagiarism, and the various types of plagiarism. It is important not only to discuss which examples are problematic, but also to allow students to edit the items to correct the mistakes. It is recommended that the instructor assign an additional worksheet as homework for independent practice and also follow up with an in-class assessment. Through participating in this plagiarism identification activity, students gain confidence in their knowledge of plagiarism as well as their ability to learn how to avoid plagiarism in their own writing.

Activity: Plagiarism Prevention

This activity practices effective note taking as well as paraphrasing and should follow the previous plagiarism identification task in the instructor's lesson plan. Before the activity can be done, it is important that the instructor teach techniques for efficient note taking, such as using quotation marks around direct quotes to help the student to later distinguish between his or her thoughts and the speakers' words. The instructor should also help students develop a habit of shorthand, abbreviation, and acronyms to keep up with the pace of a lecture. To hone these skills, the instructor should play a short audio or video file to the students for taking notes. The students should take notes while listening to the audio knowing that they will need to write a paraphrase of the material afterwards. As a result of paraphrasing from spoken rather than written material, and thus being unable to look at the original for assistance with grammar or phrases, the students must rely on their own grammatical faculties to reproduce the ideas of the author. This makes it very difficult for students to accidentally plagiarize by using the exact words and phrases as the original. Through practice, students develop confidence in their grammar and circumlocution skills while practicing practical skills such as note taking and active listening.

Adaptations

Traditionally, plagiarism education focuses on advanced reading and writing skills. This may lead some ESL or ELL teachers to believe that plagiarism does not affect their oral skills, grammar or listening classes. Synthesizing information and producing content that avoids plagiarism, however, requires great ability in a wide variety of language skill areas. Different aspects of plagiarism prevention can be taught in nearly any course, no matter how specialized.

Grammar and Vocabulary

A lack of confidence in grammar and vocabulary could logically impede a student's ability to paraphrase text. A grammar instructor, therefore, could contribute to an institution's plagiarism prevention initiative by building student confidence (and knowledge) in grammar and focusing on paraphrase activities that highlight grammatical structures and vocabulary being learned in class. Examples of grammatical techniques to paraphrase text would be transforming a sentence from active to passive and preposing adverbial or prepositional phrases rather than leaving them in-situ (and vice-versa).

Listening and Reading

The receptive skills probably receive the least emphasis on plagiarism prevention, and this is quite unfortunate. If we view the production of an essay or speech (whether plagiarized or not) as a process, it surely begins with the input: reading an article, listening to a lecture, etc. In a way, we can imagine that plagiarism begins with these receptive skills. Emphasizing detailed note-taking abilities that help the student distinguish between source material and their own thoughts can set students up for better awareness of their language and its relationship to the source material in future stages of the process.

Speaking or Oral Communication Skills

Another set of courses typically overlooked by plagiarism prevention initiatives are oral skills classes. While it certainly stands to reason that if the course focuses on conversational English or survival English that there would be little place for a formal discussion on plagiarism, many universities include some sort of academic oral skills course in their offerings, which is designed to prepare students for giving oral presentations in future university courses. Here, plagiarism education can benefit the student by teaching rhetorical methods of deferring

ownership of an idea to its original author and the etiquette and style of presenting another authors' material in a PowerPoint presentation.

Conclusion

Given the profound diversity of international students on our campuses, it cannot be assumed that students have been exposed to Western academic standards of scholarship. And while some students may resort to plagiarism intentionally, we cannot control this. Instead, Devlin and Gray (2007) recommend we focus on the language and referencing skills to prevent *unintentional* plagiarism from occurring. It is our sincere hope that our discussion of recent literature on the subject of plagiarism prevention reduces the time, energy, and frustration that results from enforcing institutional academic honesty codes, and that these example activities increase your students' understanding of plagiarism.

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Appendix: Plagiarism Identification Worksheet with Answers

Below is an original passage from an Academic Journal called *Bee Culture*. Your task will be to determine if the examples that follow this original passage are quoted correctly or are misquoted. For each misquote, correct the mistake.

ORIGINAL PASSAGES

"It is a daunting task to begin to introduce the various ways one could produce honey bee queens. If I enter the simple Google search command, raising honey bee queens, I get nearly 300,000 responses. At first flush, beginning this process can feel overwhelming. As I wrote last month, queen production is not really a complicated procedure, but the perpetual interest in queen production has resulted in a vast number of production techniques. In this morass of information, cling to this - nurse bees produce queens when swarming, superseding, or for an emergency. Everything else is just details."

Tew, James E. "Producing Honey Bee Queens, II." *Bee Culture*. 139.8 (2011): 54-56. EBSCOhost.

"Getting started is relatively inexpensive. A starter colony will run about \$60; a wood hive frame another \$60; frames, five to 10 per hive, about 50 cents each; plus coveralls, veil, hat and a smoker."

Scharabok, Ken. "There's Money in Honey." *Countryside & Small Stock Journal*. 84.1 (2000): 87. Vocational and Career Collection. EBSCOhost.

QUOTES

1. Did you know that you can get nearly 300,000 responses on Google if you search for raising honey bee queens? What an overwhelming process!

This uses the idea from the original passage without citation. It uses the same words and/or structure.

2. "It is a daunting task to begin to introduce the various ways one could produce honey bee queens. In this morass of information, cling to this - nurse bees produce queens when swarming, superseding, or for an emergency" (Tew, 2011).

This is an incorrect use of citation. There should be ellipsis dots between the first and second sentence.

3. It is a daunting task to begin to produce honey bee queens. A starter colony will run about \$60, but the perpetual interest in queen production has resulted in a vast number of production techniques.

This is an example of patch writing. The student has patched together different information from two sources without any of his/her own ideas and without any citation.

4. It is a difficult task to introduce the ways we can get honey bee queens. Google will give us many responses if we search for "honey bee queens," which is overwhelming. There are, of course, lots of details to get bogged down in, but stick to the main idea: "nurse bees produce queens when swarming, superseding, or for an emergency" (Tew, 2011).

This is an example of mosaic plagiarism. Even though there is a citation at the end, the beginning is too close to the original in both structure and wording.

5. "As James Tew wrote last month, queen production is not really a complicated procedure, but the perpetual interest in queen production has resulted in a vast number of production techniques. In this mess of information, cling to this - nurse bees produce queens when their population gets too large or when there is an emergency." (Tew, 2011)

This is an incorrect use of citation. To make a change to the cited material, students must use square brackets.

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Reflective Teaching as a Form of Professional Development

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Abstract

Teachers can improve their instructional activities by constructive feedback from others such as students, peers or supervisors. More importantly, teachers can also learn from their own teaching experiences through reflection. This paper is intended to introduce readers to reflective teaching, a concept that has recently received a tremendous amount of attention from teachers and teacher trainers. First, I will review different definitions of reflective teaching and briefly discuss the importance of reflection in language teaching as well as the benefits of engaging in reflection. Second, I will examine a reflective practice framework and identify information sources for teacher professional development. Finally, I will present the kinds of reflective practice in language teaching and methods for practicing reflective teaching. The paper ends by arguing for language classroom practitioners to view their classroom as a medium for generating knowledge for professional development.

Introduction

The attempt to search for effective instructional practices has led the field of second language teaching to an interest in researching teachers' knowledge and practices. Reflective teaching has been a recurring topic of discussion in many publications for decades (Best, 2011; Boud, Keogh, Walker, 1995; Burton, 2009; Clarke, 1995; Schön, 1983, 1987; Farrell, 2007, 2011, 2012a, 2012b; Korthagen, 1993; Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). The large number of publications on reflection in language teaching seems to show that it is a worthy topic of discussion for teacher development.

Definitions of Reflective Teaching

Richards (2001) indicated six types of teacher knowledge: practical knowledge, contextual knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, personal knowledge, and reflective knowledge. Reflective knowledge is the kind of knowledge that can be attained through critical reflection, and the information obtained from reflection can be utilized to maximize the effectiveness of teaching activities by eliminating or altering ineffective activities and capitalize on those that are efficacious. Farrell (2012b) stated that the two terms *reflection* and *reflective practice* are so popular that they are almost mandatory words utilized in language teacher education and development programs. A reflective approach to teaching is one in which teachers “collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching” (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p. 1). Similarly, Bailey (2006) defined reflective teaching as a process of “gathering data about one's own teaching, interpreting those data, and using our reflection to implement change”(p.193). Reflective teaching also “means that teachers articulate their beliefs about teaching and learning and then compare these beliefs to their actual classroom practices to see if

there are any contradictions between practice and underlying beliefs” (Farrell, 2012a, p. 25).

Based on the definitions of the scholars cited above, it may be interpreted that reflective teaching must involve garnering data regarding teaching both internally by articulating beliefs about teaching and learning and externally by obtaining data from one’s own classroom to bring forth changes for better instructional quality and practices consistent with one’s own beliefs.

Reflection may not be a novel concept, but in language teaching, reflective practice may mean different things to different people. Farrell (2007, 2012a) observed that there are two different views on reflective practice in second language education. The first view sees reflective teaching as no more than informal thoughtful practice, which is similar to thinking about the class while going from class. Citing Wallace (1996), Farrell (2012a) noted that such informal reflection does not help to improve teaching. The second view considers reflection as a formal process in which teachers reflect systematically on teaching so as to take more responsibility for their classroom activities. Whereas teachers espousing the first view on reflective teaching seem to superficially reflect on their teaching mentally without any specific method of documentation and analysis, teachers supporting the second view are likely to be involved in systematically examining their beliefs about language learning and teaching, collecting data about their own instructional performance, and interpreting the data in order to bring about innovative change. Teachers may all be familiar with thinking about what works and what does not work in a class, but they typically do nothing or not much above and beyond that. As a consequence, their reflective moments and information are not well documented in any systematic way in which they can re-examine to identify all possible causes of problems or drawbacks. The likely results are that the reflective information may not be optimally utilized to benefit teachers or their classroom practice.

In terms of the rationale behind reflective teaching, Richards and Lockhart (1994) pinpointed that reflective teaching is based on the following assumptions:

1. An informed teacher has an extensive knowledge base about teaching.
2. Much can be learned about teaching through self-inquiry.
3. Much of what happened in teaching is unknown to the teacher.
4. Experience is insufficient as a basis for development.
5. Critical reflection can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching.

The aforementioned assumptions can be generally understood as follows: experience alone does not qualify for quality teaching and professional development, and because teachers are knowledgeable about teaching and because a lot of what goes on in the classroom may go unnoticed, teachers can improve their teaching through self-examination of and reflection on their own classroom teaching.

The Importance of Reflection

Classroom practitioners rarely feel completely satisfied with their own teaching, which is partly why they continually seek ways to improve their teaching by trying out new, innovative methods of instruction and engaging in various forms of professional development, such as attending workshops, observing their peers, or working toward a higher degree to help them enhance the quality of their teaching. Farrell (2007, 2012a) used an interesting story to illustrate the importance of reflection: a young girl was observing her mother cooking a roast. Before the mother put the roast in the pot, she chopped a piece off the end, which greatly aroused the little girl's curiosity. The daughter asked her mother why she had done that, and the mother replied that her mother had always done it. Later that day, the mother called her mother to ask the same

question, and she was told that her mother had to trim the roasts because they were too big for a regular pot.

In language teaching, the foregoing story may be interpreted as follows: simply teaching the ways teachers have been taught without knowing the rationale behind them may sometimes lead to unnecessary and ineffective activities. The aphorism that teachers often teach the way they have been taught may be true, but it is sometimes necessary and even of critical importance to question why certain teaching techniques and methods have been used and how effective they are. Reflective teaching can be one method for classroom language teachers to answer such questions on their own.

Benefits of Reflective Teaching

As regards the benefits of practicing reflective teaching, Richards and Lockhart (1994) pointed out three potential benefits of engaging in reflective teaching. First, by looking objectively at teaching and reflecting critically on what teachers have discovered, teachers can achieve a better understanding of their own assumptions about teaching and their own teaching practices. Second, the process of reflective teaching can enable teachers to have a richer conceptualization of teaching as well as a better understanding of the process of teaching and learning. Finally, reflective teaching can also be considered as a method of self-evaluation, so it is part of professional development. Further, as supervisors cannot monitor the work of teachers all the time, teachers should be encouraged to keep improving their teaching through reflective teaching (Bailey, 2006). In fact, encouraging teachers to actively take part in reflective teaching can be viewed as one way of fostering faculty professional development.

In learning about their own teaching practices, teachers can also know more about their learners and ways to improve the teaching and learning process. Learning about their own

teaching and student learning in the classroom is a kind of research which Cross (1988) suggested:

The basic premise of classroom research is that teachers should use their classroom as laboratories to study the learning process as it applies to their particular disciplines; teachers should become skilful, systematic observers of how the students in their classrooms learn. (p. 3)

As teachers can easily be interested in merely teaching what they are supposed to, they may fail to see their own classroom as a learning environment for them. It is, therefore, necessary for teachers to see their classroom as “laboratories” to sharpen their observation skills and learn more about their students, as well as themselves, to enhance learning and teaching quality. It is also in such “laboratories” that teachers can compare their beliefs about learning and teaching with their actual instructional practice to see if their practice is congruent with their beliefs.

A Reflective Practice Framework

Farrell (2012a) presented a reflective practice framework that consists of five interconnected components: opportunities for reflection, ground rules, time, external input, and trust. In terms of opportunities, teachers should be provided with a range of reflective methods from which to choose. Reflections can take place in the form of group discussions, self or pair observations and discussions, and self, pair, or group journal writing. With regard to ground rules, Farrell suggested that in order to effectively practice reflection, teachers need to develop a set of rules or guidelines to follow to focus their reflections. With respect to time, as teachers are busy with their lives outside of teaching, time commitment for professional development can sometimes be a challenge. Individual teachers or groups of teachers should negotiate the amount of time needed for reflective practice at the outset of the reflective process. Regarding external

input, Farrell suggested that after having reflected on their beliefs and instructional performance, teachers should explore external sources of information such as books and professional journals to compare the results of their reflections with those of others. Finally, as the four previous components pose some threat and anxiety for teachers engaging in reflective teaching, certain measures should be considered to build up trust in the observation and discussion groups. One way of promoting trust is emphasizing description and observation rather than judgment during observations and discussions. Another way to promote trust is to ensure that data obtained are only used for the purpose of professional development and will not be shared with anyone else without permission.

Three Sources of Teacher Professional Development

Teachers can learn to improve their work through input from external sources (experts and students) and internal sources (teachers themselves). The idea of seeking internal and external input for professional development has been discussed by Williams and Burden (1997), who admonished teachers to look both inward and outward to teach effectively. External sources constitute experts such as researchers, scholars, teacher trainers, expert teachers, and supervisors. Students are also part of the external sources of information useful for teacher professional growth. While researchers, scholars, teacher trainers, expert teachers, and supervisors are often regarded as worthy sources to learn from, students may not be viewed as a serious source for teacher professional development. When teachers take the task of collecting and analyzing data from students seriously for professional development, they can see the effectiveness of their teaching from a new point of view: the learner's perspective, which can significantly be different from those of experts. The learner's feedback on teaching can at times be as important as or even more important for teachers than that of experts, as they are the ones who actively partake in the

learning process. Learners, therefore, are a legitimate source of information to improve teaching quality. Sometimes activities considered by teachers to be effective teaching may not be seen as effective for students or at least for some students. Learning from their opinions and perspectives can enable teachers to have a greater understanding of their teaching from students' point of view.

An often ignored approach to faculty development is development from within, that is, development by critically reflecting on what one is doing and has done to search for an informed basis for future classroom performance. Just as teachers ask students to reread their essays to identify recurring error patterns to avoid them, teachers themselves also need to re-examine their teaching practices to document their strengths as well as their weaknesses so as to capitalize on their strengths and look for ways to improve their weaknesses. All three sources: experts, students, and teachers themselves are of equal importance in practitioners' professional growth; however, reflection or self-examination may be one of the most convenient, doable, and the least threatening methods for teacher development because teachers cannot be criticized or judged by anyone else but themselves. The only thing teachers need is a sincere desire to learn from what they do to emulate themselves. By actively engaging in reflective teaching, teachers can demonstrate a higher level of responsibility for their own professional growth, even after their formal education. In effect, Zeichner (1992, p. 297) posited that "learning to teach is a process that continues throughout a teacher's career," which could be understood that regardless of what qualifications teachers hold or how many years of teaching experience they have, as long as they still teach, they have to keep learning to teach better, more interestingly and effectively. Each student learns in a different way, which justifies the reasons for teachers to continually find ways to develop professionally to better serve their learners.

Three principal sources of information for teacher professional development are graphically depicted in Figure 1.

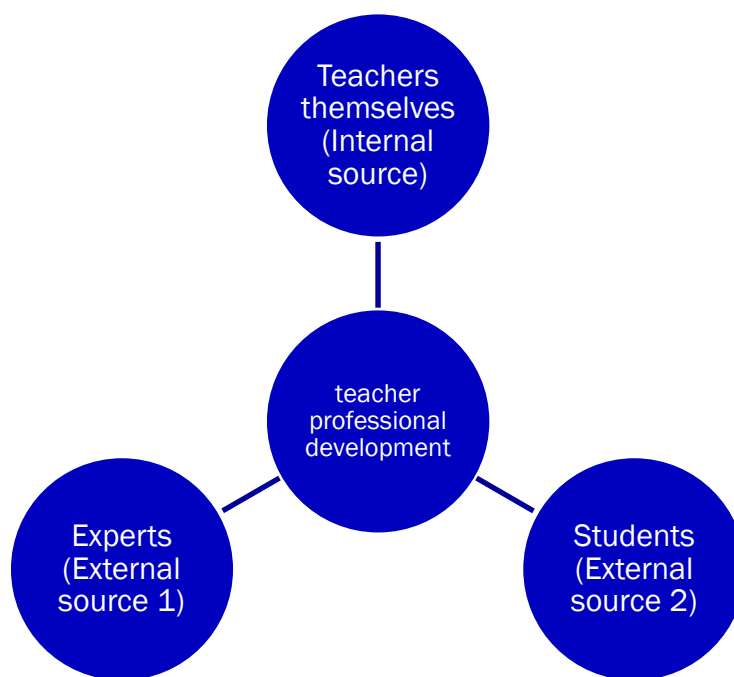


Figure 1: Sources of Information for Teacher Professional Development

The Johari Window (Luft, 1984) may be worthy of some attention here, as an understanding of the Johari Window can enable one to easily see the need for internal and external input for professional development. Named after Joe Luft and Harry Inghan, the Johari Window includes four windowpanes: open area, blind area, hidden area, and unknown area. The open area is what other people know about a person. For teachers, the open window can be what other teachers or supervisors know about them. The blind area includes what other people know about a person, but she or he does not know about herself or himself. This can be what teachers do not know about their own teaching, such as using too much teacher talk or too little body movement in the classroom. The hidden area refers to what a person knows, but others do not know. For teachers, this can be their own “hidden” weaknesses that others do not know or they

do not want to let others know. Finally, the unknown area is what a person as well as others do not know. This, for teachers, can be their potential strengths in teaching that have not been discovered by themselves or others. Based on feedback and input from external sources such as experts and students, teachers can improve their areas of weaknesses they are not aware of; and based on the information teachers know about themselves and their own instructional performance (internal source) that others do not know, teachers themselves can be the most knowledgeable, suitable, and reliable people to assist themselves in the search for better teaching practices. By practicing reflective teaching with data garnered from the three main sources, teachers can gain a deeper insight into their own blind area and explore their own potential talents in the unknown area. Just as there is no best teaching method, there is no best teacher. Each teacher can perform the best he or she possibly can by practicing continuous reflective teaching.

Types of Reflective Practice in Language Teaching

Based on Schön (1983, 1987) and Killion and Todnem (1991), Farrell (2012a) presented three types of reflective practice: reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection-for-action. Reflection-in-action is the kind of reflection that takes place while teachers are teaching in the classroom. Reflection-on-action is concerned with thinking back on what teachers have done in the class after the class. Whereas reflection-in-action takes place during the class, reflection-on-action happens after the class has taken place. The third kind of reflection, reflection-for-action deals with utilizing reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action to improve future teaching activities. This type of reflection seems to be the desired ultimate product of the reflective teaching process when knowledge from the previous two reflection types is put into use in future lessons. If the modified or adjusted teaching activities work well, teachers should

continue to use them or further refine them, but if they do not seem to be effective, teachers should begin to explore possible reasons that prevent the activities to be a success. The three types of reflections previously discussed may work best if they are in a continuous circle called the virtuous reflective circle as illustrated in Figure 2.

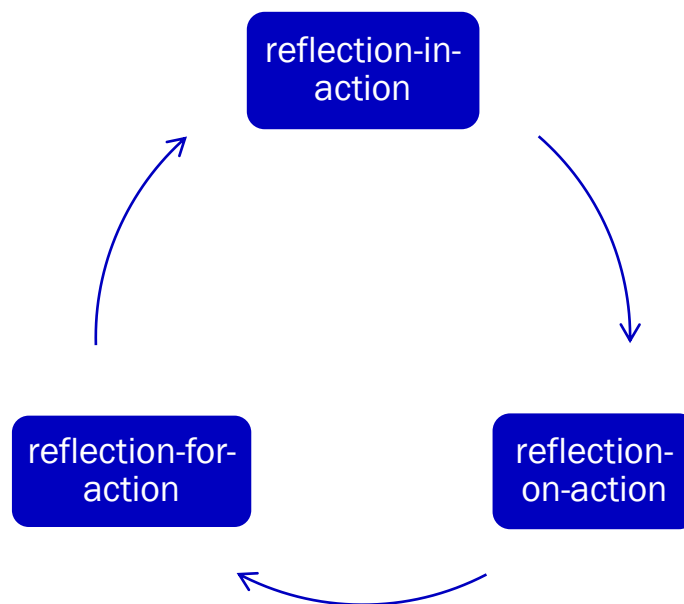


Figure 2: The Virtuous Reflective Circle (Schön, 1983, 1987; Killion & Todnem, 1991; Farrell, 2012a)

Methods for Practicing Reflective Teaching

This section points to specific methods for practicing reflective teaching. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (1998, as cited in Bailey, 2006, pp. 189-190) suggested six reflective methods classroom practitioners can employ to improve their own instructional performance: (a) visiting the classrooms of other expert teachers, (b) videotaping one's own teaching session for later review and analysis, (c) designing and analyzing results of surveys administered to students, (d) interviewing supervisors, peers, students, or parents to learn about effective teaching and

one's own teaching, (e) keeping a journal of one's own teaching successes and failures together with critical reflection for the purpose of future improvement, and (f) developing a teaching portfolio for self-reflection and analysis. Additionally, Richards and Lockhart (1994) pointed out the following possible procedures to capture information for critical reflection: teaching journals, lesson reports (written description of the main features of lessons), surveys and questionnaires, audio and video recordings, action research, and observation completed by a student teacher or peers. Farrell (2011) added that observation can either be carried out by the teacher alone by audio or video recording, or it can be performed by asking another to observe the class. It may not be feasible to utilize all the methods suggested, so adopting a method one favors or is more comfortable with may be more useful. From personal experience, the author of this paper has the habit of audio-recording his lessons and listening to them later; upon one reflection, he found that he had consistently asked many yes-no questions, which explained why the students had not spoken much during class. Therefore, to identify teacher question types, an audio-recorder may suffice. Nonetheless, if one is interested in observing learners' behaviors or teachers' body movement, a video-recorder may be needed. Depending on the type of information desired and teachers' personal interest in developing a certain aspect of their instructional performance, one method may be more effective than others. Some scholars have gone as far as providing classroom practitioners with a set of questions to guide them in the process of reflective teaching. Readers interested in obtaining specific questions for fostering critical reflection are recommended to read Smyth (1991) and Richards and Lockhart (1994). The questions suggested from the two sources can serve as guidelines for those interested in embarking on the ongoing journey of learning from their own teaching. Such questions can also assist language classroom practitioners in initiating their own agenda for critical reflection.

Conclusion

If teachers wish to perform their work better and provide optimum learning opportunities for their students, they do need to develop professionally in various ways, and critically self-examining their own instructional practice to seek ways to teach more effectively in a systematic manner may be one of the most feasible and convenient methods. Teachers are often times busy looking for methods to help them teach better, but they may fail to see themselves as their own best supervisors who may know and can help them most. Ruddock (1984, cited in Williams & Burden, 1997) stated that “not to examine one’s practice is irresponsible; to regard teaching as an experiment and to monitor one’s performance is a responsible professional act” (p. 6). Williams and Burden (1997) observed that in order to be effective teachers on their own terms, teachers need to look both inward and outward. Learning from oneself is as essential as learning from other expert teachers, supervisors, scholars, and researchers. Both ways of professional development, looking inward and outward, do not need to be mutually exclusive. The key is for teachers to see the relevance, feasibility, and value in learning from their own instructional activities. When teachers systematically reflect on their own practices, they can later share their insights and experiences with the wider community of teachers, so our collective understanding about teaching and learning can be exponentially multiplied. Knowledge does not always come from the laboratory and formal empirical studies; it can also be generated through critical reflection of classroom practitioners.

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Oral Assessments: A Stage for Eliciting Performance?

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Abstract

When a test taker “performs” in an oral exam, how do we, as assessors, know if that individual truly is issuing forth authentic language? How can we measure real-world communicative competence in an exam that is, essentially, separated from any such real-world target language use situations? This paper will attempt to shed further light upon that central issue of performativity in performance-based oral assessments by revealing some of the deeper psychological and social issues that surround them. It will, first, specifically highlight and explore current testing procedures and the psycho-social implications that result due to test format, test taker, and tester. This paper will then investigate the societal impact of the aforementioned assessments and will, finally, conclude by suggesting various testing alternatives to current procedures.

As a second language learner of Spanish, I have engaged in multiple oral interviews, role plays, and group oral exams throughout the course of my academic and professional career. Once, as part of an undergraduate study abroad application, I was called in to participate in an oral interview with a Spanish language professor. The interview itself lasted about one half hour and consisted of questions that elicited basic Spanish vocabulary and syntax. As the conversation ensued, the questions progressively became more complex, culminating in a role play constructed around a hypothetical situation. From an L2 learner's perspective, I remember how overwhelmed, anxious, self-conscious, and unnatural I felt while conversing with the professor; a sense of heightened awareness certainly overcame me. I felt as though my performance was, in many ways, inhibited by various psychological/affective issues such as nervousness, shyness, self-doubt, etc. What I experienced and how I reacted during that interview is in no way "new news." There has been a long established belief that "test performance can be facilitated or inhibited by positive or negative affective responses, both to the topical content of test tasks and to a particular type of test task" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 66). However, are psychological issues (including affect, topical knowledge, and language knowledge) the primary factors that contributed to my subpar performance on the oral exam? The answer is a resounding "no." What Bachman and Palmer (1996) fail to address in their definition of "competence" (when applied to oral assessments) is something that goes *beyond* affective schemata and the "personal," something that *encompasses* it, something that surrounds the *causal relationship* between the psychological and the social. That "something" is the very notion of *performativity*.

According to McNamara (2001), test performance in an oral assessment is both psychological *and* social in nature, meaning that a candidate's overall performance is *not* just an

outcome of an individual's topical knowledge, language knowledge, and affect (all of which are mental or psychological acts) but, also, an outcome of the complex social interaction that takes place between the candidate, interlocutor, and test format. This social and cognitive interaction combined can be thought of as "performativity," a separate entity or construct that develops and surrounds the entire test experience, thus affecting overall test results. Because of this looming notion of performativity, then, we cannot *directly* observe an individual's communicative competence in test performance. Problems arise when conventional testing methods put a candidate "in the lime light," so to speak, and measure his/her communicative competence without considering any of the social factors that are intrinsically linked to his/her performance. McNamara (1997) elaborates on this idea when he writes, "The focus on the ability of the candidate in conventional approaches within second language assessment views the candidate in a strangely isolated light; it is he or she who is held to bear the brunt of the responsibility for the performance. In this sense, the inevitable gap between a test and real life appears unusually stark" (p. 453). Because social interaction seems to be largely ignored while assessing candidates in many current oral testing procedures, issues of test authenticity undoubtedly arise. One begins to question whether or not the scores from those performance-based oral assessments are truly a "valid" reflection of "real-world" communicative competence. Certainly, we do not live in a world where language is produced in a cognitive vacuum, void of any human interaction. Therefore, how can we justify evaluating L2 learners in such a way? This paper will, thus, highlight the need for a reevaluation of current performance-based oral assessment procedures by specifically examining the oral interview, role play, and the group oral assessment in terms of their overall level of performativity (that is, the psychological and social interactions between test taker, tester, and test format). It will then discuss the impact of the three previously

mentioned exams and will, finally, conclude by suggesting various testing alternatives to current procedures.

Effects of Performativity in Three Oral Assessments

Oral Interviews

If we revisit my own oral interview experience for a moment, we can begin to delineate the psycho-social factors that surrounded my overall test performance. As stated in the introduction, there were definite psychological, or cognitive, issues at work during the interview (affect, topical knowledge, and language knowledge) that clearly contributed to my linguistic performance. However, psychological matters were not the only factors that contributed to how well or how poorly I performed; social issues, such as my interaction with the professor (interviewer), also played a significant role. For instance, would I have performed the same on the oral exam had I been interviewed by someone different? Did the very social interaction itself affect my performance and allow me to issue forth authentic language? Did it provide ample opportunity for me to demonstrate my language abilities?

Annie Brown (2003), PhD in language testing from the University of Melbourne, had similar questions. She knew full well that interviewers vary in aspects of behavior as diverse as the following:

The level of rapport that they establish with candidates, their functional and topical choices, the ways in which they ask questions and construct prompts, the extent to which or the ways in which they accommodate their speech to that of the candidate, and the ways in which they develop and extend topics (p. 3).

In fact, she wanted to know if those variations in social interaction affected the reliability of overall oral interview test scores. To answer this question, Brown examined two IELTS oral

interviews (she excluded the role play portion to focus specifically on the conversational aspect of the interview) that were conducted on the same day between one interviewee, Esther, and two different interviewers, Pam and Ian. Eight ratings were elicited for each of the two interviews in order to produce stable estimates. Raters produced scores for Esther's performance based on "communicative effectiveness," or how well the candidate was able to talk at length on a range of topics displaying functional and discoursal skills. In the end, Brown discovered that Esther received a mean score of 5.8 (using the IELTS band score system) for her interview with Pam and a mean score of 5 for her interview with Ian (Brown, 2003, p. 6). What led to such differences in raters' judgments? In the interview with Pam, raters described Esther as "willing and responsive" but characterized her as "unforthcoming and uncooperative" in her interview with Ian (Brown, 2003, p. 18). Brown elaborates:

In the interaction with Pam, topics developed smoothly and readily because Pam was explicit in her requests for information as well as using strategies such as recycling and the topicalization of candidate input to develop topics and to elicit descriptive speech from Esther... With Ian, however, responses tended to be brief and there were frequent breakdowns where Esther, it seems, misinterpreted the pragmatic intent of his moves.

Whilst it could be argued that the interview with Ian provides evidence of the limitations of Esther's pragmatic competence, the issue here is fairness: these limitations are made evident in one interview but not the other (Brown, 2003, p. 19).

Brown revealed a definite discord in the consistency, or reliability, of oral interview test scores and widely attributed that variance to the variable nature of social interaction. That social interaction between interviewer and interviewee, however, cannot be thought of as a single, direct causative link to test performance. One must not forget that it is fundamentally tied to a

candidate's psychological state (affect, topical knowledge, and language knowledge) as well. For example, if the interviewer (in a hypothetical interview) appeared laid back, friendly, and conversational, then the interviewee might feel more at ease, thus making it easier for him/her to utter "authentic" language. However, if the interviewer were someone of greater power, someone who seemed distant, cold, and matter-of-fact, then that same interviewee might feel nervous, scared, and uptight, thus hindering his/her ability to produce authentic language in such an abnormal, uncomfortable environment. Therefore, when talking about social interaction, we must be sure to consider it in light of the psychological, or cognitive, aspects of communicative competence as well; for it is this sense of "performativity" that ultimately affects the candidate's entire linguistic performance. Despite Brown's sole focus on social interaction, her study indeed proves helpful in mitigating this larger issue of performativity in oral interviews. Her study urges us to focus in on one aspect of performativity, that of social interactions, and deal with it in such a way that will eliminate the possibility of any human assessors affecting the overall test performance and becoming part of the score meaning.

Role Plays

Role plays, like oral interviews, exhibit similar issues in regard to the social interaction produced between interviewer and interviewee, but they also highlight issues that deal with the psychological interaction between interviewee and test format, or the overall context of the assessment. Dan Douglas (2010), professor emeritus of Applied Linguistics at Iowa State University, illuminates this issue when he writes:

From the test taker's point of view, language use for sheer display is at best unnatural and at worst a distortion. If the performance we elicit is in some way abnormal, the inferences

we make about the ability that produced the performance will stand a good chance of being wrong (p. 5).

It is, therefore, important to establish a plausible communicative context for each role play that is administered. Hymes (as cited in Douglas, 2010) suggests that interviewers (or testers) appropriately manipulate the setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms of interaction, and genre of the test (SPEAKING) in order to specify a context that is, to a large degree, believable. However, as Douglas (2010) points out, there are no two individuals that interpret contexts in the same way (p. 8). These ambiguous contextual interpretations affect a candidate's test performance and, thus, affect the authenticity of the test and the authenticity of the language that is produced during the role play. Even if the tester, for instance, brings in genuineness to the constructed contexts in an effort to make the role play "sets" appear more "real" (such as bringing in a genuine menu written in the target language), the test takers will still know that they are participating in an exam and that they are being assessed.

Therein lies the central issue of role play performances—the fact that the test taker engages not in a real-world performance, but in a metacognitive performance. No matter how hard the interviewers/testers try to simulate real-world events or scenarios, the test takers will always know that the set is contrived, that the role play is, in fact, a complete turn-around from any such "real-world occurrence." It is that very notion of test taker "metacognition," then, that interferes with a candidate's ability to issue forth "authentic" language. Test takers get put on the spot, are expected to take on different personas, and are expected to imagine. How is imagination comparable to real life? How can the situation be considered "normal?" How can the entire performance be deemed as "authentic?" Combine the psychological issue of metacognition with the social issue of interviewer/interviewee interaction (as discussed above under the section,

“Oral Interviews”), and we have one major, overarching issue of performativity. Indeed, attempting to measure real-world communicative language ability via a “theatrical” performance is insurmountably questionable.

Group Orals

A proposed alternative to the oral interview and role play is the group oral assessment. From the outset, this type of exam appears to solve the key issue of performativity in the aforementioned tests, as it eliminates the need for an interviewer and does not attempt to construct an “alternate reality” via a role play performance. Instead, it calls upon three or more candidates to discuss a topic without any prompting from or interaction with interlocutors. Raters simply sit outside of the group and assess each individual’s speaking ability without taking part in the actual discourse. In general, the group oral exam is believed to produce authentic language; test takers are “expected to interact with one another and have discussions similar to those they might have both in the classroom and in the real world” (Ockey, 2009, p. 162). Because the group oral assessment randomly assigns candidates into groups, there is no way to discern in advance what the group dynamics will be like. Rather than dealing with one interaction with one interviewer (as is the case in an oral interview), candidates must deal with a variety of different interactions with other test takers. This begs the question: do the interactions *between* test takers affect individual performances?

Gary Ockey (2009), from Utah State University, investigated whether or not a candidate’s level of assertiveness and ability to interact with his/her group members affected the test score. Ockey (2009) gathered 225 test takers for his study, all of which were Japanese first year university students majoring in English as a foreign language in their home country, Japan. The participants took three different tests: the revised NEO-PI-R (a personality inventory test

that assesses the five major domains of personality), a group oral test, and the PhonePass SET-10 (Ockey, 2009). After administering the personality inventory exam, Ockey grouped the participants into four different types based on their documented level of assertiveness; one group consisted entirely of assertive test takers, another group had all non-assertive test takers, yet another had three assertive and one non-assertive test taker, and the last group had one assertive and three non-assertive test takers (p. 171). The results of the study indicated that:

The personal characteristics of a test taker's group members can affect a test taker's score on the group oral. Assertive test takers received higher scores than expected when assessed with non-assertive test takers and lower scores than expected when assessed with assertive test takers. One possible explanation for these results is that...the raters might have compared a test taker's performance with the performances of other group members and assigned different scores for similar performances (Ockey, 2009, p. 178).

Ockey (2009) goes on to explain how the social interaction between test takers could have psychologically affected individual candidates. For example, based on the level of assertiveness of the members in each group, participants may have intentionally or unintentionally changed their individual performances. Certainly, we've all experienced times where we've changed our demeanor while around people with different personalities. We may become shy when surrounded by outgoing individuals and especially gregarious when surrounded by non-loquacious people, or vice versa. The unpredictability of group dynamics and the psychological impact of such erratic social interactions in the group oral significantly affect one's ability to perform. It's this sense of performativity, then, that ultimately affects the reliability and construct validity of the group oral assessment scores.

Impact of Performativity in Oral Assessments

As has been alluded to in previous sections of this paper, the issue of performativity in oral assessments is of particular concern because of its impact on authenticity, reliability, and construct validity. However, how exactly does performativity impact those key components of test usefulness? A deeper look into the meaning of performativity is needed. As noted above, performativity can be thought of as a complex interaction between the psychological and social states of a test taker. Tim McNamara (2001) elaborates when he writes:

Through performativity we construct or create a sense of something ‘inner’ by our actions, actions that are performed as a result of social constraints and training...Through performativity, we come to believe in the existence of an ‘inner essence,’ which is in fact a result, an effect, a fiction ... We assume in language testing the existence of prior constructs such as language proficiency or language ability. It is the task of the language tester to allow them to be expressed, to be displayed, in the test performance. But what if the direction of action is the reverse, so that the act of testing itself constructs the notion of language proficiency? (p. 338-339).

McNamara (2001) suggests that the test construct itself is what lies at the very heart of the performativity issue in oral assessments. It is the test takers’ metacognition of the oral assessment that leads to issues of authenticity, the social and psychological interactions between and among test taker/s and tester that lead to issues of reliability, and the interpretations made during the assessment that lead to issues of construct validity. When combined, the issues of authenticity, reliability, and construct validity seriously undermine the overall test usefulness of oral assessments.

The performativity that is produced during these assessments leads to inferences about a test taker's communicative competence or, rather, inferences about an individual's ability to orally use language in real-world situations. Jacoby and McNamara (1999) highlight an instance where the inferences that were made in the Australian Occupational English Test (a performance-based test for immigrant and refugee health professionals that assesses their spoken English abilities) did not correlate to actual, real-world communicative competence. Douglas (2001) further explains:

About six years after the introduction of the OET, test supervisors were receiving complaints both from physicians conducting the clinical examinations of the overseas candidates and from hospital supervisors of the overseas physicians working in medical practice that the English skills of those who had passed the OET appeared inadequate for interactions with both patients and medical colleagues (p. 175).

Jacoby and McNamara (1999) and Douglas (2001) go on to hypothesize the reasons for such a disconnection between the communicative competence measured in the OET and that found in real life situations, and they largely attributed it to the test's construct (Jacoby and McNamara, 1999, p. 223-224). The test construct causes test takers to issue forth a "performative" during the oral assessment that, essentially, clouds any inferences that can be made about a candidate's communicative competence. For those inferences about communicative competence to become more useful, then, it is necessary to reconsider current testing methods and criteria for the oral assessment.

Suggestions of Testing Alternatives for the Oral Assessment

Even though the test construct itself is believed to be the culprit behind the grand issue of performativity, I am in no way suggesting an elimination of the oral assessment. Rather, I am

pushing for certain revisions to be made to current testing procedures in the hopes that they will eventually dilute, at least to a modest degree, the sense of performativity in oral assessments. Basing my suggestions on the three oral assessments that I have previously reviewed in this paper (the oral interview, role play, and group oral exam, respectively), I will argue for four distinct revisions: interviewer training, stronger implementation of Hymes' SPEAKING acronym in role plays (as cited in Douglas, 2010), rater training for group orals, and self-assessments/classroom assessments carried out in real time.

In terms of the oral interview, interviewer training would help keep interviewers' styles from becoming so diverse. It would, essentially, establish a greater sense of fairness, or reliability, among test scores. With the implementation of interviewer training, interviewers would no longer be dubbed "easy" (as Pam was in the example above) or "difficult" (like Ian); instead, interviewers would be trained to conduct interviews in a similar manner. Although difficult to achieve, the relative uniformity amid interviewers would, to some extent, stabilize the social interactions that would take place between tester and test taker.

For role plays, it is important to "make an effort to provide a context for language use in our tests," regardless of the test takers' metacognition of the assessments (Douglas, 2010, p. 10). Doing so will at least help ensure that the inferences gathered from such an exam are useful. Therefore, testers should continue to attempt to create authentic target language use situations for the test takers by manipulating the elements of context (setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentation, norms of interaction, and genre) because the closer one gets to reality, the more authentic the performances uttered by the test takers will likely become.

Because interactions between test takers can affect an individual's score on the group oral assessment, it is necessary that raters be trained to acknowledge and take into account the

personal characteristics of each candidate's group members. As is the case with the oral interview, this process is something that is very difficult to carry out. Nevertheless, making raters aware of the possible effects is a must. In addition, it is highly suggested that raters be trained not to compare test takers during the exam. As Ockey (2009) pointed out in his study, the act of comparing test takers could result in unfair scores.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would like to propose an alternative to oral assessments that hinges on the idea of the utopian “non-assessment”—that of self-assessments and/or classroom assessments carried out in real time. The realization of self-assessments would help lift some of the responsibility for evaluation off of the testers and place it onto the test takers. Self-assessments, carried out in unison with tester's judgments, would facilitate reflective learning; it would encourage test takers to pay attention to their own performances and to become more self-aware of their development. Obviously, this type of assessment would be most productive and useful in criterion-referenced tests or, rather, those that take place in the classroom. Furthermore, perhaps that is where oral assessments truly belong—in the classroom. When conducted in the classroom, oral assessments become a part of *pedagogy*, of *real life*; whereas, when confined to test constructs, they elicit *performatives*, or *fictions* as McNamara (2001) alludes to in his article, “Language assessment as social practice: Challenges for research”. By essentially removing the idea of the “test construct” from the oral assessment, the language issued forth by learners would become more “real,” more authentic. With a stronger sense of authenticity, then, the oral assessments would also become more reliable indicators of communicative competence, which would, consequently, lead to cogent construct validity and, thus, a better overall sense of test usefulness.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper, I have attempted to shed light upon the central, yet hazy, issue of performativity in three different types of oral assessments—the oral interview, role play, and group oral exam. I have explained how the complex interaction between the psychological and social states of a test taker needs to be considered when testers assign quantitative scores to an oral assessment “performance.” If not taken into consideration, the assessment itself runs the risk of being inauthentic, which could lead to unreliable scores that do not evoke appropriate inferences (construct validity). In other words, the oral assessment loses its sense of test usefulness. I have also suggested a few revisions to the oral assessment, such as interviewer training, stronger implementation of the SPEAKING acronym in role plays, rater training for group oral exams, and self-assessments/classroom assessments that, if carried out successfully, will mollify the severity of the impact of performativity.

It should be well understood, though, that even with such revisions, there will *always* exist a sense of performativity in any type of oral assessment that is undertaken. The complex psycho-social interaction that occurs in individuals is impossible to predict; it is, indeed, what makes each of us unique, each of us human. I think the Shakespearean quote, that was presented at the very beginning of this paper, “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players,” truly captures the essence behind the issue of performativity in current oral assessments. Oral assessments are very much like a stage; they are man-made constructs that attempt to elicit performances or, more specifically, language found in real-world situations. Just as actors interact psychologically and socially with the director, script, and cast members to produce a performance, so do test takers of an oral assessment interact psychologically and socially with the tester, test format, and other test takers to produce a “performative.” It is

through this stage, or test construct, then, that the transformation between reality and fiction becomes blurred, that the issue of performativity becomes illuminated. If we wish to continue to make inferences about real-world communicative competence through oral assessments, it is our duty as test facilitators to remove the masks of our actors or test takers, so to speak, and carefully take the “performative” into consideration when evaluating their overall language ability.

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Grunt and Cheer: Teaching North American Vowels through Native Speaker Utterances

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Abstract

Pronunciation textbooks most often present and teach vowel sounds through “key words,” often presented as a list or as part of a vowel chart. In this article, I argue that “key” or “chart” words are ineffective, especially when using words that create minimal pairs that English Language Learners (ELLs) already tend to mispronounce. As an alternative, I present Native Speaker Utterances (NSUs). The NSUs are easy and fun to teach, focus ELLs’ attention on the sound, and link the sound utterance to meaningful communication. A complete model is presented that can be integrated into any classroom.

The English language has one of the most complex vowel systems in the world, making pronunciation a difficult feature for English Language Learners (ELLs) to acquire and for English as a Second Language instructors to teach. With more than a dozen vowel sounds, the English language makes great use of space in the vocal tract (requiring jaw dropping for low vowels), uses lip shape to a significant degree (from spread lips, to lax, to various degrees of rounding), differentiates between long and short vowels (requiring a distinction between tenseness and laxity), and includes several diphthongs. Students with little or no background in phonetics and phonology may find it impossible to acquire all of the needed features to create easily intelligible American vowel sounds.

Most ESL instructors are not experts in phonetics and phonology, and, therefore, rely on textbooks and other pronunciation materials to teach students the necessary features to work toward an intelligible accent in English. But even still, most textbooks do not go into full linguistic detail when presenting vowel sounds to students. A simplified introduction to vowels helps keep the lesson less technical and more practical for students. For this reason, the majority of pronunciation texts opt for a simplified method of introducing and teaching vowel sounds by giving students models to use as examples of the sounds.

Two methods are most common for the introduction of vowel sounds in published pronunciation materials. The first method lists the target vowel sounds using an accompanying symbol (most often from the International Phonetic Alphabet) along with an example word (e.g., /iy/ as in *meat*). The second method is more extensive, and I will call this method a **Vowel Modeling System**. A Vowel Modeling System (VMS) is a chart or diagram that demonstrates where in the mouth all the vowels are articulated relative to tongue placement and uses example or key words to model the sounds (this method owes its legacy to Daniel Jones' Cardinal Vowel

system and diagrams of the early twentieth century). VMSs are pedagogically more useful because they show the position of vowels relative to each other, unlike the simple list of vowels. In this paper I will argue that even the VMS can be pedagogically problematic due to the selection of the example words in these charts and diagrams.

Many example words in textbooks' VMSs have variable pronunciation or form minimal pairs with other words in the same VMS. My argument is that the traditional selection of example words in VMSs provides little pedagogical advantage to English Language Learners, especially those at a lower level in pronunciation. In this paper I survey thirty-three ESL pronunciation textbooks and discuss potential problems with traditional VMSs. To offer a more pedagogically effective method for teaching and reviewing North American vowel sounds, I present a new VMS that uses **Native Speaker Utterances**, rather than example words.

Due to the great variability of vowel sounds across international dialects of English, I limit this textbook survey to books published for the North American ESL market. Seventeen of the books surveyed (51.5%) include complete VMSs (Cook, 2000; Grant, 2001; Hagen & Grogan, 1992; Hahn & Dickerson, 1999; Handschuh & Simounet, 1985; Lado & Fries, 1979; Lane, 2005; Lujan, 2008; Luter, 1990; Meyers & Holt, 1998; Miller, 2007; Morley, 1995; Orion, 2012; Prator & Robinett, 1972; Reed & Michaud, 2005; Sheeler & Markey, 1991; Sudlow, 1986), while three other books only include partial VMSs (Cameron, 2012; Dale & Poms, 2005; Mosjin, 2009). Twenty-two of these textbooks (66.7%) include lists of example words (Baker & Goldstein, 1990; Beisber, 1995; Cameron, 2012, Chan, 1987; Clarey & Dixon, 1985; Cook, 2000; Dale & Poms, 2005; Dauer, 1993; Gilbert, 2005; Grant, 2001; Hagen & Grogan, 1992; Hewings & Goldstein, 1998; Lane, 2005; Lujan, 2008; Luter, 1990; Miller, 2007; Mosjin, 2009; Orion, 2012; Prator & Robinett, 1972; Reed & Michaud, 2005; Sheeler & Markey, 1991;

Sikorski, 1990), and twelve of these books contain both a list and a VMS. Only five of the books made no use of either a VMS or list of example words (English, 1998; Esarey, 1996; Gilbert, 2001; Pavlik, 1985; Stern, 1987). This paper will focus on the seventeen textbooks that include a complete VMS and discuss their potential pedagogical inefficacies.

Vowel Modeling Systems

More than half of the textbooks surveyed made use of a Vowel Modeling System. A VMS places vowel sounds into a spatial context to show the relative relationship of sounds in terms of tongue placement. Most of these use a triangle or grid format and/or make use of a facial diagram to demonstrate tongue placement on a vertical and horizontal axis. All of these VMSs use at least one set of words to model the sound (these are often called key or chart words). See Table 1 for an example VMS.

Table 1

An Example Vowel Modeling System

		Front	Central	Back
High	Tense	[iy] beat		[uw] boot
	Lax	[ɪ] bit		[ʊ] put
Mid	Tense	[ey] bait	[ə] sun	[ow] boat
	Lax	[ɛ] bet		
Low		[æ] bat		[ɔ] bought
			[ɑ] hot	
Complex Vowels: [aw] how, [ay] high, [oy] boy				

(Lane, 2005, p. 2)

Vowel Modeling Systems can play a key role in a student's acquisition of vowel sounds because the chart shows each sound relative to the others in terms of tongue placement. For example, if a student can produce both /iy/ and /ey/ but not /ɪ/, it could be helpful to show that the articulation of /ɪ/ is in between /iy/ and /ey/. VMSs also provide example words to put the sounds into meaningful semantic context. But selection of these example words can often cause students more confusion or difficulties, especially if the model word is variable in its pronunciation or confused with another minimal pair in the system. Twelve of the VMSs from this survey contained items that could easily prove problematic or confusing in the teaching or learning of North American vowels.

These twelve VMSs make use of minimal pairs in their example words. Minimal pairs are two words that are contrasted by only one sound (for example, "bead" and "bid"). These VMSs use words that form minimal pairs as example words for neighboring vowels in the chart. The most common set of example words for the front vowels is: *beat*, *bit*, *bait*, *bet*, and *bat* (as in

Table 1). Six of the textbooks used these five easily confusable words as the models ELLs could use to remember how the vowels are pronounced and to learn the distinction between these sounds (Prator & Robinett, 1972, p. 13; Lane, 2005, p. 2; Sudlow, 1986, p. 3; Cook, 2000, p. 73; Hagen & Grogan, 1992, p. 16; Meyers & Holt, 1998, p. 48). While minimal pairs are excellent to demonstrate the necessity for learning to make proper distinctions between vowels or for vowel review, using them in a vowel introduction or as models to learn the sounds can easily confuse and frustrate ELLs.

Most ELLs working on their pronunciation are unable to pronounce the fine distinction between neighboring vowels (thus their need for pronunciation instruction). For most, this problem stems from the inability to *hear* the distinction between neighboring vowels. This is why ear-training drills focusing on aural perception are an important element of pronunciation training; Celce Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2010) call this “listening discrimination” (p. 46). Minimal pairs as vowel models give students little help learning how the sounds are different, especially if the student confuses two or more words on the chart as sounding or being pronounced exactly the same. My argument is that minimal pairs are useful for ear training and advanced practice, but they are pedagogically ineffective as models for ELLs.

Another problem in textbook vowel coverage is the omission of vowel sounds. While the description of consonants is more consistent across ESL textbooks, the description of vowels can vary depending on the technicality of the transcription system or on the features of the particular dialect. From surveying these twenty-two textbooks with explicit coverage of vowel sounds, fifteen tonic (stressed) vowels can easily be identified as the most commonly covered vowel sounds in North American English (see Table 2).

Table 2

The Fifteen Tonic Vowels of North American English

	Front	Mid	Back
Diphthongs	/ay/	/ɔy/	/aw/
High	/iy/ /ɪ/		/uw/ /ʊ/
Mid	/ey/ /ɛ/	/ʌ/ /ɜr/	/ow/
Low	/æ/	/ɑ/	/ɔ/

(Vowels excluded in some of the VMSs reviewed have been highlighted)

Four of the textbooks exclude /ɜr/ from their VMS even though the books are designed for North American English (Lado & Fries, 1979; Lane, 2005; Reed & Michaud, 2005; Sudlow, 1986). One book omits /ɔ/, /ɔy/, and /aw/ (Cook, 2000). Exclusion of common vowel sounds does not allow ELLs exposure to the full range of vowel sounds most commonly found in North American English. The omission of /ɜr/ is possibly the most alarming because this vowel tends to be one of the most difficult for ELLs to acquire in North American English (consider the words “girl,” “turn,” and “word”) and, therefore, should be given special attention in vowel training.

Possibly even more confusing than minimal pairs is the use of words that have variable pronunciations across major dialects. Three textbooks contain VMSs with variable items. For example, Hagen and Grogan (1992) use “bored” as the model word for /ɔ/ (p. 16), although *The Newbury Heritage Dictionary* and *The Miriam-Webster Dictionary* both list /bowr/ as an

alternate pronunciation for “bore.” Similarly, Cook (2000) and Sudlow (1986) both use “bought” as example words for /ɑ/ (p. 73; p. 3). These words, however, are pronounced with an /ɔ/ sound according to the above-mentioned dictionaries. In fact, Sudlow (1986) uses “bought” to represent *both* /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ (noting that /ɑ/ is for the Western US and /ɔ/ for the Eastern US). From a pedagogical standpoint, this could only cause trouble, and from a sociolinguistic standpoint, is an inaccurate overgeneralization.

While variability in pronunciation of words such as “bought” does exist, care should be taken in choosing words to represent vowels. It may be impossible to find a single word that will be pronounced consistently throughout every dialect (especially when factoring in regional, ethnic, and sociological dialects). Some textbook authors, however, have been more successful choosing example words that represent the vowel sounds of North American English. Four of the surveyed textbooks include complete VMSs with all fifteen tonic vowels and avoid using minimal pairs as example words (Miller, 2007, p. A-12; Morley, 1995, p. 5; Orion, 2012, p. 71; Sheeler & Markey, 1991, p. 46 and V). Miller (2007) and Sheeler and Marley (1991), however, only include their VMS in the introduction, and do not carry this tool through the rest of their book. These two textbooks along with those by Hahn and Dickerson (1999), Handshuh and Simounet (1985), Lado and Fries (1979), Lane (2005), Luter (1990), and Sudlow (1986) present VMSs in their introduction, but this useful pedagogical tool is not revisited in later vowel lessons. In other words, these textbooks are not set up to reinforce this VMS as a pedagogical tool.

Only Morley (1995) and Orion (2012) present complete VMSs for all fifteen vowels, refrain from using minimal pairs, *and* revisit the VMS throughout their materials. I would argue, though, that even if example words do not form minimal pairs with other words in the VMS,

they may not be as pedagogically effective if they form minimal pairs with other common words. Example words that Morley (1995) and Orion (2012) use such as *it*, *sit*, *met*, *not*, and *bus* may already be confused by ELLs with *eat*, *seat/set*, *mate*, *nut/gnat/net*, and *boss*. Even words without minimal pairs can still easily be pronounced with the incorrect vowel, for example, *stop* as /stʌp/ or *up* as /ʌp/. Many ELLs requiring basic vowel work already make such common errors; therefore, the use of single-syllable words as examples may still prove problematic, even when well chosen. While the use of “chart words” may be the tradition, I argue that it is time for a new method to model vowel sounds for ELLs.

A New Vowel Modeling System: Native Speaker Utterances

English Language Learners need a system to help model vowel sounds, especially in earlier stages of pronunciation training or when an ELL has fossilized pronunciation errors. These vowel models should be within some kind of communicative context to help increase retention and make the sounds meaningful. The use of example words as found in the traditional VMSs, however, tends to draw the focus on the word itself and its semantic meaning, but the vowel sound can easily be lost. Furthermore, the memorization or use of mispronounced words from a traditional VMS can only add to the problem.

For this reason, I developed a new kind of Vowel Modeling System not based on key or example words, but rather on everyday **native speaker utterances**. Every language makes use of simple single- or multiple-syllable utterances that play an important role in communication. Many of these utterances are not necessarily words, yet the use of these syllables in context carries semantic meaning. In many cases, a vowel sound in isolation can carry semantic meaning in a language even if it is not a word. Syllable utterances such as “ow!” (meaning “I feel pain” or “that hurts”) and “uh” (meaning “I don’t know what to say”) are often classified as

interjections but would not commonly be taught in a vocabulary or grammar lesson. But these native speaker utterances do play an important role in the English language. Celce-Murcia, et al., (2010) also list several “vowels with communicative meaning in English,” such as /uw:/ for disgust and /uwps/ for recognition of a problem (p. 151). The authors of *Teaching Pronunciation*, however, only cover eight of the fifteen tonic vowels and several vowel sounds are repeated in this chart (as seen with /uw/). While they present some helpful tools for several vowel sounds, they have not presented a new vowel modeling system, which I will now present.

Native speaker utterances (NSUs) are, in many cases, the vowel sounds in their purer or—at least—simpler form. But more importantly, NSUs focus on vowel sounds but carry important semantic meaning, putting sound into a communicative context. With NSUs, students learn to model vowel sounds in simple syllable utterances that are used in everyday conversation. Because sounds become semantically meaningful, they are easier for ELLs to remember. Not only do NSUs promote the use of these utterances in everyday communication, but ELLs find the system easier to use and more fun to learn. Facial expressions, gestures, and example situations (such as, “aw, look at the cute little puppy”) can provide additional semantic context and make using them more fun in the classroom, especially for younger ELLs. Table 3 presents these native speakers utterances as a list with examples. Table 4 presents the NSUs as a Vowel Modeling System.

Table 3

Native Speaker Utterances

Note: Exclamation points emphasize the tenseness of long vowels and diphthongs.

Long E	/iy/	wee!	/wiy/	"Wee! This is fun!" (<i>Excitement and fun.</i>)
Short I	/ɪ/	ick	/ɪk/	"Ick. This tastes awful." (<i>Bad taste or something gross.</i>)
Long A	/ey/	hey!	/hey/	"Hey you!" (<i>Getting someone's attention.</i>)
Short E	/ɛ/	eh	/ɛ/	"Eh, I really don't care." (<i>Dismissal of a useless idea.</i>)
Short A	/æ/	yeah	/yæ/	"Yeah, this is cool!" (<i>Enthusiastic agreement.</i>)
Short O	/ɑ/	ah	/ɑ/	"Ah, now I understand." (<i>Pleasant surprise or realization of an idea.</i>)
Short U	/ʌ/	uh	/ʌ/	"Uh, I don't know." (<i>Confusion or pause marker to think.</i>)
Short Back O	/ɔ/	aw	/ɔ/	"Aw, what a cute little puppy." (<i>To designate that something is cute; also used to show pity.</i>)
Long O	/ow/	oh!	/ow/	"Oh, I didn't see you there!" (<i>Sign of surprise.</i>)
Short Back U	/ʊ/	oogh	/ʊ/	"Oogh, me Tarzan, you Jane." (<i>The sound a gorilla makes.</i>)
Long U	/uw/	ooo!	/uw/	"Ooo, that's pretty." (<i>Enjoyment and pleasure.</i>)
Short U w/ R	/ɜr/	grr!	/gɜr/	"The tiger went grrr!" (<i>Sound a tiger or bear makes.</i>)
Long I	/ay/	hi!	/hay/	"Hi! How are you?" (<i>Common greeting.</i>)
"OY/OI"	/ɔy/	ahoy!	/əhɔy/	"Land ahoy!" (<i>Common term for sailors and pirates.</i>)
"OU"	/aw/	ouch!	/awtʃ/	"Ouch! That hurts!" (<i>Sound used to designate sudden pain; also a simple "ow!" can be used.</i>)

(Kaiser, 2002, p. xix)

Table 4

Native Speaker Utterances as a Vowel Modeling System

	Front	Central	Back
Shifting	/ay/ hi!	/ɔy/ ahoy!	/aw/ ouch!
High	/iy/ wee! /ɪ/ ick		/uw/ ooo! /ʊ/ oogh
Mid	/ey/ hey! /ɛ/ eh	/ʌ/ uh /ɜr/ grr! /ə/	/ow/ oh! /ər/
Low	/æ/ yeah	/ɑ/ ah	/ɔ/ aw

(Kaiser, 2002, p. xix)

This new VMS is ideal for both introducing and reviewing vowel sounds in the classroom. Instructors can go through the NSUs on the chart with students by pronouncing the utterance and asking the students to repeat. Individual contrasts can easily be covered by working on two utterances in contrast, for example, “eh” versus “yeah” for /ɛ/ versus /æ/. The chart with the native speaker utterances also makes it easier to introduce and review a target vowel sound in contrast to neighboring vowels. Native speaker utterances also make error correction in the classroom easier and more effective (for example, “remember this vowel is ‘uh’ as in ‘uh, I don’t know’”). Because the native speaker utterances focus on the vowel sound, it is easier to make the needed transition from the vowel model to the vowel sound in isolation, for example “yeah” to /æ/.

Decisions to Make when Choosing a VMS

Regardless which Vowel Modeling System one chooses, it is important to be aware of some important factors. Simply using a VMS because it is included in the textbook selected for the course could cause ELLs confusion or problems acquiring intelligible North American vowel sounds. First of all, it is important to check if the VMS contains all the vowels that one intends to cover in the class. For example, if a teacher is teaching in a region where the majority of speakers make a distinction between /ɔ/ and /ɑ/, then he or she would probably want to choose a VMS that includes this distinction. Secondly, teachers should check the VMS to see if the models for each vowel are accurate (for the correct vowel sound in your target dialect) and easily distinguishable from other models in the system (remember that minimal pairs can cause confusion.) In the case that the VMS does not include examples that will help ELLs, one may be able to make some modifications to the VMS (change some of the vowel models) so that the VMS better suits course purposes.

Once one has a usable VMS, then there is a need to decide how it will be presented in the classroom. I recommend that the VMS be part of every vowel lesson to give ELLs the most exposure to the vowel models. Vowels in focus should be demonstrated in the context of the whole VMS to reinforce the sounds in contrast to all others. If the vowel models are accurate and easy to remember, then the students will have the benefit of using the VMS as a self-check system both in and out of the classroom. For example, if a student knows that a word requires the Short A sound but is not certain if he or she is pronouncing the sound correctly, he or she can use the vowel model (such as “yeah”) to help refresh his or her memory. After the VMS has been presented, teachers should check to see if the students are making use of the vowel models for their own self-monitoring. If they are not, students may need encouragement to do so and/or the instructor may need to modify the manner in which the VMS is used/presented in the classroom.

Conclusion

Encouraging ELLs to use a VMS for their own self-monitoring is a key element to their success in acquiring intelligible North American vowel sounds. These models can empower students by developing their ability to monitor their own speech and make adjustments to their own pronunciation of difficult vowel sounds. While the use of example and key words is the most common method of modeling vowel sounds for students in textbooks, I maintain that this tradition is not the most pedagogically effective option. Native Speaker Utterances offer a new method for modeling North American vowel sounds in the classroom and may prove much more effective than the memorization of individual words.

Instructors should pay special attention to vowel coverage in the textbooks and materials they select. Once materials are chosen, instructors still need to be able to evaluate the modeling

system and make any needed adjustments to ensure that the VMS will be an effective learning and monitoring tool for students. And finally, decisions need to be made on how to present the VMS in the classroom. With the combination of a good Vowel Modeling System and appropriate presentation of the VMS, students' ability to acquire vowel sounds can increase. Native Speaker Utterances provide a fun and memorable method for modeling, practicing, and remembering the complex system of fifteen tonic vowels in North American English. Grunting and cheering may just be the solution that the ELL classroom needs to avoid the problems of mispronounced and forgettable example words.

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Stressing Over Stress: Re-Analyzing the Stress of Noun Constructions

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Abstract

Pronunciation textbooks often cover the stress of compound nouns, but they most often do so through oversimplification. Other more complex models, such as those by Fudge (1984) and Dickerson (1989), provide more detailed approaches to the stress of noun constructions, but I argue that these models sacrifice the pedagogical ease needed in the classroom. In this article, I propose a new analysis of “noun units” in two categories: “compound nouns” and “noun strings.” This “noun unit” approach allows for a pedagogically effective analysis of complex noun constructions that also accounts for stress in extended discourse.

Compound nouns occur frequently in English—from everyday conversation (cell phone, textbook, birthday present) to academic language (field work, research methods, data table) to professional discourse (business meeting, mortgage lender, stock market). Many pronunciation textbooks address simple compound nouns such as these. A quick survey in Weisman’s *New York Times* October 2012 article “Leaders at Work on Plan to Avert Mandatory Cuts” shows that compound nouns are quite common (e.g., Senate leaders, tax increases, lawmakers, spending cuts, tax code). Weisman’s article includes many other compound nouns and noun constructions that most textbooks do not cover (such as, deficit reduction target, deficit reduction down payment, Bush-era tax cuts, Tax Policy Center, Clinton White House chief of staff). These more complex noun constructions are quite common, yet training in TESL programs and published pronunciation textbooks most often fail to provide the needed tools to help English Language Learners grapple with these constructions.

The examples above establish the need for a theoretical background for re-examining the stress of noun constructions. In this article, I will first present and examine how noun constructions have been handled in current pedagogical materials. This will include a survey of pronunciation textbooks to examine how noun constructions are presented in published materials. I will then present a new model for examining and teaching noun constructions in English. This model will account for stress both in isolation and when placed into discourse. Finally, I will discuss the pedagogical implications of various approaches to teaching stress in noun constructions.

Textbook Survey

English Language Learners (ELLs) often struggle with word stress and sentence stress (sometimes called phrase stress). The stress on compound nouns and other noun constructions is also a difficult feature for ELLs to acquire. Most pronunciation textbooks address compound nouns to some degree (one notable exception from this survey was Brazil, 2007). Many textbooks limit their coverage of compound nouns to only *noun + noun* (Cameron, 2012, pp. 192-193; Dale & Poms, 2005, p. 90; Lujan, 2008, p. 3.25; Miller, 2007, pp. 46-48), while two others add compounds comprised of *adjective + noun* (Beisbier, 1995, pp. 33-34; Gilbert, 2005, p. 40, p. 164). Only two textbooks include explicit coverage of three-word compounds (Hewing, 2007, p. 43; Mosjin, 2009, pp. 78-79).

Other authors present more complex coverage of compound nouns adding compound adverbs, reflexive pronouns, present participles, and verb and preposition combinations, in addition to other compound structures (Grant, 2001, pp. 57-60; Hewings, 2007, pp. 38-43; Lane, 2005, pp. 145-147; Orion, 2012, pp. 25-26; Reed & Michaud, 2005, pp. 61-62). While these authors make several categories of compound nouns more explicit, a few others leave the concept of compound nouns very general, such as Prator and Robinett (1971, p. 21) and then Sheeler and Markey (1991), who define compound nouns as simply being “formed of two words” (p. 25).

Hahn and Dickerson (1999) present one of the most detailed units on compound constructions in their *Speechcraft: Workbook for Academic Discourse* (pp. 128-145). Note that Hahn & Dickerson’s *Speechcraft* is published as a core textbook (*Speechcraft: Discourse Pronunciation for Advanced Learners*, also published in 1999) with an accompanying series of discipline-specific workbooks. The core textbook includes no coverage of compound nouns or

construction stress, but the workbook does. In addition to various categories of compound nouns, their workbook also presents other noun constructions that may be more difficult for learners to stress (names of people, abbreviations, chemical compounds, compound place-names, streets, and buildings). They also include compound numbers and phrasal verbs (a topic briefly touched upon in a few of the other reviewed textbooks, but outside the more narrow focus of this article).

With the notable exception of Hahn and Dickerson (1999), most pronunciation textbooks tend to oversimplify compound nouns and fail to account for the diversity of complex noun constructions that ELLs will regularly encounter in everyday conversation, academic language, and professional discourse. My pedagogical contention is the conflation of all noun constructions into the category of “compounds.” In the next section, I will present two models by Fudge and Dickerson that define two classes of “compounds.” Later in this paper, I will argue for a new approach to noun constructions (which I call **noun units**) that divides them into two separate categories: **compound nouns** and **noun strings**. I will argue that these two categories are more pedagogically beneficial in the ESL classroom and easier for ELLs to use for stress prediction. The eventual goal is to make teaching stress on these noun units less stressful for the teacher, and subsequently easier for the English language learner.

Models of Noun Construction Stress

The textbook survey in the previous section shows how simplified the presentation of compound nouns has been in most pedagogical materials. Another issue is that most textbooks only address compound nouns (primarily *noun + noun*) and very few address complex compound nouns (constructions with more than two elements). Erik Fudge and Wayne B. Dickerson, however, present more complex models for assigning stress in noun constructions. Both scholars place these constructions into two different categories. Erik Fudge (1984) differentiates

compounds with initial stress from **compounds with final stress** (pp. 134-138). Fudge (1984) also includes the categories of “Contextually-Determined Stress-Shift” and “Compounds Involving Bound Forms” (pp. 137-142), which lie outside the more narrow focus of this article. Fudge’s (1984) model for presenting stress on constructions from his first two categories is as follows (in these examples, the number “1” denotes primary stress, while “2” designates secondary stress, and so on):

1) Compounds with Initial Stress

1 2	1 4 3 4 2 4 3 4	1 5 4 5 3 5 4 5 2 5 3
black board	elevator operator	elevator operator training scheme

2) Compounds with Final Stress

2 3 1	2 3 1 3 3	1 3 2
London Road	London Avenue	<i>Exception:</i> London Street

According to Fudge (1984), there are as many as five levels of stress in “elevator operator training scheme.” I would argue that teaching five levels of stress in a noun construction is not pedagogically effective. His second category presents another issue: the exception with “London Street.” I will return to both the issue of too many levels of stress and the “London Street” “exception” when I present my model for teaching noun construction stress.

Wayne B. Dickerson (1989) similarly divides compound nouns into two main categories and assigns each category a different rule (Unit 3, pp. 13-22). Those stressed by the **compound stress rule** place greater stress on the first (of two) elements. Constructions stressed with the **grammatical stress rule** place greater stress on the last element

1) Compound Nouns Stressed by the Compound Stress Rule

3 1 2	1 2 3
a cold front	space shuttle

2) Compound Nouns Stressed by the Grammatical Stress Rule

2 1 3	2 2 1	Exception:	3 1 3 2
Bill Rogers	UFO		Nevada Street

Whereas Fudge's second category focuses on street names, Dickerson has included a proper name and a three-letter abbreviation. As also seen with Fudge, Dickerson notes "Nevada Street" as an "exception." (It should also be noted that "Street" is listed as an "exception" in Beisbier [1995, p. 36] and in Hahn & Dickerson [1999, p. 142].)

Both Fudge and Dickerson highlight the need for a complex approach to analyzing and teaching noun constructions. In the next section, I will argue that any model that teaches construction stress must also account for sentence stress.

The Theoretical Background to Noun Construction Stress

Erik Fudge (1984), in his book *English Word Stress*, notes that "the physical properties which signal stress in English do not enable hearers, even trained phoneticians, to distinguish consistently more than three degrees of stress" (p. 135). It is ironic, then, that Fudge's (1984) own analysis of "elevator operator training scheme" has as many as five levels of stress (p. 135). Fudge's three levels of stress perception have important implications for teaching stress in all environments. If we assume that every sentence or phrase has a primary stress, then there are only two more levels of stress that can be perceived. This means that at the word level, teaching two levels of stress is sufficient. Single-syllable words will either be stressed or not in the

sentence. Typically, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and some function words will be stressed, while most other function words are unstressed (see Dickerson [1989] for his distinction between “loud function words,” which include negatives, question words, and demonstratives—to which we could add possessive pronouns without a noun and reflexive pronouns—and “soft function words” [Unit 1, p. 33]).

If Fudge’s model of three levels of stress perception is correct, then we only need to teach the primary stress of polysyllabic words. Words such as *congratulations*, *compound*, and *antidissestablishmentarianism* contain minor stresses that dictionaries will mark in their entries. My argument is that teaching secondary stress at the word level is ineffective because secondary stresses become almost indistinguishable from unstressed syllables once polysyllabic words are placed in the discourse.

By analogy, teaching secondary stress in compound nouns and other noun constructions is ineffective. Our eventual goal should be to assist ELLs in stressing the appropriate syllable(s) in words and noun constructions, and then adding the sentence or phrase stress as an additional level of stress. For this reason I propose teaching construction stress separate from sentence and phrase stress. Using this new model, all noun constructions will be assigned the same stress pattern regardless of sentence or phrase stress placement; this additional level of stress will be placed upon these constructions once placed into discourse.

A New Model for Noun Construction Stress: Noun Units

In this paper, I am presenting a new model for teaching the stress on noun constructions, called **noun units**. Noun units are broken into two categories: **compound nouns** and **noun strings**. My categories are similar to categories presented by both Fudge (1984) and Dickerson (1989), but the models I present allow for an easier description of complex compound nouns and

“exceptional” cases that they note (such as “Street”). I will also present complex noun units that combine elements of both compound nouns and noun strings. To help teachers explain this model and to assist learners with prediction skills, I suggest that compound nouns be placed in square brackets (e.g., [bus stop]) and that noun strings be underlined (e.g., Grand Boulevard). These simple markings will differentiate compounds nouns from noun strings and will make it easier to analyze complex noun constructions and easier to present them in the classroom.

According to this new model, there are only two levels of stress in all noun units: secondary and tertiary. Secondary stress accounts for the main stress (or stresses) in the noun unit, while the tertiary stresses are all the other syllables that are weaker in prominence. Primary (sentence) stress will then be added on top of this basic binary stress distinction at the construction level. With this model, it will become evident that pronunciation teachers need a new model for teaching noun construction stress.

Compound nouns are most often comprised of a *noun + noun* or an *adjective + noun*, when the adjective does not serve the function as a modifier for the noun. Compound nouns have a single semantic meaning and cannot be truncated or simplified without changing the meaning. For example, “cell phone battery charger” cannot be shorted to “cell phone,” “battery charger,” or “cell phone battery” without changing the semantic field of what the construction signifies. In this model, all compound nouns are analyzed in pairs of elements that are placed into brackets. **Complex compound nouns** are analyzed the same way, with compound nouns serving as elements within another compound noun. Once analyzed this way with brackets, stress assignment is simple. All first elements (those elements with a “[” before them) are given a stress level of “2” on the stressed syllable, and all other syllables will be at the level of “3” (the

primary stress level of “1” will be dealt with later). See the following examples for compound noun analysis and stress assignment.

2 3 [baseball]	2 3 3 3 3 2 3 [elevator [control booth]]	2 3 3 [[ice cream] cone]
2 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 [[elevator operator] [control booth]]	3 2 3 [telephone [[switch board] operator]]	2 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 [[[Noun unit] model] [stress assignment]]

Notice the difference between “elevator control booth” and “ice cream cone.” Both have three elements, but the first has two stresses, while the second has only one. Similarly, “elevator operator control booth” and “telephone switch board operator” both have four elements and two stresses, but the first is stressed on the first and third element, while the second is stressed on the first and second element. By properly breaking down complex compound nouns into their composite parts and marking them with square brackets, stress assignment is easier to predict.

The second category of noun units is noun strings. Noun strings *function* as a single nominal unit and are often proper nouns. These include locations, street names, names of structures, publications, titles, initials, acronyms, group names, people’s names, and fields of study. One difference with noun strings is that some of these may be truncated. For example, “Fairview Heights” may become “Fairview” and still mean the same thing. “The States” is a truncated form of “the United States.” Context, however, will determine which truncated forms are acceptable. In noun strings each element receives a level “2” stress on the stressed syllable (with the exception of articles and prepositions). See the following examples:

2 2 3 3 2 3	2 3 3 2 3 3	3 2 3 2
<u>Saint Louis, Missouri</u>	<u>Michigan Avenue</u>	<u>The [Gateway] Arch</u>
3 2	2 2 2	2 3 2 3
<u>The Arch</u>	<u>CBS</u>	<u>Terry Scott Taylor</u>
		<u>Terry Taylor</u>

Not every element in a noun string will receive stress. Articles, prepositions, and other words typically not stressed in a sentence will also be weak in noun strings. A few other words are commonly weak in noun strings. Both Fudge (1984) and Dickerson (1989) note that street names ending in the word “Street” are “exceptions.” What I propose with noun strings is the concept of the **final weakened element**. Particular words that commonly end noun strings are either fairly generic or so common that they become weakened and are not stressed. Table 1 shows some of these common final weakened elements.

Table 1

Common Final Weakened Elements in Noun Strings

Building	Street	Center	Society
Room	House	Department	J*
	Disease	Syndrome	

(Note that J is only a final weakened element in two-letter combinations: DJ, but JMJ)

The following examples show the effect of final weakened elements in stress assignment of noun strings:

3 2 3 2 3 3 3 3	2 3 3 3	2 3	2 2 2
<u>The Foreign Languages Building</u>	<u>Madison Street</u>	<u>DJ</u>	<u>TMJ</u>
3 3 2 3 3 3 3 3 3 2 3 2 3 3 3 2 3 3		2 3 3 2 3 3 3	
<u>The Humane Society</u> <u>The Humane Society of Iowa</u>		<u>Stix International House</u>	

Notice how “Society” may be stressed or weakened depending on its placement in the noun string.

There are important pedagogical implications for using brackets for compound nouns and underlining for noun strings. Many complex noun units will embed compound nouns into noun strings (as seen earlier with “the Gateway Arch”). Imagine the following title: “A Coffee Lover’s Guide to LA Coffee Shops.” Both “coffee lover” and “coffee shops” are compound nouns. “LA” is also a noun string (an abbreviation) that is embedded in a longer noun string. The analysis of this title (remember that titles are noun strings also) would be:

3 2 3 3 3 2 3 2 2 2 3 3
<u>A [Coffee Lover’s] Guide to LA [Coffee Shops]</u>

The use of brackets and underlining in the classroom allows teachers an easier way to break down longer noun units and a useful way for ELLs to predict the stress placement on these complex noun units.

Noun Construction Stress in Discourse

Earlier in this article, I argued for teaching construction stress (and word stress) only at the secondary (stressed) and tertiary (unstressed) levels. Once words, noun units, and other constructions (e.g., multi-word verbs) have been assigned secondary and tertiary stress, primary stress at the discourse (or phrase) level may then be added. Primary stress is generally placed on

the last content word (noun, verb, adjective, or adverb) in the phrase. (This primary stress will shift in cases where the final content word is old, repeated, or assumed information; in cases of contrasting stress or parallel structures; or for the purposes of highlighting information. With the focus of this article being the stress of noun constructions, more detailed rules for primary stress placement at the phrase level will not be covered.) If the last content word is a noun unit, primary stress assignment is fairly easy to predict and teach. The last secondary stress is simply raised to the primary stress level (in other words, the last “2” in the phrase is changed to a “1”). Note that in cases where the primary stress occurs earlier than the last content word, all secondary stresses after the primary stress should be weakened to the tertiary level. This method avoids the necessity to teach construction stress in both stressed and unstressed positions for the phrase (as is done in Dickerson’s [1989] model). Note how the primary stress on compound nouns and noun strings can change based on their placement in the phrase.

2 2 2 3 3 2 3 3 1 3 3	2 2 2 3 3 1 3 3 3
Let’s play [baseball] on <u>Madison Avenue</u> .	Let’s play [baseball] on <u>Madison Street</u> .
2 3 3 2 3 3 3 2 3 1 3	2 3 3 3 3 2 3 1 3
<u>Madison Avenue</u> is good for [baseball].	<u>Madison Street</u> is good for [baseball].
3 2 3 3 3 3 2 1	3 2 3 3 3 3 1 3
My [English teacher] is <u>ML</u> .	My [English teacher] is <u>DJ</u> .
2 2 3 3 1 3 3	2 3 3 3 1 3 3
<u>ML</u> is a [space cadet].	<u>DJ</u> is a [space cadet].
2 2 3 3 3 2 3 3 3 3 3	2 3 3 3 3 1 3 3 3
This section of the article is about [[[noun unit] model] [stress assignment]]	

The implication for teaching primary stress in this manner is that it makes the placements of primary stress easier to place on noun strings, compound nouns, complex compound nouns, and

complex noun units (those that embed compound nouns within noun strings). Notice the difference in phrase stress on this complex compound noun:

3 2 3 2 3 3 3 3 1
My [[cell phone] [battery charger]] is dead.

3 2 2 3 2 3 1 3 3 3 3
I can't find my [[cell phone] [battery charger]].

In the complex compound noun “cell phone battery charger,” the primary phrase stress falls on the second stressed elements when it is the last content word (as in the second example). Most pedagogical materials teach that the first element of a compound noun has the strongest stress. This is primarily because most textbooks ignore complex compound nouns. Note how the following would sound awkward to most native speakers:

3 2 2 3 1 3 3 3 3 3
*I can't find my [[cell phone] [battery charger]].

Future Research

This article presents a new model for teaching noun constructions that simplifies the process while allowing the prediction of stress on more complex noun units. I have justified the need for this approach based on the presentation of compound nouns in current ESL pronunciation textbooks. My primary contention is that most pedagogical materials have long oversimplified noun constructions. Corpus-based research into noun constructions would further assist to see how frequently various complex noun constructions occur in English.

Research into the variability of stress placement on noun units by native speakers would also be useful. The common noun string “ER” (the abbreviation for Emergency Room) appears to have variable stress depending on the speaker. The common stress placement seems to categorize this as a noun string (typical of abbreviations), yet hospital workers tend to reinterpret

“ER” as a compound noun and apply a compound noun stress pattern to this abbreviation. Such knowledge could be helpful to those who teach English for Specific Purposes and may also help account for other “exceptions” or the variability that naturally occurs in language. But finally, it would be useful to test different pedagogical approaches to teaching stress on noun constructions to ELLs. Data on both the accuracy of prediction and production, and especially data on the retention of these skills would help future teachers determine which methods are the most effective in the short and long term.

Pedagogical Applications of the Noun Unit Model

Compound nouns, noun strings, and other complex noun units occur naturally and frequently in English discourse. ELLs using academic or professional discourse will encounter a variety of noun units more frequently. This makes teaching stress placement on noun constructions necessary for any course that addresses pronunciation, public speaking, or oral communication skills. This new noun unit model makes it easier for both teachers to explain and ELLs to understand the distinction between compound nouns and noun strings. Additionally, teaching only two levels of stress at the noun construction level simplifies the process. Then levels of stress that would not be audibly distinguishable in spoken discourse are ignored so that focus may be placed only on those features that are most significant for intelligibility (note the complexity of Fudge’s [1984] model).

The clear division between compound nouns and noun strings provides ELLs the needed tools to break down and predict stress patterns on the more complex noun constructions common in everyday English. This model also helps with exceptional cases such as final weakened elements (such as “Street” and “Room”). More importantly, these final weakened elements are presented as a class of common nouns that are commonly weakened when in the final position.

This teaches ELLs a *principle* that may apply to other final weakened elements in their field of study or employment setting rather than simply presenting a list of exceptions to memorize.

More importantly, the binary stress distinction at the noun construction level is easier to teach (as it can match the skills of teaching word stress and stress placement for phrase rhythm). Stress at the phrase or discourse level can then be taught as the third level of stress distinction used to mark the end of the phrase or to highlight information that is new, contrasting, or brought into focus. In other words, this binary stress teaching approach to noun constructions integrates itself into a full curriculum of pronunciation skills.

For teachers, it is important to avoid the oversimplified presentations of compound nouns (that compounds are only two-elements long). It is also important to be cautious using more complex models (as found in Fudge [1984], Dickerson [1989], and Dickerson & Hahn [1999]). While these models provide a more thorough coverage of noun constructions, their models may be too complex for ELLs while at the same time not properly addressing more complex noun constructions. This new approach to teaching stress on noun constructions combines a more specialized model to account for more complex constructions while at the same time simplifying its pedagogy. The end result makes teaching and learning stress less stressful for teachers and learners alike.

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