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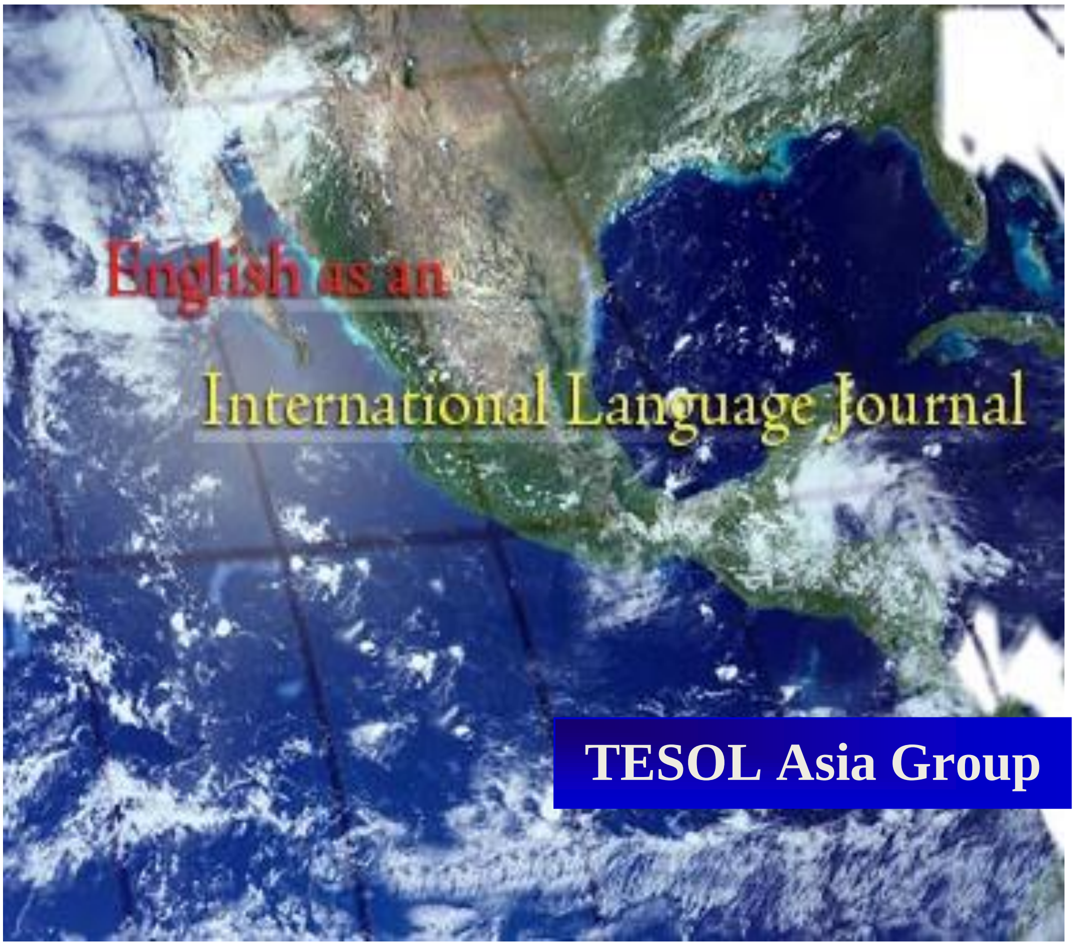

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Foreword

Welcome to the November 2014 issue of the Journal of English as an International Language!

The engaging array of research agendas and insights captured in this issue resonates with EILJ's resolve and remit to nurture a plurality of approaches and conceptualizations in its domain of inquiry. It is our fervent belief that such exercises could provide the required impetus and synergy that EILJ needs to democratize and dehegemonize the use of English across the cultures of Asia and farther afield. This is both central to and synonymous with our pedagogic aspirations and practices in the teaching of EIL.

Immaculee Harushimana's paper, "English Instruction in Burundi Elementary Schools", sets the tone and tenor for this issue. She uses her well-anchored theoretical resolve to examine the problematic nature that encompasses the implementation of English instruction in Burundi schools. Drawing on available research on the state of (English) language education in East Africa and the status of English in the world, she alerts us in no uncertain terms as to how the current misguided, as well as the imposed implementation of English in Burundi schools has generated scepticism among Burundian linguists and language teacher educators. On the basis of the evidence presented in the paper, she argues that the situation in Burundi schools can serve as a convincing "lead-in" for understanding the problems of social exclusion in most African and other developing nations, where either English or another ex-colonial language is implemented as a third language of literacy. The paper offers an interesting angle on policy implications for language-in-education policy development in multilingual contexts, particularly in developing nations and its pedagogical implications.

Chi-an Tung and Shan-mao Chang's joint paper, "Exploring Possible Selves: An Exploration of Tertiary EFL Students' Learning Motivation in Taiwan", examines the motivational construct of EFL tertiary students and how it relates to their English proficiency, language use and learning behaviour. The authors have been discernibly innovative in their theoretical application in that they have been able to synchronize the affiliable and affinitive aspects of Markus and Nurius's (1986) Possible Selves Theory and Dörnyei's (2009) propositions about Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self . This has infused a particular dynamism in their study thereby pointing to the significance of the five factors that appear to constitute the motivational construct of 866 Taiwanese university freshman students: successful knowledgeable self, communicative self-reaching out, instrumentality, requirements and academic achievements, and immediate needs for survival. The authors believe that although these factors are synonymous with their students' extrinsic motivation, their degree of internalization could vary and that the first two factors point to a moderately high correlation. Given the increasing scale and scope of scholarly interests in motivational studies in language teaching, EILJ hopes that the pedagogical implications and the future research directions stated in the paper will provoke further thinking and inquiry on the lines examined and explored in the paper.

Yang Gao's paper, "Language Teacher Beliefs and Practices: A Historical Review", comes across as a well-positioned historical narrative filled with a host of issues and insights that underlie our understanding of teacher beliefs and values in language teaching. Referring to studies that are both informative and inviting, the author points to a paucity of more inclusive research into language teacher beliefs. In light of this, she is convinced that the current store of scholarly wisdom in the area appears largely to be reductive and restrictive in its focus. Given that the relationship between teacher beliefs and actual teaching is an interactive and complex one, the paper underscores the need for more varied and in-depth approaches that would emphasise language teachers' beliefs and practices on other specific aspects of language teaching such as speaking, listening, writing and vocabulary and the correlation between teachers' beliefs and their classroom actions. With the advent of interdisciplinary perspectives as well as the sociocultural theory in language teaching research, the author feels that we should be factoring in facilitative contexts for teacher cognition studies as these can help investigate the ever-complexifying issues such as identity, voice, emotions, motivation, and agency. This could perhaps help mitigate the monotony and boredom in belief inventory and case studies, which are neither facilitative nor supportive of more reflective, reflexive and interpretative approaches that are needed to examine the various issues in the field of teachers' beliefs and practices.

Yangyu Xiao's paper entitled, "Exploring the learning potential of peer-assessed dictation in the Chinese context", investigates students' views on peer-assessed dictation in two Chinese high schools via a qualitative study. The author, who is one of EILJ's editors, has used her alternate discourse of reckoning to spotlight as well as chronicle her students' perceptions and growing sense of involvement. In light of this, the accruing novelty of the study is particularly appealing. Given the culture and context of the study, it is indeed edifying to note how the author has used her sensitivities to zero in on her students' sensitivities, views, intuitions and hunches. Having come to terms with the issues and insights that constitute the benefits and constraints of student peer-assessed dictation, the author accentuates the efficacy of her students' active involvement in assessment and the potential it has for promoting the prevalence of pedagogies of voice, agency and inter-subjectivity in EIL. Needless to say that the paper boldly affirms the positive relationships(s) between learning and assessment, it makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of peer assessment from students' perspectives. The two examples drawn from the real world classroom provide sufficient basis for the author to voice her confirmations in a distinctly persuasive tone given their productive dimensions. This, we hope would serve as rationale and motivation for our readership to accord student involvement the priority it deserves in their assessment practices.

Al-Mohanna, Ayedh Dhawi Mohammed’s paper, “Towards an Effective Intercultural Training for English Majors at King Saud University”, makes a call for developing intercultural communicative competence among Saudi students majoring in English with specific reference to cognition, affect, and behavior. In keeping with this, the author makes a determined attempt to unpack the cultural contents of the current syllabi taught to EFL BA level students at one of Saudi Arabia's leading universities. The ensuing discussions and narratives signpost his grasp of those theoretical possibilities that reinforce the prevalence of specific intercultural teaching as well as learning activities which are vital to a syllabus of the scope and scale in question here. The curricular audit that the author undertakes in the scheme of the paper has all the makings of a faithful self-analysis that we associate with language educators who wish to function responsibly and professionally. Having pointed out the gaps in research into intercultural communication, the author alerts his readership as to how teaching a language in isolation from its culture can result in miscommunication and misunderstanding between interactants. In light of this, he believes that any effective approach to intercultural communicative competence focused on the teaching and learning of a foreign language and culture, should offer new possibilities with which the learners and teachers can become mediators. While the author believes that his paper has provided a framework for coming to terms with the intercultural dimensions in language teaching, he would like put the issues and insights presented in this paper to test in a full-blown investigative/empirical study using an appropriate methodology. In this regard the paper should be seen as a ground-clearing operation.

Nadezhda Chubko’s paper, “Gender-Based Interaction Differences in EFL Students’ Approach to a Communicative Task Performance: Conversational Analysis of Male-Male and Female-Female Kazakhstani Students’ Dialogues in the EFL Classroom Setting”, reports on an investigation into the influence of students’ gender on their accomplishment of a communicative task in the English as a foreign language (EFL) in a Kazakhstan classroom setting. The analysis of 29 transcripts of EFL classroom interactions of male-male and female-female groups featured in the study points to the differences in male and female students’ approaches towards a dialogue task accomplishment. These findings, the author believes can explain how boys and girls approach a communicative task and can offer suggestions to the EFL teachers on how to make the communicative task more efficient for the students of different gender. In light of this, the study adds interesting dimensions to our understanding of learning and underscores the need to consider gender when assigning a communicative task to EFL learners. Based on the findings that the study has yielded, the author feels that male-male groups are efficient for the practicing of the learned material, but appear to face certain obstacles while preparing for the communicative task; especially, the one that requires the work with the new texts. In contrast, girls might have some flaws, such as stops or inclusion of L1 interjections, on the presentation stage as their dialogues are a consequence of a collaborative work in which they have not decided on their turns yet. The paper suggests that male and female students could contribute to each other's' approach when engaged in a communicative task accomplishment and produce better learning outcomes. Given the novelty of the paper, it will be a rewarding experience to further this inquiry to ascertain whether or not these interactional gender differences in a communicative task accomplishment vary across different age groups.

In closing, I wish to applaud the resolve and resilience with which the contributing authors of this issue have showcased their alternate discourses of current reckoning. Such endeavors are central to EILJ's declared mission of creating "a heterogeneous global English speech community, with a heterogeneous English and different modes of competence" (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 211). Given this, I am certain that the issues and insights discussed in this issue would serve as a pathfinder to all of us, who could otherwise be stranded in a "methodological wasteland of EIL". Read on!

Dr Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam,
Chief Editor

English Instruction in Burundi Elementary Schools

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Abstract

With the country's recent integration to the East African Community (EAC), Burundi was unexpectedly required to implement Kiswahili and English instruction in primary grades, thus joining a worldwide trend among countries with no prior colonial ties to English to embrace it as their additional language. How will a country which has barely recovered from the devastation of two decades of civil war afford the costs involved in the design and implementation of two foreign language curriculums with? This article draws from available research on the state of (English) language education in East Africa and the status of English in the world to: 1) explore the inhibiting factors for a successful implementation of English instruction in Burundi elementary schools; 2) predict the possible influence of East African English on Burundian children's English acquisition; and, 3) propose strategies to ensure that elementary teachers receive adequate training before being assigned to teach a new and foreign language to young learners. The discussion concludes with some policy implications for language-in-education policy development in multilingual contexts, particularly in developing nations.

Keywords: EFL, lingua franca, global language, monolingual, trilingual, unqualified teachers

Introduction

Due to the fact that English has acquired international status as a global lingua franca (Abdullah & Chaudhary, 2012) "closely associated with the leading edge of global scientific, technological, economic and cultural developments" (Graddol, 1997, p. 4), a lot of countries with no prior colonial ties to English have adopted it as their additional language. Burundi, a developing country with a seriously ailing economy, is one of those countries. Although classified as a monolingual country due to the fact that 90% of the population communicates almost exclusively in Kirundi, Burundi's government has officially endorsed and authorized the teaching of English in addition to Kirundi and French in the country's secondary and tertiary education, and even in the national media (Niedzelski, 1983). As a landlocked country, whose nearest ports of access are located in English speaking countries (Tanzania and Kenya), much of Burundi's international trade must be conducted in English, providing a reason for the official promotion of English. In 2007, in a rather unanticipated way, Burundi officials had to extend English instruction to elementary grades. This rushed decision has generated skepticism among Burundian linguists, particularly language teacher educators.

The official acceptance of Burundi and Rwanda in 2007 into the East African Community (EAC) (Cocks, 2007) elevated the status of English above a mere foreign language. Among key conditions for being accepted in the EAC, both countries were required to teach Kiswahili and English in elementary schools. Under pressure from the EAC, the government of Burundi hastily amended its almost nonexistent language-in-education policy (Nizonkiza, 2006; Rwantabagu, 2011), authorizing the teaching of English and Kiswahili as new disciplines within the primary school curriculum. In a context where "95% of the teachers have no knowledge of Kiswahili whatsoever" while "almost all of them have very limited competence in English and even less in how to transmit it to primary school learners" (Rwantabagu, 2011, p. 471), it is feared that that the average child may end up not mastering any of the languages being taught. This article draws from available research on the state of (English) language education in East Africa and the global status of English: 1) to explore the inhibiting factors for a successful implementation of English instruction in Burundi elementary schools; 2) predict the influence that East Africans' use of world Englishes may have on Burundian children's English acquisition; and 3) to propose strategies to ensure that elementary teachers receive adequate training in English before being assigned to teach the language to young learners who, most likely, will only encounter it in the classroom. The discussion concludes with some policy implications for language-in-education policy development in multilingual contexts, particularly in developing nations.

Conceptual framework

As the critical age hypothesis stipulates (Lenneberg, 1967), learning a second language at a young age has significant benefits, namely, the chance to overcome L1 phonological interference which diminishes rapidly after puberty. It has also been hypothesized that to acquire native like proficiency in a second language, a learner must have access to a native English speaking environment. Whereas English has been embraced internationally, only a handful of countries can claim it as a national language. Those countries, which Kachru (2006) referred to as the "inner circle," include the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, in the case of English. It is very difficult for developing countries from "the expanding circle", like Burundi, to facilitate the implantation of natives of these countries. Native English speakers may not find it practical to live in a country where their language is not used; moreover, the precarious living conditions in those countries may be difficult for people from developed countries to adapt to. Also worth mentioning is the fact that that in some countries, political instability constitutes a major isolating factor.

Another complicating factor, and perhaps a critical one, is that the notion of what constitutes "model native English speaker" has undergone a major reconceptualization. Today, the native English speaker attributes have become broadened due to the adoption of English as an international language (EIL) (McArthur, 2001). The situation was further intensified by the rise of the World Englishes movement, through which English varieties spoken in some former British colonies (e.g., Singapore, Kenya, India, and Nigeria), those that Kachru (2006) refers to as the "outer circle," have claimed and earned legitimacy. Thus, the presence of three competing kinds of English (i.e., Standard British English (SBE), Standard US English (SUSE), and "Standard World Englishes" (SWE), constitutes today's major challenge to the "native English speaker" myth. Whereas Kachru's concentric circles model "locates the 'native speakers' and native English speaking countries in the center of the global use of English and, by implication, the source of models of correctness, the best teachers, and English language and goods consumed by those in the periphery" (Graddol, 1997, p. 10), there are fore signs that such a model will not be the most useful in the twenty-first century. Today those who speak English alongside other languages outnumber its native speakers and some of them, as the Non-native English Speaking teachers' movement (NNEST) supports, have demonstrated the ability to communicate in and teach English as effectively as their native-speaker counterparts (Braine, 1999). With the achieved recognition of World English varieties as legitimate English, the number of people from expanding and inner circle countries with native-like English competency may drop. Whereas those English varieties have been adopted as the medium of instruction in outer circle countries' school systems, research shows that the grammar of World Englishes at times deviates significantly from the standard grammar of native English varieties, as the example of East African English provided below indicates. As a matter of fact, there is compelling evidence supporting that the English proficiency level in some outer circles schools is not at par and that most elementary teachers are not English proficient (Njoroge & Nyamasyo, 2008; Rugemalira, 2005). The alarming decline in English instruction in former British colonies, such as in East Africa, gives reason for questioning the likelihood of its successful implementation in early grades in expanding circle countries, like Burundi, where English is almost solely and exclusively encountered in the classroom.

Can East African Teachers Be Good English Models for Burundian Elementary Students?

Despite Burundi's consent to EAC's requirement to implement English instruction in elementary grades, many problems are likely to interfere with this project's successful realization, including poverty, practice of monolingualism, low national literacy rate, and lack of qualified teachers due to the overall regional decline in English proficiency.

Whereas Burundi may count on the exchange of teachers among EAC members to find English and Kiswahili teachers, there are rising concerns among East African linguistic and educational scholars (Batibo, 1990; Kajubi, 1971; Njogu, 2002; Rugemalira, 2005) regarding the regional decline in English proficiency and the precariousness of elementary teacher preparation. Historically, formerly colonized African countries have been faced with the dilemma of promoting education either in an African lingua franca which will only be recognized in Africa (i.e., Kiswahili in East and South Africa), or continuing to provide education through ex-colonial languages (i.e., French, English, or Portuguese), the mastery of which is becoming increasingly questionable (Kioko & Muthwii, 1999; Rubagumya 1990, 1993). This dilemma has led to what is perceived by many African educational critics as the decline of the language policy and pedagogy in the African educational system.

There seems to be a shared feeling among East African leaders and language policy critics that education in general is in decline, and that the literacy in ex-colonial languages (e.g., English and French) has gone down. Commonly cited factors of the decline include lack of qualified teachers, shortage of resources, and generalized poverty (Batibo, 1990; Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2003; Rajabu & Ngonyani, 1993; Rubagumya, 1990). However, I also support Njogu's (2002) observation that the imbalance between multilingualism and multilingual literacy and the unsuccessful domestication of English have had a significant impact on African students' poor academic performance and low literacy attainment in the English language. This situation raises an important point about the legitimization of Institutionalized Varieties of English (IVES), such as East African English, especially in this era of globalization, when scientific, economic, and educational competition is carried through in International English.

Given the global necessity to communicate intelligibly with linguistically diverse partners, it might be important to ensure that the teaching of localized English and its use as a medium of instruction does not become a hindrance to effective communication. Careful attention needs to be paid to the possible interplay between poor quality of formal education, teachers' lack of proficiency in the English medium, and the development of an East African English variety with deviant features from Standard English (Bobda, 2004). A close look at some features of East African English (EAfE) provides an illustration of how deviant a localized English variety can be from conventional Standard Written English (Gaskell, 1998).

East African English and New Englishes

Recently, with the rise of the New Englishes movement (Platt, Weber, & Ho, 1984), there has been an emerging scholarship focused on establishing linguistic evidence to prove the legitimacy of East African English (Buregeya, 2006; Mwangi, 2004; Schmied, 1991). The East African component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-EA) has made possible the characterization of East African English (Schmied, 1991) as a distinct type of English, not to be confused with West African English or, by extension, any other institutionalized English varieties (Crystal, 1998).

In the case of ex-colonial languages, the Africanization of a western language implies the integration of *Africanisms* (Bokamba, 1992) and other features unique to the African discourse. By *Africanism*, Bokamba meant "any English construction that reflects a structural property of an African language" (p. 126). It is the pervasive presence of Africanisms in the English discourse of African people that provided basis for advocating the African English Variety. Adversely, research has revealed that the occurrence of localized English forms in writing is judged as incorrect English usage (Higgins, 2003) by native and near-native users of native varieties of English (NVEs). As the World Englishes movement keeps on fighting for the recognition of New Englishes as legitimate versions of English, it is important to project the influence that the regional expansion of IVEs in developing nations will have on these countries' effective participation in global competition.

It has already been mentioned earlier in this discussion that East African leaders and educational researchers are worried about the future of education and the decline of English proficiency in primary and secondary schools. The legitimization of IVES risks deepening the decline. The fact that a nativized English version may be legitimized and claimed by a given society as a linguistic identity marker (e.g., Nigerian English, Indian English, Kenyan English, etc.) does not necessarily make it correct. Examples taken from East African English help clarify this issue further.

Sample Features of Kenyan English

According to Buregeya (2006), the following structures taken from Schmied's (1991) study are considered as typical Kenyan English. From a NVE/near-NVE educator perspective, however, all the sentences represent grave violations of Standard English usage.

a. Use of *be* + verb-*ing* constructions with linking and stative verbs: I *was* not *liking* the food in the hotel.
b. Overgeneralization of the *-s* plural marker to mass nouns: He had too many *luggages*.
c. Omission of articles and other determiners: I am going to — post-office.
d. Use of an invariant question tag form: He *came* here, *isn't it?*

Although the deviations from NVE in the above sentences do not affect the deep meaning, they may constitute a disruption for native and near-native speakers of English, as they violate both the syntactic rules of English sentence formation and the morphological rules of the Standard English language. The fact that the users of these varieties, including members of the educated class, perceive these constructions as normal usage can be problematic, as some educational critics have observed (Kioko & Muthwii, 2001; Njoroge & Nyamasyo, 2008) .

In his study of educated Kenyans' perceptions of correct and incorrect English, Buregeya (2006) confirmed that the grammar usage in the underlined phrases below was endorsed as typical of Kenyan English:

1. Please, *type for me* this letter (60% correct score); I will collect it in the afternoon. (Irregularity: Prepositional object precedes direct object; the accurate form should be *"type this letter for me.")*
2. — Majority of people (96% correct score) in Nairobi *oftenly* mix up to three languages. (Irregularity: Lack of article, as in *"The* majority*...;"* faulty adverb derivation from another adverb *"often")*
3. The course will enable them — improve their language skills. (Irregularity: Missing infinitive marker *"to;"* the accurate form should be "*...*enable them *to* improve…"*)*
4. Both texts have quite a number of words *which are easy to find the meaning* (66% correct score). (Irregularity: missing *'for"/"whose"* in the relative clause; the accurate form should be "…words *whose* meanings are easy to find, or "which are easy to find the meaning *for"*)
5. If you do that *anyhowly* (63% correct score), you *cannot be able* to succeed. (Irregularity: Faulty adverb derivation from another adverb *"anyhow;*" redundant double modal use: *cannot be able to;* the correct usage should be *"cannot succeed")*
6. Her *second born* — (97% correct score) is studying in *primary* —, while she herself is doing *secretarial* — (89% correct score). (Irregularity: Adjectives are inadequately used as nouns; the omitted head nouns were needed to convey a clear meaning. Thus, the accurate forms should be "second born *child*," "primary *school*", and "secretarial *course*")

Evidence that these violations are typical of Kenyan English discourse was further researched and confirmed by Mwangi (2004) and Njoroge and Nyamasyo (2008). In their study of elementary teachers' discourse, Njoroge and Nyamasyo found that the teachers' discourse deviated significantly from the British standard variety which was supposed to be the norm of correctness in Kenyan schools (Kioko & Muthwii, 2001). The authors raised incorrect patterns similar to those that were highlighted in Buregeya's (2006) study. These include:

1. *Pronoun copying*
   e.g., Soi's grandmother **she** took him to the bus stop because Soi had to leave early in the morning. The grandmother **she** feared that Soi would be attacked. It was still very dark… The containers **they** were being lifted up (KIRMG 2)

2. *The skipping of articles*
   e.g., — rat is a very small animal and — lion is a big animal. So — lion, no — rat said…. We have big animals like— elephant, — lion and so on. — elephant is bigger than — rhino. (KARFNG 40)

In the examples highlighted in (2), both definite (i.e., *the*) and indefinite articles (*e.g., a/an*) were omitted throughout.

Evidence that these patterns are characteristic of Kenyan English was further confirmed by the fact that they were also identified in highly prestigious Kenyan newspapers, such as the *East African Standard* (EASt.), *Kenya Times* (KTimes), and the *Daily Nation* (DN). Identified ungrammaticalities include:

1. *Redundant or non-standard use of prepositions*
   e.g. To them, there is nothing wrong *in* this (EASt.) The trio were charged ... for violently robbing Kanduyi Member of Parliament, Mr. Wafula Wamunyinyi, — sh. 150,000 in cash, his Mercedez Benz vehicle and ... (*KTimes*)
2. *Article dropping*
   e.g. The subalterns may regard obscenity as — normal part of their discourse. (*EASt.)*
3. *Use of continuous tense with stative verbs (e.g., understand, remember, know, like, have, etc.)*
   e.g. Whatever doubts this "matatu" (transportation van) tout had as to the state of his being, there is one thing he must unmistakably *be knowing*: That he has been nabbed. (*EASt*.)
4. *The use of resumptive pronouns (pronoun copying)*
   e.g. He goes to the shopping centre every day and orders for *himself* half a kilo of roast meat, which he escorts *it* with six beers. *(DN)*
5. *Non-application of subject-auxiliary inversion in direct questions*
   e.g. […] "Oh, you women, you must have done something to provoke him. *You are* afraid he'll kill you*?* Don't be silly, this is your 'baba watoto' (father)". (*DN*)

It can be hypothesized that originally these incorrect forms were transmitted by the very people that learners and the average people, with little or no education, look up to as intellectual role models, such as journalists and teachers. Most likely, some of the "miseducated" students went on to become future teachers and imparted to their students the erroneous English forms that they themselves inherited. Thus the East African English variety took shape and underwent further localization, which eventually led to an overall decline in English usage and in the overall quality of education throughout the region.

The English Teacher Crisis in East African Education

Both educational critics and applied linguistics researchers in East Africa seem to agree that poor language teacher training is the major cause of the decline of English as the medium of education, and the resulting low quality of primary and secondary education overall (Batibo, 1990; Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2003; Njogu, 2002.; Rajabu & Ngoyami, 1993). Interestingly, neither the medium of instruction dilemma in former British colonies nor the lack of qualified teachers of English seems to be a new problem. Testimonies from as far back as during the colonial era allege that the British colonial masters were reticent to allow the African people to acquire proper English. Mazrui and Mazrui (1993) described the English (people) as "less keen to spread their language; [that] they preferred language policies that would limit the dissemination of their language among their colonial subjects" (p. 286). Bobda (2004) later supported Mazrui and Mazrui's observation in his discussion of the linguistic apartheid, "which," he explains, "consisted in driving Africans away from the language, first by limiting access to formal education, then by not showing much enthusiasm for teaching them the language" (p. 19).

Despite the noted poor exposure to English, Africans still opted for the implementation of the use of the English medium at the elementary level. In Uganda, for example, Mackenzie (1959) recalled a time when "scarcely one teacher in five was considered by the Education Department qualified to teach through English" (p. 219). The author evoked the cynicism of leaders of certain African territories, who felt "that an uncertificated [sic] teacher knows far more than his pupils, and that the cry for knowledge cannot be ignored merely because high standards are still beyond reach" (p. 219). While Africans should not be entirely blamed for the situation, the truth is that African instruction through the English medium was shaky and the language transmission flawed from the start, according to Mackenzie's report. No good results can be expected from teachers who were seen writing "glaring errors in grammar and spelling … on the blackboard for all to copy" (p. 219).

Recent curriculum and language policy studies in post-colonial Africa have deplored the deteriorated state of English and its teaching in East African primary and secondary schools. In Tanzania, the situation reached a point where applied linguistics scholars proposed the replacement of English with Kiswahili as the medium of instruction (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 1995; Rugemalira, 2005). Apparently, the main reason why the Head of the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics at the University of Dar es Salaam advocated the use of Kiswahili as the language of instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 1995) was to avoid that children continue to learn incorrect English from their incompetent teachers. It is only understandable that ill-prepared teachers, such as described by Rugemalira (2005) below, will produce ill-prepared students.

Rugemalira (2005) observed that elementary teachers are recruited from the Grades A and B/C pool of teacher candidates. Grade A consists of candidates who have completed Secondary Four (four years of lower secondary), and taken one to two years of teacher training. Grade B/C category is composed of primary-seven graduates with up to two years of teacher training. According to the Tanzanian language-in-education policy, these teachers may only have three to four years of English as a subject.

From a Ugandan perspective, a similar break down of the primary teacher training curriculum was provided by Kajubi (1971). Like Rugemalira, Kajubi observed that in 1967 in Uganda, the primary teacher taskforce included Grade I, with only four to six years of primary education plus two years of professional training; and Grade II, with a basic education of seven or eight years plus four years of training. Linguistically, Kajubi (1971) notes, Grade I teachers "read and write only their vernaculars" (p. 201). Kenya seems to be in a similar situation, with 30.5% of the primary teacher personnel being untrained, and less than 28 % having the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) (Kajubi, 1971).

Despite the complaints about the poor quality of teachers, some African school leaders do not see the recruitment of native English teachers as a solution to the crisis. For example, while admitting that teachers at Kibangu English Medium Primary School "have less than perfect command of the English language" (Rugemalira, 2005, p. 80), its principal firmly stood by the principle that, "It is by no means ideal that the teachers should *not* [emphasis mine] understand the language of pupils" (p. 81).Under the conditions described above, when so-called African English speaking countries themselves are concerned about the low English literacy of their elementary teachers, one can only wonder what kind of teachers will be supplied to Burundi.

In the context of today's expanded East African Community regional integration, there is no doubt that the exchange of teachers between member nations will intensify, particularly given EAC's requirement of Burundi and Rwanda to implement the teaching of English and Kiswahili in elementary schools. Since, as it was noted earlier, Burundi elementary teachers barely possess basic knowledge of English, the country might need to recruit teachers from Tanzania, Uganda or Kenya to fill the void. This arrangement is likely to engender serious problems due to the fact that the supplied teachers have not even achieved competency in "Standard" East African English which itself deviates in grammar from the Standard International or NVE grammar. Additionally, they may not have the knowledge of Kirundi, the students' native language, which is indispensable for the scaffolding of L2 instruction especially in a foreign language setting. As Ndayipfukamiye (1996) and Eisemon, Prouty and Schwille (1989) rightly observed, both Burundian children and teachers rely on the code switching strategy in order to elucidate and process meaning originally expressed in the foreign language. Evidently, well-thought strategies are indispensable and need to be given priority if the

Burundian government is serious about promoting a solid foundation in English instruction in elementary grades likely to lead to competency in International English.

Strategies for Implementing English Instruction in Primary Grades in EFL Settings

Confronted with EAC members' unbending condition to either implement the teaching of Kiswahili and English in primary grades or be denied acceptance to the Community (SIDInt, 2012), Burundi officials were left with no option but to agree to the challenge. After all, Burundi had been implementing a trilingual education policy since the 1970's and made its intention clear in 1981 that "the ambition of the Burundi government was to make the country trilingual in Kirundi, French and English" (Niedzielski 1981, p. 219). The idea of a possible implementation of English instruction in Burundi elementary schools could be predicted from the now prevailing English language curriculum. According to Nizonkiza "English [...] is taught as a discipline from the 6th form in public or government owned secondary schools and even earlier in some private schools. Today some private schools teach English at the primary school level" (2006). The only major issue is that nationwide implementation of the English curriculum in lower elementary grades was not on Burundi's immediate agenda.

Given that Burundi does not have qualified personnel to teach the recommended languages in elementary grades, using East African teachers is the likely option despite the predictable classroom communication breakdown since the teachers and the students will not have a shared scaffolding language (i.e., either the native language or the first language of literacy). While the imported teachers may be familiar with English and Kiswahili, Burundian elementary students can only communicate comfortably in Kirundi, as it is holds a dual status as the national language and the first language of literacy.

A rigorous language-in-education policy developed from the inside needs to be established if the Burundian government is to prevent a schooling and educational debacle likely to result from the execution of EAC mandate to implement English and Kiswahili instruction in a predominately monolingual society, with moderate opening to the outside world. To that end, strategic measures that can be recommended include:

- encouraging a close collaboration between Burundian curriculum design departments and the new ministry in charge of the East African Community to ensure that the new curriculum is primarily based on the local funds of knowledge;
- providing English and teacher training to repatriated Burundian refugees from Kenya and Tanzania so that they can aid elementary teachers in the teaching of English and Kiswahili;

- recruiting Tanzanian and Ugandan high school students from neighboring areas, whose local languages are close to Kirundi, to do their internship in Burundi elementary schools;
- implementing summer English immersion courses for Burundian elementary teachers and require the same from prospective non-Burundian elementary English teacher recruits in Kirundi language and culture; and
- involving Burundian-native applied linguists residing both inside and outside of the country in the designing of culturally and linguistically sensitive teaching materials and the brainstorming of appropriate approaches for a globally transferable primary-16 EFL curriculum

Conclusions and Implications

Cognitive psychologists have observed that early childhood and childhood constitute important stages of intellectual development, and there is no doubt that language constitutes an essential vehicle for knowledge acquisition. In that respect, the learning and acquisition of ex-colonial languages, such as English, French, and Portuguese in settings where access to native speaker models is very limited requires careful planning. Evidence shared in this article highlights the many obstacles that hinder effective instruction in those languages particularly in developing countries. With the exception of a handful people in most developing countries who can afford putting their children in schools where conditions for good instruction in those languages are met, the majority of the school population in those countries gains little from imposed acquisition of and instruction through someone else's language. The Burundian situation presented above can serve as the basis for understanding what happens in most African and other developing nations, where either English or another ex-colonial language is being implemented as a third language of literacy. African politicians should invest in educating the masses about the value and benefit of promoting early literacy and schooling in local languages.

This discussion pointed to a few implications for the implementation of foreign language curricula in contexts with restricted access to native speaker models. To begin with, a strong elementary education provides a solid foundation for schooling; developing nations need to invest in the training of linguistically and culturally competent elementary teachers both in their native and adopted foreign languages. Second, linguistic competence is essential for effective communication and processing of any type of knowledge. Children in developing nations should be given the same opportunity as those in developed nations to acquire basic school knowledge in their home (or local) language. Third, no man is an island. Children from all parts of the world should be given the opportunity to learn other languages so that they will have the flexibility to access knowledge from other cultures and societies. This said, before implementing early instruction in a foreign language or considering its adoption as as medium of instruction, developing nations need to ensure that conditions have been put in place which will give opportunities to *all* children, not just those from well off families, to learn and use one or more global languages effectively.

Fourth, in the event that it is not possible to provide all children an equal opportunity to attain proficiency in a foreign language, the best option will be to implement home or area language instruction in early grades, i.e., lower elementary grades, and introduce the foreign language in upper elementary grades when the child is cognitively able to transfer knowledge from the first language into the target language.

Finally, liberalization of trade and the proliferation of technology have contributed to more accessibility to cost effective resources and devices that can assist foreign language educators in acquiring near-to-authentic language input. Some of these tools include sharewares such as itunes and similar apps, You-tube, Skype and smart phones. In collaboration with the countries whose languages are being adopted, developing nations can find a solution to teaching materials' shortage which renders quality language teacher education impossible and brings down the national literacy level and school performance in most African nations.

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Exploring Possible Selves: An Exploration of Tertiary EFL Students' Learning Motivation in Taiwan

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Abstract

This study explored the motivational construct of EFL tertiary students and its relations to English proficiency, language use and learning behavior. We examined the relationships among these four by adopting Markus and Nurius's (1986) Possible Selves Theory and Dörnyei's (2009) propositions about Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self. An exploratory factor analysis of the motivational construct of 866 university freshmen found five factors: successful knowledgeable self, communicative self reaching out, instrumentality, requirements and academic achievements, and immediate needs for survival. Results showed that the five factors showed extrinsic motivation but of different levels of internalization and that the first two factors had a moderately high correlation. This finding can be reasonably ascribed to the impact of Confucian-Heritage Culture (CHC) and globalization. In addition, the first, second and fourth factors were found to predict learning behavior, and learning behavior was slightly correlated to language proficiency. Finally, some pedagogical implications with regard to promoting these EFL learners' self-knowledge and internalizing their motivation were presented to optimize their L2 motivation and English proficiency, and some future research directions were suggested.

Keywords: motivation; possible selves; Confucian-heritage culture; globalization; EFL learners

Introduction

The notion of motivation to learn a second or foreign language has engaged voluminous discussion in language learning for the last three decades (e.g., Clément & Krüidenier, 1983; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001; Dörnyei, 2003; Gardner, 1985, 2001; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Noel, Pelletier, Oxford, & Shearin, 1994). Though diverse in their orientations, the majority of the researchers have confirmed that motivation has a significant impact on learners' language performance and that motivation is individual-, situation- and culture-specific (e.g., Gardner, 2001; Lamb, 2004; Warden & Lin, 2000; Zhang & Xiao, 2006) and as motivation is context- mediated, it is complex, dynamic and fluid (e.g., Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998; Gardner, 2001; Noel et al., 2003; Ryan & Dörnyei, 2013).

With the rise of globalization in the 1990s, there has been a call for "a broadening of the conceptualization of motivation in language learning" (Roger, 2010, p. 2), particularly for investigating whether integrative motivation existed for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) (Dörnyei, 1990, 2003, 2009; Littlewood, 1984; Lamb, 2004, Ushioda, 2009). In the 2000s, Dörnyei and other researchers re-examined the content of integrativeness (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009) from the psychology of self-concept and an L2 motivational self system was proposed (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). Dörnyei's L2 motivational system offered a new perspective to conceptualize L2 learners' motivation and its relation to behavior. The system has been well received, and quite a few empirical studies (Al-Shehri, 2009; Courtney, 2008; Csizer & Kormos, 2009; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009; Yashima, 2009) had lent support to his proposed motivational system, including one seminal study (Yashima, 2009). She found that her Japanese learners of English conceptualized English as an international posture to perceive and interact with the world, and that those who had a more open international posture to connect and interact with the international community exerted more efforts in L2 learning and demonstrated better L2 proficiency. Currently, some studies (Chen, 2012; Far, Rajab, & Etemadzadeh, 2012; Islam, Lamb, & Chambers, 2013; Lai, 2013), using Dörnyei's L2 motivational system as the theoretical framework, explored the definitions of possible L2 selves and the explanatory power of the system in different EFL contexts. Their findings, in general, validated Dörnyei's motivational system and provided some expanded views of contemporary EFL learners' motivation. For example, Chen (2012) found that Taiwanese EFL learners' ought-to L2 self contained both promotion- and prevention-focused instrumentality rather than merely the latter. Lai (2013) found that Taiwanese EFL learners' ideal L2 self was more complex than what Dörnyei (2009) conceived. Dörnyei (2009) argued that ideal L2 self had a strong correlation with instrumental and integrative orientations, but Lai (2013) found that in addition to this, Taiwanese EFL learners' ideal L2 self was correlated to intrinsic motivation and travel. In addition, Islam et al. (2013) found that national interest, a unique motivational construct, made a strong contribution to the ideal L2 self in the Pakistani context, and that ideal L2 self was a strong predictor of learning effort.

These studies set in the Asian EFL contexts presented some new perspectives to construe L2 possible selves in relation to motivation and learners' behaviors. As Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self system was derived from a European EFL context, it seems reasonable to advance exploring this issue in a distinctive cultural context where self is "a fluid concept" (Cross & Gore, 2003, p. 541) defined by social norms and interpersonal relationships. We therefore explored this issue in Taiwan where collectivist values and CHC beliefs (Biggs, 1996) are still dominating in the flux of globalization. We explored how the Taiwanese EFL learners envisioned their possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) in the course of EFL learning and hoped to uncover some culturally-specific motivational factors that might be relevant to learners' motivation, their English proficiency or their learning behaviors.

Literature Review

The need to examine EFL learners' motivation in a CHC context

The advancement of information technology and globalization made English a lingua franca for communication in the global community, and as such, a few major concerns were brought to the foreground: for example, L2 learners' identities in the local and global communities, attitudes toward English as an international language, and ownership of English and the user's right to change the language. In line with these concerns, L2 motivation research (e.g., Crooks & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998; Ryan, 2006; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009) started to re-evaluate integrative motivation, and argued for a more complete and dynamic model of L2 motivation that was viable in a global context (Roger, 2010; Ryan, 2006; Ryan & Dörnyei, 2013).

Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 motivational system thus emerged in a wave of these voices that challenged the notion of integrativeness– a desire to "come closer psychologically to the other language community" (Gardner, 2001, p. 7). The notion of integrative motivation was found missing (Chen, Warden, & Chang, 2005; Warden & Lin, 2000), ambiguous (Gao, 2008) or indistinguishable from instrumental orientation in an EFL context (Lamb, 2004) because the world has become "increasingly characterized by linguistic and socio-cultural diversity and fluidity" (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009, p. 1) and "there is no specific target reference group of speakers" (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009, p. 2). Speakers of English are, in a sense, situated in a global community, with multicultural and multiethnic backgrounds. In light of this, Dörnyei proposed an L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) to construe L2 motivation in an EFL context. This system was grounded in Marckus and Nurius' (1986) possible selves and Higgins' (1987) self discrepancy theory, and it was composed of three components: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience. In this system, the first two components are representations of what one desires to be, likes to be, or avoids to be. These representations projected future-guided self images, but in the course of shortening the gap between the ideal self and actual self, one is under the impact of his/her L2 learning experience, a collective experience subsuming the cultural values, environmental impetus or constraints, and immediate and prior experience. With the interactions of these self images and the L2 learning experience, one is motivated to move toward the future.

Currently, some studies have validated Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) motivational system with subjects from Arab, China, Korea, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, and Taiwan (Chen, 2012; Courtney, 2008; Islam et al, 2013; Lai, 2013; Papi, 2010; Taguchi et al, 2009; Zhang & Xiao, 2006). However, as mentioned earlier in the Introduction, some of these studies, set in an Asian context, found that ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self were more complex and diversified than what Dörnyei (2005) proposed. This could be attributed to different cultural models in that cultural differences can affect motivational process and result in different motivational constructs (Lin, McKeachie, & Kim, 2003). In addition, different cultural models entailed distinct conceptions of self (Cross & Gore, 2003). As most research of motivational models of language learning was developed and originated from western cultures (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 1998; Gardner, 1985, 2001; Oxford & Shearin, 1994), it is reasonable to inquire into the motivational constructs of East Asian EFL learners. These learners inherited CHC values which were quite different from the western cultural values about self-knowledge (Cross & Gore, 2003; Littlewood, 1999) and learning attitudes (Li, 2002, 2009; Watkins & Biggs, 1996). For example, in a CHC learning context like Taiwan, people are oriented toward collectivism and Confucianism. Social harmony and deference to authorities are more emphasized than autonomy and individualism. Therefore, EFL learners in Taiwan tend to be more instrumentally or extrinsically motivated. They need to pass a series of exams to advance their academic or professional success so that they can meet the expectations from their teachers and parents and fulfill their social obligation (Chen et al., 2005). Particularly after the 2008 global economic slump, English has been assuming a more important role in education domain and workplace, serving as a threshold for students to enter and graduate from a university and as a criterion for schools or enterprises to assess students' or employees' global knowledge. More emphasis has been placed on these extrinsic motivators. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that ought-to L2 self exerts more influence than ideal L2 self on these EFL learners' motivation for English learning. However, we were also aware that learner autonomy has been promoted through learning strategies training and portfolio assessment in EFL teaching in the last decade in Taiwan (Chen, 2006; Lai, 2009; Lo, 2010; Su, 2005; Yang, 2003) particularly for tertiary students, and teachers have been advised to respect students' individual choices and help students pursue their interests. In this light, there is a need to see how the EFL tertiary students conceptualize what they aspire or hope to be, whether their aspirations or hopes are in congruence or conflict with what they are expected to be, and how these images of possible selves affect their motivation, learning behavior and proficiency.

Possible selves and the self concept

Markus and Nurius' (1986) ideas of *possible selves*, from which Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self system was majorly drawn, provided some insight into exploring EFL learners' motivational constructs.

> Possible selves are the ideal selves that we would very much like to become. They are also the selves we could become, and the selves we are afraid of becoming … An individual's repertoire of possible selves can be viewed as the cognitive manifestation of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears, and threats. Possible selves provide the specific self-relevant form, meaning, organization, and direction to these dynamics. As such, they provide the essential link between the self-concept and motivation. (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954)

Markus and Nurius (1986) argued that possible selves are views of the self derived from the representations of the self in the past, and they are malleable or fluid as they are influenced by the immediate learning conditions. Furthermore, possible selves represent future images of the self that are to be realized, and thus they function as "incentives for future behavior" (Markus & Nurisu, 1986, p. 955). In addition, possible selves provide "an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of self" (Markus & Nurisu, 1986, p. 955) because individuals need to actively reflect on their attributes, abilities, and the images of the self defined by and expected from others. In this way, they can know what they hope or fear to be. In a sense, "possible selves act as 'future self-guides', reflecting a dynamic, forward-pointing conception that can explain how someone is moved from the present toward the future" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 11).

In Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 self motivational system, he proposed ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, and both of which were based on an assumption that "all individuals have possible selves and that they can easily reflect upon them" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 958). But this assumption may not be valid in an Eastern Asian society oriented to CHC in that not all individuals in such a context have possible selves, and it may not be easy for individuals to reflect on their possible selves. Two reasons may explain this doubt. First, in a CHC context with a collectivistic orientation, individuals tend to see themselves as an inseparable part of the in-group; they expect and are expected to act in accord with group norms rather than stand out as individuals (Cross & Gore, 2003; Littlewood, 1999; Watkins & Biggs, 1996). Therefore, they are not encouraged to develop a unique self or to construct a personal and individual identity. In this light, their possible selves are to some extent culturally constrained. Second, it is not easy for EFL tertiary students in a CHC context to exercise reflection independently. Reflection is a "dialectical process" that engages learners to look inward at their thoughts and outward at the situations (Kemmis, 1985, as cited in Strampel & Oliver, 2007), and it involves “reprocessing of knowledge, understanding and, possibly, emotions that we already possess” (Moon, 2005, p. 1). However, EFL learners situated in a CHC context rely heavily on significant others to reflect effectively in that reflection demands a lot of cognitive processing and Socratic questioning skills (Elder & Paul, 2007; Paul & Elder, 2007, 2008) to probe into clarity, precision, accuracy, relevance, depth, and breadth of the questions and answers in a dialectical process. In light of these two reasons, we need to enquire into how individualistic or collectivist these EFL learners can be in envisioning their possible selves and the extent to which these EFL learners can reflect on their possible selves.

Instrumentality and requirements

This study also examined whether instrumentality and requirements found in previous researches could be located in this EFL context. As to instrumentality, traditionally it has been perceived as the desire for rewards or punishment avoidance (Gardner, 1985). Although Dörnyei (2005) argued that it should include other incentives beyond the utilitarian dimension, in this study, we would use the term to denote the extrinsic motivators like well-paid jobs, high social status, or a life without financial stress.

In addition, this study examined the requirements as an important motivator for EFL learners in Taiwan as Warden and his colleagues (Chen et al, 2005; Warden & Lin, 2002) argued. They contended that the social culture in Taiwan was highly collectivist and the learners always faced examinations no matter whether they were in school or in the work force. A series of entrance examinations, exit examinations, and job qualification examinations dominated their learning motivation. Currently Chen (2012) and Lai (2013) lend support to their argument. As the subjects of this study are university freshmen who have just been exempted from the stress of Joint College Entrance Examinations and who are at the initial stage of exploring self-autonomy in their university life, it is essential to verify the intensity of requirements and see how it affects these EFL learners’ learning motivation.

Research questions

In light of the above literature review, there is a reason to believe that CHC makes a difference in L2 learners’ motivation for language learning (Gu, 2002; Xiong, 2010). However, there was a paucity of research conducted in this regard. Therefore, in line with Markus and Nurius’ (1986) possible selves, instrumentality and requirements as targeted motivational factors, this study aims to find some empirical evidence to verify whether globalization and the cultural differences have induced different motivational constructs in Taiwanese EFL learners, and which motivational factor could predict their learning behavior, language use or language proficiency. Two research questions are hence posed as follows:

1. What is the motivational construct of tertiary EFL students in Taiwan?
2. Which motivational factor can predict learning behavior, language use, or English proficiency?

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were 866 tertiary non-English majors taking *Freshman English*, a required course, at a private university located in central Taiwan. Repeaters, and participants whose returned questionnaires had missing data in all the items of section six were excluded from this study. The participants were from 31 classes of four English proficiency levels. They were randomly chosen from 71 classes from six colleges to represent diverse academic backgrounds and EFL abilities. These students had learned English for at least 6 years in formal education.

Of the sample, 546 were males and 320 were females. Based on their percentile rank of English on Scholastic Aptitude Test or English scores of Assigned-subject Test, these freshmen were placed into four levels: beginning (L1), intermediate (L2), high-intermediate (L3), and advanced (L4). The sample's average English proficiency was intermediate on these two nationwide college entrance examinations. Detailed demographic information about the participants is provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Breakdown of the participants

College	Number	Male	Female	L1	L2	L3	L4
B	272 (31.4%)	108 (39.7%)	164 (60.3%)	70 (25.7%)	60 (22.1%)	66 (24.3%)	76 (27.9%)
IEE	192 (22.2%)	170 (88.5%)	22 (11.5%)	47 (24.5%)	54 (28.1%)	53 (27.6%)	38 (19.8%)
C & D	121 (14.0%)	62 (51.2%)	59 (48.8%)	31 (25.6%)	32 (26.4%)	33 (27.3%)	25 (20.7%)
E	114 (13.2%)	93 (81.6%)	21 (18.4%)	31 (27.2%)	32 (28.1%)	25 (21.9%)	26 (22.8%)
S	85 (9.8%)	67 (78.8%)	18 (21.2%)	28 (32.9%)	30 (35.3%)	27 (31.8%)	
F	82 (9.5%)	46 (56.1%)	36 (43.9%)	19 (23.2%)	24 (29.3%)	25 (30.5%)	14 (17.1%)
Total	866 (100%)	546 (63%)	320 (37%)	226 (26.1%)	232 (26.8%)	229 (26.4%)	179 (20.7%)

Note. B=Business; IEE=Information and Electronic Engineering; C & D=Construction and Development; E=Engineering; S=Sciences; F=Fiance.

L1=beginning level; L2=intermediate level; L3=intermediate –high level; L4=advanced level.

Instruments

Two instruments were used for the study: One was the Chinese version of Motivation/Attitudes questionnaire (Chang, 2006) with 96 items and the other was Stanford English Language Proficiency Test (SELPT) customized for the university[1] by Pearson Education, Inc. Chang's questionnaire was developed from two major sources: 200 tertiary students' essays describing their EFL learning experiences, and 18 questionnaires[2] published from 1980 to 2001 so that it could better reflect the local EFL learning context. The questionnaire comprised seven sections. The first section was about students' biographical information.

For sections two and three, students rated their desired proficiency level and the expected proficiency level to achieve by marking a 6-point scale, ranging from *very bad* (1) to *as good as native speaker* (6). For sections four to seven, the students rated the extent to which the proposed reasons corresponded with their reasons for motivation, behaviors and language use, using a 5-point scale that ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5), or from a*lmost never* (1) to *always* (5). This study adopted Chang's questionnaire[3] to investigate the relationships between EFL tertiary students' motivation, language use, learning behavior and English language proficiency. However, 10 items pertinent to attitudes toward the English speaking community were deleted as the subjects in this study were freshmen who had little or no contact with English speaking community in their prior learning experience, and at the time questionnaires were administered, only six classes were taught by foreign teachers who only met students for two hours per week.

SELPT was composed of 70 questions in two sections. The first section includes four parts: (a) picture; (b) question-response; (c) short conversations; (d) short talk. The second section includes three parts: (a) vocabulary; (b) text completion; (c) reading comprehension. Each question is valued with 1.5 points, so the total score of the 70 questions is 105 points. For those who scored over 90, their proficiency level was estimated to be equivalent to Taiwan's General English Proficiency Test—Intermediate Level, or TOEIC 650.

Data collection and analysis procedures

All the students taking Freshman English, regardless of their levels, took the SELPT at the same time. The time limit was 60 minutes. Two weeks later, copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the sample students during regular class time. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and then they filled out the questionnaires without time limit.

SPSS version 19 was used to analyze the data collected through the questionnaires and the SELPT, and pair-wise deletion was used to handle missing data. To examine the first research question, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the 48 items of the motivation orientation. Using minimum-eigenvalue criterion of 1.0 and principle component extraction techniques followed by varimax rotation, five factors were extracted. To examine the second research question, multiple stepwise regressions were performed respectively to see which motivational factor could predict learners' learning behavior, language use and language proficiency.

Results & Discussion

To answer the first research question, the Cronbach coefficient alpha referring to the internal consistency (reliability) for the five-point questionnaire was computed on the participants and they were 0.91, 0.90, 0.88 for sections four, five and six respectively, indicating that the internal consistency was satisfactorily reliable. Five factors were extracted after the initial run of rotated principle component matrix. Appendix A shows the loadings of variables on factors, and the percentage of the variance of the 29 items. The five factors account for 52.69% of the total variance.

When we looked into the items pertaining to the factors, motivation tended to be "defined by vagueness, defying description using the established terminology of integrativeness and instrumentality" (Roger, 2010, p. 37). Therefore, we defined them with Markus and Nurius' (1986) ideas about possible selves and explored how these factors were related to Dörnyei's (2009) ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self. Factor 1 includes eight items (4, 5, 6, 11, 16, 33, 38, 39). All of the items concern learners' interests in the English speakers' arts and cultures, updated global issues, and new knowledge, and their desire to be influential and successful in the local community. Therefore, this factor is named *successful knowledgeable self*.

Factor 2 contains six items (9, 12, 18, 21, 23, 37). All of them reflect the desire to use English as a medium for travelling, studying abroad, making friends with foreigners, and interacting with people of diverse cultural backgrounds. Some of the items pertaining to this factor are similar to travel, knowledge and friendship, three of the four motivational orientations identified by Clément and Krüidenier (1983) and later found highly inter-correlated with identified extrinsic regulation and intrinsic motivation (Noels et al, 2000). This factor involves self exploration and interactions with others abroad. It was thus labeled *communicative self reaching out*.

Factor 3, with items 1, 2, 3, 7, 13 and 30, is named *instrumentality* as the items concern the utility of English to fulfill needs for a good job, a better life, and knowledge of intellectual trends. Factor 4, including items 10, 17, 19, 20 and 32, is named *requirements and academic achievements* as they reflect the learners' aiming at achievements such as getting good grades, passing exams, and outperforming their peers. The factor also reflects a view held by many Taiwanese tertiary students. They still associate the English language with the United States of America and United Kingdom and hold these countries in high esteem. Factor 5 contains four items– 45, 46, 47 and 48, and it is named *immediate needs for survival*. All of these items concern the needs of using English in daily life and for computer and the Internet. In a sense, this factor reflects how one needs to be intellectually and technologically competent to survive via English.

In general, the last three factors are instrumentality-oriented in that they focus on the utilitarian functions of learning English to fulfill the practical needs, some proximal needs like being updated with the latest information and some distal needs like obtaining good grades, outperforming peers and getting a good job. These three factors reflect learners' desire for some survival skills, rewards or achievements. In this light, these factors are similar to Gardner's (1985) instrumental motivation and Ryan and Deci's (2000, 2002) extrinsic motivation of the self-determination theory (SDT). On the contrary, the first two factors, accounting for 14.15% and 12.73% of the total variance, concern more internalized extrinsic motivation in that they are about possible selves. More elaborate discussion of these two factors will be given later.

To answer the second research question, multiple step-wise regressions were performed to see which factor, and whether language use or learning behavior could predict language proficiency. The results showed that only learning behavior could predict language proficiency (β=.34, t=10.17, p<.01) and the coefficient of determination (R^2) was 11(Table 2). The predictive power was weak and correlation coefficient between learning behavior and language proficiency was slight (r= .34).

Table 2
Results of multiple stepwise regressions of five motivational factors, language use and learning behavior on language proficiency

Predictor variables	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F
constant	-2.17	.22						
Factor 1				-.81	.42			
Factor 2				1.64	.10			
Factor 3				-1.27	.21			
Factor 4				.38	.70			
Factor 5				.41	.68			
Language Use				1.49	.14			
Learning Behavior	.67	.07	.33	1.00	.00**	.11	.11	99.94

Note: Factor 1=successful knowledgeable self; Factor 2=communicative self reaching out; Factor 3=instrumentality; Factor 4=requirements and academic achievements; Factor 5=immediate needs for survival.
**p<.01

Despite the slight correlation, this result was in congruence with past research that behavior predicts success in language learning. As motivated behavior involves efforts (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2003; Liu, 2007), desire and attitudes (Gardner, 1985, 2001; Yashima, 2002), motivation literature has lent support to the concept that the more efforts one puts into L2 learning, the more positive or open one's attitude toward L2 language becomes, or the more one desires for or is highly interested in learning the language, the more one improves or succeeds in language learning.

As to the relationship between the five motivational factors and language use, there are three models in which the first one includes only Factor 1, the second one includes Factors 1 and 2, and the third includes Factors 1, 2 and 5. The three models explain 23%, 27% and 27% (R^2= .23, .27 and .27) of the variance of language use respectively (Table 3).

Table 3
Results of multiple stepwise regression of five motivational factors on language use

Model	Predictor variables	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F
1	constant	.54	.13						
	Factor 1	.57	.04	.48	15.75	.00**			
							.23	.23	274.92
2	constant	.37	.12						
	Factor 1	.38	.05	.32	8.32	.00**			
	Factor 2	.22	.03	.25	6.43	.00**			
							.27	.26	150.65
3	Constant	.25	.14						
	Factor 1	.34	.05	.28	6.78	.00**			
	Factor 2	.21	.03	.24	6.32	.00**			
	Factor 5	8.30E-02	.04	.08	2.35	.02*			
							.27	.27	102.82

Note: Factor 1=successful knowledgeable self; Factor 2=communicative self reaching out; Factor 5=immediate needs for survival.
**p*<.05. ***p*<.01

Finally, to examine the relationship between the five motivational factors and learning behavior, three models emerged (Table 4). In the first model, Factor 1 is the sole predictor and it can explain 38 % (R^2= .38) of the variance of learning behavior. In the second and third models, Factors 1 & 2 and Factors 1, 2 and 4 serve as predictors and both models explain 44% (R^2= .44) of the variance of learning behavior. The correlations of the five motivational factors and learning behavior are shown in Table 5.

Table 4

Results of multiple stepwise regression of five motivational factors on language behavior

Model	Predictor variables	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F
1	constant	1.21	.10						
	Factor 1	.62	.03	.61	22.59	.00**			
							.38	.38	510.16
2	constant	1.02	.09						
	Factor 1	.41	.03	.41	12.21	.00**			
	Factor 2	.24	.03	.32	9.69	.00**			
							.44	.44	330.08
3	Constant	.93	.10						
	Factor 1	.38	.04	.37	10.39	.00**			
	Factor 2	.24	.03	.33	9.77	.00**			
	Factor 4	5.87E-02	.02	.08	2.61	.01*			
							.44	.44	223.86

Note: Factor 1=successful knowledgeable self; Factor 2=communicative self reaching out; Factor 4=requirements and academic achievements*p<.05. **p<.01

Table 5

Summary of inter-correlations, means, and standard deviations for five motivational factors and learning behaviour

	1	2	3	4	5	6
successful knowledgeable self	--					
communicative self reaching out	.64**	--				
instrumentality	.51**	.44**	--			
requirements and academic achievement	.46**	.28**	.44**	--		
immediate needs for survival	.50**	.35**	.40**	.42**	--	
Learning Behavior	.61**	.58**	.37**	.34**	.31**	--
M	3.41	3.75	3.63	3.51	3.56	3.33
SD	.48	.66	.40	.63	.56	.49

Note: 1=successful knowledgeable self; 2=communicative self reaching out; 3=instrumentality; 4=requirements and academic achievements; 5=immediate needs for survival; 6=learning behavior.
**p<.01

The correlation and regression results showed that the three motivational factors (i.e. Factors 1, 2, and 4) could predict learning behavior. This finding was supported by the concept that motivation contributes to efforts and attitudes, a concept that has been attested to in the motivation research in the last three decades (e.g., Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei 2009; Kormos & Csizér. 2008). However, if we look into the items pertaining to the factors in light of Markus and Nurius's (1986) theory of possible selves, we generate some enlightening findings. We found that these factors reflected Taiwanese learners' motivational complexity in EFL learning. These motivational factors showed that these learners socially aspired to realize possible selves as evidenced in Factors 1 and 4, but they also desired to pursue their interests in exploring self as manifested in Factor 2.

Factor 1, successful knowledgeable self, refers to the future objects that one would like to possess: knowledge, achievement, social power, and interesting challenges. These objects were, in essence, very much in line with the ideas of ideal self fostered by the norms of CHC. In Li's (2001, 2002, 2009) proposed Chinese learning model generated from cluster analysis of core conceptions of learning, a few learning beliefs held by Chinese learners were noted. For example, in the course of learning, one should do his/her utmost to optimize the amount of knowledge as one's knowledge is always inadequate. When knowledge is enriched, different kinds of achievements (e.g., fortune, love, power) will follow because as expressed by these idioms and sayings: "As long as one studies hard, he will get a house full of gold and a fair lady," and "Knowledge is power." Furthermore, pursuit of learning is considered "the only path toward the highest goal of Confucianism: self-perfection" (Li, 2002, p. 54) and making social contribution is a requisite to complete the cycle of self-perfection. These notions underscore Chinese learners' ideas of learning in relation to self-perfection and success. In light of Li's notions, the future objects that these Taiwanese EFL learners' endeavor to obtain are much in conformity with what CHC advocated about a perfect successful self, a self working hard with heart and mind for obtaining new knowledge and making achievements and social contributions.

Factor 4, requirements and academic achievements, is slightly correlated (r=.46) with Factor 1, and the items pertaining to this factor also manifest the influence that CHC norms impose on these learners. In a CHC context, examinations have been considered the fairest means to allocate fortune, elevate one's social status, and earn glory. Therefore, passing a variety of examinations to fulfill academic requirements or advance professional success serves as a strong extrinsic motivator (Chen et al, 2005; Warden & Lin, 2001) and it exists in the education, business and civil service domains (Chen, 2013) in modern Taiwan. In addition, it has been strongly promoted by significant others like teachers or parents in a CHC context (Gao, 2006, 2008; Lei, 2008). In general, from the SDT perspective, Factor 4 represents identified extrinsic motivation in that these students have somehow internalized the expectations from their teachers and parents as the items showed that they wanted to realize these expectations. On the other hand, in relation to Factor 4, Factor 1 represents more internalized extrinsic motives, and it is similar to Dörnyei's (2005) ideal L2 self to which "traditional integrative and internalized instrumental motives would typically belong" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). Factor 4 is similar to Dörnyei's (2009) ought-to L2 self, which, by his definition, refers to "what one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29).

Factor 2, communicative self reaching out, also involves future self-guided goals like Factor 1. However, Factor 2 is different from Factor 1in the following aspects. First, Factor 2 is about a self reaching out to the global community while Factor 1 concerns a self striving to obtain success in the local community. Second, relative to Factor 1which concerns a CHC-oriented ideal self, Factor 2 seems to concern an individual's interest. From person-object approach to interest (POI) (Krapp, 2002), interest is defined as "a phenomenon that emerges from an individual's interaction with his or her environment" (Krapp, Hidi, & Renninger, 1992, p. 5), and, in terms of Factor 2, the environment refers to a target language country like the USA or UK. The Factor 2 activities like traveling, making friends with foreigners, entertaining, or interacting with people of diverse cultural backgrounds represent actions of interest. Moreover, they represent interest in exploring and defining self. As a Chinese saying goes, "Stones from other hills may serve to polish the jade of this one," it is commonly believed that interactions with foreign others will provide new impetus or directions to overcome one's shortcomings, know more about the current self and plan for the future self. It seems that these activities are generated from the emerging emphasis on developing individual self rather than a collective one.

In contemporary Taiwan, more and more cases were reported about young adults who travelled abroad to pursue their interests, explore their selves and find their course of life[4]. In the flux of globalization, the social ambiance is promoting the idea that every individual should be independent and have sufficient self knowledge. In such a social milieu, for example, more and more young people are going abroad not for an advanced degree but for exploring their potentials or developing interests. Even the 12-year Compulsory Education, newly implemented by Ministry of Education in 2014, is a policy aiming to help the young generation develop their aptitudes and explore what they want to be. In addition, a lot of workshops or forums like Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED) Taipei were held to encourage young people to be unique and purse their dreams. It is in such a context, communicative self reaching out becomes a significant motivational factor.

In sum, it is pleasing to see that these EFL learners were motivated to develop their individual self while reaching out to communicate with others in the global community. It is even more gratifying to see that Factor 2 and Factor 1 have a moderately high correlation coefficient (r=.64). This means that if these EFL learners tend to realize their possible selves in the local community, they are likely to develop their self knowledge and participate in interactions in the global community. It is found that these two factors are in congruence rather than in conflict. Traditionally, in a CHC context, developing an inter-dependent self overrides developing an independent self

(Cross & Gore, 2003). But from this study we observed that globalization has infused some western self concepts into the Taiwanese EFL learners. For example, “the individual who has not made an individual effort to define the self is seen as having no reality” (Cross & Gore, 2003, p. 544) and making choices on one’s own “represents the establishment and fulfillment of a unique, individual self” (Cross & Gore, 2003, p. 546). These concepts have affected how the self is perceived. From Factors 1 and 2, we observed a self making effort(s) to define his/her place in a local social network. Furthermore, we observed a self interacting with foreign others to define himself or herself.

In addition, with Factor 4, we are glad to see that the students were concerned about the utility of English and agreed to its importance in paving the way to success in the proximal future. Although we did not find any motivational factor to predict English proficiency, we found that Factors 1, 2, and 4 could predict learning behavior and learning behavior is slightly correlated to language proficiency. The findings cannot minimize the potential for motivation making a difference in language proficiency. Koestner and Losier’s (2002) study, grounded in SDT, identified extrinsic motivation (e.g., Factor 4 in this study) was particularly important to young adult learners in the academic settings. They found that identification rather than intrinsic motivation emerged as “the best predictor of successful long-term adaptation in the academic domain” (Koestner & Losier, 2002, p. 2). Noels and her co-researchers (2000) also lent support to Koestner and Losier’s finding as “those who naturally enjoy the feeling of learning an L2 may not necessarily feel personally involved in the learning process” (p. 52). In an EFL context where English has been a school subject for 10 years, if the students can identify with the learning goals that have been introjected to them and attach personal meaning to English learning, it is reasonable to assume that their learning behavior will be positive and their learning performance will improve.

Conclusion

We found five motivational factors, all of which concerned students’ extrinsic motivation but of different levels of internalization. Successful knowledgeable self and communicative self reaching out involve “future-oriented self-guides” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 15) and both of them were more internalized relative to the other three. Instrumentality, requirements and academic achievement, and immediate needs for survival involve the utilitarian functions of English, and all of which were relatively extrinsic. Four of these five were about what they could and would get in the local community while communicative self reaching out involves what they would like to do in the target language community. In light of the five factors, these tertiary students’ concept of being a world citizen is not as resonant as it was for Yashima’s (2009) or Roger’s (2010) highly-proficient Asian EFL learners. However, we see the potential that these EFL learners in Taiwan are developing this concept because successful knowledgeable self and communicative self reaching out are positively correlated. In addition to the concept of being a world citizen, we witness that globalization has prompted Taiwanese EFL learners to go abroad to interact with others, explore and define themselves rather than to merely obtain an advanced degree and come back to secure social mobility in the local community.

It is therefore foremost for EFL teachers to ask their students as to what they hope to accomplish in their lives, what they would like to become or what they are afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In this way, they may attach personal meaning to learning. Recent research on interest (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002; Black & Deci, 2000; Deci, 1992; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Krapp, 2002; Taguchi, 2006) suggested that promoting their interest and contextual support played a crucial role in facilitating this process of internalizing the extrinsic motivation. Therefore, EFL teachers need to consider in what way they can help their students associate English language learning with some personal goals in a positive light. They can refer to Dörnyei's (2009) five conditions that can enhance the motivational impact of the ideal and ought-to L2 selves. For example, the teachers can first help students elaborate their future images as vividly as possible, and help them perceive these images as realistically as possible and learn some strategies to realize their ideal selves. Furthermore, as motivation is called "goal directed behavior" (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 173), they can design activities geared to meet their students' goals, and grade them not by achievements but by plan, performance and volition. They can even share their beliefs about their students' capacities or their expectations of the students' achievements to enhance language gains as Taguchi (2006) suggested. It is believed that with one or some of these activities, students could be more intrinsically motivated and see more about their current and future selves.

This study presented what motivational factors could predict language behavior, but not language proficiency or language use. There are some limitations of this study. First, the questionnaire is self-reported, and there are too many items and the participants were impatient to complete the questionnaire. Second, the results were based on a cohort of EFL learners with intermediate proficiency. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to EFL learners with high or low proficiency. However, this study presented a few issues to be examined in the future research. First, the present study did not include possible mediators like language strategy as suggested by Wu (2010), expectancy as proposed in Chen et al's model (2005), or self-efficacy as implied by Phan (2009) in the research design. Therefore, a follow-up research could include these and examine possible paths in the motivation model. Second, a longitudinal study needs to be conducted to observe the learners' changes, if any, in motivation and language achievement in the process of L2 learning. Phan's longitudinal study (2009) on the motivational variables like goals, self-efficacy, critical thinking and deep processing strategies found that these variables operated in a reciprocal manner. He suggested that "the positive influences of both motivational constructs [self-efficacy and mastery goals] help foster the adoption of deep mastery learning, as well as the self-beliefs in competence that may be crucial in learning outcome" (p. 794). Therefore, it would be important to conduct the survey and the proficiency test a year later to see if such a reciprocal relationship can be found between present and future motivational factors and how they affect L2 achievement. Finally, a qualitative study using interviews could be conducted to explore how students construct their possible selves in the local milieu and the global community, and how these self images affect their L2 learning. In general, this study made some contribution to the motivation research on EFL learners situated in an Asian CHC context. We found that Taiwanese EFL learners tend to be motivated to learn English not merely out of social expectations and for external rewards (Chen et al, 2005; Warden & Lin, 2000) but also out of their desire to explore their selves, and fortunately these two motivational orientations are in congruence.

Notes

[1]The Freshman English program of the university is a 4-skill integrated program which adopted a communicative approach. SELPT is used to assess students' English proficiency before, during and after taking the course so the Language Center can monitor students' progress and weaknesses in language learning and provide timely remedial courses for the students.

[2]The questionnaires were developed by Ames and Archer (1988), Chen (2000), Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1994), Clément & Krüidenier (1983), Dörnyei (1990), Dörnyei, Nyilasi and Clément (1996), Gardner, Tremblay, and Masgoret (1997), Genesee, Rogers and Holobow (1983), Lin and Warden (2000), Liu (1999), MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Conrod (2001), Meece, Blumenfeld and Hoyle (1988), Noels, Clément, and Pelletier (1999), Noels, Pelletier and Vallerand (2000), Pierson, Fu and Lee (1980), Schmidt, Boraie, and Kassabgy (1996), Warden and Lin (2000), and Wen (1997).

[3]After deleting 15 items which had low correlations with the total scales (r<.30), the final version of Chang's questionnaire comprised 91 items. The internal consistency Cronbach alphas for the sections of motivational orientations, attitudes, motivational intensity and language use were .90, .82, .91 and .86 respectively. The questionnaire was in Chinese and was translated back and reviewed by another experienced teacher who was proficient in English and Chinese. The test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from .72 to .83 for the last four sections. Due to the length limit of this paper, the questionnaire is not included as an appendix but a copy of the questionnaire will be provided upon request.

[4]One of the stories that received nationwide attention is about Hsin Hsuan Hsieh. When she became one of the 18 finalists for the 2013 Tourism Australia's "Best Job in the World", she gained a lot of admiration from young people in Taiwan. Her story perpetuated the propositions circulated in mass media: "Be yourself," and "As long as I have the heart, nothing is impossible."

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Appendix A

Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation of Motivation/Attitude Scale

	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
11	I think learning English is an interesting challenge to me.	.75				
5	Learning English is a burden to me.	.69				
4	I learn English because I feel a sense of achievement from learning.	.63				
39	I work hard in English class because I am interested in learning something new.	.62				
6	Learning English makes me a more knowledgeable person.	.52				
33	Learning English helps me to better understand and appreciate art and cultures of English speakers.	.50				
16	I learn English because it helps me to learn more about what is happening in the world.	.49				
38	I learn English because it permits me to become an influential member of my community.	.42				
9	I learn English because I would like to spend a period of time aboard.		.82			
21	I learn English because it helps me to study abroad.		.76			
37	I learn English because I would like to travel around English-speaking countries.		.74			
23	I learn English because I would like to make friends with foreigners.		.67			
18	I learn English because it helps me to talk to people from different cultures.		.54			
12	I learn English because it allows me to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.		.48			
13	I learn English because someday it will help me to get a good job.			.60		
1	I learn English because it helps me			.60		

	to have a better life.					
30	It’s not necessary to learn too much English.			.59		
3	English proficiency is highly valued by the society.			.56		
2	There would be a serious gap in my life if I couldn’t learn English.			.53		
7	I learn English because it allows me to learn about the current intellectual trends of the world.			.53		
19	I work hard on English because I want to obtain good course grades in English class.				.71	
32	I learn English because I want to pass GEPT or TOEFL exams.				.61	
17	It is important to me to outperform others in my English class.				.54	
20	I will study harder on English if I do a good job in exams.				.53	
10	I learn English because the USA and the UK are strong countries.				.40	
46	I want to learn English well because I need it for computers and the Internet.					.76
47	I learn English because people around me are learning English.					.57
45	Learning English helps me to become a modernized citizen.					.44
48	I learn English because I need to use it in daily life.					.41
	%age of loading	14.15	12.73	9.88	8.56	7.36

Note. F1=successful knowledgeable self; F2= communicative self reaching out; F3= instrumentality; F4=requirements and academic achievements; F5= immediate needs for survival.

For each of the factors, the %age of variance is shown. The higher the %age of variance, the more important that factor accounts for the solution.

Language Teacher Beliefs and Practices: A Historical Review

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Abstract

This paper reviews the literature on the topic of teacher beliefs and practices, particularly in the field of language teaching. After the introduction of various definitions of teacher beliefs and summarizing the features of teacher beliefs, the author analyzes the studies in an emerging stage when researchers attained consensus on a unidirectional relationship between teacher behaviors and student achievements between the 1960s and 1980s. The author then presents a synopsis on
the literature between the 1990s and 2000s, which was regarded as a developing stage when scholars held two competing themes: consistency, and inconsistency on teacher beliefs and practices. Thereafter, the author summarizes studies after the 2000s, when researchers attempted to explore language teachers' beliefs and practices from a sociocultural perspective, and regard the relationship between teacher beliefs and actual teaching as an interactive and complex one. This paper concludes with some issues that scholars and researchers can address in the future.

Keywords: teacher beliefs; practices; consistency; inconsistency; sociocultural theory

Introduction

Considerable studies on the complex relationships between teacher beliefs and practices have been conducted over the past decades. Shifted paradigms from behaviorism to constructivism steered educational researchers from a unidirectional emphasis on the relationship between teacher behaviors and student achievements to the correlates of teacher cognition and beliefs with their teaching practices. Breen and colleagues (2001) outlined four points as to why studies on language teachers' beliefs are important: 1) They can enable research to "go beyond description towards the understanding and explanation of teacher action;" 2) They can provide insights for "initial teacher education" and "reflection in ongoing teacher development"; 3) These studies can "accommodate" any innovation in teaching practices within the teachers' beliefs; and 4) These studies may "contribute frameworks for language pedagogy" which would enrich the traditional teaching methodology. Therefore, further research in this field is highly needed.

This paper aims to review the literature on the topic of teacher beliefs and practices, particularly in the field of language teaching. It first introduces various definitions of teacher beliefs and summarizes the features of teacher beliefs. Then, it begins to analyze the studies on this topic from the 1960s to 1980s, an emerging stage when researchers reached consensus on a unidirectional relationship between teacher behaviors and student achievements (Brown, 1968; Jackson, 1968; Lortie, 1975; McDonald & Elias, 1976; Schulman, 1986a). Next, it presents a synopsis on the literature from the 1990s to the 2000s, which was regarded as a developing stage when scholars held two competing themes on teacher beliefs and practices. One theme proposed that there is a consistent relationship between teacher beliefs and practices (Johnson, 1992; 1994; Kinzer, 1988; Kinzer & Carrick, 1986; Konopak et al., 1994; Leu & Kinzer, 1991; Michell, 1991), whereas the other theme states that connection between teacher beliefs and instruction is inconsistent (Ng & Farrell, 2003; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991; van de Schaff et al., 2008). In addition, this paper introduces the studies after the 2000s, when researchers attempted to explore language teachers' beliefs and practices from a sociocultural perspective, and regard the relationship between teacher beliefs and actual teaching as an interactive and complex one (Borg, 2011; Breen et al., 2001; Farrell & Lim, 2005). This paper concludes with some issues that scholars and researchers could address or elaborate upon.

On teacher beliefs

Defining teacher beliefs

While the concept of teacher beliefs has been gaining researchers' attention for decades, researchers fail to reach a consensus on its definition (Borg, 2001). Scholars at the early stage did not define teacher beliefs in a clear way; rather, they introduced the concept of teacher beliefs through elaborating on its origins and classifications. For example, Lortie (1975) proposed that teachers' beliefs originate either from their personal experiences as students, or from their personal life experiences such as family traditions, values, social interaction, community participation, and so forth. Clark and Peterson (1986) classified teachers' thought processes into three categories: 1) teacher planning, 2) teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions, and 3) teachers' theories and beliefs. Nespor (1987) viewed teacher beliefs as being affective, narrative in nature, and pointed out that the classroom demands the affective and evaluative method of decision-making.

Although the study of teacher beliefs was highlighted as a key category, there had been little research about the difference between teacher beliefs and those on other psychological constructs such as teacher knowledge and attitudes in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Therefore, Schulman (1986b) termed this period as "the missing paradigm" (pp. 7-8). Researchers embarked upon studies on teacher cognition, however, their emphasis was restricted only to teachers' decision-making, leaving aside the content knowledge upon which decisions are made (Meloth, Book, Putnam, & Sivan, 1989).

In 1992, Pajares contributed to the topic of teacher beliefs and presented a summary that has been regarded as the most comprehensive review available (Fang, 1996). Pajares stated that while researchers acknowledged the importance of teacher beliefs on the classroom decision-making process, they remained unclear about the definition for such a concept due to its encompassment. He further defined beliefs as "an individual's judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, instead, and do" (p. 316). Apart from defining the teachers' beliefs, Pajares also discussed what might be covered in the study of teacher beliefs:

> As with more general beliefs, *educational beliefs about* are required -- beliefs about confidence to affect students' performance (teacher efficacy), about the nature of knowledge (epistemological beliefs), about causes of teachers' or students' performance (attributions, locus of control, motivation, writing appreciation, math anxiety), about perceptions of self and feelings of self-worth (self-concept, self-esteem), about confidence to perform specific tasks (self-efficacy). There are also educational beliefs about specific subjects or disciplines (reading instruction, the nature of reading, whole language). (p. 316)

Based on Pajares' classifications, scholars further divided teachers' beliefs into explicit and implicit ones. Espoused or explicit beliefs are what a person can readily articulate (Johnson, 1992), and implicit beliefs are held unconsciously and should only be inferred from actions (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Breen et al., 2001). However, Borg (2001) stated that there is disagreement on conscious versus unconscious beliefs, with some people regarding consciousness as an inherent attribute of beliefs, and the others holding that beliefs can be either conscious or unconscious.

The concept of teacher beliefs nowadays refers to the evaluative propositions which teachers hold un/consciously as true when teaching (Borg, 2001), and it is often used to characterize the cognitive structures that teachers bring to make classroom decisions (Meirink et al., 2009). Kalaja and Barcelos (2003) defined beliefs as dynamic, complex, and contradictory. Barcelos (2003) identified three ways of explaining teacher beliefs in the relevant literature:

1) In normative studies, beliefs as opinions or generally inaccurate myths regarding L2 learning and teaching;
2) In metacognitive studies, beliefs as metacognitive idiosyncratic knowledge or representations characterized by some personal commitment; and

3) In contextual studies, beliefs as ideas which are interrelated with contexts and experiences of participants (cited in Negueruela-Azarola, 2011).

The features of beliefs

Abelson (1979) identified seven features of a *belief* system which may make it different from a *knowledge* system. Abelson's classification of belief features aimed to distinguish *beliefs* from *knowledge* in terms of the scope of truth. For *beliefs,* truth is individual, personal, and subjective; for *knowledge,* truth is objective and universal.

Woods and Cakir (2011) then summarized Abelson's seven features as follows: "1) being non-consensual; 2) denoting existential entities such as God, witches etc.; 3) acknowledging 'alternative worlds'; 4) relying on evaluative and affective components; 5) including episodic material such as folklore and cultural experiences; 6) having open boundaries (including self-concept); 7) holding variable credence and having varying degrees of certitude" (p. 383).

Barcelos and Kalaja (2011) further studied and summarized eight characteristics of beliefs which include: "1) fluctuating; 2) complex and dialectical; 3) related to the micro- and macro-political contexts and discourses; 4) intrinsically related to other affective constructs such as emotions and self-concepts; 5) other-oriented; 6) influenced by reflection and affordances; 7) related to knowledge in intricate ways; 8) related to actions in complex ways" (pp. 285-286). Barcelos and Kalaja's classifications embodies the tenets of sociocultural theory, which pays more attention to the importance of context in language education; it also attaches great importance to the complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), which proposes that the study of an emergent whole results from the study of interaction among individual components.

Emerging stage: Teacher cognition and beliefs

In 1968, Phillip Jackson wrote his masterpiece *Life in Classrooms* to describe and analyze teachers' mental constructs and cognitive processes, and he believed that these constructs drive teacher behaviors. Afterward, teacher cognition and thought processes began to attract researchers' attention, particularly for those working in the field of literacy education (Fang, 1996). Since the mid-1970s to early 1980s, the majority of studies was conducted on how teacher thought processes helped teachers plan and manage their classrooms, and assess their students' understandings (McDonald & Elias, 1976; Schulman, 1986a). Teachers, at this time, viewed instruction as a means to deliver information, and viewed students as persons who decode the information. "Teacher's responsibility basically ends when they have told students what they must remember to know and do" (Sedlak, 1987, p. 320).

Neither the concept of teacher beliefs nor teacher cognition was highly studied then, because educational research focused more on teaching instead of the teachers.

Research during this time confirmed the consistent relationship between teacher beliefs and their actual practices. Brown (1962; 1963; 1966; 1967a; 1967b; 1968a; 1968b; 1968c; 1968d) published a series of papers showing that teachers' beliefs, regardless of philosophic or educational beliefs, are consistently revealed in their actual practices in classrooms. While philosophical beliefs are more pronounced than the educational ones. Similar to Brown's findings, Harvey and his associates (1964; 1965a; 1965b) found that teachers' belief systems have a positive effect on teachers' behaviors. Gordon and Combs (1969) also identified a series of concepts of the teachers' role, which were related to their actual teaching. The National Institute of Education (1975) reported that teacher behaviors are "directed in no small measure by what they think" (p. 5).

Apart from the studies on the relationship between teacher beliefs and practices, research scholars continued to explore the origins of teacher beliefs. Lortie (1975) stated that most teachers' teaching is almost identical to their prior teachers, which is termed as *apprenticeship of observation*:

> Teaching is unusual in that those who decide to enter it have had exceptional opportunity to observe members of the occupation at work; unlike most occupations today, the activities of teachers are not shielded from youngsters. Teachers-to-be underestimate the difficulties involved, but this supports the contention that those planning to teach form definite ideas about the nature of the role (p. 65).

Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) agreed with Lortie's explanation, and proposed that the great amount of time that pre-service teachers spend as pupils in the classroom shape their beliefs, which remain latent during formal training in pedagogy at the university. Sequentially, their formed beliefs become major forces when they become in-service teachers in their own classrooms.

Based on Jackson (1968), Clark and Peterson (1986) categorized teachers' thought processes into three fundamental types: 1) teacher planning, 2) teachers interactive thoughts and decisions, and 3) teachers' theories and beliefs. Clark and Peterson's work was regarded as a paramount one, at their time (Fang, 1996). For the first time, the topic of teachers' beliefs was formally included as a category in teacher education research. Apart from Clark and Peterson, Munby (1982) had also noted the lack of research on the concept of teacher theories and beliefs. While the studies on the topic were still few, "there was nonetheless sufficient work for it to constitute a distinct category of inquiry in the field of teacher education" (Borg, 2006, p. 17).

Clark and Peterson paved the way for their following scholars to explore the field of teacher beliefs a step further. Towards defining the teachers' beliefs, Pajares (1992) deconstructed the notion into a variety of foci that deserved scholars' attention to research and examine. In the end, Pajares stated that, "little will have been accomplished if research into educational beliefs fails to provide insights into the relationship between beliefs, on the one hand, and teacher practices, teacher knowledge, and student outcomes on the other" (p. 327).

Empirical studies on language teachers' beliefs began to emerge during this period. The most significant contribution took place in the field of reading/literacy education (Fang, 1996). Harste and Burke (1977) defined reading teachers' theoretical orientations as their belief systems, which may lead teachers to monitor their students' behaviors, and help them make classroom decisions. Reading research also examined how teachers' theoretical orientations affect their ways of perceiving English reading, namely, whether English reading is a bottom-up, top-down, interactive or transactional process (Kinzer, 1988; Kinzer & Carrick, 1986; Konopak et al., 1994; Leu & Kinzer, 1991; Michell, 1991). In addition, Mango and Allen (1986) found that, in terms of teachers' different beliefs about writing, teachers conduct different language arts instruction. Wing (1989) stated that early childhood teachers' theoretical beliefs influence their ways of teaching, and shape their students' perceptions of reading and writing. Wing's findings are consistent with Kamil and Pearson's (1979) research, which proposed that teachers' theoretical beliefs not only affect classroom instruction, but also exert an impact on students' perceptions of literacy processes.

While it was a good starting point for studies on language teachers' beliefs, research on the topic was still flawed in some ways. For one thing, researchers narrowed the definition of teacher beliefs, pairing teacher beliefs only with theoretical orientations; for another, a majority of studies presupposed that there was a unidirectional relationship between language teachers' beliefs and their practices. However, what researchers did was simply testing and concluding the relationship.

Developing stage: Teacher beliefs and actions

Debate on consistency versus inconsistency

"In analyzing teacher cognition in language teaching, then 1990-2000 merges as the decade of change" (Borg, 2003, p. P. 83). In terms of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and teaching practices, two competing themes are recurring in relevant literatures during this time period. One theme proposed that there exists a consistent relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices; the other, however, stated that the connection between teachers' beliefs and instruction is inconsistent.

Considerable reading studies support the notion that teachers' theoretical beliefs shape their ways of teaching. Rupley and Logan (1984) found that elementary teachers' perceptions of reading affect their decision-making in the classroom. Richardson and his colleagues (1991) reported that teacher beliefs about reading are consistent with their classroom teaching practices. They further explained that teachers who are in favor of skills-based instruction rely heavily on basal texts, and prefer decontextualized modes of assessment, such as the ubiquitous blackline master. In contrast, teachers who believe in constructivism regarded whole language as the best practice, and promoted through today's more forward-thinking teacher education programs (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000; Au, 2000; Lenski, Wham,, & Griffey, 1997; Pressley, 2006; Pressley & Harris, 1997). The distinction between these two opposing views of reading instruction resulted from the heavy emphasis on either behaviorism or constructivism. The latter tenet places emphasis on the process of learning, which is attached more value than the final product. Teachers in this constructivism camp serve as the knowledgeable tour guide, allowing their curious students to stop at some moments and reflect on their learning. In contrast, teachers in the behaviorism camp fastened their students in seats on the bus, and led them directly to their final destination with a single-minded determination.

Similar to the studies in teachers' beliefs, in general, as well as English reading, some research in ESL/EFL education focused on the relationship between language teachers' perceptions of their content knowledge and their actual teaching practices. Johnson (1992) researched certain ESL teachers' theoretical foundations in their reading classroom, and found that they aligned their actual teaching to their lesson plans. Johnson used a Multidimensional TESL Theoretical Orientation Profile, which consisted of an Ideal Instructional Protocol, a Lesson Plan Analysis Task, and a Beliefs Inventory. She recruited 30 ESL teachers who had different theoretical orientations on second language (L2) learning and teaching as the subjects, and studied their corresponding instructional practices represented by skill-based, rule-based, and function-based methodologies. Her findings indicated that theoretical beliefs held by most of these studied teachers lead consistently to methodological approaches. In her subsequent study, Johnson (1994) concluded that while teachers' beliefs are difficult to define and study due to its unobservableness, educational research on teachers' beliefs share three basic assumptions: 1) teacher beliefs influence their perceptions and judgment; 2) teacher beliefs plays a part in shaping information on teaching into classroom practices; and 3) understanding teacher beliefs is necessary, because it may improve teacher practices and teacher education programs (Farrell & Lim, 2005).

However, some research showed that there exists limited correspondence between teachers' beliefs and practices. Richardson and his colleagues (1991) hypothesized that the inconsistency may be due to research methods; for example, researchers may attempt to assess teachers' beliefs through paper and pencil type means, or questionnaires. Research scholars after the 2000s further proved this hypothesis. Basturkmen (2012) concluded that even "sophisticated methods do not necessarily reveal closer correspondence" (p. 284). In a study based on multiple sources of data on beliefs and practice, van der Schaff and colleagues (2008) also found there was no clear correspondence between teachers' stated beliefs about research skills, and their actual practices of teaching these skills in their research classrooms. Farrell and Lim (2005) reported a "strong sense of convergence between the stated beliefs and actual classroom practices' of grammar teaching of one of the two experienced teachers in their study"; however, the beliefs of the second teacher only "partially matched some of her actual classroom practices" (p. 9). Powers and Butler (2006) examined four teachers' beliefs and practices in literacy and literacy assessment over the course of one year. Four teachers worked in the university literacy clinic as part of their graduate coursework. Two of the four taught elementary pupils in a public school, one worked as a reading resource educator at a public elementary school, and the last one taught high school students at an alternative school affiliated to a public school. Findings of the study indicate that teachers' beliefs and their classroom instruction were often inconsistent due to an array of variables such as school philosophy and/or government and state mandates.

Methodological issues: Explaining the inconsistency

Fang (1996) did a comprehensive study on teachers' beliefs and practices, which can be regarded as a synopsis of the studies from the 1980s and 1990s. Apart from analyzing the literatures on the consistency and inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and practices, he contributed greatly in summarizing the most commonly used methods for eliciting responses on teacher cognition. He described and analyzed three types of methods: policy capturing, repertory grid technique, and process tracing.

Fang defined policy capturing as a method using simulated cases or vignettes from students, curriculum materials, or teaching episodes to study teachers' classroom judgments. Specifically, given the features or cues in the materials, teachers are asked to make judgments about the features. Then, data are recorded on a Likert scale, and processed with linear regression equations. Armour-Thomas (1989) pointed out the major problem of this method as its reliability on the generalization consistency from a small sample to a big population. Armour-Thomas also indicated other problems with the policy capturing method. For example, regression equation might only predict key variables that affect teacher judgment, but cannot precisely describe teachers' decision-making. Borg and Gall (1989) then listed possible errors from teacher judgment, which may include observer/experimenter drift, halo-effect, error of leniency, personal bias, reliability decay, contamination and error of central tendency. Other scholars also pointed out problems with the policy capturing method (Lave, 1989; Webb & Burstein, 1986). Most policy capturing studies were conducted in laboratory settings rather than in an authentic classroom setting, which is highly dynamic and interactive. Results derived in laboratory settings may not accurately reveal the features of an authentic classroom.

Another method in which to solicit teachers' beliefs is the repertory grid technique (Johnson, 1992; Kinzer, 1988; Wilson, Konopak, & Readence, 1991). According to Fang (1996), this method is used to examine how personal constructs affect behaviors. To be specific, a teacher is asked to select the statement among a set of statements which best reflects his/her teaching beliefs. Investigators label the categorical responses from teachers with constructs, which are then formed in a grid format (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Similar to the policy capturing method, data collected from the repertory grid technique are also unreliable to be generalized to all settings. What the data represents is only hypothetical situations.

The last method used to elicit teachers' beliefs in Fang's (1996) study is process tracing. Fang regarded process tracing as an overarching term under which lies a group of verbal report methods used by teachers to make their classroom decisions. Four common methods are think-aloud, retrospective interview, simulated recall, and journal keeping. The think-aloud approach requires teachers to verbalize their thoughts in their actual teaching. The retrospective interview usually asks teachers to reflect upon their teaching after the class has ended, or at any moment after an instructional task is performed. The simulated recall elicits teachers' reflection on their classroom instruction as a way of replaying their actual performance. The journal keeping approach asks teachers to record their teaching practices in written form instead of verbalization.

Scholars hardly reach a consensus on the validity of the data generated from a process tracing approach. Some hold that the introspective nature of the process tracing method makes scholars doubt its validity in a scientific research. Nisbett and Wilson (1977) criticized the use of verbalized reports as valid data, and contended that self-reported data may be based on a priori and implicit casual theories. However, the other scholars acknowledge the validity of a process tracing approach and contended that:

> the inference that the recall of one's own private, conscious thoughts approximates the recall of the overt, observable events has led to the anticipation that the accuracy of the recall of conscious thought is high enough for most studies… if interview are made within a short time after the event. (Bloom, 1953, p. 162)

While studies on teachers' beliefs and practice in the 1980s to 1990s began to change from a one-dimensional orientation to a bi-dimensional one, scholars in the 1990s still regarded the literature, at this time, as infant (Bean & Zulich, 1992). Fang (1996) proposed an expanded direction for future research. First, for those scholars who believe in consistency between teachers' beliefs and practices, they should further explore how the teachers' theoretical beliefs inform their teaching practices. Secondly, most studies at this time only focused on the K-12 level, with few focusing on the college level. Third, for ESL/EFL teachers, studies on the connection between teachers' beliefs and components of their content knowledge are necessary.

For example, a reading teacher's beliefs can be further observed through the lens of its connection with vocabulary or grammar in a reading text. Finally, yet importantly, research should be done to gain insights from successful in-service teachers, and address them to the pre-service teachers.

Transformational Stage: A Boom of Paradigms

Influence of sociocultural theory on belief research

The continuum of research paradigms from positivism (quantitative method-based-based) to pragmatism (mixed methods), with other paradigms such as constructivism and critical theory (qualitative and/or quantitative method-based) in between, has orientated EFL researchers from simply focusing on in/consistency of teacher beliefs and practices to the sociocultural and political factors influencing teacher beliefs and practices. Therefore, entering the 2000s — while the consistency and inconsistency camps are still debating on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices, another school of thought emerged. With Vygotsky's sociocultural theory prevailing in the contemporary academic literatures, research scholars, particularly in the field of language education, begin to investigate teachers' beliefs and practices through the lens of the sociocultural theory. Barcelos and Kalaja (2011) stated that, "The studies tend to view beliefs as variable and fixed, and focus on changes on these, and/or on the interaction between beliefs and learner or teacher actions, acknowledging their relationship to be a complex one" (p. 281). Therefore, studies on language teachers' beliefs in the recent two decades tend to focus on the two following aspects: beliefs as a complex system, and the connections between beliefs and change or actions.

How beliefs interact with actions has been a recurring theme in scholarly research on beliefs for decades. Earlier research on beliefs viewed this relationship as a unidirectional cause-and-effect relationship; as interactive and mutual, namely, beliefs influence actions and vice versa; or, as complex, that is, beliefs and practices may be irrelevant due to contextual factors (Barcelos, 2003; 2006). Rather than studying effects from teachers' beliefs on practices, researchers at the new era begin to investigate the role of actions in beliefs change from a sociocultural perspective. Most research through the lens of a sociocultural approach regarded beliefs as mediators of learner/teacher actions (Navarro & Thornton, 2011), and reflection on their actions helps them define their emergent beliefs. Generally, research on language teachers' beliefs and practices in a sociocultural approach can be categorized as follows: a) belief as mediator; b) belief and identity; c) belief change; and d) belief on specific language knowledge.

Belief as mediator

Alanen (2003) argued that "further research is needed to investigate how beliefs are put to practice during language learning" (p. 68). To bridge the gap, Negueruela-Azarola (2011) investigated how semiogenesis—an approach referring to "documenting the emergence of meaning as signs with functional capabilities in concrete activity"—informs the internalization of beliefs as conceptualizing activity, "the origin and result of developmental processes in the L2 classroom" (p. 363). Eight in-service language teachers were recruited in the study, and given a seminar on sociocultural approach in L2 teaching. A series of textbooks, articles, and book chapters on L2 teaching were selected, and assigned to the participants to elicit their discussion and reflection. In the study, Negueruela-Azarola viewed a sociocultural framework as a "complementary path to exploring beliefs as contextually situated social meaning emerging in specific sense-making activities" (p. 368).

Similar to Negueruela-Azarola, other scholars have used the sociocultural framework to investigate beliefs (Peng, 2011; De Costa, 2011; Yang & Kim, 2011). These papers report on how beliefs act as mediators in cognition, in change, and in the macro-political context (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011).

Belief and identity

Apart from mediators, positioning is another concept relating to beliefs. The positioning theory sheds light on the interface research of beliefs and identity. According to De Costa (2011), positioning refers to how learners or teachers position themselves and others in terms of the identity they want to construct in a conversation. The positioning theory allows teachers "to examine how learners' discursive positionings shape their beliefs, and subsequently influence their learning outcomes" (p. 350).

Based on the positioning and discourse theories, Trent (2012) explored the discursive positioning of native-speaking English teachers (NETs) in Hong Kong. He studied eight NETs, using semi-structured interviews, to gain in-depth data of NETs' experiences in Hong Kong schools. He elicited responses from the eight subjects on three aspects: self-positioning, being positioned, and responding to positioning. Trent found that these NETs perceive challenges to their self-positioning as professional language teachers from some local teachers who doubt the value of their teaching in the classrooms.

Belief change

There are also some studies in recent years focusing on belief change (Borg, 2011; Mercer, 2011; Navarro & Thornton, 2011; Woods & Cakır, 2011). Mercer (2011) noted that beliefs are complex and nuanced, and may lead to contextual changes.

Reflection plays an important role in belief change. Woods and Cakır (2011) stated that, "when a teacher reflects on practice, and begins to articulate his or her "practical" knowledge, it begins to be theorized and to inform his or her theoretical knowledge" (p. 389). By acknowledging the changeable attribute of teacher beliefs, Woods and Cakır argued that the teachers' knowledge and beliefs in communicative language teaching is "multidimensional" and "dynamic," and they developed a framework with two dimensions: “personal-impersonal” and “theoretical-practical” (p. 381). Then, they investigated six Turkish English teachers and found that when these teachers discuss the characteristics of communicative teaching, depending on their own experiences and stories, they refer to theoretical frameworks learned at school. It turns out that they rely on their personal/practical beliefs more than impersonal/theoretical beliefs.

Borg (2011) investigated how teacher education courses affect in-service teachers’ beliefs, and concluded that these education courses do have an impact upon teachers’ beliefs. These education courses can extend teachers’ beliefs, and make their beliefs more explicit. They also help teachers to articulate their beliefs and put them into practice, thus, connecting their beliefs with theory; and, they can ultimately pave the way for new teachers’ beliefs. Borg further suggested in his study that educational courses “could have engaged teachers in a more productive and sustained examination of their beliefs” (p. 370).

Besides the studies on teachers’ beliefs from a sociocultural perspective, research regarding how teachers perceive reading shapes their ways of teaching reading remains prevailing after the 2000s (Arnett & Turnbull, 2008; Borg, 2011; Isikoglu, Basturk, & Karaca, 2009). Other scholars (Breen et al., 2001; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004) even found that the relationship between language teachers’ beliefs and practices are interactive, namely that, “beliefs drive actions, but experiences and reflection on actions can lead to changes in, or additions to beliefs themselves” (Basturkmen, 2012, p. 283).

Fung and Chow (2002) indicated that there was limited correspondence between the novice teachers’ theoretical orientations, and their practices during a language teaching practicum. Basturkmen, Lowen, & Ellis (2004) investigated the relationship between foreign language teachers’ beliefs and practices in terms of “focus on form”, which are the instances during communicative lessons. They concluded that, among the three teachers, there was a “tenuous relationship” (p. 243) between the teachers’ actual practices and stated beliefs.

Future directions

While the research on the topic of teachers’ beliefs has been studied for decades, there is still more room for exploration in this field. First, studies on language teachers’ beliefs and their practices in teaching specific language knowledge are unevenly distributed, with the majority of the studies focusing on grammar teaching (Andrew, 1997; 1999; Basturkmen et al., 2004; Borg, 2001; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Farrell, 1999; 2005). There are relatively fewer studies on language teachers’ beliefs and practices on other specific aspects of language teaching such as speaking, listening, writing and vocabulary. Even within the larger portion of studies on grammar and reading, the correlation between teachers’ beliefs and their classroom actions still need to be investigated further due to the newly emergent and interdisciplinary theories. Second, with studies on SLA steering towards viewing language acquisition as a complex, dynamic and context-dependent process, and the sociocultural theory paving the way for teacher cognition studies, language teachers' belief studies should be connected with concepts like identity, emotions, motivation, and agency (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011). As most studies on teachers' beliefs have thus far been conducted in a limited number of research methods, more various and in-depth approaches is highly suggested. Instead of belief inventory and case studies, more reflection and interpretative approaches should be examined in order to address the issues in the field of teachers' beliefs and practices.

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Exploring the learning potential of peer-assessed dictation in the Chinese context

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Abstract

Students play an important role in using assessment for learning. Their perceptions and involvement directly impact on the learning potential of assessment. This paper investigated students' views on peer-assessed dictation in two Chinese high schools through a qualitative study. Students recognized both benefits and constraints of peer-assessed dictation. They perceived more benefits when they got actively engaged. This paper contributes to the understanding of assessment and learning relationship from student perspectives. It also offers implications for using assessment more productively in the Asian classrooms and a wider context.

Key words: formative assessment, peer assessment, dictation, student learning

Introduction

In recent years, more attention has been paid to the role that assessment plays in promoting learning in language classrooms. Recent research on teacher classroom assessment has contributed to the formative assessment theory, including but not limited to formative assessment strategies, process and cycle for gap closure, and variations in formative assessment (e.g. Rea-Dickins and Gardner, 2000). Whilst teacher perspectives are important, increasingly attention is called for student perspectives, as their perceptions and beliefs directly impact on their learning (Cowie, 2009). Involving students in assessment is necessary and there are opportunities for students to become active learners rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Peer assessment is such a strategy to get students involved. It involves students actively by encouraging them to support each other and reflect on their own work, and to get engaged with criteria and standards (Carless, 2011).

This paper focuses on students' responses to English dictation in their everyday classrooms. Dictation is a commonly used technique in language classrooms particularly in the Chinese context. Although it has been considered as an old-fashion technique in Anglo-American context, dictation is still used popularly in the Chinese primary and secondary schools. In the English classrooms, memorizing words and assessing the mastery of vocabulary through dictation is a common feature. Carless (2011) interprets this as being related to the practice and memorization of the forms of the

Chinese characters. Dictation is not frequently discussed in existing literature, probably because it is associated with the old grammar translation method. However, dictation can take a variety of forms rather than writing down what is being read. An action research in a Hong Kong school shows that secondary school teachers attempt to involve students in more meaningful ways by focusing on more than spellings and involving students actively (e.g. Chiang, 2002).

This study investigated students' perceptions of peer-assessed dictation in two high schools in China. This paper was drawn from a larger study which explored students' responses to English assessment. Peer-assessed dictation turned out to be a major theme and it was frequently used in three classes. Through collecting data from classroom observations and interviews, this study intends to find out how Chinese high school students perceive peer-assessed dictation and to what extent it contributes to English learning. It is hoped that this study offers implications for teachers in both China and a wider educational context.

Literature Review

Black and Wiliam's (1998) foundational review article collects rich and extensive evidence on the role that assessment had in improving learning, which raises wide interest on the learning potential of formative assessment in the following 20 years. Unlike external tests where students tend to have a more passive role, students are strongly recommended to be actively involved in the whole assessment process in formative assessment (Broadfoot et al., 1999). Drawing on their comprehensive review, Black and Wiliam (1998) point out that it is important to develop students' own capacity to evaluate. If students are unable to plan and carry out remedial learning, they are less likely to make good use of feedback. Through working with English as additional language pupils in England, Rea-Dickins (2001) suggests that teachers need to focus on students' learning and involve them actively in the whole assessment process, including motivating learners to engage in interaction, developing their skills for reflection, focusing on learners' difficulties, and providing opportunities for learners to express their own understanding. Classroom discourse demonstrates how learners are active participants themselves, and how teachers could facilitate this process through classroom interaction.

Peer assessment is such a strategy to get students involved. Peer assessment contributes to students' learning through social interaction, in the process of which students stimulate others to think and act, hence developing their thinking in collaborative ways (Carless, 2011). Peers also provide scaffolding, so that students can recognize how others have done the job and how they can complete it (Lam, 2011). Students may accept peer feedback more easily. Cowie (2009) considers that peer feedback is straightforward and contains less technical words. Peers who share similar learning experiences provide support and assistance to their classmates in an easily accessible way.

In spite of the recent launch of the new curriculum in China that emphasizes students' active participation, there is still a gap between the intended curriculum and classroom practices. While pair and group work is observed in the language classrooms, some students believe that there are more chances to learn from teachers rather than peers (Jin & Cortazzi, 2008), indicating that peer assessment is a contextualized phenomenon. In a study in a wider Chinese context in Hong Kong, secondary school students recognize the benefits of peer assessment in terms of enhancing thinking and reflection, and setting future learning target in English learning, but they also feel concerned about the effectiveness of assessment forms and their own academic capabilities (Mok, 2011). Another strategy to get students involved is by asking them to design assessment questions and administer assessments to other students. This strategy has been identified by Black et al. (2003), but there is a lack of elaborated studies on this.

This paper hence focuses on the peer assessment in the Chinese school context through examining students' responses to dictation. As mentioned earlier, dictation is frequently used in the Chinese classrooms, although it is considered to be an old fashion activity and is associated with the grammar translation method of language learning (Stansfield, 1985). Dictation is considered both as a teaching technique and an assessment technique. From the perspective of teaching technique, Kidd (1992) recommends teachers to use meaningful and interesting methods, instead of merely focusing on spelling and stress. Dictation could involve a variety of possiblities, such as dictating words, and asking students to write down connections between words or suitable connotations, or asking students to draw pictures (Davis & Rinvolucri, 1988). Dictation is also regard as a way of assessing English-language skills (Oller, 1971). However, some researchers criticized that dictation is a reduced form of assessment, as the performance elicited is not part of everyday language use (Brown & Hudson, 1998). As dictation plays a dual role as both teaching and assessment technique, it is reasonable to examine dictation from an assessment perspective. This paper intends explore if and in what way peer-involved dictation contributes to learning. It might be interesting to examine how this technique is used in the Chinese context, and in what way dictation could be more productive than it was considered to be. This study offers implications for more productive use of dictation in the Chinese context, and peer participation in other forms of classroom assessments.

This study examined the perception of students in Chinese high schools towards peer-assessed dictation.

Method of study

This study was conducted in two high schools in China. School A was a provincial key high school in a major city in Hubei province; it admitted the top 20 per cent students in the municipal high school exams. School B was a foreign language school in Zhejiang province. The school adopted a junior-senior consistent secondary system and selected top students from primary schools. Therefore, the students in the two schools were comparatively high-achieving learners. School A was chosen because of the researcher's familiarity with the context and it was a typical high school in China. School B was chosen for its constant good practices in language teaching and good assessment practices. Both schools seemed to be information-rich cases, which were likely to provide insights into issues that of central importance to the research (Patton, 1990, p. 169). This paper reported the findings from one class in school A (AC1, C stands for class) and two classes in school B (BC1 and BC2) where peer-assessed dictation was observed to be a constant practice. This purposeful sampling intended to get more insights into peer-assessed dictation. The two schools were chosen not for comparison purpose, but to maximize the perspectives obtained.

The data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Altogether 60 classroom observations were conducted in three classes, including 21 observations in AC1, 25 in BC1 and 14 in BC2. Fewer classroom observations were conducted in BC2, as it was included in the study at a later stage. Among all observations, peer-assessed dictation was observed four times in AC1, once in BC1 and twice in BC2; interview responses indicated that dictation was conducted regularly at the end of each unit. Student participants were also invited to individual or group interviews, depending on students' preferences. Altogether 32 interviews were conducted; each individual interview lasted for about 40 minutes and each group interview lasted for one and a half hours. The interviews were conducted in the students' mother tongue-Chinese and were translated into English after coding. The interviews focused on students' responses to various assessments in their English classes. This paper focused only on their responses to dictation, whilst the other findings were reported elsewhere.

In analysing the data, each interview participant was assigned a code. For example, AC1-S1 refers to student one in class one at school A, whilst BC2-S3 refers to student three in class two at school B. Accordingly, AC1-T refers to the English teacher in class one at school A, whilst BC2-T refers to the English teacher in class two at school B. The transcripts of all the participants were coded on the original transcripts in Chinese. Drawing on the recommendations of Merriam (2009), the data analysis adopted an iterative approach, and it went simultaneously with data collection and the writing-up of report (Creswell, 2007). After initial codes were generated from the transcripts in one class, they were tried out with transcripts from other classes. Codes were reduced and merged to develop a new list of codes. Previous coded transcripts were checked accordingly. The codes were then categorized into categories and themes. The relevant quotations were translated from Chinese to English after coding.

Results

In two schools, students participated in different ways in dictation. I describe below how peer-assessed dictation was conducted and how students responded to it in the two schools.

Peer assessment in school A: Teacher-designed with peer feedback

In School A, dictation was conducted at the end of each unit and lasted for 45 minutes. Dictation assessed the usage of words, phrases and sentences. In term one, AC1-T provided English meanings of words for students to write down words, and asked students to translate sentences from Chinese to English. In term two, the dictation turned into a blank filling exercise (Appendix 1). Students needed to fill in the blanks with the suitable forms of words in suitable tenses and voices, with the Chinese translation of sentences provided. AC1-T chose to provide English explanations, as it urged students to understand the words rather than memorizing Chinese translations. She switched to the blank filling exercise later, as this method assessed students' abilities to use new words rather than merely recognizing and spelling them. I also noted that the format of blank filling was similar to how vocabulary was assessed in exams. After dictation, students checked their desk-mates' work and wrote feedback; they also wrote reflection on their own work.

As most students reported they never experienced peer assessment before, AC1-T explained benefits of peer feedback and how to write feedback to students; she also demonstrated what good feedback looked like from students' own work. AC1-T strongly believed the benefits of peer assessment and articulated the benefits in three aspects: checking peers' work provided a chance for re-memorization and re-learning; peer feedback was more accurate, approachable and easily accessible; the easy comparison of their peer's performance and their own performance motivated them to learn.

Affective impact

When asked about what they thought of the peer assessment, students mentioned the affective impact. Peer feedback was considered emotionally supportive. AC1-S3 commented that peers were more considerate and caring than teachers, as the feedback showed an understanding of the difficulties she had, which was not appreciated by the teacher. AC1-S2 reported that peer feedback helped with emotional communication and they wrote supportive words for each other.

Students also addressed the relationship between peer assessment and the efforts they would make: they felt more motivated to study in order to present a good work in front of peers. Below is an excerpt:

> Peer assessment inspires me. I have to memorize harder and better next time. I do not want my peer to write so many again. (AC1-S7)

AC1-S7 stressed that emotional inspiration was of vital importance, which made her determined to do better in the next dictation. According to students, working harder to outperform their peers came from their intention to establish a good “image” in peers’ eyes and to avoid embarrassment. An interpretation made here is that in the context of competitive examinations, the motivation triggered by peer assessment may come from the intention to outperform others.

Peer assessment and learning

Three aspects emerged when students responded to whether peer assessment helped with learning. First, students articulated the opportunities to learn from peers’ strengths and weaknesses through checking peers’ work. AC1-S4 was impressed by desk-mate’s capabilities in answering difficult questions; therefore, he asked his desk-mate for reviewing strategies. Both AC1-S3 and AC1-S7 reported that they noticed peers’ mistakes and tried to avoid them in the future, although some other students pointed out that it was hard to learn from trivial mistakes.

The second aspect lay in the chances to reflect on peers’ and their own work. AC1-S3, drawing on what the teacher has taught in class and how her desk-mate performed, concluded that her desk-mate did not pay sufficient attention in class. She also reflected on her own vocabulary memorization strategies:

> I used to memorize words by reading English words and Chinese meanings interchangeably; now I begin to think the word meanings lively in my mind, like a picture, as suggested by AC1-T, it is easier to do so with Nouns and Verbs; but much harder for Adjectives. (AC1-S3)

AC1-S2 commented that the dictation was different from previous ones she had experienced, as students became assessors, rather than the teacher as the sole assessor. The involvement offered more chances for reflection. She elaborated that she had always examined beyond the superficial phenomenon (i.e. poor performance) and identified the reasons for poor performance, for example, laziness and poor attitudes, or lack of efforts, or incorrect understanding.

The last aspect fell on whether comments provided by peers helped with learning. Students who were in favour of peer feedback provided examples of effective comments they received. AC1-S3 received a suggestion that memorization of new words should start with reading a sentence containing the word, instead of directly checking meanings. She found this enhanced the understanding through getting access to the context. AC1-S4 responded with another suggestion:

> My desk-mate asked me to read out words while writing them down, so I have a deeper impression of the spellings; for example, whether [ei] spells

> as an “A” or “E”. I got much less wrong this time so I decide to keep doing it. I hated reading while writing before; but now I found it helpful. (AC1-S4)

In addition to suggestions on specific difficulties, peers also proposed cooperative learning activities, such as finding out key phrases in the texts together and checking each other before dictation. However, they admitted that cooperative learning was time-consuming and difficult to stick to under the heavy school workload. AC1-S7 noted she once worked with her desk-mate and circled out what they considered important. They reviewed these notes; it turned out that most of the words and phrases occurred in dictation. However, this action stopped after one or two trials.

Unsurprisingly, students complained about peer feedback. The most prominent ones included feedback was template-like and feedback was not insightful. AC1-S5 illustrated in the quotation below typical comments he observed:

> There is not much to write. They are: “you were not careful”; “you did not have a solid foundation”; “you did not listen attentively in class”; “a slip of the pen”. It’s boring, if I have to write those for two years. (AC1-S5)

The quotation above was from an interview which took place a couple of weeks after peer assessment has been implemented. This view remained similar when I interviewed students again after eight months. Both AC1-S5 and AC1-S8 reported that they regarded writing feedback as a required task to complete. AC1-S8 elaborated that he thought suggestions, such as “paying more attention to details” and “developing the abilities to grasp key points”, were too vague to implement. AC1-S7 pointed out that students’ opinions were not as sharp as teachers’. She illustrated that students told her she could not spell because she did not memorize, which contradicted her efforts in memorization; she believed that the problem lay in the lack of strategies in memorization and understanding, which could not be seen by peers.

Another constraint was the time-consuming nature of dictation. AC1-S4 and AC1-S9 described writing feedback as “a waste of time”. Both preferred spending time learning new content rather than writing feedback.

These responses demonstrate the multi-faceted nature of students’ perceptions towards peer-assessed dictation. Peer-assessed dictation exerted affective impact and was related to student learning. The reported benefits show that peer-assessed dictation was easily accessible, enabled students to notice strengths and weaknesses, encouraged reflection and generated helpful feedback. For students who perceived benefits in dictation, their active involvement in checking and reflection seemed to be an important contributing factor. They seemed to engage in reflection and cooperative work with peers. They seemed to take more responsibilities over assessment when they became assessors. Complaints such as “template-like feedback” and “lack of insights” were probably related to the nature of assessment tasks. For dictation focusing on the surface feature of language use, it is comprehensible that not too much insightful feedback could be provided.

Peer assessment in school B: student-designed dictation

School B conducted dictation on a weekly basis. Students took turns in pair to organize dictation for the rest of the students. There was no fixed requirement on how to conduct dictation, as long as they used words, phrases, or sentences learned in the current unit. The observation shows that usually dictation items included "blanks filling according to the initial letter", "blanks filling according to the Chinese meanings", "selecting appropriate phrases" and "sentences translation", etc. (See Appendix 2 for a sample dictation). The pair then marked peers' dictation and checked their corrections after students handed them back. They were not required to write feedback, although I observed one or two students writing a few words for peers. The teacher involvement came both before dictation through checking the questions designed and afterwards through checking if all students completed tasks. Students commented that peer assessment was part of the routine in English classes.

Both English teachers BC1-T and BC2-T considered peer assessment to be an effective way of getting students involved. They felt that it released teachers' burden and empowered students by asking them to take responsibility. Students had more chances to review and learn vocabulary, as they must have a good understanding of the vocabulary meanings and memorize spellings clearly before they could check others' work. Regarding the format of dictation, BC2-T believed that using vocabulary exercises was beneficial for both assessors and assessed. To complete the dictation, students needed to understand the words rather than merely memorize the spellings. Designing dictation also required assessors to have a deep understanding of words. They would check the dictionary and surf the internet, all contributing to the understanding of words. BC2-T believed students could gradually become autonomous learned by providing them with opportunities to assess.

Peer assessment and learning

Without addressing affective impact, students in school B mainly articulated the relationship between peer assessment and learning. After observing the peer-assessed dictation organized by BC2-S1 and BC2-S2, I interviewed them for their perceptions. BC2-S1 commented that the ones who benefited the most were those organising dictation but each pair only had one chance to organize dictation in a semester. BC2-S2 elaborated that:

> If I only took dictation, I merely spent time answering questions and found out if I know the words or not. But when we organized, in addition to reviewing all words as everyone did, we spent hours studying usage of the word, looking up dictionary and checking the grammar book.

BC1-S1 also emphasized that she benefited most through organizing dictation as she knew clearly where each language point came from and had deep impression of the words she selected. When designing dictation, she read through surrounding text and thought about which words to choose and why.

These responses indicate that students were actively engaged in designing dictation. When asked to elaborate on how they designed dictation, BC2-S5 explained that he and his partner split the task into two parts, with each being responsible for one section. For example, one worked on vocabulary and another one on sentences. They then checked each other's questions and made relevant revisions. After this, they handed the questions to the teacher for a check. BC2-S5 exemplified how he chose words for dictation:

> I prefer to choose phrases that are easily used in the wrong way. Last time I chose two phrases, "take a stroll" and "break out", as the two show different paces of moving. I also tried to make up sentences using the recent news. It is like a practice for me. (BC2-S5)

BC2-S6 noted that quiz questions such as "filling the blanks according to the initial letter" required him to create sentences that provided sufficient context to enable classmates to think of the word, and at mean time each should allow no more than one correct answers.

Another benefit lay in the chances for noticing the common mistakes through checking the work of the whole class, which made students more careful in their own learning. Although in school B teachers did not require students to write feedback, I noticed from reading students' work that BC2-S9 wrote encouraging comments and detailed usages of words for her peers. When asked to elaborate, BC2-S9 commented that she hoped her classmates took dictation as a chance to learn, rather than a task to complete. Therefore, she gave encouragement if someone did a poor job and supplemented with word usages to help them to learn.

However, as commented by most students, the process of purely doing the dictation designed by other students was not different from answering dictation designed by teachers, both triggering insufficient chances for learning. The learning opportunities were restricted, as students always did the review at the last minute rather than regularly (BC2-S4, BC2-S6). Regarding other constraints, BC2-S7 pointed out that they felt nervous of doing dictation, which was test-like and they felt depressed if they got a poor grade. BC2-S3 regarded it time-consuming, which occupied BC2-T's teaching time.

Students articulated mainly two benefits from peer-assessed dictation: noticing peers' mistakes, and chances to understand and learn vocabulary. The process of designing and delivering dictation was regarded as beneficial. Students particularly emphasized the benefits as dictation designers, as they needed to study and digest the words before they could design proper dictation. The learning potential comes probably from their active engagement in learning.

Hence, they perceived dictation to be less helpful when only participating in dictation.

Discussion

The findings revealed that in both schools, dictation was not used in the way that dictation is meant literally, i.e. writing down what is being read. Dictation in this study assessed students' understanding of words and their abilities to use words. When conducting dictation, teachers in two schools deployed different strategies to get students involved. In school A, students provided feedback to peers and in school B, students acted as assessors. To answer my research question, students in two schools recognized positive impacts in terms of emotional support and opportunities to learn, as well as the potential restrictions. The opportunities to learn include learning from peers' strengths and weaknesses (both schools), chances for reflection (school A), receiving insightful feedback (school A) and in-depth learning of vocabulary through organizing dictation (school B). Although this study was conducted with a small number of students, it demonstrated potential benefits of peer assessment through collecting data in natural classroom settings.

In this study, two types of peer assessment in dictation were identified: students assessed each other and provided feedback; students designed and delivered assessment to other students. The first type was frequently discussed in a wide range of peer assessment research focusing on the peer feedback (e.g. Mok, 2011). The second type, peer-designed assessment, was relatively less addressed in the existing literature, although it is suggested by Black et al. (2003) as being helpful. Regarding the first type of peer assessment, students who considered peer feedback to be helpful felt that peers offered easily accessible support and useful advice (Cowie, 2009), in the form of feedback on potential areas for improvement and recommendations on learning strategies. Students' involvement in assessing others' work triggered self-reflection, and enabled students to notice peers' strengths and weaknesses (Carless, 2011). This study also shows that feedback offered emotional support, and made dictation less threatening. Hence, in addition to activating learning opportunities through a socially-constructed process, peer assessment offered motivational support. It supports that the functions of peer assessment involve multiple aspects, including cognitive, social and affective purposes and consequences (Cowie, 2005).

As regards to peer-designed dictation, the benefits did not lie in information from feedback, but in the process of constructing dictation and checking through others' work. Students studied the word meanings and word uses in more detail, hence developing an in-depth understanding of word uses. Checking the whole class's work also enabled them to notice the potential mistakes and reinforced their memory of spellings. Student-designed dictation was not frequently mentioned in educational literature, probably because diction was a low-cognitive activity and focused on surface learning. This study shows that even in such an activity, the process of assessing others triggered students' active engagement with assessment, and contributed to student learning in a constructive way. Therefore, this study suggests that students should be involved more actively in the design and delivery of assessment. Peer assessment can be used not only in dictation, but also to assess other skills in in different aspects of learning.

Students also articulated the constraints of peer-assessed dictation, which included lack of insights in peer feedback (school A), template-like feedback (school A), lack of chances for learning when participating in assessment (school B) and dictation being time-consuming (both schools). The first two constraints were likely to be relevant to the nature of assessment tasks. The feedback generated from dictation could be limited. For alternative assessments to be productive, they should include tasks that require high-order thinking and represent meaningful instruction activities (Marshall & Drummond, 2006). The third constraint further supported that students should be more actively engaged in the assessment in order to learn; hence, they felt dictation less helpful when they only answered the dictation questions. Despite the constraints articulated, the findings intended to encourage rather than discourage teachers to implement peer assessment in their classes. This study shows that peer assessment can trigger learning opportunities, which can be enhanced through adopting meaningful tasks and involving students actively in the assessment process. An insight drawn from this study is that assessment tasks, student engagement and learning are three interlocked concepts in classrooms. For assessment to induce productive learning, the assessment tasks and student active involvement are two important components.

Conclusion

This qualitative study inquired students' perceptions of assessment through an example of peer-assessed dictation in the Chinese context. Two examples presented in this article show that students perceived more benefits from assessment whenever they were actively engaged. Their active engagement with assessment enabled them to notice good and poor performances, promoted reflection, enhanced further learning by providing feedback and suggestions, and urged students to study vocabulary use in greater depth. The constraints articulated by students further indicate that the learning potential can be enhanced by providing more meaningful activities. This study demonstrates how an assessment technique used frequently in the Asian context can become more productive. It shows that assessment tasks, student engagement with assessment and student learning are three interlocked concepts. For assessment to promote student learning, meaningful tasks are needed and students should be engaged more actively. Although this study focused on dictation in the Chinese context, it has implications for a larger context. It is likely that different assessment techniques are used in different context, and this study encourages teachers to involve students more actively in the assessment.

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Note on Contributor

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Appendix 1: Dictation in School A
Sample in AC1

1. It is by no means clear ____________ to end the strike.(do)
   总统能采取什么措施来结束这场罢工根本不为人所知。
2. Film has a much shorter history, especially ___________ such art forms as music and painting.(compare)
   电影的历史短得多，尤其是它与诸如音乐、绘画等艺术形式相比较时。
3. _____________ math for the whole afternoon and the numbers swam before my eyes.(work)
   整个下午我都在做数学题，众多数字在我眼前晃来晃去。
4. If she doesn't want to go, nothing you can say __________ .(persuade)
   如果她不想去， 你说什么都说服不了她。
5. If we ___________ adequate preparations, the conference wouldn't have been so successful.(make)
   如果我们没有做好充分的准备，会议是不可能那么成功的。
6. A number of buildings have arisen ____________ a year ago but ruins.(there)
   在一年前曾经只是一片废墟的地方建筑物已拔地而起。
7. The manager was concerned to hear that two of his trusted workers .(leave)
   听说他信任的员工中有两名要离开，经理很是忧虑。
8. The manager _______________ from Paris where he had met some European business partners.(arrive)
   据说经理已经从巴黎返回了，他在巴黎会见了一些欧洲的生意伙伴。
9. A lot of language learning, __________ is happening in the first year of life, so parents should talk much to their children during that period.(discovered)

   正如被发现的那样，大量的语言学习是在人生的第一年发生的，所以父母应当在那个时期和孩子多说话。
10. Not until he retired from teaching three years ago _________ having a holiday abroad.(consider)
    直到三年前从教学上退休后他才考虑到国外度假。

Appendix 2: Dictation in School B
Sample dictation from BC2
Words:
1 After a one-hundred race, Johnson's breath came in short __________ .
2 Henry Adams went to the American _________ to seek help, but no response was given.
3 Volunteer is a person who does ___________ work. （用新学的)
4 Fire suddenly broke out. People ran for the exits, ___________ out in terror.
5 Is the painting a ________ Picasso? I don't want to get a fake.
6 The lost child was found _________ the streets alone.
7 The movie opens with a _________ in a New York apartment.
8 He is very sad ____________ to hear of your father's death.
9 The city had been captured (攻占). But there was a secret underground ______________ to help citizens get foods and clothing.
10 Nowadays many children have their own __________ at a bank so they can be in charge of their money.
11 "Linverpool（利物浦——足球队）are bound to win."
" Do you want a _________ ? I don't think they will."

Phrases:
Be reluctant to do; go ahead; take a chance; get accustomed to ; on the contrary; line up;
1 Lucy thought Johnson had taken a very bad vacation. ___________, Johnson enjoyed every minute.
2 My eyes slowly _______________ the dark after I turned off the lamp.
3 "May I start now?"
"Yes, ____________."
4 As Johnson isn't confident of his looks , he _____________ photographed.
5 We ______________ on the weather and planned to have the party outside.

Translation
1、一只从上海走到杭州的部队在一天内走过了90公里的路程。
2、现在最困扰Johnson的是怎样才能得到Lucy的原谅

Towards an Effective Intercultural Training for English Majors at King Saud University

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Abstract

In language learning and teaching circles, intercultural competence has been gaining ground and is increasingly seen as inseparable from linguistic competence. This paper calls for developing intercultural communicative competence among Saudi students majoring in English with specific reference to cognition, affect, and behavior. This is done through an investigation of the cultural contents of the current syllabi taught to EFL BA level students at one of Saudi Arabia's leading universities. This investigation underscores a need to integrate a number of specific intercultural teaching/learning activities into the syllabus.

Introduction

The communicative approach adopted in most ESL/EFL contexts worldwide, considers target language-based communicative competence to be essential in order for foreign language learners to participate fully in the target language culture. Consequently, the target language culture and its inhabitants are viewed as crucial elements to learning success. Language learners are not only expected to acquire accurate forms of the target language, but also to learn how to use these forms in given social situations to convey appropriate, coherent and strategically-effective meanings to the native speaker and non-native speaker as well. Thus, learning a foreign language becomes a kind of enculturation, where one acquires new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target-language culture and its speakers (Alptekin, 2002).

As various communicative features underlying the sociolinguistic, conversational and strategic competences in the target-language culture are different from those in the language learners' own culture, it is suggested that instructors develop target-language communicative competence in language learners by integrating language and culture. This is found to be both pedagogically and educationally sensible, as it is said to offer a multidimensional perspective or experience for the learners (Porto, 1996). Integrating language and culture is also seen as the fundamental purpose of language learning for it gives learners experience of another language and a different way of coping with reality.

In the Saudi Arabian context, it seems that culture, a complementary aspect of language teaching/learning, is a neglected element in EFL classes. The emphasis seems to be placed on the development of basic language skills (Al-Qahtani, 2005). Two important issues arise: How can language be taught effectively without an emphasis on culture? How can language learners become communicatively competent without being culturally equipped? Language is communication, but not without an understanding of the culture. This leaves little time, if any, for intercultural lessons which aid students' mastery of English grammatical, lexical, and phonological rules and causes problems in intercultural communication. This concern served as impetus for conducting this review of practice.

The problem addressed in this study is formulated in the following questions:

- What are the conceptualizations of culture that are utilised within the Saudi EFL BA programme?
- How much target culture is presented and how is it presented and addressed in the materials provided for the EFL students?
- How can we come to an effective intercultural training programme?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this paper is to raise awareness of the need to integrate intercultural understanding and intercultural communicative competence in the EFL curriculum of one Saudi Arabian’s higher education institutions. Specifically, the paper aims to shed light on the cultural aspects incorporated in the BA EFL programme offered by the College of Languages and Translation at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Significance of the study

The importance of an informed introduction of cultural aspects in foreign language teaching has been stressed by many studies. Bennett (1997), for example, argues that teaching a person a foreign language in isolation from its authentic culture can only make that person a fluent fool who can get into all sorts of trouble due to the lack of the cultural and social background knowledge native speakers share. Adapting this line of thought, many researchers (e.g., Celce-Murcia et al. 1995, Hymes 1972; Savignon 1983) have shown the importance of developing language students’ intercultural competence and cross-cultural awareness to be able to speak the language appropriately as expected and accepted by other interactants.

The importance of this study also lies in the fact that findings can provide direct and practical help to two groups of people. First, the outcomes of this study can help instructional designers and higher-education instructors to improve instructional design for socially engaged learning. Second, the results of this study can help current and potential EFL graduate students to recognize and overcome their linguistic and cultural challenges, improve their level of intercultural communicative competence, and achieve their educational goals.

The natural context, in which this review study was carried out, is the English Department of the College of Languages and Translation at King Saud University. The target programme of informing the review study was the EFL BA programme with a focus on the cultural syllabi within the programme. The paper depends heavily on examining the existing EFL BA programme materials (mainly cultural syllabi) and also on reviewing the relevant literature. To state it in another way, the examination of the EFL BA programme materials, particularly the cultural syllabi within the programme and the review of relevant literature, are the mainstays of this paper.

Theoretical overview

This part of the paper presents a historical review of the emergence of intercultural communicative competence. It also discusses how to develop an effective intercultural training.

Emergence of intercultural communicative competence

This section sheds light on the move from communicative competence to intercultural communication and then to intercultural communicative competence. It also discusses briefly language learner and teacher roles in intercultural communicative competence.

The concept of communicative competence was introduced by Hymes in the early 1970s in opposition to the Chomskyan term of linguistic competence (Chomsky, 1965, 1957). The idea was further developed by Canale and Swain in the early 1980s in the USA and by Van Ek in the mid 1980s in Europe. Van Ek (1986) applied it to foreign language acquisition and turned it into a fundamental concept in the development of communicative language teaching, whose aim is to present the necessary skills to communicate in socially and culturally appropriate ways and whose focus, in the learning process, is placed on functions, role play and real situations. The term has prevailed for about three decades in foreign language teaching and most textbooks currently used by students follow this methodology.

Nonetheless, the term has been revised over the years by different authors, although, not always in the same direction. Some authors have drawn heavily on pragmatics (Celce-Murcia, 2007); others have made their revisions of communicative competence using Van Ek's (1986) model, which introduced cultural and attitudinal aspects. Apart from the linguistic or grammatical, strategic, sociolinguistic and discourse competences that had been introduced and/or reformulated by several authors (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980; Chomsky, 1957, 1965; Hymes, 1972), Van Ek added sociocultural competence, which takes into account that every language is situated in a sociocultural context and implies the use of a particular frame of reference which is partly different from that of the foreign language learner, and social competence, which involves both the will and the skill to interact with others, including motivation, attitude, self-confidence, empathy and the ability to handle social situations.

In fact, the idea of connecting culture and attitude with foreign language learning and teaching was not something completely new. Regarding culture, the concept of intercultural communication had already appeared in the 1930s in connection with cross-cultural psychology (Guilherme, 2002), and enjoyed preferential treatment in the post-war years, when researchers realised that some knowledge of aspects, such as organisational behaviour, educational system, civic studies, anthropology or psychology influenced the success of business, military and diplomatic personnel on placements in foreign countries (Mughan, 1999). Since those early times, many other authors have presented models for introducing culture in the foreign language classroom (see Guilherme, 2002). As for attitude, Baxter (1983) draws on several authors already working in the 1970s in order to describe the characteristics of an effective intercultural communicator and he speaks about aspects such as tolerance, adaptability to new stimuli, social conventions and behavioural demands, observation and interpretation skills, interaction willingness, respect, empathy, flexibility and sensitivity.

However, intercultural communication can be defined as an act of communication undertaken by individuals identified with groups exhibiting intergroup variation in shared social and cultural patterns. According to Damen (1987), these shared patterns are the major variables in the purpose, manner, mode, and means which affect the communicative process. Coffey (1999) and Alptekin (1993), on the other hand, highlight the importance of cultural information in language teaching. They stress that communication is an interrelationship between a language and its people and if cultural information is not taught as a part of communicative competence, higher levels of proficiency are needed to facilitate communication with people from other countries.

In general, intercultural communication refers to communication between people from different cultures (Dodd, 1998). Ting-Toomey (1999, p. 16), however, indicates that it precisely refers to “symbolic exchange processes whereby individuals from two different cultural communities negotiate shared meaning in an interactive situation.’’ She is of the view that, in the “symbolic exchange process”, people from cultural communities “encode and decode the verbal and nonverbal messages into comprehensive meanings”. This definition obviously emphasizes the influence of cultural variability and diversity on communication. There is no doubt that when two people of different cultural backgrounds attempt to communicate, cultural barriers to communication often arise due to the differences in their life patterns, social style, customs, world view, religious philosophy and so on.

Nowadays, intercultural communication plays an important role in ELT partly because English assumes the role of an international language which is used extensively by millions of people outside its original geographic boundaries to "convey national and international perceptions of reality which may be quite different from those of English speaking cultures" (Alptekin, 1984, p. 17). Consequently, the question of intercultural communication is indispensable in English language learning and teaching if the aim is to develop students' intercultural communicative competence, which is further discussed in the section below.

Intercultural communicative competence

The concept of communicative competence has been reconsidered. One of the reasons for that was the fact that the native speaker, as a model, was implicit in both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence, as well as the idea that the language presented in the classroom should be as authentic as possible, so as to represent the reality of native-speaker language use (Aarup Jensen, 1995; Alptekin, 2002;) and, in fact, very often the implicit aim has been to imitate the native speaker (Byram et al., 2002). This has been seen in other criticisms: the cultural aspects usually taken into account are also those of the target language, leaving the learner's own culture in a peripheral position or even ignoring it completely (Alptekin, 2002). In regard to sociocultural competence, the tendency has also been to consider the learner as an imperfect native speaker, an unattainable target for the learner, whose prominence in language teaching has obscured the distinctive nature of the successful learner of a foreign language (Cook, 1999). Even in the case that the learner should manage to acquire a native speaker's degree of perfection, it might not be the correct kind of competence as it would mean that the learner has to abandon one language in order to blend into another linguistic environment, thus becoming linguistically schizophrenic (Byram, 1997). It also means that the learner's native language and culture is completely left aside in the process of learning a foreign language, when it could be usefully introduced to give confidence to the student and trigger interest in some topics or aspects to be dealt with in the classroom. It might also happen that the learner would voluntarily refuse to adopt the cultural standards underlying the verbal and non-verbal behaviours of a native speaker (Baxter, 1983), as often noticed in immigrants who opt for partial divergence from the norms as a strategy of identity maintenance (House, 2007). Something else that needs to be taken into account is that in the present situation where most speakers of English in the world do not have it as their mother tongue, the terms "native" or "native-like" do not seem to be appropriate in the evaluation of communicative competence (Savignon, 2007, p. 210).

If the native speaker is no longer suitable as a model for the foreign language learner, communicative competence is probably not the most appropriate approach to foreign language teaching either and what we have to do then is to go a step beyond the concept of communicative competence and thus, make a connection with intercultural communication, which would be in keeping with the concept of intercultural communicative competence (Baxter, 1983). According to Byram, when people from different languages and/or countries interact socially, they bring to the situation their knowledge about their own country and that of the others'. Part of the success of such interaction will depend on establishing and maintaining human relationships, which depends on attitudinal factors. At the same time, the aspects of knowledge and attitude are influenced by the process of intercultural communication; that is to say, the skills of interpretation and establishing a relationship between aspects of the two cultures, and the skills of discovery and interaction. Finally, all these factors should be integrated within a philosophy of political education and develop the learner's critical cultural awareness of all the cultures involved (Byram, 1997).

Intercultural communicative competence deliberately maintains a link with recent traditions in foreign language teaching, but extends the concept of communicative competence in significant ways. Generally, it has been identified by many researchers (Baxter, 1983; Byram, 1997; Byram et al., 2001; Byrnes, 1991; Deardorff, 2007; Fantini, 2006; Hyde, 1998; Kim, 1991; Krasnick, 1984; Meyer, 1991; Schinitzer, 1995) as the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language. As Byram (1997, p. 3) stated, intercultural communicative competence is "the qualities required of the sojourner". It is a set of complex abilities for those who enter a second language and culture to interact successfully with people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Fantini, 2006). The recent definition of intercultural communicative competence, commonly supported by many other approaches, is "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2007, pp. 87-88). Deardorff (2007) notes that intercultural communicative competence begins with attitudes, such as respect, openness, curiosity and discovery; it tends to move from an individual level to an interaction level, such as internal adaptability and flexibility, and external communication ability in intercultural situations; and the degree of intercultural communicative competence depends on the degree of attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

More precisely, intercultural communicative competence is defined as "the overall internal capacity of an individual to manage key challenging features of intercultural communication" to efficiently "negotiate a mode of communication and interaction" through using and adapting language appropriately in culturally different contexts (Kim, 1991, p. 259). The challenging features of intercultural communication can be identified as cultural differences, unfamiliarity, and incompatibility between the interactants. The status of English as a means of international and intercultural communication brings many challenges to instructors and learners of English. It stands to reason that successful communication is not simply about acquiring a linguistic code; it is also about dealing with different cultural values reflected in language use. This lays out the philosophical groundwork for a growing awareness that communicative competence should be conceived as intercultural communicative competence (Baxter, 1983), including not only "the knowledge of basic values and norms; verbal and nonverbal interactional competence in using English in intercultural communication; competence in using language as social action; competence in creating and interpreting linguistic aspects of social reality" (Krasnick, 1984, p. 218), but also "the cognitive, affective, and behavioural adaptability of an individual's internal system in all intercultural contexts" (Kim, 1991, p. 259).

Learners of English who hope to carry out intercultural interactions effectively must be equipped with this set of abilities to be able to understand and deal with the dynamics of cultural differences because of the inseparable relationship between foreign language learning and intercultural communication. But, what kind of learner are we then teaching? What kind of speaker are we trying to train? The forthcoming sub-section is set to answer these kinds of questions.

Learner's role

If we disregard the native speaker as the communication model to follow, we will have to look for a new one. According to Kramsch (1993, pp. 233-259), learners of a foreign language need to function fully in a situation where at least two languages and two cultures, their own and another one, interplay. They may also find themselves in a no-man's-land that she calls "a third place" from where the learner is able to understand and mediate between the home and the target language and culture. Learners, then, have to become mediators who have the ability to manage communication and interaction between people of different cultural identities and languages; changing their own perspective and taking up another, able to handle different interpretations of reality; people who have a privileged position between the home and the target culture. As proposed by Byram and Zarate (1994), the notion of the native speaker in foreign language learning must then be replaced by that of the intercultural speaker, a mediator of both languages and cultures. But being a mediator implies building bridges between languages and cultures; therefore, in the process of learning a new foreign language and becoming an intercultural speaker, the first or other previously acquired languages cannot be suppressed. In fact, the speaker goes through a "third way" or a hybridisation process, where the "old cultures" are still recognisable in the new one (House, 2007, p. 18). Other authors place more emphasis on the idea that rather than not losing our previous knowledge, what happens is that we share rules of interpretation that are applied to both the familiar and the new context to make sense of the world. Kramsch (1998) as well as Risager (1998) appear to hold a similar position on this issue. They feel that, there is an interweaving of cultures, whose penetration into each other is strengthened by extensive migration and tourism, mass communication systems, supranational economic interdependence and globalisation in general.

Despite the objections we have already presented to the choice of the native speaker as a model, it may seem that, by choosing the intercultural speaker instead, we are lowering the standards of achievement required by the learner (Steele, 1996). It is quite plausible that an intercultural speaker will probably be less skilled than a native speaker regarding the mastery of the language, although as Corbett (2003) observes, few native English speakers entirely conform to Standard English in their output, something which contrasts with the rigorous requirements often made on foreign language learners. At the same time, any language performance deficits of the intercultural speaker should not be regarded as the effect of cultural transfer from one language to another or as ignorance of a second culture but rather as a clear sign of the intercultural competence they possess (House, 2007). In fact, the intercultural speaker can be considered to be at a vantage position in respect to the native speaker regarding communication and interaction with people from other cultures and languages. It may also seem that by relaxing the requirements on the learner and allowing the intercultural speaker to retain his/her social, linguistic and cultural baggage, he/she is in a better position to read and negotiate with their world. However, the intercultural speaker is a dynamic concept with no specific goal or limits and the learner must always be ready to acquire more knowledge and more abilities (Jaeger, 2001). The acquisition of intercultural communicative competence is never complete, since it is not possible to anticipate all the knowledge the learner might need at all times and in all situations (Byram et al., 2002). Therefore, becoming an intercultural speaker is a lifelong activity. In my opinion, students - even at the higher education level - cannot be taught all the knowledge they will need throughout their working life. In this sense, they are incomplete graduates, who will need to continue their training; however, they should be given the necessary skills so that they can keep acquiring new knowledge and competences throughout their lives. If the role of the learner changes in intercultural communicative competence, then the role of the teacher is also bound to be different. The sub-section below addresses this issue.

Teacher's role

As noted above, intercultural communicative competence goes beyond the concept of language learning as just acquiring skills in a language accompanied by some factual knowledge about a country where the language is spoken. The teacher now becomes a mediator, a ”gatekeeper” according to some authors (Alptekin, 2002, p. 58) who has to give priority not to the amount of knowledge acquired but to the development of new attitudes, skills and critical awareness in the student. The task of the teacher is not to provide comprehensive information or bring the foreign society into the classroom for learners to observe and experience, but to develop in students the competence that will make them relativise their own cultural values, beliefs and behaviours and investigate for themselves the otherness, what is different from their “norm” (Byram et al, 2001, pp. 13-33; Byram et al, 2002, p. 3; Risager, 2000). This teacher would be what we might call an ”intercultural teacher”, who can make students see the connections between their own and other cultures, as well as awaken their curiosity about difference and otherness. In this context, non-native teachers, who can move between their home and the target cultures, might seem to be in a better position. However, a curious, open-minded native teacher, especially if widely travelled would not be a disadvantage (Corbett, 2003). Educational as well as critical thinkers such as Freire and Giroux (cited by Guilherme, 2002, p. 159) consider that a critical educator is in fact a ”transformative intellectual”, someone who expands the notion of teaching from ”reading the word” to ”reading both the word and the world”.

The notion of the teacher becoming a mediator, might be understood as a loss of power. Some authors, though, understand it as “sharing the power” with students. This is what Coffey (1999) does with her proposal of cultural community building in the foreign language curricula, fostering meaningful communication among all group members when they do not share a common worldview. In order to do this, apart from sharing power with their students, teachers have to encourage them to be tolerant of ambiguity, foster empathy and co-operation, and build an understanding of cultural values. As we can see, all these aims are synonymous with those of intercultural communicative competence, as well as the idea that the primary role of the teacher in intercultural communicative competence is to develop students' autonomous and independent learning skills and that learner-centred pedagogy is the most effective way of teaching a foreign language (Jager, 2001; Steele, 1996).

It is obvious that, if a language teacher aims to maximize students’ communicative effectiveness when they interact with members of other cultures, then the students should receive cultural awareness training as an integral part of their English courses. However, teaching or emphasizing intercultural awareness in the classroom is not an easy task. The next section discusses the contribution of several research studies towards the development of intercultural skills.

How to develop an effective intercultural training

As mentioned earlier, the characteristics of effective intercultural communicators are summarized by Baxter (1983, p. 307) who indicates that an effective intercultural communicator needs not only tolerance for ambiguity but also an ability to adapt to “new social conventions and behaviour demands” and then understand his/her own cultural roots and the effect of other cultures on personal behaviour. More than an adaption to new social conventions, Gudykunst (1993, p. 37) considers intercultural communication more like an exercise in anxiety management. In this regard, he states that the effectiveness of intercultural communication is determined by our “ability to mindfully manage our anxiety and reduce our uncertainty about ourselves and the people with whom we are communicating.’’

Some language instructors may ask: Can intercultural communication be taught? How can learners acquire this in the language classroom? However, considering these kinds of questions, several researchers (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Brislin et al, 1986; Martin, 1994) draw our attention to the necessity of addressing the three domains of intercultural communicative competence: cognition, affect, and behaviour in designing intercultural training for the development of intercultural communicative competence. The integration of these three domains is very important for an EFL training programme to be most effective. Below is a brief depiction of each domain.

Cognitive domain

As a way of supporting cognition, Lambert (1999) and Schmidt (2000) advocate introducing specific knowledge regarding topics such as history, geography, politics, and economics. This would help language learners engage in communicating with people from the target culture. This approach can provide students with a certain understanding of specific areas of culture such as the artefacts which the culture uses, so that they have a basis for intelligent conversations with people of the target culture, and “help decrease stress” (Weaver, 1993, p. 154). This approach, however, has been criticised by some researchers. Brislin and Yoshida (1994), for example, argue that this aspect of culture does not greatly influence communication in two different ways. First of all, if the interactants do not understand the underpinning rules of behaviours, they are likely to face misunderstandings and failure in intercultural communication. Second, the danger of this approach is that too many facts are presented and there are too many challenges to the students’ memory and their tolerance. It can never be sufficient and learning such information can be time consuming and tedious. Bochner (1982, p. 23) also makes the point that “mere cognitive learning” will not assist students in developing the necessary skills to successfully negotiate intercultural encounters and thereby reduce “the anxiety and the uncertainty” that Gudykunst (1993, p. 37) talks about.

The mere transmission of facts about a culture will not by itself help in developing intercultural communicative competence. We need to go beyond that and provide knowledge to enhance language learners’ understanding of when, how and why others perform certain behaviours and have certain attitudes during intercultural encounters. Brislin et al. (1986, p. 1) state, “misunderstanding is reduced when people know when, how, and why certain attributions will be made”. Brislin and Yoshida (1994) suggest that to develop language learners’ awareness of intercultural communication, a language programme should initially concentrate on culture-general cognitive training and should include familiarisation with the major differences in fundamental cultural patterns of attitude and behaviours.

To conclude, cognition can be considered as the first step in any intercultural training. In this stage, the focus will be on knowledge and awareness, aiming to help language learners understand how their culture influences their interaction with people of other cultures (Gudykunst et al., 1996). To achieve this in a language programme an instructor can present readings or listening materials. Foreign language learners also should take part in problem-solving activities, and the analysis of critical incidents which help in developing their awareness of how behavioural attributions are made during interaction (Brislin et al, 1986). We shall now turn to “affect”, the second step.

Affective domain

It is evident from the literature that intercultural interactions usually involve some degree of anxiety, stress, adjustment, and uncertainty in interactants due to unfamiliarity and cultural differences. Thus, interactants may face complex emotions such as confusion, and anger. Reflecting on this phenomenon, several researchers (e.g., Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kim, 1991) stress the higher aims of intercultural awareness at the affective level. This is to enable interactants to effectively manage their emotional reactions, maximising the effectiveness of their interactions with members of the other cultures. According to Kim (1991, p. 269) this leads to the “readiness to accommodate intercultural challenges”. Adopting this line of thought, many researchers (e.g., Burleson, 1983; Gudykunst et al., 1996; Weigel & Howes, 1985) believe that the challenge for intercultural training is not only to provide language users with the necessary awareness of why uncertainty and anxiety occur and to provide them with the tools and information to manage that anxiety, but also to encourage them to confront their biases and prejudices so that they can more effectively deal with them. Gradually, they can accept the viewpoint that people from different cultural backgrounds have different ways to behave and interpret their behaviours, but that difference does not mean deficiency.

Activities such as case studies, discussions, simulations, role-play, and cultural assimilators involving the use of critical incidents have been suggested by some writers (e.g., Baxter, 1983; Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Gudykunst et al, 1996). The purpose of such activities is to develop language learners’ intercultural awareness at the affective level. According to Brislin and Yoshida (1994), the use of critical incidents, at this stage, is an effective approach to understand the viewpoints of culturally different people, prompting discussion concerning the interactants’ emotional reactions, and developing the ability to identify culturally appropriate behaviours. A well-prepared simulation or role-play helps language learners to put themselves in the shoes of others and experience such emotions, paving the way to understand how culture influences their behaviours and emotions. In these activities, language learners are required to consider and discuss either their own reactions or those of others when they take part in observing posed cross-cultural interactions. Irwin (1996) advocates that the object of these activities

is for participants to become aware of the many and varied emotional reactions that may arise during intercultural contact, and to learn, through the discussion stage of the activities, the reason for the emotional reaction given the background, thus providing the basis for the development of cultural empathy and sensitivity.
However, having knowledge about another culture and some degree of affective identification is not sufficient to prevent the occurrence of breakdowns in the process. A language learner should understand and be aware of the behaviours and social skills necessary to accompany communication. Below is a discussion of the behavioural dimension of intercultural training.

Behavioural domain

For achieving success in intercultural interaction, knowledge and awareness of how to face emotional challenges are not sufficient. Practice in engaging in culturally related behaviours must be increased to develop language learner's intercultural communicative competence (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Gudykunst et al, 1996). A language instructor, in developing his/her students' intercultural awareness, needs to help them recognize that changes in behaviours lead to greater probability of success in interaction with culturally different people. In turn, this develops the ability to read the behaviour of other participants in intercultural encounters and learn a repertoire of social skills in effective intercultural interactions (Cushner & Landis, 1996). Elaborating on the behavioural dimension, Kim (1991, p. 269) explains that language learners need "to develop their ability to be flexible and resourceful in actually carrying out what [they are] capable of in the cognitive and affective dimensions". In other words, it is the ability to discover, interpret, relate and adapt to the requirements posed by different contexts (Byram, 1997).

From the above discussion of the three domains of the intercultural communicative competence, it is understandable that for an intercultural training integration to maximize its effectiveness, it needs to incorporate all three domains: cognition, affect and behaviour.
What then is the nature and quality of the intercultural training that Saudi students majoring in English receive during their BA programme? This is the concern and focus of the following section.

The Saudi Arabian context

Prior to reviewing and examining the materials currently used within the Saudi EFL BA programme offered by King Saud University, this section provides a contextual background to the teaching of English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia with reference to intercultural communication and its place in the process.

With the emergence of English as the chief medium of international communication in Saudi Arabia, there is an understanding that users of English need to successfully engage on a global scale. Whenever two people from different cultures meet and use English to communicate with each other, they use it in culturally distinct ways. Thus, teaching intercultural interaction competence may well be one of the most significant undertakings of the future. It stands to reason that culture needs to be integrated into the teaching of all language skills, so that EFL learners can learn not only to speak, but also to write, in culturally appropriate ways for specific purposes.

Meanwhile, the quality of English teaching and learning is still a concern to many Saudi educators. A report, released by the Symposium hosted by Al-Yammah College in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 2005, suggests that the demand for English language teaching and learning is ever increasing, but the curriculum and textbooks are in need of development (Al-Yamamah College, 2005). In Saudi Arabia, most EFL classrooms have been teacher-centred or teacher-fronted (Al-Nasser, 1999). This view is also supported by Al-Nafisah (2001), and Al-Motairi (2005), who hold that teaching methods in Saudi Arabia are outdated, relying almost entirely on strict teacher-centred methods and rote learning.

In recognition of the role English plays as a language of international communication, the Saudi Arabian context should address the need for more effective alternatives and pedagogies/practices of appropriation. Despite the on-going education reform aiming to revise and modernize curricula taught in all stages in Saudi Arabia, progress has been very slow in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. In an ELT research study submitted to Al-Yamamah’s Symposium, Al-Qahtani (2005) suggests that a pedagogy of appropriation and authenticity, which reflects an effort to make ELT both efficient for global transactions and relevant to the user’s local culture, can have far reaching benefits to students. Therefore, intercultural training should be integrated in ELT so as to prepare language learners to be both global and local speakers of English and to feel at home in both international and national culture.

An examination of the EFL BA programme offered by Department of English of the College of Languages and Translation at King Saud University, reveals that intercultural communication has not received the attention it deserves in the programme. The English Department includes what may be called a “cultural syllabus” within its EFL BA programme. The programme offers three cultural courses: ”Readings in the Target Language Culture I”, ”Comparative Culture”, and ”Readings in the Target Language Culture II”. Appendices 1, 2 and 3 provide descriptions of these three courses.

A close examination of the cultural syllabi illustrated in Appendices 1-3 suggests that despite there being a new emphasis on developing intercultural communicative competence, intercultural issues seem not to be included in the curriculum in any integrated way. The English Department of the College of Languages and Translation at King Saud University introduces cultural information about the target culture; American and British culture and those of other countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand which are explicitly taught in the programme with the purpose of providing students with knowledge on major cultural issues of these countries, getting them to make some comparisons between other cultures and Arabic/Islamic culture.

Reviewing the content, the objectives, and the weekly schedules of the cultural syllabi offered for Saudi students majoring in English, appears to suggest that culture is embedded in knowledge about various cultural issues of the target language countries. Cultural competence in this case comes to be viewed as a body of knowledge about the target culture and the target language country. Although students need to develop knowledge of the L2 culture, "this receptive aspect of cultural competence is not sufficient" (Lessard-Clouston, 1997, p. 137). Tseng (2002, p.11) also believes that "culture can be learned as a process rather than as a collection of facts." Consequently, it is important that students should develop strategies which they can apply to further their own learning and to interpret cultural acts in the context in which they occur, not just some information about the target language cultural practices.

Bearing in mind that English serves as a means as well as a meditational tool of intercultural communication, the above analysis suggests that EFL students may fail in communication with both native speakers and non-native speakers of English. Therefore, besides the understanding of the target culture, awareness of intercultural communication is indispensable in the educational practices of ELT.

The conclusion that one can draw from the examination of the cultural syllabi introduced to Saudi EFL students is that intercultural communication has not received the attention it needs. In other words, insufficient attention is paid to the development of intercultural awareness. The aim, in the syllabi, appears to be primarily to develop cognitive awareness of cultural peculiarity - the stage of "mere cognitive learning" (Bochner, 1982, p. 32) (see the Cognitive Domain discussed above).

However, the English Department of the College of Languages and Translation at King Saud University has made a great leap of faith by introducing intercultural studies, which cover most of the basic topics of intercultural Arabic/Islamic and Anglophone communication. Yet, it still targets the provision of information about intercultural communication at the cognitive level. In this case, the opportunities for students to develop their affective domain and behavioural skills are limited.

In the Saudi Arabian context, English learning conditions are mostly limited to the classroom. Saudi EFL students normally have few chances to improve their intercultural communicative competence outside the classroom. Opportunities for independent learning are even more limited because of the lack of related available resources and opportunities to be exposed to a foreign environment. All this suggests that the principal learning location is the classroom, which to a considerable degree hinders the development of EFL students’ intercultural communicative skills. Therefore, this supports the need to use the classroom environment to develop students' intercultural communicative competence, and to help them master intercultural communication and behaviour.

To summarize, being aware of the link between language and culture, the English Department of the College of Languages and Translation at King Saud University have recognised the role of intercultural communication in enhancing communicative competence which, in turn, would improve and develop students' level in English language. Yet it is usually restricted to culture-specific awareness in the cognitive domain, which in my opinion partially leads to Saudi EFL students facing difficulties in intercultural communication.

The review of the literature and the discussion of the BA EFL programme offered by the College of Languages and Translation at King Saud University, from the standpoint of intercultural communicative competence, points to the need to design a more effective intercultural communication programme. In the remainder of this paper, I put forward a number of teaching and learning classroom activities with the purpose of developing EFL Saudi students’ intercultural communication understanding, as well as their skills to deal with barriers in intercultural communication.

Pedagogical implications

First of all, it should be emphasised that the following teaching/learning activities and strategies focus on the processes involved in the development of intercultural communicative competence rather than products or facts. Seelye (1993) describes facts as cheap and meaningless unless they are interpreted within a critical incident situation. According to Seelye, as well as other researchers, focussing on facts or products only in dealing with culture is ineffective for several reasons:

- Facts are in a constant state of flux. Specific data may not hold true across time, location and social strata (Galloway, 1985)
- An information-only approach to culture may actually establish stereotypes rather than diminish them, since such an approach provides no means of accounting for cultural variation and construction (Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1984).
- Amassing facts leaves students unprepared when they face cultural situations not previously studied (Crowford-Lange & Lange, 1984).

This means that the ultimate goal of ESL/EFL instructors is not just providing students with bits of information but rather helping them attain the necessary skills that will enable them to make sense of the cultural information that they themselves will discover.

Secondly, each of the following activities has some individual merits; therefore, it would be more useful and effective for language learners to be presented with a combination of activities. This would provide the learners with opportunities to practise their learned behaviour and develop their social skills. Brislin et al. (1983) argue that developing and acquiring such skills for social interaction serves as a means of reducing the stress and anxiety which may be generated in intercultural interactions. These activities will engage students in using language interactively and communicatively for meaning. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) explain that these activities, if handled proactively by the language instructor, can develop students' intercultural communicative competence, build up their vocabulary, expand their grammatical accuracy, and develop their communicative competence. To handle these activities and to make teaching culture a better experience for the teacher and students, the language instructor, as Cullen (2000, pp. 4-5) suggests, needs to pay particular attention to the following practical tips:

- When the instructor talks about issues in the target-culture, students should be allowed to relate the same issues to their own lives. This would help in avoiding stereotyping as well as stereotypifying.
- The instructor should use activities with simple instructions and a clear goal.
- The instructor should use material suitable to students' level of proficiency. Using material that is too difficult is a sure way to make students lose interest in the target-culture.
- The instructor should pick out the interesting aspects of a culture and present them in a way that will engage students. He/she should also be able to create an exciting class for students.
- The instructor should use pair and group techniques. Students learn more in groups. They have more opportunities for using the target language, discussing the target culture, and gaining additional perspectives on their own cultural values.

Suggested classroom activities

This part of the paper introduces a number of teaching/learning activities meant to provide Saudi learners of English with opportunities to develop interactional communicative competence.

Activity I: Pair/Group discussion

In this activity the language instructor may provide students with:

- A brief description of critical incidents of intercultural behaviours that they would probably misunderstand. After that, the students might be presented with answers from which they are asked to select the correct one, followed by possible explanations for the choice they have made (Seelye, 1993)

- Recorded or written brief presentations showing one or more essential differences between cultures, accompanied by visuals that illustrate these differences and a set of questions to stimulate class discussion
- Topics related to intercultural aspects which contribute greatly to learner's motivation and critical thinking (Gudykunst et al., 1996)

This activity would be beneficial in different ways. First, as it involves language learners in pair and group discussions, it would provide them with a good learning atmosphere in which they can cooperate better, learning from the content of discussion and from each other. Second, it helps learners to identify differences in cultural values. This increases learners' understanding of culturally complex issues. Third, it offers great potential, and, as Krasnick (1984, p. 217) puts it, this activity is "an effective way of teaching individuals to make culturally appropriate interpretations or attributions of the meaning of other behaviour." Finally, it encourages greater sensitivity to differences in cultures.

The suggested classroom procedures for this activity are as follows

- When the instructor distributes material, first give the title of the topic and ask students to predict what they will learn. This forces them to review their existing knowledge of the topic and raises their curiosity about whether their prediction is correct or not.
- Before presenting students with a written or recorded topic, the instructor may first present them with a number of statements about that topic and ask students to answer true or false to each statement in pairs or groups. It is not important whether students get the right answer or not, but by predicting, students will become more interested in finding out the right answer. The right answer can be given by the instructor, through a reading, listening or video. At this point, extra information can be provided.
- As students watch a video or are engaged with other materials, the instructor can ask them to notice particular features. For example, they could watch a video of a target-culture wedding and note all the differences with their own culture. Asking students to notice differences gives a focus to the material by making it into a task, rather than simply passive viewing or listening.
- When students have read, listened to or watched the material, the instructor may want to use reformulation technique to allow them to check what they have learned and to reinforce learning by retelling to a partner. Reformulation simply means explain what you just learned in your own words. It is a very simple technique but has proved very successful for learning both language and culture.

(Cullen, 2000, pp. 2-3)

Activity II: Cultural mini-drama

Gorden (1970) (cited in Robinson, 1985) suggests a mini-drama approach for use in language classes. The mini-drama consists of three to five brief episodes, each of which contains one or more examples of miscommunication, followed by an instructor led discussion after each episode.

The purpose of the mini-drama is to provide cultural information and to evoke an emotional response which results in self-confrontation (Gudykunst et al., 1996).

The suggested classroom procedures for cultural mini-drama are as follows:

- The instructor appoints, for example, three students to create three role-playing scenarios around an event in the target culture (e.g., eating dinner at a restaurant) and assigns native speaker and non-native speaker roles.
- The instructor provides those who act as native speakers with common vocabulary, sentences and expressions used by native speakers.
- The instructor explains how westerners use the vocabulary, sentences and expressions and how they behave in the given situation.
- When the instructor makes sure that students are ready, they are asked to start. The scenarios involve, for example, Saudi citizens interacting with people in the target culture and some sort of misunderstanding of the perspectives, practices and products of the target culture.
- The instructor then discusses with students why the misunderstandings occurred (i.e. how the target-culture differs from Saudi culture).
- The instructor also explains how Saudi perspectives, practices and products might be confusing to a visitor to Saudi Arabia from the target culture and vice versa.
- Before the performance, it may be possible for the instructor to have the class watch or listen to segments of video/audio taped conversations to absorb expressions used by native speakers in that situation.

Matthew et al. (2006)

Activity III: Cultural role play

In this activity, the instructor provides students with role-play tasks where they imagine themselves in an intercultural situation outside the classroom, and perform a role-play about a situation within one’s own culture or another culture.

This activity helps learners experience the situation from different perspectives. This, as Fennes and Hapgood (1997, p. 109) indicate, can contribute to a “clearer perception, greater awareness” and “a better understanding of one’s own culture and the culture of other people.’’

The suggested classroom procedures of cultural role-play are as follows:

- The instructor chooses a situation based on cultural differences, keeping in mind students’ needs and interests, or alternatively lets students choose the situation themselves.
- In choosing situations, the instructor should take students’ level of language proficiency into consideration.
- The instructor may introduce any new vocabulary before the students perform the role play. For example, the situation is returning an item of clothing back to the store. The instructor asks questions, such as, “in this situation what will you say to the salesperson?” ”What will the salesperson say?” and writes what the students dictate on the right side of the board. When this is done, on the left side of the board the instructor writes down useful expressions, asking the students: ”Can the customer say it in another way?” ”What else can the salesperson say?” This way of introducing new vocabulary makes the students more confident acting out a role play.
- The instructor provides students with concrete information and clear descriptions so that they can play their roles with confidence. For example, in the situation above, the salesperson should have relevant information: prices, types of clothing, etc.
- The instructor asks volunteers to perform the role play in front of the class or plan in advance what roles to assign to which students. He may give students role play exercises for a home task where the students learn useful words and expressions, think about what they might say and then act out the role play in the next class. While students are conducting the role play, the instructor should listen for their errors and make notes. This will help with feedback for further practice and revision. The teacher should avoid intervening in the role play with error corrections as this may discourage the students.
- Once the role play is finished, the instructor and students can have a group discussion where the instructor asks students' opinion about the role play and welcomes their comments. The aim is to discuss what has happened in the role play and what they have learned.

(Kodotchigova, 2002, pp. 2-4)

Activity IV: Real life experience

In this activity, the instructor may:

1. Invite native speakers of the target culture into the class to talk about their culture and experiences, or
2. Encourage learners to interact with foreigners and to recall their experiences.

This activity is useful in helping language learners experience real life intercultural interactions (Argyle, 1982). The suggested classroom procedures are as follows:

1. Inviting a native speaker: The instructor invites, for example an American, who recently has started work in Saudi Arabia, to class asking him/her to talk about his/her cultural experience in Saudi Arabia. The instructor informs students prior to the visit asking them to be ready to ask the visitor some questions with reference to culture.
2. Encouraging learners: The instructor asks each of the students to conduct an interview with a native speaker. The instructor should set out the cultural aspects they should focus on in their interviews. Each student should focus on one aspect. After conducting their interviews, each student should make a short presentation about the interviewee's reaction to the cultural aspect he/she has chosen to focus on and how the interview has increased his/her understanding to the target culture.

Conclusion

Studies stress the importance of integrating language and culture for a language to be learned appropriately. These studies have also shown that teaching a language in isolation from the culture only results in miscommunication and misunderstanding between interactants.

The aim of foreign language teaching has traditionally been to train learners so that they can use a language other than their own correctly. The notion of using a foreign language correctly has changed over the last decades. It has moved from linguistic competence and grammatical native-like mastery of the language to communicative competence with the acquisition of some sociolinguistic skills that allow the user to cope appropriately with any given social situation. From there it progresses to intercultural communicative competence which focuses on the teaching and learning of a foreign language and culture, and we consider the foreign language teaching classroom as a kind of microcosm of the real world where languages and cultures are put into contact with one another, thus offering some characteristics and possibilities which are denied to other disciplines. Intercultural communicative competence encourages learning autonomy and learner-centred methodologies because learner training does not come to an end when secondary or formal higher education finishes. Learners will continue to develop new skills and add new values to their cultural repertoire as they encounter new situations in an ever-developing multicultural society. Regarding intercultural communicative competence, the learners and teachers have to become mediators. The learner, on one hand, should have the ability to manage communication and interaction between people of different cultural identities and languages, coming out from their own perspective and taking up another. The learner should be able to handle different interpretations of reality, having a privileged position between the home and target culture. The teacher's task, on the other hand, is not to provide comprehensive information or bring the foreign society into the classroom for learners to observe and experience, but to develop in students the competence that will make them relativise their own cultural values, beliefs and behaviours and investigate for themselves the othering as well otherness that accrue as a consequence.

The integration of intercultural awareness into language teaching is of immense value in developing students' communicative competence. Many research studies also offer insights into how language instructors can incorporate intercultural dimensions through language teaching practices. It is evident that if EFL teaching is to maximize the effectiveness of the intercultural communicative approach, it needs to incorporate all three domains of intercultural communicative competence; cognition, affect, and behaviour.

This paper has analysed the EFL programme, offered by the Department of English of the College of Languages and Translation at King Saud University, with a focus on the cultural syllabi within the programme. Although the programme introduced three cultural courses, it was restricted to cultural awareness at the cognitive level in which the opportunities to develop the affective domain and behavioural skills are limited. English language has increasingly become an international language, and Saudi EFL students have more and more opportunities to be involved in intercultural communication; therefore, intercultural communication should assume particular prominence and substance in the Saudi Arabian context. In response to the call for reform in the field of English language teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia, attention to intercultural awareness can be considered as a valid option.

For the purpose of affording EFL students the opportunity to practice and develop their skills at the cognitive, affective, and behavioural levels to deal with barriers in intercultural communication, the paper in its last section suggested a number of teaching/learning activities to be considered when designing an effective intercultural communicative competence programme. Having said that, at some point of time in the foreseeable future I would like put the issues and insights presented in this paper to test in a full-blown investigative study using an appropriate methodology.

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Appendix 1

Course title: Readings in the Target Language Culture I		
Level: Four	Course No. & Code: 299 Najd	Contact hours: 2
Content and Objectives The course 'Readings in the Target Language Culture' seeks to introduce students to the target language culture/s through a selection of texts. The selection is based on the prominent cultural aspects that they exhibit. They cover themes such as education, work ethics, family relations, health systems, election campaigns, and leisure activities in Britain and the USA as well as other English speaking countries such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.		
Weekly schedule		

{Week 1} The Geography of Great Britain, the USA and Canada.	{Week 2&3} Countries of the Commonwealth. The European Union.
{Weeks 4&5} The political systems in Britain and the USA. Political parties, electoral campaigns.	{Weeks 6&7} Education in Britain (or the USA or New Zealand).
{Weeks 8&9} Work Ethics in the USA and Britain.	{Weeks 10&11} The Health System in Britain (The NHS) and the USA.
{Weeks 12&13} Scientific and Technological Research.	{Week 14} Leisure and entertainment.

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Appendix 2

Course title: Comparative Culture		
Level: Five	Course No. & Code: 307 Najd	Contact hours: 2
Content and Objectives The 'Comparative Culture' course introduces students to the following issues: The various definitions of the term "culture". The interface between language and culture. The importance of comparing cultures without falling into stereotypes and unwarranted bias. The contribution of comparative culture to the domain of translation. The course discusses American culture and makes reference to the British and European cultures and, whenever appropriate, to the Arab culture and Islamic values. It deals with the various factors that have contributed to the shaping up of the so- called American character. These factors include immigration, slavery, the frontier movement, and puritanism. The course stresses that these factors have made the American culture different in some of its aspects from the above-cited cultures and similar in some other aspects. The course also analyses, compares, and translates proverbs, sayings, and idioms in American English, British English and Arabic.		
Weekly schedule		

{Week 1&2} Definitions of culture across time and in socio-political contexts.	{Week 3&4} Language and Culture: The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.
{Weeks 5-8} Characteristics of the American Culture. Origins of Variations and Contradictions. Early Immigration. The Frontier movement. Success and Mobility. Humour and entertainment. Differences and Similarities between the American Culture and other European Cultures, particularly Great Britain. Some Judicious reference to Islamic principles and teachings.	{Weeks 9-11} The Influence of Religion on work ethics, competition and success in the USA. Puritanism in the USA. The Importance of Spirituality in culture and its role in the progress of societies; the myth of a non-religious society.
{Weeks 11&12} Globalization. Dialogue between cultures. Conflict between cultures.	{Weeks 13&14} Understanding and translating proverbs, sayings, and idioms from English into Arabic.

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Appendix 3

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">Course title: Readings in the Target Language Culture II</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Level: Seven</td><td colspan="2">Course No. & Code: 493 Najd</td><td colspan="2">Contact hours: 3</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Content and Objectives
This course builds on the course that bears the same title and that is taught at Level Four. It also takes into consideration the academic maturational process students have undergone at Levels Five and Six. At these Levels students study a number of linguistics and hyphenated linguistics subjects, in addition to the Comparative Culture course that is offered at Level Five. In view of the above factors, the Readings in the Target Language Culture course concentrate on sophisticated issues that bridge the gap between linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, and sociology. The following are some of the themes and references that are covered: Passages from T.S. Eliot’s Notes towards the Definition of Culture, Passages from Sapir and Whorf’s works on, The interface between language and culture, Passages from Claire Kramsch’s Language and Culture, with special emphasis on acculturation, enculturation, and alienation, Articles published in learned journals on some aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture/s.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Weekly schedule</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">{Week 1&2}
The Interrelation between language and culture.</td><td colspan="3">{Week 3-6}
Problems in the definition of culture and contact between cultures.
What is a cultured person? What is a cultured society?
Are cultures stable? Are cultures homogeneous?
Language Contact and Culture Contact/Conflict.
Acculturation and enculturation.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">{Weeks 6-9}
Up-to-date Issues in the American society and culture.</td><td colspan="3">{Weeks 10-14}
Up-to-date Issues in the world: Globalization and its future.</td></tr>
</table>

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Gender-Based Interaction Differences in EFL Students' Approach to a Communicative Task Performance: Conversational Analysis of Male-Male and Female-Female Kazakhstani Students' Dialogues in the EFL Classroom Setting

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American University of Central Asia

Abstract

This paper reports on the exploration of the influence of students' gender on their accomplishment of a communicative task in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom setting. The research took place in a secondary school in Kazakhstan, and involved 37 school students aged 14-16 years. The analysis of 29 transcripts of EFL classroom interactions of male-male and female-female groups revealed the differences in male and female students' approaches towards a dialogue task accomplishment. These findings explain how boys and girls approach a communicative task and give certain suggestions to the EFL teachers on how to make the communicative task more efficient for the students of different gender. Thus, this study expands our understanding of learning and raises the necessity to consider gender when assigning a communicative task to EFL learners.

Keywords: EFL classroom interaction, dialogue task, gender, code-switching, intertextualization

Introduction

In many settings we can witness how gender shapes the way we dress, speak, or even work. As a routine accomplishment gender influences on how we interpret everyday social activities to construct our own social practices (Scharff, 2008). Hence, gender is the sum of behaviors, attitudes, values, and beliefs that are assigned by society to men and women on the basis of their biological sex. Students' gender is one of the social roles that are constructed during the classroom interaction (Li & Brand, 2009). By participating in classroom life, students construct their everyday behavioral patterns that define learning and teaching, reading and writing, interacting and interpreting in a particular classroom or group within a classroom (Green & Dixon, 2008). These patterns influence the possible roles, relationships, and the types of available activities. Therefore, such a strong influence of gender on students' social identity appears to support the idea that gender could also affect students' approach to studying.

The issue is especially vital in the current context of the mixed-gender classes where teachers assume that all students are equal and impose the same expectations on their students' task performance. At first glance boys and girls attain approximately the same results. However, the results of this study show that students could learn better if some changes were made in the tasks assigned to them. Some assignments that are appropriate for boys appeared to be very challenging for girls. Sometimes a teacher could feel that students are not smart, but it may be only a question of a task assigned to a student that does not meet student's learning preferences.

This study aims at pointing out the gender dependence in students' approaches towards a communicative task accomplishment. For the purpose of the research a communicative task is defined here as a classroom group interaction in a context close to real-life that requires meaning-focused target language production aimed at achievement of specific objectives (Ellis, 2003). The dialogue task fits this definition perfectly and thus the research participants will be invited to present dialogues as the context for interaction. The observations and analysis of students' work could give us more insight into the students' approach towards the task that allows for better understanding of what interaction peculiarities are shaping the task presentation. The research will also show whether there are any interactional differences between the males' and females' presentations of a task. Finally, we will discuss the practical implications of these findings in the EFL classroom.

Influence of gender on communicative behavior

During the last several decades, interest towards the nature and existence of differences between male and female discourse seems to have caught the attention and focus of researchers. Numerous research has shown that differences in language use shown by women and men could be attributed to the differences in their brain functions (Sabbatini, 1997) as well as to the influence of the process of socialization (Rossetti, 1998). Tannen (1995) claims that our knowledge of a language depends on the cultural expectations (cited in Rossetti, 1998). Men and women initially have different upbringing that influences on their speech style and social roles. By means of communication girls are believed to attempt and establish intimacy as a basis of friendship, while boys use language to establish their social status. These differences in discourse goals influence the social and linguistic communicative styles between two sexes at all levels: at home, work, meetings, social occasions, and in personal, casual, and formal contacts. That is why women and men have different ways of saying what they mean (Rossetti, 1998).

Tannen (1995) is of the view that males use direct and forceful style while females have more indirect and intimate style of interaction (cited in Rossetti, 1998). Women's gender role is seen as one that is communal; embodying emotional expressiveness and focusing on the needs of others, while men's role is agentive, where action, self-expansion, and individuality are required. Lakoff's (1975) theories suggest that women's language use reflects diffidence, shyness, and lower self-confidence, indicating a lack of commitment or strong opinion (Huffaker & Calvert, 2005).

Nurseitova (2009) has studied the communicative behavior in discourse through the observation and analysis of everyday communicative acts, and made a distinction between long-term memory containing socially shared knowledge that is culturally relevant and short-term memory containing idiosyncratic knowledge related to our personal experiences. It is believed that our communicative strategy is based on the long-term memory and depends on the general cultural knowledge. Besides, the author claims that gender factor as a socially constructed phenomenon is also influencing on our communicative strategies. Thus, Nurseitova (2009) states that gender peculiarities of behavior force men to chose competitive strategy while women are more inclined for conversation leading to mutual understanding. Further to this, she provides a table (Table 1) contrasting gender differences in male and female communicative behavior.

Table 1.
Differences in male and female communicative behavior (Source: Нурсеитова, 2009) [Nurseitova, 2009].

Males	Females
Interpretation of interlocutor's speech	Hyperbolic expressions
Interruptions of interlocutor	Correct language use
Argue with the interlocutor's opinion	Security questions
Ignore comments	Specific markers
Guide the development of conversation	Ask more questions
Express intentions directly	Express disagreement by keeping silence
Less personal remarks	Polite remarks
Initiate conversation more often	Pushy communicative behavior
More frequent remarks	Give more excuses during conversation
Question as a source of information	Expressing demands
Directed by personal previous remarks	Directed by the remarks of the interlocutor

Communicative gender differences in education

Nowadays we can observe the increase in scholarly interest toward the gender issues in education. According to Lipatova (2007) such an interest is based on the revealed differences in the ways boys and girls think, perceive information, and feel. Some scholars claim that there is a "performance gap" between boys and girls (Tinklin, Croxford, Ducklin, & Frame, 2001). Thus, girls usually perform course work elements better than boys and boys do better on multiple-choice exams. This leads to the assumption that girls and boys approach tasks differently. If it is confirmed, it would then become inevitable to provide assessment tasks that would meet both girls' and boys' approaches towards learning.

Lakoff (1975) insists that gender difference in language behavior is caused by social pressure and is not a physical interiority that supports the vision of gender as a socially constructed behavior (cited in Li & Brand, 2009). Though, Howe (1997) claims that academic performance is not directly linked to gender differences, she accepts that different studies show different results, often contradicting each other. That is why further investigation of this issue is needed (Howe, 1997).

Tannen (1996) claims that it is impossible to isolate gender influence on learning performance from other factors such as, for example, social background or ethnicity. In light of this, Tinklin et al. (2001) contend that the factors in question may not explain gender differences verifiably. Their claim is supported by Nurseitova (2009) who states that our gender behavior is developed together with the cultural knowledge and is located in the long-term memory. Gender as a socially constructed phenomenon should convey distinctive discourse features that could not be interfered with other factors. Tinklin et al. (2001) further support their claim with the evidence from research that middle class girls do better than middle class boys as well as working class girls do better than working class boys.

Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton (2003) argue that representatives of different gender roles use different discourse strategies. They explain their observation with reference to different world views that dictate certain behaviors to fit society's expectations. Hence, people are able to adjust their linguistic behaviors to any given communicative situation. Birjandi and Tabatabaei (2009) state that substantial difference between male and female interaction was reported only in a few studies. Thus, the role of students' gender in ESL and EFL is still unclear and needs further research.

Task-based instruction and gender

The analysis of studies on task-based learning shows that very little attention is devoted to the role of contextual factors in EFL, and in particular to participant factors, such as gender. Meanwhile, some researches on gender in education have revealed the differences between males' and females' classroom behaviors as well as the difference in the amount of time male and female students spend for in-class interactions with a teacher (Eccles & Blumenfeld, 1985; Howe, 1997). Hence, the current study is designed to fill the gap in EFL research and give close attention to the role of gender in students' EFL classroom interaction and task completion. It is assumed that considering gender in task design and assigning students to particular groups could lead to creation of better classroom climate and help students to increase their academic achievements. There is a limited number of studies dealing with the issue of gender in EFL and viewing gender as one of the factors for task design. The present study attempts to emulate Robinson's (2003) idea of students' gender as a contextual participant factor that influences students' task performance.

Method

This research employs participant observation of task-based teaching. This approach allows for observation of students' interactions and can provide an opportunity to reveal students' gender-specific interaction patterns through the implementation of dialogue tasks. The study has some limitations, such as: small sample, mixed socio-cultural background of the research participants, mixed level of English language proficiency, time constraints, and low sensitivity of the recording devices.

The research participants were 37 EFL ninth-year secondary school students from three different classes. In the first group there were 12 students: six males and six females. In the second group there were 13 students: four males and nine females. In the third group there were 12 students: seven males and five females. The age of the participants ranged from 14 to 16 years. All the students were from the same city in Kazakhstan. Some of them were ethnic Russians and some were ethnic Kazakhs, but they all spoke Russian as their first language (L1). All of the students were learning Kazakh as the second language (SL), and sometimes they could insert Kazakh words into their utterances in Russian or in English.

Data were collected during 12 EFL lessons (nine hours) that adhered to the school syllabus and were based on the course book selected by the school. On these lessons the participants read and translated a number of texts. The regular English language lesson consisted of reading the text that was usually followed by a retelling of it. However, for research purposes, a dialogue task was substituted for retelling in order to create a context for students' group interaction. The recorded dialogues were based on the following course-book topics: movie discussion, visiting places, health care, and space exploration. In addition, students considered two topics not based on the course-book texts: the role of the English language in Kazakhstan and planning an event. All the decisions about topic selection were based on the school syllabus.

The students' work with the dialogues consisted of two stages: students' dialogue preparation and students' dialogue presentation. Firstly, students were divided into groups of two or in some situations three people. The assignment to a certain group was determined mainly by students' preferences. After group formation, all students were informed about the dialogue topic and were given from five to 10 minutes to prepare the task. There were no instructions on how to make up the dialogues. Students had only the topic and preparation time constraints. While preparing for the task, all the students were audio recorded by means of the audio recording devices that were placed on students' desks. The final presentations of the dialogues were video recorded. After collecting all the research data, participants were asked to sign the informed consent for the use of the recorded data for the research purposes. In the course of the research we collected two hours 40 minutes of audio and video recorded data that resulted in 29 transcripts. First, all the recordings were divided into three types and coded: MM (male-male interaction), FF (female-female interaction), and FM (female-male interaction). After that broad transcripts of the collected data were made. To begin the analysis, all the turns in all the transcribed dialogues were labeled according to their discourse functions, for example: turn-taking, opening and closing talk or sequence, developing the topic, and so forth. After that the pragmatic means by which these functions were performed were indentified, for example, question or answer. Finally, the most frequently occurring patterns of turn-taking for MM and FF dialogue task performance were outlined. Preliminary comparison revealed differences in turn-taking, role-play, code-switching, and establishment of connections with the text (intertextualization). The further study was targeted at the detailed examination of these phenomena to understand whether it is a gender pattern or just a singular event.

The way students stepped into a persona in the course of dialogue task preparation and presentation was analyzed. Since code-switching is a strong contextualization cue that coincides with shift from real to pretend talk (Alvarez-Cáccamo, 1990), the functions of code-switching in students' task performance were analyzed and then all Russian words in the males' and females' talk were counted. To study the gender differences in the establishment of intertextualization we counted and compared the number of words from the course-book texts male and female students included in their talk.

Results

The analysis of two hours and 40 minutes of classroom interaction showed two main differences between boys' and girls' interaction patterns. First, during the task preparation, male students tended to focus on distribution of the roles and establishment of their roles in the dialogue (turn-allocation). The example of boys' roles' discussion starts from line 003 in excerpt one (Figure 1) where M1 suggested that he would take the role of a doctor and assigned the role of a patient to his partner (lines 004, 008, 010). In line 005 M2 established his role. Then in lines 006-009 M1 repeated his desire to perform the role of the doctor. In line 011 M2 confirmed acceptance of the patient's role assigned to him and simultaneously initiated the role-play. Instead of supporting the role-play M1 in line 012 was still engaged with the role distribution and attempted to find out the name for the M2's role. Eventually in lines 014- 015 both participants of the dialogue were ready to start the role-play. Thus, line 015 was the end of the role-distribution and beginning of the turn-allocation.

Unlike the males, female students did not discuss their turn-taking structure in advance. Female students also avoided establishment of their roles in the dialogues. During the task preparation girls attempted to create the future content of their dialogues carefully elaborating each sentence (turn-construction).

Excerpt 1

003	M1	Давай типа я доктор↓ [Let me be a doctor]
004	M1	А↑
005	M2	Пациент↓[Patient]
006	M1	Давай↑ [Let's]
007	M1	Давай типа я доктор↓[Let's make as if I'm a doctor]
008	M1	А↑
009	M1	Типа я доктор↓ [As if I'm a doctor]
010	M1	А ты это↑ [and you]
011	M2	Hello doctor↓ (laughs)
012	M1	Пациент как будет↑ [How to say patient]
013	M2	Э: *[pasient]*↓
014	M1	Hello *[pasient]*↓
015	M2	Hello doctor↓

Excerpt 2

001	F1	Давай↑ [Let's]
002	F1	Диалог составим↓ [Let's make up a dialogue]
003	F2	Давай↓ [Let's make]
004	F1	Hello↓
005	F2	Hello↓
006	F2	What do you think about our medicine↓
007	F1	I think [XXX]
008		(laughter)
009	F1	A:↑
010	F1	I don't think it is Quality nowadays↓

Figure 1. Example of male-male and female-female dialogue preparation

Excerpt two (Figure 1) shows how female students start their preparation of the dialogue from discussion of the task. In lines 001-004 girls began scripting their future dialogue. From line 004 they started rehearsing. Line 006 initiated the question-answer sequence of the dialogue. The exchange in excerpt two showed that female students did not allocate their turns and did not distribute their roles. They rather made an argument (line 010) and further developed this argument. Excerpt one (Figure 1) shows how different the talk of male students who distributed their turns (lines 003-007, 009, 010) and stepped into persona (lines 014-015) to signal the beginning of a pretend talk was from the talk of the female students in excerpt two (Figure 1).

Excerpts three and four (Figure 2) demonstrate the further development of the dialogues in excerpts one and two (Figure 1). In excerpt four (Figure 2) girls jointly developed the first argument of the dialogue (lines 011-023). In lines 016-026 of excerpt three (Figure 2) boys began the elaboration of their previously established roles though it looked like they were also developing the topic. Thus, boys stuck to their roles, while girls developed the argument of their discussion topic. These gender differences in approaches towards the task preparation are further reflected in students' code-switching, and establishment of intertextualization.

Excerpt 3			Excerpt 4		
016	M1	Какие проблемы↑ [What problems do you have]	011	F2	If you э↑
017	M1	Как будет↑ [How to say]	012	F2	Как будет с одной стороны↑ [How to say on the one hand]
018	M2	Э:↑	013	F1	Как будет с одной стороны↑ [How to say on the one hand]
019	M2	Э:↑	014	F1	A:↑
020	M1	A↑	015	F1	A [XXX]
021	M1	How↑	016	F1	Как будет с одной стороны↑ [How to say on the one hand]
022	M1	Давай я спрошу↓ [Let me ask]	017	F2	On the one hand↓
023	M1	How are you↑	018	F1	On the one hand↑
024	M2	A↑	019	F1	For the family it is good↓
025	M2	I'm fine↓	020	F2	I heard↑
026	M2	A↑	021	F2	I heard that↑
			022	F2	A↑
			023	F2	What do you think↑

Figure 2. Example of male-male and female-female dialogue preparation

Code-switching. Studies in language learning define *code-switching* as the learners' use of more than one language in the course of classroom interactions (Nilep, 2006). As a result of the analysis of 29 transcripts, the data show that male students switch codes more often than female students. Figure three is an example of males' code-switching during the dialogue task presentation. The dialogue lasted for one minute and nine seconds. During the task preparation, dialogue participants agreed that one of them (M1) would pretend to be a doctor. In this case M1 performed the role of a dentist and M2 a patient. In line 006, M1 started the question-answer sequence. M2 answered the question. It was followed by another question by M1. In this excerpt (lines 009-010), the dialogue participants introduced the idea of a toothache that was never mentioned during the task preparation in excerpts one and three (Figures 1 & 2). That is why in lines 030-033 (Figure 3), M1 switched code and addressed the teacher for the translation of the word 'to wash.' At the same time, he signaled to his partner that he was out of role-play for a while. Thus, in lines 030-036, M1 was not the dentist anymore, but is the student who did not know how to say some word in English. After learning the translation, M1 easily returned back to the role-play (line 037) and the dialogue presentation continued as if no code-switching had taken place.

MM Dialogue Presentation (In a Hospital)		
006	M1	Can I help you↑
007	M2	Yes↓[[stands opposite to M1, holds a button on his jacket, steps from one foot to another]]
008	M2	You can↓
009	M2	My teeth is↑
010	M2	ill↓
011	M1	Э:↑
012	M1	Э↑
013	M1	You drink cold water↑[[reads from his notes]]
014	M2	No↓
015	M2	No↓
016	M2	I don't drink↓ a… [[plays with a pen in his hands]]
017	M1	What should you↑
018	M1	Do↑
019	M2	Эм↑
020	M2	I↑
021	M2	I eat↑
022	M2	More ↑
023	M2	I eat more chocolates↓
024	M1	Oh:↑
025	M1	It's very bad↓
026	M1	It's very bad↓
027	M1	You drink↑ [[waves his hands while speaking]]
028	M1	You drink teeth pills↓
029	M1	And↑…
030	M1	Полоскать как↑ [How to say to wash]
031	M1	Полоскать↑ [To wash]
032	M1	Полоскать↑ [To wash]
033	M1	Полоскать↑ [To wash]
034	R	Wash↓
035	M1	A↑
036	M1	Wash↓
037	M1	Wash your↑

038	M1	A:↑
039	M1	Wash your teeth↓
040	M1	Wash your teeth water↓
041		(laughter)
042	M2	Thank you↓

Figure 3. Male-male dialogue presentation

Figure four presents the example of females' code-switching during the dialogue task presentation. This excerpt is an exchange of two female students based on a text on space exploration. The recording lasts for two minutes and five seconds. In this dialogue, one of the girls (F1) tells the other girl (F2) about her visit to the exhibition.

FF Dialogue Presentation (Space Exploration)		
013	F2	Do you heard about *Paul' Bowlz*↑
014	F1	Yes↓
015	F1	He was one of the organizers of *[ekzibi]*↑
016	F1	Of the exhibition↓
017	F1	And he had a good speech about the aims of that exhibition↓
018	F1	A:↑
019	F1	So↓ [[comes closer to F2, stares at F2]]
020	F1	His ʽspeech was very interesting↓
021	F1	Э:↑
022	F1	And *[eksplore]* the exhibition was very interesting↑
023	F1	Interesting too↓
024	F1	And э↑ [[steps back]]
025	F1	A
026	F1	Can you describe the: exhibition↑
027	F2	Э [[touches her sweater]]
028	F2	Э
029	F2	Exhibition was so interesting and memory↑
030	F2	Memorable↓
031	F2	And (.) exhibition was so huge↓
032	F2	There was э (.) maps and *[sins]* everywhere↓
033	F2	Э (.) ʽa are you tired↑ [[smiles]]
034	F1	No↓
035	F1	Because every эм↑[[crosses her hands on her neck]]
036	F1	Every a↑
037	F1	Every thirty minutes there was breaks where the э:↑
038	F1	People dressed like aliens served our э↑
039	F1	Served to us our refreshments↓
040	F2	So↓ эм [[puts her right hand on her waist]]
041	F2	I think the best thing эм↑
042	F2	The best thing of a↑
043	F2	O↑
044	F2	Э
045	F2	About a new exhibition was a replica↓
046	F2	Of the (.) international space station↓

047	F1	Yes↓[[holds her hands in front of her]]
048	F1	And↑
049	F1	I think that at this exhibition is the example to follow for all other exhibitions↓
050	F2	The sky's the limit↓ [[smiles]]

Figure 4. Female-female dialogue presentation

This dialogue is an example of female-female interaction during the dialogue task presentation. The instances of code-switching are presented in lines 018, 021, 025, 027, 028 and so forth. All these examples of females' code-switching are expressed through the interjections and function as floor-holders. Analysis of the boys' code-switching revealed that it was used to signal a shift from real to pretend talk. Because male students do not negotiate their dialogues in advance, they need to negotiate the content of the ongoing dialogue during the task presentation. The data show that boys discuss the task in Russian while role-playing in English. Female students refer to code-switching less often than the male students, but they frequently use L1 interjections.

The data seem to suggest that girls need to use interjections to hold their turns and gain time to recollect what they are supposed to say at the certain point of the dialogue. In male dialogue task presentation Russian words comprise five percent of all the utterances. Females' dialogue task presentation contains only 1.5% of Russian words. Among these Russian words, the percentage of L1 interjections (such as: э, а, ну, ой, эм, уф that resemble English: ah, oh, hm) in females' talk is 83%, while males' talk in Russian contains only 52% of interjections.

The observation of students' dialogue task preparation shows that students of both genders use code-switching to clarify words they need. As a rule girls first searched for the words in the dictionary, text, or consulted with each other and only then addressed the teacher. Male students tended to choose the easiest way and ask the teacher directly. This difference in males' and females' use of code-switching during the task preparation further affects their dialogue task presentation.

Female students used mainly L1 interjections to signal their partner that they could continue the interaction, but they needed time to remember the rehearsed text. During the task presentation, girls rarely addressed the teacher for the translation of the words. Male students used fewer interjections because they had already agreed on who would take a turn. They rather lapsed into L1 to discuss how to continue their dialogue and what content to include. Boys also tended to switch to L1 to ask from the teacher the translation of the words they needed to continue their role-play.

Intertextualization. The analysis of the dialogue task presentation also shows that female students tended to rely on texts for construction of their dialogues. They were more likely than males to use words and sometimes even whole phrases from the course-book texts. The data show that girls used

183 words from the texts while boys' task presentations included only 27 words from the texts. Most probably this difference arose from the females' focus on turn-construction during the task preparation.

Since female students tended to elaborate their answers, build connections between ideas and script their dialogues, they used the original texts extensively. It seems that for girls, the discussion of the text was not exactly a pretend talk but rather a display of their knowledge of the text. For example, lines 032, 037, 038, 045, 046, 050 of figure four demonstrate that female students used direct quotations from the text.

As seen in Figure 1, boys preferred role-play and did not discuss the topic in advance; therefore they did not use text as extensively as girls. Turn-allocation allowed for male students to perform the task with the minimal effort and always left space for improvisation. The use of the text suggests that students had to elaborate their answers. For male students, it seems the discussion of the text was extra work; that is why they preferred to step into a persona during the task presentation and perform the minimum of question-answer sequences. Female students also stepped into a persona but only if it was a task requirement specified in the task instruction or in case they did not have enough preparation time for turn-construction.

Discussion

Due to their communicative nature dialogue tasks have discernible objectives and can provide learners with the interactional freedom in the course of achieving these objectives. In addition, communicative tasks can facilitate language learning because they reflect students' needs, interests, and experiences (Littlewood, 2000). Communicative task creates an opportunity for examining how learners use a foreign language to convey a message (Ellis, 2003). Since dialogue task facilitates students' interaction, it creates the context for students' practicing of their gender roles. All these make task a pertinent research tool for examining differences in male and female talk in EFL classroom.

As a rule teachers could witness only the final version of students' work with the task. The observation of the students' work with the dialogue tasks during the task preparation gives us more insight into the students' approach towards the task that allows for better understanding of what interaction peculiarities underlie the task presentation. Dialogue task is a form of the classroom group-work that promotes students' interaction during the task accomplishment. Assignment of students to male-male and female-female groups for making up their dialogues helps to see how students of different gender position themselves towards the task and observe how they approach task performance.

The main task-based interaction gender differences discussed in the previous studies (Birjandi & Tabatabaei, 2009; Seedhouse, 1999) include: a particular turn-taking system, the minimalization of linguistic forms, the creation of indexication, and the generation of clarifications. This research supports Seedhouse's (1999) observations that students' task-based interaction follows a particular turn-taking system. Females tend to establish intimacy as a basis for friendship, while males use language to establish their social status. Females' interaction is expected to be supportive and focused on the needs of others, while males' interaction is characterized by self-expression and competitiveness (Nurseitova, 2009).

This research has revealed the distinct differences in male and female students' interactional goals during their work with the dialogue tasks. The female students' model of the communicative task approach seems to be more favorable for gaining knowledge. If the task is based on a particular text the teacher may expect that female-female groups would carefully study it, discuss the content, and attempt to understand the new words. In this case the presentation of a communicative task should be a result of the actual learning. However, it is also possible that when a task is not based on the text female students may experience more problems than the male students because they usually concentrate on the content part of their final product and try to show the knowledge of the text rather then become the participants of a role-play. Thus, the task preparation time is the essential time for female students' learning of the foreign language and practicing the new concepts. Hence, EFL teachers need to consider this finding when assigning a communicative task to girls.

The research findings also suggest that male students are mainly focused on the "performing part" and distribute and allocate their turns in advance to demonstrate a role-play. It is possible that by performing a role male students are attempting to distance themselves from the task and school work. As a result a communicative task in the male-male groups should be resulting into little learning. Quite literally, male students end up with allocating the roles in their future dialogues and switch to their own business. Consequently, their communicative task presentations result into improvisational role-play with numerous instances of code-switching.

Code-switching, then, is used to clarify the unknown vocabulary with the teacher or discuss the further content of their dialogue. One implication for this finding is that EFL teachers do not need to allow the communicative task preparation time to the male students because boys are inclined to elaborate their answers during the actual presentation of a task. In case, they want to allow some communicative task preparation time to the male-male groups they possibly need to assign them certain roles and set certain requirements towards each group participant's final product. For example, the number of new words he has to use or the certain type of grammar, that should be demonstrated in all his sentences. Given this, the second variant of the communicative task preparation will not be a group work anymore; however, it should result into efficient use of the classroom time and guarantee that male students are at least making an effort to learn.

Considering the research findings, we can assume that the most favorable form of classroom interaction while approaching a communicative task should be the male-female group.

In such a group the representatives of both genders would bring in the approach, which is missing in the same-gender groups. Supposedly, girls develop more independence on a text and learn to immediately respond to a task, while boys will start to prepare in advance.

Conclusion

The results of the current study show that male and female students have different approaches towards dialogue task preparation and presentation. The data analysis of dialogue task preparation showed that females use text extensively, develop their arguments, and support each other during the task presentation. Males' interaction during the task preparation demonstrated that boys were more concerned on their turn-allocation by role distribution and focused on construction of their turns. The observation of students' interaction during the dialogue presentations has shown that female students present scripted and often rehearsed discussions of topics, while male students perform roles of imaginary characters.

This research engaged the participants of the particular age group and from a particular school. That is why, it is impossible to state that the same research conducted in another setting would show the same results. Nevertheless, the research suggests that students' gender is of paramount importance for students' classroom interaction and influences on how students approach and perform a communicative task. For that reason, it is suggested that EFL teachers should be more sensitive towards their students' gender and design their communicative tasks accordingly so that boys and girls could perform to the best of their foreign language effort.

Subsequently, we can conclude that male-male groups are efficient for the practicing of the learned material, but appear to come across certain obstacles while preparing for the communicative task; especially, the one that requires the work with the new texts. The individual assignments that lead to a collaborative result could probably heighten the level of responsibility for the task preparation and result in better final performance.

Among some specific recommendations is the necessity to substitute males' task preparation group work with the individual preparation task, or not to allow any preparation time at all. For female students, most of the learning happens during the preparation time. However, girls may have some flaws, such as stops or inclusion of L1 interjections, on the presentation stage because their dialogues are a result of a collaborative work and they have not decided on their turns yet.

More research is needed to deepen our knowledge of how a communicative task is approached in the mixed gender groups. This research suggests that male and female students could contribute to each others' approach towards a communicative task accomplishment and attain better learning results. It will be also interesting to learn whether these interactional gender differences in approach to a communicative task accomplishment vary across different age groups.

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Note on Contributor

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