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## **September 2017 Foreword**

**by Aradhna Malik**

The current issue of the AEFL Journal contains six articles. Two of these articles, one by Gray and the other by Lee, describe and analyze the experiences of native English teachers teaching English in Korea.

Gray analyzes the narratives of six native English speaking teachers learning and speaking Korean in Korea. His study highlights the challenges these teachers face in their quest to balance their 'otherness' with their need to assimilate within the social fabric of South Korea.

Lee, on the other hand, describes the experiences of one novice Canadian English Speaking Teacher in Korea. Lee's paper analyzes and brings to light the influence of this teacher's self identity and her self concept as a teacher on her ability to adjust to the teaching environment in Korea.

Shen's paper addresses the other side of learning, i.e. the strategies for learning unfamiliar, and unknown words used by learners of English as a Foreign Language, in Taiwan. Shen highlights the importance of lexical inferencing strategies over contextual learning strategies in learning English as a Foreign Language by speakers of a language that is significantly different from English.

Vedyanto's paper looks at yet another aspect of learning English as a Foreign Language. He explores the content of a well-known and oft-used English Language Teaching textbook, 'English in Mind 1', as a determinant in learning of English as a Foreign Language by EFL teachers in Indonesia. Vedyanto's study quantitatively evaluates the general attributes and learning-teaching content of the book from the perspective of the EFL teachers using this textbook.

The study by Banegas suggests that "instead of employing commercially produced coursebooks only, teachers can become materials developers for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in secondary education." His study highlights the contextual significance of material developed by teachers for their own classes and the importance of constant feedback through constant use in refining and perfecting the teaching material, thereby highlighting the 'theory-practice' relationship especially in 'CLIL education'.

Li describes yet another aspect of Foreign language learning and expression. As a native writer of Chinese, and a secondary user of English, she discusses, with the help of personal vignettes, the challenges faced by students writing English (as a foreign language) and teachers assessing such writings. Her study highlights the aspects of interpretation one must attend to in learning environments where such writings take place.

The two books that have been reviewed in this issue of the AEFL Journal address very diverse topics.

Jan-Nesar and Motallebzadeh review *Task Based Language Teaching in Foreign Language Context* By Shehadeh & Coombe (2012). As the title suggests, this book discusses a diversity of contexts with regard to Task Based Language Teaching. Jan-Nesar and Motallebzadeh provide a comprehensive analysis of the different topics covered in the book and an honest evaluation of the book as a resource for Foreign Language Teachers.

Songhori reviews *Resilient Teachers, Resilient Schools: Building and Sustaining Quality in Testing*, and describes it as a must read for all teachers. Teaching is an extremely demanding profession, and a book like this, according to Songhori is essential to surviving and flourishing in this profession.

This issue of the AEFL Journal illustrates the variety of analysis techniques that can be used for foreign language research, including narratives, part ethnography, and quantitative analysis. In accordance with the mission of this journal, the voices and writing styles of the authors have been preserved as far as possible.

**Always the Other:  
Foreign Teachers of English in Korea, and Their Experiences as Speakers of KSL**

*Stewart Gray*

*Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea*

**Biodata**

**Stewart Gray** has been an English teacher in South Korea since 2011. He completed his MA TESOL at Dankook University, Korea, and is a Ph.D. student with the University of Leeds, England. He is currently serving as an Assistant Professor in the Foreign Language Center at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. His research interests include language and identity, reflective practice, critical thinking, critical pedagogies, and extensive reading. He may be contacted atec\_391@hotmail.com

**Abstract**

This research examines the narratives of six foreign English teachers learning and speaking Korean in Korea, the ways in which learning contributed to the teachers' *self-formation*, and helped them to negotiate their position in Korean society. Participants' stories were gathered via conversational interviews and internet correspondence. Data gathered serves to highlight the discourses within Korean society to which foreign teachers are subject: (1) foreign teachers generally cannot speak Korean; (2) foreign teachers learning and speaking Korean are therefore special and respectable; (3) White foreign teachers are a relatively privileged group in Korea because of their ethnicity; (4) though a foreign teacher may learn Korean, they will still be an *Other* in Korea. Recognizing these discourses, participants variously partly rejected and partly embraced their pre-given position in Korean society in an effort to

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find the most comfortable space for themselves. Learning Korean served a beneficial function in this process, as it bestowed upon them the *values*

of open-mindedness and sophistication, helping them to distance themselves from negative perceptions of foreign teachers as a group held by the Korean majority. This, combined with the privileges afforded to ethnically White immigrants, allowed participants to find an agreeable position for themselves in Korean society.

**Keywords:** Korea, KSL, foreign English teacher, self-formation, ethnicity, privilege

## **Introduction**

*‘...no matter how good your Korean is, you’re never going to be one of them or looked at as an equal, you’ll always be the Other...’* (Jenny, interview, 2014.08.09)

The number of foreign residents in South Korea (hereafter Korea) has greatly increased in recent years, and these residents now face the challenges of life as newcomers to a traditionally homogeneous society. Among the various groups of foreign residents in Korea are foreign English teachers; people from inner-circle English countries (Kachru, 1996) who find employment teaching English as a foreign language to Korean students. Such teachers are faced with the decision of whether or not to learn the Korean language. For an immigrant in Korea, Korean language ability may be a useful form of social capital (Bourdieu, 1993), and help to bridge the divide that exists between them and the Korean majority community (Jun & Ha, 2015). It can also be a means of working against stigma, such as the preconception that foreign English teachers in Korea are culturally insensitive and boorish (Killick, 1995).

Though a foreign English teacher may be well treated and live comfortably in Korea without learning the language (Gordon, 2012), may not be expected to learn (Bailey, 2010), and might be advised by colleagues (Waygook.org, 2011) not to demonstrate knowledge of Korean to their students, some nevertheless choose to learn, and some become highly competent speakers. The goal of this research was to explore the experiences of those foreign English teachers who have acquired a high competence in Korean by collecting and analyzing detailed narratives of their experiences, their challenges, and what they had sought and achieved through learning Korean.

## **Research rationale**

While research on foreign English teachers in Korea has tended to focus on their work as language educators, this research examined their experiences as language learners, their interactions with native Korean speakers, and whether they felt that knowledge of Korean had provided them with social benefits, with a view to providing insight into the discourses that surround foreign teachers and the Korean language in Korea.

## **Context – An ever more globalized Korea**

While modern South Korean pop culture expands out into the world, and increasing numbers of students internationally study the Korean language (Gordon, 2015), the country of Korea itself is a largely ethnically homogeneous nation, the majority of people being ethnic Koreans (CIA World Factbook, 2014) who primarily speak Korean (Park, 2004). However, the number of foreign immigrants residing in Korea has been increasing rapidly, reaching 1.5 million in 2011 (Statistics Korea, 2013), though even among immigrants, many people are ethnically-Korean returnees (Kim, 2008).

The Korean government has made a number of policy decisions in response to increased multiculturalism, decisions that Watson (2012) suggests have to be understood in light of the discourse of Korean cultural and ethnic exclusivity. For example, while the Korean government has stated that: ‘policymakers need to be aware that migrant workers or spouses are not subjects that should be assimilated into this country but human beings who have different cultural standards’ (p. 239), Watson suggests that statements of this sort are carefully crafted to avoid infringing on the idea of Korean ethnic uniqueness, whilst paying lip service to multiculturalism. Indeed, the Asan Institute for Policy Studies has suggested that a majority of multicultural programs in Korea are ‘culturally assimilating,’ in that they may focus on teaching Korean norms to foreign residents (Lee, 2014). Also, the Korean government has instituted a minimum Korean language competence standard for acquiring certain visas (Heit, 2010; Lee, 2010).

Modern Korean society has complex relations to ethnicity and nationality, and a strong sense of the importance of homogeneity is in evidence. Groups that have been shown to experience discrimination in Korea include immigrant spouses from countries such as the Philippines and Mongolia (Lee, 2010), multi-ethnic public school students (Kim & Kim, 2015) and ethnically-Korean Chinese and American immigrants (Cho, 2012; Redmond, 2014; Seol & Skrentky, 2004), though Korean immigration policy

provides advantages in visa acquisition to immigrants of Korean ethnicity (Kim, 2008; Park & Chang, 2005). This research presents the experiences of foreign English teachers, another minority and immigrant group in Korea, to contribute to this body of data.

### **Foreign English teachers and local languages**

For the purposes of this research, a 'foreign English teacher' is someone who fits the Korean government's definition (Korea Immigration Service); somebody who has acquired an E2 foreign language instructor's visa (Na, 2006) and been hired to teach English to Korean students at public or private institutions, which necessarily means that they come from a narrow group of 'inner-circle' (Kachru, 1996) English countries; the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa (HiKorea.go.kr).

Both within Korea and in other countries in East and South-East Asia, foreign English teachers from inner-circle countries, particularly those who are White, enjoy considerable privilege in hiring (Ruecker & Ives, 2015) over members of other groups, including native English speakers of Asian descent (Lan, 2011). White native teachers also benefit from possessing cultural and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1993) to the extent that they arguably do not need to learn the predominant languages of the countries in which they have come to reside (McIntosh, 1990; Gordon, 2012), and may even benefit from not being able to understand the local language in situations where the pressure felt by local interlocutors to speak English acts to the advantage of the native English speaker (Lan, 2011).

In Korea specifically, the stated purpose of the employment of foreign teachers is to improve the English level of their students and colleagues and to improve their school's English program (Gyeonggi Provincial Office of Education, 2013), an activity that does not obviously demand competence in Korean. Indeed, foreign English teachers may even experience direct external pressure against their Korean language use; on the foreign English teachers' discussion website, *waygook.org* (2011), some teachers claim to have received explicit instructions from their colleagues and employers that they should not use Korean in class with students. In this context, it is reasonable that a foreign teacher may lack *investment* (Norton, 1995) in learning, and may conceive of more economically profitable uses for their time (Dustmann, 2000). Nevertheless, some teachers choose to invest themselves in learning to a high level, and the fact of their doing so despite an ostensible lack of benefits and the apparent inappropriateness of

using Korean for a person in the position of a foreign English teacher raises the questions that are at the center of this research:

- In Korean society, what benefits might a foreign English teacher acquire by learning Korean?
- In what sense, if any, might learning Korean have been an act of resistance against external forces seeking to control and position the learner?

### **Theoretical basis for research - Language learning as self-formation**

According to Michel Foucault (1985), humans exercise freedom through the practice of ‘ethical self-formation’ (or ‘self-creation’ [Infinite, 2003]) when they engage with the rules that govern their situation. Foucault (1985) suggests that, even within the context of a strict set of rules, or a ‘pre-given power structure’ (Hennig, 2010) there are many different ways that we can conduct ourselves, and in choosing to act in a certain way we act upon ourselves, to create ourselves. Through voluntary actions of self-improvement and decisions about who we wish ourselves to be, we can exercise our individual freedom, add *value* to ourselves, and resist external forces that seek to control our subjectivity. The way in which a particular action may add *value* to us is connected to beliefs we and others hold about that action, and the meaning attributed to that action in a given social context, and this is true for acquiring knowledge of certain languages in certain environments. For example, in Korea, knowledge of English may imply possession of a rare and enviable international character (Cho, 2014); to a Sri Lankan person in Canada, English may imply high class and social possibilities, while knowledge of Tamil may be associated with an undesirable connection to the Sri Lankan caste system (Canagarajah, 2010); and in Hong Kong, knowledge of German may imply specialness and industriousness (Hennig, 2010). Thus, in learning a language, we create ourselves, taking onto our *selves* the attributes that we, and others, ascribe to that language, so as to give our lives an ‘individuality and special shape’ (Hennig, 2010), to attain social approval, and strive towards our *telos* (Greek: ‘end’), Foucault’s (1984) word for the idea/image we hold within our minds of a superior, future version of ourselves that we might become through engaging in *self-formation*.

This theory was selected as a lens through which to examine participants’ stories and explore the extent to which learning and speaking Korean was for them connected to perceptions of *value* and/or resistance to positioning within ethnically restrictive discourses in Korean society.

## **Language learning and social inclusion/exclusion**

Armour (2003) relates the story of a young woman named Lola Lovett, who appeared on a Japanese radio program as the first exchange student in her area. In the interview, she declared in Japanese, 'I think I've become like a Japanese person, you know,' to which the Japanese interviewer responded, 'Well, not quite, you know' (p. 121). This interaction is indicative of the fact that, though a person may act to create themselves, such actions may encounter external resistance, for *self-formation* is part of the negotiation for social power and, 'where there is power, there is resistance' (Foucault, 1978, p. 96).

Foucault stressed that caring for and creating ourselves is not something we do in isolation, but is a form of 'social practice' (cited in Infinito, 2003, p. 166). Our interactions with other people form the basis for the decisions we make about how we wish to work towards self-improvement. As Hennig put it, we are trying to 'transform ourselves with the approval of others and establish a world governed by mutual respect and freedom' (Hennig, 2010, p. 308). However, the idea of receiving approval is potentially challenging in the Korean context; How does one receive the approval of an exclusive society of which one is not already a member? One way may be through language learning, as ability in a language may allow one to receive 'recognition of one's competence as valued by the community' (Tsui, 2007, p. 674), and build the sort of social connections that are essential for gaining access and acceptance from members of other communities. Language learning is potentially necessary or beneficial for bridging community divides and obtaining acceptance/membership, whether the community one wishes to approach is defined by ethnicity (Dustmann, 1996; Jun & Ha, 2015), sexuality (King, 2008), profession, or simply multilingualism (Bailey, 2010).

However, as suggested above, members of the community one wishes to approach may offer resistance. Killick (1995) described the challenges he faced while living in Korea: 'Koreans seemed to find it funny when I came too close to (acting like a Korean man). In their eyes, the appropriate way for me to behave was in accordance with their clear if over-generalized notions of western culture' (p. 88). These 'notions' are examples of 'societal forces' (Infinito, 2003, p. 158), external mechanisms of control, that self-creation empowers us to resist. It may be that some Koreans engage in *Othering* (Said, 1978) of foreigners on an ethnic basis in order to maintain the idea of Korean ethnic uniqueness (Watson, 2012). Therefore, for a foreigner, acting so as to position

oneself contrary to the expectations of the Korean majority, such as through learning Korean, may be a form of resistance to this *Othering*.

## Methodology

As the years-long process of learning Korean and developing social connections with Koreans was the focus of this research, the decision was made to solicit and examine the narratives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) of participants' learning experiences. Narrative inquiry has been used to examine the long-term experiences of language learners and teachers with a view to understanding the construction of their identity (Park, 2006; Tsui, 2007), and the study of narrative has clear potential when considering *self-formation* (Foucault, 1985), as it allows the researcher detailed insight into the factors, beliefs, and thought processes that underlie people's decisions and intentions (Bell, 2002). Thus, for this research, participants were requested to tell the stories of their experiences, in the hope that they would consciously or unconsciously reveal the beliefs they held about the *value* of the Korean language and their place within the discourses of ethnicity in Korean society.

### *Sampling*

Initially, participants for this research were sought by appealing for contacts from personal acquaintances. Thereafter, more were found through 'snowball sampling' (Goodman, 1961), whereby participants were asked to nominate more potentially suitable participants. Participants were contacted via electronic message, and they were informed that the research concerned second-language Korean learners and their experiences. In total, six foreign English teachers with strong Korean proficiency agreed to participate. The number of participants was appropriate in that valuable data may be gathered from interviewing six subjects, provided they are reasonably homogeneous (Guest et al., 2006). Though language ability, not age and ethnicity, had been the relevant criterion when seeking participants, in the event they were all of a similar age, and all were White, and as such happened to fit the image of the ethnically-ideal foreign English teacher prevalent throughout South-East Asia (Ruecker & Ives, 2015).

All individuals participating in this research were given a verbal guarantee of anonymity that was audio-recorded at the time of the interview. As such, all names in the following data are pseudonyms [Table 1].

### *Data Collection*

Participants were interviewed informally in public settings for between 1 and 2 hours. The interviews were audio-recorded in their entirety. Interviews were unstructured (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) and conversational, as the goal of the research was to ‘(obtain) unique information or interpretation held by the person interviewed’ (Stake, 2010, p. 95), with the start of the conversation being a request by the researcher to participants to tell the story of their coming to Korea and learning Korean. The underlying goal of the interviews was that the following questions, inspired by Hennig (2010) with some variation, would ideally be addressed:

- Why did participants choose to learn Korean?
- What were their experiences of learning Korean?
- What goals for the future did they have that learning Korean can help with?
- What difference did they think it has made to them being able to speak Korean in Korea?
- Did they feel that it has helped them be accepted into Korean society?
- What has been the reaction of Koreans to participants speaking Korean?

**Table 1: Participants**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>English teaching context</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Time in Korea (years)</b>
Nigel	Male	35	Elementary school	Canadian	10
Jenny	Female	30	After-school program	American	7
Ian	Male	29	Private Kindergarten	American	6
James	Male	Unstated	Private academy	American	5
Simon	Male	29	Private academy	Australian	3
Chris	Male	29	University	American	6

These questions were only occasionally posed directly by the researcher. During their interviews participants provided stories of their experiences that answered some or all of these questions in greater or lesser degrees of detail depending on the particular events and details they chose to focus on. After the interviews were completed, follow-up questions were sent to the participants (five out of the six) via internet correspondence either once or twice wherever ambiguity in a statement made a fair interpretation difficult.

All questioned participants responded with clarifying details that facilitated the process of analysis.

### *Data Analysis*

Interview recordings and answers to follow-up questions were wholly transcribed (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), read, and re-read. The transcriptions were then used as the basis for the writing of the full-length narratives of all individual participants, between six and ten pages per participant, which were then e-mailed back to them for their assessment, giving them the opportunity to comment on any information omissions or misinterpretations they observed. Minor adjustments were suggested by some participants, and narratives changed to correspond. The narratives were then color-coded according to identified themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) including participants' intentions in learning Korean, their perspectives on the access it had granted them and their feelings about their position in Korean society. The categorized data was explored for statements made by participants suggesting patterns of common experiences and perspectives, as well as statements which deviated from these patterns (Berkowitz, 1997). Using these grouped statements as themes, the six narratives were summarized and condensed into the *findings* section of this writing, under three headings; *cultural and social access*, *experiences interacting with native Korean speakers*, and *participants' relative privilege*.

### **Findings - Cultural and social access**

*'...they're not going to speak in English for your courtesy... you have to blend in.'*  
(Simon, interview, 2014.08.16)

All participants expressed a desire, when setting out to learn, to acquire Korean language abilities for social purposes with Koreans, and/or as a means of accessing Korean culture, and all expressed a measure of success in doing so. All believed that Korean language ability is important and useful for making friends and maintaining good relationships with colleagues in Korea.

Some participants stated explicitly that, in learning Korean, they were seeking respect from Korean native speakers for their cultural openness as demonstrated by learning, and in doing this they aspired to distance themselves from the negative collective image of closed-minded foreign teachers. For instance, Nigel described his

view of the foreign teacher community who, in his experience, included people who would ‘drink and... go to clubs, and that’s their entire life.’ For him, learning Korean was one way to demonstrate open-mindedness and sophistication, unusual for foreign teacher, as a result of which he gained greater respect from Koreans of his acquaintance: ‘...(my colleagues) treat me much more as a part of a team rather than a foreign entity, you know what I mean?’ (Nigel, interview, 2014.08.09)

All participants felt that they had received respect, acceptance, and otherwise positive responses from Koreans as a direct result of having learned Korean. For example, James felt he had received especially good treatment at a restaurant on account of a member of staff’s appreciation for his abilities: ‘...she started to give me some free chips sometimes... and, my guess is that... She likes that I speak Korean... it makes me feel good that I have that, someone who... I’ve made a connection with.’ (interview, 2014.09.06). The most commonly expressed social advantage of speaking Korean was the ability to converse with Koreans who were not conversant in English, and access to particular social environments where the primary language was Korean.

For example:

- ‘...being able to speak Korean lets you talk to a much wider variety of people...like old hippies, or like weird musicians, or just old men, older people especially... I’ve got a gallery that I sort of volunteer at, I talk to all of the people there in Korean.’ (Ian, interview, 2014.08.24)
- ‘...my friends at school... the vegan group I’m part of...’ (Nigel, interview, 2014.08.09)
- Jenny developed her Korean with friends in salsa and yoga classes.

Korean ability allowed participants to converse with people who, whether they were capable in English or not, may have felt uncomfortable speaking in English, and ‘relieved’ (James) or ‘relaxed’ (Jenny) at being able to use Korean, and in some cases this included participants’ own students. Chris and James credited their Korean learning with giving them a greater understanding of their students’ language learning struggles, while also describing Korean as a useful classroom tool. In Chris’s case, he would ‘pepper’ his classroom speech with Korean, which he suggests helped to hold his students’ flagging attention, while for James knowledge of Korean provided a way to understand and join in with his students’ Korean conversations, which he used as an opportunity to help them develop their English conversation skills.

Several participants suggested that Korean social dynamics may demand Korean ability from people who wish to participate, as whether people can communicate in English or not, as a group they may be unprepared to do so:

**Simon:** ...when you meet Koreans and they all get together, they're not going to speak in English for your courtesy, to help you out, you have to blend in. When you're at a *sooljari* (*drinking with friends/colleagues*) you might get the occasional question as to whether the food tastes good... but I've yet to see a group of Koreans comfortable enough to converse entirely in English without reverting back to Korean because they find it strange to be speaking to each other in a foreign language, regardless of whether a foreigner is present or not.

(Simon, interview, 2014.08.16)

Some participants also sought to use the language to approach and explore Korean culture, suggesting that outsiders competent only in English may not be able to do so to as great an extent. Chris and Ian, for example, used their Korean to explore, respectively, traditional rituals and traditional music. In Chris's case, he credits his Korean skills with winning him the chance to witness and photograph the *goot* ritual, a highly private shamanistic exorcism ceremony, stating: 'you show that you're interested in something, (and) a lot of people are going to be willing to show (you)' (interview, 2014.08.31). In Ian's case, his language learning was strongly connected to his study of Korean music and literature. In Ian's view, both of these can be studied through the medium of English, but not to the same depth: '...in Korean they'll have an introductory course, and then an intermediate course, and then advanced course... then for foreigners, they'll have a broad introductory one-hour thing and then that's it... they assume that no-one's interested...' (Interview, 2014.08.24).

It appears that participants learned Korean, in part, to add to themselves the *value* (Foucault, 1985) of being culturally open-minded in the eyes of Koreans, and thereby gain greater access to Korean society and culture. They recognized that foreign teachers often do not learn and are expected not to be interested in Korea, and they took the view that the 'community' (Wenger, 1998) of Korean native speakers would therefore value their learning. In practice, they all felt that to an extent this had come to fruition; through learning, they had won the 'approval' (Hennig, 2010) and respect of their close Korean peers.

## Experiences interacting with native Korean speakers

*'...no matter how good your Korean is... you'll always be the Other'* (Jenny, interview, 2014.08.09)

In contrast to the above, all participants expressed the feeling that, despite having become competent Korean speakers and thereby enjoying social success, they were nonetheless treated as *Others* by some Koreans. Reactions participants described upon using Korean with some Korean native speakers were described as 'awkward' (Ian), though less so when the native interlocutor was younger, and/or they had already gotten to know each other. The awkwardness was said to take the form of disbelief that participants were able to speak Korean, as well as condescending behavior and assumptions made about their level of knowledge of Korean society. For instance, while participants all described getting good reactions for their Korean abilities, this was often disproportionate to their skill level at the time, and many interpreted such reactions as patronizing: 'I would stumble through broken sentences... and all the same, they'd be like, "oh, hankukmal jal hashineyo".'*' (Your Korean is so good)* (Chris, interview, 2014.08.31)

Such behavior related not only to displays of linguistic competence, but also to other actions that may be assumed to be unfamiliar to non-Koreans. Jenny described a feeling of being 'infantilized', possibly for ethnic or cultural reasons: 'I've been here seven years and people are still amused that I can use chopsticks... it's just tiring' (interview, 2014.08.09).

In a similar vein, Simon, a recipient of the highest grade on the Korean ability test, said that he felt arbitrarily grouped together with the other foreign teachers at his institution who could not speak Korean, and that he was treated as a 'symbol' of English, and a 'commodity.' His Korean co-teachers at the private English institute at which he worked would seem uneasy when he was speaking Korean, even if he was only in their vicinity and not talking to them directly. He also once sent an e-mail ahead of a meeting related to his graduate study. He wrote the message in Korean and used his Korean name, but when he arrived at the meeting place he found the staff who had received the e-mail acted awkwardly towards him, as he ventures they had been expecting someone ethnically Korean. Simon felt frustrated by this behavior: 'What's the difference if I'm an ethnic Korean or not?' He felt that, as a member of a non-Korean ethnic group, he needed to repeatedly demonstrate his abilities to work against assumptions made about him: 'You've got to battle those stereotypes.'

Some participants, notably Jenny and James, described the feeling that Korean people with whom they attempt to interact in Korean have at times been resistant, unwilling to use Korean, and assertive in their preference for using English. Jenny described a range of reactions she had received, including people who, as in the case of Chris described above, were perhaps excessively complimentary, and people who responded more negatively, and who would make her feel she was ‘not speaking well enough.’ In seeking to interpret this tendency, participants ventured a number of explanations. For example, some believed that it may be connected to the belief that foreign teachers do not learn Korean (an idea Nigel described as ‘a pretty accurate generalization’), and/or that Korean people may feel social pressure to speak English when interacting with a foreign person irrespective of that person's Korean ability. Ian, for instance, described how this pressure can create a social barrier between Korean and foreign groups:

**Ian:** At my school, and a couple of the schools I've worked at, it's really hard to get Korean teachers and foreign teachers to socialize together. And a lot of the Korean teachers have told me that it's just because they don't feel good about having to speak English all night. Like that's just a burden that they feel, you know, embarrassed and burdened by.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, but then you speak Korean.

**Ian:** Yeah that, but that's... I don't know, it's just a thing, like people feel like even if they can speak Korean they really should be speaking English.

(Ian, interview, 2014.08.24)

Ian was not convinced that such awkwardness was necessarily connected to ethnic differences, suggesting that personal unfamiliarity might be the cause. Simon too, though he did express exasperation with his own ethnic positioning, ventured that his social interactions were much more comfortable once he had gotten to know someone, and that he had on occasion been treated ‘like family’ by Koreans of his acquaintance. On the other hand, many participants, notably Nigel and James, expressed the belief that it was the result of their appearance as foreigners that Korean interlocutors found it hard to believe that they understood Korean, even when the person was known to them: ‘I've had cases where I speak what I would assume was perfect Korean with a third party Korean that knew me... and they've said “I don't speak English”, so they just assume what's coming out of my mouth is English’ (Nigel, interview, 2014.08.09). Similarly, Simon and Jenny described a sense that Korean people with whom they spoke at times focused on

the fact of their using Korean rather than paying attention to what was being said, as it was surprising that they could speak Korean at all.

As with Killick's (1995) experiences, participants found that Koreans they met often had expectations of how ethnically-White foreigners would behave, and resisted efforts participants made to change this through mastery of Korean. For participants, learning Korean was not sufficient to entirely overcome the 'societal forces' (Infinito, 2003) at work in Korean society, which included discourses of Korean ethnic exclusivity (Watson, 2012) and/or the pressure on Koreans to use English given its high social value in Korea (Cho, 2014).

### **Participants' relative privilege**

*'I can pick the things I like about Korean culture, and ignore the things I don't...'*

(Chris, interview, 2014.08.31)

As to whether or not participants culturally self-identified as Korean, or, through learning Korean, were hoping to receive equal treatment to others in Korean society, many described a measure of assimilation and comfort with Korean culture in various ways, but none stated that they wished to become Korean per se. Chris, for example, stated he could 'identify with both cultures,' Korean and American, without 'truly belonging to (either) culture.' His position, as with all participants, was that of a perpetual partial outsider. Nevertheless, none of the teachers interviewed expressed a strong desire to change their position. Many described contentment with the position in which they found themselves so long as they felt accepted and respected.

Some participants believed that they would always be outsiders in Korea to a degree, and that learning Korean would not be enough to completely overcome this fact. However, several of them suggested that the different treatment they experienced as White foreigners was in fact better treatment than they could expect otherwise in Korea as a member of any other group, including ethnic Koreans. In Chris's case, as an unmarried man in his late 20's, he suspects that he would feel a strong pressure to marry, find a secure career and settle down, but that as a foreign teacher he is given more freedom to live his life as he wishes. He laments the position of his students, Korean people also in their twenties, as they seem 'miserable' on account of the pressure to succeed, and that by contrast, he can 'fit in' to Korean society without the same sense of obligation. Likewise, Jenny expressed comfort living in Korea, despite the fact that she is a lesbian and

recognizes that, were she Korean, people ‘wouldn’t accept it.’ However, as a foreigner she feels she has more ‘leeway for mistakes or misunderstandings,’ and as such feels free to appear strange or sound foolish when speaking Korean, because she is ‘always infantilized anyway.’

Related to this was a point made by a number of participants that their position as White foreigners was strong relative to other foreign groups in Korea. Some recounted the experiences of *gyopo* (ethnically-Korean foreigner) friends of theirs who, though also originating from inner-circle English speaking countries, experienced notably greater social pressure from Koreans. Others variously mentioned that friends of theirs of Thai, Chinese, Japanese, and African-American ethnicity suffered worse discrimination in Korea than they had themselves:

- ...my Korean, my friend, the one that actually told me to come here... Korean people held her to a different standard, and judgments, and expected different things from her, whereas with me because I'm White they were like, “wow, your Korean's so good”, whereas with her it was like, “why aren't you better at it?” (Jenny, interview, 2014.08.09)
- I’ve had a really close black African American friend here, and he had a totally different experience than me... he’d get on the subway and sit down, people who were sitting next to him would get up, they wouldn’t even sit next to him... you know I used to hear like, “oh, weygookin-ida” (*It's a foreigner*), but he would hear, on the street, like, “heukin, heukin-ida” (*It's a black person*), like, or like “apeurika-saram” (*It's an African*) or something like that. (Chris, interview, 2014.08.31)

Among some participants, there was an expressed sense that there exists a ranking of ethnicities among foreign groups in Korea, and that because they were White they benefited from being high up in this ranking. Nigel described this while contrasting himself with a Chinese friend of his:

**Nigel:** ...One time I was drinking with her in the park, and we went in to get more alcohol... the store owner said something racist about Chinese... and she started screaming at him... we'll never experience that kind of racism in Korea, but I think that other races do.

**Interviewer:** Why not us?

**Nigel:** We're from richer countries I guess... when you encounter Koreans who are racist towards people of other countries they'll say, English, Canadian, American or Japanese (are) arrogant, you know, don't respect our culture, think they're better than us, but when it's like South Asian or Chinese they'll say ‘dirty, poor, uneducated’,

right?... she told me... “You’ll never understand what it’s like for me to live in Korea because you’re White,” right? She said, “your struggles are very different from mine.” You know, I kind of believe that. I mean, it’s impossible for me to live a day in her shoes.

(Nigel, interview, 2014.08.09)

Many participants demonstrated clear recognition of their relative privilege as White people in Korea, such that, in context, they often found their own challenges as ethnic outsiders to be trivial. Even Simon, who talked of the need to ‘battle (the) stereotypes,’ stated clearly he felt discrimination he had experienced was mild and perhaps unintended.

Perhaps due to this, participants, all of them several years into their residence in Korea, did not demonstrate much desire to further strengthen or change their position in Korean society. The *telii* (Foucault, 1984) of all participants, their internally held visions of their better, future selves, included speaking Korean fluently and being respected, but none of them expressed a desire to entirely shed their identity as White foreigners, with many being able to enumerate ways in which they are better off as they are. Learning Korean gave participants lives a ‘special shape’ (Hennig, 2010), and earned them respect as distinguished from other foreign teachers, but even in as much as they were nevertheless subject to the restrictive ethnic discourses of Korea, they found that they occupied a strong and often agreeable position.

## Discussion

On the question of what benefits a foreign teacher may acquire by learning Korean, participants' stories clearly suggest that learning allowed them to add to themselves the *value* (Foucault, 1985) of cultural open-mindedness and respectability. Many participants felt their Korean skill was valued as a sign of their interest in Korean culture, a fact which stood in opposition to pre-conceptions about the behavior of foreign teachers (Killick, 1995). If one wishes to be respected, including by oneself, it is understandable that one might seek to distance oneself from the negative stereotypes associated with one's group, as Appleby (2013) observed in the behavior of foreign teachers in Japan. Likewise, as foreign teachers in Korea may not be expected to learn Korean, learning was a clear way for participants to distinguish themselves. The benefits of the *value* (Foucault, 1985) participants acquired along with knowledge of Korean took the form of facilitated and diverse social interactions with Korean people and greater access to Korean culture.

As to whether learning Korean might have been an act of resistance against external forces of control, participants' stories again suggest that this was the case to some extent.

Phrases some participants used, such as 'battle the stereotypes,' hint at a resistant and combative underlying mode of thought. The degree to which this was in evidence varied between participants. All were, to some degree, subject to positioning, essentializing, and *Othering* (Said, 1978) by some Koreans, and this evoked pronounced displeasure and frustration in some. This essentializing was tied to a facet of White privilege (McIntosh, 1990; Willinsky, 1998); not to be obligated/expected to explore other languages and cultures (McIntosh, 1990). Thus, participants chose to learn Korean in the absence of obligation, and in spite of arguments declaring learning unnecessary (Gordon, 2012), and in some cases this seems to have been an act of resistance against undesirable facets of their own privilege. In this can be seen an aspect of participants' *self-formation* (Foucault, 1985); through learning Korean, participants sought to create themselves in the Korean context as sincere, open-minded people, and resist the idea held not only by Korean people but also in global discourses of ethnicity that, as White people, they were culturally closed-minded and content in their ignorance.

However, some participants were explicit in stating that they did not totally disapprove of their privilege, because they could identify advantages to their position relative to all others, and the desire to move still closer to the position of 'Korean' and still further away from the position of 'foreign teacher' than had been achieved through learning Korean was not in evidence, as to do so was not apparently profitable. Thus, the position of *Other* was not only imposed from without, but chosen and embraced by participants to an extent. This may be because they believed, as many of them stated, that their positions could not be completely escaped by any means; the title 'foreign teacher' in itself implies a perhaps inescapable *Otherness*. However, it could be argued that the particular *Other* that is the White foreign English teacher occupies a desirable position in the ethnic discourses of Korean society compared to other groups, much as it does in the discourses of other societies in Asia, such as Taiwan (Lan, 2011) and Japan (Appleby, 2013). As participants variously described it, they suffered only trifling discrimination, and/or were stereotyped in more positive, or less destructive ways than members of other minority groups, and enjoyed greater benefit of the doubt for their mistakes and predilections than they might have received had they been ethnically-Korean *gyopos* (Cho, 2012; Redmond, 2014), while possibly also being more free from social obligation than the members of the Korean ethnic majority.

Thus, participants variously fought against and embraced their *Otherness*, because this put them in a position where in their lives possessed a 'special shape' (Hennig, 2010)

in two senses; they were special as foreigners from ‘richer countries’ (Nigel), and again as members of that group who had learned Korean and shown interest in Korean culture, contrary to expectations. Between the benefits of having acquired Korean and the privileges attached to being a White foreigner in Korea, all participants seemed to have found an agreeable space within the ‘pre-given power structure’ (Hennig, 2010) of Korean ethnic discourse.

## **Conclusion**

The results of this research highlight a number of discourses relating to White foreign teachers of English in Korea, as language learners and long-term foreign residents, contributing to the body of research on discourses of ethnicity and immigration in Korea, and complementing existing research on foreign English teachers in Asia and their discursive positioning as language educators (Appleby, 2013; Jeon, 2009). The discourses identified were as follows: foreign teachers generally cannot speak Korean; a foreigner teacher is worthy of respect for knowledge of Korean, because, by learning, they distinguish themselves from the perceived common behaviors of foreign teachers; even though a foreign teacher may learn Korean, an inextirpable (possibly ethnically determined) difference will continue to separate them from the Korean majority community as a whole; to be White is to occupy a position of relative privilege among ethnic groups in Korea.

Further research on foreign teachers as Korean learners might be conducted to elaborate on these discourses. The sample size of this research being six individuals, all White and mostly male, a larger scale study on Korean-speaking foreign English teachers of varying ethnicities and with a greater proportion of women would likely reveal clarifying details about the hierarchy of ethnicities (and perhaps genders) in Korea, the relative privilege of White teachers, the potential social gains that can be made by learning Korean despite disadvantage resulting from ethnic positioning, and what may not be gained even by learning. Also, as many participants suggested that in general younger Koreans were more comfortable interacting with them in Korean despite their ethnicity and older Koreans were more likely to behave in an awkward manner, conducting this study again after some years may yield different results in terms of participants experiences and challenges, and these differences might reflect changing attitudes towards foreigners in Korean society over time.

Knowledge of the foreign teacher-related discourses of Korea may be of use to those bearing responsibility for the training and support of foreign teachers, such as school principals and managers, public school English program coordinators, teacher educators, and recruiters, as this knowledge may serve to inform advice given to foreign teachers about the experiences they have, or are likely to have, living in Korea, and the benefits and implications of learning Korean. The accounts of experiences and perspective contained within this research should also be of interest to foreign teachers themselves, as they may provide clarifying perspective on the reader's own lived experiences, as they did for the author.

Though a case may be made about the lack of benefits to learning foreign languages like Korean for L1 English speakers in some situations (Dustmann, 2000; Gordon, 2012), advantages of learning go beyond the practical and economic upsides of communicative ability and extend to the creation of our *selves* (Foucault, 1985) as culturally open-minded individuals, who may give and receive respect as a result of choosing to show interest, and thereby striving to bridge cultural, ethnic and community divides (Dustmann, 1996; Wenger, 1998). Learning Korean may not presently be sufficient in itself to entirely overcome perceptions of foreign English teachers, but participants in this study believed that it was a worthwhile undertaking for the positive. Some ability in the Korean language may potentially aid in the development of greater mutual understanding between foreign English teachers and Koreans, and contribute towards a modern Korean society 'governed by mutual respect and freedom' (Hennig, 2010, p. 308).

### **Disclosure Statement**

The author declares no financial interest or benefit arising from the direct applications of this research.

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## Teacher-developed materials for CLIL: Frameworks, sources, and activities

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### Abstract

The integration of curricular content and language learning, usually known as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) has brought about new possibilities to the learning of an L2, in this case English, by building bridges with the school curriculum. While the CLIL literature is rich in positive experiences, there are also reports about the lack of context-responsive CLIL materials in the market. The purpose of this viewpoint article is to argue that instead of employing commercially produced coursebooks only, teachers can become material developers for CLIL in secondary education. A review of the literature on CLIL materials development is offered with the aim of providing teachers with frameworks for developing or adapting their own materials to suit the needs of their local contexts. The frameworks, sources of input, and activities described and discussed draw on sociocultural theory and cognitivism. Through CLIL materials development, teachers can revisit and reflect on their own teaching principles and pedagogical approaches which guide learning and teaching. It is hoped that both pre-service and in-service teacher courses allocate more training opportunities for

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developing materials based on a framework which establishes a powerful link between theory and practice in CLIL education.

**Keywords:** CLIL, materials development, teacher-made materials, teacher development, secondary education

## **Introduction**

The integration of curricular content and language learning is usually linked to Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). European in origin (Dalton-Puffer & Nikula, 2014), CLIL is generally defined as a “dual-focused, learning and teaching approach in which a non-language subject is taught through a foreign language, with the dual focus being on acquiring subject knowledge and competences as well as skills and competences in the foreign language” (Ioannou Georgiu, 2012, p. 495).

Underpinned by sociocultural theory, interactionism and cognitivism (Dallinger, Jonkmann, Hollm, & Fiege, 2016), CLIL is spreading at a fast pace and its implementation causes celebration and concerns about its reach and practice (Ball, Kelly, & Clegg, 2015; Morton, 2016). In a critical analysis of CLIL, Cenoz, Genesse and Gorter (2014) highlight the international interest in the integration of curricular content and language. CLIL implementation can be extensively found in Europe (Fortanet-Gomez, 2013; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2013; Ruiz de Zarobe & Cenoz, 2015), and to a lesser extent in Africa (Gustaffson, 2011), Asia (Brown, 2015; Lang, 2012; Lin, 2015; Yang, 2015), Australia (Turner, 2013), Latin America (Banegas, 2013; Mariño, 2014; McDougald, 2015), and North America (Chamot & Genovese, 2009). While the CLIL literature is rich in positive experiences (Doiz, Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2014, Llinares and Pastrana, 2013), there are authors who argue that one drawback is the lack of context-responsive CLIL materials in the market (Maley, 2011; Mehisto, 2008; Meyer, 2010; Moore & Lorenzo, 2015; Morton, 2013). To address this, many teachers develop their own materials. Moore and Lorenzo (2007) believe that teachers may have three possibilities when developing their own CLIL materials: (1) produce their own materials from scratch, (2) employ authentic sources without any modifications, and (3) adapt authentic materials according to their teaching aims.

This article suggests that teacher-developed CLIL materials for secondary education can be excellent resources to meet such a demand for materials because teachers, as Bosompem (2014) concludes, can make them suitable for their learners and needs in context. Materials produced in collaboration between subject and language teachers is a personal and professional investment opportunity to reflect on teaching and

learning processes which integrate learner involvement, motivation, and cognitive development (Ball et al., 2015).

This article reviews the literature on CLIL materials for secondary education with the aim of providing teachers with frameworks of reference and pedagogical tools to adapt and produce CLIL materials. I discuss materials based on the belief that they need to be envisaged as part of a pedagogic approach, in this case, CLIL, which takes materials as tools to scaffold learning (Foley, 1994).

### **CLIL materials in the market**

CLIL teachers may resort to authentic materials or commercially-produced coursebooks. For example, teachers of English may opt for a Science textbook written for English L1 British secondary learners, to teach in Brazil or Singapore. Smit (2007) remarks that the drawback of this type of authentic material is lack of contextualisation as most examples may be American/British-based and, therefore, not connected to the learners' curriculum. In fact, no authentic materials produced elsewhere and with a different target audience will ever bear correspondence with teachers' local school curriculum. Furthermore, Ball et al. (2015, p. 174) indicate that such materials have "no consideration of language support."

Conversely, commercially-produced textbooks for the international market are far from satisfactory. In a study of four series advertised as CLIL-oriented, Banegas (2014a, p. 345) found "(1) little correlation between featured subject specific content and school curricula in L1, (2) oversimplification of contents and (3) dominance of reading skills development and lower-order thinking tasks'. The author adds that CLIL is 'incorporated as a brand name but there seems to be little evidence of genuine innovation or development in CLIL-related coursebooks."

In this landscape, teachers can assume a more active role by developing their own context-responsive materials individually or as a team. In so doing, materials development does not become a burden but another powerful opportunity for collaborative professional development. CLIL, as any approach, needs that teachers engage in training opportunities in order to understand the underlying principles of CLIL. Although this contribution does not deal with the rationale and features behind CLIL, it provides teachers with a guide to explore and develop contextualised CLIL and content-rich materials (see McGrath, 2013).

## Teacher-developed CLIL materials

CLIL materials, defined here as sources of comprehensible input and activities which teachers employ in order to offer meaningful learning opportunities, are mediating tools. Such materials respond to a general theoretical framework which integrates, as mentioned above, sociocultural theory, cognitivism, and interactionism. The sections below discuss frameworks, sources, and activities which scaffold language and content learning.

### *Frameworks*

According to McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara (2013) all teaching and learning materials need to be developed within a framework which considers the context (learners and setting), goals, and the syllabus. Thus, materials, whether they are for CLIL or any other approach, need to be part of a pedagogical approach which is principled and context-responsive (López-Barrios and Villanueva de Debat, 2014; Tomlinson, 2013). Because any language pedagogical approach must respond to context, materials should start by relating their structuring topics to the learners' lives thus encouraging the elicitation of learners' prior knowledge. However, materials per se do not guarantee learning if they are not the synthesis of informed decisions and good teaching practices. To this effect, it is discussed different organising framework and principles which teachers can consider guides for materials as mediating tools.

One framework to scaffold language and content learning is Mohan's (1986) seminal framework (Table 1).

**Table 1: Mohan's (1986) framework for knowledge structures.**

Activity (also applied to a sequence of materials)			
1 Description	Specific practical knowledge	General theoretical knowledge	4 Concepts and classification
2 Sequence			5 Principles
3 Choice			6 Evaluation

According to this framework, a CLIL lesson should start by taking learners from specific practical knowledge in order to activate their prior knowledge and lower-order

thinking skills such as remembering. From that basis, the lesson can move to general theoretical knowledge with the aim of promoting higher-order thinking skills such as evaluating or creating. Linguistic demands will follow the same evolution of cognitive demands, and therefore CLIL materials will mediate and scaffold this sequence not only in terms of language input and output but also in terms of cognitive development. The didactic sequence below explains Table 1.

The following sequence is based on a lesson developed for a group of fifteen-year-old secondary school learners in Argentina. The subject was Social Studies and the lesson learning objectives were to describe types of climate. The aim was to introduce climate differences across the world together with the language needed to describe and compare climate graphs. To this effect, the learners first completed sentences about their town (e.g. “In Esquel, winters are usually cold and dry”). They read aloud their sentences and compared their ideas. To activate subject-specific terminology, they were asked to work in groups and complete Table 2.

**Table 2: Measuring elements of the weather/climate.**

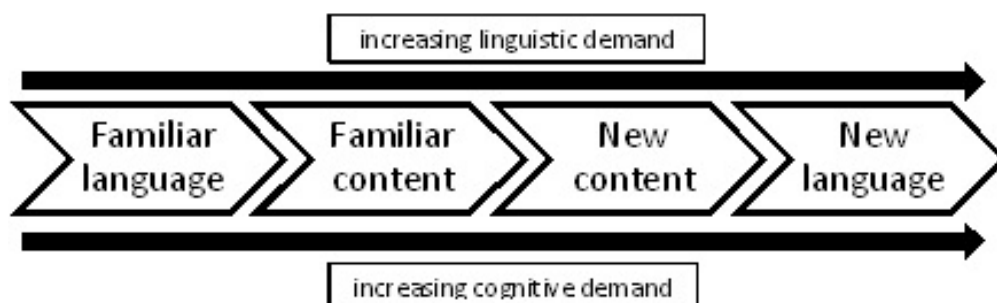
Element of weather/climate	Measure instrument

This graphic organiser was completed with information taken from a coursebook targeted at UK secondary school learners. Next, the learners were asked to think about how the seasons change according to perceived changes in the atmosphere. They were given a list of conditions (e.g., Temperatures may reach 22°C; There are prevailing cold winds from the South) which they sequenced from January to December. After that and following the “choice” stage, they were provided with a climate graph of their town together with a climate graph from another different place (e.g. Buenos Aires and Helsinki) and they had to determine whether statements were true or false (e.g. The average winter minimum temperature in Helsinki is lower than in Buenos Aires).

Depending on their language level, they were asked to correct and/or justify each statement.

Once the learners had become aware of specific practical knowledge, they were provided with a map of world climate zones and a classification of climates briefly described. The descriptions had been modified by reducing the length of the sentences or breaking down complex sentences into simple sentences. Their task was to match climate graphs to each climate type. They were encouraged to find similarities and differences between places with a similar climate type but located in different hemispheres. Once they looked at the different climate types and sample climate graphs, they were asked to identify what principles and reasons gave rise to the different climate types. To scaffold this activity, they were provided with a list of reasons and principles which they had to rank. Then, they had to complete the following sentence: “We understand that the main reason/principle for climate differences is ... because...” Last, they collaboratively wrote a text which described the climate in a region of their country and inserted an updated climate graph taken online.

Following a cognitivist paradigm, McDonough, Shaw, and Masuhara (2013) suggest that materials should be developed in such a way that learners are presented with a sequence that evolves in complexity and scope to promote language and, above all, cognitive development. Similarly, several authors (Banegas, 2014b; Coyle, 2007; Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; Evans, Hartshorn, & Anderson, 2010; Llinares, Morton, & Whittaker, 2012; Marsh, 2008; Mehisto, 2012; Meyer, 2010) agree that activities should move from lower-order to higher-order thinking skills and that materials should also scaffold new language and content based on familiar language and content. The following framework is based on this view.



*Figure 1: CLIL lesson framework*

Similarly to Mohan's framework, the CLIL lesson framework responds to concerns around cognitive development together with the desired balance between the content and language components of the CLIL classroom. In relation to teacher-developed materials, it organizes sources and activities so that lessons become an engaging and coherent proposal for learning.

The following example of the CLIL lesson framework is based on a lesson for a group of Argentinian secondary school learners whose level of English was, according to CEFR standards, A2/B1. The aim of the lesson was to introduce the Battle of the River Plate during WWII together with complex passive voice structures. For this group of learners the familiar language was simple past, narrative time markers, and subject-specific vocabulary, and the familiar content was WWII from a European perspective. They had covered these latter contents in the History class delivered in their L1 (Spanish).

The learners were first asked to work in groups and summarize one important event during WWII in one sentence beginning "During WWII, ...". Second, they were given a series of statements to be sequenced chronologically. Learners watched a section of a documentary (in English, with English subtitles) to check the sequence of events. For each statement, the teacher asked them questions for elaboration. So far the lesson was focused on familiar language and content together with lower-thinking skills such as remembering, identifying, and understanding.

Third, the teacher showed them a map of the route of Admiral Graf Spee's cruise and the learners had to guess the lesson topic. At this stage, they were asked to listen to an audio about the Battle of the River Plate. Previously, the teacher had summarized the contents of a Wikipedia entry on this topic and asked a colleague to read the summary aloud. The text contained instances of passive voice. The learners had to listen to the recording and answer content-related comprehension questions (e.g. What made the Graf Spee enter the River Plate estuary?). After checking the questions orally, they were provided with the script, which contained highlighted instances of passive voice. They were asked to identify other instances. Based on these examples, they were asked language-noticing questions such as "How are these structures formed?" or "When do we use them"? Through such questions the teacher aided the learners with moving from new content to new language. These questions promoted language awareness and learners' ability to produce rules by themselves. Finally, the learners had to read a gapped text where they had to insert passive voice phrases. The text, longer and with

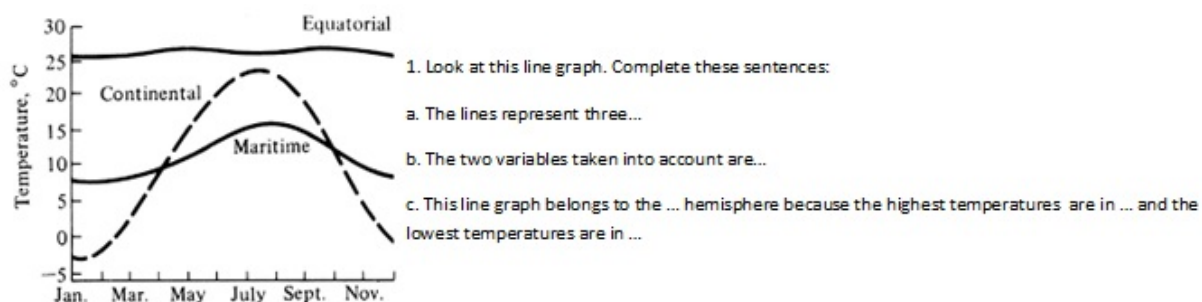
more complex sentences inserted by the teacher for clarification purposes, provided them with more information and opinions on the battle. In groups, they had to assess the political impact of the battle between Argentina and Uruguay and their relationship with the Allies, particularly Britain. This last activity promoted higher-order thinking skills by asking learners to evaluate the political landscape in South America during WWII.

In this sequence, the materials employed by the teacher were authentic texts, maps, and videos, and the activities were based on questions which moved from remembering to understanding to evaluating. Following Ball et al. (2015), the lesson showed cohesion between the text and the task for it provided them with content and language to produce an evaluative response. In addition, the learners were actively involved as it was them who had to assess the political angle of the Battle of the River Plate in the international scene. Third, the materials had been adjusted so that concepts, procedures and language were combined in such a way that the lesson featured an organic sequence. Last, both input and output were scaffolded by guiding learners with useful phrases and key facts. The lesson, in turn, promoted interaction through group discussion.

The following sections focus on the sources and activities teachers can resort to and develop to enact the frameworks outlined in this section.

### *Sources*

One of the features usually found in CLIL materials development is authenticity as discussed in Gilmore (2007). Authentic materials are those which have not been produced to teach modern foreign languages. In the frameworks above, the teachers used authentic materials such as climate graphs, maps, documentary extracts, UK secondary education coursebooks, and Wikipedia entries. For example, the following activity is based on an authentic line graph:



*Figure 2: Line-graph based activity.*

McGrath (2002) offers criteria for the selection of authentic texts since the use of them is not unproblematic. He suggests: relevance, intrinsic interest of topic, cultural appropriateness, linguistic and cognitive demands, logistical considerations (length, legibility, and audibility), quality, and exploitability. In a similar vein, Coyle et al. (2010, p. 93; also Gottheim, 2010) mention that texts need to be considered on the basis of focus and clarity of the message, mix of textual styles, level of subject-specific and general vocabulary, level of grammatical complexity, and clarity of the thread of thinking.

Conversely, authentic texts, according to Moore and Lorenzo (2007) may be adapted through simplification, elaboration, and discursification. The authors explain that those teachers who resort to simplification produce a shorter text composed of fewer and shorter sentences than the original. For instance, in the sequence on climate types, the teacher simplified a text by shortening the sentences without shortening the text (Crossley, Allen & McNamara, 2012). As for elaboration, this process includes the lengthening of texts by inserting examples, paraphrases, the use of the pronoun 'we', noun repetition, and lack of ellipsis. For example, for the Battle of the River Plate text, the teacher inserted sentences which clarified or illustrated the input and showed instances of passive voice structures. Last, discursification involves transforming the nature of a text, for example, producing a bullet-point list from a narrative text. Teacher may include visuals, rhetorical questions, parenthetical information, and focus on attitudes and evaluation.

Aural texts can also be modified through teacher intervention. For example, it has been observed that teacher talk can include summarizing, paraphrasing, translating, synonyms, gestures and body language, and board drawings among others (de Graaff, Koopman, Anikina, & Westhoff, 2007; Dafouz Milne & Llinares García, 2008). De Graaff et al. (2007) observe that teachers tend to select attractive authentic materials which are then scaffolded by active use of body language and visual aids.

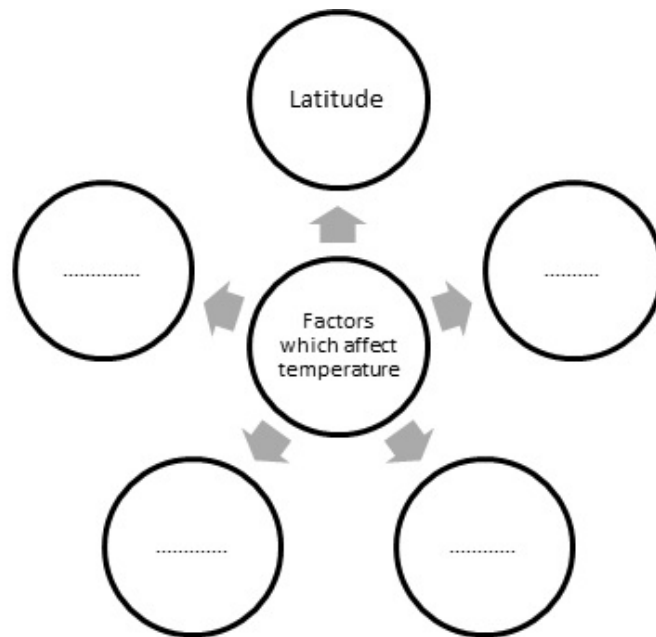
In conclusion, strategies to modify written and oral input are similar. This similarity shows that materials are scaffolding tools which can be further scaffolded by teachers as they interactively employ them in the classroom with their learners. What is important to maintain is that whatever the strategy, teachers should strive for ensuring that content and language authenticity are preserved as it may be one of the driving forces in learner motivation in CLIL classrooms. They can achieve this by selecting texts which require little modification in terms of coherence and cohesion.

### *Activities*

While the studies above suggest strategies, overarching practical frameworks should provide teachers with ways of adapting authentic sources and developing activities based on those sources of input. Following CLIL, such activities need to ensure that learners engage with knowledge construction and meaning making. In addition, the language and cognitive skills involved in those sources and activities should help them share the meanings and ideas they wish to convey. Thus, it may be agreed that the theoretical basis for activity development is a combination of socioconstructivism, cognitivism, and interactionism.

Casal Madinabeitia (2007) recommends that, as shown in the didactic sequences above, initial activities may ask learners to remember and understand information before the inclusion of higher cognitive skills. In this regard, while Casal Madinabeitia is concerned with the learning of content, Vázquez (2007) suggests the use of worksheets to support language. These may include L1-L2 vocabulary lists, figures for labelling, boxes with useful expressions and grammatical structures to reactivate and resituate language contextually speaking, or specific tips about how to study content while paying attention to language, i.e., a balance between meaning and form. It is hoped that through such support meaning making and learning is strengthened since the motivation of CLIL lies in the opportunity that learners have to talk about contents which promote higher-order thinking skills (Banegas, 2013).

Furthermore, activities can be scaffolded through illustrations, graphic organisers (Bentley, 2010), awareness of text features (Reiss, 2005) and ICT/online resources. For example, in a lesson about temperature and climates, secondary school learners from Argentina were asked to read a short text extracted from a Geography coursebook and complete this graphic organizer (Figure 3):



*Figure 3. Graphic organiser*

Then they were provided with another modified text taken from a website. One sentence had been deleted from the first paragraph and key words had been highlighted. The text was followed by language-awareness questions (Figure 4).

The presence of **cloud cover** has a definite effect on air temperature. During the daytime, cloud cover tends to block the transmission of sunlight to the Earth's surface. Less **solar radiation** leads to reduced **heat** generation and lower surface air temperatures. This process explains why daytime temperatures are cooler along the equator and hotter at the subtropical deserts. At the equator, cumulus and cumulonimbus (thunderstorm) clouds develop almost daily reducing the amount of incoming solar radiation absorbed at the Earth's surface. In the subtropical deserts, skies are usually clear, maximizing the flow of solar radiation through the **atmosphere** to the **surface**.

At night, the presence of clouds is associated with less dramatic **nighttime cooling**. Nighttime cooling is the result of heat energy in the lower atmosphere being converted into outgoing **longwave radiation**. In a clear atmosphere, most of this emission leaves the Earth and only a small amount of this outgoing energy is reemitted as counter-radiation to partially offset radiative cooling at the Earth's surface and lower atmosphere. The presence of clouds greatly enhances the greenhouse process. When cloud cover is extensive and thick, most of the outgoing longwave is redirected back to the surface where it again creates heat energy. Therefore, cloudy nights tend to be warmer than cloudless nights.

- a. Look at the words in bold, what do we say in Spanish?
- b. What words/phrases does the author use to talk about (a) cloud cover (b) absence of clouds?
- c. Re-read the first paragraph, what does "this process" refer to?
- d. What do these words describe? "incoming, outgoing, flow"
- e. What do these comparatives describe? "cooler, hotter, warmer"

*Figure 4: Text-based activity*

As regards ICT, Fernández Rivero, García de la Morena and del Pozo (2009) illustrate the use of PowerPoint presentations and interactive material found in institutional websites which sometimes provide educational activities (for examples see Notes). In addition, Maggi, Cherubin, and García Pascual (2014) shows how Web 2.0 tools such as videoconferencing applications and an interactive whiteboard can enhance collaborative learning through a democratic and digital environment. The authors highlight that learners' attention to form and content are motivated by their efforts to express meaning clearly in an engaging and collaborative manner.

With reference to sources of input and follow-up activities in teachers' worksheets, Coyle et al. (2010) suggest that lessons should start by using visuals, real objects, brainstorming prior knowledge. The authors remind teachers that CLIL materials move from familiar language and content to new content and language, in that

order. What they suggest is that, in the case of texts, teachers can explore bullet-point texts, tables and diagrams and more visuals within the texts they select. As for a progression in terms of text-related activities, teachers need to create activities which go from recognizing words to sentences to texts. Finally, Coyle et al. (2010) recommend learning scaffolding through activities which include vocabulary headers to add examples to, sentence starters, spidergrams, and substitution tables among other possibilities. Teachers are also encouraged to adapt texts by using synonyms, cognates, reducing complex and long sentences, and keeping the core aspects of the language of and for learning.

As regards activities and thinking skills, text completion, sequencing, diagram completion, text marking, labelling, segmenting, table construction, student-generated questions, and writing summaries are all activities which cut across Bloom's taxonomy. Teachers can exploit them if arranged from lower-order to higher-order demands so as to increase the depth of interaction between students and subject matter in their attempts to strengthen meaning making through such interaction. More recently, Dale and Tanner (2012) offer a compilation of almost 100 activities to cover level proficiency, thinking skills, and are organized around prior knowledge activation, language skills, and assessment.

## **Conclusion**

Teachers who wish to explore CLIL with their learners may realise that using commercially-produced coursebooks may pose a challenge because the content side of CLIL should respond to the learners' school curriculum and the global market cannot cater for specific requirements. It follows that teachers can see this shortcoming as a possibility to engage in developing their own materials to meet the needs and demands of all the actors involved in the teaching and learning processes. By assuming greater responsibility in such processes, teachers become agents of change and empowerment (Kaufman & McDonald, 1995).

To this effect, teachers may opt for a set of principles which they can modify according to their own experience and background. Once teachers have agreed on a set of principles and features, they can first collect and select sources of input which match their learners' cognitive and language level but maintaining a level of challenge. These sources will respond, above all, to the curricular content selected and what language can

be taught through that content and sources. Teachers can then develop a sequence of activities which offer variety, relevance, and cognitive engagement.

The studies and experiences included in this contribution suggest that there exist several roads to discover and that teachers' explorations need to be guided by an awareness of the context around them. Drawing on and integrative framework guided by sociocultural theory, interactionism and cognitivism, teachers can reach informed decisions discussed not only with colleagues but also learners. Although it may be a demanding task, developing materials may be seen as another opportunity for in-service teacher development which has direct impact on teachers' practices. It is hoped that both pre-service and in-service teacher courses allocate more learning opportunities for materials development following a framework which establishes a powerful link between theory and practice in CLIL.

### Notes

1. CLIL didactic sequences and materials:  
<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/educacion/webportal/web/aicle/secuencias-aicle>
2. CLIL activities, blogs, and wikis: [http://www.isabelperez.com/clil/clicl\\_m\\_6.htm](http://www.isabelperez.com/clil/clicl_m_6.htm)

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## **A Study of Actual Behaviours of EFL Non-English Majors' Lexical Inferencing**

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### **Abstract**

The previous research has a general consensus that lexical inferencing is among the most common strategies that L2 learners (English as a Second Language) use to deal with unknown words. Instead of quantity analysis of its efficiency on L2 learners, this study aimed to examine how efficient and inefficient learners actually process the unknown words when solving word problems. Six EFL (English as Foreign Language) non-English-majors were involved in the think-aloud process to reveal their word inferring process when they read a short reading text. The data were analyzed focusing on the strategies used by the EFL learners at different English proficiency levels, the errors they made, and to what extent they used context for inferring word meanings. Results indicated that differences existed in terms of the use of strategies for the unknown words between successful and less successful learners. The more successful learners tended to interactively use various strategies in processing unknown words which might contribute to more successful lexical inferencing. Regardless of the proficiency level, the most serious problems when inferring word meanings were misconception of deceptive transparency (DT) words and unawareness of polysemy (i.e. words with multiple meanings). The less successful learners relied more on contextual

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strategies; however, this use of context for lexical inferencing did not help them successfully comprehend a

text. The suggestions for future study and ideas for pedagogical implications were also discussed in relation to understanding and promoting explicitly teaching vocabulary knowledge as well as skillful use of lexical inferencing strategies..

**Keywords:** Lexical inferencing process, actual behaviors, EFL non-English majors

## **Introduction**

Second language vocabulary acquisition and learning strategies have received much attention in L2 acquisition since the 1990s (Lawson & Hogben, 1996). Research findings have indicated that efficient and automatic word recognition is essential to reading comprehension (Chard & Osborn, 1999; Koda, 1996). Because reading critically depends on the facility of word recognition, applying learning strategies to process new words should be as important as developing the meaning of reading.

In EFL learning context, students always meet unknown words whenever they read a text. Lexical inferencing from information available in the text has been recognized in recent years as an important reading strategy for dealing with unknown words (Nazmia, 2004; Parel, 2004; Read, 2000). It involves using a variety of linguistic and nonlinguistic clues or context to guess the meanings when the learner does not know all the words (Oxford, 1990). Contextual inferencing is thus considered to serve as a compensation strategy for low receptive vocabulary in relation to the demands of the text (Parel, 2004). In this way, lexical inferencing from contextual clues encourages learners to become independent and effective learners.

Much attention has also been paid to teaching the contextual inferencing strategy as a sub-skill among reading strategies (Baumann, Edwards, Tereshinski, Kame'enui & Olejnik, 2002; Pulido, 2007; Riazi & Babaei, 2008; Robb, 2000; Walters, 2006). However, instruction of contextual inferencing strategies has been shown to have varied success. A great deal of research suggested that cautions should be taken when teaching students inferencing strategies for unknown words. Several constraints on the use of context clues were indicated: e.g. the text factors (i.e., high and low density text) (Chegeni & Tabatabaei, 2014; Hu & Nation, 2000; Laufer, 1997), and the context factors (i.e., rich context, local/global clues) (Frantzen, 2003). Hu and Nassaji (2012) further argued that ease of inferencing had a negative effect on word retention. Abbasian and Arianezhad (2013) verified the feasibility of a hybrid model (i.e. vocabulary instruction in a form of multiple visualizations) and indicated that the

Hybrid group outperformed the lexical inferencing group not only in an achievement but in retention power of the vocabulary items. While many studies have been done on the constraints of lexical inferencing, little information is available on how the learners actually did in processing the unknown words.

To provide researchers and educators better understanding of EFL learners' lexical inferencing process for more effective use of these strategies in classroom instruction, this present study examined the EFL learners' actual behaviours during their lexical comprehension process in terms of the errors they made as well as to what extent they used context for inferring word meanings. It also identified how the EFL learners with different English proficiency used strategies to support vocabulary acquisition. Results of this study might be of importance in explaining the varied success of contextual inferencing strategies in the EFL learning context. The research questions were addressed as the followings: How do the successful and less successful EFL learners use the lexical inferencing strategies? What were their difficulties revealed in the comprehension process? To what extent do contextual clues aid their lexical inferencing and reading comprehension?

## **Literature Review**

### *Context Clues and Variables Involved in Using Lexical Inferencing*

Contextual guessing involves making use of the context in which the word appears to derive its meaning. According to Oxford (1990), guessing intelligently in reading, sometimes called "inferencing," involves using a variety of linguistic and nonlinguistic clues to guess the meanings when a learner does not know all the words. Nation and Coady (1991) defined context as "morphological, syntactic, and discourse information in a given text which can be classified and described in terms of general features" (p. 102). Context clue is word surrounding the unknown word that can explain the word meanings. The surrounding words may also provide clues to the learners (i.e. semantic clues). According to Gairns and Redman (1992), the meaning of a word can only be understood in terms of the interaction between semantic and syntactic clues called context clues; that is, the meaning of a word results from its relationships with other words in the language. The ways to identify this relationship, can be categorized such items as synonym, hyponym, antonym, cause and effect, and translation equivalence.

Several researchers have emphasized the role of context clues in learning words. Contextually inferring meaning for unknown words has been served as a compensation

strategy for EFL reading. "Guessing intelligently" (Oxford, 1990, p. 91) helps learners to overcome knowledge limitations in other skills. The ability to infer the meaning from the context is clearly a valuable skill in reading. Since there are many words in English language with more than one meaning, its position in a sentence aids students in determining the meaning of an unknown word (i.e. syntactic clues). Nagy (1997) thus stressed that the more contexts one takes into account, the greater are the chances of guessing an unknown word. emphasized in recent years as the most important strategy for dealing with unknown words. In recent years, Read (2000) also suggested, "inferencing is a desirable strategy because it involves deeper processing that is likely to contribute to better comprehension of the text as a whole and may result in some learning of the lexical item that would not otherwise occur" (p. 53). Therefore, when dealing with a new text, students should be encouraged to make a guess at the meaning of the words they do not know rather than look them up immediately in a dictionary.

While lexical inferencing is recognized as a useful compensation strategy for learning vocabulary (Oxford, 1990), some other researchers placed doubts on the value of context (Lawson & Hogben, 1996; Laufer, 1997; Nation & Coady, 1991). Nation and Coady (1991) concluded that their subjects showed no great amount of vocabulary after learning from context. Lawson and Hogben (1996), examining 15 advanced students in Italian course, found that the students did use the available context cues for generation of word meanings. With respect to the long-term effect, however, the richness of the context did not contribute to high levels of recall of word meaning. Instead, recall of word meanings requires more deliberate procedure (Lawson & Hogben, 1996). Nation (2001) has further reminded that "guessing from context is a complex activity drawing on a range of skills and types of knowledge" (p. 261). They, thus, suggested a need to make a distinction between comprehension of word meaning in context and the acquisition of word meaning from context.

The complex nature of word-meaning inference has led further research to investigate the factors that influence learners' lexical inferencing. Several constraints on the use of context clues were indicated, including the text factors (i.e., high and low density text) (Hu & Nation, 2000; Laufer, 1997), and the context factors (i.e., rich context, local/global clues) (Frantzen, 2003). According to the research on parts of speech and density of unknown words, Hu and Nation (2000) concluded that when using high and low density text, words in low-density text are easier to guess. Verbs are easier to guess than nouns and adverbs and adjectives are ranked as the most difficult.

As for text factor was concerned, Hu and Nation (2000) and Schmitt (2000) also claimed that the percentage of known and unknown vocabulary is one of the factors that determine the difficulty of a text, following others such as rich context, and local/global clues. Moreover, Alderson (2000) indicated that lexical inference becomes easier when the contextual information is closer to the unknown word.

Other studies draw our attention to learner factors, such as learners' vocabulary capacity (Hunt, 1996; Laufer, 1997) and vocabulary knowledge (Frantzen, 2003; Nassaji, 2006), learners' memory capacity (Cain, Lemmon, & Oakhill, 2004), and syntactic complexity of texts (linguistic knowledge) (Kaivanpanah & Alavi, 2008) that serve an indicator of how learners infer word meanings. Hunt (1996) implied that inferring meaning from context works best when learners have the ability to recognize several thousands of high-frequency words in context. Guessing word meaning from contextual clues, according to Laufer (1997), is far more difficult than is generally expected and insufficient vocabulary size in the learners' lexicon is by far the greatest obstacle to efficient reader, which might seriously cause inability to infer unknown words successfully and subsequently impede reading comprehension. With regard to lexical threshold, Laufer claimed 3000 word families or 5000 lexical items to be the lexical threshold for general reading comprehension (Laufer, 1997). Furthermore, a recent research by Nassaji (2006) indicated a significant link between learners' depth of vocabulary knowledge and the use of lexical inference strategy. This finding supports the hypothesis that lexical inference depends heavily on the richness of the learners' semantic and conceptual system (Fukkink & Block, 2001).

Guessing meaning by misinterpreting words from context may lead to larger distortions. According to Gleason and Ratson (1996), this serious problem occurs because multiple meanings of a word may be activated in parallel, with the dominant meaning appearing first. Laufer (1997) argued that misinterpretation of deceptive transparency (DT) words is one of the most serious problems among second language learners. Deceptive transparency (DT) words are words that look familiar to the learner even though they are unfamiliar, such as 'synforms', pair/groups of words that are similar in form, similar in sound (available/ valuable, price/ prize), and morphologically similar, i.e., economic /"economical" (Laufer, 1997, p.26). The reader might have studied both 'synforms' but since the knowledge of both in the memory is insecure, the result is to misinterpret one synform as its counterpart. Laufer (1997) repetitively reminded us that one cannot completely rely on contextual redundancy since there is no

guarantee that a given context is enough to provide clues to the unknown words to the reader.

Unlike the previous researchers, Levine and Reves (1998) further pointed out that the “reader profile” (i.e. educational background, reading strategies and preferences) affected the derivation of unknown words. Alderson (2000) further suggested that the learners' age, background knowledge about the topic, and inference skills should be the variables to be considered. A more complete framework was provided by Frantzen (2003), investigating how Spanish students derived word meaning from context. The findings revealed that some of the reasons for an incorrect guess may lie on the context itself, the student's behavior, and the story's glossing. The context itself would not be beneficial because it is sometimes vague, ambiguous, or misleading. Moreover, the students' inattentiveness to details in context for, both difficult and easier passages, and their ‘oblivious certainty’ about words they think they know might also result in an incorrect guess. Furthermore, Shen's investigation (2009) on such factor as reading proficiency indicated a significant correlation between learners' reading proficiency and their lexical inferencing performance and their strategies use. A further study on individual differences revealed that learners with different perceptual learning style preferences demonstrated different lexical inferencing ability and learners with certain perceptual learning style preference benefited more from the explicit instruction (Shen, 2010).

Research findings also suggest that what matters most in terms of lexical inferencing strategy use seems to be the way these strategies and knowledge sources are employed rather than the types and frequency of use. That is, good language learners are able to make a greater use of both cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies actively and constructively (Oxford, 2010). Using both quantitative and qualitative analyses, Hu and Nassaji (2014) investigated the differences between successful and less successful inferencers in terms of the quantity and quality of strategy use. The findings confirmed that not only the degree to which they used certain strategies but also when and how to use them successfully that distinguishes successful from unsuccessful lexical inferencers. Additionally, successful inferences showed several important characteristics including frequent use of evaluation and monitoring strategies, a combination of both textual and background knowledge, self-awareness, and repeated efforts to infer the target word meanings.

In summary, the role of context clues has been a controversial issue in the field of L1 and L2 vocabulary acquisition (Hu, 2013). The previous researchers have indicated that more successful L1 learners use a wider range of strategies more frequently than do less successful learners in order to solve problems while acquiring or producing the language (Oxford, 1990a). How the successful and less successful learners solve their word problems has not been fully investigated in L2 reading. Moreover, while the previous studies have provided with a number of factors elaborating the complex nature of lexical inferencing, however, few of them investigate the the learners' actual behaviours during processing the word meaning. Thus, the study aimed to go further into the learners' behaviours, as provided by Frantzen (2003), investigating how the non-English EFL learners infer meanings of unknown words and examining their errors as well as the extent to which they use context clues to comprehend word meaning.

## **Method**

### *Participants*

This study, descriptive in nature, focused on six university-level non-English majors from the EFL learning background. All six were never taught contextual inferencing strategies before being investigated. They were selected according to their English proficiency levels determined by a) the scores in English subject of Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), and b) the results on GEPT (General English Proficiency Test, a nationally standardized English test). Three of them were then designated as successful learners and the other three were less successful ones.

### *Materials*

In order to provide more cues for comprehension, a cohesive reading text, instead of separated sentences, were chosen from *Weaving It Together* Book one as material (Appendix I). The criteria for choosing the texts were based on the length and the level of difficulty for the participants. The time-consuming nature of think-aloud procedure and the participants' proficiency level were also taken into consideration.

### *Data Collection*

The data were obtained via concurrent think-aloud (TA) research method, which is considered to produce a concurrent report cognitive action and not to change the sequence of thoughts (Deschambault, 2012; Ericsson & Simon, 1993), when compared

with self-reported procedure and questionnaire. L1 and L2 reading researchers agree that the use of think-aloud technique allows researchers and practitioners to form a good understanding of the reader's mental processes (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). It helps uncover the reading procedures in depth.

Each participant participated in the reading task individually. First, the teacher explained the nature of the think-aloud task and demonstrated the task with a sample passage. All the think-aloud procedures were recorded and there was no teacher intervention except the moment when participant was silent for more than three minutes. The teacher reminded the participants by asking "What are you doing?" or "Say anything that you are thinking?" The learners reported their thinking and the content of their immediate awareness while they were performing the reading task. This included reading aloud, silent reading and verbal response. All the participants processed the think-aloud task in their mother-tongue, Chinese.

In order to reduce the participant effects, the participants were not told that they were being studied, but helping the teacher to understand how they processed the reading and identified difficulty words when they were reading.

### *Data Analysis*

The data analysis focused on the strategies used to infer meaning of unknown word as well as the comprehension of sentence involving the underlined word. There were eighteen sentences in the text and each sentence was defined as a unit. Twenty words, including one phrase and one noun phrase, were underlined for processing while reading. The two criteria for successful comprehension were "logical" and "illogical" in meaning. The "logical" part could be from either self-comprehending or their teacher's involvement, such as teacher's giving a hint (e.g. marked as "T"). Two raters judged the data and discussed the discrepancy until the agreement was reached.

All the data from the think-aloud were transcribed. The coding scheme for word inferring (Appendix II) was developed from the following sources: 1) Lawson and Hogben's (1996) vocabulary learning strategy categories, 2) Schmitt's taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997), and 3) Yang's (1997) list of findings. For the purpose of analysis, the coding scheme was further classified into three categories as shown in Table 1. The data was arranged and presented in terms of frequency, percentage and ranks.

**Table 1: Coding scheme for data analysis of EFL learners' lexical inferencing**

Categories	Definition	Strategies
linguistic knowledge (or bottom-up strategies)	- requires word / phrase decoding, and knowledge of sentence structures.	key words, word repetition, feature analysis / polysmy—a word with several meanings; word-by-word guessing, translation, etc.
metacognitive strategies (or top-down strategies)	-involve a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best ways to solve the problems.	background knowledge, suspending problems, monitoring comprehension, complex use context, commending on own behavior, using a mnemonic
social strategies	- use interaction with other people to improve language learning.	asking meaning from the teacher

## Results and Discussion

### *EFL Learners' Strategy Use for Lexical Inferencing*

Table 2 presents the results regarding the successful learners' and less successful learners' lexical inferencing strategies based on the coding scheme (Table 1). The results indicated that the frequencies of strategy use were in favor of the successful learners. The successful learners used strategies more frequently (130) than the less successful ones (91). Successful learners used “monitoring comprehension” most (14.6%). In addition, they also frequently used “translation” strategy (13.8%) and “commenting on own behavior or process” (10.8%). Like successful learners, less successful learners also used the “monitoring comprehension” strategy (20.9%) most. Next to the monitoring strategy were the “complex use of context” (12.1%) and “using simple word or phrase repetition” (12.1%). “Using background knowledge” (8.8%) and “commenting on own behavior” (8.8%) were ranked as the third. Thus, the results suggest that both the successful and less successful learners used the monitoring comprehension strategy more often than the others. This supports the point of view of Wenden (1998) that learners of different ages and proficiency levels will have acquired some knowledge about learning, which influences their approach to learning.

Table 2 also revealed that less successful learners used more context and background knowledge as the strategies than the others for lexical inferencing. For these learners who were insufficient in linguistic knowledge, the use of context and background knowledge became a significant compensatory strategy for word processing. This finding lends support to Stanovich's Interactive-compensatory model (1980) suggesting that under certain conditions poor learners may exhibit greater sensitivity to contextual constraints than do good learners.

Moreover, Table 2 presents how individual learner used the strategies on each category of the coding scheme. While the less successful learners' top five strategies fell in the same category, i.e. metacognitive category only, the successful learners' strategies involved more on the other categories, i.e. linguistic knowledge.

**Table 2: Successful (S) and Less Successful (LS) learners' strategies for lexical inferencing**

Strategies	S1	S2	S3	Frequency	%	Rank	LS1	LS2	LS3	Frequency	%	Rank
1. asking T for meaning	1	5	3	9	6.9 %	7	0	0	0	0	0 %	9
2 using simple word/ phrase repetition	6	1	2	9	6.9%	7	8	2	1	11	12.1%	2
3. using cumulative repetition	0	1	4	5	3.8%	9	2	1	2	5	5.5%	5
4.using word-by-word guessing	1	4	6	11	8.5%	5	1	3	1	5	5.5%	5
5.Using feature analysis	1	2	3	6	4.6%	8	0	2	3	5	5.5%	5
6. Reading of related keywords	4	1	0	5	3.8%	9	1	1	1	3	3.2%	7
7.Translating logically	5	8	5	18	13.8%	2	2	1	1	4	4.4%	6
8. Re-translation	0	0	1	1	0.8 %	10	0	2	1	3	3.2%	7
9.Using background knowledge	5	6	2	13	9.9%	4	3	4	1	8	8.8%	3
10.Monitoring comprehension	6	5	8	19	14.6%	1	5	7	7	19	20.9%	1
11.Complex use of context	5	3	2	10	7.6 %	6	2	5	4	11	12.1%	2
12. Commenting on own behavior or process	1	5	8	14	10.8%	3	3	4	1	8	8.8%	3
13.Suspending problems	3	0	2	5	3.8%	9	2	1	4	7	7.7%	4
14.Using mnemonic	1	2	2	5	3.8%	9	1	1	0	2	2.2%	8
Total	39	43	48	130			30	34	27	91		

*Note.* 1=social strategy; 2~8 = linguistic strategy; 9~14= metacognitive strategy

Table 3 further showed a symmetrical distribution between the linguistic and metacognitive categories among the whole range of strategies for successful learners (i.e.42.3%-linguistic strategy; 50.7%-metacognitive strategy), while the percentage revealed 39.5%-linguistic strategy, and 60.4%-metacognitive strategy for the less successful learners. In other words, the successful learners' use of strategies fell into different categories, while less successful learners tended to use metacognitive strategies more often than others and none of them used the social strategy.

**Table 3: Percentage on each category of lexical inferencing strategies for Successful Learners (s) & Less Successful Learners (LS)**

Category	S1	S2	S3	Total	LS1	LS2	LS3	Total
Social strategy	2.5%	1.2%	6%	6.9%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Linguistic Strategy	43.5%	39.5%	43.7%	42.3%	46.6%	35.2%	37%	39.5%
Metacognitive strategy	54%	48.8%	50 %	50.7%	53.3%	64.7%	62.9%	60.4%

The findings, in line with Lawson and Hugben's (1996) findings, suggest that successful learners were able to interactively apply several resources / strategies to processing unknown words in the text. In other words, learners who comprehend a text with a wider range of strategies tend to be more effective than those who did not. This suggests that effective comprehension can only result from a constant and skilled interaction between those several resources / strategies.

#### *EFL Learners' Error Patterns in Lexical Inferencing*

Analysis of the think-aloud data revealed that regardless of the proficiency level, misconception of deceptive transparency (DT) words and unawareness of words with multiple meanings were the most serious problems among the learners when inferring the word meanings. For instance, the less successful reader (LS3) in the present study incorrectly perceived the word 'feet' as 'movable parts of the body at the end of the leg' instead of the correct meaning 'a measure of length.' The successful learners (S3), who seems to have a better vocabulary ability, also misinterpreted the word 'plate' (a flat round 'dish') as another word 'paste' (a thick liquid), 'fetch' ("to go and get") as "catch" ('to get hold of'). In a different case, the successful reader (S2) activated the meaning for 'servant' from another word 'service' and interpreted 'servant' as 'people who offer service.' The unusable and misleading contextual clues do not aid the word comprehension and might consequently hinder reading comprehension.

This finding supported what Laufer (1997) argued that misinterpretation of DT words is one of the most serious problems among second language learners. Since the learners were unaware of or did not know those "deceptively transparency words (DT)" (Laufer, 1997, p. 26), they would stick to the false meanings and may use them as clues to guess other unknown words. The Interactive-Activation and Connectionist Models (Gleason & Ratson, 1996) could also be in line with Laufer's findings (1997), indicating that the presence of misleading clues or linguistic context may also influence activation

level. The greater the overlap in the spelling, the greater the activation is stimulated by given neighbors. This error was apparent in this present study, such as ‘fetch / catch’, and ‘plate /paste.’, and ‘feet/feel.’

The Interactive-Activation and Connectionist Models can also be used to explain the learners’ unawareness of words with multiple meanings. “It appears that multiple meanings of a word may be activated in parallel, with the dominant meaning “popping up” first (Gleason & Ratson, 1996, p.207). Additionally, “the most frequent interpretations of a word are the first to be activated unless the context strongly steers subjects to the subordinate-biased contexts” (Gleason & Ratson, 1996, p. 206). For instance, all the less successful learners in the present study activated the meaning for the word ‘bill’ as “a piece of paper that show how much money you owe for service” instead of “paper money” inferred from the neighboring word ‘paper’ and ‘money.’ (e.g. *When we think of money, we think of coins and paper bills.* See Appendix 1.) Either the successful or less successful learners interpreted (e.g. “*Big stones can be twelve feet high.*”) “feet” as “foot—boy part” by misusing the clue “go to” in the previous sentence. The most important factor might be that they were not aware of words’ multiple meanings in different contexts.

To sum up, from the above findings, we can no longer assume that use of contextual clues always aid lexical inferencing, particularly for the less successful learners.

#### *The EFL Learners’ Use of Context for Lexical Inferencing*

This present study examined the extent contextual clues aid unknown word inference and reading comprehension. As shown in Table 2, less successful learners (12.1%, ranked as top 2) relied more on the complex use of context for inferring word meaning than their successful counterparts (7.6%, ranked as top 6). Stanovich's Interactive-compensatory model (1980) again supported this finding for which under certain conditions poor learners may exhibit greater sensitivity to contextual constraints than do good learners (Stanovich, 1980). For the less successful learners in this study, they might lack linguistic knowledge and tend to rely on context clues and background knowledge for guessing. For these learners, although they had acquired the ability to know what they knew and what they did not know, they still did not show successful comprehension of a reading text. Thus, the use of context became a significant compensatory strategy for word processing.

However, it seems that using the metacognitive ability as well as context clues did not provide the less successful learners sufficient help in comprehension, as shown in Table 4. The results in Table 4 (Note 3) showed that successful learners (totally 80.8%) outperformed their less successful counterparts (totally 53.7%) in comprehending a reading text successfully. In contrast, less successful learners had a high percentage of mistakes in decoding the reading text (46.3%). Even though both of the groups needed the teacher to guide them when they got stuck in processing, the less successful learners had a higher frequency of teacher involvement (27.8%) than the successful learners did (15.3%). Without the teacher's involvement, successful learners still had better comprehension of a reading text (65.4%) than less successful learners did (25.9%).

One possible reason is that the less successful learners showed a tendency to use previous knowledge that was irrelevant to the context. Another reason could be that their vocabulary ability was far below the language threshold and not enough to use the context clues to make an efficient guess (Laufer, 1997). The other explanation might be that less successful learners need to be taught to use context clues intelligently and efficiently. Whether the instruction of context clues and contextual analysis had positive effects on the less able learners needs further empirical evidence. The relationship between monitoring strategy and reading comprehension, use of context and reading comprehension also needs further study.

**Table 4: Results of reading comprehension for Successful (S) and Less Successful learners**

Comprehension	S 1	S 2	S 3	Total	%	LS 1	LS 2	LS 3	Total	%
Logical (self-comprehend)	15	10	9	34	65.4	8	2	4	14	25.9
*Logical (Teacher- Involvement)	2	4	2	8	15.4	6	4	5	15	27.8
Illogical	1	3	6	10	19.2	4	12	9	25	46.3
**missing		1→ ?	1→ ?	52	100%				54	100%

*Note 1.* \*"Logical" was defined as "the translated meaning was acceptable in Chinese." Omitting one or two words, especially nouns, was still considered as "logical," as long as the acceptable meaning was verbalized.

*Note 2.* \*\*"1→?" refers to the sentence that the student did not process

*Note 3.* Logical comprehension rate for successful readers is 80.8% (65.4%+15.4%), the less successful learners could logically comprehend 53.7% (25.95%+27.8%) of the texts.

From the findings, it seems that use of a single strategy or a single category of strategies cannot lead a learner to be an efficient reader in terms of lexical inferencing and reading comprehension. This finding also supports the interactive view of reading

in which successful reading comprehension is achieved through an interaction among multiple knowledge sources, such as sound, words, learners' language proficiency, and the background knowledge the learners bring to the text. The effect of the interactive use of bottom-up and top-down processes was particularly apparent in the group of successful learners. For the less successful learners, the single use of context could not help them obtain a successful comprehension.

### **Conclusion, limitations, and pedagogical implications**

This study reemphasized that successful learners use more strategies than less successful ones and that successful learners use a wider range of strategies when processing unknown words in L2 reading. As shown in Table 2 and Table 3, the results provided evidence that use of a single strategy or a single category of strategies cannot lead to be efficient reading. It is amazing to find that the less successful learners did use slightly more contextual strategies than the successful learners. However, this use of context to infer unknown word meaning did not help them successfully comprehending a text, as Table 4 shows. In other words, the learners who focused on reading as an interactive process tended to be more effective learners. While the less successful learners often used a single category of strategies, either linguistic or metacognitive, the successful learners were more able to skillfully and interactively use various resources, such as linguistic knowledge, metacognitive awareness and social strategy interactively for lexical inferencing and reading comprehension.

There were some limitations in conducting this study. First, the think-aloud task has been criticized for its validity on eliciting what the subjects really perceived although it has its advantage of allowing access to processes and information that are difficult to obtain through other measures. It was difficult to determine how much data is sufficient for data analysis. Additionally, the numbers of subjects in this study provided just a small scale of exploration; thus, it probably needs further research for a more solid conclusion. More subjects and more reading texts with different genres and difficulty levels would be necessary to provide with more detailed insights for vocabulary acquisition.

Despite its limitations, some pedagogical implications are as follows. First, with little exposure to a natural language learning environment, the EFL learners should be explicitly taught how to use context intelligently instead of guessing widely. They need repetitive practice with metacognitive awareness (controlled process) in the

combination of various processing strategies skillfully (automatic process) which leads learners to a better comprehension. In addition, the less successful students in the present study often commented on their own processes by saying “I don’t know!” or “I really don’t know!” For less able learners in EFL context, a reading recovery program might be crucial to help them rebuild the confidence in learning. Finally, as Ooi and Kim-seoh (1996) suggested, it should be necessary to make students aware of polysemy (i.e., a word with several different but closely related meanings), a word’s prefix or suffix and its limitations in different contexts.

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## Appendix I

### Reading : Money

[1]When we think of money, we think of coins and paper bills. [2]That is what money is today. [3] But in the past people used many things in place of money. [4]Some countries used cows. [5]Other countries used salt, tobacco, tea, or stones. [6]Today there are still some places in the world that do not used paper money. [7]One place is the island of Yap in the Pacific Ocean.

[8]On the island of Yap, people use the heaviest money in the world---Yap stones. [9]These are round, white stones with a hole in the middle. [10]The Yap stones do not originate from the island. [11]The Yap men have to go to island four hundreds miles away to fetch them. [12]Big stones can be twelve feet high---as big as two tall men. [13] Small stones are as big as a dinner plate.

[14]Rich people do not carry the Yap stones. [15] Servants follow the rich. [16] Each servant carries a stone on a pole over his shoulder. [17]Today the people on the island use paper money for everyday shopping. [18]But for other things they still prefer Yap stones.

## Appendix II: Coding Scheme

1. Ask the teacher for meaning: The participants took the initiative to ask the teacher for the meaning when they were processing the meaning of a word. For example, the S2 student asked, “ what is this word?” by pointing to the word “Yap”?
2. Using simple word/phrase repetition: While guessing the meaning of a word, the student repeated a word or a phrase either to show their difficulties in decoding the meaning or to allow themselves sufficient time for processing. For example, LS1 student made several repetitions of the word “paper” before he could verbalize the L1 meaning for “paper bills.”
3. Using cumulative repetition: Participants not only repeated a word or a phrase but also returned to the beginning of the sentence to restate the translation word-by-word. For example, the S3 student repeated translating the words ‘the most’ and the phrase “in the world” and then finished translating the sentence “..People used the heaviest money in the world” by the word sequence.
4. Word-by-word guessing: All the participants comprehended the phrase “in place

Of” as “ in a place of...” by using word-by-word guessing. Some of them mistook the meaning of a certain word to be that of another word with similar spelling but different meaning (polysemy).

5. Word feature analysis: Using feature analysis means the use of prefix / suffix or meaning from a word with similar spelling. In this study, the S3 participant mistook the word “ round” (adjective, like a circle) as meaning “around” (prep. Surrounding) or the verb ‘round’ (circulative movement). Also “plate” was misinterpreted as “a soft sticky mixture of liquid and powder” (the meaning of “paste”).
6. Reading of related keywords: Learners used the word “dinner” to guess its following “plate.” This is a simple use of context.
7. Sentence Translation: All the participants used translation to Chinese to comprehend a sentence. The translation had to match the correct expression in Chinese.
8. Retranslating: Participants redefined the words, phrases or sentences by giving the translation again.
9. Using background knowledge: Participants associated ‘coins’ together with ‘paper bills’ based on their own background knowledge of the real world.
10. Monitoring comprehension: Learners elaborated the meaning by talking to themselves, such as “Let’s me think,” “well...” “Oh-oh” “Is this right?”
11. Complex use of context: Learners inferred meaning from the neighboring sentential context. In this study, it was counted as using context to find the meaning because the participant learned some words when playing the computer game.
12. Commenting on own behavior process: Learners evaluated and judged themselves on their accuracy when inferring the meaning of a word. In this study, most responses from the low achievers were negative, i.e., “I don’t know.”
13. Suspending the problems: Learners initially skipped some words that did not make sense to them, expecting to figure out the meaning from later words. They then moved back to the beginning of the sentence to elaborate it again.
14. Using mnemonics: Learners used their memories, or an image of the word to elaborate the meaning of unknown word. For example, the S3 student could verbalize the Chinese meaning for “the Pacific Ocean” because he saw the phrase in an advertisement about cell phones.

## A Novice Native English Speaking Teacher in Korean Alternative School: Challenges and Negotiations in the First Years

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### **Biodata**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the challenges experienced and negotiated by one novice Canadian Native English Speaking Teacher (NEST) during her first year in a Korean EFL alternative school. Drawing on sociocultural theory, this study will illustrate how the NEST with a limited prior teaching experience coped with the challenges throughout three chronicle stages (i.e. first month, first semester, and second semester). Multiple sources (i.e., teaching portfolio, field-notes, semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire, and reflective journal) were employed to triangulate the data and understand her professional dilemmas. The findings show that she greatly struggled in the first semester due to her unrealistic sense of optimism, negative teacher belief toward her qualification, and inadequate pedagogical skills. In the second semester, however, she adjusted perfectly well to the school, positively transformed her teacher belief and improved her teaching skills. After elucidating the increasing but unknown professional demands on this novice NEST in a socio-culturally unique Asian EFL context, this study will make practical suggestions

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for novice NEST, school administrators, and pre-service English teacher training programs.

**Keywords:** Novice Native English Speaking Teacher (NEST), Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE), alternative school, ethnographic research

## **Introduction**

While I worked as an English teacher from 2010 to 2012 in one of Korea's leading alternative schools, I saw four NESTs leave their teaching jobs. Their average length of employment was less than two years: 1.5 years (three Korean-American) and 1.5 years (one American couple). When I took over the reins as the head teacher in the English department in 2013, I hired two new NESTs. But again, one of them left the job after just a year of teaching. Then I started wondering why the turnover rate for novice NESTs there was so high. What was more alarming was that the school administrators did not seem to pay close attention to this issue, although the school emphasized highly on fostering the global youth with English communicative competence. This high turnover rate might have caused inconsistent teaching among NESTs and had a negative impact on students' learning of English. Nor could I find any study on the challenges experienced by beginning NESTs in an alternative school context. The impetus for this study came from a need to understand the underlying root of this high turnover rate among novice NESTs in this socio-culturally unique language learning and teaching context and provide hands-on and relevant suggesting to address these issues based on this one-year-long ethnographic case study.

Several studies in the field of second language teacher education (SLTE) have argued that it is increasingly difficult to ignore second language (L2) teachers' complex internal 'mental lives' (Ahn, 2010; Farrell, 2012; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 2006, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Lee, 2009). They indicate the limitations of traditional teacher professional development (TPD) practices such as seminars, workshops, and conferences. Moreover, they argue that the traditional TPD approach can hardly resolve the challenges that L2 teachers face in their own unique educational contexts. In recent years Farrell (2012) has highlighted the tensions experienced by novice L2 teachers in new classroom contexts. Recalling his own negative experience during the first year of teaching, the author points out that a lack of attention and guidance may cause beginning English teachers to quit the profession (Peacock, 2009). Ingersoll (2003) also indicates that around 50 percent of public school novice teachers leave their profession within the first five years. Several studies, including Farrell's, have discussed some challenges

experienced by L2 teachers during their initial years of teaching within various socio-cultural contexts. Although the number of alternative schools and NESTs in a Korean EFL context has been on the increase during the past decade(Cha, 2013), to date little attention has been paid to what novice NESTs face and how they negotiate such challenges in this socio-culturally unique language learning and teaching context.

To fill this gap, the current study will shed light on the challenges identified by a novice NEST during the first year in a Korean EFL alternative school context. Drawing on socio-cultural theory, it attempts to elucidate how a beginning NEST perceived and negotiated challenges in a new school environment from April 2013 to April 2014, using multiple data sources (i.e., teaching portfolio, field notes, semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire, and a reflective journal).After elucidating the increasing but unknown professional demands among novice NESTs in this socio-culturally unique Asian EFL context, this study will make practical suggestions for novice NESTs, school administrators, and pre-service English teacher training programs.

## **Theoretical framework**

### *A Sociocultural Perspective on Second Language Teacher Education*

In the field of second language teacher education (SLTE), the ‘knowledge transmission model’ had been the prevailing paradigm during the past century (Johnson & Golombek, 2002, p. 1). Johnson and Golombek (2002, p. 1) argue, however, that this model was negatively criticized for three factors, namely, ‘paternalistic,’ ‘decontextualized,’ and ‘ineffectual.’ Richards (2008, p. 160) also points out that SLTE has experienced a paradigm shift, influenced by ‘sociocultural theory’ (Lantolf, 2000) and ‘the field of teacher cognition’ (Borg, 2006). In the 1990s, for instance, there was a debate over “teacher training vs. teacher development.” While “teacher training” is associated with ‘entry-level teaching skills’ (p. 2) acquired through teaching observation or short-term teacher training programs, “teacher development” is identified with an ongoing teacher development over a longer period of time (e.g., MA programs).

Recently, this debate over two different dimensions has been replaced by re-examining or raising a question about the traditional ‘knowledge transmission model’ or ‘*knowledge about*’ (Richards, 2008, p.162). For example, Bartels (2005)

claims that there was a gap between theories and knowledge (e.g., language analysis, methodology) learned from the SLTE program and teachers' actual practices in their own classroom. As a result, several scholars have argued that SLTE should move beyond the '*knowledge about*' paradigm and pay more attention to teacher-learning and teachers' inner beliefs about their teaching and identity through reflective teaching or action research (Ahn, 2010; Farrell, 2012; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Lee, 2009). They know the limitations of traditional TPD practices such as seminars, workshops, and conferences. They are also clearly aware that the traditional TPD approach can hardly resolve the tensions and challenges that L2 teachers face in their own unique educational contexts. In other words, it is increasingly difficult to ignore second language (L2) teachers' complex internal 'mental lives' in the field of SLTE (Johnson, 2006, p. 236). This movement is deeply rooted in the sociocultural theory that "in order to understand human learning, or higher cognitive development, one must look at the social activities that the individual engages in and see how they reappear as mental activities in the individual" (Johnson, 2006, p. 237). It means that we need to utilize multiple instruments of qualitative research such as observation, reflective journals, and interviews in order to achieve an in-depth comprehension of teachers' inner perceptions of various issues within their specific educational settings.

In Korea, Kim (2010) reviewed 31 papers in relation to SLTE issues, based on Korea's four major ELT journals: *English Teaching*, *English Language Teaching*, *Primary English Education*, and *Foreign Language Education*. It turned out that the research topic on teachers' reflections (19.5%) was the second most frequently conducted, which reflects the current trend in L2 teaching studies. However, Kim also pointed out that 71% of the SLTE studies were conducted quantitatively, and that may make it difficult for us to understand teachers' inner tensions and perceptions at a deeper level. Therefore, a qualitative research may compensate for this shortcoming of the quantitative study by reaching a deeper understanding of L2 teachers in the field of SLTE.

#### *Novice Teachers in Second Language Teacher Education*

Similar to the trend of SLTE, there has been a shift from quantitative research to qualitative research on novice L2 teachers. Since 2000, especially, an increasing number of qualitative research studies on novice L2 teachers have been conducted in

SLTE. For instance, Farrell (2003) explored how a first-year Singaporean teacher of English transitioned from the teacher-training program to an actual classroom by employing classroom observations, teaching journals, and interviews. Kanno and Stuart (2011) also carried out a qualitative study on changes in novice L2 teachers' identities for one academic year through a 'situated learning perspective' (p.236). They attempted to demonstrate how two graduate student teachers' identities were changed and how this transformation affected their pedagogical approaches. This study indicated that more studies should explore at a deeper level L2 teachers' experience and sense of identity, in contrast to research in SLTE that has been published during the past 20 years, which has been focused on L2 teachers' knowledge-based education (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

In recent years, Farrell (2012) highlighted the well-being (e.g. tensions and difficulties) of novice L2 teachers' professional lives in SLTE. Recollecting his own negative novice teaching experience, Farrell indicated that some novice professionals in TESOL leave their teaching career due to a lack of professional attention and guidance. After defining novice teachers as those who "have completed their language teacher education program, including teaching practice, and have begun teaching English in an educational institution" (Farrell, 2012, p. 437), he pointed out that novice teachers struggle markedly in the areas of 'lesson planning, lesson delivery, classroom management, and identity development' (Farrell, 2012, p. 435). He argued that the gap in time between the pre-service teacher training and the in-service teacher teaching period should be closed. Farrell suggested that novice teachers should share with outside audiences their authentic stories and experiences in their educational contexts. In other words, more qualitative research should be conducted about beginning teachers, especially studies that would reflect those teachers' particular working contexts and capture their authentic perceptions and experiences.

In South Korea, Hayes, Kim and Chang (2013) acknowledged Farrell's contribution to TESOL with his work on novice-teachers and attempted to provide theoretical perspectives to challenges facing first-year L2 teachers. Reviewing the relevant literature in diverse contexts, the study revealed that novice L2 teachers quit working due to a lack of 'structured induction programs' (p.21), which otherwise could have helped them adapt to a new school environment. They also indicated that a gap exists between what pre-service teacher candidates learn from the teacher training

program and what they actually encounter in an actual classroom. But it appears that their findings simply echo the previous findings of Farrell (2012), which called for different approaches to this issue.

### *Novice Native English Speaking Teachers in a Korean EFL Context*

Although numerous studies have attempted to explain how novice L2 teachers face and cope with various challenges during their initial years in diverse contexts (for example, Farrell, 2003; Farrell, 2012; Hayes, Kim & Chang, 2013; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Kuzmic, 1993), little attention has been paid to the challenges of novice NEST in an Asian EFL context. This research on novice NESTs, particularly in the Korean EFL context, is important because an increasing number of new NESTs are recruited by Korean educational institutions to promote English learners' communicative competence (Cha, 2013). Lee (2001) explains this social phenomenon occurs because of Korean's pervasive perceptions that NESTs are better than non-native speaking English teachers (NNESTs) in terms of their English proficiency and communicative pedagogic skills.

Before introducing a novice NEST teacher of this study, it is important to distinguish the term NESTs from NNESTs. Edge (1988) argues that NEST can be defined as one having innate grammar ability, usually influenced by his or her birthplace and living environment. But Fukumura (1993) argues that some NESTs may not provide sound grammatical explanations. Medgyes (2001) also points out that his or her native country (e.g., English-speaking nations) alone cannot determine the status of NEST. Rather, both linguistic and educational perspectives should be taken into account when defining NEST. In this aspect, Medgyes (1992) maintains that NNESTs are not necessarily inferior to NESTs but can create full synergy effects by utilizing and complementing NESTs and NNESTs' strengths and weaknesses when teaching. Considering the aforementioned discussions on NESTs, Cha (2013, p.167) defines NESTs as "those who were born, raised and educated at the higher educational institutions in the Inner Circle countries<sup>1</sup> and who thus can command and teach English as a second/foreign language." In this study, I adopt Cha's definition of

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<sup>1</sup> According to Kachru (1985), 'The Inner Circle' belongs to the country where English is used as the native language (e.g. U.S., UK, Canada, etc.)

NESTs. The profile of this study's participant will be discussed in the methodology section.

Considering the recent trend of SLTE – qualitative research and novice L2 teachers – and more recruitment of new NESTs in South Korea, it is worth investigating how a novice NEST assimilates into a new teaching environment. In particular, this study draws on sociocultural theory to deeply understand novice NEST perceptions on such difficult issues in terms of one's professional life experienced in a Korean alternative school setting during the span of one year.

To the author's best knowledge, no ethnographic research has been conducted on novice NESTs in a Korean alternative school context from a sociocultural perspective. Thus, it is expected that this longitudinal research may contribute new knowledge to the field as it attempts to approach the critical issue of the novice NEST in (rapidly emerging but still unknown) EFL alternative school context, from an ethnographical standpoint. It can also offer immediately relevant and practical insights and suggestions for the novice NEST, school administrators, and pre-service English teacher training programs.

## **Methodology**

### *Research Questions*

The primary purpose of this study was to address the following two questions:

- 1) How does a novice NEST perceive issues and challenges through the three chronicle stages (i.e., first month, first semester, and second semester) during her first year in a Korean alternative context?
- 2) How does a novice NEST negotiate the issues and challenges that are faced during the three chronicle stages (i.e., first month, first semester, and second semester) during her first year in a Korean alternative school context?

### *Participant*

Johnson (pseudonym) is a 25-year-old black, female, Canadian teacher. She obtained a B.A. in applied nonprofit studies in Canada and completed a 120-hour TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certification course. Although she did not have formal teaching training or experience, she had “informal” experience

teaching and developing a curriculum for children in a Canadian local community, in addition to volunteer experience in Cambodia and Thailand. The mission statement from her teaching portfolio reads, “*use education to inspire, empower, and purposefully make a difference in the lives of children and youth,*” which demonstrates her passion as well as a strong capability for teaching children and young people in an academic environment. She also had extensive international experience in South Korea, Cambodia, Thailand, and Haiti, which one would assume helps her to easily adapt to new cultures and environments.

In school she taught English writing and conversation to junior high school-level students (7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> graders). As a head teacher, I spent a significant amount of time knowing her and explaining to her the new teaching environment. From my overall observation, in the first semester of 2013 Johnson struggled while trying to adapt to a new school environment (see the Findings and Discussion section). In the second semester of 2013, however, not only did she fulfill the required teaching duties (teaching more than 20 hours per week) in school, but also she engaged in various extra school activities and even taught English for students during the weekend outside of school. At first glance, in light of this observation, it seems Johnson adopted successfully into this new teaching environment and to a great extent led her life consistent with her mission statement. When this study examined Johnson from a sociocultural perspective, however, it turned out that she suffered severe emotional and social turmoil at a deeper professional level.

### *Setting*

She teaches English in an alternative boarding school (hereafter referred to as *J School*) in South Korea. It is regarded as one of the leading alternative schools in the region. It has approximately 300 students, from the 7<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The school tuition costs \$20,000, which is relatively higher than the average in private or public schools in Korea. Students also must pay for foreign language learning programs in Canada and China, apart from regular tuition. In this regard it can be assumed that students have higher socio-economic backgrounds in Korea.

Most of the public and private schools in South Korea are governed by the national curriculum. By contrast, this alternative *J School* is free to choose its own curriculum. The English department also has no fixed curriculum, so that teachers are allowed to design and implement their own curriculum and method of instruction

after consulting with the head teacher. Unlike a regular public school, in which L2 teachers rely mainly on the established national curriculum, English teachers here are encouraged to try out or experiment with various teaching activities.

Since it is a boarding school, most of the teachers are residing inside the campus in a teachers' residence hall. Unlike the Korean teachers there, NESTs are provided with a 'better' accommodation (e.g., living alone in two bed-rooms with a spacious living room) equipped with basic furniture, home appliances and Internet connections. Every meal is provided free of charge, even during vacations. However, it seems inconvenient to use public transportation, since *J school* is located in a remote county. From the school it usually takes more than one hour to travel by bus to the nearest downtown area.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

This study aims to show how a beginning NEST perceives and negotiates issues and challenges encountered in a new educational context, during the period April 2013 to April 2014, throughout three chronological stages (i.e., first month, first semester, and second semester). To achieve this objective, I collected and analyzed the data through five main instruments (i.e., teaching portfolio, field notes, semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire, and reflective journal) to elicit perceptions on Johnson's professional life as a novice NEST as well as to ensure triangulation of the data.

After Johnson began her contract, she agreed to participate in this study. First, using her teaching portfolio, I obtained and analyzed her teaching philosophy. This data offers basic information about her professional life. It also shows her underlying motivation for teaching English at this school. Second, from April 2013 to February 2014, several field notes were recorded in my notebook through observations and informal interviews as Johnson and I worked in the same school building. Also, for one week, our English department consisting of one Korean non-native teacher, Johnson, and myself attended one TEFL international conference in Manila for the purpose of professional teacher development. There were several formal and informal occasions during which I could understand and keep track of the perceptions of her professional life during her first year of teaching. For instance, every evening our group had a formal meeting in a hotel room or cafe in order to reflect on and discuss what we learned from the TEFL conference. We also interacted with several

conference participants from a number of countries within and outside of the conference hall. During these informal conversations I could understand what she was concerned about during her initial year of teaching, a realization that provided me with her different perspectives on this issue. I kept field notes in my personal notebook later that night or the next morning after each conversation occurred. These field notes helped me identify some patterns of her utterances.

Based on these emerging patterns, in March of 2014 I created questionnaire items and interview questions. The question items consist of the two main purposes: The first four questions examined a Johnson's background information including previous expectations and teaching experience. The last five questions aimed to investigate Johnson's attitudes toward teaching in terms of both cognitive and behavioral aspects (e.g., attitude toward teaching English, opinions on teaching at an alternative school, and coping strategies to negotiate the challenges). The questionnaire was collected on March 26, 2014.

Third, intensive interviews with regard to Johnson's professional life took place four times: First interview (1:30-4:00 p.m., March 18), second interview (2:20-3:30 p.m., May 19), third interview (3:30-5:20, March 26), and fourth interview (3:00-4:00, March 28). Questions fell into two main categories: Personal and professional life. More specifically, personal life is related to her general living issues in the settings within the country of Korea and that specific school. In detail, its items include accommodation, transportation, food, cultural and communication difficulties, social support, and psychological issues (e.g., homesickness, isolation, depression). On the other hand, her professional life is closely linked to her life as a NEST in school and in her classroom context. Its specific items contain implementation of her pedagogical knowledge, the classroom culture, and her relationship with her students. In this study, Johnson's professional life is highlighted.

Finally, on April 1, 2014, Johnson's five reflective teaching journals were also submitted. They helped me understand what was actually happening in her class, as she vividly described her inner world concerning her students, her classroom and pedagogical knowledge, her perceptions about herself as a teacher, and those events that frustrated her. In Table 1, the data collection and analysis for this study is displayed.

**Table 1: Data collection and analysis for the study**

Period	Focus	Context	Instruments for Data Collection & Analysis
Apr. 2013-Feb. 2014	The perceptions of Johnson's general life as a novice NEST	School and TEFL international conference	Teaching portfolio, Field notes (observations), Informal oral interview
Mar. 2014	Johnson's professional life	School	Intensive interview (4 sessions)
Mar. 2014	In-depth understanding of Johnson's perception	School	Questionnaire
Apr. 2014	Understanding of Johnson's actual classroom contexts	School	Johnson's Reflective Journal

## Findings and Discussion

In this section, I will first discuss what tensions and challenges Johnson experienced as a novice L2 teacher during the first year and how she negotiated them throughout the three chronicle stages (i.e., first month, first semester, and second semester).

### *First Month (April, 2013)*

After becoming an L2 teacher in *J School*, Johnson seemed to be greatly troubled during the first month due to an unrealistic sense of optimism. According to the field notes, during this first month of her teaching practice she often mentioned observations such as “students are different” and “it is different from what I thought.” As illustrated in Excerpt 1, she also confessed that during the semi-structured interview, the first two weeks were the most difficult time in her professional life. She faced so-called ‘reality shock’ in several aspects. For instance, she figuratively linked her life as a professional English teacher to being like ‘a hamster on a wheel.’ In other words, although Johnson made desperate efforts to survive and adjust to this new environment, she felt as if she was “spinning her wheels” during this period, hardly aware of her new teaching environment and the act of instructing her new students. In the informal interview conducted in January 2014, she mentioned that she often heard about teaching English in Korea from her friend who was teaching English in a private institute, which caused her to form biased concepts about teaching English, as listed in Excerpt 1 (e.g., Korean students are talkative; Korean students all spoke perfect English; English teachers in Korea have a decent workload). Also in the questionnaire, in response to a question about her motivation to teach in *J School*, she

answered, “I went to Korea to visit a friend and totally fell in love with the country, its culture, food, and scenic surroundings. I thought teaching in Korea would be great to gain international experience, a chance to travel and save money.” It can be implied that her motivation for teaching English in Korea mainly stemmed from her previous trip to Korea, in addition to teaching experience shared via word-of-mouth from her friend. Since she formed an unrealistic picture of this school prior to her arrival, she naively prepared ‘ambitious’ teaching materials for low-level students, as also indicated in Excerpt 1.

*Excerpt 1. Johnson’s sense of tension and challenges regarding her ‘professional life’ for one month (Mar. 18, 2014)*

I think the first two weeks were difficult. The first weeks I did not know what was going on. I was like a hamster on a wheel. But towards the end of the month, I became more acquainted with my students, the atmosphere, and my teaching skills. I was able to implement my style into the classroom...There was a gap between my expectation and reality. The students are very talkative. I just assumed they would all be quiet while I taught but not so the level of understanding. I thought they all spoke perfect English. So some of my material at the beginning was ambitious. I also never expected grading. That was a hard thing towards the end of the semester...For a first time teacher, the workload was a lot.

To sum up, based on the field notes and the semi-structured interview, it is clear that Johnson struggled professionally in her beginning stage in Korea due to the gap between her initial sense of anticipation and the actual situation. In light of the informal interview and the questionnaire, this ‘unrealistic optimism’ was first formed by her prior trip to Korea and word-of-mouth from her friend about the teaching experience in Korea. In other words, Johnson relied heavily on her past experience in order to predict what she might expect in Korea, a result that coincides with previous findings in previous studies (Farrell, 2012; Pataniczek and Issacson, 1981; Weinstein, 1988).

Implications for NESTs are enormous here. NESTs should realistically expect that they might have a difficult time in adjusting to a new educational context for the first couple of weeks. Rather than merely buying into the word-of-mouth about teaching English in a particular context, it is recommended that one should develop

critical and accurate information about the situation of a particular school by contacting the potential colleagues via phone or email with questions about the life and position. Instead of engaging in several duties during the first few weeks, it is also recommended that one should concentrate on pursuing a limited number of highly important tasks. Second, it is important to prepare teaching materials in advance, but teachers also should be flexible along the way due to the variables encountered in diverse teaching contexts. It is an effective strategy to contact the school and investigate its curriculum and the nature of the students' profile in advance. It is also a good idea to visit the school firsthand, observe some classes and gather a real sense of what the students are like. Finally, the school should assign lesser workloads because NESTs usually have much work to do, coping with adjusting to a new environment, coping with their teaching load, and experiencing cultural shock.

When asked about how to cope with this dilemma, according to the semi-structured interview, Johnson responded that another native speaker was helpful in preparing for her class. Contrary to Kuzmic's study (1993), which pointed out that novice language teachers might feel isolated as they performed their duties with insufficient support from his or her colleagues, Johnson did receive immediate support from another NEST in the new teaching environment. Despite another NEST's help, however, she still felt a strong need to prepare for the class and become more organized on her own. In addition, she could not help but struggle during this transitory stage simply because she was not well prepared, as noted in Excerpt 2.

*Excerpt 2. Johnson's negotiation regarding her 'professional life' for one month (Mar. 18, 2014)*

In that aspect [another NEST] did help. For the first week he prepared lessons for each of my classes and lent me a book for further preparation...I think I needed to be more prepared and organized...I just endured.

To summarize, Johnson experienced tensions and problems as a newly hired NEST in *J School* during her first month. At first she struggled due to a large gap between what she initially anticipated and what she actually went through in the classroom. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the new working environment and its surroundings as objectively as possible, using various reliable sources. Additionally, she was extremely busy adjusting in addition to carrying out the school

workload. Although her colleagues were of great help, Johnson believed it would require her own self-discipline and perseverance to handle these difficult periods during this transitory stage.

### *First Semester (April-June, 2013)*

During the ‘first month,’ it was found that Johnson struggled significantly as a beginning NEST. Over time, however, it seems that Johnson adjusted well into her new environment. This section will highlight her first semester.

According to the field notes, during the first semester there were several indicators that Johnson adjusted well into her new school environment. In May she told me about her trip to Seoul to meet her friend and go shopping. Near the summer break (mid-June, 2013), she expressed that she became accustomed to the school routine and sometimes felt bored with it. However, the field notes about her professional life indicated that she also suffered from a ‘teacher belief’ issue. During her first semester, she often said, “I am a bad teacher. I am not good enough.” In the semi-structured interview held on March 18, 2014, she also referred to herself as an unqualified English teacher: “I was not wanting to go [to class]. I thought I would make a horrible teacher...The whole idea of being an English teacher sounded so exotic. Not because that I was a bad teacher [but] I had not taught formally.”

According to Borg (2001), a belief is “a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further it serves as a guide to thought and behavior” (p. 186). Much research on teacher beliefs has indicated that teacher beliefs play a vital role in a teacher’s instructional decisions (Borg, 1998, 2003; Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Farrell & Lim, 2005). In light of the field notes and the semi-structured interview data pertaining to the first semester, Johnson had a negative teacher belief toward herself due to her lack of formal teaching experience, which might affect her teaching in the classroom. In particular, according to another semi-structured interview (Excerpt 3), Johnson struggled with classroom management – especially in handling students’ behavior. For instance, when her Korean students spoke in Korean, she did not know how to handle this situation simply because she had no prior experience in disciplining students. Although Johnson could prepare the teaching materials well, she did not have adequate teaching skill or experience to utilize those materials. In her reflective journal she vividly depicted her struggle in the

classroom: “I am not sure what will motivate them to participate. I am losing my confidence in my teaching ability...Students leaving classroom...What should I do?...I have tried having misbehaving students leave the classroom for 10 minutes but this punishment does not seem to have any weight.”

*Excerpt 3. Johnson’s problem regarding her ‘professional life’ during the first semester (Mar. 19, 2014)*

The tension I had was student behavior. Students are very talkative [in Korean] and I was not used to disciplining students. I was also just getting to know them so it was difficult to punish them when I didn’t know who they were and I wanted to be friends with them so I felt badly...Also finding a teaching method that was efficient and helpful. I did printouts but it was difficult to utilize all classroom materials [all at once].

Kanno and Stuart (2011) attributed difficulties in the classroom experienced by two novice L2 teachers in the beginning stage of instruction to a lack of teacher authority. This insufficient teacher authority may have stemmed from no previous classroom teaching experience. Since the novice teachers had no teaching experience they could not conceptualize themselves as a “teacher with authority.” Unlike Kanno and Stuart’s paper (2011), Johnson had previous teaching experience, although it was carried out in informal settings. Unfortunately, as indicated in the semi-structured interview on March 18, 2014, Johnson thought of herself as a “horrible teacher” due to her lack of formal teaching experience. As shown in previous studies (Borg, 1998, 2003; Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Kanno & Stuart, 2011), Johnson’s teacher belief (e.g., a ‘horrible’ teacher) may well have affected her practice in the classroom.

Notwithstanding some difficulties in the classroom during the first semester, Johnson utilized specific negotiation strategies to overcome those problems. As displayed in Excerpt 4, she took a carrot-and-stick approach to deal with students’ behavioral issues. That is, she rewarded students’ correct responses (or behaviors) while punishing their misbehaviors. What is interesting is that she imposed creative penalties on students when handling their misbehavior. Although a lack of pedagogical knowledge and skills was one of Johnson’s primary concerns, she recalled and began to apply her prior (informal) teaching experiences in order to handle this particular problem. She also found that both Korean and NEST colleagues

were of great help, but Korean colleagues were more helpful than another category of NEST colleague for her because the latter provided more practical, on-the-spot aids.

*Excerpt 4. Johnson's negotiation regarding 'professional life' for the first semester (Mar. 19, 2014)*

[I mainly used] candy. But I used different punishments. [For example] if you misbehave, you have to eat lunch with the teacher and spend lunchtime with me. I had students singing songs, too. I think hard punishment and yelling is ineffective. A teacher yelled me at and I never forgot it. It scarred me for life. ...I also had colleagues' help. My first semester began at a slow and rough start but ended with experience, potential, and anticipation for the next semester.

In summary, Johnson adapted well into a new environment in her personal life as she began to explore in town and outside of town, and even felt bored by her routines toward the end of the semester. On the other hand, her professional life was somewhat challenging because of her negative teacher belief (e.g., she was a horrible teacher), which was formed as a result of her previous informal teaching experience, which thus affected her practice in the classroom. However, Johnson took initiative by applying her “informal” teaching experience to manage her classrooms. In addition, she proactively sought support from her colleagues, which helped her resolve teaching-related problems and conflicts.

#### *Second Semester (August to December 2013)*

So far, this paper has investigated Johnson's struggles and perceptions about negotiations as part of her experience as a novice NEST during the first month and first semester. In this section, her perceptions during the second semester will be discussed.

Overall, Johnson positively discussed her professional life during the second semester. The most significant finding here is in regard to her ‘teacher belief change.’ As previously discussed, her native teacher belief greatly affected her teaching during the first semester. According to the semi-structured interview (Excerpt 5), however, Johnson said that she became more comfortable and then deserved to be a real English teacher, not just a disciplinarian or “horrible” teacher. Field notes taken during her second semester support that remark: “Johnson has become a self-initiated professional L2 teacher. She has become more comfortable using various teaching

materials. Now she can design her own curriculum.” As indicated in Excerpt 5, she was “teaching,” not “playing house” during the second semester. This salient transformation of her teacher belief and behavior echoes Kanno and Stuart’s study (2011) – namely, that two novice language teachers took one academic year to eventually consider themselves fully functioning teachers. According to Johnson’s response to the questionnaire, she wrote, “...while embarking upon my new position, it became quite clear I had a passion for teaching...I have been blessed to find a school that so compliments my beliefs and values.” It clearly shows that Johnson’s teacher belief has been transformed positively.

*Excerpt 5. Johnson’s perception regarding her ‘professional life’ during the second semester (Mar. 28, 2014)*

The first semester was crazy because I started teaching the week I arrived. I felt like I was "playing house." But in the second semester I was teaching. It sounds naive but that is the biggest difference. I became a teacher. [The] identity change [happened]. They regarded me not really as a disciplinarian but someone they could talk to – someone they felt comfortable with.

What is even more intriguing about Johnson during the second semester was illustrated in Excerpt 6. It seems that at this stage Johnson became much more competent teacher regarding her pedagogical skills. For instance, she utilized PowerPoint, designed her own curriculum, and implemented several creative projects (e.g., making English magazines, writing articles, and writing poetry). As Johnson felt more comfortable about her teaching and therefore interacted more closely with her students, she even came to realize that students were much more talented than she had previously thought. This finding supports Kanno and Stuart’s (2011) study that there was a positive correlation between the change from the novice teacher’s initial belief and her eventual pedagogical practice.

*Excerpt 6. Johnson’s perception regarding her ‘professional life’ during the second semester (Mar. 28, 2014)*

This semester I used PowerPoint and this was more my style. Students had notes and I had my structure...In the second semester, I felt relaxed and at ease. I decided to make my own curriculum. I had each class doing a new project.

In summary, during the second semester, Johnson's overall perception of her professional life was very positive. She felt more comfortable with her students and her teaching prowess. The most salient observation during this period was, contrary to her first semester, a positive shift in her teacher belief, which noticeably led to becoming, in the view of her colleagues and herself, a more competent, professional L2 teacher.

## **Conclusion**

This study attempts to highlight issues and challenges that were identified by a novice Native English Speaking Teacher (NEST) from April 2013 to April 2014 in an EFL alternative school context. It also reveals vividly how the beginning NEST negotiated these dilemmas throughout three chronicle stages. Based on multiple sources, several findings and implications were discussed.

During the first month, Johnson greatly struggled because of “unrealistic optimism,” caused by a discrepancy between her expectations and her actual experience in a real environment. It is advisable to obtain accurate information beforehand about a new workplace and the expected workload. Toward the end of the first semester, Johnson became accustomed to her new school and even explored her environment outside the local town. Yet, a lack of teaching experience and her own negative teacher belief affected her classroom teaching, even though she made much effort (e.g., seeking help from her colleagues) to resolve those particular issues. During her second semester, it was significant to witness how Johnson transformed her teacher belief from that of a “horrible” teacher to a “real” teacher. It was also a significant finding that as her teacher identity changed for the better, her pedagogical skills also improved.

Nevertheless, the limitations of this study need to be understood. First, the more significant findings may have been obtained if a larger sample had been employed. However, there is surprisingly little research about novice NESTs particularly in an EFL alternative school context. In this aspect, even the small sample size of this study can be plausible. I expect that this study could serve as a starting point for offering encouragement to NESTs in diverse alternative school settings across the globe to share perspectives on their own issues, challenges, and successes, as well as to offer their own stories, which are not often heard in scholarly publications such as Asian EFL journal. For additional research and to conduct a more reliable study, a

comparative investigation of novice NESTs and NNESTs in a similar EFL alternative school context is desirable for gaining a deeper insight about this issue. Notwithstanding these limitations, the current findings provide a new understanding of novice NEST's increasing but unknown professional demands in this socio-culturally unique Asian EFL context. More importantly, this research will serve as a base for future studies on novice NEST in alternative school context, and the ethnographic method used for this study may be applied to a study similar to this elsewhere in other Asian EFL contexts.

To conclude, I would like to propose several suggestions for novice NESTs who might want to teach abroad, for EFL school administrators that would recruit new NESTs and operators of pre-service English teacher training programs. First, novice NESTs should prepare and obtain sufficient information in advance. Johnson emphasizes that novice NESTs should have adequate preparation for their first teaching voyage overseas. One of her regrets was that she did not have her own curriculum. She believed prior to coming to Korea that the curriculum would be provided by the school; therefore she did not take it much into consideration. By contrast, she was working in an alternative school where teachers were much more likely to take initiative in constructing school curricula and forms of instruction. Based on her experience, therefore, I suggest that novice NESTs need to ascertain where they intend to teach and determine what will be required of them. Second, novice NESTs should expect the unexpected. Johnson stressed that novice teachers should conform to those expectations that are written into his or her contract. That is because in some cases, novice L2teachers may encounter a disparity between what they hear and what is written in a contract, a disparity that can cause conflicts after employment commences. Thus, it is prudent to confirm that the contract with the school is well written prior to its enactment so that both sides are clear about expectations. Nevertheless, Johnson also asserts that it is important to expect the unexpected. Instead of coming to a new country or working environment with some fixed ideas or prejudices, she offers that it is important to remain open and embrace unexpected events with a flexible mindset. Unlike a public school setting, the alternative EFL school context is unique. Thus, I strongly recommend that new NESTs should enjoy experimenting with creative teaching methods.

For EFL school administrators, they should pay more attention to new NESTs. Johnson believes there is need to have a 'survival book' for novice NESTs in a

foreign country. It means that schools should seriously consider creating a survival book that contains pertinent information (e.g., airport pickup, shopping centers, sight-seeing, understanding bus routes, visiting a doctor, emergency contacts) for the NESTs, which would help them adjust to their new surroundings. Furthermore, the school should make efforts to improve on connecting novice NESTs with existing teachers. Specifically, she indicates that a ‘cultural training session with the school system’ and ‘interaction with the school before coming to Korea’ would be greatly helpful for novice NESTs. In this regard, the school leadership and the head of the English department should become aware of these needs and take actions to help NESTs adapt to a new school environment. If there is no survival book, a new teacher policy should be created. Since beginning NESTs need time to adjust to a new culture and work environment, in addition to dealing with some expected problems (e.g., homesickness), a protocol in place to assist with this adjustment would be tremendously effective.

Finally, pre-service English teacher training programs should set up a mentoring situation in which in-service teachers may share authentic teaching experiences with pre-service English teachers before they walk into an actual classroom. It would be immediately relevant and practical if the potential pre-service English teachers could talk with current teachers in the school and invite them to the class so that they may observe before they become full-time teachers.

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## Evaluation of the ELT Textbook: 'English in Mind 1 (2nd Edition)'

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### Biodata

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### Abstract

This cross-sectional survey study located its aim at conducting evaluation of the English Language Teaching (hereafter cited within the paper as ELT) textbook 'English in Mind 1 (Second Edition)' written by Puchta and Stranks (2010). Both groups of direct users (i.e. EFL teachers and EFL students of Santu Petrus Junior High School) showed how their perceptions towards such textbook are. A revised, updated, and structured checklist questionnaire developed by Mukundan, Nimehchisalem, and Hajimohammadi (2011) was in use to collect the primary quantitative data. There are two main evaluative criteria: general attributes and learning-teaching content and five-point Likert scales used to show to what extent the participants agreed with the provided statements. The responses were manually input into the computer spreadsheet software, namely Microsoft Office Excel 2007 and processed to find out the percentages. The yielded quantitative outcomes reflect the fact that amicably, the direct users of the ELT textbook generally possess contentment as nearly all the evaluated elements of each category included in the ELT textbook are

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favourably acceptable. There is, however, only one of those (i.e. balanced speaking activities distributed in the ELT textbook) refuted by the

EFL teachers, straightforwardly resulting in a clash of views. Despite this, the needs of both groups are, to such an extent, apparently fulfilled. Implications offered to the internal groups of the school and others adopting EFL teaching and learning in any educational institutions include sustainable use of the ELT textbook periodically controlled through evaluation until recent issues appear. The writers and the designers, however, should actualise balanced oral activities and preserve fine elements found in the ELT textbook.

**Keywords:** ELT Textbook evaluation, perceptions, checklist questionnaire

## **Introduction**

Numerous textbooks published as ELT materials spread widely in the market. It is easy to get interested in either of them because of its cover and writing. Nevertheless, it is complicated when providing a material that best fits the needs of a certain school (Cunningsworth, 1995; Williams, 1983). When an English teacher does not have great awareness of the features in the ELT textbooks, it may end up with the wrong selection. In this common sense, s/he merely applies the purchasing power for uselessness due to the content that is not ideal for the groups of students. For example, providing that the ELT textbook contains material that does not suit the levels of the students' knowledge and skill, various matters can indisputably occur (Yamanaka, 2006). Accordingly, in order to evade an improper use of the ELT textbook whilst instructional and learning activities last, a superfine decision should be made in advance. Evaluation is acceptable to take to ascertain that the decision does not go wrong.

Throughout the ELT textbook evaluation, values of the materials are measured (Tomlinson, 2011). There is no exception to keep this process active because the students' learning success heavily relies on it. In conducting the ELT textbook evaluation, a set of criteria should be thoroughly concerned. One of the ways to ease it is by providing a checklist. The checklist evaluation becomes a great recommendation. Cunningsworth (1995), for example, offers a quick-reference checklist for evaluation and selection comprising the criteria of aims and approaches, design and organisation, language content, skills, topic, methodology, teachers' books, and practical considerations. These, as lots of researchers believe, can portray the evidence of how the ELT textbooks are immensely like.

English in Mind, abbreviated as EIM, is one of the famous ELT textbooks currently appearing in its second edition in the world. Nevertheless, it is not widely used and, accordingly, is not for sale in any book stores in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Santu Petrus Junior High School is one of the private junior high schools in Pontianak that requires the use of such ELT textbook. Having identified the series of EIM, EFL teachers of Santu Petrus Junior High School particularly utilise EIM Starter, EIM 1, and EIM 2 as the ELT resources. These series are consecutively for the seventh, eighth, and ninth graders. The researcher who experientially works as one of the EFL teachers realises that such ELT textbooks have been used for a long time. However, none of the evaluative actions is taken and, hence, the strengths and the weaknesses of EIM remain mysterious. This research is designed to clear this issue throughout its focus on the second edition of EIM 1. There is strong belief that the outcomes of the current research accurately show the evaluative pieces of information in a logical sense since the two groups become direct users of EIM 1 (Second Edition).

#### *Research Question*

The formulated research questions on which the researcher concentrates are: ‘What are the perceptions of the EFL teachers of Santu Petrus Junior High School towards EIM 1 (Second Edition)?’, ‘What are the perceptions of the EFL students of Santu Petrus Junior High School towards EIM 1 (Second Edition)?’, and ‘What are the positive and negative values of EIM 1 (Second Edition)?’.

#### **Literature Review**

With regard to the theories underlying this research, the literature is reviewed. These cover the evaluation of ELT materials, types of ELT materials evaluation, ELT textbooks as an important material, and about English in Mind (Second Edition).

#### *Evaluation of ELT Materials*

Lots of ELT materials are used to aid the teaching and learning activities. Tomlinson (2011) mentions that either of them can be a textbook, a workbook, a cassette, a CD-ROM, a video, a photocopied handout, a newspaper or a paragraph written on a whiteboard: anything which presents or informs about the language being learnt (pp. xiii-xiv). However, it seems useless providing that it is invalid, unreliable, impractical, and unclear. Thus, despite the fact that it is complex, ELT materials

evaluation is fundamental (Ahmad, Sungif, & Mukundan, 2014; Branch, 2009; Cunningsworth, 1995; Sabzalipour & Koosha, 2014; Soori & Jamshidi, 2013).

ELT materials should be well-evaluated. This generally aims to ascertain the instructional products and processes. In essence, following the standard procedures is needed. For example, Branch (2009) mentions the three of them: determining evaluation criteria, selecting evaluation tools (e.g. a checklist (Cunningsworth, 1995; Miekley, 2005; Mukundan, Nimehchisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011; Williams, 1983)), and conducting evaluation. Cunningsworth (1995) further elaborates the need of thorough ELT materials evaluation to bridge the students' learning needs, requirements of the curriculum, ELT approaches, and language aspects. Additionally, this phase usefully assists the teachers to be capable of understanding the surroundings. The fact shows that students scarcely get opportunities to evaluate the ELT opportunities because the task is challenging. It should be noted that they are direct ELT materials users who understand what they need and can provide very useful feedback (Cunningsworth, 1995). When the internal criteria of the ELT textbooks are well-evaluated by the teachers and the students, a pleasant agreement can be achieved. Therefore, the students can engage in enjoyable learning (Cunningsworth, 1995; Tomlinson, 2011).

#### *Types of ELT Materials Evaluation*

Concerning the types, as claimed by Cunningsworth (1995) and Tomlinson (2011) ELT materials evaluation can be classified into pre-use evaluation, in-use or whilst-use evaluation, and post-use evaluation. Their elucidation is given here. Pre-use evaluation is the most difficult kind of evaluation as there is no actual experience of using the textbook to draw on. In this case, the teacher predicts the potential value of the textbook (Cunningsworth, 1995; Tomlinson, 2011). In-use or whilst-use evaluation, conversely, refers to textbook evaluation while the materials are being utilised. The focus is on identifying the consciousness and description of the users when using the materials (Cunningsworth, 1995; Tomlinson, 2011). Lastly, post-use evaluation is useful for identifying strengths and weaknesses which emerge over a period of continuous use. In other words, it provides retrospective assessment of how the textbook performance was. This kind of evaluation can be useful in helping to decide whether or not using a similar textbook in the future is necessary (Cunningsworth, 1995; Tomlinson, 2011).

The above elucidation suggests that evaluating the materials can be flexibly done as long as it is needed. However, sustainable evaluation yields better results as it reflects the perceptions and priorities of those making them over time (Cunningsworth, 1995; Sabzalipour & Koosha, 2014).

### *ELT Textbooks as an Important Material*

It is a certainty to see the familiarity of the term ‘textbook’. The use of textbooks is inevitable in the ELT context (Ahmed, Yaqoob, & Yaqoob, 2015; Alkhalidi, 2010). There is a plethora of essential roles that they play (Alavinia & Siyadat, 2013; Azizifar, Koosha, & Lotfi, 2010; Bahman & Rahimi, 2010; Bahrami, 2015; Jin, 2010; Mukundan, Nimehchisalem, & Hajimohammadi, 2011; Sabzalipour & Koosha, 2014; Soori & Jamshidi, 2013). For instance, they are primarily used for instructional and learning purposes (Alavinia & Siyadat, 2013; (Alavinia & Siyadat, 2013; Azizifar, Koosha, & Lotfi, 2010; Jin, 2010; Sabzalipour & Koosha, 2014), direct the learning to achieve the goals (Cunningsworth, 1995), acquaint the students with the cultural matters (Bahman & Rahimi, 2010; Bahrami, 2015; Zarei & Khalessi, 2011), and provide information ((Alavinia & Siyadat, 2013; Azizifar, Koosha, & Lotfi, 2010) and guidance to the teachers (Ahmad, Sungif & Mukundan, 2014; Soori & Jamshidi, 2013). Cunningsworth (1995) mentions more roles that a textbook plays. These are a resource for presentation material (spoken and written), a source of activities for learners’ practice and communicative interaction, a reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and so on, a source of stimulation and ideas for classroom language activities, a syllabus (where they reflect learning objectives which have already been determined), a resource for self-directed learning or self-access work, and a support for less experienced teachers who have to gain in confidence (p. 7).

### *About English in Mind (Second Edition)*

English in Mind (Second Edition), abbreviated as EIM (Second Edition) is a textbook written by Puchta and Stranks (2010). It was firstly published in 2004 and lastly in 2010 by Cambridge University Press. The latest edition is, as Puchta and Stranks (2010) note, fully revised and updated. Exclusively, EIM (Second Edition) is imported by Mentari Books to increase the accessibility to the EFL students in Indonesia. This textbook company is also responsible for the distribution. There are

six series of EIM: EIM Starter, EIM 1, EIM 2, EIM 3, EIM 4, and EIM 5. The packet of EIM (Second Edition) encompasses such facilities as student's book completed with DVD-ROM packing games, additional exercises and videos, workbook, teacher's resource book, audio CDs, classware DVD-ROM which covers the student's book, class audio and video, and testmaker audio CD/CD-ROM that supports the creation and edition of tests.

### *Previous Studies*

ELT textbooks evaluation has previously been carried out in different background. Some researchers (e.g. Ahmad, Sungif & Mukundan, 2014; Ahmed, Yaqoob & Yaqoob, 2015; Alavinia & Siyadat, 2013; Azizifar, Koosha & Lotfi, 2010; Bahrami, 2015; Jin, 2010; Sabzalipour & Koosha, 2014; Soori & Jamshidi, 2013) did their studies on it, while the others (e.g. Miekley, 2005; Mukundan, Nimehchisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011; Williams, 1983) developed the checklist. Concise reviews are presented following this discussion.

Strengths and weaknesses of Malaysian primary English language textbooks were sought by Ahmad, Sungif & Mukundan (2014). Thirty-two English teachers teaching in primary schools in Selangor were randomly selected. That the textbook was very highly beneficial and suitable for the learners was what Ahmad, et al. (2014) found.

With their belief that listening skill contributed to speaking skill and grammatical performance, Ahmed, Yaqoob & Yaqoob (2015) conducted evaluation on listening material served in the ELT textbook used by the secondary school level learners in Pakistan. The results of their evaluation were that the listening texts and activities were missing and that listening was not primarily concerned.

In the other regard, Alavinia and Siyadat (2013) compared four ELT textbooks facilitating the learning in Iranian institutes and found out that the one supported with more updated materials, beautiful coverage, visuals, and a convenient website became the students' priority.

In addition to the previous studies, in their paper whose goal was to evaluate the two series of ELT textbooks published from 1970 to the present and serving as the means of teaching and learning in Iranian high schools, Azizifar, Koosha & Lotfi (2010) obtained a result indicating that the students sought enough chances of

communicative learning. Therefore, it was suggested that the ELT textbooks were designed to load communicative activities.

Following these studies, Bahrami (2015) evaluated perceptions of fifty male and female English teachers on the cultural elements of Total English book series. Attempting to recognise the techniques and the strategies used by the teachers was additionally done. The results revealed that the respective book contained more western cultural elements and values not having suitability with the national culture and that the English teachers did not have a good command of the target culture and did not frequently get involved in introducing the cultural elements of the books.

Unlike the others, Jin's (2010) research was on the evaluation of the amount of white space in the Malaysian KBSM Form 2 English textbook. MATLAB 7.5 was utilised to solve the research problems. After analysing the research data, Jin (2010) found that white space of the textbook was inadequate as only few pages exceeded 90 percent. As it was affirmed, this research was important for the textbooks writers or the evaluators to consider avoiding creation of menacing textbooks for the learners.

Another study on evaluation by Sabzalipour and Koosha (2014) was characterised by eight common criteria (i.e. content, physical appearance, exercises and activities, clarity of instruction, level of textbook, vocabulary, grammar, and consideration of learning style differences in the textbooks) applied to examine some high schools in Mazandaran, Iran. Each of the 271 male and female English teachers was given a questionnaire to fill out. After the data were processed, it was identifiable that positive attitudes towards the textbooks assured the Iranian teachers' needs and interests.

Further evaluation on an ESP textbook was investigated by Soori and Jamshidi (2013). The textbook was designed for the students of computer sciences in Islamic Azad University, Iran. As it was asserted based on their findings, in order to satisfy the students' needs, revision and addition of materials were necessary.

In the sense of developing the evaluation checklist, Miekley (2005) created a checklist consisting of three major criteria such as textbook, teacher's manual, and context. Every question was arranged based on what the twenty-two experts proposed. This serves as the instrument of evaluating reading textbooks in the context of EFL/ESL. Similarly, Williams (1983) dealt with evaluative criteria of textbooks comprising general, speech, grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, and technical to be ticked. As he claims, this presented scheme is appropriate with EFL/ESL

instruction. A difference, however, is found in Mukundan, Nimehchisalem & Hajimohammadi (2011). They reformulated the checklist items in their focus group study. They assert that the checklist that they wrote is clearer and more inclusive than the earlier version. Unstructured and structured interviews were conducted to let the experienced participants brainstorm the criteria of ELT textbook evaluation and do rephrasing, omission, and addition as necessary as possible. After all, fourteen additional and two rephrased checklist items were made.

It is clear that previous researches on the ELT textbook evaluation are plentifully available. Despite this, it is a rarity to find the one in the EFL context in which the EFL teachers and the EFL students are internally involved. Thus, this gap is ready to fill. The novelty value is noteworthy in that this research focuses on the two aforementioned groups simultaneously taking part to disclose their evaluative ideas and the outcomes are, therefore, can more reliably and more logically acceptable.

## **Methodology**

The current chapter presents an applicable method of this research. The design, procedure, and participants of the research, the researcher's roles, the technique and the instrument of data collection, and data analysis are those going to be elaborated.

### *Design and Procedure of Research*

With regard to the quantitative nature of this study, a survey was decided to be applied. This design, as its name implies, administered a survey to the research participants and involved the data collection of their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, behaviours or characteristics. The cross-sectional survey design was performed because it fitted best with the topic of the current study. In the cross-sectional research, the data are only collected once, while the latter type involves the survey on the dynamics of the issue twice or more (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011; Jackson, 2010; Walliman, 2011).

Prior to the conduct of the research, a well-defined procedure should be concerned. It consisted of the following steps: state the problem or the topic, construct or locate the questionnaire or the survey tool, pilot test the questionnaire, prepare the cover letter, administer the questionnaire: select participants, distribute the

questionnaire, conduct follow-up activities, tabulate the questionnaire responses, analyse the results, and write the report (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011, p. 183).

### *Research Participants*

This study surveyed the four EFL teachers and all (two hundred and eighty-six) eighth EFL graders of Santu Petrus Junior High School in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Indonesia in the academic year of 2015/2016. One of the four EFL teachers is a male (the researcher), while the three others are females. They are experienced in teaching for three to ten academic years. They all have ever taught the eighth graders using EIM 1 (Second Edition). The representativeness was achieved since the target sample was wholly included in this study.

### *Researcher's Roles*

The researcher participated as a person who surveyed the perceptions of the EFL teachers and the EFL students when the evaluation of EIM 1 (Second Edition) lasted. In addition, he was also responsible for giving responses, collecting and analysing the gathered data, interpreting the results, drawing the conclusions, and providing recommendations to the groups of people directly engaging in the use and the writing of EIM 1 (Second Edition).

### *Technique and Instrument of Data Collection*

A survey instrument was compulsorily taken into consideration in order to collect the primary data. Either of the questionnaire or the interview can be used in the survey study. To decide, the whole selected participants were offered structured questionnaires (i.e. lists of items with limited options to be answered by the respondents (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2012; Dawson, 2002; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2011; Jackson, 2010; Walliman, 2011). It was adopted from Mukundan, Nimehchisalem & Hajimohammadi (2011). It contains two main evaluative criteria: general attributes and learning-teaching content and five-point Likert scales used to show to what extent the participants agreed with the provided statements. As they claim, the questionnaire they developed is valid, reliable, practical, and clear due to the revision and update constructed together with the experienced participants that they selected. Such instrument satisfies the

affirmation vis-à-vis validity and reliability that Gay, et al. (2011) proposed. Comprehensibly, it was ready to be applied.

The respondents were not asked to fill out their personal information in the cover letter for the reason of releasing the state of being anxious. The Likert scales of each statement following each category in the questionnaire were ticked. By doing so, the collected data could give confirmation from various perspectives. A teachers' room and seven classrooms were used as the research sites. Total silence was made to keep the participants concentrated and serious when the process of filling out the questionnaires lasted for twenty minutes.

### *Data Analysis*

The data surveyed throughout fifty-two-item questionnaires in which each consists of a five-point Likert scale were analysed beforehand. The responses were manually input into the computer spreadsheet, namely Microsoft Office Excel 2007, and processed to find out the number and the percentages. The yielded quantitative data were tabulated, analysed, and descriptively elaborated.

## **Outcomes and Discussion**

### *Outcomes*

The yielded quantitative outcomes were obtained through fine process. To obviously see percentages of responses given by both groups of respondents, tables were used. The reports were described next.

### *General attributes*

The elaboration of five common features of EIM 1 (Second Edition) is covered in this part. As indicated in the adopted questionnaire, they include syllabus and curriculum appropriateness, methodology, suitability to learners, physical and utilitarian attributes, and efficient outlay of supplementary materials.

Understanding a syllabus and a curriculum integrated in an ELT textbook is indispensable. They specifically reflect what is to be taught to or to be learnt by the students. For this reason, the content should be presented based on the specifications to ascertain systematic and directed teaching and learning. Table 1 displays the response rates in terms of the ELT textbook in relation to syllabus and curriculum.

**Table 1: Percentages of responses on the book in relation to syllabus and curriculum**

Statement			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
It matches to the specifications of the syllabus (adopted from Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 104)	T	%	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	50.00
	S	%	0.35	2.45	20.63	45.45	31.12

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

As can be seen in Table 1, 50.00% of the EFL teachers strongly agree on the statement. The others refute it (25.00%) and not decided (25.00%). Alike the EFL teachers' responses, positive perceptions are also given by more EFL students (76.57%). Nonetheless, the rest of the EFL students oppose (2.80%) and are undecided (20.63%).

Flexibility of employing any teaching methods when coping with the activities remains a serious aspect (Cunningsworth, 1995). An ELT textbook, thus, is useless once it encompasses numerous tasks that cannot be solved through ELT methodologies. To see how the EFL teachers and the EFL students perceive this matter, the content placed in Table 2 ought to be noted.

**Table 2: Percentages of responses on methodology**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
The activities can be exploited fully and can embrace the various methodologies in ELT.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
	S	%	0.35	2.80	32.16	42.31	22.38
Activities can work well with methodologies in ELT. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 104)	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%	0.35	3.50	29.36	44.41	22.38

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

Table 2 provides indication that the whole (100.00%) of the EFL teachers have a positive viewpoint that the ELT methodologies can be integrated in any kinds

of ELT activities. This is similarly supported by 64.69% of the EFL students. Only a small number (3.15%) of the EFL students show their disapproval and the others have no decision (32.16%).

In the other regard, a favourable impression appears as all (100.00%) of the EFL teachers accept the compatibility between ELT activities and ELT methodologies. Nearly 67.00% of the EFL students react to the statement as what the EFL teachers do.

Any of these: background knowledge and level of students (Sabzalipour & Koosha, 2014; Soori & Jamshidi, 2013), socio-economic context compatibility, cultural accessibility to learners (Bahrami, 2015), learners' need compatibility (Soori & Jamshidi, 2013), and learners' interest compatibility (as proposed by Mukundan, et al., 2011, p. 104) can make the perceptions of the intended respondents vary. Comprising five items, Table 3 gives information on the appropriateness of EIM 1 (Second Edition) based upon the viewpoints of the EFL teachers and the EFL students.

**Table 3: Percentages of responses on suitability to learners**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
It is compatible to background knowledge and level of students.	T	%	0.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	25.00
	S	%	2.45	4.20	19.92	38.81	34.62
It is compatible to the socio-economic context.	T	%	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
	S	%	2.80	7.34	36.72	36.36	16.78
It is culturally accessible to the learners.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%	2.80	6.99	29.02	40.21	20.98
It is compatible to the needs of the learners.	T	%	0.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	25.00
	S	%	0.70	2.10	21.67	44.06	31.47
It is compatible to the interests of the learners. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 104)	T	%	0.00	25.00	0.00	50.00	25.00
	S	%	2.80	8.74	31.46	33.22	23.78

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

Table 3 shows that there are high percentages (75.00% and 73.43%) of the EFL teachers' and the EFL students' responses on the compatibility between the ELT textbook and knowledge and level of students. No EFL teachers and only a small number (6.65%) of EFL students disagree and strongly disagree. The rest of them, however, hold no decision (19.92%).

Referring to the compatibility between the ELT textbook and the socio-economic context, the positive responses (50.00% and 53.14%) are lower than the ones for the first item in Table 3. Some (36.72%) of EFL students are undecided, while 10.14% of them have negative responses.

A perfect percentage (100.00%) is accumulated from the EFL teachers' agreement on the third item. Over a half (61.19%) of all the EFL students also possess positive responses. 9.79% and 29.02% of them consecutively have disapproving and undecided responses.

The fourth item in this part is responded affirmatively by both of the EFL teachers (75.00%) and the EFL students (75.53%). Negative responses are only given by a small number (2.80%) of the EFL students, while the rest (21.67%) of them choose neither in favour of nor against the item.

Ultimately, there are 75.00% of and a quarter (25.00%) of the number of EFL teachers who respectively show agreement and refutation on the compatibility of the ELT textbook and learners' interest. 57.00% of the EFL students approve, whereas the others have negative (11.54%) and undecided (31.46%) responses.

Recognising various aspects which are in relation to physically and practically noticeable elements of the ELT textbook (for example, the layout, the efficiency of passages and visuals, the durability, the cost-effectiveness, the size appropriateness, and the printing quality) is one advantage. Needless to say, such elements are the key to better learning opportunities (Sabzalipour & Koosha, 2014) and, therefore, direct the ELT textbook selectors to have evaluative impressions. Table 4 reflects how the EFL teachers' and the EFL students' perceptions are on these.

**Table 4: Percentages of responses on physical and utilitarian attributes**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
Its layout is attractive.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00
	S	%	1.75	4.55	22.02	30.07	41.61
It indicates efficient use of texts and visuals.	T	%	0.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	25.00
	S	%	0.00	1.75	18.88	35.66	43.71
It is durable.	T	%	0.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	25.00
	S	%	1.75	2.45	20.98	36.01	38.81
It is cost-effective.	T	%	0.00	25.00	25.00	50.00	0.00
	S	%	1.75	3.15	26.91	44.06	24.13
Its size is appropriate.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%	3.50	7.69	26.23	37.06	25.52
The printing quality is high. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 104)	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00
	S	%	1.40	1.40	13.28	29.72	54.20

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

As outlined in Table 4, 100.00% of the EFL teachers and 71.68% of the EFL students concur with the statement *Its layout is attractive*. 6.30% of the EFL students, nevertheless, are in opposition to it. The rest (22.02%) of them are neutral.

Regarding the efficiency of passages and visuals, 75.00% of the EFL teachers make approval. One (25.00%) of them is undecided. Meanwhile, almost 80.00% the EFL students show approval, whereas the rest do not (20.63%).

Resembling the second item result, the third item on the ELT textbook durability gains affirmation from 75.00% of the EFL teachers and nearly 75.00% of the EFL students. On the contrary, the others (25.00% of the EFL teachers and 25.18% of the EFL students) do not.

In addition to the results, 50.00% of the EFL teachers agree on the fourth item *It is cost-effective*, while the others disagree (25.00%) and not decided (25.00%). In contrast, 68.19% of the EFL students assert that the ELT textbook brings benefits to

them compared to the money spent, whereas the others disagree (4.90%) and are undecided (26.91%).

On the size appropriateness of the ELT textbook, all (100.00%) of the EFL teachers agree. Over a half (62.58%) of the EFL students show their positive responses as well. The remaining EFL students disagree (11.19%) and are undecided (26.23%).

Finally, equal percentages (50.00%) indicate that the EFL teachers agree and strongly agree on high printing quality of the ELT textbook. The majority (83.92%) of the EFL students surveyed additionally have good perceptions on this item. The others oppose it (2.80%) and hold no decision (13.28%).

The ELT textbook cannot merely be singly evaluated. Another aspect that should be further taken into account pertains to supporting materials kept as facilitating supplements. Encouraging this idea, Williams (1983) specifically ascertain that a teacher's guidebook is compulsory for all non-native speakers of English. Providing that none of them are provided, teaching and learning becomes ineffective and inefficient. Comprehensibly, the teachers' responsibilities and the students' needs remain not fulfilled (Soori & Jamshidi, 2013). Hindrances emerge as a straightforward result of this case. To offer an unfavourable case in point, an EFL teacher can adversely teach listening to his/her students as there are no accompanying audio-materials and teacher's guide book. Their cognitive functions and precise predictions when coping with oral activities, hence, cannot be expedited (Ahmed, et al., 2015). Table 5 serves the data given by the EFL teachers and the EFL students.

**Table 5: Percentages of responses on efficient outlay of supplementary materials**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
The book is supported efficiently by essentials like audio-materials.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	75.00
	S	%	1.75	2.45	23.42	37.76	34.62
There is a teacher's guide to aid the teacher. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 104)	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00
	S	%	2.10	3.50	29.37	37.06	27.97

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

It is evident from Table 5 that all (100.00%) of the EFL teachers and most (72.38%) of the EFL students are convinced that the ELT textbook are completed with essentials. The other EFL students, however, are against the statement (4.20%) and have reluctance to provide responses (23.42%).

Resembling the previous outcome, the whole (100.00%) of the EFL teachers and most (65.03%) of the EFL students notice the existence of the teacher's guide. Conversely, the remaining EFL students dispute (5.60%) and possess no decision (29.37%).

### *Learning-teaching content*

Whether or not the content is thoroughly written in the ELT textbook is a topic to be discussed in this section. The discussion specifically covers such items as tasks, cultural loads, naturalness and authenticity of the language and the conversation context, material, topics, and internal elements. Showing a link, real-world tasks attract the students' attention to learn relying upon the language, the complexity level, the achievability of the goals, and the internal elements. Cultural loads, however, sensitise the students to various cultures. Encompassing the most items in the adopted questionnaire, Table 6 shows positive, negative, and undecided responses of the participants on the general elements of the ELT textbook.

**Table 6: Percentages of responses on general elements**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
Most of the tasks in the book are interesting.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
	S	%	4.90	10.49	31.12	36.01	17.48
Tasks move from simple to complex.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
	S	%	3.50	4.90	34.95	33.92	22.73
Task objectives are achievable.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%	2.80	6.64	40.56	34.62	15.38
Cultural sensitivities have been considered.	T	%	0.00	0.00	25.00	75.00	0.00
	S	%	4.20	8.39	38.11	34.27	15.03
The language in the textbook is natural and real.	T	%	0.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	25.00
	S	%	1.40	3.85	23.07	41.96	29.72
The situations created in the dialogues sound natural and real.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
	S	%	1.40	4.20	23.07	39.51	31.82
The material is up-to-date.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%	1.40	5.24	29.03	37.41	26.92
It covers a variety of topics from different fields.	T	%	0.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	50.00
	S	%	1.40	1.40	20.63	46.15	30.42
The book contains fun elements. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 105)	T	%	0.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	50.00
	S	%	2.80	4.55	24.81	34.97	32.87

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

As wholly indicated in Table 6, 75.00% of the EFL teachers agree but only 25.00% strongly agree on the interesting tasks of the ELT textbook. In the other regard, the EFL students express agreement (36.01%) and strong agreement (17.48%) as well. The other EFL students, conversely, cannot have the same points (46.51%).

The second item finding reveals that the percentages obtained from the EFL teachers are similar to the ones stated in the first item (75.00% for *agree* and 25.00%

for *strongly agree*). On the other hand, the EFL students give these facts: agreement (56.65%), opposition (8.40%), and neutrality (34.95%).

Following these, a complete number (100.00%) of the EFL teachers believe that the task objectives are achievable. 50.00% of the EFL students, however, concur with each other. The rest of the EFL students have opposite opinions (9.44%) and are undecided (40.56%).

Besides, 75.00% of the EFL teachers believe that the cultural sensitivities have been considered, while another one does not have a perception (25.00%). The EFL students' responses, however, indicate concurrence (49.30%), dispute (12.59%), and neutrality (38.11%).

Pertaining to naturalness and authenticity of the language in the ELT textbook, the results reveal that the EFL teachers have agreement (75.00%) and no decision (25.00%). Meanwhile, the EFL students have positive responses (71.68%), negative responses (5.25%), and no decision (23.07%).

Furthermore, the sixth item receives 100.00% of the EFL teachers' and 71.33% of the EFL students' positive responses. The rest of the EFL students possess negative responses (5.60%) and no decision (23.07%).

The whole (100.00%) of the EFL teachers concur with each other when considering the updated material. In another way, there are EFL students expressing approval (64.33%), disapproval (6.64%), and neutrality (29.03%).

Concerning the topic variety, the EFL teachers have dissimilar responses: *agree* (25.00%), *strongly agree* (50.00%), and *undecided* (25.00%). Meanwhile, the five responses are proven by the EFL students in this distribution: agreement (76.57%), rebuttal (2.80%), and neutrality (20.63%).

Finally, the fun elements gain responses which are similar to the ones given by the EFL teachers in the eighth item: *agree* (25.00%), *strongly agree* (50.00%) and *undecided* (25.00%). 67.84% of the EFL students express approval, whereas only less than 8.00% of the EFL students reveal disapproval. The rest are neutral (24.81%).

Besides the aforementioned matters, how the four integrated skills are explored is a serious point of concern. The first one (i.e. listening) is inextricably linked with these elements: aims, directions, and difficulty and authenticity of tasks. Table 7 serves the data obtained from the sample.

**Table 7: Percentages of responses on listening**

Statements				Responses				
				SD	D	U	A	SA
The book has appropriate listening tasks with well-defined goals.	T	%		0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%		3.50	5.24	32.52	32.17	26.57
Instructions are clear.	T	%		0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
	S	%		2.80	5.24	23.43	40.91	27.62
Tasks are efficiently graded according to complexity.	T	%		0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%		2.10	6.64	31.82	40.21	19.23
Tasks are authentic or close to real language situations. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 105)	T	%		0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
	S	%		1.40	2.45	28.67	39.86	27.62

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

As shown in Table 7, the appropriateness and well-defined goals of listening tasks are approved by the whole (100%) of the EFL teachers. The majority (58.74%) of the EFL students also have good trust on this item. Despite this, the other EFL students indicate disapproval (8.74%) and no decision (32.52%).

In relation to a clear instruction of each listening task, concurrence is made by the EFL teachers (100%) and the EFL students (68.53%). The rest of the EFL students react against it (8.04%) and are undecided (23.43%).

Moreover, the only response on the third item: *agree* (100.00%) is given by the EFL teachers. Meanwhile, the EFL students' responses signify these: approval (59.44%), disapproval (8.74%), and no decision (31.82%).

Paying attention to the last item result, the EFL teachers assert these: *agree* (75.00%) and *strongly agree* (25.00%). The EFL students also mostly state agreement (67.48%), while the others do not (3.85%) and are undecided (28.67%).

Besides listening, a speaking category should be prioritised. This deals with the enhancement of a communicative competence. Tabulated in Table 8, the three items portraying the evidence on such the category are given.

**Table 8: Percentages of responses on speaking**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
Activities are developed to initiate meaningful communication.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
	S	%	1.75	4.55	25.52	40.91	27.27
Activities are balanced between individual response, pair work, and group work.	T	%	0.00	75.00	25.00	0.00	0.00
	S	%	1.75	5.94	21.68	36.01	34.62
Activities motivate students to talk. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 105)	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%	2.80	4.90	26.56	34.62	31.12

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

Table 8 presents the evidence that 100.00% of the EFL teachers and 68.18% of the EFL students support the statement *Activities are developed to initiate meaningful communication*. Less than 7.00% of the EFL students, however, cannot positively admit it. The rest (25.52%) of them are neutral.

Unlike the first evidence, concerning the balanced activities, the number of the EFL teachers mostly disagree (75.00%), while another one (25.00%) is undecided. On the other hand, nearly 71.00% the EFL students show concurrence, whereas the remaining ones do not (7.69%) and are undecided (21.68%).

At last, the activities, as perceived by all (100.00%) of the EFL teachers, are a motivating tool for learning. This statement also becomes the EFL students' favourable concern (65.74%) in general. The others are in an altercation (7.70%) and are undecided (26.56%).

Evidently turning out to be a substantial aspect, reading skill needs to be evaluated in the ELT textbook. It is developed through graded texts, appropriate length, and interesting texts ( Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 105). To evaluate these, referring to Table 9 is necessary.

**Table 9: Percentages of responses on reading**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
Texts are graded.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%	1.40	3.85	26.92	38.81	29.02
Length is appropriate.	T	%	0.00	0.00	25.00	75.00	0.00
	S	%	3.85	5.59	29.37	39.16	22.03
Texts are interesting. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 105)	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
	S	%	2.10	4.20	19.57	32.17	41.96

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

The given numeric information in Table 9 shows that all (100.00%) of the EFL teachers concur with each other when considering the graded texts. In another respect, there are EFL students expressing concurrence, contention, and neutrality with these respective percentages: 67.83%, 5.25%, and 26.92%.

Regarding the length appropriateness, the EFL teachers have different responses: *agree* (75.00%) and *undecided* (25.00%). In an opposite way, the five responses are proven by the EFL students in this distribution: agreement (61.19%), denial (9.44%), and neutrality (29.37%).

The interesting texts are agreed (75.00%) and strongly agreed (25.00%) by the EFL teachers. This is similarly perceived by more than 70.00% of the EFL students. Merely the minority of the EFL students reveal disapproval (6.30%) and neutrality (19.57%).

Apart from listening, speaking, and reading aspects, writing is another indicator of success that the ELT textbook possesses. The following three items given in Table 10 are those to be evaluated.

**Table 10: Percentages of responses on writing**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
Tasks have achievable goals and take into consideration learner capabilities.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%	3.50	4.55	28.31	41.96	21.68
Models are provided for different genres.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00
	S	%	3.15	5.94	31.47	38.81	20.63
Tasks are interesting. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 105)	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
	S	%	4.90	10.84	30.76	29.02	24.48

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

Table 10 presents the truth that 100.00% of the EFL teachers agree with the statement *Tasks have achievable goals and take into consideration learner capabilities*. On the other hand, the EFL students present these response types: agreement (63.64%), opposition (8.05%), and neutrality (28.31%).

Equally, a half of the number of the EFL teachers agree (50.00%) and another half strongly agree (50.00%) with the models. In the other regard, the EFL students also express agreement (38.81%) and strong agreement (20.63%). The other EFL students, conversely, cannot have the same points (40.56%).

Finally, the whole (100.00%) of the EFL teachers concur with each other when considering interesting writing tasks. In another way, there are EFL students expressing approval (53.50%), disapproval (15.74%), and neutrality (30.76%).

English language teaching and learning have tremendous reliance upon various components: vocabulary (Sabzalipour & Koosha, 2014), grammar, and pronunciation. It is, thus, insufficient to have enhancement of English language learning skills once these components are unworthily considered in the ELT textbook. To begin with, the non-appearance of attention paid to vocabulary component leads to unfavourable teaching and learning. The following data numerically act as representation of the percentages of responses on vocabulary items in accumulation.

**Table 11: Percentages of responses on vocabulary**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
The load (number of new words in each lesson) is appropriate to the level.	T	%	0.00	0.00	25.00	75.00	0.00
	S	%	3.50	5.59	27.27	39.86	23.78
There is a good distribution (simple to complex) of vocabulary load across chapters and the whole book.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%	2.45	7.69	29.02	39.86	20.98
Words are efficiently repeated and recycled across the book.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	75.00
	S	%	2.10	3.50	29.71	42.66	22.03
Words are contextualised. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 105)	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
	S	%	1.05	3.50	32.86	40.56	22.03

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

From Table 11, it can be reported that the EFL teachers have these responses on an appropriate load of vocabulary in relation to the level: *agree* (75.00%) and *undecided* (25.00%). The EFL students, conversely, show approval (63.64%), disapproval (9.09%), and neutrality (27.27%).

Unlike the first item outcome, the second one is viewed affirmatively by the whole EFL teachers (100.00%) and the majority of the EFL students (60.84%). The other EFL students dispute (10.14%) and are undecided (29.02%).

A dissimilar result is also found on the third item. While most (75.00%) of the EFL teachers strongly agree, only the minority agree (25.00%). The EFL students, however, mostly give positive responses (64.69%), whereas the others raise denial (5.60%) and are neutral (29.71%).

As to the word contextualisation, all (100.00%) of the EFL teachers express approval. Meanwhile, 62.59% of the EFL students positively show their positive responses. Only a small number (4.55%) of the EFL students disagree and are undecided (32.86%).

As previously noted, being a secondly mentioned component, grammar is another complementary component indispensably defining the success of English

language teaching and learning. Without grammar, the rules of English language can be disobeyed. Therefore, unstructured sentences produced by the students are definitely found. Productive use of English language is also hampered (Sabzalipour & Koosha, 2014). Gathered in Table 12, the findings are as follows:

**Table 12: Percentages of responses on grammar**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
The spread of grammar is achievable.	T	%	0.00	25.00	0.00	50.00	25.00
	S	%	2.45	3.15	26.92	47.55	19.93
The grammar is contextualised.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	S	%	2.10	2.10	38.46	40.91	16.43
Examples are interesting.	T	%	0.00	25.00	25.00	50.00	0.00
	S	%	2.45	3.85	28.31	41.96	23.43
Grammar is introduced explicitly.	T	%	0.00	25.00	25.00	50.00	0.00
	S	%	1.75	3.15	26.91	44.06	24.13
Grammar is reworked implicitly throughout the book.	T	%	0.00	0.00	25.00	75.00	0.00
	S	%	2.45	3.85	36.71	41.26	15.73

(These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 105)

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

Table 12 gives a useful indication that the majority (75.00%) of the EFL teachers express approval on grammar achievability, whereas the minority refute (25.00%) it. Meanwhile, almost 68.00% of the EFL students support it. The remaining EFL students, nonetheless, respond against it (5.60%) and are undecided (26.92%).

Pertaining to contextualised grammar, the outcomes show that the EFL teachers reveal total agreement (100.00%). Meanwhile, the EFL students have positive responses (57.34%), negative responses (4.20%), and no decision (38.46%).

Besides, 50.00% of the EFL teachers assert that the interesting examples have been considered, whereas the rest disagree (25.00%) and are neutral (25.00%). The

EFL students' responses, however, indicate concurrence (65.39%), dispute (6.30%), and neutrality (28.31%).

Turning to the explicit grammar introduction, the EFL teachers indicate these: concurrence (50.00%), denial (25.00%), and no decision (25.00%). The EFL students, however, present these: concurrence (68.19%), denial (4.90%), and no decision (26.91%).

Lastly, the implicit grammar reworking gains these responses: *agree* (75.00%) and *undecided* (25.00%) from the EFL teachers. 56.99% of the EFL students express approval, whereas only less than 7.00% of the EFL students reveal disapproval. The others are neutral (36.71%).

In addition to vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation is fundamental to concern. It particularly affects how consistently remarkable the speaking achievement is. Pronunciation refers to the way every word is sounded. Table 13 contains two items related to pronunciation and the results.

**Table 13: Percentages of responses on pronunciation**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
It is contextualised.	T	%	0.00	25.00	0.00	50.00	25.00
	S	%	2.45	6.29	27.63	45.45	18.18
It is easy to learn. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 105)	T	%	0.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
	S	%	5.24	9.79	26.23	32.52	26.22

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

Referring to Table 13, the findings provide indications that concerning the contextualised pronunciation, the EFL teachers have different responses: *agree* (50.00%), *strongly agree* (25.00%) and *disagree* (25.00%). Meanwhile, the five responses are proven by the EFL students in this distribution: agreement (63.63%), denial (8.74%), and neutrality (27.63%).

Following this, a half number (50.00%) of the number of the EFL teachers are certain that the pronunciation is easy to learn and the other half cannot have similar points (50.00%). In another way, most (58.74%) of the EFL students concur with each

other. The rest of the EFL students have opposite opinions (15.03%) and are undecided (26.23%).

An ultimate category to be evaluated in an ELT textbook is exercises. Those arranged with clear instructions evade the students from perplexity. To ensure the learning success assessed (Soori & Jamshidi, 2013), exercises should additionally be precisely and conscientiously written based upon the consideration of the levels of the students. Table 14 contains the survey results on exercises.

**Table 14: Percentages of responses on exercises**

Statements			Responses				
			SD	D	U	A	SA
They have clear instructions.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00
	S	%	2.45	5.59	27.27	33.92	30.77
They are adequate.	T	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
	S	%	2.45	4.90	27.27	45.10	20.28
They help students who are under/over-achievers. (These statements were adopted from Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011, p. 105)	T	%	0.00	25.00	0.00	50.00	25.00
	S	%	5.24	3.85	22.73	37.06	31.12

T= Teachers, S= Students, %= Percentage, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, U= Undecided, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree.

As displayed in Table 14, equal percentages (50.00%) indicate that the EFL teachers agree and strongly agree on clear instructions of exercises given in the ELT textbook. The majority (64.69%) of the EFL students have affirmative belief on this item as well. Following these, the other EFL students dispute (8.04%) and show absent decision (27.27%).

Paying attention to the second item result on exercise adequacy, the EFL teachers state these: *agree* (75.00%) and *strongly agree* (25.00%). The EFL students also mostly state agreement (65.38%), while the others do not (7.35%) and are undecided (27.27%).

Ultimately, 75.00% of the EFL teachers and 68.18% of the EFL students claim in favour of the exercises encouraging learning and skill enhancement. The former

group has a participant with disagreement (25.00%), whereas the latter group includes participants with disapproval (9.09%) and no decision (22.73%).

## Discussion

Results obtained in this study were interpreted in the form of discussion. The evidence implies that there is no refutation on general attributes of EIM 1 (Second Edition). In essence, the two groups react in favour of the whole provided statements as the syllabus and curriculum specifications are suitable. They can also employ particular methods that suit any kinds of activities and experience learning in different ways. To offer further details, based on the participants' pleasant agreement on the suitability to learners as well as on the existence of physical and utilitarian attributes and of efficient outlay of supplementary materials, it can be affirmed that the parts arranged in the ELT textbook intrigue the engagement of the participants in enjoyable teaching and learning, the passages and visuals are effectively used across the chapters, there is likelihood that the physical elements can last for a long time, benefits compared to the cost borne are assured, the size and the printing quality of the ELT textbook satisfy the users, and a set of accompanying materials are available (cf. those proposed in *about English in Mind (Second Edition)* for the sake of comprehensive information).

In the other regard, the EFL teachers and the EFL students reach the consensus of perceptions vis-à-vis learning-teaching content of EIM 1 (Second Edition) in general. Merely balanced speaking activities do not attract agreement. To clearly provide description, the ELT textbook is recognised by the current school for its acceptable standard in terms of tasks, cultural sensitivities, language, conversation context, material, topic variety, and interesting elements. In addition, the facts that the listening tasks are appropriate and have obvious goals and instructions, include proportional questions, and embed authenticity are regarded. Under the speaking category, the capabilities of the activities to contribute to meaningful communication and raise students' motivation to talk are designed well. Nevertheless, as reflected in the findings given in Table 8, to restate, there is a clash of views on balanced speaking activities distributed in the ELT textbook. This shapes not solid soundness. As a matter of fact, typically, based on the researcher's intensive observation, additional materials provided in the other references are in use by the EFL teachers to cover the activities which are insufficient for particular speaking purposes in the

current ELT textbook. The effort made here is common in this case (Cunningsworth, 1995).

Apart from these, both groups' expectations on the sections of reading, writing, and vocabulary existing in EIM 1 (Second Edition) are satisfied. At first, reading sections are characterised by graded and interesting texts and appropriate length to read. Furthermore, the EFL teachers and the EFL students believe that no typical complexity hampers the process of achieving writing goals, examples are ready to refer to, and tasks are interesting. They can further evade the perplexity of grasping most words given across the chapters as they corroborate appropriateness of the vocabulary and the students' level, proper vocabulary distribution, effective vocabulary repetition and recycling, and contextualised words. In connections with grammar, pronunciation, and exercises, a similar indication appears. The EFL teachers and the EFL students are generally not doubtful about accepting the aforementioned statements listed in the last remaining tables. This signifies welcome regard.

Above all, excluding the only balanced speaking activities, general attributes and learning-teaching content of EIM 1 (Second Edition) can attract favourable concurrence among the direct users. This indication is unlike the others. ELT textbooks evaluated by Ahmed, et al. (2015), Bahrami (2015), and Soori and Jamshidi (2013), for example, cannot satisfy learners' needs because of these respective weaknesses: a greater emphasis of western cultural elements and values, the defects of textbook material, and the unavailability of audio-video learning material. The current research confirms the outcomes obtained by Ahmad, Sungif & Mukundan (2014) and Sabzalipour and Koosha (2014) in terms of ELT textbook acceptability and serves the generalisation that the teaching and learning of EFL in the current school are commonly in a proper context and finely last.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Serving as a medium for teaching-learning purposes, EIM 1 (Second Edition) has been evaluated particularly in one of the private schools in which English subject is taught and learnt as a foreign language. The cross-sectional survey design was performed through the use of adopted, structured questionnaires. The survey outcomes reflect the fact that a logical conclusion can be drawn. This is to assertively note that amicably, the direct users of the ELT textbook generally possess

contentment as nearly all the evaluated elements of each category included in the ELT textbook are favourably acceptable. There is, however, only one of those (i.e. balanced speaking activities distributed in the ELT textbook) refuted by the EFL teachers, straightforwardly resulting in a clash of views. Despite this, In a unanimous support with findings shown by Ahmad, Sungif & Mukundan (2014) and Sabzalipour and Koosha (2014), the needs of both groups are, to such an extent, apparently fulfilled.

Some recommendations can be made and conveyed to the EFL teachers and the principal of the current school as well as the writers and the designers of the respective ELT textbook. At first, the former groups ought to evidently recognise that the ELT textbook deserves sustainable use until recent issues appear. Simply to state, the ELT textbook should be available at school as long as no altercation exists due to any factors. Because no ELT textbooks are perfect (Soori & Jamshidi, 2013), evaluation controlled in a series of periods, as strongly recommended by Cunningsworth (1995) and Sabzalipour and Koosha (2014), is indisputably vital to continually conduct to see how useful and effective the ELT textbook and its supplementary materials immensely are (Ahmad, et al., 2014; Alkhaldi, 2010). Recommendations are also given to the latter groups. Initially, they should maintain fine elements that have been one contributing factor of the quality assurance of the ELT textbook. Additionally, they should keep a number of speaking activities not overloaded in particular. An obvious goal is to achieve better quality of the ELT textbook (Alavinia & Siyadat, 2013; Azizifar, et al., 2010).

The ascertainment that those adopting EFL teaching and learning in any educational institutions can make use of the examined ELT textbook is convincing. Understandably, though merely whilst-use evaluation of EIM 1 (Second Edition) performed solely by the EFL teachers and the EFL students in a very typical EFL school was reported, a lot of criteria are in appropriateness based on the perceptions given.

Limitation is still found in this research. Future researches resembling this scope can include the other types of evaluation on the other types and series of ELT textbooks in any settings of English language teaching and learning.

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## **Genre and Rhetoric Awareness in Academic Writing Instruction: Personal Narrative and Comparative Analysis**

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### **Biodata**

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### **Abstract**

The author discusses genre and rhetoric issues in second language academic writing through personal narrative of writing in Chinese (first language) and English (foreign/second language) and analysis of current writing instructions in China's high schools and universities. The goal is to lead up to discussions of the cross-cultural differences in rhetoric and genre classification, the deficiencies in writing instruction, and the concerns with the academic contexts across borders and disciplines. The author presents pedagogical considerations on how to view students' writing and their potentials when definitions of text types and evaluation criteria are different, when students' past curriculum focus and acquired skills are different, and when multiple sets of 'norms' encounter and differences in post-secondary education exist. Raising genre and rhetoric awareness early in students' tertiary studies and communication between professors and non-native students are recommended.

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**Keywords:** Academic writing, second language, EAL, rhetoric, genre, cross-cultural differences

## Introduction

Learning to write academically is not easy for a native speaker of any language. The training of essay writing may begin at the middle school or high school, but the imperative task of academic writing happens at the tertiary level. Non-native-speaking students have an additional set of issues on top of what a native speaker may have. These issues vary, and some have been investigated extensively, for example, the influence of the writers' home cultural values, first language rhetorical traditions, writing conventions, writing skills, and instructional methods, to name just a few (e.g., Carson, 1992; Coelho, 2007; Friedlande, 1990; Hyland & Anan, 2006; Schoonen et al., 2003; Wang, 2003). It seems easy to scrutinize the students' prior knowledge and skills when they have trouble writing in English. However, how did students learn to write in English before they came to an English-speaking university? Are the concepts they learned compatible to those in English? Is the "English" way of writing the best way? What considerations should language instructors and subject professors have when they read essays written by their non-native-English-speaking students?

In this article, I will use my personal narrative of writing in Chinese (first language) and English (second language) to address the above questions. Chambers (2003) states that the narrative itself and reflections upon the narrative facilitate writer and reader understanding and generate fresh knowledge. This is what I hope to achieve with this article. My narrative will be used as a thread to hold together some of the online and in-print instructional materials on Chinese and English writing. I weave literature on academic writing and analysis of the instructional materials into my narrative to lead up to the issues I wish to further discuss, in an inductive way and from a learner-to-researcher's angle.

The changing nature of educational practices calls for narrative research that would embrace unfolding of the events and the change process (Cortazzi, 1993, Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). However, narrative research has its limitation in its uncertainty of interpretations. "A personal narrative is not an exact record of what happened and nor does it mirror the wider world, although it might have common points with other similar stories across space and time" (Bold, 2012, p. 18). With this point in mind, it is not my intention to generalize my experience and understanding of writing to others. My personal narrative presents a perspective; and my interpretations of the narrative serve as a prompt for further discussion

In the remainder of this article, I may use ‘additional language’ (an umbrella term, any language beyond one’s first language), ‘foreign language’ (which is not spoken as an official language) and ‘second language’ (which is spoken as an official language) interchangeably as occasions fit.

## **Writing in Chinese**

Let me start with my first language writing.

In my first Chinese class in senior high school (Grade 10), our teacher asked us to write an impromptu essay in 40 minutes on any topic. Our school was the only key high school in the whole municipality. Most of the students had been top-picked from schools in different towns and counties. The competition was keen and this first essay was more like a test.

I wrote an argumentative essay on manners and virtues in treating flowers. The whole piece was meant to be metaphorical. I began with a brief description of a beautiful garden and presented the thesis that different people might act differently at the sight of such gorgeous flowers in the garden. I proceeded to assume the different actions. Some might pick the flowers and contain them in a vase for private admiration, which would eventually kill the flowers. It was an act of harming in the name of love. Some might re-pot their favorite flowers for personal possession, which would damage the overall landscape of the garden and isolate the flowers from the group to which they belong. It was an act of selfishness in the name of love. Yet others would simply admire the flowers with respect, watering and fertilizing them carefully but never attempting to constrain them. They would allow them to grow, bloom, and be appreciated by others. And this was the true love of flowers. I ended the essay by applying the morals to human society: loving a person is like loving a flower; nurturing without constraints makes love last.

This spontaneous piece was read by our teacher to the class as an exemplar. It was not the first time that my Chinese writing was recommended to the class. I had been a confident and competent writer throughout my years in middle school and high school, and later in university when I took an elective Chinese writing course.

## Writing in English

I started to write letters in English to some friends from first year in university as a way to practice my English writing. The fact that I was able to communicate extensively in English was exciting and motivating.

In the second year of university, we began to have English writing classes. Our first writing teacher was a native-English-speaker from the United States who taught us to write simple sentences in English, containing a simile, metaphor, personification, and so on. It was funny to me considering I had been writing six-page letters talking about literature, philosophy, emotions, and college life with friends for over a year. Yet, as a good Chinese student, I complied with whatever was required of us.

Then we started to write paragraphs. The most “ridiculous” thing about writing an English paragraph was that I had to place the topic sentence either at the beginning or at the end very explicitly. What if I didn’t want my main idea to be so obvious and make my writing seem shallow? What if I wanted my reader to nod in agreement, ideally with a subtle smile, by figuring out my main idea herself through induction or careful reading and thinking? What happened to the one-sentence paragraph, or even one-phrase paragraph that conveys a lot of meaning? What happened to a surprise beginning and a profound ending? There could be so many ways to write effectively and there were so many ways to convince people of your points. Why should we all write in the same way? Did it not kill our creativity? Did the teacher not get bored by reading so many similar pieces?

For the first time in my life, writing was no longer fun; it was tedious, and worst of all, *constraining*. My head was gripped by something like the Monkey King’s headband<sup>2</sup>. The writing instructor cited the conventions of English writing in the way the Master of Monkey King recited the scriptures to tighten the headband.

Then came the essay writing in the third year. I resisted it with the same sentiment. In the fourth year, we were learning to write full length research papers (basically literature review and archival research). The instructors changed but not the teaching methods. I suffered all the way through the three years of learning English

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<sup>2</sup> Monkey King is an enduring Chinese literary character who went on a journey to retrieve Buddhist sutras from India with his Master, who kept him under control with a headband given by Guan-yin, a Buddhist goddess.

writing. Once a proud, confident, and creative writer, I felt as if the wings of my creativity were clipped. I was a puppet eagle, moving every joint following the pull of the strings. It was too much for me and I began to rebel.

Our exit paper for fourth year writing was supposed to be a critical review of a certain issue discussed in the media. Our teacher, a Chinese professor who specialized in writing and who drilled us on the tedious details of punctuation marks, reference style, and so on and so forth, had the librarian organize all the materials and references that our class would need in one section of the library, and strongly recommended that we write on topics of public concern, such as juvenile delinquency, women's rights, etc. I had already tolerated being told *how* to write. Now I resented being told *what* to write. I paid a brief visit to the designated library section and saw the crowd of my classmates who were struggling to snatch the limited materials. I left never to return.

Back then China had just extinguished a huge forest fire in the Northeast, a fire that burned the hearts of billions of Chinese. Two years before that, I had written an article on soil erosion in Northwest China. I had also witnessed the deterioration of the natural environment in my hometown; in particular, the change of the rivers from crystal clear to lifeless muddy. Children no longer swam in summer and skated in winter. There were no longer concerts of crickets, frogs, toads, and other riverside creatures in the evening. I missed the beautiful hometown in my memory. The environmentalist sentiment was brewing inside me.

It was a happy surprise that one day I found that tucked away on the top floor of our library was the office of an academic journal *Human Geography*. The editor was so pleased with my interest in his journal. To my delight, all the journal articles contained an English abstract with key words, which was a great help. I left the editor's office with a big pile of the back issues of the journal, feeling like I discovered a load of hidden treasure. I went back to the editor a few times to return and to borrow more. Weeks later, I submitted an outline for a research paper on the desertification of farmland and grassland in Northwest China as a result of human activities.

I was strongly discouraged by my professor to write on this topic, but I was stubborn. Even today, I cannot help a smile when I remember my persistence and defiance when I was in an obvious vulnerable position.

### **Why the difficulties and differences?**

My experiences of writing in Chinese and English provide some food for thought. The three years' Chinese writing in high school focused mostly on the argumentative essay because it was the required genre for the National College Entrance Exam. I enjoyed writing and always took great pride in my creative ways of presenting my ideas. Even within the more rigid format of argumentative writing, I did my best to diversify the language, the way of opening and ending, and the way of idea development. However, why was it that what worked well for my Chinese writing was not working for my English writing? What was it that caused my difficulties in English writing? Was Chinese writing too freestyle and English writing too restrictive? Was my Chinese creativity not appreciated in English writing?

#### *High School Chinese Writing Instruction*

Growing up reciting the master pieces of eminent scholars, both domestic and foreign, I appreciated the Chinese way of presenting serious thoughts through poetic language and inductive lead-up. As a matter of fact, a good piece of writing in Chinese normally integrates narration, exposition and argumentation effectively. Use of stories and citation of well-known pieces are highly recommended for idea development. The points drawn from such stories and quotations are normally presented in an argumentative style and used as support for the thesis.

Let me quote some of the instructional materials for high school Chinese writing regarding the points I made above.

The current high school curriculum highly recommends (or requires) students to memorize both classical and contemporary texts (poems, prose, speeches, etc.) written by well-known figures. Examples include excerpts from Confucius *Analects* and Darwin's *the Origin of Species*, poems by Li Bai, Mao Zedong, and William Wordsworth, speeches of Martin Luther King and Fredrick Engels, essays by Lu Xun, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Benjamin Franklin, to get just a rough idea. Instructional manuals and websites provide identical lists of such recommended pieces for recitation. For example, about 80 entries are on the list of Baidu (百度 the Chinese equivalent to Google) Wenku (文库 Composition) site for the first two years

of the high school Chinese course. Other composition sites have similar recommendations.

Such broad reading and accurate memorization of masterpieces aligns with notions of what good writing consists of and how an argument should be written. Students are encouraged to quote well-known phrases and lines, following the principles of *páng zhēng bó yǐn* (旁征博引 citing extensively from various sources) and *yǐn jīng jù diǎn* (引经据典 citing intensively from the sages' books and the holy books) (Zhang, 2011).

The methods of presenting ideas are multiple. For example, on the high school argumentation writing page of a very popular composition website (zuowen.com), the instruction<sup>3</sup> says:

An argumentative essay may begin with a thesis statement, followed with analysis of the supporting points one by one, and end with the conclusion. It may also begin with narration of a story or conversation, or description of a scene, followed with analysis of the facts layer by layer, and draw a new conclusion inductively. Common methods of writing argumentation include: induction, deduction, compare/contrast, and refutation.

The range of methods in argumentation writing is broader than the English “thesis-support-conclusion” structure. An inductive structure with narrative opening is also common practice in Chinese argumentative writing.

The way students write is normally the way they are taught. Aligned with the Chinese instruction of argumentative writing, some essays that received high marks in China's National College Entrance Exam (NCEE) demonstrated an excellent integration of narration, persuasion, and argumentation. An example is an anonymous piece entitled “The Boat Owner and the Painter”. It begins with<sup>4</sup>:

Everyone of us has our own desires. Ancient people pursue the serenity of “I pick fenseside asters at will; Carefree I see the southern hill”<sup>5</sup>. *However, modern people fight for status, wealth, and power, regardless of means. It is greed and selfishness that swallowed people's conscience. The virtues and civility of humanity are getting further and further away from us.*

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<sup>3</sup> Translated from Chinese to English by the author.

<sup>4</sup> Translated from Chinese to English by the author.

<sup>5</sup> A well-known verse by Tao Yuanming (陶渊明 365-427AD) in China's Jin Dynasty: “采菊东篱下，悠然见南山”. Translation by Xu Yuanchong (许渊冲). I add this note to follow the English writing convention but it is not included in the Chinese article.

In our life, we may do things effortlessly for ourselves but beneficial to others. However, there are also selfish people who would not make even the smallest effort to help others.

The author continued with three stories and brief personal commentary on each:

A story of a lavishly dressed lady who threw a recyclable bottle at the foot of a street cleaner, with the author's comment that such behavior should be despised.

A story that a painter fixed the hole at the bottom of a boat while painting it and the boat owner later came with reward money to thank the painter for saving the life of his son who went out on the boat before the owner got a chance to fix it. The author's comment was that both the painter's kindness and the owner's gratitude are worthy of modeling.

A story that a neighbor swept the front yard of the author's house and deemed it effortless and the author's mother gave some of their garden vegetable to the neighbor as a thank-you. The author's comment was that simple words, deeds, and gifts are priceless.

In the last paragraph, the author stood on the moral high ground and called for embracing life with a true self and for kindness, genuineness, and gratitude in our life.

When I read this piece, I could not help wondering how an English speaker would rate it. Not all highly rated essays posted on the composition websites follow this style, but it is obviously one of the favorites in high school Chinese writing, as illustrated in some research findings. In a study of Chinese and English argumentative writing, Zhang (2011) compared five argumentative essays written by Chinese students for the NCEE in China and five by American students written for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in the U.S. All ten essays were rated full score or close to full score in the 2006 tests and were posted online as exemplars. Zhang's analysis indicates that Chinese writers use over four times more examples and citations than English counterparts, but the English writers provide more explanations and logical reasoning for their use of examples. Zhang goes on to explain:

Chinese writers tend to “tell” the facts and examples with less effort to make logical reasoning out of the support. The underlying ideology may be that they think the examples in themselves are convincing and credible enough. They pay more attention to the extensiveness of citations to present the examples, historical facts, etc, so that the essays are stylistically rich. (p. 76)

### *Tertiary Chinese Writing*

In tertiary education, the Chinese writing instruction follows the same line of blending “hard” evidence with “soft” appeals. A Chinese writing textbook, *University Writing Course* (Wu, 1999), states that factual, statistical, and scientific evidence can be used as arguments alongside arguments from classical writers, appeals to authority, and sayings and axioms.

Why does Chinese argumentative writing demonstrate such a mixed style? According to Kirkpatrick and Xu (2012), “Chinese writing has been influenced by its own tradition and by the West... [T]he writing of Chinese students has certain ‘blended’ features and these are inherited from Chinese writing traditions and Western influence” (p. 189). An example of this dual influence is the diversity of modes of argument: “deductive reasoning has always existed alongside inductive reasoning” (Kirkpatrick, 2002, p. 246).

However, another popular textbook by Wang and Li (2008), *University Writing Course: New Edition*, suggests that students write the sub-points at the beginning of each body paragraph. Is this straightforward western style appreciated by students? It seems to be. Empirical evidence is provided by Chen (2011), who conducted a study on the use of topic sentences in Chinese students’ argumentative essays. In the 45 essays collected from Chinese undergraduate students, 80.68% of topic sentences appeared at the beginning of the paragraph and 12.5% were in the middle. Chen concluded that Chinese students are “capable of direct writing” (p. 26).

### *Tertiary English Writing*

At college level, however, the explicit western deductive style gains major ground in English classes. Chinese is no longer a mandatory course for most college students, but English is, and for two years or until they pass the national College English Test (CET) Band-4 to be qualified for a Bachelor’s degree. Instructions of English writing are in unison following the western organizational and reasoning skills. For students who are used to the subtle inductive style or the ‘blended’ style, it is a big change, like

switching from singing Chinese opera to western opera. People with a good ear for music and good vocal quality may adjust with some effort, but not all can make an easy switch.

I could be stubborn with my own writing, but I could not do it when my students were concerned. I followed the English conventions when teaching writing to my college-level students, whose three-part essays would be evaluated in the national CET. Writing in this manner was for the sole purpose of pleasing the examiner, which had nothing to do with personal views or creativity.

Now, consider the many international students from China who may or may not be gifted with language learning and academic writing. College students in China are trained to write academically in English through the two years' instruction and preparation for the CET-4. However, students who enter an undergraduate program at a western English-speaking university may not have had such systematic and organized training. Language alone can be a challenge, not to mention the compounded effect of cultural differences and mismatched expectations in academic writing. Graduate students may have better language and writing skills but may still demonstrate residual influence of their first language writing conventions.

### **Writing in English, again, academically**

I began to write seriously and willingly in academic English and research on second language writing since I became a student again in Canada in 2001. My first term paper based on my involvement in a teaching innovation program was published in our in-house journal. Then my first co-authored conference paper was accepted for the conference proceedings. These were encouraging for a novice academic writer. I learned from reading academic literature, but I learned more from the merciless criticism of a reviewer who rejected my bold submission to a top-notch journal. The comments hurt but helped. I began to change my metaphorical style to a more straightforward one, and to 'hedge' what I said. I also began to abandon subtleness and to critique more forcefully to satisfy my western readers.

It was during this period that I read Shen's (1989) article discussing his identity changes in writing. He had to "reprogram" his mind, "redefine some of the basic concepts and values" associated with his past life (p. 94), and imagine himself "slipping into a new 'skin'" (p. 101). What he said made tremendous sense, and I quoted him when I discussed identity issues in my own research. However, there was

something unsettling. Does an author change her voice, identity, and writing style in the same way one changes into a different suit upon leaving the house? What happens if one is dressed in mixed styles? What happens if one attends a western social function in elegant Chinese attire? Is it simply superficial change or does something internal have to be changed in order to have the appropriate bearing?

Years later I read an article written by another Chinese scholar Guo (2006) who had a “crash-landing” in English writing in her graduate program in Canada but took on a journey to claim her “right to speak” and validate her Chinese self with the English self. Through relentless struggles during her Master’s and doctoral programs, underlined by her non-western views disregarded by some professors and her nonnativeness questioned by her ESL students and potential employers, she came to realize her ownership of both languages and cultures. She began to view writing “as an attempt to absorb the best from both and as a site for creativity” (p. 224), in order to construct her “between-the-worlds identities” (228). Maybe this is the stance second language writers, educators, and evaluators should consider, celebrating the hybridity and heterogeneity in second language writing.

### **What are the gaps in understanding and instruction?**

A closer look at my own writing experience and the writing instruction in China, and considering how Chinese EAL writers are evaluated by their English-speaking professors when they study abroad, I feel the need to tease out a few issues for discussion. They include differences in rhetorical style and classification, deficiencies in writing instruction, and lack of contextual consideration in the English academic setting. Had I never left China, I would have never gained such an acute sense of genre and rhetorical differences. The growing number of Chinese students entering North American universities has prompted numerous studies on EAL writing. However, the helpful findings from such studies may not have disseminated to the stakeholders of EAL writing—the students, the EAL instructors and the subject professors.

#### *Differences in Rhetorical Style and Classification*

Decades of research in contrastive rhetoric has demonstrated that conceptions of effective writing differ from culture to culture and the resulting conventions of writing, which are also different, are passed on through formal instruction (Connor,

1996; Hinkel, 1994; Purves, 1988). Different styles in argumentation and reasoning may cause pragmatic failure in intercultural communication (Fisher, 1980; Walker, 1986) and particularly in academic writing. Writers from Europe and North America tend to be more direct in arguments while writers from collectivist cultures such as in East Asian countries are more likely to be indirect and ambiguous to maintain group harmony and pragmatic space (Connor, 1987; 1996; Dillard & Marshall, 2003; Hinkel, 1997; 2005; Tannen, 1998).

In Anglo-American academic writing, strategic use of hedging is common to distinguish the fact from the possible and to “protect the writer from the commitment of the truth-value of the proposition” (Hinkel, 1997, p. 364; also see Hyland, 1995, 1996, 1998; Lewin, 2005). However, Asian students are often noted for using extensive quotations when asked to reflect on a topic (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999). They accept a wider range of information as meaningful evidence and use fewer claims and data, shallower levels of reasoning, and less diversity of argument structures, yet more appeals to humanness than their American counterparts (Cheng & Chen, 2009; Choi, 1988; Kamimura & Oi, 1998; Okabe, 1983; Qin & Karabacak, 2010).

However, such studies on rhetoric do not explain all the writing issues with EAL students. An essential question needs to be asked: Do they understand the terms, such as “argumentation”, the same way native English speakers do? Let’s take Chinese and English for example. First of all, the classification of common text types or rhetorical modes in Chinese does not match that in English. In the *New Edition of University Writing Course*, Wang and Li (2008) describe five text types: narration, description, prose, expository, and argumentation. An earlier textbook *University Writing Course* (Wu, 1999) comprises three major sections: narrative writing, argumentative writing, and practical writing. *Persuasion* is not mentioned in either; nor is it mentioned in other textbooks (e.g., Yeh, 2005; Zhou, Li, & Lin, 2009). There is no equivalent term for persuasion in Chinese as a mode of writing.

In English, argumentation and persuasion have their respective historical origins and major theories and methods. Although the two are related in some ways, they are treated as different studies and different genres. In Chinese, however, persuasion is enclosed in the argumentation category. Any piece that analyses, elaborates on, presents, and puts forward ideas, opinions, and viewpoints is called argumentation. As

a matter of fact, neither the sample essay I quoted above nor the essays analyzed in Zhang's (2011) article would be considered as "argumentation" by English speakers.

What this points to is that the definition of argumentative writing is different in Chinese and English. Accordingly, the evaluation criteria are different. When I was frustrated with the boring, uncreative English writing structure, I was viewing it from the Chinese perspective. When my writing was criticized for lack of "hedge", I was being evaluated by the western standard. My experiences are not different from those of other Chinese students who have gone through or are going through the transition from following Chinese conventions to following English conventions.

### *Deficiency in Teaching and Disciplinary Enculturation*

With differences in rhetorical styles and the nuances in terminology, learning and teaching about such distinctions become prominent issues. Whose responsibility is it to deal with the differences, and are there any gaps between different levels of instruction?

A number of issues that EAL students encounter are not simply mechanical or grammatical, but deeply rooted in the differences found in L1 and L2 academic discourse. Non-native students have problems learning how to do critical analysis as a result of a different "relationship with text and authorities that is taught, both consciously and unconsciously, by family members, friends, teachers, the media, even the history of one's country" (Fox, 1994, p.125). Students also have "different ways of organizing ideas and structuring arguments" from their instructors because "what is seen as logical, engaging, relevant or well-organized in writing often differs across cultures" (Hyland, 2008, p. 548). It is not a question of whether students can write but rather if they think and write in ways in line with the dominant discourses of North American academia (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Casanave, 1995; Spack, 1997).

From the analysis of the instructional materials used in China's high school and college writing, we see mismatches in curriculum focus and skills training. Chinese pedagogy tends to emphasise memorization of sample texts and repeated practice of new skills (Liu, 1986), which leads to a "reproductive approach to learning" (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991, p. 23). Such a learning approach may be explained more by the nature of the curriculum and the teaching environment than as an inherent characteristic of the students (Kember & Gow, 1991; Kraus & O'Brien, 2000). To convert EAL students to the writer-responsible, rational North American style without drawing "swell

conclusions” (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999, p. 510), proper coaching and practice are needed.

Writing problems are most often noticed in EAL classrooms, and yet writing instructors normally focus on teaching the ‘right’ way of English writing. When it comes to academic writing at the tertiary level, attention was primarily given to effective literature review and critiquing in the Anglo-American fashion. The subtle and indirect ways of presenting different opinions are not appreciated. Students are criticized for writing in a style that is different from what is recognized in the Anglo-American society but are not told why such differences exist. It is not surprising to see that students’ individual potentials and needs are not taken into consideration in many EAL learning environments (Sarasin, 1998; Wang & Liao, 2011).

EAL students’ writing challenges can be further intensified when they write in discipline-specific genres. Acquiring the conventions of different disciplinary discourses necessary for the successful completion of post-secondary and graduate level programs-- “disciplinary enculturation” (Jolliffe & Brier, 1988), involves learning more than just content. “Different fields require different genres” (Hyland, 2008, p. 550); therefore, students must learn specific systems, definitions and reading and writing strategies unique to the discipline they are studying. Unfortunately, professors do not consider it part of their job to instruct students on how to write. They often assume that EAL students come to their classes with academic writing skills and rarely consider where and how they got them. Also, professors do not always give detailed, constructive feedback on writing assignments. Angelova and Riazantseva (1999) pointed out that there was a lack of information sharing between students and professors, and that even if professors were aware of the cultural differences, they might not exercise the awareness in ways beneficial for their students.

### *The Social Context*

Then there is the issue of context. Swales said that “Discourse communities are socio-rhetorical networks that form in order to work toward sets of common goals,” and “genres are the properties of these communities that are used in the communicative furtherance of those sets of goals” (1990, p. 9). Teaching writing is teaching discursive traditions and cultural practices. Teaching western academic

writing involves teaching the analytical and deductive ways of discourse, which inevitably shuns other ways of discourse. In a multicultural context like today's Canada, multiple sets of 'norms' are encountered. Shouldn't we reconsider the 'norms' in writing to reflect the societal changes? Do we follow the conventional concept and classification of rhetoric and genre or do we recognize their cross-cultural differences? Do we accept the differences as legitimate or do we brush them aside?

A contributing factor to the confusion of writing academic discourse is that there is not a single, unified standard with one set of rules and expectations. Each discipline has its own conventions, values and practices, which make the acquisition of academic literacy a very complex process (Bazerman, 1988; Casanave, 1995; Myers, 1990). Academic writing is infused with artificial rules. The flexibility and creativity in real-life communication are often lost in the rigid structure of academic writing. One may argue that academic texts were not written for the general public. However, in the contemporary world where access to higher education is becoming easier day by day, and where field-specific information is becoming household knowledge, perhaps we should ask to what extent we can adjust the rules of academic writing so that they facilitate knowledge mobilization instead of withholding it.

Another problem often neglected by instructors and professors is the difference between post-secondary schooling in various countries. North American universities hold writing to a high value and students entering into studies in the humanities are required to write extensively in genres very new to them (Connor, 1996; Kaplan 1966; Silva 1993). Hyland (2013) argues that "universities are ABOUT writing and that specialist forms of academic literacy are at the heart of everything we do" (p. 53). Many of the EAL students have never studied in schools that rely so extensively on writing as a method of evaluation. The situation is not helped by the fact that EAL students entering into the humanities typically have high Test of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) scores and therefore enroll directly into their programs without being required to take any additional writing courses (Spack, 1997). In such a context, shouldn't an opportunity for professors and students to discuss their respective educational systems and expectations be appreciated?

## **Implications**

There are a number of pedagogical and theoretical implications gleaned from the literature on ESL writing instruction, problems in teaching writing to EAL students,

and the common confusions experienced by EAL learners when learning English academic writing.

A major component to the success in L2 writing instruction is for instructors to understand the differences in their students and the fact that their students' success is determined not only by linguistic factors, but also by social and personal factors, such as culture, gender, motivation and personality (Shaughnessy, 1998; Witkin & Goodenough, 1981). Considering the complex nature of second language learning, it is essential to use differentiation of instruction to "accommodate different learning profiles" (Wang & Liao, 2011, p. 11). To create an optimal learning environment, teachers need to identify students' individual differences and background knowledge for the purpose of maximizing each student's learning outcome (Sarasin, 1998).

Explicit, genre-based instruction has a positive impact upon learners and their writing abilities. It provides students with an opportunity to "acquire conceptual and cultural frameworks to undertake writing tasks beyond the courses in which such teaching occurs" (Cheng, 2006, p.77). Genre awareness helps students to develop organizational skills and become "conscious users of language" (Swami, 2008, p. 10). In the same token, awareness of the differences in rhetorical modes across cultures and languages closes the gaps in the students' understanding of the required text types and expectations.

In each academic discipline, more open and frequent communication between professors and non-native students is essential. It is helpful to see "literacy as embedded in the beliefs and practices of individual disciplines, instead of a generic skill that students have failed to develop" (Hyland, 2013, p. 53). Professors need to have a greater awareness of their students' cultural backgrounds and the differences which exist in their specific disciplinary writing discourse. Professors should also be aware of students who come from cultures in which students are not expected to seek help from or interact with their professors (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999). Constructive feedback on not only the content of the assignment but also the writing style that misaligned with the required genre can go a long way in bridging the culturally-different understandings of academic writing between the professor and the students. In terms of timing of the instruction on "how to write a field-appropriate academic paper", the students' first semester or early in their studies is the recommendation (p. 518). In addition, the clarity of professor's expectations about assignments is vital in the success of EAL students' writing.

A further implication of this article is relevant to the learning of instructors and professors within the North American academia representing the dominant discourse. Discussion with students about their different conceptions of academic writing, such as argumentation, will broaden the knowledge of instructors and professors and prompt them to reconsider the 'norms' in academic writing. Celebrating cultural diversity in academia should include recognition of culturally-embedded differences in the concept and classification of rhetoric and genre and accept them as legitimate. And a starting point can be in the classroom where students are able to express their knowledge and views in more flexible and creative ways without being judged as deficient writers.

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**Resilient Teachers, Resilient Schools: Building and Sustaining Quality in Testing Times.**

Christopher Day & Qing Gu. New York: Routledge, 2014, Pp. xi + 174

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The stressful and uncertain nature of the teaching profession, along with the workload and the emotional labor inherent in the job, can take a heavy toll on teachers' psychological and physical well-being (Hiver, 2015). Despite the challenges and perturbations in their profession, teachers might have to nurture a quality in themselves which helps them to positively respond to the stress and challenges they encounter in their teaching career. This quality is called *resilience* which is defined as "specific strategies that individuals employ when they experience an adverse situation" (Castro *et al.*, 2010, p. 263). Resilience lies at the heart of teaching since it ensures teachers will teach to the best of their ability in their profession. Understanding how resilience is developed and sustained is crucial for teachers. *Resilient Teachers, Resilient Schools* is an up-to-date book which deals with the concept of resilience from its definition to its construction and maintenance, and to its relevance to students' achievement.

*Resilient Teachers, Resilient Schools* includes three parts with each part containing three chapters. In the first part, by drawing upon a range of interdisciplinary studies, the authors try to elucidate the concept of “everyday resilience”, not as a built-in characteristic, but as a quality that needs to be nurtured and sustained by many teachers working in cultural and social milieus. They further scrutinize the effect that neo-liberal, results-driven agendas might have on the potentials of teachers in their profession. Then, the concept of resilience, especially its building blocks, namely well-being, commitment, emotional energy, academic optimism and care, is thoroughly investigated.

The first chapter of the second part of the book deals with the identity construction of teachers. In the course of their identity building, teachers confront a number of challenges in the settings where they work. These workplace challenges might have negative and positive impacts on teachers’ resiliency throughout their personal and professional lives. The second chapter discusses teacher development, retention, and renewal. It zeros in on the effects of educational values and moral goals on the capacity of teachers to be resilient. The authors argue that teachers’ fervent desires to teach may empower them to sustain their motivation, commitment, and efficacy in diverse challenging milieus. In the third chapter the actual workplace factors which seem to be pivotal in how teachers’ resilience and commitment are promoted and focused on. Workplace factors such as school conditions, cultures, and interactions might function like a double-edged sword which may hinder or promote the development of teachers’ sense of well-being, self-efficacy, professional identity, and resilience.

The third part of the book starts with a discussion on the importance of building resilience by school leaders themselves. As the authors claim, there is a paucity of research on the needs for school leaders to be resilient and this resilience is an integral part of successful leadership at schools. Then, by drawing on the evidence from their VITAE (Variations in Teachers’ Work, Lives and Effectiveness) research conducted in 2007, the writers establish a connection between teachers’ resilience and their students’ learning and achievement. They also explain that the way teachers manage the contexts in which they work and live is linked to their sustaining “everyday resilience” over their career span. The final chapter of the book talks about the quality retention and continuing development of teachers for system and school

leaders, teacher trainers, and teachers themselves and the key role the resilience plays in this process.

On the whole, *Resilient Teachers, Resilient Schools* is a landmark book which challenges the traditional concepts pertaining to teacher resilience which tend to ignore the complexities of teachers' personal and professional contexts in which they work and live. This impressive and pioneering text is a "must read" for school leaders, policy makers, teachers, and even students.

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### **Task-Based Language Teaching in Foreign Language Context**

Ali Shehadeh & Christine A. Coombe. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2012. Pp. xix+364

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*Task-Based Language Teaching in Foreign Language Contexts* contributes a much-required body of research on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). TBLT is

commonly seen as an educational framework for the theory and practice of language teaching. As Pica notes in the introduction, research on the field in EFL is especially important, because the challenges facing TBLT in EFL contexts have become increasingly more complex.

The present volume focuses on the application of tasks in the teaching of English as a *foreign* language. It covers a set of collected studies on how TBLT has been studied and implemented in different EFL settings. This enables readers to compare a wide range of investigations done in various contexts.

The book includes two main sections (variables which affect language learners' interaction/performance and practical adaptations of TBLT) and covers 13 studies from different countries all around the world. The five studies in section I, deal with the effects of different variables like pre-planning, task structure, and task difficulty on Task-based language learning and students' performance (i.e., fluency, accuracy, and complexity). Section II contains 8 studies dealing with adaptation and Implementation of TBLT. The studies center on the implementation of factors like teachers' beliefs regarding TBLT, the status of TBLT in teacher education programs, the design of computer assisted teaching, and the assessment of TBLT. This section deploys a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

In chapter 1, Shehadeh examines TBLT as an instructional method and discusses challenging aspects such as institutional, teacher, and student factors facing TBLT research in various EFL settings. He also provides an overview of the book. In the next three chapters the authors explore the findings in relation to the well-known hypotheses (limited capacity and cognition hypothesis) put forward by Skehan (1998) and Robinson (2003). Sasayama and Izumi in Chapter 2, investigate the impacts that task difficulty and pre-task planning may have on the oral performance of Japanese high school students. Chapter 3 deals with the studies done by Malicka and Levkina. They consider the effect of student proficiency on perceived task difficulty and proposed task difficulty among the undergraduate learners in Spain. Chapter 4 is dedicated to the adoption of strategic planning in the task-based performance through oral and written modes in Turkish EFL context.

Chapters 5 and 6 study the novel methods of acquiring new vocabularies with respect to task-based method. In chapter 5, Horiba and Fokuya explore recall task on content and language learning of Japanese students under 3 conditions. They discuss

the mediating role of L1 and L2 on learners' cognition during text processing. In chapter 6, Hobbs examines how exposure to task designs based on native speakers' interaction (lexicon, discourse or chunks) can affect what EFL students might gain from such exposure. Hobbs' findings provide practical insight into analysing NS task completion, enabling researchers to realize how task design can influence interaction.

The eight studies in Section II, argue how task-based approaches were implemented in the classroom. Chapter 7 focuses on the studies by Iwashita and Li which inspect different patterns of interaction in a task-based oral EFL classroom in China. They reveal that task-oriented classroom can help teachers overcome cultural barriers.

Chapter 8 focuses on learner-to-learner language-related episodes, Moore concludes that in a Japanese undergraduate setting, student-produced focus-on-form could be influenced through negotiated interaction.

In Chapter 9, Chan provides a detailed discussion of six teaching strategies of novice teachers in their implementation of TBLT among primary grades in Hong Kong, revealing that teachers' beliefs filter and characterize these strategies. Chan posits that the ways teachers implement tasks depends on a lot of other interrelated aspects.

In Chapter 10, Park examines the role of technology in the implementation of TBLT by comparing the performance of Korean EFL learners. He also observes students' perceptions of TBLT and their progress in L2 writing. Results show superior performance in technology-based tasks.

In Chapter 11, Chacon demonstrates how film-based learning projects improve autonomy, fluency and cooperation of Venezuelan students' performance because of authentic language, extensive listening and students' collaboration.

Chapters 12 and 13 include mixed-method studies and provide perceptive methodological inquiries. In chapter 12, Jackson focuses on TBLT implications for teacher education in Japan. He concludes that task-based training is indispensable in an innovative curriculum development. Weaver in Chapter 13 explores the area of assessment and applies TBLT principles. His findings on Japanese students reveal that informative feedback can help teachers develop a framework for implementing TBLT.

In Chapter 14, the final contribution to Section II, McAllister, Narcy-Combes and Starkey-Perret explore French teachers' beliefs involved in a TBLT program. The result indicate that institutional change depends on teachers' personal beliefs of language and learning.

In the closing chapter, Carless investigates the current state of TBLT research and proposes five major themes in the field, including regions of research methodology, teacher education, language assessment and language context. He also proposes a number of directions for further research.

The book is a valuable source for TBLT and there are some points for consideration. As Pica notes in the Foreword, most of the studies done in the field were practiced under controlled conditions. The present collection includes some recent investigations done in authentic classroom contexts (cf, Ellis, 2009; Van den Branden, 2006).

The book does not arbitrarily boast on the merits of TBLT. The authors recognize the intricacies of language learning within predominant institutional/societal restrictions. The title of the book suggests that it is exclusively confined to English as a FL, but not solely limited to Western settings. The informed readers are challenged to critically judge the implications of the different studies in order to synthesize the current state of research and the place of TBLT in an anticipated curriculum. The book can be a source of inspiration for language teachers, researchers and curriculum designers.

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