

The background of the cover features a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of concentric circles and squares, creating a sense of depth and movement. The pattern is rendered in a lighter shade of blue against the darker blue background.

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Foreword from the editor

This issue of *TESOL International Journal* contains seven papers. In the first paper, **Sukardi Weda** explored knowledge sharing practices in EFL classroom at university level. The study reveals that knowledge sharing in the classroom should be a discussion based on intriguing questions or issues to provide opportunity to all students to be involved in the classroom activity.

Cris Delatado Barabas investigated the current preparatory programmes for students who will study abroad. With all his data analyzed, he proposed a curriculum design and evaluation processes of a bridging English programme for Chinese learners joining the international education system.

Marife G. Aquino and **Dr. Presley V. De Vera** examined the status of struggling readers and developed a supplemental learning material for reading remediation.

In the fourth paper, **Nonny Basalama** and **Karmila Machmud** studied the factors that influence teacher identity, beliefs and values development of an English teacher. The study indicated that there are two factors influential in identity shaping and development, family culture and social factor.

Iskandar Abdul Samad and **Zifirdaus Adnan** researched on TDE as an important event for students as this can determine their completion of their degree. The study is on TDE genre and its generic structure. It was found that without a common structure in TDE, students struggle to successfully pass this communicative event.

Dr. El-Sadig Ezza and **Dr. Khaled Almudibry** studied the effects of ICT affordances in the enhancement of educational transparency in Saudi EFL classroom.

In the last paper, **Estrella C. Sioco** and **Dr. Presley V. De Vera** examined Junior High School Students' level of grammatical competence along subject-verb agreement. It was found that students need to further enhance their level of grammatical competence through suggested strategies and techniques in instruction and in the development of instructional materials.

Readers who are actively engaged in research or have done research related to English language education are encouraged to contact us about the possibility of publishing with *TESOL International Journal*. Apart from individual paper submissions, we also welcome proposals for special issues.

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Knowledge Sharing Practices in EFL Classroom at Higher Education in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims at exploring the knowledge sharing practices in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom at university level in Indonesia. To explore knowledge sharing practices in the EFL classroom, the author conducted research on this topic at undergraduate and postgraduate programs at the State University of Makassar in Indonesia in 2015/2016 academic year. There were sixty-five students from English Literature Study Program and Graduate Program Universitas Negeri Makassar as subjects of this study. The subjects of the study were chosen purposively and the instrument was close and open-ended questionnaire in which the subjects were asked to write down their perceptions about the knowledge sharing practices in EFL classroom at higher education and the subjects were asked to respond the questionnaire. This study has sought to explore knowledge management practice as the most intriguing issue in the industry and needs to be implemented in educational domain. The pedagogical implication of this study is to encourage teachers, lecturers, educational practitioners, educationists, and policy makers in education to implement the knowledge sharing in the classroom and they hopefully will conduct the study on the same topic in knowledge management process. For further studies, we will focus on knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation, knowledge utilization, and knowledge storage.

Keywords: Knowledge sharing, EFL classroom, higher education, Indonesia

Introduction

Education is future investment and the governments who place education as their first priority will achieve prosperity. Good condition of a nation depends on how the government pays attention on the quality of education. The quality of education in many aspects is also determined by a wide variety of aspects. One of the very important aspects is the teacher in schools and the lecturer at tertiary levels.

Weda (2016) argues that the most intriguing element is the role of the faculty members (lecturers) at higher education to employ good method in transferring knowledge to students. This is because lecturers take very vital role in enhancing students' knowledge. Weda (2016) further explains that, higher education in Indonesia is very much hope to adopt the learning management as implemented by the industrial company. In the international context today, various management practices have been employed by large industries in order to achieve their goals. Those management practices are management strategic, knowledge management, knowledge leadership, and strategic planning under the umbrella of learning organization.

As a learning organization, university needs to adopt knowledge management practices at teaching-learning processes in the classroom setting. The knowledge management (KM) has a wide variety of tasks, namely knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, knowledge utilization, and knowledge documentation. Knowledge management enables individuals, teams and entire organizations to collectively and systematically create, share and apply knowledge to achieve their strategic and operational objectives (North, Klaus and Kumta, Gita, 2014) as cited in Weda (2016). One of the most important parts of KM is knowledge sharing. Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore the knowledge sharing practices in the EFL classroom at higher education in Indonesia.

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Literature Review

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management (KM) may simply be defined as doing what is needed to get the most out of knowledge resources (Fernandez and Sabherwal, 2010). They (2010) therefore argue that KM is viewed as an increasingly important discipline that promotes the creation, sharing, and leveraging of the corporation's knowledge.

KM involves systematic approaches to find, understand, and use knowledge to achieve organizational objectives (Moffett and Walker, 2015). Moffett and Walker (2015) therefore add that KM is based on the idea that an organization's most valuable resource is the knowledge of its people, the essence of KM is 'getting the right information to the right people at the right time.'

Lee, Chi-Lung, *et al* (2010) propose procedures of the knowledge management process model for schools, which include knowledge generation and acquisition, knowledge sharing, and the SECI model: externalization of knowledge, internalization of knowledge, socialization of knowledge, and combination of knowledge.

With regard to the relationship of people, when knowledge creation depends on information being shared between and among people, it is very availability depends on communication, interpretation, and meaning (Nasiripour, 2012).

Methodology

Participant

To explore knowledge management practices in the EFL classroom, the author conducted research on this topic at undergraduate and graduate programs at State University of Makassar in Indonesia. There were eighty English learners as participants of this research. There were two classes or sixty students from English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Literature, State University of Makassar, and one class or twenty students from Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Study Program of Graduate Program, State University of Makassar in 2015/2016 academic year as revealed in table 2.

Table 2. Participants' Information

Program	Major	Semester	N	Gender
Undergraduate Program	English Literature	2 nd	50	10 males, 40 females
Graduate Program	TEFL	3 rd	15	5 males, 10 females

Instrument

The instrument of this research is questionnaire consisting of Likert scale and showing 23 5-point Likert type questions about knowledge sharing practices in EFL classroom. All Likert scales were scored from 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (Neither agree nor disagree), 2 (disagree), 1 (strongly disagree). The second instrument is the questionnaire consisting of open questions in which the subjects are asked to write down their perceptions towards the knowledge sharing practices in the EFL classroom at the Faculty of Languages and Literature and Graduate Program Universitas Negeri Makassar.

Procedure and Analysis

The questionnaire items were written in Indonesian. This means to give opportunity to students or participants responding the questions easily and comprehensively, especially for the open questionnaire. The data obtained from the questionnaire is then tabulated and analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics Version 20 to see descriptive statistics. Additional information obtained through open questionnaire is coded and analyzed to find out the knowledge sharing practices in EFL classroom at higher education.

Results

Results on Students' Perception

Table 1. *Students' Perception on Knowledge Sharing (N= 66)*

Code	Knowledge Management Practices	M	SD	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5(%)
KSP-1	In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists among students in the classroom.	4.3333	.70892	0	1.5	9.1	43.9	45.5
KSP-2	In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists from students to community outside the university.	3.7576	.84235	0	6.1	31.8	42.4	19.7
KSP-3	In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists from other organizations or communities to students at the university.	3.8030	.84525	0	6.1	28.8	43.9	21.2
KSP-4	In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists from students as individuals to other students in the classroom.	4.0152	.86811	0	7.6	13.6	48.5	30.3

KSP-5	In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists from class learning to students as individuals.	4.0909	.71742	0	1.5	16.7	53.0	28.8
KSP-6	In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists from other people or organizations outside the university.	3.8333	.77625	0	3.0	30.3	47.0	19.7
KSP-7	In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists from outside the classroom.	4.0455	.73237	0	1.5	19.7	51.5	27.3
KSP-8	In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists from classroom to other organizations or people outside the university.	3.6364	.77730	0	6.1	36.4	45.5	12.1
KSP-9	In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists from among students as learners.	4.5152	.58815	0	0	4.5	39.4	56.1

As revealed in table 1 above and chart 1 below, the highest mean score is Knowledge Sharing Practices (KSP-9): “In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists from among students as learners.” The second mean score is KSP-1: “In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists among students in the classroom.” The third mean score is KSP-5: “In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists from class learning to students as individuals.” The fourth mean score is KSP-7: “In learning English in EFL classroom, knowledge sharing exists from outside the classroom.”

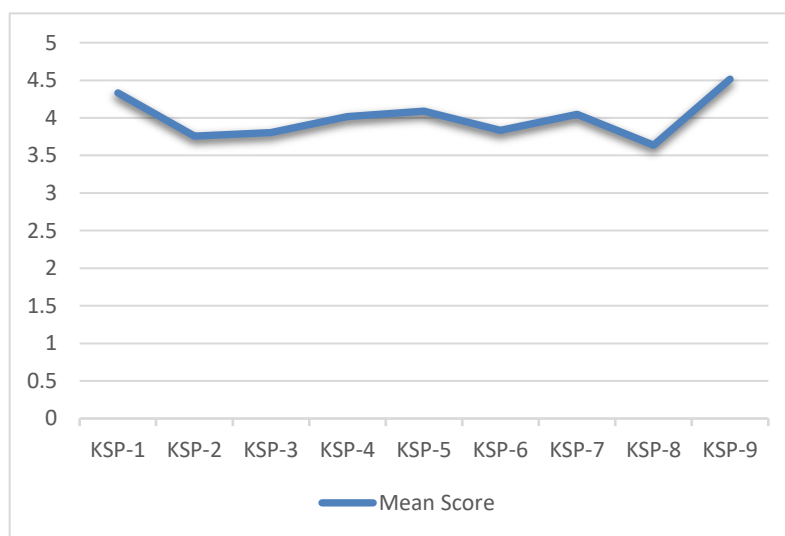


Chart 1. *Mean Score of Knowledge Sharing Practice (KSP)*

The question as revealed in the questionnaire “Is there any knowledge sharing in your classroom?,” there were 58 or 89.2% of the students said “yes” and 7 or 10.8% said “no.” This information reveals that the knowledge sharing practices have been implemented by classroom members (students and teacher) as stated in chart 2.

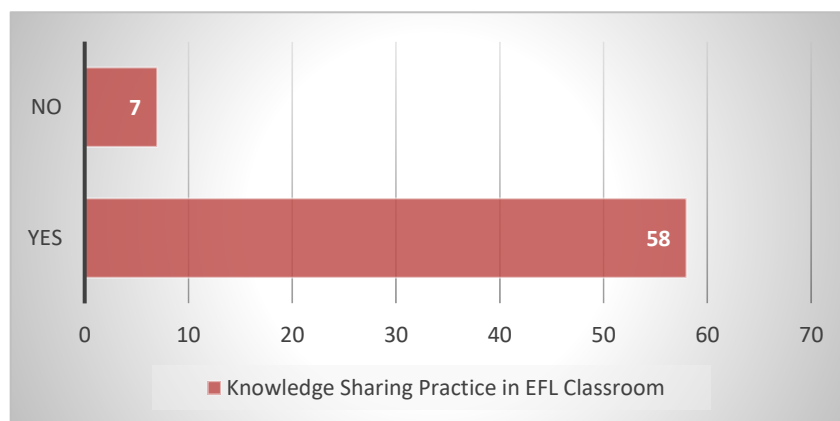


Chart 2. *Knowledge Sharing Practice in EFL Classroom*

Generally, the analysis has shown the following, which reveals the students’ perception on knowledge sharing in the EFL classroom, either between students and teacher or students and students. Regarding students who gave reasons toward the types of knowledge sharing in the classroom, there were 28 (43.07%) students gave reasons that the knowledge sharing practices in the classroom setting was “discussion.”

Excerpt (1) “Knowledge sharing in the classroom emerged when the lecturer gave explanation and when the discussion took place in the classroom.”

Excerpt (2) “Knowledge sharing in form of discussion in which the students were involved in the discussion as place for exchanging ideas to others.”

Excerpt (3) “Knowledge sharing emerged when we maintained classroom discussion. Not only from lecturer to students, but also from students to students.”

Excerpt (4) “We always share knowledge in the discussion in the classroom setting.”

Excerpt (5) “For example discussion, forming group to complete the task and sharing knowledge in doing individual task.”

Excerpt (6) “After receiving knowledge in the classroom, my friends and I then discussed the materials that had been explained by the lecturer.”

From these reasons, it can be identified that the students notably responded that discussion in a wide variety of forms in the classroom illustrate that if we would like to nurture students’ knowledge sharing, discussion will be the first priority to implement. This is because the students can share with others about the subject materials.

As previously stated in the Procedures of the Knowledge Management Process Model for Schools through a KMS, the documented knowledge is announced and shared. An environment that allows the “internalization and socialization” of inter-member discussions and observations is provided. In order to provide the school with the necessary correct knowledge, the senior knowledge managers determine what knowledge is to be shared, and these documents are only shared after being approved by the knowledge management team (LEE, Chi-Lung, et al., 2010). Obviously, the term sharing and discussion are illustrated as two sides of coins which intertwined each other. There is no one side without the existence of the other.

The second priority was the question and answer session in which the members of the classroom can share knowledge. The students who gave reasons toward the knowledge sharing practice in the classroom through question and answer session were 9 or 13.85% students. The following excerpts illustrate the students’ reasons.

Excerpt (7) “Through question and answer session or sharing knowledge with lecturer or friends.”

Excerpt (8) “Question and answer between lecturer and students, or between students and students.”

Excerpt (9) “There is question and answer session for friends who present their paper and they therefore answer the questions.”

Excerpt (10) “Question and answer between lecturer – students in the classroom, and from students to students.”

Excerpt (11) “Sharing between lecturer and students, which usually takes place in question and answer.”

Excerpt (12) “Knowledge sharing when the question and answer process exists in the classroom in which the students ask the lecturer, or the students ask their friends who presented the material. In this activity, knowledge sharing emerged about the responses from the audiences.

Excerpt (13) “If there are some students do not understand the material and they ask other students to explain again.”

Some students gave responses that the knowledge sharing practices in the classroom setting were conducted when the lecturer presents the material in front of the classroom. There were 4 or 6.15% students said that the knowledge sharing emerged in the classroom through subject presentation by the lecturer as revealed in the following excerpts.

Excerpt (14) “When the lecturer presents the material subject.”

Excerpt (15) “Knowledge sharing based on the existing data or facts, through explanation or material presentation in the classroom.”

Excerpt (16) “Classroom presentation by the lecturer or between students and students.”

Excerpt (17) “Knowledge sharing from lecturer or teacher to learners or knowledge sharing among students and via internet.”

Traditionally, the teacher is a facilitator in the classroom, so that he or she should be competent in transferring knowledge to his or her students. The teacher needs to employ good teaching strategies in order to lead his or her students to understand what he or she explains.

Since the material presentation places the third rank of students' responses toward students' perception on the knowledge sharing practices in the classroom setting, the teacher should have good competence (knowledge, skill, and attitude). This is because the teacher becomes very vital role model in the classroom.

Some other reasons of knowledge sharing practices in the classroom based on the students' perception are presented below:

Excerpt (18) "Sharing knowledge among students in doing the tasks."

Excerpt (19) "Knowledge sharing emerged through interaction between teacher and students or among students in the classroom."

Excerpt (20) "The way of understanding the material in the classroom by each student is different and this causes various knowledge. If there is different opinion, the students exchange their thought with explanation according to the theory."

Excerpt (21) "Knowledge sharing between lecturer and students. So we can know something which we do not know and we can maintain mutual understanding and understanding each other."

Excerpt (22) "Clearly, knowledge sharing through other students' opinion."

Excerpt (23) "Knowledge sharing from the lecturer and the students."

Excerpt (24) "Mutually knowledge sharing by offering opinion."

Excerpt (25) "Knowledge sharing practices when student explain his experience and other students listen to the explanation."

Excerpt (26) "Knowledge sharing in the learning teaching processes, from teacher, book, browsing internet, and among students."

Based on the students' perception in open and close questionnaire, the results on table 1 and the results on qualitative data analysis, as previously stated, indicate that the knowledge sharing in the classroom exists through interaction between teacher and students, and students and students through discussion, material presentation from the lecturer, and question and answer session after presentation, either presentation from the lecturer or presentation from the students through group discussion.

Conclusion

The objective of the study has been to provide an analysis of students' perception of knowledge sharing in the EFL classroom at higher education. In particular, the data obtained from the students support the following conclusions.

The study reveals that there were 58 or 89.2% of the students said "yes" and 7 or 10.8% said "no," towards the question "Is the knowledge sharing employed in your classroom? If the student's answer "yes," it is followed by the following question "How is the knowledge sharing employed in the classroom setting? The answers of this question are varied. Most students responded that the knowledge sharing in the classroom setting was 'discussion' in various discussion activities, followed by question and answer session, material presentation from the lecturer, and other knowledge sharing activities done by the students as members of the classroom.

As one of the very vital parts of knowledge management, knowledge sharing needs to be employed through discussion based on intriguing topics or issues in the society. This knowledge sharing provides opportunity to all students to be involved in the classroom activity in order to nurture their motivation and learning outcome. Therefore, the pedagogical implication of this study is that the students' knowledge sharing is the most intriguing issue to develop in the classroom, so that the lecturer, teacher, educational practitioner, and educational policy maker need to employ knowledge sharing in the curriculum, syllabus, and teaching-learning process in the classroom.

Other researchers are recommended to conduct further investigation on the same topics in different locus or focus on knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation, knowledge utilization, and knowledge storage.

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Bridging the Gap: Towards Developing a Preparatory English Programme for Chinese Learners Joining the International Education System

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Abstract

This paper proposes a curriculum design and suggests some evaluation processes of a bridging preparatory English programme for Chinese learners joining the international education system in a school in southern China. Taking into consideration the contextual educational background of the learners and the desired language and social skills that the programme wants to enrich, this project outlines the possible themes that can be used throughout the programme. Theoretical aspects of general curriculum design are tackled and I attempt to link this to curriculum development in language learning. Moreover, by looking into some arguments on incorporating global citizenship skills in education, I propose themes that may enhance the students' global mindedness. This is important since the target learners will be doing the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in high school and will consequently be leaving their home country for overseas university studies. I have also included aspects of active learning approaches that can be utilized in the English classes. Through this proposed curriculum and by exploring the literature, I attempt to present how language learning and acquiring sociocultural awareness skills and other discourse mechanisms can be possibly achieved by prospective learners. In this paper, I have also argued how active learning strategies should be advocated for most especially in language learning classes. Moreover, I generally expect to achieve an understanding on how Chinese learners' linguistic abilities have improved and to what extent and attempt to link how active learning strategies have contributed to this development. However, since this curriculum design has not been implemented yet I will not be able to report an evaluation but rather I attempt to address this stage by presenting some curriculum evaluation mechanisms that involve various stakeholders.

Keywords: English curriculum development, Chinese learners, International Baccalaureate, international education, English language programme

Introduction

The rising demand for international education in China in the past decades has seen significant increase in the number of international schools and national schools offering international education programmes. This demand is partly fuelled by the very tight competition on the limited number of places that top tier universities in the country can offer. The notorious Chinese National Higher Education Entrance Examination (NHEE) or commonly called *Gaokao* also precedes constant drilling in lesson implementation and places emphasis on examination results (Wright & Lee 2014).

The increase awareness on the potential psychological stress this system may cause to the learners and the slim chances of being admitted in top Chinese universities prompted most upper middle-class families to enroll their children in the international education system and consequently sending them overseas for higher education. While this situation poses lucrative opportunities for English medium schools to educate Chinese learners in a more progressive manner, one important factor to consider is the fact that English is a foreign language in China and English instruction in Chinese mainstream schools is limited and puts emphasis on drilling (e.g. fill in the blanks, multiple choice exercises) rather than authentic use of the language (Zhao 2012; Wang 2009; Liao 1996).

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When Chinese children join the international education system, they need to adjust to the new environment, the structure of the programme, the pedagogical practices, the foreign teachers, and most importantly the language of instruction. Considering these factors, it is vital for the school to take measures to effectively integrate Chinese learners into the new system and their international peers. Whilst all subject teachers should work together to help these learners adjust to the new system, I believe that English subjects play a prominent role in assisting the learners as they adjust to the language of instruction. The bridging or preparatory English course is also an avenue for the learners to understand foreign culture and social issues that they need to tackle in other subjects.

School Setting and Learners

The boarding school where I am working at is located in southern China. It has around 3000 students but the international education division has around 350 students only. The international division opened in 2011 and currently offers Grades 7-12 education with authorization to deliver the programmes developed by Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE) and the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). I have been teaching in the school for four years and currently head the English Department. We developed our own scheme of work for Grades 7 and 8, deliver the IGCSE First Language English and ESL for Grades 9-10, and the IBDP English A and English B for Grades 11 and 12. A-Level students have an internally developed English curriculum integrating IELTS skills. In school year 2017-2018, the division opened one class of Grade 10 Preparatory Programme for students from the mainstream Chinese system wanting to take the international curriculum for high school (Grades 11-12). There are 16 students in the programme and they will be taking the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme for high school. These students will be taking the DP English B: Language Acquisition course next year.

Gathering Insights

Curriculum development is a process whereby the choices of designing learning experiences for students are made and then activated through a set of coordinated activities (Wiles & Bondi 2002). This definition is further clarified by Smith (1996, 2000), highlighting that 'learning is planned and guided and curriculum theory and practice emerged in the school'. Smith (1996, 2000) further emphasised four ways of viewing curriculum theory and practice, namely: as a body of knowledge to be transmitted, as an attempt to achieve certain ends in students (or product), as a process, and as praxis. While these approaches are a holistic take on curriculum development, Smith (1996, 2000) also highlighted the significance of context.

Considering these prescribed practices in approaching curriculum development, I thought it would be wise to identify key factors that are crucial in this project. In order to facilitate a deeper understanding of my context and the context of language teaching practices in my host country, I decided to discuss with my English teacher colleagues in school some key aspects of this project. One English teacher talked about the nature of English language teaching in the mainstream or national curriculum school. In our conversation, we talked about the content of the Grade 9 English course, the materials used, the teaching and learning practices, and assessment schemes. I also had a conversation with my colleague in the international department who is currently teaching the preparatory programme class and we have discussed the behaviour of our new Chinese learners, their responses and performance, her pedagogical practices, and most importantly I have elicited inputs on how to further improve the content of the curriculum. We have agreed that we need to strengthen and clarify key aspects of the preparatory English programme. I also had the chance to observe one of her lessons and have taught the class for a week when I had to do cover duties. In addition, I have to consider the IBDP English B Course syllabus since the students will be taking the DP English course in the succeeding year and I feel that it is also co-equally important to consider my school's vision-mission to align objectives and learning activities, in addition to various language teaching methods, approaches, and techniques to be employed.

Curriculum Development in Language Education

Prior to embarking on the task of developing a curriculum for language education, I think that it is imperative for language practitioners like me to have a sound understanding on the science of language. There are various aspects of language and language learning that we need to consider, in addition to scientifically approaching how learning works. I would like to refer to Brown's (1994) enumeration of areas to consider in linguistic

endeavour, as this can be the springboard in gaining a basic understanding on language education.

1. Explicit and formal accounts of the system of language on several possible levels (most commonly syntactic, semantic, and phonological).
2. The symbolic nature of language; the relationship between language and reality; the philosophy of language; the history of language.
3. Phonetics: phonology; writing systems; kinesics, proxemics, and other 'paralinguistic' features of language.
4. Semantics; language and cognition; psycholinguistics.
5. Communication systems; speaker-hearer interaction; sentence processing.
6. Dialectology; sociolinguistics; language and culture; bilingualism and second language acquisition.
7. Human language and nonhuman communication; the physiology of language.
8. Language universals; first language acquisition.

After considering the linguistic elements I have cited above, I would like to connect these to curriculum development in language education. In doing so, I think that I am able to bridge the concepts from the theoretical perspective to actual practice. According to Richards (2001) 'curriculum development in language teaching began in the 1960s, though issues of syllabus design emerged as a major factor in language teaching much earlier'. A brief review of language teaching methods and approaches that dominated a particular decade is summarized by Richards (2011) below:

Grammar Translation Method (1800-1900)

Direct Method (1890-1930)

Structural Method (1930-1960)

Reading Method (1920-1950)

Audio-lingual Method (1950-1970)

Situational Method (1950-1970)

Communicative Approach (1970-present)

Reflecting on my experiences as a student and teacher, these methods are still employed in the present times depending on the nature and needs of the learners. For example, with low-level learners of English a teacher who is bilingual in Chinese and English may resort to translating some phrases and words into the mother tongue of the learners. When I was teaching an English aural-oral communication course in the university where most students have high level of English proficiency, the materials produced by the department were very audio-lingual in nature. Direct method seemed to be preferred as well in the teaching of English grammar, with teachers putting emphasis on grammatical rules and students memorizing these rules.

I decided to present this overview on the development of language teaching methodologies because I think that it is necessary for various teachers to combine or alternate their teaching approaches to cater to students' needs, objectives and learning preferences. While teachers have their preferred ways of teaching, it is imperative that learners are exposed to various ways of acquiring a language (Zhou 2011; Tamura 2006). Indeed, when it comes to the grammar translation method, Larsen-Freeman (2000) hoped that 'through the study of the grammar of their native language students would become more familiar with the grammar of their native language and that this familiarity would help them speak and write their native language better'. While the grammar translation puts emphasis on the grammatical structure of the native and target languages, the direct method places emphasis on communicative skills (Mart, 2013). This is essential as speaking in the target language is one of the challenges faced by Chinese learners. Behlol (2010) also reported on the effectiveness of the structural method in terms of vocabulary learning. He reported that this is due to 'morphological analyses of a word, experimenting with the word, and role of the students as the partner in the learning process' among others. The reading method, of course, cannot be neglected especially in the foreign language-learning context.

However, one has to be careful when to employ oral reading, sub-vocalization, and silent reading (Alshumaimeri, 2011). In turn, the situational method enables the learners of a language to 'form links between new words and constructions and real situations (Hornby, 1950).

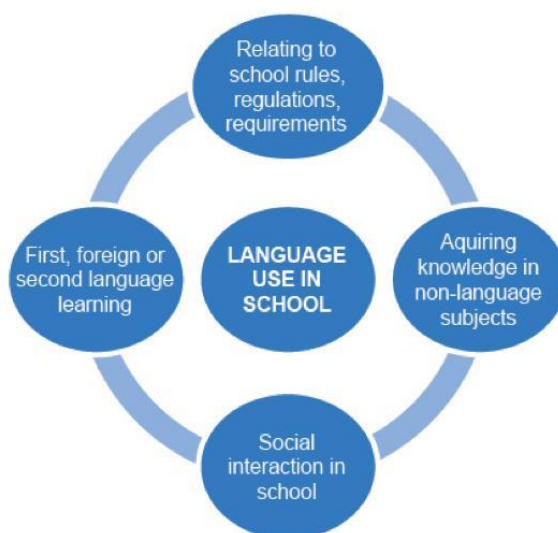
The presentation in this section, although not exhaustive reflects the basic areas of language education that I feel must be taken into consideration prior to the designing of the curriculum. Through the discussion of various theories, methods, approaches, and techniques, it has become clear that differentiation matters and that language teaching must be taken from both the humanities and science perspective. This has also raised some issues regarding teacher quality, training and professional development, especially with the ever-growing demand for English language teachers in the Asian region.

Project Design

Wiles and Bondi (2002) posited that 'curriculum development usually begins with a set of questions that initially reveal value preferences and then later undergird planning efforts and program evaluation'. They further commented that for the curriculum development process to be logical, practitioners must be able to establish boundaries for inclusion and exclusion.

In 2015, the Council of Europe published a document entitled *Language Skills for Successful Subject Learning*. The framework developers argued that the main aim of primary and secondary education is to prepare students for their future lives by empowering them with the relevant skills and knowledge to enable them to live and work as social and independent human beings. I believe that one crucial factor in reaching this aim is equipping students with the necessary language skills in order to better facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and thrive in both the school and outside environments. It is also worth mentioning that access to language of instruction or schooling is one of the determining factors in the promotion of equity. This is an important case in my school as I have noticed that only those students who have higher level of proficiency in English language are able to excel in both academics and co-curricular activities. The following figure shows the language situations students need to cope with in school as taken from the Council of Europe document.

Figure 1. Language situations students need to cope with in school



Source: Council of Europe, 2015

In the development of this curriculum, it is necessary that I take into consideration the immediate language needs of the students to thrive in the new environment and justify how acquiring the skills from this course can benefit them in the long run. The primary target learners of this course are mainly Chinese students who have had 9 years of basic education in the national education system. When my school decided to open the Preparatory Programme, the management gave each department autonomy to decide the content as long as vertical and horizontal articulation are taken into consideration. It is also a known fact in China that sensitive

materials and issues must not be tackled most especially in international schools environment, hence, these topics must be avoided.

Although the course description is in place, I admit that there is no clear syllabus or scheme of work and the content was haphazardly designed without considering various aspects of curriculum development. It also does not help that the current teacher is newly employed by the school and has never taught a formal English class before. Hence, there is an immediate need to review the content and establish a framework for the teaching of the course.

In English language teaching and learning aspect, Li & Bildauf (2011) argued that in the Asian region, the emphasis of the objectives set out in the English curricula has changed from 'linguistic knowledge and skills to communicative language competence'. As a language practitioner, this claim is ideal as this totally supports the Council of Europe's thrust on lifelong learning. Although Li & Bildauf (2001) reported that the national English language curriculum in China for primary and secondary schools has as its focus the quality of students' overall education achieved through task-based, learner-centred methods and communicative language teaching, this seems to be a contrast to what is being practiced as manifested in my conversation with an English teacher from the Chinese mainstream school. In this regard, my discussion with two English teacher colleagues reveals salient points for the design of this curriculum. According to the teacher in the mainstream side, key characteristics of the Grade 9 English programme (the preceding grade level of PP) at Chinese mainstream side are the use of drilling and memorization of grammatical rules. There are also the traditional assessment practices such as the use of multiple choice questions, cloze tests, fill in the blanks, and oral reading without follow-up activities. In terms of writing, my colleague at the mainstream side said that usual writing activities only allow students to write a maximum of 80 words, without emphasis on coherence and even writing a topic sentence. With these observations and comments, we have agreed that the bridging Grade 10 English preparatory English must review basic grammatical rules, introduce advanced grammar lessons, and put emphasis on speaking, listening, writing, and critical viewing.

Our school follows the quarter system and the instruction period for each term usually lasts for 9-10 weeks with one week for assessment. Continuous assessment is used for the first and third terms and semestral assessment for the second and fourth terms (these are major examinations where students usually take the full papers). Considering the school's grading periods, I have divided the Grade 10 Preparatory Programme into the following themes:

Term 1: *Relating with Others and Diversity in Culture*

Term 2: *Beliefs, Customs and Traditions and Language and Mass Communication*

Term 3: *Fitness and Health and Global Issues*

Term 4: *Science and Technology and Leisure and Well-being*

Contrary to the English curriculum design in the mainstream Chinese education system, I think it would be beneficial for the students to learn and consequently increase their level of proficiency in the English language if the thematic approach is used. As I have taught English subjects for lower levels before, I am familiar with how instructional books are designed in order to cater not only to the English language needs of the learners but also to reinforce concepts from other disciplines. The thematic approach would also be beneficial for the teachers as it would be easier for them to choose texts from other subject matters. This is also an avenue for collaborative teaching, with both the language and the so-called non-language subject teachers being involved in curriculum development. Indeed, this view is supported by Reading & Reid (2004), claiming that 'in an effort to better support the learner and to avoid problems associated with students' fragmented view of the curriculum', developers and teachers must consider a more holistic approach to the content. To validate this claim, I again refer to the document produced by the Council of Europe. The following table indicates relevant discourse functions that can be first learned in the English class, making it easier for the learners to have access on the contents of other subjects.

History	Science	Literature	Mathematics
Beacco (2010: 20-21)	Vollmer (2010: 21)	Pieper (2011: 20)	Linneweber- Lammerskitten (2012: 27)
Discourse functions/cognitive operations and their verbal performance			
analyse argue illustrate/exemplify infer interpret classify compare describe/represent deduce define discriminate enumerate explain judge/evaluate/assess correlate/contrast/ match name specify prove recount report (on) a discourse summarise calculate quote	analyse argue classify compare describe/represent deduce define distinguish enumerate explain illustrate/exemplify infer interpret judge/evaluate/assess correlate/contrast/ match name prove recount report (on) a discourse summarise specify assess (also mentioned above) calculate outline/sketch	analyse argue classify compare describe/represent deduce define distinguish enumerate explain illustrate/exemplify infer interpret judge/evaluate/assess correlate/contrast/ match name prove recount/narrate report (on) a discourse summarise specify assess (also mentioned above) outline/sketch	analyse argue classify compare describe/represent deduce define distinguish enumerate explain illustrate/exemplify infer interpret judge/evaluate/assess correlate/contrast/ match name prove recount report (on) a discourse summarise specify assess (also mentioned above) calculate outline/sketch

Table 1. Relevant discourse functions in history, science literature and mathematics
Source: Council of Europe, 2015

Second language acquisition is a complex continuous process (Menezes 2013; Gass & Selinker 2008; Gass & Mackey 2002) with several theories being proposed regarding this are of inquiry (see Krashen 1982, Tricomi 1986, Song 2018). While debates have been going on for decades, I think the consensus is that language is a special faculty for cognition and has direct influence in social functions and interactions (Yamaguchi et al. 2014; Kockelman 2010; Nassaji 2017; Beckner 2009) and that language acquisition and language instruction are a complex interplay (Nassaji, 2017). It is sufficing to claim that language practitioners will have varying perspectives when it comes to the acquisition of second language but as I have claimed in the earlier part of this paper and supported by Lee et. al (2014), a significant aspect of language education is the integration and implementation of contents and activities that enhance the learners' socio-emotional well-being. Of course, practices must also encourage 'flexibility and variety to cater for learner diversity and promote assessment for learning' (Cooley et al. 2012).

In my host country's foreign language schooling context, there is a tendency to rely heavily on the technicalities of language in instruction (i.e. grammar rules) and while to some extent this is ideal especially

that the end goal is standardized testing, I would like to subscribe to Underwood's (2007) idea that grammar teaching should be integrated with communicative work. This poses a great challenge to both the teachers and the learners as this entails the activation of metacognitive process, which admittedly is difficult to approach. However, I agree with Tanewong (2018) that there are several ways that can be utilized depending on the target skills. For instance in listening activities, Tanewong (2018) reported that learners who are engaged in key metacognitive process such as 'predicting, planning during pre-listening, monitoring, evaluating, and problem-solving with peer through dialogue and collaboration' have increased performance in listening activities. Among others, there is also the emphasis on diversity training in the classroom which I think would be beneficial for the learners with the given aim of creating global citizens. Arias (2008) proposed activities such as 'tell a story as a group', 'spell everything' and 'hot seat'. I find these activities suitable as the level of difficulty is easy to adjust and the themes can easily be used.

Another relevant approach in the acquisition of 21st century skills is task-based language teaching. Chen & Wright (2017) have reported that meaningful and authentic tasks are more relevant and more time spent on task-based activities made students become more proficient in the language. I believe that in my context, this approach would not only increase our learners' language proficiency but this would also enhance other skills. In practice, what we want is for our students to 'see the connections between current tasks and their personal goals and interests- self awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making' (www.casel.org). If this is the case, I surmise that task based approach is fundamental in collaborative learning and consequently in the development of students' affective domain. I think the notion in the east that classrooms are highly for academic discourses should change and that development of 'caring' attitude must be one of the focal points in language learning. Lee & Schallert (2008) posit that 'caring is enacted in complex and reciprocal ways, influenced by interwoven factors from greater society, the course, the teacher, and the student'. They further added that 'students' level of trust in the teacher's English ability, teaching practices, and written feedback, as much as the teacher's trust in particular students based on how they revised their drafts, played a great role in the development of caring relationship between them'. The implication of this research in my context is on the teacher's feedbacking practices and most importantly in supporting learners and learning inside and outside the classroom. This also implies that foreign English teachers must establish connection and a healthy relationship with the learners, considering cultural differences and language barriers.

Another aspect that is very relevant in the development of this curriculum project is Global Citizenship. While the key focus is the acquisition of technical and pragmatic competence in the English language alongside developing lexical resources in the various themes, this English programme must be able to equip students with concepts pertaining to global citizenship and consequently contribute in shaping their thinking as global citizens. MacKinnon (2011) argued that 'it is not just internal structures which are causing rapid and major change in schools and that these changes have come about in response to the changing nature of society, employment structures, types of work, technologies- especially communication and that the media is rapidly shifting expectations, changing social norms, and a new connected awareness in globalisation'. Indeed, Cambridge (2002) supported this by commenting that 'curriculum must embrace an existential and experiential philosophy of education which values the moral development of the individual and recognizes the importance of service to the community and the development of a sense of responsible citizenship'.

The fact that these students will be taking the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) in the succeeding year highlights the justification on the inclusion of global education concepts. Indeed, as what Tsolidis (2002) has posited, 'learning to negotiate a range of cultural understandings is an extremely valuable component of cross-cultural learning and it would seem that the more distinct that cultures are which students experience, the more challenging their curriculum'. I believe that limited it might be, the themes included in this course would facilitate this understanding of various cultural practices and issues across the globe.

I recently attended a workshop on Active Learning and Assessment for Learning in English conducted by Cambridge Assessment International Education and gained further insights on how active learning can be best addressed in English language and literature classes. Based on constructivism, a theory that learners construct or build their own understanding, active learning is a process that has student learning at its centre (CAIE 2018). I would argue that this approach is most importantly relevant in English language classes where integration of cultural and social awareness is essential. The learners build and develop their prior knowledge and there is an emphasis on problem so there is an active stimulation of ideas from the students. Bonwell and

Eison (1991) postulated that active learning instructional strategies include a wide range of activities that share common element of “involving students in doing things and thinking the things they are doing”. (*Please see Appendix II for some suggested activities.*)

The design of this curriculum takes into consideration the development of the learners’ competencies in all micro-skills of language learning. A balanced mixture of grammar exercises, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing activities must be utilized every term. Language learning and teaching can be messy and controversial. There is no exact or right method but as long as there is variation in approaches, clear objectives, understanding of the needs of the learners, well-chosen instructional materials and active participation of the learners in the teaching and learning process, some degree of success can be attained in every day instruction by both the teachers and the learners.

Project Evaluation

The assessment of curricula is always subjective since the plan always reflects preferences and values (Wiles & Bondi 2002). As elaborated by these experts, curriculum development as a process is neutral and can be judged by its efficiency. According to them, these assumptions pose this main question: *Does the program developed served our intentions?*

I would like to treat the project that I have designed as something new because although there is already an existing English preparatory class in my school, the existing one has not been properly designed and is only a course outline. In the evaluation of my project, I feel that I have to involve three things. Firstly, the organization’s core values, desired student outcomes, and strategic thrust for students. By referring to these aspects, I will be able to view evaluation from the perspective of the school management, the parents, and the teachers as stakeholders. Secondly, since my school delivers both the Cambridge and International Baccalaureate programmes, I would like to explore how the Cambridge Learner Attributes and the IB Learner Profile can be used to evaluate my project. Although these are two different curriculum providers, the values are overlapping and clearly promote 21st century skills. Lastly, I would like to consider the evaluation process from the language teaching and learning perspective.

Xuesong (2006) mentioned that ‘if language teachers and researchers could pass on some of the wealth of knowledge about learner development in accessible forms to parents and other social agents, we would contribute to the creation of a wider social environment facilitating learners’ language learning and development’. Hence, in the future evaluation of this curriculum, I would like to involve the assistant principal for curriculum and instruction, the English Department Subject Head for Grades 7 to 10, the English teacher, and the Head of English Department. Although it is very ideal to involve the parents in the process of evaluation, it is very difficult to do so in my context because most of these parents do not speak English. However, I believe that parents can support the curriculum in other ways and as a reflection from this project, I intend to orient the parents especially those of Grades 7 and 8 on our English curricular offerings. Considering that the educational system is totally new for them, communication is vital and I feel that this practice should enhance the school and parents relationship. Moreover, from the school’s point of view it is necessary to evaluate how the programme satisfies the school’s ethos.

The scheme of work will be the basis for exploring how the content such as the themes, instructional materials, learning activities, and assessment schemes reflect the school’s ethos and the desire learning outcomes. It is important that Key Performance Indicator and Targets are also reflected and evaluated.

My school has also released a directive regarding the integration of the values promoted by our curriculum providers, Cambridge and the International Baccalaureate. As previously mentioned, I argue that these two organisations’ learner characteristics as overlapping as they aim to promote 21st century skills. In the same manner as the evaluation of the curriculum from the school ethos’ perspective, I thought that it would be logical to make a more holistic approach in the evaluation process by exploring how both learner profiles are reflected in the design of my curriculum.

School Vision

A global centre of excellence that promotes holistic education in a vibrant, multi-cultural environment anchored in local values.

School Mission

We create an environment geared towards nurturing independent life-long learners who strive for excellence and serve with a reflective awareness of self and the community.

Core Values

P.R.I.D.E. – Purpose, Respect, Integrity, Dynamism, Empowerment

Desired Student Outcomes

Scholars, Leaders, Global Citizens

STRATEGIC THRUSTS**THRUST 2: Affective and Effective Learners**

-Active learners who are imbued with moral values and embrace humanistic endeavours in the application of knowledge and skills for achieving success.

LTO 2.1:

Active Learning - Learners strive to achieve excellence in their learning.

LTO 2.2:

Values Education – Learners develop a sense of social awareness and are actively engaged in serving the community.

LTO 2.3:

Skills Mastery – Learners develop research skills to attain global literacy and embrace international mindedness to produce creative and innovative ideas.

Table 2. School Ethos

Source: *Department Action Plan, Own School, 2017*

The Cambridge Learner Attributes	The IB Learner Profile
<p>Confident in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others. Cambridge students are confident, secure in their knowledge, unwilling to take things for granted and ready to take intellectual risks. They are keen to explore and evaluate ideas and arguments in a structured, critical and analytical way. They are able to communicate and defend views and opinions as well as respect those of others.</p> <p>Responsible for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others. Cambridge students take ownership of their learning, set targets and insist on intellectual integrity. They are collaborative and supportive. They understand that their actions have impacts on others and on the environment. They appreciate the importance of culture, context and community.</p> <p>Reflective as learners, developing their ability to learn Cambridge students understand themselves as learners. They are concerned with the processes as well as the products of their learning and develop the awareness and strategies to be lifelong learners.]</p> <p>Innovative and equipped for new and future challenges Cambridge students welcome new challenges and meet them resourcefully, creatively and imaginatively. They are capable of applying their knowledge and understanding to solve new and unfamiliar problems. They can adapt flexibly to new situations requiring new ways of thinking.</p> <p>Engaged intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference. Cambridge students are alive with curiosity, embody a spirit of enquiry and want to dig more deeply. They are keen to learn new skills and are receptive to new ideas. They work well independently but also with others. They are equipped to participate constructively in society and the economy – locally, nationally and globally.</p>	 <p>IB learner profile</p> <p>The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.</p> <p>As IB learners we strive to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> INQUIRERS We make our curiosity developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life. KNOWLEDGEABLE We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance. THINKERS We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions. COMMUNICATORS We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups. PRINCIPLED We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our action and their consequences. OPEN-MINDED We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience. CARING We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us. RISK-TAKERS We approach uncertainty with fortitude and determination. We work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change. BALANCED We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives – intellectual, physical, and emotional – to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live. REFLECTIVE We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development. <p>The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.</p>

Table 3. Cambridge Learner Attributes and IB Learner Profile

Source: CAIE and IBO Websites

The third and last factor that I want to consider in the future evaluation of my curriculum is from the English language teaching and learning perspective. In his book 'Curriculum Development in Language Teaching', Richards (2001) raised some important questions that need to be answered once the curriculum is already in place. From a summative wider perspective of curriculum evaluation, I would like to adopt Richards' (2001) overarching questions:

- Is the curriculum achieving its goals?
- What is happening in classrooms and schools where it is being implemented?
- Are those affected by the curriculum (e.g., teachers, administrators, students, parents, employers) satisfied with the curriculum?
- Have those involved in developing and teaching a language course done a satisfactory job?
- Does the curriculum compare favourably with others of its kind?

By reflecting on these questions in a focus group discussion session, I believe that we will be able to identify strong and weak points in the curriculum design. Of course, this will be extended to specific questions such as those designed by Richards (2001) in the following table.

1.	How effective was the course? Did it achieve its aims?
2.	What did the students learn?
3.	How well was the course received by the students and teachers?
4.	Did the materials work well?
5.	Were the objectives adequate or do they need to be revised?
6.	Was the amount of time spent on each unit sufficient?
7.	How appropriate were the teaching methods?
8.	What problems were encountered during the course?

Table 4. Specific Questions for Evaluation

Source: Richards, J. (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*

While curriculum evaluation process directly involves administrators and teachers, it is imperative that we hear from the students. I think that one of the best ways to ensure that evaluation is holistic is to gain insights from the learners either directly or indirectly. This can be done by creating an evaluation checklist with focus on how the learners respond to the topics and the learning activities. This can be done both by the teacher and administrator. Additionally, I would want the students to be directly involved in the evaluation process. The Preparatory Programme is designed to be a small size class (ideally 15 students) so it is very easy to hear insights from the students. The following questions taken from Richards (2001) can be used for structured student interviews:

- What did I learn?
- How well did I do compare to others?
- How well will I rate this course?
- How will this help me in the future?
- Do I need another course?

Finally, I would like to go back to the main aims of this curriculum which is primarily to enhance the students' grammatical competence in the English language, enhance their writing skills in various genres, increase global awareness and consequently promote global citizenship, and develop competence in speaking and listening. Most importantly, the main aim is to promote active learning, consequently creating independent reflective learners. The following reflective questions can be used to interview the students or as written reflection activities.

1. How well do you think you have improved your English grammar skills? How have you used these skills to become a better communicator?
2. Have the various English lessons helped you in other subjects? In what ways?
3. What is your understanding regarding cultural respect? Has this course helped you become aware of respecting other cultural practices?
4. Do you think this course has helped you understand global issues and taking actions to help the world and humanity in your own small ways?
5. Do you think this course has helped you prepare to become a global citizen? What are the concepts learned in this course that will help you interact with people from other cultures when you study abroad?
6. Does this course help you understand your culture more?
7. Does this course help you establish a relationship with various people in the new school environment? Has this helped you develop your self-confidence?
8. What are the activities that you like in this course?
9. What activities can you further suggest to make this course interesting and relevant?

Table 5. Reflective Questions

Source: Richards, J. (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*

There are various methods and frameworks that can be used in evaluating this programme. Presumably, the easiest way to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum would be to take a look at the learners' progress in the learning activities that the teacher designed. The regular writing activities, quizzes and other forms of testing could also indicate something about the learners' performance. It is also essential to conduct periodic speaking activities, be it in the form of individual or group presentations.

Alongside looking at the school's ethos, the learner profiles or attributes and the content and students' responses to the interviews, it is also important to take a look at how the curriculum has developed the learners' socio-emotional skills. The bottom line is that various stakeholders are involved in the process of curriculum evaluation.

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Development of Learning Material for Grade 7 Struggling Readers

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Abstract

The study dealt on the development of a supplemental learning material for the instructional remediation of Grade 7 struggling readers sensitized to the needs and conditions of students in Mapandan National High School. The study adopted the descriptive-developmental method using a questionnaire and content-validated oral reading and reading comprehension tests. Data were analyzed using frequency count and percentage distribution. Validated rubrics were used for the qualitative description of the students' word-recognition miscue level and reading comprehension level. Majority of the Grade 7 struggling readers employed as respondents in the study are within the average age for Grade 7. They are male-dominated. Concerning their grades in English during the first and second quarters, majority obtained grades that are below average, while the rest obtained grades that are above average. In terms of access to reading materials, all the students have books available in their homes while few have encyclopedias. With regard to media type exposure, majority have televisions and a few reported having a personal computer or laptop with internet connection. About the extent of their reading time, majority spend, at least, an hour of reading every day, while a meager read at least 2 to 3 hours daily. As to their parents' educational profile, majority of the students' fathers finished high school while the minority is a college undergraduate. Moreover, most of their mothers are high school graduates with a meager trace of those who finished elementary education and a college undergraduate. As to the employment profile of the students' father, the majority labor as agricultural, forestry and fishery workers while one works as a manager. Most of the students' mothers are unemployed, and the remainders work in the service and sales industry. On the income profile of the students' respective families, majority belong to families within the poverty line. The performance tests administered to the students indicate that majority are susceptible to mispronunciation and the remainder to omission errors. Generally, the students were gauged to have "Low Level" performance in literal, interpretive, critical, and application reading comprehension. On the merits of the findings, the study offers several recommendations, including the actual use of the developed learning material for instructional intervention purposes. The study also recommends greater instructional focus along areas that students find most challenging in their reading and comprehension performance.

Keywords: Grammatical competence, subject-verb agreement, supplemental learning material

Introduction

Reading is essential to one's success in the varied industries of society. The ability to read is highly valued and important for social and economic advancement. Most children learn to read fairly well. In the Philippines, teachers are most concerned with the large number of children who may be imperiled in their career path or social opportunities because they have less than the sufficient reading skills that are required to meet the demands of an increasingly competitive economy. Current difficulties in reading are largely indicated by the rising demands for literacy. In a technological society, the demands for higher literacy are ever increasing, creating more grievous consequences for those who fall short (Fountas and Pinnell: 2008).

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Reading is a complex and purposeful socio-cultural, cognitive, and linguistic process in which readers simultaneously use their knowledge of spoken and written language, their knowledge of the topic of the text, and their knowledge of their culture to construct meaning with text. Each of these types of knowledge impacts the sense that readers construct through print. Readers in different parts of the world easily comprehend text with familiar language but are less successful at comprehending text with unfamiliar language. Readers easily comprehend text on familiar topics but are less successful at comprehending texts on unfamiliar topics. At the same time, the interpretations readers construct with texts as well as the types of texts they read are influenced by their life experience (Commission on Reading of the National Council of Teachers of English, 2004).

Moreover, majority of students being referred for academic concerns are also identified as either having a specific learning disability or have difficulties in the area of reading. Among the population of students with learning disabilities, an estimated 80 percent have reading disabilities. Students with poor reading skills are becoming more apparent to educators and parents due to the results found on criterion-referenced, high stakes mandatory testing that most schools nationwide have incorporated across grade levels (Joseph, 2002).

The significance of developing students' competitive reading skills is aligned to the implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Program. This is more clearly stipulated in DepEd Memorandum No.402 series of 2004 and Administrative Order No. 324 that implemented the "Every Child a Reader Program" (ECARP). The aim is to teach learners in public schools with planned training in reading and writing to make them independent young readers and writers.

Furthermore, ECARP is also part of the ten-point education agenda of former President Aquino to ensure that the country's public schools produce well-equipped graduates who can cope with different challenges. To reinforce the effectiveness of instruction along reading skills, the pertinent assessment tools have been fortified in order to determine the real status of students' reading proficiency. One such assessment tool is called the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). It measures the reading proficiency of learners through word recognition and reading comprehension in English and in Filipino by obtaining students' rate in word recognition accuracy and in comprehension questions based on the set of criteria for reading levels.

The Phil-IRI scale enables the classification of students into different levels namely, 1) frustration, 2) instructional, and 3) independent. Students under the frustration reading level tend to withdraw from or refuse to read. On the other hand, students with instructional reading level can only read under a teacher's guidance. Those in the independent reading level can read alone with ease even without the guidance of the teacher.

Reading programs have been set up in all school divisions for both public and private schools. However, the programs are not enough to develop students' optimal reading habit. Thus, it is unfortunate to note that despite the efforts and different programs launched by the DepEd to ensure that children in every grade level are equipped with reading skills; actual statistics has indicated that students promoted to high school cannot even read a simple word, i.e. so-called "struggling readers".

Another essential component of reading skill is comprehension. The latter is highly interactive, such that readers must be able to tap on a variety of skills and processes when comprehending texts. These processes are complex and consist of multiple components. A variety of cognitive models have been developed to lend support to the various skills processes thought to impact comprehension (Middleton, 2011).

Standford's (2015) research found several key factors that impede a students' reading comprehension. In reading, numerous cognitive processes are used in aid of comprehension. Likewise, strong vocabulary skills aid a student's ability to read proficiently. Unfortunately, as students struggle to read, they often avoid reading. Refusal to read implies a wide range of consequences since reading also influences vocabulary development. Thus, when one's reading is not fluent or a regular habit, then the development of one's vocabulary is also retarded. During reading, students continually process words to create meaning; and without a strong vocabulary, students struggle to understand what they read.

The study of Cadias (2013) reinforces the foregoing explanation. Accordingly, Cardias states that of the four macro skills, little attention has been paid to reading. This goes true with one of the micro skill under Reading, which is comprehension. The latter was found to be a major challenge for many students, which has qualified the academic weakness of most high school students.

On account of this researcher's survey of the teacher feedbacks on the reading performance of Grade 7

students in Mapandan National High School, it was found that most of the students especially in lower sections are consigned to “frustration level”. A pre-reading test, administered last June 27-30, 2017 among 551 Grade 7 students of the school, revealed that a total of 33 students were identified to be at “frustration level” in terms of word recognition and reading comprehension. The same observation was figured in other schools in Mapandan as the researcher learned about it through the consolidated status report in reading. This gives rise to the exigency and imperative for reinforced remedial instructional materials in reading. With the alarming large fraction of struggling readers among Grade 7 students, an urgent solution is imperative.

Launched from the above national context and the local situation of the school where the researcher is in the roster of teachers, this study was conducted in order to provide crucial information to the concerned teachers and a general reference for all other teachers encountering similar problems with their students regarding poor reading performance and poor comprehension. It is every student’s right to receive competent instruction that shapes him / her to be a skilled reader. Thus, in aid of the teacher’s agentive role in the enterprise of reading skills, this study offers a prototype of a supplementary learning material that may be employed by teachers to improve the word recognition level and comprehension skills of struggling readers.

Literature Review

On Reading

The road to knowledge begins with the turn of a page. The ability to read is recognized as one of the most important skills that a person can have. It is difficult to discover any ability in the school, in the home, in business, or in any other field of endeavor that does not require reading. Through reading, one can ponder the mysteries of the world, explore accumulated knowledge, and contemplate the unknown (Sanders & Rivers, 2005).

Similarly, Flores (2009) emphasizes that learning to read is one of the most important skills. With the ability to speak effectively and to write in a variety of forms and for a variety purposes, reading competency can open avenues for upward mobility or economic opportunity, improve social status, increase personal pleasure and enhance self-respect. Thus, the ability to read and to comprehend the printed work is a prerequisite to academic success.

In the same way, Resurrection (2010) describes reading as the basic tool for learning, for it facilitates the ability to reason, to think, judge and evaluate what has been read and to solve problems. Additionally, reading is a necessary tool for learning the subject in the curriculum and the ability to read is indispensable in leading a successful life.

Miller as cited by Alonzo (2005), it is very important to know the reading performance of the students since this skill is considered the key for gaining knowledge. One reads to attain knowledge that is useful in constructing new knowledge. Comprehension refers to the creation and re-creation of meaning from the printed materials.

However, one cannot deny the fact that hard of reading ability is a perennial problem in the educational system. Teachers must be aware of this because they are the central figures in all teaching activities. The challenge for a brighter future of our school children depends on the teachers. So they must accept the challenge and perform their duties and responsibilities honestly and devotedly (www.sciencedaily.com).

Accordingly, the International Reading Association (2000) issues a position statement that provides a research-based description of the distinguishing qualities of excellent classroom reading teachers. Excellent reading teachers share several critical qualities of knowledge and practice which are contributory to the students’ reading performance:

- a. They understand reading and writing development, and believe all children can learn to read and write.
- b. They continually assess children’s individual progress and relate reading instruction to children’s previous experiences.
- c. They know a variety of ways to teach reading, when to use each method, and how to combine the method into an effective instruction program.
- d. They offer a variety of materials and texts for children to read and are good reading “coaches”.
- e. They use flexible grouping strategies to tailor instruction to individual students.

Likewise, Karp (2006) states that the new three-word aim of the U.S. Department of Education’s Early Childhood Division in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement underscores the priority of building an adequate

foundation for later reading success: relationships, resiliency, and readiness.

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) is one of the most useful classroom tools in assessing a student's reading ability. It is one variation of Informal Reading Inventory (IRI). It is adopted in the context of IRI to help teachers determine the reading abilities and needs of their students in order to provide bases for planning their classroom instruction. It can give teachers information on the level of their student's performance in reading through actual observation (<http://philinformal.reading>).

Ayson (2008) says a typical IRI is administered individually and it consists of graded stories followed by comprehension questions of different dimensions. Depending on the purpose, an IRI may contain comprehension questions on a few or more on the following reading skills: getting the main idea, inference, sequencing events, finding cause-effect relationship, and noting details. Most IRIs would include measures of word miscues and comprehension as well as provision for student's re-telling of the passage read.

Thus, the IRI provides the teachers with a comprehensive profile of their student's ability in reading, whether orally or silently, including their reading habits and attitudes. The teachers may then use this information in planning their classroom reading instruction (<https://philinformal.reading>).

Moreover, Sevilla et al. (2008) stress that the Phil-IRI-Oral Test is an informal measure that assesses the students' word identification, vocabulary and comprehension skills in oral reading. The Phil-IRI uses a predetermined set of criteria in identifying the reading levels namely; frustration, instructional and independent.

Teachers should continuously monitor the development of the students' reading performance. In this way, teachers could plan for future programs and instructions suited for the students' reading level (Flores, 2009).

On Word Recognition

According to Anderson (2000), all readings begin with recognition of words. In the early years of the child's growth, they learn to produce new words through letter-sound recognition and letter blending. As they mature and begin to spell longer and more complex words, they apply to their spelling the concepts of root words and affixes i.e. prefixes and suffixes. When a child is first taught to read, the emphasis is usually on decoding skills. This is the process whereby the written letters and words are translated into language. He is taught phonics and from learning the sounds of individual letters, he progresses to putting the sounds together to form words.

Similarly, Snow, et al. (2008) disclose that word recognition subsequently becomes increasingly automatized by direct recognition of multi-letter units and whole words. Automatic word recognition enables children to devote their mental resources to the meaning of text rather than to recognizing words, allowing them to use reading as a tool to acquire new concepts and information. It is commonly assumed that both cognitive and linguistic factors have a great impact on reading acquisition and also on reading impairment.

Furthermore, Sanders, et al. (2005) state that word decoding, vocabulary, and listening comprehension can be seen as critical factors for developing the ability to efficiently build up text models during reading comprehension. Moreover, verbal memory skills play a special role in research on the relationship between language and literacy problems. Given the fact that linguistic knowledge and memory capacity can be seen as highly interdependent, short-term memory tasks can be seen as indirect means of assessing the operation of language-processing mechanisms.

On the other hand, Shaywitz (2003) contends that students must learn that there are systematic and predictable relationships between letter combinations and spoken sound. While formal phonics instruction is important, it should not take up more than 25 percent of available reading instruction time. Students should be engaged in actual reading much more than they are engaged in discussing the act of reading.

Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe (2009) explain in word recognition research that L1 reading abounds with a predominant focus on children's acquisition of word recognition skills. The literature indicates that children acquire word recognition skills in their native language gradually with increasing accuracy and speed.

Also, Whitehurst (2010) describes that learning to read is affected by "the foundation skills of phonological processing, print awareness, and oral language". Where these components are lacking, children may be "unready" to begin some of the activities in the kindergarten's literacy curriculum, and they are more likely than other children to be poor readers in the long term.

Lifehack's (2004) contends that students, who lack opportunities to speak English, shun from saying an English word because they are more comfortable in using their mother tongue. Moreover, he suggests that oral

reading has to be done regularly to provide more opportunities for the struggling readers to be exposed in English.

Tonjes and Zintz (2001) point out that one reason why some students are poor in reading is that they have not learned reading styles that are needed to help them extract ideas from print with an economy of effort and with an

appreciation for both the quality of the ideas and the craft of the author. What happens is they begin reading the selection with no particular purpose. They never pause to reflect upon what they are reading and to put the author's ideas into their own personal language.

Matthews (2006) states that omission happens when the reader misses a letter out of a word that is superfluous or that he/she is unable to understand from contextual clues. The reader skips over the word/s and supply with another word.

During oral reading, students often say something other than what is actually printed in the book. Such "miscues" can be used to help teachers make decisions about upcoming reading instruction. Deviations from text during oral reading are not simply random mistakes but form patterns that reveal useful information about children's reading abilities (Villamin, 2009).

Accordingly, miscue analysis can be employed to assist professionals in gaining insight into the reading process. It involves both a quantitative and a qualitative component. Miscue analysis targets to analyze the oral reading of individual students to gain insight into the linguistic knowledge and strategy use of readers while reading and "meaning making", and to help professionals evaluate reading material. It also provides an objective basis for determining whether a given selection should be used in a reading program and for determining material's suitability for use by students. These are not considered errors or mistakes. Rather, they are considered non-random indices of the individual's underlying reading ability, linguistic knowledge, background knowledge, and reading strategies. The interest is both on the miscues and how the miscues change, disrupt, or enhance the meaning of a written text (Matthews, 2006).

Moreover, Reading Miscue Inventory is concerned largely with errors that cause a loss of meaning, the number of errors being less important than their immediate impact on comprehension. There are differences in the acceptability of various miscues. Good miscues maintain meaning and are viewed as an indication that the student is using meaning to drive the reading process, and hence, is on the correct path. Bad miscues are those that alter meaning. Whether the word the student reads corresponds to the written word may not be important in this conception. Within the whole language framework, self-corrections are a clear and pleasing sign that meaning and syntactic cues are being integrated into the reader's strategies (Sanders, 2005).

Similarly, Swerling and Stenberg (1994) assert that good readers self-corrected errors at a higher rate than did poor readers. She considered high rates were indicative of good text-cue integration, which in turn was a measure of reading progress. When text difficulty was controlled in reading level-matched designs, the rates of self-correction became similar among good and poor readers. That is, when text is very difficult everyone is more likely to make errors and increase their rate of self-correction.

On Levels of Reading Comprehension

Woolley (2011) claims that reading is a two-way process that combines information from the text-based model with information from prior knowledge using inference.

On the other hand, Gamboa (2014) believes that instruction for word recognition is a critical process for students. Some students continue to struggle with derive meaning or acquiring knowledge from text in spite of possessing sufficient word recognition skills. Additionally, these students experience greater difficulty in upper elementary grades seeing attention switch from learning to read to reading to learn. Particularly, the students encounter problems about finding main idea, making predictions, using background knowledge, making connections, creating mind images, asking questions, drawing inferences, and summarizing information.

The reading process requires continuous practice, development, and refinement. In addition, reading requires creativity and critical analysis. Reading ability is determined by many factors, and requires the development of certain skills through early reading instruction to attain initial success and build on it. Reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning. An individual's ability to comprehend a text is influenced

by his traits and skills, one of which is the ability to make inferences (De Certaeu, 2010).

Moreover, Alonzo (2005) states that students should be expected to extend the ideas in the text by making clear inferences from it, draw conclusion and make connections from their own experience including other reading experiences.

Lutkus, Rampey and Donahue (2005) also say that students should be able to extend the ideas in the text by making clear inferences from it, by drawing conclusions, and by making connections to their own experiences including

reading experiences.

Lifhack (2004) declares that to achieve reading comprehension, the reader should read every day, and use skills such as generating the ideas and information in the selection, and looking for the answers while reading.

In addition, Neufeld (2006) and Mercurio (2005), as cited by Jude and Ajayi (2012), believe that to achieve reading comprehension, the reader should employ skills such as identifying the main idea of a passage, summarizing the context of a text, generating questions about the information in the text and looking for clues that answer those questions.

Furthermore, Vacca (2005) contends that learners must work with print in an effort to explore and construct meaning and that reading is first and foremost a conversation, a give and take process, between the reader and the text. However, the burden is always on the reader.

Moinzade and Salari (2015) disclose that reading comprehension among 120 Iranian EFL learners involves highly complex cognitive processing operations. Teaching English to language learners especially on how to read is a vital issue in their current educational policy and practice. While many students do well in literacy, several English language learners tend to exhibit lower academic achievement especially in reading. When second language readers read second language texts, they are encountering difficulty in processing them; they may get frustrated with reading, and experience anxiety.

Derk (2012) asserts that comprehension means understanding what is being said or read. When it comes to reading, it is an active process that must be developed if a learner wants to become a proficient reader. Effective reading skill development is further accomplished when the learner becomes proficient in literal, inferential and critical comprehension reading.

The first level of reading is literal which has been defined by Roundy (2014) as what the text simply says. It is what actually happens in the story. This is a very important level to understanding because it provides the foundation for more advanced comprehension. Without understanding the material in this level, you could not go any further. He explicates level concerns itself with why the author says what he or she says. This high level of comprehension requires the reader to use some external criteria from his/her own experience in order to evaluate the quality, values of the writing, the author's reasoning, simplifications, and generalizations. The reader will react emotionally and intellectually with the material. The literal level comes out with understanding and absorbing facts, the interpretive level concerns underlying implications, and the applied level focuses on translating topics into real-world situations.

Jude (2012) affirms that literal comprehension is technically the basic form of reading comprehension that involves understanding facts and descriptions that are found in the text. Questions on literal comprehension simply engage students to locate information that are already explicit in the reading material.

Inferential level of comprehension presupposes the ability to process the information in the text and be able to reach a conclusion about the reading material. Inferential level deals with what the author means by what is said. The reader must simply read between the lines and make inferences about things not directly stated. Again these inferences are made in the main idea, supporting details, and cause and effect relationships. Inferential comprehension could also involve interpreting figurative language, drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes, determining the mood, and judging the author's point of view (Cherry, 2016).

Huggins (2009) states that critical comprehension is more than evaluating quality of the text or stating an opinion about it and requires readers to make judgments about what they are reading based on an evaluation of several text-grounded factors, such as the quality of the writing, the determination that it is fact or opinion, the objectivity of the author, and whether the text is believable.

Abdullah (2008) then confirms that a critical reader has achieved the state of critical comprehension when he or she is satisfied that the inferences or meaning obtained from reading, that includes evaluation of the information presented by style, language tone and mode of writing, is consistent with his or her own interpretation, when all contradictions are resolved.

According to Turner (2008) the skills involved in critical reading are one of the highest levels in the hierarchy of reading skills if there is any hierarchy at all.

Finally, Davis 2015 says that application or evaluative reading level is often referred to as “beyond the text” and includes “big picture” comprehension. Often there are no right or wrong answers but rather justification for thinking in a particular way.

On the Development of Learning Material

According to Kellough (2005), the detailed planning for teaching and learning is carried out for several reasons, but the most important one is to ensure curriculum coherence. The workbook or learning material in particular, serves as an agenda for the teacher, a helpful aid for substitute teachers and a useful record for use in the future when teaching similar lessons and classes. Further, it provides information on the quality of teaching and learning, and what the teacher and students could do to improve the standard of their performance.

Barry and King (2007) take the discussion a step further and explain that the keeping of a learning material in any subject area is an administrative requirement. It shows the coverage of work relative to similar classes at both school and national levels. With this information, the educational administrators such as head teachers are able to assess the work of the teacher as well as that of the students and suggest ways of reinforcing the strengths and addressing the limitations.

Richard et al. (2010) contend that effective planning at the school level begins with curriculum development and passes through the scheme of work and units of work to the weekly workbook, learning materials, and daily lesson plans.

In the same way, Dodd (2000) explains that there are three main elements in the process of preparation. First, there is the syllabus, which tells the teacher, in broad outline, what aspects of its subject are to be covered annually. Second, there is the scheme of work, which is the detailed version of the syllabus, a learning material that addresses the specific needs of a class and the school community. The third element is the lesson plan that shows clearly how the lesson is to be taken in the time prescribed by the school timetable. These three elements, according to Dodd, integrate and interrelate to ensure that there is continuity in the teacher’s teaching and the child’s learning. In preparing and presenting lessons, it is also important for the teacher to include the approaches suggested by Bloom (1956).

Likewise, Gibbs (2002) emphasizes that the design for the development of a module, workbook or any learning material uses a blended pedagogy, combining traditional classroom teaching with e-learning, as part of seeking to utilize all strategies for encouraging students to be independent learners. Influence of workbooks, learning materials on monitoring student progress, delivering formative feedback and guiding students’ independent learning was explored. The development of learning materials presents student perceptions of how this educational approach influences learning and enhances their learning experience. The activities in the learning materials were designed to prompt learners to draw on knowledge and skills acquired during teaching sessions; provide opportunities for reflection; application of theory to practice; and development of a deeper understanding. When faced with this new mode of learning, 75% of respondents agreed that the workbooks and other learning materials increased independent study.

On the Profile of the Students

Chall (2006) affirms that the earliest stage of reading readiness encompasses the skills that young children usually ages 4-6 acquire before they can profit from formal reading instruction. Children with 4 to 6 years old acquire knowledge of the language and of letter names; they learn that spoken words are composed of separate sounds and that letters can represent these sounds. At younger ages, children also learn about other aspects of written language. They can distinguish their script from that of other languages; recognize commercial logos, engage in “pseudo reading” with familiar books, and so on. It has been suggested that these early “reading” behaviors contribute to later

reading success. .

Schmidt and Retelsdorf (2016) in their research article on a new measure of reading habit: going beyond behavioral frequency, offers a rubric to measure reading frequency in which the maximum is “more than 2 hours daily”, and the minimum is “up to 30 minutes daily”. One to two hours of reading is relegated to the fourth scale in a five-scale range.

Smith (2008) declares that teaching reading is one of the most challenging yet enriching tasks since reading is the key to learning. Traditional approaches to dealing with reading problems such as tracking and grade retention do not help. Instead, expose the child to varied reading materials that could ignite his interest in reading, from simple to complex until he develops his reading performance.

Relative to the above, exposure to music could affect the reading skills of the students. Music, like any written language, can give students that same limitless power felt as a 5-year-old first entering a world filled with words. The key to this hidden realm within music is sight reading. The constant practicing, studying, and challenges that make up a music-learning experience are the perfect ingredients for sight reading success. (<https://www.musical-u.com/learn/sight-reading-music/>).

According to the article Reading Children Science (Canete, 2007)”, reading is said to help the child become familiar with sounds, words, language and the value of books. Their imagination is stimulated; they learn to breakdown words into their most basic sounds called decoding.

Sanklin (2004) asserts that growing body of evidence suggests that reading problems are preventable for learners who receive extra support in the form of early reading activities.

On the other hand, Walker (2002) states that in kindergarten or first grade, whose ages are below six (6) years old are often given readiness tests that measure abilities in language, knowledge of letter names, a skill in matching words and letters.

Slavin (2004) articulates that literacy is a relatively recent addition to human culture. Humans have used oral language for perhaps 4 million years, but the ability to represent the sounds of language by written symbols. However, the expectation in today’s society is that 100 percent of the population will be able to read and comprehend. We live in a society where the development of reading skills serves as the primary foundation for all school based learning. Those who do not read well find limited opportunities for academic and occupational success. Although the expectation that all children will read and comprehend is understandable, we are a long way from reaching this goal.

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2008), 38 percent of fourth graders in the United States cannot read at a basic level. This means they cannot read and understand a short paragraph of the type found in a simple children’s book.

Based on Lyon (2011), a child who is not at least a modestly skilled reader by the end of third grade is unlikely to be a skilled reader in high school. In fact, research has shown that we can predict, with reasonable accuracy, students’ future academic success by their reading level at the end of third grade.

Shaywitz (2003) upholds that even though reading is an acquired skill and not a natural process, most people do become fluent readers, but not without a lot of work. Learning to read is a long, gradual process that begins in infancy. Basic competency usually is not reached until middle childhood. As reading researcher, professor and director of the Yale Center for Learning and Attention, added: “Reading is the most complex of human functions; his age is a determining factor”.

In the article of Marshall (2013), it is stated that if a student is struggling with reading, the teacher should take the necessary steps to check for possible learning disabilities. It could be influenced by factors such as the profile of the students, the school or his community.

In the article, “Bridges to Literacy,” (Rosenkoetter and Barton, 2001), it is established that reading emerges after instruction, in children who are well nourished and thriving in safe abodes and neighborhoods, in children who are nurtured by strong families who receive the services they need from living in caring communities.

Erica (2012) states that in the Philippines, about 58 million (86%) of the estimated 80 million Filipinos aged 10 to 64 years old are functionally literate, meaning they can read, write, compute and comprehend. This is based in 2010 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS). It is reported further, that the 2012

functional literacy of 86.4 percent is slightly higher than the 2011 FLEMMS survey result of 84.1 percent. She concluded that literacy is much higher to persons who have completed high school or higher education.

Medina (2000) discloses that the majority of reading problems faced by today's adolescents and adults are the result of problems that might have been avoided or resolved in their early childhood years. It is imperative that steps be taken to ensure that children overcome these obstacles during the primary grades. Reducing the number of children who enter school with inadequate literacy-related knowledge and skill is an important primary step toward preventing reading difficulties. Although not a panacea, this would serve to reduce considerably the magnitude of the problem currently facing schools.

Estabillo (2008) contends that children who are particularly likely to have difficulty with learning to read in the primary grades are those who begin school with less prior knowledge and skill in relevant domains, most notably general verbal abilities, the ability to attend to the sounds of language as distinct from its meaning, familiarity with the basic purposes and mechanisms of reading, and letter and knowledge.

Tizon (2004) states that children from poor economic status neighborhoods, children with limited proficiency in English, children with hearing impairments, children with preschool language impairments, and children whose parents had difficulty learning to read are particularly at risk of arriving at school with weaknesses in these areas and hence of falling behind from the outset.

Catts & Hogan (2008) confirm that many children learn to read effortlessly; however, there are a great number of children who have difficulty acquiring reading skills and need additional support or specialized instruction. Conditions that place children at risk for reading difficulties include poverty, cultural and linguistic differences, neurologically-based problems, inadequate instruction, limited development-enhancing opportunities, or familial history of reading disabilities.

Snow, et al. (2008), affirm that reading in any language poses a challenge, but reading in English is particularly difficult. For example, some language systems, such as the Japanese katakana, are based on a system where each syllable is represented by a written symbol. When these symbols are learned, the child can read with relative ease. Spoken English, on the other hand, has approximately 5,000 different possible syllables. Written English uses a system of letters—an alphabet—to make up a spoken syllable. A letter alone does not refer to anything. It must be combined with other letters to represent a meaningful unit or syllable. The child must learn this complex alphabetic system in order to be able to decipher written words.

Tierney (2001) states that reading is a complex process that requires the learner to interact with print on many levels, the type of reading material one reads. It has long been acknowledged that effective word recognition skills are fundamental to proficient reading. Word study addresses not only word recognition, but also vocabulary, spelling, word-level grammatical concepts and effective word choice. These areas work in tandem to help learners develop into mature readers and can be categorized as Independent reader.

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive-developmental research method with the use of a survey questionnaire as the data-gathering instrument was employed in this study. A descriptive study searches for factual data to substantiate an existing truth (Calderon, 2003). Moreover, the aim of was to determine and describe the nature of a thing by deciphering its parts by means of collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. This study utilized the descriptive method to enable the analysis of the profile and the reading level of the students as well as their relationship.

As a developmental study, an output was generated, i.e. a learning material appropriate for Grade 7 struggling readers. The development of this output underwent the standard scientific steps in instructional development. The merits obtained from correlating the sets of variables inspired the outline, features and contents of the instructional material.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study are thirty-three (33) Grade 7 students of Mapandan National High School, Mapandan, Pangasinan during the school year 2017-2018. The students were prior identified as struggling readers based on teacher assessment and as revealed by the result of the pre-reading test conducted in the beginning of the school year 2017.

Total enumeration was employed, thereby including the complete list of the Grade 7 struggling readers. The population was congenial for applying the selected statistical tool.

Data Gathering Instruments

Relevant data to actualize the research analyses were gathered using three (3) sets of instruments, namely: 1) the survey questionnaire, which determined the profile of the students in terms of age, sex, reading materials at home, extent of reading time, media type exposure, grades in English during the first and second quarters, highest educational attainment of parents, their occupations and monthly family income; 2) the oral reading passage which determined the reading miscues and word recognition level of the students; and 3) the reading comprehension test which gauged the level of comprehension of the students in literal, interpretative, critical and application type of comprehension.

The survey questionnaire (see Appendix C) determined personal information such as students' age, sex, reading materials present in their homes, extent of reading time, media type exposure, grades in English during the first and second quarters, highest educational attainment of their parents, their occupations and monthly family income. The summary of the data obtained using this instrument including their analysis and interpretation was vital in answering the first question of the research problem.

The oral reading passage (see Appendix D) was adopted from "Reading Links" (Aguinaldo, M.B. et al, 2004). This passage was used in the oral reading test given to the students in order to determine their reading miscues and classify their word recognition level into low, average or high. The matrix for determining the word recognition level is also appended (see Appendix I).

The reading comprehension test is composed of sixty (60) with equal distribution of the questions on literal, interpretative, critical and application levels of reading comprehension. The test also meant to determine the following reading skills: identifying specific information or noting details, sequencing ideas and getting the explicit main ideas; identifying implied main idea, inferring character traits, forming conclusions, anticipating or predicting an action and drawing implications; making judgment of the accuracy and logic of the text, identifying the appropriate title for the passage, distinguishing between fact and opinion, determining the author's intent/purpose, his style of presentation; and application of reading to practical situations.

The aforementioned test items were formulated based on the five reading passages excerpted mostly from "Reading Links". Moreover, the structure of the questions was patterned after the departmental and division-made tests. It was designed to classify the students' literal, interpretative, critical and application levels of comprehension. Prior to the administration of the test, it was subjected to content validation. The selection of evaluators was based on professional experience and academic expertise. Comprising the roster of evaluators are the department heads, master teachers, and teachers of English from different secondary schools. The test was assessed in terms of clarity, vividness and definiteness based on the Content Validity Questionnaire (see Appendix G). Accordingly, the test obtained an overall rating of 4.74 or Highly Valid (Appendix H). Comments and suggestions of the evaluators were integrated in the final revision of the comprehension test.

Data Gathering Procedure

In gathering the research data, adequate administrative and ethical protocols were observed. At the commencement of the procedures for data gathering, a formal communication was addressed to the principal of Mapandan National High Schools (Appendix A) requesting to administer the research instruments.

The administration of the research instruments to the students was conducted by the researcher and ably assisted by the school's English teachers. Clarification and transparency clauses were made to inform the teachers and the students about the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of the data obtained.

In the conduct of the oral reading test, the students were asked to read the passage orally, while the

researcher documented the students' reading performance and miscues using the Miscue Analysis Chart (Goodman, 1969 in Walsh, 1979). This chart also enabled the qualification of the different miscues into cases of insertion, mispronunciation, omission, repetition, reversal, substitution, and transposition. Pre-identified symbols were used to facilitate in the recording of the students' oral reading miscues (Appendix E). The researcher also used audio recorder to document all the miscues that would be missed during the live reading.

The reading comprehension test was administered after the oral reading test. The students were asked to read the passages silently and then answered the comprehension test. The aforementioned sets of data gathered through the use of the tests were noted, analyzed and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Gathered data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistical tools.

In answering question number 1, the students' profile was described using percentage and frequency count.

In answering question number 2, the students' word recognition level was determined using the scale below:

Level	Word Recognition (WR)
High	89 below
Average	90-96%
Low	97-100 %

In answering question number 3, the researcher utilized frequency count and percentage distribution. In determining the reading comprehension level of the students to the different reading categories, it was described by the researcher employing the scale below:

Score Range	Descriptive Equivalent
11-15	High Performance
6-10	Average Performance
0-5	Low Performance

In answering question number 4, the learning material for Grade 7 struggling readers was developed based on the results of the reading test focused on word recognition and the levels of reading comprehension. The material was designed relative to the nuances that characterize the typical errors of students. Certain merits were also drawn from the learner-profile variables to ensure that the learning tasks are contextualized and sensitized to the personal characteristics of the learners.

Moreover, the learning material produced in this study was subjected to content validation procedure. This entailed the use of a content validity questionnaire which the evaluators used to indicate their ratings on the material. The average weighted mean (AWM) of the ratings were obtained, which were further transposed to the implication of the ratings on the learning material's level of content validity. The rubric below shows the formula for determining the level of content validity of the learning material:

Range of AWM of the Evaluators' Ratings	Level of Content Validity
4.50 – 5.00	Highly Valid
3.50 – 4.49	Valid
2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Valid
1.50 – 2.49	Fairly Valid
1.00 – 1.49	Not Valid

Findings and Discussion

This study dealt on the development of a supplemental learning material appropriate for Grade 7 struggling readers. A prototype of the material was offered based on the guidelines proposed by this study. In turn, the guidelines were

based on the merits of the research findings to ensure the contextualization of the material in consideration of the characteristics of the students in the research locale. The research findings were focused on the analyses and interpretation of the students' learner variables, the identification of their performance level in word recognition, their susceptibility to the categories of reading miscues, and their performance in the four levels of reading comprehension. Researcher-developed and modified instruments were used in gathering the data.

The following provides a summary of the salient points in the research findings.

Profile of the Grade 7 Struggling Readers

The research involved the participation of 33 Grade 7 students. The typical age of the students is 13. There are isolated cases of students in the same grade level aged 12 (being the youngest) and 18 (being the oldest). The research population is also male-dominated. As per students' self-report, there are available reading materials accessible in their respective homes, majority of which are books, while others reported having magazines, encyclopedia, and dictionaries in their homes in addition to books. All the respondents account for exposure to various media, which is typically the television. Majority of them have cell phones, and are exposed to media that features music. There is a small trace of students having further exposure to internet resources using computer and video games. With regard to the extent of their reading time, majority of the students (84.8 percent) engage in, at least, an hour of reading at home while the rest (15.2 percent) have 2 to 3 hours extent of reading time. Pertaining to the students' grades, majority of the students (57.6 percent) obtained grades below the average while the rest (42.4 percent) obtained grades above the average in the first quarter. This pattern also applies in the second quarter with more students obtaining grades below the average (60.6 percent) than those with grades above the average (39.4 percent). Noteworthy is the increase of the number of students with below average grades from the first to the second quarter.

The students' parents are generally at par in their educational attainment. Majority of the students' fathers (84.8 percent) finished High School. There is a small trace found for those whose fathers did not finish High School and elementary education (6.1 percent) or is a college undergraduate (3 percent). On the other hand, majority of the respondents' mothers finished High School (78.8 percent). There is a meager trace of those who finished a college degree (9.1 percent), undergraduate in High School (6.1 percent), and undergraduate in College (3.0 percent). With regard to their parents' occupation, most of the respondents' fathers are employed in the blue collar industry, i.e. as skilled agriculture, forestry and fishery workers (42.4 percent); as craft and related trades workers (30.3 percent); as service and sales workers (12.1 percent); and as plant and machine operators and assemblers (6.1 percent). In contrast, majority of the respondents' mothers are unemployed (84.8 percent), and the remainder who are employed work in the service and sales industry (15.2 percent). Most of the respondents belong to families with relatively low income. Majority of the respondents' have families that generate income below Php 7,890.00 (84.8 percent); while the rest belong to families with slightly higher income brackets namely, Php 7891.00 to 15,780.00 (6.1 percent); Php 15,781 to Php31,560.00 (6.1 percent); and Php31,561 to 78,900.00 (3 percent).

Performance in Word Recognition Relative to Reading Miscues

Of the seven reading miscues, the students mostly accounted for the categories of "mispronunciation" (60.6 percent) and "omission" (39.4 percent). Likewise, the students who accounted on the aforementioned reading miscues also rated "High Level" in terms of word recognition miscue performance. A small trace of students who also committed "mispronunciation" (39.4 percent) and "omission" (57.6 percent) were rated "Low Level" in word recognition miscue. The students have negligible errors in terms of "insertion, repetition and substitution". They have not accounted any error in terms of "reversal, and transposition" miscues so students were rated with "Low Level" word recognition relative to these miscues.

Performance in Reading Comprehension

a. Literal Level

As per ascending rank in terms of frequency, the students' performance in terms of literal level of comprehension range from "Low Level" (69.7 percent); "Average Level" (27.3 percent); and "High Level" (3.0 percent). Noteworthy is the apparent dominance of students with low literal level of comprehension.

b. Interpretative Level

As per ascending rank in terms of frequency, the students' performance in terms of interpretative level of comprehension range from "Low Level" (93.94 percent); and "Average Level" (6.06 percent). Noteworthy is the greater number of students with low interpretative level of comprehension compared to those with low literal level of comprehension.

c. Critical Level

As per ascending rank in terms of frequency, the students' performance in terms of interpretative level of comprehension range from "Low Level" (93.94 percent); and "Average Level" (6.06 percent). Noteworthy is the comparable number of students with low critical level of comprehension compared to those with low interpretative level of comprehension.

d. Application Level

As per ascending rank in terms of frequency, the students' performance in terms of interpretative level of comprehension range from "Low Level" (90.91 percent); and "Average Level" (9.09 percent). Noteworthy is the relatively comparable rate of students with low application level of comprehension compared to those with low interpretative and critical levels of comprehension.

Contents of the Developed Learning Material

The developed learning material is composed of reading exercises on vowel sounds, consonant blends, digraphs and common sight words to address the word recognition miscues of Grade 7 struggling readers specifically on mispronunciation and omission. It also contains passages with questions to enhance their comprehension level along literal, interpretative, critical and application.

Conclusions

Based on the foregoing findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Majority of the struggling readers are within the average age for Grade 7, male dominated, read books that are available at home, spend time reading for one hour daily, are exposed to varied media and have grades of below average in the first two quarters, with parents who are high school graduates, their fathers are employed in blue collar industries while their mothers are typically unemployed and they typically belong to families with low level income.
2. That word recognition miscue level is committed in most of its categories, with the greater density in mispronunciation and omission.
3. The Grade 7 struggling readers have low level of performance in literal, interpretative, critical and application reading comprehension.
4. The developed learning material is composed of reading exercises to enhance the performance of Grade 7 struggling readers in word recognition specifically mispronunciation and omission as well as in reading comprehension along literal, interpretative, critical and application.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. Instructional efforts and preparation of learning materials for reading and comprehension must be sensitized to the varied age range, sex, and other characteristics of the students to ensure that their varied learning needs are addressed. Interventions can be used to improve the reading habit of students and to encourage parents to secure more types of reading materials accessible for their children at home despite economic challenges. Parents

must also be counseled as to how they can reinforce their children's exposure to a broad range of media beneficial for learning.

2. Instructional efforts and preparation of learning materials must focus on the remediation of the common reading miscues of students, i.e. on mispronunciation and omission.

3. Instructional efforts and preparation of learning materials must focus on the remediation of students' apparent weakness in dealing with all levels of comprehension. Teachers with their department head and school head must review the reading materials prescribed to ensure the selection of texts that are more interesting and relevant on the part of students to make them enjoy the task of comprehending their reading materials.

4. The teachers handling Grade 7 struggling readers shall be advised to use the developed learning material as a supplementary material for remedial reading to improve their performance in word recognition and reading comprehension.

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The Influence of Role Model Affects Teacher Identity Development in English as a Foreign Language Teaching Context

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Abstract

The influence of a role model is critical to the motivation in teaching and learning English and the teacher's identity. This paper explores the factors that influence the teacher identity and beliefs and values of an English teacher who was actively engaged in teaching and was considered a powerful and energetic role model until her death at the age of 83 in Gorontalo, Indonesia. The data for this qualitative study were collected from in-depth interviews with the family members of the exemplary teacher in Gorontalo Province, Sulawesi, Indonesia; and from 10 high school English teachers and colleagues of the said teacher. Two factors are identified in influencing the role model teacher's identity shaping and development: Family culture and Social factor. These two factors are pivotal contributing to EFL teacher's professional beliefs, identity shaping and development which then subsequently impact on motivation in learning and teaching.

Keywords: Role model, teachers' identity, EFL teaching

Introduction

This study aims to understand an influential figure who was considered as a role model and how it affects to the identity development in English as a foreign language context, explaining from the beliefs, attitudes and experiences of others toward the teacher.

The influence of a role model is critical to the motivation in teaching and learning English and the teacher's identity. While the issue of teachers' identity and development have become a topic of increasing research interest in western contexts (e.g., Duff and Uchida 1997; Morgan 2004; Varghese et al 2005), in Indonesia context this issue is still under investigation.

Research over many years has discussed the problems of ELT in Indonesia which pointed out of many other factors affecting EFL teaching such as studies on the diversity of students' culture and unsupportive English learning environment for ELT success (e.g. Marcellino 2008), teachers' beliefs on the teaching of English in English language courses in Indonesia (Flora, 2013), teachers' beliefs on the issues of nativeness (Zacharias, 2006), teacher' training programs which influence motivation and confidence to teach (Wati 2011). However, empirical studies which specifically focussing on understanding role model and its affect to motivation and identity development seem are still lacking. Basalama (2010) studied on teacher's professional formation, identity and practice. While Basalama (2010) focussed her investigation on understanding 20 high school English teachers' beliefs and attitudes of themselves through their beliefs and attitudes of several things including their investment and curriculum reforms.

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Literature Review

The focus of this article discussion is drawn on theory of teacher's identity shaping and development (By Varghese et al 2005 and Uchida 1997), and the concept of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Deci and Flaste 1996).

In understanding a teacher, one should understand their teaching and their identity shaped. These three factors are inseparable. In relation to that, Varghese et al (2005) suggest that teachers' engagement in language teaching and learning cannot be separated from an understanding of who they are as teachers including their multiple layers of identities, "the professional, cultural, political, and individual identities which they claim or which are assigned to them" (Varghese et al 2005, 22). They argue that EFL teachers face a more complex task in their attempt to be good teachers, as they have to develop a foreign language identity, in addition to negotiating the other identities that are assigned to them.

In conceptualizing identity three underlying tenets emphasized by Varghese et al (2005) are worthy of highlighting (cited in Basalama 2010). First, identity is multiple, shifting and in conflict. One may experience the change of his or her identity due to their relationship with others including one's relations to the world and environment, choice, language and practice that can constantly impact on the change, form and reform of one's identity (Weedon 1997, p. 33 cited in Basalama 2010). Second, it is crucially related to social, cultural and political context (Duff and Uchida 1997). Traditional culture and value, and society expectation are related to this concept of identity, referring to the understanding that 'identity is not context free' (Duff and Uchida 1997). Finally, identity is constructed, maintained, and negotiated primarily through discourse. In this paper, these three tenets of identity are considered to understand the exemplary teacher through understanding the stories, beliefs and attitudes of others.

As teacher identity is seen as an important component in determining how language teaching is played out, there have been an increasing number of studies devoted to the topic of language teacher identity (Carson 2005; Demirzen 2007; Duff and Uchida 1997; Johnston 1999, 2002; Malm 2004; Morgan 2004; Pennington 2002; Webb 2005 cited in Basalama 2010). Among the studies some have considered teachers' socio-cultural identities and classroom practice in relation to expatriate teachers and ESL teachers (Duff and Uchida 1997), how identities are developed in the teacher education context (Varghese 2000 cited in Varghese et al 2005), teacher's identity as a form of pedagogy (Morgan 2004), and teachers' collaborative research in understanding self-identity development (Webb 2005). These studies have provided insights for this present study in understanding teacher and their identity shaping and development, especially the influence of socio-cultural values.

The studies are primarily focused on understanding the issue of language teacher identity when English is a teacher's native language in an ESL context (e.g., Morgan 2004), when English is either a teacher's native language or a foreign language in an EFL setting (e.g., Duff and Uchida 1997), and secondary school teacher identity development in their native (western) context (e.g., Webb 2005). In contrast this present study focuses on the issue of language teacher identity in a quite different context: in a relatively remote part of Indonesia – Gorontalo Province, a context where the exposure of English is minimal. The focus of this paper discussion is exploring the factors that influence the teacher identity and beliefs and values of an English teacher who was actively engaged in teaching and was considered a powerful and energetic role model until her death at the age of 83 in Gorontalo, Indonesia.

Methodology

The data of this particular discussion on this paper were gathered from in-depth interviews with the family members, and from 10 high school English teachers and colleagues of an English teacher who actively engaged in teaching and was considered a powerful and energetic role model until her death of age of 83 in Gorontalo Indonesia.

The family member interviews were gathered from the three daughters of the five daughters of the teacher. Yet due to the availability and accessibility, the data derived from the eldest daughter was primarily used in understanding the role model and her personal histories related to identity development and motivation.

The ten participants who were selected for this study, six of them were both as English teachers in junior high and high school in Gorontalo province and as former students of the role model teacher when they were

entering their pre-service teacher education (See Table 1 for a summary of participants' profile). The other four participants were the university colleagues of the role model teacher when she was teaching at the institution (which from early 1960 up to now have experienced several changes of its name) in English department, the place where

she had been teaching for almost 40 years.

Each participant was interviewed for approximately one to two hours duration covered several broad thematic areas such as stories and experiences they can share of the exemplary teacher's educational background, stories, life experiences which can be connected to the teacher's beliefs, motivation including her career choice (obtained from family interviews), and the interviews gained from the 10 high school teachers and colleagues of the exemplary teacher, dwelled on their stories, motivation, and experiences in describing the teacher, her ways of teaching and how these all be connected to the participants' beliefs, motivation in English learning and teaching. As the 6 participants who were also as former students of the teacher in their pre-service teacher education, they were also asked to share their experiences with the teacher which connected to their motivation in learning, and later in teaching.

All the participants' names were pseudonyms as in this study context, it is important to keep the participants' name remained anonymous. It is also considered important to use pseudonyms for the exemplary teacher in order to preserve any harms feeling which might present due to the information gathered from interviews, thus in this article, the teacher will be identified as Mrs Ramolan. Data analysis systematically followed steps suggested by Seidman (1998). The interview materials were coded in relation to those main areas of interest, and from this, a number of themes emerged for discussion that seemed to be influential contribute to understand the teacher, her ways of teaching, and motivation in learning and teaching in the foreign language teaching context.

Findings and Discussion

Factors influencing role model teacher's beliefs and identity

There appear to be two broad groups of factors that emerge as critical in understanding belief and identity shaping and development of a role model teacher in EFL context. The first are the culture of family factors- defined as ways and traditions, which occurred and applied during the childhood and teenage time experiences of the teacher. The most important the family cultures factors based on the family members' interviews are:

- The existence of fighting value
- The culture of language – in relation to foreign language use at home
- The strong root of Javanese traditional values
- The role model influence within family
- The influence of being a high achiever
- The influence of high reading literacy

The second groups of factors are social factors – defined as factors that influence the role after entering her marriage life which appeared to influence the model's decision on her English teaching career and choice as professional. Based on the interviewed analyzed for the aims of this paper discussion, social factors for the role model teacher identity development are:

- Society expectation – the expectation derived from a group of people put upon the role model teacher in relation to English teaching
- The influence of family responsibilities- As the bread winner and being responsible for financial support within her marriage life, this seems as of the reasons for the teacher to engage in English teaching.

Each of this group of factors will be discussed based on the interviewees of the participants in relation to their stories, motivation and experiences in describing the role model teacher, her ways of teaching and their contribution to identity development and teaching approach in English as a foreign language.

The culture of family- factor influence teacher identity

The existence of fighting value and the culture of language

Fighting value and the culture of language tradition among the members of the family seem to shape EFL role model teacher identity. The existence of fighting value appears to be manifested in the family tradition in the role model childhood and teenage time, represented through the positive competition among siblings in the family. The family members' interviews reported the stories of how their mother and her other siblings (four girls of the ten siblings) were passionate in competing and accomplishing success for their life goal and education. Like many other siblings who worked after pursuing their education, Mrs. Ramolan worked as a chemist analyst after finishing her

chemist bachelor's degree. At the same time, she was also studying her additional bachelor's degree in English as the language was one of the two foreign languages which always has been used in their family interaction at home. Working while studying might be indicated the family's attitude and value toward work hard. The value appeared to be critical in understanding the identity of Mrs. Ramolan who perceived by quite a few participants (Yani, Don, Sani, Riska, Tania, Nung, Tina) as 'a hard-working person'.

The language tradition also seemed as influential factor influencing the role model identity. The family reported interviews showed that in her young age time, Mrs. Ramolan's family in Java always maintained family culture tradition by communicating with two foreign languages at home; Dutch and English, beside Indonesian and Javanese. This tradition appeared to affect the identity shaping of Mrs. Ramolan, as multilingual. The two factors of the family culture seem had affected her and her identity shaping in multiple ways. Some examples of the interviews highlighted below:

...She always kept herself busy. You never saw her doing nothing or even just sitting she was still working on something. She always finished her job and satisfied by that completion...even in early morning when were still sleeping she already started her day... (Family member interview)

She became as an English teacher when she stayed here in Gorontalo... (Family member interview)

...Mrs. Ramolan is hardworking person. During my interaction with her for many years both as her former student and later we became colleagues, I never saw she did nothing. She was a very active, smart and diligent teacher. Her English was above average and she always used English... (Participant Don, interview).

The strong root of Javanese traditional values

The issue of Javanese values also has been identified as something important which seems has strengthened the identity shaping of the teacher. One of them is 'nrimo' [translated literally as 'receiving'], refers to 'acceptance' and 'belief' that one should do on their faith regardless what difficulties they experienced to. While 'nrimo' for many might be interpreted as total receiving of their faith, others understood that as the teaching which guides one to accept whatever the result after doing their best to achieve that. After efforts being done, whatever the result would be considered as God's decision, as the eldest daughter explains: "... although my mom and her other siblings were quite modern as they went to 'Dutch school, they however kept maintaining the good values of Javanese tradition...therefore in her own family where we grew up my mother always maintain those..."

The teaching seems influence the exemplary teacher understood of all the constraints and difficulties she is facing through her life experiences. The eldest daughter explains; "whatever the difficulties she faced she never complained, never regretted on things and she even tried her best to still enjoy life."

The influence of role model

The influence of role model in family emerges as one of the important factors that seems influencing the teacher's identity in her life pathways. The eldest daughter recalls that her mom was highly inspired by her own father (known as a high-class person in Javanese's culture and status) including the teaching value she learned from the figure. As explained: "At their home town, my grandfather was the most respectable person. Both my grandfather and grandmother were from Jogja [one of the provinces in west java which popular for its different status and rank. My grandfather was well known as the caring father ...I think my mom was extremely influenced by her father whom she strongly admired to...influence by his teaching where my mother always taught that every

problem has its solution and one just need to go through it.”

The high achiever

Being a high achiever in the family can also be understood as one of the factors that affecting the identity of the EFL role model. Based on family member's recollection, it reveals that of the ten, Mrs. Ramolan who was perceived by her family as the smartest. This leads to understanding that teacher identity is influenced by the relation a teacher made with the other and how she is perceived by the others. The beliefs and attitudes of her family to Mrs. Ramolan appears to have been extended how her students and colleagues perceived of her, highlighted from one of the interviews materials:

...She was not only excellent in her English, but she was knowledgeable in many things. She was so smart
...I

remembered well at the time when were in Manado because we should travel to Manado and we did our exam there... when attended the face to face reading exam [Mrs. Ramolan was also doing her further study at the time], the lecturer's name was Mener Tulung [sir Tulung] who thought that Mrs. Ramolan competence like many others of us [meaning average]. So he gave face to face reading exam. You know what happened? He seemed to be shocked because when he just started enjoying his cigarette, Mrs. Ramolan had returned back her answer sheet. Being shocked with this, he challenged her by English oral test, and he was astounded again by her English communication skill which was excellent...we witnessed these all from the other side of the room (Participant Yani, Interview).

The influence of high literacy in reading

Another factor of family cultures which seems becoming influential factor affecting identity shaping of the teacher is the high reading literacy derived from her family tradition in her childhood and teenage experiences. The importance of reading literacy skill appears has become priority where the EFL teacher and any other siblings were facilitated by their parents with home library. The family members further explained that their mom was strongly motivated by her reading activity after school hours. One of her former students (later became one of her colleagues) also recounts that she was told by the teacher during their past conversation that every day after school, Mrs. Ramolan always be motivated and looked forward to walking into the home library for reading where a wide range of literatures collections including novels and many others written both in English and or in Dutch were available. The family members' interviewees also indicated that her hobby in reading had been continuously remained intersecting in her multiple roles as a wife, a mother and a teacher. Of the ten, participants, that was Yani, Usla, Don, Tania, Sani, Riska, Nung, Tina who describe the teacher as high achiever.

This culture seems to positively impact on her teaching and English competence, resulting on her for having a broader cultural views and interesting teaching approach in her teaching performance, as reported by other participants as her former students and colleagues. All ten participants indicate this broader culture views of the teacher. The all six English teachers I junior and high school who also were as her former students in pre-service teacher education were positive in describing their learning classroom experiences with the teacher. We highlight some examples from the interviewees:

I think she was so great person and teacher. Her English was so good, not to say her pronunciation it was in high level. When she taught she mastered the topic of her teaching and its content.so were so emotionally immersed in her teaching. It was obviously clear that she shows her high views of world cultures. She was so special, and we were really fond of her teaching. If she would enter the class, we were so fascinated by that. We can say that she was the multidisciplinary teacher... (Participant Usla, interview). She mastered multi languages not only English I guess Dutch. Her ability in English was so high. I was inspired a lot of her teaching... (participant Sani Interview).

Parallel to these views, the positive attitudes derived from her former colleagues (two of them were also as her former students) appear to have similar experiences with some of the Junior and high school teachers above, as participant Elis explains: “ If doing her teaching, she always was able to connect that with her previous

knowledge and other discipline which I think it was so interesting and pushed our motivation to learn more....”

Social Factors

In discussing social factor, society expectation and family responsibility were discovered as factors which appear to become influential in shaping the EFL teacher identity. These two factors would be highlighted in the following discussion.

Society expectation

One factor that is identified influencing identity shaping and development of an EFL teacher is the expectation derived from society. As explained in earlier section that Mrs. Ramolan owned her English bachelor's degree while worked as a chemist analyst. The family members' interviews reported that her career changed when she moved to Gorontalo after marrying to a Gorontaloese male. She embarked to English teaching when an elite group of Javanese

culture community, who stayed in Gorontalo found out that Mrs. Ramolan in fact has high skill of English speaking. Since that she the group asked her to teach them English (English was considered as one of the prestigious languages, and just could be accessed by the prestigious group).

...Initially, the ladies in the group undermined mom, but when mom was involving in interaction with them, they realized who mom was. Then mom being asked to teach them English...Therefore, my sister[name] and I also then had become friends with the children of the group member. Mom did her teaching in many groups, so she always arrived home late about 11 pm at night. Sometimes we went with her because we also could meet our new friends. Then later through these groups mom was introduced to Mr.Kadir abdussamad and Mr. Idris Jalali (the high profile person in Gorontalo college at the time). They then asked mom to do teaching at campus where at the time the number of English teachers was only few... (Family member Interview).

The reported interviews can be linked to few things. First, that living in Gorontalo, in early sixties where the English position was considered privilege, it was quite an opportunity for Mrs. Ramolan to start the new job, teaching English. The next thing was, this opportunity brought her into the next level, teaching English at the only one college in Gorontalo in early 1960 where the institution known as training program for teacher (or pre-service teacher education). It seems that the role of society's expectation placed on her in facilitating English learning and teaching for the small group above became the momentum for Mrs. Ramolan to develop her career as English teacher.

Influence of family responsibility

Other factor which may also influence an EFL teacher's decision, and hence their identity development is financial issue. It was revealed that since the 1960 when started her new marriage life, and moved to Gorontalo, Mrs. Ramolan had played a significant role to support her family financially. Despite the data restriction we faced in exploring more on the issue (as this appears to be a sensitive issue for her family member) this factor appears to also strengthen her position in teaching English, and thus her identity development, as many of the participants (Yani, Usla, Riska, Ellis, Tania and Nung) perceived her as strong, patient, active and energetic figure in teaching and many other situations. For example, her colleague (Yani) says:

We would never see her sad or was devastated with all the difficulties she faced in her life. When saw her in the corridor, you saw a very energetic, strong and a high motivated person in her job. She is so kind person, a humble person and has good relationship with all of her colleagues. (Participant Yani, interview)

The influence of Role Model and How It Impacts on Motivation and Identity

There appear several characteristics of the teacher that emerge as important in understanding why the figure was considered as a good role model in English foreign language teaching context, particularly in Gorontalo. As a part of our larger study the characteristics identified of the teacher are various ranged from incorporating interesting

teaching approach by using body language and unique expression in teaching, representing professional and pedagogy competency, to demonstrating a good social relation with community, representing social competence (see table 2). But based on the interviewees analyzed in this article, some characteristics identified as critical in influencing English learning and teaching motivation listed in the following:

- Incorporating interesting teaching approach- using body language and unique expression in teaching.
- Demonstrating high competency in English (e.g broad cultural view), and high motivation in teaching resulting on motivation to learn (e.g high discipline)
- Incorporating contextual learning approach and high commitment in giving feedback for students' work (the use of 'red ink')
- Demonstrating high engagement with student.

Each of the characteristics will be discussed with examples from the stories, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of interviewees to indicate how they have impacted on English learning and teaching motivation, which subsequently impact on teacher's identity development.

Incorporating interesting teaching approach- using body language and unique expression in teaching.

The majority of the participants (Riska, Don, Tina, Umar, Elis, Sani, Tania, Nung) reported that they have been motivated in the ways of how Mrs. Ramolan approached her teaching which was delivered with interesting ways. She was illustrated as the teacher who is in her teaching always incorporating body language and unique expressions. Some indicate that they would be happy to stay in her class due to her interesting teaching. Below are some examples of the participants' beliefs, stories and experiences of the teacher in the issue.

In teaching, she always uses body language and unique facial expression which I think made her teaching is clear and interesting. So without using any other additional media her teaching was clear. We were so immersed in her teaching (Participant Riska interview)

I strongly remember her ways when she taught. She would directly model what has happened. She created the situation where we felt so real. For example, when she taught drama; 'Macbeth,' She would facilitate the situation or what has happened in the story by using her body language and facial expressions. The characters in the story would be so alive. Therefore when she taught, everybody would pay attention seriously. With no integration of IT, her teaching is interesting! (Participant Don, interview)

Through the recollections, it was apparent that Mrs. Ramolan was emotionally connected with her teaching, and so were her students. Although there has not information technology (IT) support yet, the teacher was able to be actively engaged in her teaching, and hence motivated her learners.

Demonstrating high competency in English (e.g broad cultural view), and high motivation in teaching resulting on motivation to learn (e.g high discipline)

These two broad issues, the competence in English and high motivation in teaching, seem also influence Mrs. Ramolan's former students (now as English teachers' motivation to learn English. All six teachers, Riska, Nung, raised these issue, explaining how they had been motivated by Mrs. Ramolan, as highlighted in examples of the interviews:

She was an unforgettable figure. I believe she was so great. Her English was so good, especially her pronunciation. She was classified as a high-level quality person in English. She mastered her teaching very well. When she was teaching, we were emotionally involved in her teaching. she also shows high knowledge of the culture she taught, she really mastered that. I think she was a special person. Of some other English lecturers, she was so well known with her capacity in English teaching and We [her students] were quite fond of her. When she entered the class, we were so full of joy. As the English teacher, she really mastered the language and its culture so that made her teaching was interesting (Participant Umar, interview).

Her conversation style and English pronunciation were clear and she spoke English naturally equal to native speaker. She also was able to create a comfort and natural situation. At the time if there were foreigners; native speakers visited Gorontalo, she was the one who would company and play

as the interpreter role to the government or institution who need her to do the job including few other private companies here in Gorontalo would request her help for that (Participant Yani, interview).

She is a very high responsible person. She always committed to her job. Every time she came on time, taught and facilitate us well with her teaching. So when we checked the new schedule and found her name there, we knew that we would get the best from her (Participant Don, interview). What motivated me a lot with Mrs. Ramolan was her ways of teaching. She is an interesting teacher. She is smart in English. Her communicative ability both in speaking, writing and all skills are high. Especially her discipline I remembered that so well. She never arrived late at class and she always returned our task with her notes inside. These also I do for my students. I replicate her ways of doing for example about time and correct the students' work ..." (Participant Tina, interview).

The recollections show that she was perceived by her former students in positive ways, positioning her as a high-profile person in teaching English. They were motivated by her ways of doing, and even for some, they do coping her strategies (e.g. Tina) and some others who will be discussed below.

Incorporating contextual learning approach and high commitment in giving feedback for students' work (the use of 'red ink')

Some of the ways of Mrs. Ramolan which were considered important and seem to highly encourage motivation in learning, and consequently affect students in the way how they approach their practice was the ways how Mrs. Ramolan integrate contextual learning and give feedback in her teaching. In correcting students' written task, Mrs. Ramolan also was so popular in using what many have called as her 'weapon' the red ink.' All of her former students (Don, Elis, Sani, Riska, Tania, Umar, Nung and Tina) rise these. Interestingly, they did not feel intimidated by that red ink notes in their work. However, they perceived that was the teacher's typical way and, even believed that as one way made her teaching is unique and interesting. Moreover, the participants also share their experiences about the integration of contextual learning delivered by the teacher (Don, Sani, Riska, Tania, Umar, Nung and Tina) where they believe that Mrs. Ramolan was competent in considering what situation and condition which could facilitate her teaching contextually. For example, as Don described in earlier section above about teaching drama 'Macbeth' for classroom. Tani, Riska and Umar, reported that many times Mrs. Ramolan would bring things in classroom for strengthening her teaching. For example, various charts and pictures, and the contextual examples she drew when explained her teaching. Moreover, the reported interviews from family members also portray the example of what their mother did in putting efforts to make her teaching interesting and fascinating for her students in private course.

When she taught, she incorporated what things surround which would match with her teaching topic, or in the context of her pupils. For example, if there is a learner who just back from their holiday in a certain place, thus the topic of her discussion would be connected to it. The student would be asked to describe to the class of the holiday, what he or she did during the holiday and other things which emphasized on past tense in the session was about teaching past tense for example. Other example she would draw on our cooking like traditional cakes or fried tempe we made in asking the students to have those things while teaching them in English which was related to the day topic with the food. For the learners who she knew well to love drawing, she would ask the learners to draw together while studying ..." (Family member interview)

Demonstrating high engagement with student

Learners' motivation in English can also be influenced by a teacher approach towards their students. Some of the participants have raised this issue, explaining that during their interaction with Mrs. Ramolan, they feel close to have interaction with her because she always treated them in good ways. The reported interviews from the family members have also portrayed the similar experience of how Mrs. Ramolan approach her students. Here are some

examples of the interviews:

Mom was so close with her students and it was quite often that her students visited and shared discussion with her at our house. As her children we were so used to that situation. So, we also knew well many of her students. When they came mom would welcome them well, and she would serve them with any things she had such as cookies and soft drink. Sometimes mom would cook a light and quick meal and enjoy those things with her students (Family member interview).

When she taught her private course at home, mom would treat them patiently. If she knew that her students were still struggle and had difficulties in understanding the lesson she taught, she would not move to different topic until she knew her students had mastered the lesson. Mom told me that as an educator we must accomplish our goal to educate our students. So sometimes I thought when I would be like her with that heart she has with her work. After mom died many had come here and asked me to teach them or their children [laugh] beside I was not an English teacher, I also did not have good heart as mom (Family member, interview)

She always paid attention to her students well. She never treated her students differently. Her high awareness and care towards her students were so obvious. It was not only for the English lesson but also for other issue ... (Participant Yani, interview)

...because of her kindly heart, she would not hesitate to play a role as a problem solver for her

students' problem. I remember one of my friend [name mentioned] experienced a serious family problem at home. Mrs. Ramolan with many of us tried our best to help the friend. That was unforgettable moment for us! (Participant Riska, interview)

The participants' recollections clearly show their positive beliefs and attitudes towards their teacher due to their positive experiences with the teacher. There are several interpretations which can be drawn from the reported interviews. First, the ways how Mrs. Ramolan's feeling and desire to English, has positively influence the ways how she treated her students. Second, as a hardworking person, Mrs. Ramolan has a high commitment and motivation to her job, including towards her students. As a result, this influence the ways how she approached her practice including her students with dedication and commitment.

Building a Bridge Between factors Influencing EFL role models, Identity Shaping, and motivation in Learning and Teaching

This section builds on the previous section and aims to synthesizing the themes that emerged through the discussion in earlier section as critical in understanding factors emerged from others' beliefs, attitudes and experiences of an English role model, contributing to the shaping of identity and motivation in EFL teaching context. The two broad group of factors; family culture tradition and social factor are as critical contribute to the shape of teacher identity and motivation in learning and teaching English as a foreign language context. As explained in earlier the two notions of teacher and identity development (by Varghese 2005 and Duff and Uchida 1997), and the notion of motivation (Deci and Flaste 1996) are helpful to help us in making meaning of this study focus. These all would be further discussed in the following.

This study has found that how personal histories of one can influence their identity development, and thus impact on motivation in learning and teaching. Further to the notion of teacher and their identity development, these two broad factors; family cultures tradition and social factors closely link to the concept of Duff and Uchida (1997) that understanding identity as not context free but heavily related to social, cultural and political concept (Duff and Uchida 1997). It is argued that all of the issues illustrated in family culture and social factor have contributed to build and strengthen EFL teacher identity; resulting on the characteristics of powerful, energetic role model EFL teacher. However, it is interesting to note that in relation to the culture of foreign language use and high reading literacy experienced by the teacher in her young age, these can be classified as prestigious influential factors at the past time, and even in the present time. Consequently, this may lead to provide an understanding of why the presentation of EFL role model teachers are quite lacking in Indonesia context, thus affecting the success of English language teaching in Indonesia as explained in early section of this paper.

EFL role models, Identity Shaping, and motivation in Learning and Teaching

This section builds on the previous section and aims to synthesizing the themes that emerged through the discussion in earlier section as critical in understanding factors emerged from others' beliefs, attitudes and experiences of an English role model, contributing to the shaping of identity and motivation in EFL teaching context. The two broad group of factors; family culture tradition and social factor are as critical contribute to the shape of teacher identity and motivation in learning and teaching English as a foreign language context. As explained in earlier the two notions of teacher and identity development (by Varghese 2005 and Duff and Uchida 1997), and the notion of motivation (By Deci and Flaste 1996) are drawn and incorporated in the discussion of the factors and issues revealed in this study. These all would be further discussed in the following.

This study argues that there is a significant relation between an EFL teacher personal histories and identity development, and motivation in learning and teaching. Further to the notion of teacher and their identity development, these two broad factors; family cultures tradition and social factors closely link to the concept of Duff and Uchida (1997) that understanding identity as not context free but heavily related to social, cultural and political concept (Duff and Uchida 1997).

The family culture traditions seem to be closely connected to the shape of English teacher identity and motivation in teaching English as a foreign language context. Several themes emerge in this tradition related to the existence of fighting value, the culture of foreign languages used in family interaction, the Javanese teaching value, the influence of role model within family, being a high achiever and high literacy reading tradition. For Mrs.

Ramolan, these all have shaped her beliefs and attitudes on many things including the ways how she approached her teaching practice. For example, the literacy tradition that facilitated by her parents, the culture of using English in family interaction seem to become beneficial points for the teacher in approaching her classroom as many of the participants (Riska, Nung, Tina, Sani, Tania, Umar) perceived her as English teacher with a high world cultural view (resulting on her identity as one who has high competency in English. In accordance with this, many English language teaching studies revealed that a language would be successful in teaching if the teacher understands its culture (e.g Celik 2005, Duff and Uchida 1997, Holmes 2009, Sun 2013, Tan 2016, Zhou 2011).

Other factors which seem are interrelated are the father as role model, the teaching of Javanese value and being a high achiever within family. It is clear from the family member's narrative that the positive role model, Mrs. Ramolan's father, affects her attitudes and beliefs to 'being a hardworking person' in achieving life goal, and simultaneously resulting on her as a high achiever person in approaching life and work. Moreover, at the same time the teaching of Javanese value 'nrimo' (discussed in earlier section) also being used by Mrs. Ramolan as 'a control' and 'reminder' of her position between herself and God after doing her best. This is manifested through her life philosophy that "*di mana kaki kita berpijak di situ kita bisa hidup*", translated literally in English as "in which the feet we stand on there we could live", as reported by her family member interview. In the context of Mrs. Ramolan, it appears that this philosophy referred to her belief of 'hardworking value' and at the same time accumulated her belief to the teaching of 'nrimo' in relation to her belief on God. It seems in her understanding as long as one has worked hard in their life, wherever they are they can survive and God would protect them. It is more likely to say that these all have accumulated together, contribute to the shaping of Mrs. Ramolan identity as referring to 'a hard-working figure' with high English competency and has a positive relation and engagement with her students, representing her high motivation in teaching and subsequently impact on motivating her students in learning, and teaching English. For some, their learning motivation has been extended in adopting the teacher's ways of teaching when they entered their profession as English teachers (Tina, Nung, Don, Umar and Tania).

It is interesting to note that in relation to the culture of foreign language use and high reading literacy experienced by the teacher in her young age, these factors can be classified as 'prestigious' tradition because only high class family would exercise the traditions where the English and Dutch were used as medium of interaction at home beside Indonesian and Javanese, and the reading tradition with highly connected to the 'accessible various collections home library' which only 'the rich and prestigious family' could facilitate these. These linked to an understanding that the identity development is closely related to contextual factors (Duff and Uchida 1997).

Moreover, the two contextual factors above are not common applied by common people in Indonesia. These all seem to provide an understanding of a reason why the presentation of EFL role model teachers are quite lacking in Indonesia context, thus affecting the success of English language teaching in Indonesia as explained in early section of this paper. However, to locate an expectation that the process of an EFL role model teacher identity can be started earlier from family culture tradition, which based on these two factors, is hardly to be accomplished.

Other factors that can contribute to shape EFL teacher identity are related to social factors; society expectation and the influence of family responsibility. This study reveals that for Mrs. Ramolan, the expectation of the 'Javanese community group' (discussed in earlier section regarding the social factor influence) put upon her in English teaching has become 'a starting point' for her to start her career as English teacher for the group, rather than as 'a chemist analyst', her previous job in Java before moving to Gorontalo. Later, through this group, she gained access to teach English in tertiary education institution, and many others. As a result, her new identity as English teacher has been strengthened by the relations she made with the others. These all factors and issues of family culture and social factor have contributed to build and strengthen EFL teacher identity; resulting on the characteristics of inspiring teacher with high English competency and having strong engagement to her students as highlighted through the views of others.

Duff and Uchida (1997) has proposed the notion of identity as not context free but bounded with economic, cultural political and institutional context. While their studies focused on determining how the teachers' social-cultural identities, views and teaching changed, and exploring what factors that influence the changes based on the teachers' (two native speakers and two Japanese) understanding of themselves, our study focus to understand a role model teachers and what factors have impacted on identity development and motivation in language learning and teaching English as a foreign language context, from the perspectives of others.

This study is also in line with Varghese et al (2005) who suggest that teachers' engagement in language teaching and learning cannot be separated from an understanding of who they are as teachers including their multiple layers of identities, "the professional, cultural, political, and individual identities which they claim or which are assigned to them" (Varghese et al 2005, 22) as the teacher claimed identity who viewed by others perspectives on her indicating a claimed inspiring teacher with high English competency including the teacher's broader understanding to the world cultural, complementing her assigned identity as English teacher.

Conclusion

The discussion of this paper reveals that family cultures tradition and social factors are considered pivotal influencing the shaping of the exemplary English teacher's identity who was drawn in this study. This subsequently impact on the way how others' beliefs and attitudes of the teacher, positioning her as a good role in EFL context. It is found that several factors in family tradition and social factor; including the existence of fighting value among siblings, the strong engagement on foreign languages which was English and Dutch, the presence of a role model in family, society expectation and being a bread winner in marriage life phase can become extremely influence factors of the English teacher identity as professional in English as a foreign language context.

Further to the notion of teacher and their identity development, these two broad factors; family cultures tradition and social factors closely link to the concept of Duff and Uchida (1997) that understanding identity as not context free but heavily related to social, cultural and political concept (Duff and Uchida 1997). It is argued that all of the issues illustrated in family culture and social factor have contributed to build and strengthen EFL teacher identity; resulting on the characteristics of powerful, energetic role model EFL teacher. However, it is interesting to note that in relation to the culture of foreign language use and high reading literacy experienced by the teacher in her young age, these can be classified as prestigious influential factors at the past time, and even in the present time. Consequently, this may lead to provide an understanding of why the presentation of EFL role model teachers are quite lacking in Indonesia context, thus affecting the success of English language teaching in Indonesia as explained in early section of this paper.

This study provides a critical insight for government, English advance learners, English teachers, practitioners and policy makers to have a clearer understanding of the critical factors that can lead to the formation of characteristics for being an EFL role model in foreign language context where the exposure of English is

minimal. From the government and policy makers side, this can help them to work on ways in facilitating factors that can lead to empower English learners in their learning experience and to empower English teachers in finding ways in building and enhancing their identity as professionals. In term of pedagogical reason, this study recommends that ELT in Indonesia, should strongly count of the importance of role model presentation in enhancing its quality, and hence it is hoped this insight can also bring the light to the other English language teaching country that has the similar context and perhaps the similar problems to achieve success in ELT. It is hoped that the contribution of this study can shed the light to many other EFL communities which encounter similar problems of English language teaching development in their context.

For English advance learners (High school and university), and English teachers, especially teaching English as a foreign language context, this finding can give the insight that not everybody would have the opportunity as Mrs. Ramolan had in her family backhome in Java. Therefore 'empowering self' in learning and teaching may become the option that they can choose to build and strengthen their motivation in learning and teaching, and hence as the result of their identity would be developed. Finally, it is expected that the findings can provide a basis for the future research in which the characteristics embedded in teachers who are considered as EFL role models are investigated through broader lenses so that they can become a model of adoption in the future path.

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Generic Structure of an Important, but Neglected, Academic Genre, Undergraduate Thesis Defence Examination, and its Pedagogic Implications. A Collective Case Study at Four Universities in Aceh and North Sumatra Provinces, Indonesia

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Abstract

Thesis defence examination (TDE) is an important event for students to complete to pursue their degree in many countries. Following Swales (1990, 2004) TDE can be considered as a class of communicative events, which has its own genre that has elements (or parts). Understanding the genre of an event could help students to perform competently. One major element of the TDE genre is its generic structure. Mastering this structure is important as it can give a frame which can guide learners in preparing for and performing in the TDE. Although a few researchers have argued that the structure could limit the creativity of students, the authors of this article adopt the positive position of other researchers who found that the structure is beneficial at least for beginners because the structure gives them an idea of the overall form of the TDE, which can provide them with a direction to follow with some degree of creativity to exercise, and when they have acquired the common structure, they can exercise their creativity as they like. Without a common structure as a model, at least some, if not all, students would struggle as found in our interviews with our research participants. As in many other countries, in Indonesia, the TDE is an activity that university students have to pass in order to graduate in all degrees including undergraduate degrees. However, there is no research-based information on the genre has been found. This issue has been questioned by academic communities not only in the country but also overseas. This study, which is part of a broader study, is an attempt to fill the gap. The data for this research were collected using qualitative methods, which include direct and indirect observations, video recordings, note taking, and interviews with students and examiners. The field research was carried out in Aceh and North Sumatera provinces, Indonesia, for eight months. This article reports the results of the study.

Keywords: Undergraduate students, poor performance, genre, genre-based approach, genre elements, thesis defense examination

Introduction

Thesis defence examination (TDE) is an important event for students to complete their degree in many countries such as the UK, the USA and Indonesia. It is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their competence in their research project and in presenting its process and results orally before a team of examiners, for the team assess whether they have met the criteria to graduate. Specifically, performance in the TDE plays an important role in determining the grade point average (GPA) at universities in this country. Considering the importance of the TDE, students have to work seriously to understand their research project, including the thesis writing, and perform in a TDE competently. It means that they should have the ability to deliver and defend their arguments verbally. In order to perform competently in a TDE, students' understanding of the generic structure (GS) of TDE is crucial because it is one of the important elements in the TDE genre because all examinees have to perform competently in the activities outlined in this structure. Unfortunately, there is not much research-based information on the undergraduate-level of TDE to help the students.

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Although there are many general guides available when searched on the Internet since many universities have their own respective guides, but there is hardly an empirical research report on it. There has been some limited research on the subject, but so far, it has concentrated on TDE at doctoral levels. For example, the studies conducted by Grimshaw, Feld, and Jenness (1994), Burke (1994), Hasan (1994) and Swales (2004). Other studies investigated the purposes of conducting TDE. Kelly (2010) finds that the TDE held at doctorate level is aimed at testing the knowledge of the students regarding their research project and a chance for the examiners to ask questions and to give feedback to the students. Kiley (2009) argues that the TDE is an opportunity for the students to make arguments and to explain the unclear parts of their thesis verbally. Maniguenneau (2002) says that the TDE is a time where the students show their competence in their research field. Tinker and Jackson (2000) add that the TDE is an opportunity to demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge. Accordingly, there is a clear gap of information on undergraduate TED, including its generic structure, awaiting to be filled. Pedagogically, such a research-based structure can help course designers to develop a preparatory course(s) which can adequately prepare their students with knowledge and skills to perform successfully in a TDE.

The research reported in this article is part of a broader research project, and this part of the project was intended to draw a common generic structure(s) (GS or GSs) of the TDE practiced at Indonesian universities, with a case study at four selected universities in Indonesia, pseudonymed Nanggroe University, Negeri Institute, Syiar University and Media University. Therefore, the main research question posed by this study was: What is the GS(s) of the TDE conducted at these universities, and what are their pedagogical implications?

It was hoped that the discovery of the TDE Generic structure(s) would be able not only to fill the information gap in the literature, but also to help lecturers to prepare their students for a TDE, for example, by improving the contents and effectiveness of the current TDE preparation units (courses) at their universities, so that the students can have a clearer understanding of the TDE and acquire the necessary skills to perform successfully in their own TDE. According to interviews with the informants of this research, such a clear understanding is not coherently presented in these units, and therefore, the necessary skills such as public speaking skills, thesis presentation skills, and the skill in answering examiners' questions are not adequately taught and practiced. Therefore, they were not adequately prepared for their TDE.

Literature Review

In the literature, a variety of names are used for TDE in different countries. Hasan (1994) has reported that in the USA, the TDE is known as an institutionalized pedagogical activity. In the UK, the TDE is called *viva voce*, and in other European countries, it is called public defence. In Indonesia alone, the TDE is called differently too, according to its levels: *ujian skripsi* for undergraduate degree, *ujian tesis* for master degree, and *ujian disertasi* for doctorate degree. But its function and significance are the same. It is a vital requirement for the students to graduate. In other words, in order to graduate, the students have to present and defend their thesis in front of a team of examiners. The students are examined by their academic advisors and at least one external examiner to minimise possible biased result (Tinker & Jackson, 2000).

There are four well-known generic structures (GSs) found in the literature. The first three GSs were found by Grimshaw, Feld, and Jenness (1994), Burke (1994) and Hasan (1994). These researchers identified the GSs through analysing the performance of one female doctorate student, named Lee, at a TDE event held at Mid Western State University. The data that these researchers observe and analyse is a one-hour observation, a two-hour audio recording (it is not clear whether this was from presentations of two students), and one copy of the student's thesis examined at the TDE. Interestingly, from this one source, the three groups of researchers produce three different models. For the purpose of discussing the models, in this article, the three models drawn by these researchers are respectively called as Grimshaw's model, Burke's model, and Hasan's model. The models are described below.

The GSs that they identified consist of some segments and some activities under the segments. Grimshaw's model consists of four segments: the opening, defence proper, in-camera and closing. In the *opening segment*, the candidate was given an opportunity to inform the examiners about her personal background, which includes some details of her education. The examinee used this opportunity to present her personal details to the

examiners. These details may help the examiners to know about the examinee's identity and professional background. Then, it was followed by a summary of the examinee's thesis, including the design of the research project and the major findings. The examinee spent more time on this part to convince the examiners that she is highly competent in conducting research. The examinee being observed by Grimshaw et al. (1994) clearly informed the examiners of the procedures she followed during the process of data collection and analysis and results. Through this information, the examiners judged whether the result was valid and reliable or otherwise.

In the *defence proper segment*, the examiners were free to interrupt the examinee by asking questions. The questions were related to the theoretical conceptualisation, research design, data, analysis, findings, interpretations and implications. There were also questions related to the examinee's future plans upon the completion of the study. The examiners asked questions freely about any unclear information in the topic. In other words, each of the examiners was not restricted by a specific section(s) allocated to him/her by the department or the panel.

In the *in-camera segment*, the examinee was asked to leave the room for approximately ten minutes. During this time the examiners evaluated both the written and oral performances of the examinee. In this segment, the examiners decided the final outcome.

The last activity is the *closing segment*. In this segment, the chair announced the result and congratulated the examinee, who was declared successful in the examination, was congratulated by the committee members. The examinee also completed the necessary documentation such as signing the forms, and left the room.

The generic structure proposed by Burke (1994) has some similarities to and differences when compared with the Grimshaw's model. The similarities are found in some activities, for example, in the *introductory background (the opening segment)*, the examinee presented her personal information and conducted the thesis presentation. Then, in the *wrap-up (closing segment)*, the examinee signed the necessary documents. These activities can be found in both models. The differences are also found in relation to the number of and the terms used for the segments and the detail of activities. The Burke's model consists of five segments, while the Grimshaw's model has four segments. The terms used for an individual segment are different. In the Burke's model, for example, the first segment is called *introductory background*, while in the Grimshaw's model, it is called *the opening segment*. The *question and answer segment* in the Burke's model is called *defence proper* in the Grimshaw's model. The *interlude* and *assessment* in the Burke's model is called *in-camera segment* in the Grimshaw's model. The *wrap-up* segment in the Burke's model is the same as *closing segment* in the Grimshaw's model. In terms of activities in each segment, the Grimshaw's model provides the details of the activities of the examiners and the examinee, while the Burke's model focused on the number of questions asked by the examiners and the examinee, as can be seen in the *questions and answers segments*. The possible reason for these differences is that the researchers use their own interpretation based on their knowledge and experience when involved in TDE research.

The Hasan's model shows some similarities and differences when compared to the other two models previously discussed. The similarities concern the number of segments and activities, between the Grimshaw's and this model. The Hasan's model uses the same number and name of segments as the Grimshaw's model. The activities in the segment are also similar to the activities in the Grimshaw's model. However, the terms used for the activities are different. Hasan's model provides more detail information about the activities in each segment. In terms of activities, there are similarities amongst the three models. In the *opening segment*, for example, the three models have the examinee introduces her-self before the examiners. However, some differences among the models are also found, for example in the Hasan's model, the presentation occurs in the *defence segment*, while in the Grimshaw's and Burke's, this activity occurs in the *opening segment* and the *introductory background segment*, respectively. Then, 'asking the examinee to return to the room' occurs *in-camera segment* in the Hasan's model, but it occurs in the *closing segment* in the Grimshaw's model and in the *interlude segment* of the Burke's model.

The Hasan's model categorises the activities into 'obligatory' and 'optional'. However, it is unclear how she found the two categories since they must be based on many presentations, while her analysis was only based on an observation of one presentation, a two hour presentation recording. Although it is not clear whether she had two presentations in the recording or not, but even if it had two presentations, still she used a very small number

of instances to make such a category. Moreover, it was likely that the data was collected only from one university. Nevertheless, these categories are not found in the other two models, making this model different from the other two. 'Obligatory' is given when the activity must occur in every TDE event (100%). Meanwhile, the label 'optional' is given when an activity occurs but they do not present in every move or step, for example, the personal introduction (PI). According to this analyst, the PI is optional because this activity need not necessary to occur if the examinee is known to the examiners. The PI is only conducted when interaction between the examinee and the committee members has been minimal. The second optional activity is advice to the candidate (AC), this activity is also optional because this activity only happens to an examinee who is less competent in presenting and defending their respective thesis, so, there is room to give a further advice. In contrast, this activity does not occur with an examinee who performs excellently, and who needs no further advice. The third optional activity is the verdict affect (VA), congratulation from examiners. The VA is optional because this activity does not inherently belong to the TDE, which means that the TDE can still reach the end whether or not the examinee receives congratulation from his colleagues or committee members. Again, the question is how such a generalization could be made if the data source is so small.

Despite the differences discussed above, the above researchers (Grimshaw, Feld & Jenness, 1994; Burke, 1994; and Hasan, 1994) include very similar elements in their models. The Grimshaw's and Hasan's models have four segments in a TDE. Burke (1994) added one more segment called *interlude*, which appears between the *opening* and the *assessment* segments. The *interlude segment* in Burke's model is included in closing segment of the Grimshaw's model, and in the *in-camera segment* of Hasan's model. Only the terms used for the segments and activities are different. Each researcher used their own terms for the segments and activities even though the meanings are basically the same.

The fourth model found in the literature is created by Swales (2004). For this study, this model is called the Swales' model. The Swales' model seems to be based on a wider spectrum of data than the other three models in that it is from several observations of four different fields of study at the University of Michigan, the USA; these are social psychology, musicology, electrical engineering and computer science, and biology. Similar to the previous three models discussed above, Swales' model is also taken from doctoral students. Being different from the other three models, Swales (2004) uses the term *the preliminaries segment* for the *opening segments* found in Grimshaw's and Hasan's models or the *introductory background segment* of the Burke's model. Like Grimshaw's and Hasan's models, Swales' model, has four segments. In each of these four segments, there are some activities too. Like the Hasan's Model, optional and obligatory are also used, but named differently.

The first segment is the *preliminaries*. Within this segment, four activities are included. First, the candidate was asked to introduce him/herself. The candidate might state his/her name and student number. In the second activity, the chair asked the candidate and the audience to leave the room. In the third activity, the committee reviewed the evaluation criteria and the TDE procedures, and agreed on each. In the fourth activity, a member (one of committee members) recalled the candidate and the audience. This means that all the parties are ready for the examination. In this segment, a personal introduction is considered optional. This activity is not necessary in this segment because it may not happen if the examiners or panel members know the examinee well.

The second segment is the *defence proper*. In this segment, there are several activities. Firstly, the chair summarised the agreed procedures. This optional activity was to ensure that the candidate knows what she/he had to do during the examination. Secondly, the candidate was invited to conduct his/her presentation. In the presentation, the candidate could provide a summary of the research project. The third activity was asking questions to the examinee in the round. This activity was conducted to provide an opportunity for the examiners to ask questions about aspects in the thesis, such as the introduction, literature reviews, methodology, and findings. The candidate was expected to answer the questions appropriately to obtain a good result in order to graduate. Lastly, the candidate and the audience were given an opportunity to ask questions of the examiners. This last activity is optional, because it was not commonly found in the TDEs of the four fields of study that Swales observed. After this segment was completed, the examinee was asked to leave the room, but this activity is not included in Swales' model.

The third segment is the *in-camera session*. During this segment, the panel members discussed the result of the presentation and decided whether the candidate was to be given a pass or fail mark or pass mark with minor

revision. During this *in-camera* segment, the candidate remained outside until a committee member recalled the candidate for the next segment.

The last segment is the *closing segment*. In this segment, four activities were found. Firstly, the members announced their agreed result in front of the candidate and audience. The candidate with a good result was congratulated by the committee and audience. Secondly, for those who passed with minor revision, there was a discussion of what more needed to be done by the candidate. This activity is optional because most of candidates passed. The third one was the documentation, where the candidate signed the required forms. Then, the final activity was the leave-taking, including photos and other social activities.

Generally, these models can be categorized into two based on the authors' respective definitions of 'thesis defence'. On the one hand, Grimshaw et al. and Burke seems to define thesis defence strictly as the ability of the examinee to answer questions, so 'thesis summary presentation' is separated from 'the Defence proper segment' and included in the 'Opening segment'. On the other hand, Hasan and Swales consider it as part of the 'defence proper', so put it in Segment 2 (Defence Proper).

The four GSs of TDE discussed above are the result of the previous researchers' observations of students' examinations at Doctorate level only. So, there is still lack of investigation about the GSs of the TDE at undergraduate level, particularly in Indonesian universities. Moreover, Grimshaw et al. (1994), Burke (1994) and Hasan (1994) used only one source of information to propose their respective GS models i.e. from one university and one student, named Lee, and 2 hour of recording. It is unclear how many student presentations were in the recording and from how many universities. But, it is likely that it is from the same university as the data was obtained from there. Nevertheless, this number of sources is considered weak to make a generalisation because the sample is very small, since it could be the idiosyncretic features of that particular university or students. Swales' model use more varied data sources involving several different disciplines, but they all represent only one university. To address this deficiency of data source, this study used a much larger number universities (4 universities) and larger number of students in order to draw the data from and ensure a stronger validity.

For this study, the reason for discussing the four Doctorate level models is that these models were taken as a framework to analyse the data and identify TDE generic structure (GS) models practiced in these Indonesian universities. These four models are called in this article as the 'four well-known GSs'.

Theoretical framework

The fact that the three researchers could propose the three different well-known models using the same data, indicates that human beings are creative. Their creativity may be influenced by their experiences, expertise, or the ways they look at the data. Some researchers have proposed the theory of discipline variation and cultural variation. Discipline variation assumes that each discipline has different models due to a variety of cultural elements such as daily practices, the environment, values, norms, emphases and the like (Yakonothova, 2006). The facts that the Swales' Model was developed based on a range of different disciplines, which gave rise to his model which differs from the other three models may suggest the influence of different disciplines. Cultures may also influence people's ideas, practices and thus produces variations (Adnan, 2010; Safnil 2001; Miller, 1984). People who live in a democratic society may come up with different creations when compared to people in an authoritarian society. It is interesting to find out whether the different cultural environments, where the TDEs examined in this study, would also produce variations. If so, it is also intriguing to find out what gives rise to the variations.

Methodology

As mentioned earlier, the study reported in this article is a part of a broader study which employed a collective case study method (Stake 1995, cited in Zucker, 2009). Yin (2009) and Nunan (1992) define a case study as an investigation of a case or multiple cases to obtain in-depth information in the context in which the case occurs. A collective case study as defined by Stake (1995) is a "...study of a number of cases in order to inquire into a particular phenomenon." (cited in Zucker 2009, n.p.). The study reported in this article looked as cases at 4 universities, focusing on one phenomenon that is their 'thesis defence examinations' (TDEs), particularly their 'generic structure' (GS). Further, this study also had one main research design, one main purpose and one central

research question, namely what is the common generic structure of the TDEs practiced at those 4 universities? ‘Common’ is defined as ‘Occurring, found, or done often’ (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/common>). The word of ‘often’ is relative to the entire occurrences, the higher the percentage of occurrences, the more common it is. Since there are only 4 cases (4

universities), occurrences of a segment in 3 universities is considered common, and occurrence in 4 universities is considered more common. Conversely, the occurrences of a segment in two universities is considered as less common and in one university is considered the least common. Thus, the purpose is not to compare individual examinees’ performance.

Therefore, the number of individual examinees in each university is not considered as part of a determining factor because it is assumed that they would follow the same rule issued by the same department, perhaps with very minor variations. The researchers of this project observed a higher but unequal number of students for each university for pragmatic reason, i.e. the availability of examinees to observe and to ensure they do follow the same rule including the order or sequence of activities applied by their respective university.

The four universities consist of Islamic and secular universities from 2 different provinces. These universities were selected for 2 reasons. The first reason was they were the major public universities in the provinces. Secondly, two of them are Islamic tertiary education institutions, so it would be interesting to find out if they represent culturally distinctive generic structure compared to the two secular universities.

The investigation was conducted in the English Education Departments (EEDs) of the selected universities. The data for this study were collected through direct and indirect observations, interviews, note-taking, photo-taking, and video recording. Direct observation means the researchers sat in the TDE room to observe the TDE, and the indirect observation means observing the TDE sessions through video recordings.

Table 1
Summary of data collection

Research question	Data collection	Data analysis	Participants	Sites
What is the common GS of the TDE of the four Indonesian universities?	Sixteen direct and indirect observations (videoing and taking pictures), in-depth interviews.	Based on four GSs of TDE in literature.	Sixteen examinees	2 universities at the Provinces Aceh and North Sumatera
What are their pedagogical implications?				

Participants

The participants of this research were sixteen examinees from four selected universities (Nanggroe University, Negeri Institute, Media University and Syiar University) in Indonesia. These examinees were students who were conducting the thesis defence examination (TDE) process as a final step to complete their degree. They were observed when presenting their thesis in the real TDE at their respective English Education Departments (EEDs) of the four selected universities.

Ten examinees are from Aceh and six are from North Sumatera. The fact that these numbers are not

equal was not an issue in this study because, as stated earlier, the number of examinees was not considered a determining factor influencing the finding of this study since the main purpose of the study was to find out the generic structure of TDE practiced at 4 universities, and the examinees of each university followed the same rule. In other words, the study did not compare individual students, but the TDE generic structure as practiced by the individual universities.

Data Analysis

The data from observations were analysed using the four US generic structures, drawn by Grimshaw et al. (1994), Burke (1994), Hasan (1994) and Swales (2004) already discussed earlier as a starting point. These GSs are used as frameworks to draw a generic structure of the TDE at undergraduate level at each of the four universities, and a common structure of all of them. However, in our analysis and developing our models we adopt Hasan's and Swales' broader definition of 'thesis defence' to include the thesis summary presentation because it is part of the assessment. We also included another segment called 'Preliminary' before the 'Opening' segment to capture important different pieces of background information, especially the composition of the parties who were present in the TDE. Further analysis, to explain the multiple variations found at each of the institutions, was conducted using principles of cultural theory.

Findings and Discussion

As shown in Table 2 four generic structures (GSs) were found at the four institutions.

Table 2

Summary of the generic structures found at the 4 institutions

Segments/ Model	1. Nanggroe University	2. Negeri Institute	3. Syiar University	4. Media University
<i>1. The Preliminary segment</i>	<i>a. The examiners, examinees, a secretary, an official (Head of the English Education Department), and audience settled in.</i>	<i>a. The examiners, examinees, an official (Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs), and the audience settled in.</i>	<i>a. The examiners, examinees, an official (Head of the English Education Department) settled in.</i>	<i>a. The examiner s, examinee s, a secretary (called note taker), an official (Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs), a witness, settled in.</i>
<i>2. The Opening segment</i>	<i>a. The Head of the English Education Department greeted and welcomed the audience.</i>	<i>a. The Head of the English Education Department greeted and welcomed the audience.</i>	<i>a. The Head of the English Education Department greeted and welcomed the audience.</i>	<i>a. The Head of the English Education Departme</i>

	<p><i>b. The opening ceremony</i> <i>c. The chair asked for the examinee's ID card.</i></p>	<p><i>b. The opening ceremony.</i></p>	<p><i>b. The opening ceremony.</i> <i>c. All the examinees were asked to leave the room.</i></p>	<p><i>nt greeted and welcomed the audience.</i> <i>b. The opening ceremony</i> <i>.</i></p>
<p><i>3. The Defence Proper segment</i></p>	<p><i>a. The Panel Chair greeted everyone in the room, introduced him/herself and the other examiners and the examinee's thesis title.</i> <i>b. The Panel Chair asked the examinee to read a number of verses from the holy book Al Quran</i> <i>c. The Panel Chair asked the examinee to conduct a thesis presentation.</i> <i>d. Each examiner asked questions about the sections already allocated to him/her for assessment.</i></p>	<p><i>a. The examiner greeted the examinee</i> <i>b. Each examiner asked questions on the sections already allocated to him/her for assessment.</i></p>	<p><i>a. The secretary called the examinees in, one by one</i> <i>b. The examiner greeted the examinee;</i> <i>c. The examiner asked the examinee to conduct a thesis presentation.</i> <i>d. The examiners asked unrestricted questions.</i> <i>e. The examiner ended the examination.</i></p>	<p><i>a. The Panel Chair greeted the examinee</i> <i>b. The Panel Chair asked the examinee to conduct a thesis presentation on</i> <i>c. The examiner s asked unrestricted questions.</i></p>
<p><i>4. The In-camera segment</i></p>	<p><i>a. The examinee was asked to leave the room.</i> <i>b. The secretary collected the scores from the examiners and calculated them.</i> <i>c. The examinee was called back into the room after a ten-minute wait.</i></p>	<p><i>a. The examinee was asked to leave the room;</i> <i>b. The secretary collected and calculated the examinees' scores from the examiners.</i> <i>c. The examinees were called back in.</i></p>		<p><i>a. The examinee was asked to leave the room</i> <i>b. The secretary calculate d the examinee 's score from the examiner s</i></p>

				<i>c. The examinees were called back in.</i>
<i>5. The Closing segment</i>	<i>a. The examiners put on their formal gowns.</i> <i>b. The secretary announced the result of the examinee's performance.</i> <i>c. The Panel Chair knocked on the table three times as a closing signal.</i> <i>d. The Panel Chair thanked the examiners and the audience.</i> <i>e. The examinee was invited to make a short speech.</i> <i>f. The Panel Chair gave final advice and suggestions to the examinee.</i> <i>g. The examinee shook hands with the examiners.</i> <i>h. The examinee signed the examination documents.</i>	<i>a. The secretary announced the results of the examinees' performances.</i> <i>b. The Head of the English Education Department congratulated all the examinees, gave final advice, and closed the TDE.</i>		<i>a. The secretary announced the results of the examinees' performance.</i> <i>b. The Chair of the Panel congratulated all the examinees, gave final advice, thanks the examiners and closed the TDE.</i>

5.1 The Generic Structure Found at Nanggroe University

The TDE observed at this university was conducted by the English Education Department (EED). It was officially opened by the Head of the Department. The description of a GS of Nanggroe University is based on the observations of five examinees who are identified using the codes NUE1, NUE2, NUE3, NUE4 and NUE5 in order to keep the real names confidential. These students were examined on different days.

The generic structure of the TDE found at this university consists of five segments and several activities. The segments are 'the preliminary', 'the opening', 'the defence proper', 'the in-camera', and 'the closing'.

The preliminary segment

The preliminary segment was the first segment of the TDE at this university. This preliminary segment was a segment of preparation for the TDE, and it occurred prior to the opening segment. It had one obligatory activity,

that is:

5.1.1.a. The examiners, examinees, a secretary, an official (Head of the English Education Department), and audience settled in.

In this activity, the examiners, secretary, examinees and audience entered the classroom where the event was to be conducted and then they sat at their allocated chairs. Their attendances indicated that the TDE was about to commence.

The Opening segment

The second segment was the opening. In this segment, three activities were found, two of which are obligatory and the other one is optional.

5.1.2.a. The Head of the English Education Department greeted and welcomed the audience.

At the beginning of this segment, the Head of the English Education Department, who will also play a role as the Chair of the Examination Panel, greeted and welcomed the members of the Examination Panel, the secretary, the examinees and the audience. The secretary was the administration officer from the relevant department of this university who observed the TDE process, took notes and announced the results. The audience consisted of undergraduate students, who were in the process of writing their own theses and would undertake the TDE in the following semester or year, so they came to observe the real TDE, and guests e.g. parents and relatives of the examinee.

This greeting segment is also found in the Hasan's and Swales' models. However, in these two generic structures, the examinee greets the examiners, while at Nanggroe University, it was the reverse. This may be influenced by cultural issues. At this university, it is common for the examiners to greet the examinees first because, in a formal event, the people with superior status, in this case the examiners and other committee members, always greet the subordinate person, the examinee. However, on a less formal occasion, such as on the street, the person with inferior status should always greet the superior. This is the way these two groups show their politeness based on the culture where the TDE is conducted. Another possible reason is that in the TDE, the examinee is being evaluated by the examiners. Thus, if the examinee greets the examiners, there might be a presumption from the examiners that this examinee wishes to attract attention and favour, e.g. be given a high mark, by showing a 'special' gesture of politeness. On the other hand, if the examiners greet the examinee, this presumption will not occur.

5.1.2.b. The opening ceremony

After greetings and welcoming all the attendees, the Head of the Department officially opened the TDE by saying 'Bismillahirrahmanirrahim' (In the name of Allah the most merciful and the most beneficent'), a common saying a Muslim says when starting a good conduct.

5.1.2.c. The chair asked for the examinee's ID

Checking ID card is considered essential by this university because examinees are not allowed to undertake this final examination if they are unable to show a valid ID card, or if their ID is problematic. The ID is required to ensure that the examinee's identity matches the information in the university records. ID checking did not always occur in the opening segment but it might occur in the closing segment; however, it was always checked. This made this activity compulsory at this university. It is also unique to this university as it is not found in the rest of the institutions under investigation, nor in the 'Well-known Models'.

5.1.2.d. The chair of the panel introduced him/herself and the other examiners and the examinee's thesis title.

This activity was optional at this university. Only a few chairs in the TDE introduced themselves, introduced the other examiners, and introduced the examinee's thesis title. A possible reason was that the chair assumed that all of the audience in the room knew the examiners, since they were also lecturers at this university. In addition, the title of the thesis had also been written on the whiteboard in the TDE room. Hence, self-introduction and stating the thesis title was optional at this university, which is similar to Hasan's model, but it is in contrast to Swales' model.

The Defence proper segment

The defence proper segment is the segment where the examinee presented their thesis and answered questions, and the examiners evaluated the performance of the examinee. Three obligatory activities were found in this segment. These activities were:

5.1.3.a. *The Panel Chair asked the examinee to read a number of verses from the holy book Al Quran*

At the beginning of the defence proper segment, the examinee had to show his/her ability to read the Islamic holy book Al Qur'an. This activity seems to be unrelated to the TDE assessment, but it does because it affects the outcomes of the TDE. The examinee had to show that he/she is able to read any verses of the holy book selected by the examiners with a proper pronunciation, intonation and without making too many mistakes since reading the Al Qur'an is different from reading a book, because it should be read carefully with correct pronunciation and intonation. As in English, the pronunciation and intonation determine the meaning. If the examinee makes a mistake in pronouncing a letter, the meaning will change. Thus, the examinee had to read the Al Qur'an correctly. This

university obliged all examinees, including those in the English department, to be able to read the Qur'an perfectly, because it is an Islamic university. If the students cannot do this, they are automatically disqualified and cannot continue the TDE. This activity seems to be unique to this university since is not found in any of the other 3 universities, nor in the US generic structures.

5.1.3.b. *The Panel Chair asked the examinee to present his/her thesis summary.*

In the presentation, the examinees were required to state the title of their thesis, the research problems, the reasons for choosing a particular research topic and the questions or hypotheses that they decided to address. They were also asked to review previous research, a summary of the research methodology, as well as the research results. This activity is the same as those found by Swales (2004) and Hasan (1994) in the same segment (defence proper segment), but Grimshaw (1994) and Burke (1994) found it in the 'opening segment'. In other words, the activities in the defence proper segment of TDE at this university were in close alignment with only two models found in the literature.

5.1.3.c. *Each examiner asks questions on the sections already allocated to him/her for assessment*

Unlike the practice found in the 4 well-known models, at this university the Department allocated a few sections of the examinee's thesis to each examiner to be scrutinised. Thus, each examiner asked various questions to the examinees about the sections that had been allocated to him/her to examine. For example, the first examiner (The Chair) was required to ask questions about any unclear parts of the background of the research, such as the reason for conducting the research, definition of the research title, and any practical research results for the institution where the research was conducted. The second examiner had another role: he or she was given an opportunity to ask questions about the literature review; for example, whether a similar research topic had been studied in the literature, whether or not the topic was still debatable and current, etc. The third examiner was required to ask questions related to the research methodology, such as the data collection procedure, samples of the research and the results. This allocation of duties had been agreed by the examiners at this university for many years.

This practice is different from the 'Well-known generic structures', where the examiners did not ask questions based on allocated thesis sections, but they took turns in asking questions 'freely' to the examinees. There may be reasons for this different way of asking questions. Asking questions 'freely' may be used to test the examinees' knowledge of their research as a whole, while asking questions based on the allocated sections may be used to avoid overlapping questions, as each examiner was restricted to the allocated sections.

5.1.4. *The in-camera segment*

The in-camera segment was a segment where the examinees were asked to leave the room for approximately ten minutes, and then called back in. In this segment, three obligatory activities were found:

5.1.4.a. *The examinee was asked to leave the room*

After the examiners had completed the question and answer interaction, the examinee was asked to leave the room and wait to be recalled.

5.1.4.b. *The secretary collected the scores from the examiners and calculated them*

The secretary collected the assessment scores provided by each examiner and calculated them to form the overall result. Unlike in the four Well-known models, there was no overt discussion among the examiners regarding the scores; this means that each examiner assessed the examinees' performance independently. Calculation of the scores by the secretary while the examinees are outside is an obligatory activity at this university.

5.1.4.c. *The examinee was called back into the room after a ten-minute wait*

The examinees were called back into the TDE room where they were asked to sit and relax and to listen to the announcement to be made by the secretary in the next segment, which is the closing segment. This activity is also found in Hasan's generic structure.

5.1.5. The closing segment

Eight obligatory activities were found in this segment. These are outlined below.

5.1.5.a. The examiners put on their formal gowns

The three examiners and the secretary put on gowns to indicate that the TDE for that examinee has finished. The examiners sat in a relaxed manner, ready to hear the final results, which would be announced orally by the secretary.

5.1.5.b. The secretary announced the result of the examinee's performance

The secretary stood up and the examinee was also asked to do likewise by the chair. The examinee listened carefully to the announcement of the result, because this result determines whether the candidate passes with a high mark and without revision, passes with revision, or fails.

5.1.5.c. The Panel Chair knocked on the table three times as a closing signal.

After the announcement, the chair of the TDE knocked on the table three times to indicate that the process of the TDE was finished and the result of the examinee's performance was valid. Knocking on the table was conducted using their knuckles, not with a special gavel, as in a court. All members understood that this knocking was sufficient to indicate that the TDE had finished.

5.1.5.d. The Panel Chair thanked the examiners and the audience

The chair thanked all the examiners, the secretary and the audience for their presence at the TDE. This formed an expression of appreciation from the chair to the other members and the audience for their participation in the TDE.

5.1.5.e. The examinee was invited to make a short speech

The chair also gave the examinee an opportunity to make a short speech. In the speech, the examinee thanked all members of the panel, especially their two supervisors, for assisting them in developing their knowledge to complete their thesis and the TDE. The examinee appreciated all the contributions given by their supervisors, and both the supervisors and the examinee were glad because they had achieved the desired results of their previous intensive communication about their research. This process had brought them very close to each other. When this TDE is finished, it means the examinee has finished his/her university study and he/she will say farewell. This activity is similar to that of the Swales' model.

5.1.5.f. The Panel Chair gave final advice and suggestions to the examinee

As a farewell message, the examiners gave some advice and suggestions to the examinees. These included a range of topic; for example, some examiners gave advice about some improvements for the content of the thesis to make the meaning of the thesis clearer. Others gave advice regarding the examinee's future career, such as motivating the examinee to pursue further studies in English-speaking countries.

5.1.5.g. The examinee shook hands with the examiners

The examinees shook hands with all the examiners and as a courtesy to show their appreciation and gratitude for assessing their performance during the TDE. All members were smiling at each other as an indication that they were satisfied.

5.1.5.h. The examinee signed the examination documents

The examinees were asked to sign some examination documents provided by the English department. These were official documents to be archived as evidence that the examinees had been assessed by the examiners through the TDE.

5.2. The TDE of the Negeri Institute

The GS of the TDE conducted at the Negeri Institute was identified from the observation of four examinees' performances. The examinees are coded as NIE1, NIE2, NIE3 and NIE4. Each of these examinees was tested by four examiners. The researchers observed their entire TDE, and found the following information.

The practice of TDE at this university is somewhat different from the practice at the Nanggroe

University, although there are similarities too. The first difference is that it is a faculty affair. Thus it was officially opened by an important person at the faculty level, it was the Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs. This suggests that this institute gave more weight to the TDE than at the Nanggroe University.

However, similar to the TDE practice at the Nanggroe University, the Department also allocated a few sections of the examinee's thesis to each examiner to be examined. The purpose was to prevent examiners from asking overlapping questions, and thus, save time. Nevertheless, there are more differences. First, at the Negeri Institute each of the examiners sat at a separate table. Thus, each of the examinees was requested to move from one examiner to the other to answer different questions. During the observation, four examiners were in the room, each examining an examinee at the same time. Thus, the room was noisy as four pairs were talking at the same time (See Appendix B for a picture of the seating).

The second difference is that, while at Nanggroe University only one student was examined in a day, at this institute, many examinees were examined on the day, and all of them were gathered in the same room. Only those who had completed their turn were asked to wait outside for the announcement of results until all the examinees have

completed their turns.

Similar to the TDE of the Nanggroe University, the GS of the TDE at this institute also consists of five segments. These segments are 'the preliminary', 'the opening', 'the defence proper', 'the in-camera' and 'the closing' segments.

5.2.1. The preliminary segment

In this preliminary segment, only one activity was found, that is an obligatory activity, that is:

5.2.1.a. The examiners, examinees, a secretary, an official (Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs), and audience settled in.

In this preliminary segment, all the attendees were seated in their respective seats. The examiners and a secretary were seated on a stage. The examinees and audience were seated on chairs facing the examiners.

This segment is similar to the GSs found by Grimshaw et al. (1994), Burke (1994), Hasan (1994), and Swales (2004), in which everyone is settled in the same room. But, in this Institute, the number of the attendees were much larger, consisting of the examiners, a secretary, the examinees, the Deputy Dean and the audience. Members of the audience included undergraduate students, guests including parents and relatives of the examinees.

5.2.2. The opening segment

Similar to the second segment at the Nanggroe University, three activities were found in this segment, two of which are obligatory and the other one is optional. They are as below.

5.2.2.a. The Head of the Department greeted and welcomed the audience.

As the host of the TDE, the Head of the Department greeted the audience, making special reference to the Deputy Dean, the examiners, the examinees, and the rest of the audience. He also gives a brief background regarding the TDEs, e.g. the number of examinees, and the like. Finally, he invited the Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs to officially open the TDE.

5.2.2.b. The opening ceremony

The Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs came to the stage. He also greeted and welcomed everyone. He also encouraged the examinees to perform competently, and wished them success. He, then, officially opened the TDE, and closed his speech.

5.2.3. The defence proper segment

This segment was significantly different from the corresponding segment at the Nanggroe University TDE as only two activities were found in this segment. They are as follows.

5.2.3.a. The examiner greeted the examinee

As mentioned earlier, each examinee had to move from one examiner to another as they sat at separate tables, so he/she was examined by one examiner at a time, not by a panel of examiners. In this segment, this study found that only a few examiners greeted their examinees, but the majority of them did not greet their examinees. Maybe, this is a way to maintain the power gap between the examiners and their examinees during this formal event.

Consequently, this activity is considered as optional for this segment.

An important difference between the TDE of this Institute and that of the Nanggroe University is that, at this Institute, the examinees were not required to make a research presentation. Ideally, such a presentation should be conducted in this segment to assess the examinees' competence in their research. According to the TDE secretary, the reason for this was that prior to having the TDEs, the examinees had already conducted their research presentations in front of their respective supervisors to see if they could pass. If they passed, then, the respective supervisors would grant an approval to undertake a TDE. With the approval of the supervisors, the examinees could sit a proper TDE.

This procedure is also different from the four 'well-known GSs' where thesis oral presentation is obligatory in the TDE, even though the activity is included in different segments, for example, one researcher includes it in the 'opening segment' and the others in the 'defence proper' segment.

5.2.3.b. The examiners asked questions according to the thesis sections assigned to them

Since no presentation was required in this defence proper segment, each examiner immediately asked questions to the examinees about the thesis sections already allocated to him/her. Examiner One asked about the discussion in the background of the study. Examiner Two asked about the literature review and commented on the grammar of the sentences and the quotation included in the writing. Examiner Three was asking about research methodology and results. An interesting phenomenon is Examiner Four tested the examinees about their understanding of their thesis content in relation to the Islamic teaching. For example, if the examinee states that education is important, then s/he has to find evidence in the Qur'an which supports or justifies this statement. This requirement to relate the subject matter with Al Quranic verses for support seems to be a unique feature of the TDE of this Institute. This feature is different from the other Islamic University, i.e. Nanggroe University, which requires its students to recite the Holy Al Quran as its unique feature.

5.2.4. The In-camera segment

Three obligatory activities were found in this segment.

5.2.4.a. The examinee was asked to leave the room

This activity is not exactly the same as the corresponding activity found in the Nanggroe University (NU) TDE since at the Negeri Institute the waiting time could be much longer than 10 minutes for many examinees, until all other students have completed their TDE, which could be in late afternoon depending on the total number of the examinees for the day.

5.2.4.b. The secretary collected and calculated the examinees' scores from the examiners

This activity is the same as the corresponding activity of the NU TDE, except that the secretary calculated the marks of all the examinees first, and announced them all at once after all of them completed their TDE (See the closing segment below). Another difference is that the secretary calculated the scores away from the TDE room, in her own office before calling the examinees back in.

5.2.4.c. The examinees were called back in.

This activity occurred after the last examinee completed the TDE and the secretary were ready to announce the results for the entire examinees. Thus, this activity is the same as the corresponding activity in the Nanggroe University TDE and in the TDE generic structures found in the literature, except that at the Negeri Institute, the waiting time is longer for most of the examinees as they have to wait until all the examinees to complete their TDE.

5.2.5. Closing segment

In this segment, two activities were found. They are as follows.

5.2.5.a. The secretary announced the results of the examinees' performances.

This activity is similar to the corresponding activity in the Nanggroe University TDE with an exception that the secretary announced the results of all the examinees at once.

5.2.5.b. The Head of the English Education Department congratulated all the examinees, gave final advice, and closed the TDE.

This activity is similar to the corresponding activity in the Nanggroe University TDE except that at this Institute it is much simpler with much less activities. This may be due to the much higher number of examinees taking the TDE on the day, while at Nanggroe University, only one examinee for the day.

5.3. *The TDE of Syiar University*

The GS of the TDE of this university is identified from the observations and analysis of five examinees' performances. The identities of these examinees are encoded as SUE1, SUE2, SUE3, SUE4 and SUE5. Similar to the TDE at the Negeri Institute (NI), each examinee was examined by 4 examiners, hence the examinee had to move from Examiner 1 to Examiner 4. Each examinee had been informed who their examiners would be prior to the TDE day.

In the TDE of this University, only three segments were found: the preliminary segment, the opening segment and the defence proper segment.

5.3.1. *Preliminary segment*

The preliminary segment was the first segment of the TDE. In this segment, all members prepared themselves for the TDE. Only one activity was found in this segment and it was obligatory.

5.3.1.a. *The examiners, examinees, an official (Head of the English Department) settled in.*

This activity is the same as the corresponding activity in the NI. The difference is that at Syiar University only the participants were present. They were the official, the examiners, and the examinees. There was no secretary nor non-participatory audience such as parents and relatives. So, it is a close TDE.

5.3.2. *The Opening segment*

Unlike the other two TDEs discussed thus far, only three obligatory activities were found in this segment. They are as follows.

5.3.2.a. *The opening ceremony*

This activity is similar with the corresponding opening ceremony in the other two institutions. It is the same in that it is the official opening of the event. It is the same as the one at Nanggroe University (NU) in terms of the level of the official who opened it, and the essence of their speeches. In both universities, it was opened by the Head of the English Education Department, and he began with greetings, motivational messages to the examinees, and the declaration that the event was officially opened, and finally he closed his speech.

But, there are four differences between the two TDE practices. The first is unlike the Nanggroe TDE, there is no ID check at Syiar University. The second difference is at Nanggroe University only one examinee was examined in one day, while at Syiar University, many students were examined in one day. In terms of the number of examinees examined at a time, this practice is the same as the corresponding activity in the Negeri Institute i.e. many students were examined at the same time by different examiners. But at this Institute all the examinees remained in the TDE room waiting for their turn, while at Syiar University all students were told to go out to wait for their turn, except the students who were being examined.

Another similarity between Syiar University and the Negeri Institute is that each examiner sat at a separate table, and he/she examined one student at the same time as the other examiners did, creating a very noisy situation (See Appendix D for a map of the seating).

5.3.2.b. *The examinees were asked to leave the room.*

After the TDE is officially opened, all the examinees were asked to leave the room, and each examiner took their respective table, and waited for his/her examinee. This activity seems to be the same as the corresponding activity at the other two universities discussed so far, but there is a difference. It is different from the NU TDE in terms of the purpose; that is the purpose of leaving the room at Syiar University (SU) was to get the examinees to wait for their turn for the TDE, while at NU it was to wait for the result. Another difference was the waiting time. At NU was much shorter (about 10 minutes), at SU, it could be much longer for many students. But, this waiting time was similar to that of the TDE at the Negeri Institute since in both cases the examinees had to wait until all the other examinees have completed their turns.

5.3.2.c. *The examinees were called back in one by one*

The examinees were called back in by an administrative assistant, one by one according to the availability of the examiners, for their respective turn to undertake the TDE. In terms of the purpose, this practice is different from the corresponding 'call-back in' in the TDEs of the other two institutions, and in 3 of the 4 'Well-known models', which is to listen to the announcement of the results.

5.3.3. *The Defence proper segment*

Three obligatory activities were found in this segment.

5.3.3.a. *The examiner greeted the examinee*

This segment is the same as the corresponding segment in the NU TDE in that one examinee was examined by one examiner at a time (See Appendix D for the seating layout). In the majority of cases, the examiner greeted the examinee. In this greeting, he/she included some calming words to reduce anxiety in the examinee. For example, the examiners asked about the feelings of the examinees, whether or not they were happy having this examination. This is essentially the same as what the Panel Chair said to the examinees at NU. Similarly, the norm, that it was very rare for the examinees to greet the examiners, was also found at SU.

5.3.3.b. *The examiner asked the examinee to conduct a thesis presentation.*

This activity is similar to the corresponding presentation in the TDE of NU, in that the examinee was asked to give a thesis presentation, including to state the background of the research, the research problems, and the findings, but it was very rare for examinees to mention the procedures used in their research. The difference is at NU the presentation was conducted in front of a panel of examiners, while at SU it was in front of Examiner One only. The rest of the examiners only asked questions. This activity is also similar to the 'Well-known' models, except that at SU it was done in front of one examiner only.

5.3.3.c. *The examiners are free to ask about any part of the thesis.*

Unlike the corresponding activity in the TDE of NU and the NI discussed earlier, the examiners at SU were not restricted to any part of the thesis about which to ask questions. They were free to pick any part(s), which they wished to focus their question(s) on. The questions were commonly related to research problems, the research content/literature review and the research methodology. Basically, the examinee was tested on their knowledge of his/her research topic and research process. The significance of the research was rarely asked.

Since each of the examiners sat at a separate table, some questions asked by different examiners were overlapping. This issue is not found in any of the other three universities. It did not happen at NU and Media University (5.4 below) because the Panel of Examiners sat at the same table, and similarly, it did not happen at the Negeri Institute (NI) because each examiner was restricted to ask questions only about the thesis sections already allocated to him/her. It did not happen in the corresponding activity in the 'Well-known' models for the same reason.

5.3.3.d. *The fourth examiner ended the examination.*

One important difference between the TDE practiced at this university and the other two universities discussed earlier is that the result was not announced on the same day, but approximately one month later on the English Education Department's notice board. This was announced prior to the TDE day and repeated in the opening ceremony. Thus, the 'in-camera' and the 'closing segments' found in the other three universities and in the 'Well-known' model, did not exist at this university. Therefore, only the fourth examiner told the examinee that the examination was finished. The examinee then left the room and could go home. The reason given for this practice was the extremely large number of examinees undertaking the TDE, thus, they needed much more time to decide on the results of all the examinees before announcing them.

5.4. *The TDE of Media University*

There are also similarities and differences between the TDE practiced at this university and those of the other three institutions discussed earlier, and the four 'Well-known' models. One similarity concerns the practice of TDE at NI, but different from those of NU and SU, was this university also gave more weight to the status of TDE, evident by the presence of the Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs to officially open the event. More similarities and differences will be discussed below.

Due to limited opportunity available, only two examinees' performances in the TDEs could be observed. These examinees are coded as UME1 and UME2. Like the TDE practice at the other institutions, except SU, five segments were found at Media University (MU). They are the preliminary segment, the opening segment, the defence proper segment, the in-camera and, finally, the closing segments.

5.4.1. *The preliminary segment*

In this preliminary segment, one obligatory activity was found.

5.4.1.a. *The examiners, vice dean for academic affairs, a witness, a secretary and examinees settled in.*

This activity was similar to the corresponding activity in the TDE of the other three universities. The difference

concerns only the composition of the people who were present. The composition is the similar to that of the SU in that both had no non-participant audience (no guests). So, it is also a close TDE. The differences are at MU there were only two examiners, while at NU there were three; however, in the MU TDE there was a witness, who is absent in NU TDE Panel and at the other two institutions (See Appendix C for seating layout of the panel). The witness observed the process of the TDE from the beginning until the end of the event. The importance of this witness is to solve possible problems that may arise after the TDE, for example, if there are complaints among examinees or panel members about the final score.

5.4.2. The opening segment

This segment is generally the same as the corresponding segment in the Negeri Institute (NI), below are the activities.

5.4.2.a. Introductory speech from the head of English Education Department

This activity is the same as the corresponding activity in the NI in that the Head of the English Education Department began with a short speech with greetings, making special reference to the Deputy Dean, and motivation messages for the examinees, and ended his speech with an invitation for the Deputy Dean to officially open the TDE.

5.4.2.b. The Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony is in a form of a speech by the designated official; that is the Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs. In his speech, the Vice Dean greeted all members in the room and welcomed them. Then, he continued with reading the research thesis titles of the examinees. Finally, he officially opened the TDE for the day, wished them success, and closed his speech.

This ceremonial event is not found in the four well-known GSs. For Media University, this ceremony is very important and it is obligatory. This is similar to the corresponding activity in the TDE of the NI.

5.4.3. The Defence proper segment

There are two activities found in this segment, one was obligatory and the other was optional.

5.4.3.a. The examinee is asked to conduct a research presentation

In this defence proper, conducting a research presentation is optional. From the observation, this study found that between two examinees undertaking the TDE event, one of them was asked to do a research presentation, while the other one was not. This makes the difference between the MU TDE and the TDEs of NU and SU, and between it and the four well-known GSs.

5.4.3.b. The examiners ask questions from any parts of the thesis

Examiners at this university asked the examinee questions regarding any part of the thesis content. This rule of asking questions also occurs at the four well-known GSs, where the examiners can ask questions as they wish. The examiners were not given certain allocated thesis sections to ask the examinees as in the TDE of the Negeri Institute and Nanggroe University.

5.4.4. The in-camera segment

There were three obligatory activities found in this segment, while optional activities were not found.

5.4.4. a. The examinee was asked to leave the room

The first obligatory activity of this segment was asking the examinee to leave the TDE room after his/her TDE. When the examinee was outside, it does not mean that the examination has been completed, but he/she was waiting for the results of the TDE to be announced after all the examinees have completed their TDE.

5.4.4. b. The secretary collected the examinee's score from the examiners and calculated them

The second activity in this segment is calculating scores. The secretary/note taker collected the scores from examiners and calculated them. The total number of the scores is then determined as the examinees' final score. So, like in the NU and NI TDEs, there was not deliberation to decide the final score, which is different from the practice in the four 'Well-known models'.

5.4.4.c. The examinees were called back in

Like the practice in the NI TDE, all the examinees were called back in after all the examinees had completed their turns.

5.4.5. Closing segment

Closing segment was the last segment of the TDE at this university. In this segment, the examinees listened to

their results announced by The secretary. One obligatory activity was found in this segment.

5.4.5. a. The secretary announced the results of the examinees' performances

This activity is the same as the corresponding activity in the TDE of the Negeri Institute, where after the examinees had been called back in, the secretary announced the results of all the examinees.

5.4.5.b. The TDE is closed by the Panel Chair.

After the announcement of the results, the Chair congratulated the examinees dan closed the TDE.

Discussion and Conclusion

The research problem for this part of the research was to address the scarcity of empirically based information regarding an important academic genre, i.e. TDE at undergraduate level in the literature. To address the problem, this study explored TDE practices at 4 different tertiary institutions in Aceh and North Sumatera Provinces, Indonesia. The question was, "What was the common segments and activities conducted at these universities? Are there similarities and differences? If so, why? Is it possible to draw a common generic structure from the four institutions?"

The findings presented earlier suggest that there are some similarities but more variations are found within the segments. The five basic segments are shared by the three institutions-the Nanggroe University (NU), the Negeri Institute (NI), and the Media University (MU), while the fourth institution, the Syiar University (SU) only shares the first three of the segments. The similarities and variations are discussed in details below.

6.1 The similarities and variation in Segment 1: The Preliminary

There is one common feature shared by the four institutions. The first common segment was 'The preliminary segment'. All the TDEs of the four institutions had this segment. All the participants and audience are invited into a room designated for the TDE. But, there are many more variations, than similarity. The first variation concerns the nature of the TDE. Two of the institutions, the NI and SU, adopts a close TDE, which means that only the participants are allowed into the TDE room. The other two, the NU and the MU adopt an open TDE, which means non-participants are allowed into the room as an observing audience. They are lower level undergraduate students and parents or relatives of the examinees.

The second variation the structure and composition of the participants. Two institutions, NU and MU adopt a panel system, and the other two, the NI and the SU adopt non-panel system, where many examiners examine many students at the same times. Even, the institutions which adopt the panel system, have variations too, i.e. different composures of the panels. The NU has three examiners, and one secretary, while the MU has two examiners, one secretary or note taker, and one witness. Apparently they have different emphasis of needs. The NU emphasizes on the need to have three examiners to ensure moderation, while the MU emphasise on the need to have an independent witness in case of a dispute.

The overall purpose seems to be the same, that is to the presence of someone to act as an arbitrator, although the NU focuses on a possible dispute between two examiners, while the other on a possible dispute between the examinees and examiner(s). The other two institutions, the NI and the SU have four different examiners for each examinee, but each examines each examinee separately. Each gives a score, and the scores are calculated by a secretary. Perhaps, having more examiners and making them assess each examinee separately and independently is their way of avoiding a dispute, and ensuring objectivity. The last difference is the presence of a faculty-level official. Two of the institutions, the NI and MU invite Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs, while the other two do not.

6.2 The similarities and variation in Segment 2: The Opening

One common activity which all the institutions share is the opening ceremony. Each university has an official opening, but there are also more variations, than this similarity. The first variation is that in two of the institutions, the opening ceremony was conducted by the Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs, suggesting that these two institutions put more significance on the TDE compared to the other two, the NU and the SU, where it was opened only by the Head of the English Education Department.

The second variation is after the opening ceremony, two institutions, the NU and the SU TDEs have two different activities. The NU has the checking of ID cards, which is not shared by any of the other institutions. Similarly, the SU also has an activity not shared by any of the other three institutions; that is asking the entire

examinees to leave the room and wait for their turns outside. The other two institutions, the NI and the MU, have no activities after the opening ceremony (in this segment).

6.3 *The similarities and variation in Segment 3: The Defence Proper*

This segment has the highest number of variations, with only one almost complete similarity. The first variation concerns the number of activities. All of the institutions are different: the SU has the highest number of activities namely five, followed by the NU with four, the MU with three, and finally the NI with two activities. The second variation concerns the Islamic specific activity, that is each examinee has to do namely the reciting of some verses of the holy Al Quran, required by the NU, which is not practiced by any of the other institutions. The other Islamic institution, the NI, also has an Islamic specific activity, but it is also not shared by any of the other institutions, that is the requirement to support points of argument with verses of the Al Quran.

The third variation concerns the ways the examination is conducted. There are three variations. Firstly, two institutions, the NI and SU, require the examinees to move from one examiner to another until each of them is examined by four examiners already assigned to him/her, while the other two institutions do not. Secondly, three of the institutions, the NU, the SU, and the MU, require the examinee to present a summary of his/her thesis, while the NI does not. Thirdly, at two of the institutions, the NU and NI, each of the examiners ask questions restricted to part of the thesis already allocated to him/her, while at the other two, the SU and the MU, there is no such restriction.

The fourth variation concerns the ways the announcement of results are made. At the three institutions, the NU, NI, and the MU, the results are announced on the same day, while at the SU, it is made one month later and on the Department's notice board.

6.4 *The similarities and variation in Segment 4: The in-Camera*

The literature defines the in-camera segment as the segment when an examinee is asked to leave the examining room after his/her performance, while the team of examiners discuss and decide the outcome of his/her TDE. After a short period of time the examinee is called back in to listen to the outcome. In essence, the practice is found in the four university, but there many variations too. Firstly, two of the institutions, the NI and the MU, conduct this after calling the examinees back in only after all the examinees have been examined, so the waiting time varies depending on the number of examinees after a student performs. The student who performs at the beginning would have to wait much longer than the student who is examined last. Only one university, the NU, which conducts this segment in the same way as the in the four 'Well-known model', where the waiting time is only about 10 minutes.

One university, the SU, takes much longer time to announce the results, approximately one month, and there is no call back in as the announcement is posted on the department's notice board. Thus, there is actually no in-camera segment at this university.

6.5 *The similarities and variation in Segment 5: The Closure*

Every beginning has an ending, so does essentially the practice of TDE at all of the four institutions. However, there are many variations too. Firstly, the number of activities varies from zero to eight. The SU has no official closure as such since each examinee can go home after he/she being examined by his/her fourth examiner. The NI and the MU have only two activities each, the announcement of the results and the official closure. The NU, however, has eight activities. Secondly, the announcement of the results. At three of the institutions, the NU, NI and MU, the results were announced on the same day, while at the SU they were announced approximately one month later. Similarly, the method of closing the TDE also show variations.

6.6 *A common generic structure*

Due to the overwhelming number of variations, it is difficult to propose a common generic pattern of the four institutions. To address such difficulty, the level of common practice should be reduced to 75%, which means it is practiced by at least three of the English Education Department of the four institutions. Even so, some non-essential variations have to be excluded. The common generic pattern can be proposed as shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

The common generic structure of Thesis Defence Examination in Indonesian Tertiary Institutions

Segments	Activities
<i>1: The Preliminary Segment</i>	<i>a. The examiners, examinees, an official settle in.</i>
<i>2: The Opening Segment</i>	<i>a. The Head of the English Education Department greets and welcomes the audience. b. The official opening ceremony</i>
<i>3: The Defence proper segment</i>	<i>a. The examiner or Panel Chair greets the examinee. b. The examiner Panel Chair asks the examinee to conduct a thesis presentation. c. The examiners ask questions.</i>
<i>4: The In-camera Segment</i>	<i>a. The examinee(s) is asked to leave the room. b. The secretary collects the scores from the examiners and calculates them. c. The examinees are called back in.</i>
<i>5: The Closing Segment</i>	<i>a. The secretary announces the result of the examinee's performance. b. The Chair of the Panel or the Head of the Department congratulates all the examinees, gives final advice, thanks the examiners and closes the TDE</i>

6.7 Explanation for the variations

Although the TDE practiced at all the institutions do what it is supposed to do according to its name, that is to defend one's thesis, and the overall segmentation of the activity is similar, there are overwhelming variations within the segments. This suggests the richness of interesting TDE practices in the four institutions. These variations can be explained with the theoretical framework stated earlier, that people of different culture create different formulations of generic patterns. This can be explained further with the definition of culture proposed by Lederach (1995), "... the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them" (p. 9). There are two key elements in this definition namely that 'shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people', and these shared knowledge are the result of the people's perception, interpretation and in response to realities around them. This means that any set of people can create knowledge and schemes specific to themselves. The TDE pattern of practice at each institution can be seen as knowledge and schemes created by the 'set of people' at that particular university as a result of their perception, interpretation, expression and response to the idea of thesis defence found in the literature and other cultural elements found around them. For example, the NU people perceive and interpret a TDE like what is practiced at the Doctoral level reported in the 'Well-known models', therefore they practice the undergraduate TDE very similar to those models, although they still show their own specific local creative elements such as the opening ceremony, asking the examinee to give a speech. On the other hand, each of the other institutions shows more of local creative elements, which lead a TDE practice not only more different from those models, but also different from one another. For example, the two Islamic institutions' sets of people, interpret their Islamic component differently, one (the NU) by requiring the examinees to show their skills in reciting the Al Quran,

while the other (the NI) by requiring them to justify their points of argument with a verse or verses in the Islamic Holy Book. The secular institutions do not practice such activity.

Pedagogical implications

The generic structure found at each institution can help its teachers and students understand how TDE is practiced at their respective universities. For its teachers, it can help them design their course contents and objectives so that they can develop the appropriate knowledge and skills necessary to adequately prepare their students to perform well in the TDE. The teachers can also learn from the practices at the other institutions to improve the TDE of their home institution. For students, they should concentrate on the GS of their home university to practice well accordingly, and adequately prepare for their TDE.

The common generic structure proposed above is useful for further research and as a guide for a course designer. For researchers, it gives them an essential framework to design their research project. For a course designer, it gives them the essential elements to develop their own TDE. However, it might not be a fully appropriate guide for students due to the variations found at each institution. This means that the students of each institution should look closely into the TDE practice of their own university.

Conclusions

In conclusion, despite the basic similarities, the study shows the richness of variations of the same academic genre largely influenced by local culture. These variations have been unknown in the literature. This study, therefore, has filled the important knowledge and cultural gap. However, as TDE could be found in other universities in Indonesia which have different sets of people, there may be many other culturally influenced variations awaiting to be discovered before we could call an 'Indonesian' generic structure because culturally, Indonesia is one of the most diverse countries in the world. More broadly, there are many countries which also practice TDE around the world, each with a number of universities. Hence, there may be many more important and interesting variations of TDE practices awaiting to be discovered. Thus, undoubtedly more studies are recommended in other universities in Indonesia as well as around the world. Nevertheless, the findings of this study have offered a crucial direction for such a wide research gap. Pedagogically, the study has also provided a useful guide for teachers and students.

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ICT as an Index of Transparency in a Saudi EFL Classroom

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Abstract

Transparency is conceived as the process of (timely) delivery of information (Vught & Heijden, 2010) such that the lack of information is understood to be a clear symptom of bias, corruption and incompetence (Smith, 2004). Thus, transparency is fully expressed when there is lack of hidden agendas. In educational settings, *transparency* consists, *inter alia*, in the declaration and measurement of learning outcomes in a way that is understandable to the students so that they can have an end-to-end view of the relevant educational program (Offerman, 2008). Given these approaches to *transparency*, this paper examines the effect of ICT affordances on the enhancement of educational *transparency* in Saudi EFL classroom. In that connection, there are two research questions to answer: 1. To what extent does ICT literacy among the students impact EFL faculty's role in the classroom? 2. Do different aspects of the educational process trigger the same degree of transparency among EFL faculty? A questionnaire was constructed and distributed to 61 EFL faculty in a number of Saudi Universities to collect needed data. Overall, results revealed a high degree of transparency among the participants, who also practised more transparency in teaching than in academic communication with the students.

Keywords: transparency, EFL teaching, academic communication, openness, ICT

Introduction

Ever since educational technology was introduced into the Saudi academia in the first decade of the 21st century, it has been (positively) affecting the teaching and learning processes in a variety of ways. For instance, Abdalla (2007) reports that as a result of the use of the smart board at Majmaah Community College, the students, taken by this new prodigy, stopped complaining about the extension of classes into their class breaks and that a precious time that was once wasted on silencing the students was fully used in covering course items. In addition, Alebaikan (2011) informs that male professors, who are not allowed to be physically present to teach in female campuses, can do so through a variety of educational technology applications. Most importantly, customer satisfaction surveys administered to students each term have been producing positive feedback regarding teachers' performance. The main impetus for the students' satisfaction is given by the availability of courseware that teachers post on their web-pages and the possibility to communicate with teachers anytime by the email or cell phones. Along these same lines, this paper assumes that the introduction of the ICT into education has far reaching consequences for the degree of transparency in the classroom. Support for this assumption comes partially from the view that teachers who were once considered educational authorities have recently assumed more moderate roles as facilitators as a result of the incorporation of ICT into the educational system. Other things being equal, this shift in teachers' role is given impetus by the fact that "a great deal of our students' learning takes place without our intention or sometimes even despite it" (Dowling, 2003). Such a learning possibility is caused by the fact that students are conceived in the relevant literature as "*digital natives*", implying that they can be more digitally literate and, thus, more knowledgeable about the rich online educational resources than their teachers (Prensky, 2001).

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Yet, it is only in a transparent educational environment that such digital competence can be integrated into classroom activities. Now given these facts about the role that ICT plays in the classroom, this paper attempts to provide answers to the following questions:

- i. To what extent does ICT literacy among Saudi students impact EFL instructional practices?
- ii. Do different aspects of the educational process trigger the same degree of *transparency* among EFL faculty?

Conceptual Background

Generally speaking, the term *transparency*, being synonymous with "openness", is conceived as the process of (timely) delivery of information (Vught & Heijden, 2010) such that the lack of information is understood to be a clear symptom of bias, corruption and incompetence (Smith, 2004). Thus, "transparency is fully expressed when there is lack of hidden agendas" (Luba & Mahraj, 2013, para. 10).

Also, Oliver (2003, p. X) defines *transparency* paradoxically as "flashpoint at the intersection of public's right to know and the individual's and organization's right to privacy." Yet, it plays a central role in people's lives to the extent that lack of it produces "enough words to fill a dictionary", including "..., spin, dishonesty, cover-ups, manipulation, deception, fraud, ruses, trickery,..., duplicity, cheating, lying, deceit, cons, corruption and treachery." (p.1)

Educationally speaking, many researchers approach *transparency* from different perspectives. For instance, discussing *transparent institutions*, Adnet et al. (2011: 13) maintain that for an institution to be so conceived, it must adhere to a number of criteria including selection of students who can complete courses based on educational achievement and potential, use of reliable and valid assessment methods and minimizing barriers to applicants. Also, Vught & Heijden (2010, p. 33) relate *transparency* to quality assurance as information delivery medium that aims at helping external stakeholders to "form judgments and take decisions." Further, according to Offerman (2008, para. 8), *transparency* is a characteristic of program-level learning outcome. In other words, *transparency* consists in the declaration and measurement of learning outcomes in a way that is understandable to the students so that they can have an "end-to-end view" of the relevant educational program. However, it is stipulated that the program should represent "a conceptual shift from curriculum as a collection of courses to curriculum as a strategic educational map that shows how and when developmental competencies are developed...". These perspectives focus on the aspects of academic *transparency* that relate to "educational administration", "management of financial resources", "recruitment of academic personnel", "admission to educational institutions", etc.

However, as shown in the introduction above, this study addresses a fourth ICT-generated transparency that centres upon the teacher-student relationship both inside and outside of the classroom. It particularly investigates the extent to which the doings, thoughts, interests, concerns of the teacher, etc. are visible to the student (Dalsgaard & Paulsen, 2009). The teacher's role is emphasized owing to the fact that it is the teacher who both facilitates and assesses learning. In that connection, there are two questions that this part attempts to answer: what is transparent teaching and how can it be enhanced by the integration of ICT in the classroom?

To begin with, Evans (2013) theorizes that transparent teaching represents a philosophical shift that requires courage, resolve and belief on the part of the teacher to share course information with the student so as to make the classroom an optimal learning environment for both the teacher and the student. The relevant literature also shows that transparent teaching transcends mere information sharing to the reconsideration of "some fundamental assumptions about course structure, content and instructor's role" (Arvidson & Huston, 2008, p. 4). In other words, these assumptions were once peculiar to the teacher but can now be negotiated with the student in a transparent educational environment. Other practices and activities that render a classroom transparent include teacher's willingness to be candid, adventurous and self-critical (ibid) and engaging with the students, appreciating candid feedback and acknowledging contributions (Chang, 2002). Indeed, teachers should experience such behavioural changes to function properly in a transparent educational environment given the traditional view that "teaching is normally a very a private activity, closed off from our peers by four walls of the classrooms, and also often jealously guarded behind the walls of academic freedom" (Kelly, 2001, para. 7).

Ezza (2012) reports that the teacher who was once considered "an educational authority", "a dispenser of knowledge", etc. has recently assumed more moderate roles as, e.g. a facilitator, an organizer, a guide, etc. owing to the students' familiarity with digital technologies and, hence, rich educational resources accessed through them, among others. There are at least two implications for the teacher that may result from this situation: students' ability to learn outside teachers'

experience, and learning may achieve objectives other than those set by the teacher (Newhouse, 2002, p. 38). As a result, the teacher has two extreme alternatives to choose from: resistance to the integration of ICT in education as it reduces his/her influence or accept to acquire ICT-related skills and literacy to be able to function competently in the classroom. Fortunately, research findings inform that there is a strong tendency among teachers to adopt a more ICT-oriented roles that enable them to form learning communities with own students (Fairman, 2004; Ezza, 2012). It was also concluded that *transparency* gave study participants “a better sense, purpose, motivation, clarity, and connection to course objectives.” (Anderson et al, 2013, p. 38).

Method

Participants

The study participants were 61 EFL faculty who were presumably in the service of eleven Saudi government-owned universities. In fact, the questionnaire was sent to 500 faculty whose email addresses were posted on the e-gates of their respective institutions but only 61 responses were received. Apparently, there were unused/inactive email addresses as indicated by the 20 notices of delivery failure and subsequent apologies from some faculty who had not used their emails for a long time. Since some e-gates did not include emails addresses of their EFL faculty at least at the time of data collection, e.g. Prince Sultan University, Hail University, Jazan University, Northern Border University, etc., they were excluded from this survey. The participants were targeted as a single group, i.e. regardless of their gender, age, academic degree and academic status as the study intends to elicit general information about the degree of their teaching transparency.

Instrument

A five-scale, likert-type questionnaire (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) was constructed to collect data for this study. It comprised 20 statements that centred upon many practices that were assumed to enhance teaching transparency. They roughly fall into two categories: teaching practices and communication practices. The first category formed the backbone of the questionnaire both in terms of the number of statements (80% of the questionnaire) and the variety of teaching strategies included. On the other hand, the communication practices focused on teacher-student communication outside the classroom to reinforce both teaching and learning. The instrument's face validity was verified by ten EFL faculty in a number of Saudi Universities while Cronbach's alpha was used to calculate its reliability, resulting in the co-efficient of .834 and, thus, indicating high consistency.

Procedure

The questionnaire was posted on Google Drive and then forwarded to the email addresses of the participants. In many cases it was sent to their institutional and general addresses when both were available on the e-gates of their institutions for the fear that one of them might be inactive. Yet, as shown in the participants' section above, a number of notices of delivery failure were received. Even worse, only about 13% of the study population completed the questionnaire despite the fact that it had been emailed twice to most of them.

Results

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data to answer the first research questions, i.e. *To what extent does ICT literacy among the students impact EFL faculty's role in the classroom?* Table 1 below informs that the participants' responses were indicative of a high degree of transparency as can be substantiated by the high mean of their responses (which is closer to the maximum value than to the minimum value). This finding will be elaborated further in the discussion section below:

Table 1: *Teaching Transparency among EFL Faculty in Saudi Arabia*

Descriptive Statistics					
Std. Deviation	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	N	
8.66114	87.4262	100.00	66.00	61	VAR00001
				61	Valid N (listwise)

Std= standard; VAR= variable

As to the data required to answer the second research question, it is important to point out in this connection that the questionnaire consisted of 20 statements that were assumed to reflect transparency in two areas: teaching and communication. Thus, the second research question was posed to find out if practices pertaining to these two areas received equal attention from EFL faculty. T-test was used to analyze the difference between the responses in these sections (i.e. statements 1-16 and 17-20 respectively); table 2 below summarizes the finding:

Table 2 *T-test for the Difference in Transparency between Teaching and in Communication means*

One-Sample Statistics						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		
Transparency in Teaching	61	70.4754	6.76906	.86669		
Transparency in communication	61	16.9508	2.52604	.32343		

One-Sample Test						
Test Value = 0						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Transparency in Teaching	81.316	60	.000	70.47541	68.7418	72.2090
Transparency in communication	52.410	60	.000	16.95082	16.3039	17.5978

t= total; df= degree of freedom; sig.= significance; alpha is ≥ 0.05

Discussion

Table 1 indicates that transparent teaching has become a matter of heightened importance for the study participants. There are at least two reasons to explain the tendency to adopt a more open relationship with their students. First, Prensky (2001) argues that the new generations of learners (those who were born after 1983) have grown up amid digital technologies. And given the fact the Internet has become a rich educational resource, it is possible to maintain that they not only access educational materials that could be richer than the textbooks prescribed by the teacher, but also learn over and above the relevant course objective. In such an educational environment, it would be futile to stick to the old roles of "a dispenser of knowledge", "an educational authority", etc. as there are technology-based avenues of knowledge that could be more student-friendly than the traditional classroom where the teacher dominates the educational scene. It is natural, therefore, that teachers react positively to these changes by accommodating their students' digital competence to enrich the classroom activities. This explanation receives a strong support from previous research findings. For instance, Fairman (2004, p. iii) reports that as a result of the introduction of laptop in the educational system in Maine State, "[T]eachers have begun to see themselves as partners in learning with students and report more reciprocal relationship with students". What is more, "students are able to bring new content and information into the classroom ..." (ibid). Second, most Saudi universities urge their faculty to develop their personal web-pages where course materials and contact information are posted. Since this procedure makes the teacher and courseware available to the students whenever need arises, it certainly renders the relevant educational environment transparent.

Regarding the second research question, table 2 shows that there is a significant difference between participants' response to the two sections of the questionnaire: teaching practices (statements 1-16) and academic communication (statements 17-20). Data analysis shows that the participants demonstrated more transparency in the former than in latter despite the fact that they had posted their contact information, e.g. email addresses, mobile phones, etc. on the personal web-pages so as to facilitate communication not only with their students but also with members of academic communities nationally and internationally. There is at least one piece of evidence emanating from data collection procedure that confirms teachers' tendency to favour teaching transparency over communication transparency. It was reported above that there had been many notices of delivery failure resulting from the lack of use of email addresses to the extent

that they were suspended. It is natural, therefore, that assignments could neither be submitted nor received electronically.

Conclusion and Implications

Although educational transparency has been widely investigated, there is a paucity of data regarding its application to the EFL classroom as most studies focused on transparency in academic administration, management of financial resources, recruitment of academic personal, admission to educational institutions, etc. It was only after the integration of ICT in education that teaching transparency has been paid more attention. Relevant research has particularly focused, *inter alia*, on the possibility that learning might take place without teachers' intention or even despite it; thus, it is proposed that educationist should re-examine some dominating assumptions about a number of pedagogical principles and practices including teachers' role in the classroom (Dowling, 2003).

In the light of these developments, the present paper set out to examine the degree of teaching transparency in an educational environment characterized by techno-pedagogy in the Saudi tertiary institutions. Overall, the findings indicated that EFL teachers showed a high degree of transparency but that they demonstrated more transparency in teaching than in academic communication with their students. Each finding has an implication for classroom practitioners and researchers. Where the first finding is concerned, "teaching transparency" does not seem to be an established concept as evidenced by the attempts made to report a working definition of it in (2) above. The available literature provided a little help about what constitutes "teaching transparency" to be employed to construct the data collection instrument for this study. This conclusion can be further substantiated by the fact that an intensive search on major databases such as EBSCO, Sage, etc. using the keywords "transparent teaching", "transparent teacher" and "transparency in EFL/ESL classroom" did not produce the required results. So, were it not for the articles accessed from free websites, this study would not have been completed. Both teachers and classroom researchers are, therefore, strongly recommended to make greater efforts to develop this concept in theory and practice.

The second finding seems to concern teachers. Apparently, the study participants considered communication with their students when they are off campus a matter of secondary importance. Needless to say, the variety of learning management systems adopted by many Saudi tertiary institutions are meant to encourage continued collaboration between faculty and their students as it provides them with opportunities to enrich topics that they initiated in the classroom. Thus, a more positive attitude towards academic communication is required on the part of the EFL teachers to facilitate both teaching and learning.

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Grammatical Competence of Junior High School Students

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Abstract

The study determined the level of grammatical competence of 177 Junior High School students and on the design and development of a supplementary learning material to enhance the grammatical competence of the students along subject-verb agreement. The study revealed that students favored textbooks as their preferred reading material at home. They are also exposed to various media types, with denser exposure to books and television. The students' parents are generally at par in their highest educational attainment, which vary across cases of being either graduate or undergraduate in College, High School and Elementary School levels. Majority of the students' fathers are High School graduate, parallel to the educational attainment of their mothers. The study concludes that the Junior High School students need to further enhance their level of grammatical competence in subject-verb agreement. The merits and essentials of the findings were drawn and treated as inputs in the development of a supplemental learning material in subject-verb agreement. The study offers a set of recommendations to improve strategies and techniques in instruction and in the development of instructional materials that will complement the goal to develop the relevant competencies of students in the field of English language learning.

Keywords: Grammatical competence, subject-verb agreement, supplemental learning material

Introduction

English is the current, highly recognized international lingua franca. As the world unites into a global community commonly engaged by modern technology, the need to use the English language has become more and more apparent. Today more than any episode in history, people from different regions of the world are able to communicate fast because of the favors of technology. Adjacent with a person's competent use of technology, it has likewise become essential to hone the skills of speaking or writing effectively in English if one were to partake in global commerce, especially that English is widely used in business industries and in education. Moreover, English is learned and studied in the modern world for its obvious practical importance, i.e. as a means to communicate in the international level and as a means to optimize one's access to opportunities in the employment market (Estanislao, 2013).

In the Philippines, English has long been a part of the curricula of varied academic programs. Curriculum has changed drastically but the learning of English remains intact in the essentials of any curriculum. With K to 2 coming to fore, English is offered in both the Junior and the Senior High School curricula. It is also the medium of instruction in teaching other subjects such as Mathematics and Science, among others. Filipinos are regarded to be among the more fluent speakers of the English language. This is one of the reasons that fellow Asians from other ASEAN countries have chosen to study here in the Philippines or resort to learning English from Filipino mentors.

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In an article written by Cabigon (2015), the Philippines is recognized globally as one of the largest English-speaking nations, with the majority of its population having at least some degree of fluency in the language. English has always been one of the country's official languages and is spoken by more than 14 million Filipinos. It is the language of commerce and law, as well as the primary medium of instruction in education. Cabigon further noted that key stakeholders from the government, academe, private, and nongovernment sectors acknowledged that even if Filipinos are generally competent in English, concerns on how much of a competitive advantage have been raised. The stakeholders agreed that the country needs to scale up with its efforts to improve the teaching and learning of English, considering that these are vital skills of the workforce. This is an initiative that can potentially strengthen the Philippines' distinct economic, political or educational advantage in this part of the world, particularly in the ASEAN economic region.

Despite the economic benefits of being an English-speaking nation, Filipinos have not fully maximized its potentials. Studies show that the Filipinos' grasp of the English language is slipping while other Asians are catching up fast. In 2008, an online article by Karl Wilson in "The National" revealed that Filipinos scored an overall mean of 6.69 for the macro skills in English in terms of listening, writing, reading, and speaking. This indicates a rather low profile at the backdrop of international standards. Historically, the English proficiency of Filipinos has been consistently stable across 1993 to 2000 before a gradual decline has been reported in the following years. Even more alarming is the rising percentage of those who are incompetent in English which doubled from a measly 7% in 1993 to 14% in 2006 (UK Essays, 2013).

Anent the above, grammar is regarded as one of the fundamentals of language. Regardless of any language, competence in grammar is foundational to one's ability to communicate in a particular language. One's good grasp of grammar implies the ability to send clearer messages, and the likelihood of being intelligible and understood by others. Moreover, one can also produce good quality writings with a competent mastery of grammar (Bradshaw, 2013).

English Grammar presupposes eight parts of speech namely: noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunctions, interjections and verbs. Students are taught to be competent in the fictional use of these grammatical elements. However, the researcher who has relatively spent years in the English language teaching career has noted that one of the main problems of the students is their functional grasp of subject-verb agreement. ESL students' problematic difficulties in their use of subject-verb agreement are becoming more obvious and rampant, and it cuts across the different grade levels where students belong. From the primary school towards the university level, many students are noted in their speech and writing as not being able to abide with the rules of subject-verb agreement. Errors on subject-verb agreement were found not only in students' essays but even in writings of colleagues in universities. The more worrisome dimension of this problem is that such fiasco extends even to professionals who use English in their lectures or those among the honorable members of state and national assemblies or those engaged in varied media outfits. Errors in subject-verb agreement are becoming wide spread and it seems as if many people are either no longer aware of the rules or they simply undermine the importance of grammar rules, for as long as they are able to convey their message (Tafida & Okunade, 2016).

Although the rules on subject-verb agreement have been introduced to students as early as their primary education, they still face problems in acquiring the linguistic competence in their communicative command or use of English. Nayan (2009) also concurs with this that despite being instructed of the grammatical rules at younger age, ESL (English as a second language) learners are not adept in deploying their knowledge of rules in their actual communicative use of English.

In the above context, one of the language learning competencies in the K to 12 program relates to grammar proficiency. Apparently, the observed deterioration among students in their application or usage of correct grammar in English language pervades not only those in the elementary level but also in the secondary level of education. Since K to 12 uses spiral progression, the grammar competencies are expected to be mastered by the learners in the early stages as a prerequisite for them to cope with the more advanced grammar lessons in the higher levels of their education.

In addition to the above, the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum uses the Spiral Progression Principle in English language teaching. In the spiral curriculum design, key concepts are presented repeatedly throughout the curriculum, but with deepening layers of complexity. As such, learning competencies in English are taught at

increasing levels of difficulty and sophistication. This allows the students to progress from the foundational level to higher levels of language use. Thus, the performance in English of the language learners, especially in writing which focuses on subject-verb agreement, is a crucial part in their language learning as it greatly affects their performance in the succeeding grade levels.

The researcher happens to be the lone English teacher of at Salud-San Eugenio National High School, who is tasked to prepare Junior High School students for higher levels of language learning especially in the area of grammar, which includes subject-verb agreement. Hence, a careful study on the nuances of the grammatical competence of the students and the possible conditions surrounding it would greatly help the researcher in catering to the language learning needs of the students. Thus, with this objective in mind, the researcher was prompted to formulate the conceptual framework of this study.

Literature Review

On Grammar and Grammatical Competence

Grammar may be roughly defined as the way a language manipulates and combines words in order to form longer units of meaning. There is a set of rules which govern how units of meaning may be constructed in any language: one may say that a learner who knows grammar is one who has mastered and can apply these rules to express him or herself in the acceptability of the language forms (Chung and Pullum, 2015).

In addition, Ur (2009) describes grammar as the way a language operates and combines words so as to express certain kinds of meaning, some of which cannot be conveyed adequately by vocabulary alone. These include the way ideas are grouped and related, and the purposes of utterances such as statement, question, request, etc. Grammar may also serve to express time relations, singular or plural distinctions and many other aspects of meaning. There are rules which govern how words have to be manipulated and organized so as to express these meanings such as when a competent speaker of the language will be able to apply these rules so as to convey his or her chosen meaning effectively and acceptably.

Moreover, grammar may speak even louder and more insistently than those of its denotation; most of the connotations carry a negative overtone, and yet many of the connotations are based on misunderstandings of the basic definitions of the word. Developing an awareness of the multiple connotations associated with the subject of grammar may help English teachers to understand students' potential aversion to studying grammar, as well as their own difficulties or confusions about the subject (Allen, 2013).

Furthermore, Burns (2009) says that grammar is essentially about the systems and patterns people use to select and combine word. By studying grammar people come to recognize the structure and regularity which is the foundation of language and people gain the tools to talk about the language system.

Similarly, Mellish and Ritchie (2008) articulate that in developing a grammar, one has to devise a suitable set of grammatical categories to classify the words and other constituents which may occur. It is important to understand that the mnemonic names given to these categories are essentially arbitrary, as it is the way that the labels are used in the rules and in the lexicon that gives significance to them.

Algeo and Pyles (2010) outline that grammar is sometimes defined as everything in a language that can be stated in general rules, and lexis as everything that is unpredictable. But that is not quite true. Certain combinations of words, called collocations, are more or less predictable.

Additionally, Kirkham (2010) summarizes grammar, at its core, as the rules of language. But how these rules are imagined and what these rules encompass can vary greatly from definition to definition. As a result, the common understanding of grammar differs in subtle but important ways from the linguistic sense of the term.

In the same way, Richards (2016) discloses that grammar is the system of rules used to create sentences refers to the knowledge of parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses and syntactic structures used to create grammatically well-formed sentences in English. The rules for constructing grammatically correct sentences belong to sentence grammar.

According to Nassaji and Fotos (2011), grammatical competence is the speakers' knowledge of the forms and meanings that exist in grammar, and a theoretical knowledge of how to use them. This type of knowledge is

reflected in the grammar rules. In other words, competence is in the head. Tasks that are sentence-based typically develop the grammatical competence.

Likewise, Eisenmann and Summer (2012) state that not only has grammatical competence focus long been considered a necessary part of language instruction; it has also even to this day often been considered a sufficient condition for successful language learning. In formal grammar teaching, the classroom contents are typically organized mainly based on analysis of language forms, rather than language functions and real communication. The language is often divided into parts and taught in isolation.

However, Larsen-Freeman (2010) explains that grammatical competence has a different starting point than formal grammar, and the focus is mainly on social interactions, communication and why some forms are more appropriate than others. Some say that language is not considered to be a set of rules, since language used is important. This is somewhat problematic because grammar does have to do with rules and the structure of the language. It cannot be claimed that grammar is purely functional, although it has functions and these functions are of utmost importance.

Also, Ur (2009) defines grammatical competence as anything the learners are asked to do that produces a clear outcome and that the function of the task is simply to activate the learners in such a way as to get them to engage with the material to be practiced in an interesting and challenging way. Other terms used in relation to grammar tasks are exercise and activity. The term exercise often refers to the conventional textbook procedure, which focuses much on correct forms, and can be done correctly without much understanding and meaning. Furthermore, Chomsky (1965 as cited by Mojabi, 2014) elucidates that grammatical competence is defined as the ability to recognize and produce the distinctive grammatical structures of a language and to use them effectively in communication.

On the other hand, Hymes' (1972 as cited by Mojabi, 2014) view was thought to be more realistic wherein he defined grammatical competence as the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations, thus bringing the sociolinguistic perspective into Chomsky's linguistic view of competence.

Finally, Ellis (2007) explicates grammatical competence in relation to implicit and explicit knowledge. Ellis distinguishes two senses of grammatical difficulty: 1) the difficulty learners have in understanding a grammatical feature, and 2) the difficulty learners have in internalizing a grammatical feature so that the students are able to use it accurately in communication. Ellis further argues that the first sense of grammatical difficulty relates to explicit knowledge, while the second sense relates to implicit knowledge.

On Subject-Verb Agreement

Sullivan (2012) mentions that a single relationship lies at the heart of every sentence in the English language. Like an indivisible nucleus at the center of an atom, the subject-verb pair unifies the sentence. It can be surrounded by any number of modifying words, taking on new shades of meaning, but no matter how many adjectives, adverbs, and independent clauses become attached, the basic unit remains. The subject-verb pair guarantees that the sentence means something. Without this core, a sentence fragments and loses its power to speak. Indeed, a sentence only becomes complete when it contains at least a subject and a verb.

McLean (2013) further notes that agreement in speech and in writing refers to the proper grammatical match between words and phrases. Parts of sentences must agree, or correspond with other parts, in number, person, case, and gender. Because subjects and verbs are either singular or plural, the subject of a sentence and the verb of a sentence must agree with each other in number. That is, a singular subject belongs with a singular verb form, and a plural subject belongs with a plural verb form.

In addition, Mudrak (2014) reiterates that in English, the verb in a sentence must agree with the subject, specifically in terms of number. That is, singular subjects require singular verb forms and plural subjects require plural verb forms. In most cases, writers can easily choose the correct verb form for a subject. However, when other clauses intervene between the subject and the verb, errors in subject-verb agreement become more common. Errors sometimes occur because word processing software does not correctly identify the subject and suggests an incorrect verb form, so be alert as you write any important documents. In every sentence, it is important to identify the true subject and ensure that the verb agrees in number with that element and not another noun in the sentence.

Huda (2015) recaps in his blog that the subject of a sentence must agree with the verb form in that sentence. A singular subject must agree with a singular verb, and a plural subject must agree with a plural verb. Sometimes it can be hard to identify the subject of a sentence and it can be confusing to know whether to use the plural or singular form of the verb. Other times, people use conjunctions to join different subjects, plural and or singular, and that makes it unclear whether to use the plural or singular verb. To top it off, there are many exceptions to these guidelines.

Additionally, Rodriguez (2015) in Tafida & Okunade (2016) notes that the use of singular versus, plural verbs and correct subject-verb agreement are more abstract concepts and require more detailed explanations. Correct use of singular and plural verbs also depends on the writer's ability to correctly identify the subject of the sentence and to determine if the subject is singular or plural.

Lastly, Vaurula (2012) writes that even though subject-verb agreement is one of the basic features of the English grammar and has been referred to as a fairly simple or easy semantic feature, even advanced learners and sometimes also native speakers fail to use the feature correctly. This is especially the case with the 3rd person singular –s that is acquired fairly late among the different morphemes studied in English as a second language. Grammatical morphemes of English emerge in learner language at different times, and the rates at which they are mastered vary greatly. When it comes to subject-verb agreement, the plural noun –s is acquired much earlier than the 3rd person singular –s and, consequently, there have been various attempts at trying to explain the phenomenon. Therefore, learning plural nouns have more meaning to learners than learning to inflect verbs as the plurality conveys more meaning than adding a 3rd person singular –s to the verb.

On the Development of Learning Material

Patel (2017) emphasizes the significance of materials development in language program. According to her, teachers should not be discouraged if textbooks are not available as long as they have the objectives of the teaching-learning process or they are familiar with the needs of the learners because they can develop their own materials to achieve their objectives. However, she advises that materials that are appropriate for a particular class need to have an underlying instructional philosophy, approach, method and technique which suit the needs of both the students and teachers.

Similarly, Kellough (2009) states that the detailed planning for teaching and learning is carried out for several reasons, but the most important one is to ensure curriculum coherence. The workbook or learning material in particular, serves as an agenda for the teacher, a helpful aid for substitute teachers and a useful record for use in the future when teaching similar lessons and classes. Further, it provides information on the quality of teaching and learning, and what the teacher and students could do to improve the standard of their performance.

Tomlinson (2016) pioneered an MA course in materials development in 1993. According to him, with the increase in the recognition of the importance of materials development, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of universities delivering MA courses and modules on materials development and in the number of PhD students researching aspects of materials development. And it is now recognized as one of the most important undertakings in applied research. According to Tomlinson (1998) (as mentioned in Patel 2017), materials development refers to anything which is done by writers, teachers or learners to provide sources of language input in ways which maximize the likelihood of intake.

On Conditions affecting Grammatical Competence

According to Arcelo (2003) found that the Philippines is very accommodating of female students wherein 59.03 percent of enrollees in public higher education was female during the years 1996-1997.

Torres (2011) as cited by Few (2013) when he found out that the functional literacy rates of Filipino boys are lower than those of Filipino girls. It is also reported that boys' underachievement in primary education is driven by the following factors: parents' and teachers' low academic expectations for boys, the economic viability of working, passive classroom experience, gender bias and stereotyping.

In the ADB (Asian Development Bank) Economics Working Paper, Series No. 199 entitled "Education Outcomes in the Philippines", Dalisay et al (2010) highlights one of the reasons for having students who are over-

aged for their grade level in Elementary Education. Accordingly, parents postpone the enrollment of their children in primary education. The research found that: “[...] less than half of 6-year-old children are not yet in primary school. BEIS reported that 63.36% of Grade 1 enrollees are older than 6 years. Of these overaged Grade 1 pupils, 63.44% are 7 years old. Parents appear to postpone enrolment at 6 years old and tend to send their children to school when they get older.”

In 2012, the Department of Education released Department Order No. 16, s. 2012 implementing the Mother Tongue-Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). The implementing guidelines specify the standardization of the students’ mother tongue (first language used) as an instructional medium from Kindergarten level to Grades 1 to 3.

A 2016 published article by Rappler Philippines (Cepeda, 2016) highlights several expert analyses provided by World Bank lead economist Jan Ruthowski who took note of the reasons behind the poverty of many Filipinos’ despite those who are employed. The latter’s report noted that:

“[...] reducing in-work poverty is ... the main challenge facing the [Philippines’] labor sector.

... the cause of in-work poverty among Filipinos [is] the low learning capacity of the poor, [that is] 30% of workers who finished secondary education hold unskilled jobs and work as laborers.

... there is [also] a scarcity of productive, well-paying jobs, especially in the rural areas. The World Bank’s findings echo the data recently released by the Philippine Statistics Authority.” (Cepeda, 2016)

Moreover, Kohli (2014) stated in an online article that electronic books (ebooks), tablets and computer-based learning might be pervading elementary and middle schools throughout the United States of America, but college students are still old-school. She conducted a survey of about 1,200 students in 100 American colleges in October found that for almost every type of schoolwork, students prefer to use a book rather than a computer.

Finally, Sicat (2013) wrote in an article in a newspaper that learning from the books was thus a heavily and unnecessarily burdened activity. Waiting time to read in the library was long for many. Few students could afford to buy their own books. The learning process was more difficult just from the scarcity of supply of reading materials. Today, the photo copy machine, the internet and electronic editions of standard books are available more cheaply. The technology for copying is easily at hand.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed the descriptive-developmental method. Descriptive research is a useful mode of inquiry to know what is happening or to explain a phenomenon where people have conflicting beliefs about what is happening (Church, 2010). Descriptive research was engaged in this study for its requirement to describe the sets of data gathered from the respondents such as: sex, grade level, age, grade in English in the first and second grading, first language used, reading materials at home, types of media exposure, occupation of parents, parents’ educational attainment, monthly family income, and level of grammatical competence on subject-verb agreement.

Developmental approach is known as the systematic study of educational processes where the creation of knowledge, grounded in data systematically derived from practice, is of primary importance (Richey & Klein, 2005). It was used in this study in the development of the supplemental learning material to enhance the grammatical competence of the students along subject-verb agreement based on the findings of the study.

Inferential technique was also used in the study, specifically differential statistics. Social scientists examine the relationships between variables, and thereby to create inferential statistics, include but are not limited to: [linear regression analyses](#), [logistic regression analyses](#), [ANOVA](#), [correlation analyses](#), [structural equation modeling](#), and survival analysis (Waters, 2010).

Subjects of the Study

The subjects of the study included one-hundred seventy-seven (177) Junior High School students from Salud-San Eugenio National High School, Natividad, Pangasinan enrolled in the school year 2017-2018. Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents into the different grade levels.

Table 1

**Distribution of the Junior High School Students at Salud-San Eugenio
National High School, Natividad, Pangasinan**

Grade Level	Number of Students
GRADE 7	45
GRADE 8	49
GRADE 9	41
GRADE 10	42
Total	177

Total enumeration was used to determine the sample population since the entire class population for each grade level was employed as respondents.

Data-Gathering Instrument

For purposes of gathering data, specialized instruments were developed, adopted and modified. In the interest of transparency and clarity, the description and purpose of the instruments were adequately communicated to the student-respondents, the teachers and the school administration as these were indicated in the cover letter attached to the instruments. It also stipulates a confidentiality clause to ensure the security of data gathered.

Two (2) instruments were used in gathering the data, namely: 1) the questionnaire that gathered the profile of the students, and 2) the test on subject-verb agreement.

The questionnaire which is a profiling instrument was used to obtain the learner-profile variables namely, sex, grade level, age, grade in English in the first and second grading, first language used, reading materials at home, types of media exposure, occupation of parents, parents' educational attainment, and monthly family income. The design of this instrument was adopted from Crisostomo (2007), although certain changes were introduced.

The test on subject-verb agreement was prepared by the researcher. It is comprised of 200 multiple-choice questions, equally distributed to test students' mastery of the 20 rules of subject-verb agreement, i.e. 10 questions for each rule. The rules are as follows: 1) A verb agrees with its subject in number; 2) Collective nouns such as crew, faculty, class, committee, etc. usually take singular verbs when the speaker refers to the group as a whole or the group acts as a whole, but take the plural verbs when the speaker refers to the individual members or the members in the group act individually or separately; 3) Compound subjects joined by *and* generally require plural verb but compound subjects joined by *and* but referring to the same person or thing (or things regarded as one or complement to each other) requires singular form of verb; 4) The third person pronouns such as *he*, *she*, and *it* require singular form of verb. While the pronouns *I*, *we*, *you*, *they*, require plural; 5) Compound subjects joined by *or*, *either...or*, or *neither...nor* generally require verbs that agree with the subject nearer the verb; 6) Compound subjects composed of negative and affirmative parts require verbs which agree with the affirmative; 7) Compound subjects joined by *with*, *together with*, *as well as*, *including*, and other similar words require verb that agrees to the first subject; 8) Singular indefinite pronouns require singular verb. Singular indefinite pronouns

are: *each, every, everybody, everyone, everything, anybody, anyone, anything, somebody, someone, something, one, no one, nothing, nobody, either, and neither*. (9) Plural indefinite pronouns require plural verbs which include: *many, several, both, few, and other*; 10) *All, some, plenty, lots of* require singular or plural verbs depending on the number of the object of the *of-phrase*.

The next set of rules include 11) When *all* means the *only thing*, the verb required is singular; 12) If a fraction is used as subject, it requires singular or plural verbs depending on the number of *of-phrase*; 13) The expression *a number* when used to precede a subject requires a plural verb. While the expression *the number* when used to precede a subject requires a singular verb; 14) When relative pronoun is used as the subject of the dependent clause, a singular or plural verb is required depending on the number and person of its antecedent; 15) Demonstrative pronouns *this* and *that* require singular verb; while *these* and *those* require plural verbs; 16) The title of a book, magazine, or movie is considered singular and therefore requires singular verb; 17) When *there* is used as an expletive, it requires either a singular or plural verb depending on the subjects that follow the verb; 18) Expressions of amount or quality preceding plural nouns referring to *money, time* or *distance* are generally considered as singular and therefore require singular verbs; 19) The verb agrees with the subject, not the phrase that follows it; and 20) Nouns plural in form but singular in meaning take singular verbs.

The foregoing selected rules were lifted from the module “Let’s Learn All About Subject and Verb Agreement” (Balili, 2012). Prior to administering the instrument to the students, it was subjected to content-validation that employed the expert evaluation of English language teachers with a considerable length of service in teaching. These included Head Teacher, Master Teachers and regular teachers (i.e. with the rank of Teacher III).

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to administering the data-gathering instruments, permission was officially sought from the Principal of the research locale. The concerned teachers handling the students were tapped of their assistance in scheduling the sessions for the data-gathering procedure. The profiling questionnaire was initially administered, followed by the conduct of the test.

To ensure the reliability of the data obtained, the researcher personally administered the instruments to the students and carefully explained the directions. All data were carefully checked, recorded, tallied, tabulated and analyzed using spread sheets.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Various modes of data treatment were employed for data analysis corresponding to the requirements in each of the research problems.

For problem number 1 (demographic profile), each of the learner-profile variables were recorded, tabulated and noted of their frequency counts and percentage.

The students’ grades in first and second quarters were qualified using the standard descriptive equivalents of the ratings based on School Form 5 Report on Promotion and Learning Progress and Achievement under DepEd Order 8, s. 2015. This rubric is presented below:

Descriptions	Grading Scale	Remarks
Outstanding	90 – 100	<i>Passed</i>
Very Satisfactory	85 – 89	<i>Passed</i>
Satisfactory	80 – 84	<i>Passed</i>
Fairly Satisfactory	75 – 79	<i>Passed</i>
Did Not Meet Expectations	Below 75	<i>Failed</i>

For problem number 2 (level of grammatical competence of students along subject-verb agreement), data on the students’ level of grammatical competence on subject-verb agreement were described using mean score and mean percentage score. The results were conveyed in terms of Mean Percentage Score (MPS) and its descriptive

equivalent as adopted from DepEd Memorandum no. 160 series of 2012 which is shown below:

Weight	Mean Percentage Score	Descriptive Equivalent
1	96-100%	Mastered
2	86-95%	Closely Approximating Mastery
3	66-85%	Moving Towards Mastery
4	34-65%	Average
5	15-33%	Low
6	5-14%	Very Low
7	0-4%	Absolutely No Mastery

For problem number 3 (relationship between students' level of grammatical competence and their profile variable), Chi-square test for independence was employed to establish significant relationship or association between the students' level of grammatical competence and their profile variables. Specifically, for effect size, Cramers V and Phi value was utilized.

For problem number 4 (suggested learning materials to enhance students' grammatical competence in subject-verb agreement), the merits of the research findings were extracted and isolated for the development of a supplemental learning material that will enhance the grammatical competence of the students along subject-verb agreement.

Findings and Discussion

Socio-Demographic and Academic Profile of the Junior High School Students

The research involved the participation of 177 Junior High School students. There are many male students (52 percent) than female students (48 percent). They are Grade 7 students (25.4 percent), Grade 8 students (27.7 percent), Grade 9 students (23.2 percent) and Grade 10 students (23.7 percent). Their ages vary across 12 to 19-year-olds with larger fractions of students aged 13-16 (84.7 percent). In addition, the grades obtained by the students in the first and second quarters range across "Did Not Meet Expectations" to "Outstanding" and the average grades in both quarters got "Satisfactory" ratings (80.61 / 80.98).

Majority of the students' (74.6 percent) reported "Iloko" to be their first language used. Majority of the students have access to "textbooks" (80.7 percent), "newspapers" (68.9 percent), "magazines" (57.6 percent), "online reading materials" (51.4 percent) and "novels" (48.6 percent) in their respective homes. The students are also exposed to varied media types such as "books" and "television" (98.9 percent), "radio" (93.8 percent), "internet" (93.2 percent), "newspapers" (81.4 percent), and "magazines" (67.2 percent).

The occupations of the students' parents range across blue collar and professional services and industries. Majority of the students' fathers are employed as "skilled agricultural / forestry / fishery workers" (57.1 percent), while the rest are employed in "crafts and trades" (9.0 percent), "service and sales" (7.3 percent), "elementary occupations" (6.2 percent), "plant and machine operations / assembly" (4.0 percent), "management" (1.1 percent), and "professional services" (1.1 percent). Some of the students' fathers are househusband/deceased (9.6 percent). On the other hand, the occupations of the students' mothers also vary, to include employments in "service and sales" (15.3 percent), "agricultural, forestry and fishery skills industries" (15.3 percent), "elementary occupations" (6.8 percent), "clerical positions" (1.7 percent), "crafts and trades" (1.7 percent), and "management" (0.6 percent). Majority of the students' mothers are either housewives or deceased (58.8 percent).

The students' parents have relatively at par highest educational attainment. Majority of the students' fathers are High School graduate (57.6 percent), while the rest of the students' fathers are College graduate (15.8 percent), High School undergraduate (11.9 percent), College undergraduate (5.6 percent), Elementary School graduate (7.3 percent), and Elementary School undergraduate (1.7 percent). On the other hand, majority of the students' mothers are High School graduate (53.1 percent), while the rest are College undergraduate (12.4 percent), College graduate (14.7 percent), High School undergraduate (8.5 percent), Elementary School graduate (7.9 percent), and Elementary School undergraduate (3.4 percent).

Finally, majority of the students belong to families having the lowest income range, P7,890 and below (55.4 percent). Smaller fractions of the students belong to families with relatively higher income ranges namely,

P7,891 to P15,780 (28.2 percent), P15,781 to P31,560 (13 percent), P31,560 to P78,900 (2.3 percent), and P78,901 to P118,350 (1.1 percent).

Level of Grammatical Competence of the Junior High School Students

The great majority of the students (90.4 percent) were found to have “Average” grammatical competence in the area of subject-verb agreement. Only a few number of students (9.6 percent) have reached the level “Moving towards Mastery”.

Relationship between the Students’ profile Variables and their Grammatical Competence

Across the relationship of profile variables with the students’ level of grammatical competence, the results show that only a few variables are significantly related to grammatical competence. The variables include “sex” (3.87 / 0.05), grades in English in the 1st and 2nd grading period (42.492 / 0.000 and 32.227 / 0.000) “monthly family income” (10.867 / 0.028), and “online reading materials” (7.807 / 0.007). Moreover, based on the computed effect size, “monthly family income” has a medium or typical effect, while the other three significant variables have small effect. Level of significance is set at 0.05.

Conclusions

Based on the merits of the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The Junior High School students are mostly male; are teenagers; have satisfactory grades; speak Iloko; have textbooks at home; and are exposed to diverse media types. The parents’ occupation range across blue collar and professional services and industries; are mostly High School Graduates; and with lowest level of monthly income.
2. The level of grammatical competence of the Junior High School students is Average.
3. In the context of the students’ characteristics, the students’ sex, grade, monthly family income, and access to online reading materials significantly relate to their grammatical competence.
4. The supplemental learning material for the Junior High School students to enhance their grammatical competence was based from the research findings to cater to their specific needs and characteristics drawn from their socio-demographic and academic variables, the level of their grammatical competence, and variables that signify to their grammatical competence.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. Teachers and administrators should provide the students varied reading and learning materials on subject-verb agreement to enhance their grammatical competence;
2. Teachers should conduct home visitations to further understand the real situations and needs of the students which affect their academic performance;
3. Teachers should raise the level of grammatical competence of the students in the area of subject-verb agreement by being aware to the findings of this study.

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