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Foreword

The Asian EFL Journal May 2019, Issue 21 Volume 3 contains six articles either by teachers of English as a Foreign Language. These six articles include topics that deal with classroom practices, pedagogical procedures, and language policy which are crucial in in-depth review of EFL trends and issues in an Asian context.

McCarthy and Armstrong, in *Peer-Assisted Learning: Revisiting the Dyadic Interaction Process in L2 Academic Writing*, consider the efficacy of Peer-assisted Learning (PAL) as a tool in helping learners to cope with the challenges in Second Language (L2) Academic Writing (AW) through feedbacking. McCarthy and Armstrong underscore the importance of PAL in EFL classes in helping students develop higher-order thinking skills as well as deeper knowledge of the AW process as it provides great potential for collaborative learning and development of metacognitive culture in an L2 classroom.

Kojima, Ishii, Iwasaki, and Harada, in *Metadiscourse in Japanese EFL Learners' Argumentative Essays: Applying the Interpersonal Model*, report their investigation on the use of metadiscourse among Japanese EFL learners. Using qualitative analysis, the authors compared the use of metadiscourse in the L2 learners' essays to those written by native speakers of English. Their findings suggest that that the Japanese EFL learners and participants lack understanding in the conventions in English academic writing. Hence, teachers need to teach the EFL learners about transitions, engagement markers, and hedges in a more explicit manner by showing them common errors and how to correct them.

Chen, in *The Relationship between Vocabulary Knowledge and Use of Chinese Tertiary Learners*, explores the use of collocation and lexical variation in learner writing from three levels of Chinese tertiary learners with 135 participants. In the study, the knowledge of collocations was measured in a multiple-choice format and the lexical variation in their written outputs to explore the correlation between receptive knowledge of collocations and the quality of lexical use in writing and the correlation between exposure to English outside classroom and the quality of lexical forms in writing. The findings in the study indicate that the correlation between the receptive knowledge of collocations and lexical variation is quite weak just as there are very weak correlations between the exposure

to English outside classrooms and lexical variation in writing. With weak correlation among the research variables in the study, the author stresses that both EFL learners and teachers need to consider the importance of language use through incidental learning.

Sung and McNeil, in *Professional Development Experiences in Reading Comprehension Instruction: L2 Teacher Reactions to Strategic Approaches in South Korea*, present their analysis of the data from a teacher development program and assess reading comprehension strategies in a Korean educational context based on the reflective writings of 87 EFL teachers who registered for TESOL graduate programs in South Korea. The study, as reported by the authors, has “pedagogical implications in terms of both teacher education and practical application in class.” These implications include the need for teacher educators to design carefully professional development programs based on teachers’ needs and past experiences in an EFL, the need to consider both dimensions of reading instruction, and external factors — like national education policy — that are beyond the teachers’ control.

Lu, in “*You Should Force Us to Talk.*”—*Symbolic Power, National Rhetoric, and Oral English in China*, examines the hegemonic power of English on local educational and language policies. Using focus group and interview with teachers and students, the author had found the symbolic power of spoken English “through both top-down educational policies and bottom-up complicit embracement of those policies by the teachers and the students.” Lu believes that the results of the study have important implications for educational policy makers in China and those in other countries where English is also used as a foreign language.

Local as they seem to appear, the six articles may have far reaching implications for practices and policies in EFL.

Also, this issue has two book reviews: (1) *Putting CLIL into Practice* and (2) *Unlocking English Learners’ Potential*. In the first book review, Hadingham reviews the pedagogical efficacy of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). In the second, Kohnne tackles the importance of work collaboration among teachers in optimizing varied learning opportunities in contexts.

The contributors, reviewers, and editors of this issue of the Asian EFL are pleased to offer some fresh insights to the readers in their continued pursuit in making English accessible to their learners.

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Production Editor of AEJ May 2019
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Peer-Assisted Learning: Revisiting the Dyadic Interaction Process in L2 Academic Writing

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Bioprofile

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Abstract

Peer-assisted learning (PAL) is a form of collaborative learning which is an effective method of helping learners to give feedback in Second Language (L2) Academic Writing (AW) courses; however, there are still many teachers today who do not implement this approach for various reasons. With fewer students, a student-centered approach is ideal. In larger classes however, an alternative approach might be required to maintain a similar amount of feedback without sacrificing quality. This research proposes PAL as a viable alternative for large AW classes, in helping to facilitate meaningful interaction and improve critical thinking skills through deep engagement with writing tasks. 291 students, across nine

faculties, participated in the study. Being able to receive ongoing and detailed feedback was essential in order for students to fully acquire the range of skills and knowledge needed to participate effectively in later advanced writing and research courses. A survey was administered to students to determine which method of feedback was most beneficial in helping students to improve writing: teacher-feedback solely or a blend of PAL with in-class teacher instruction. Results showed that 80% of students felt more engaged with the writing process through the PAL system with regard to pedagogic, academic, affective, cognitive, metacognitive, and social factors. The research concludes that there is great potential for collaborative learning in higher education institutions in the L2 context depending on various factors, such as the learner's language skills as well as motivational levels of both the teacher and learner.

Keywords: Peer-Assisted Learning, Collaborative Learning, L2 Academic Writing, TEFL/TESL

Introduction

There has been a consistent movement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Japan over the past three decades toward a more student-focused classroom as universities seek to increase the level of students' communicative competence and "independent-mindedness" (McCarthy, 2017). In Japanese tertiary institutions, Second Language (L2) Academic Writing (AW) courses are often assessed solely by the teacher with students completing writing assignments individually. Providing a learning context which encourages collaborative feedback through dyadic interaction is atypical among teachers, even though such an approach can help students take more ownership of the learning process, thereby increasing developmental awareness.

Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) is a form of collaborative learning in which students learn *with* and *from* each other (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2013). In essence, PAL involves the sharing of knowledge in mutually beneficially ways through various activities such as discussions, advising, project-work or tutoring. The contemporary concept of collaborative learning is deeply rooted in sociocultural theory (see Vygotsky, 1978; Dillenbourg, 1999; Slavkov, 2015) which highlights how learning is mediated through experience with peers. It has gained momentum within higher education institutions with its focus on personality development, group dynamics, interdependence and the development of cognitive (such as problem solving, decision making and knowledge elicitation) and metacognitive (such as

reflection and higher-order thinking) mechanisms. Boud (2001) essentially describes PAL as a way of moving beyond independent learning to interdependent learning.

In essence, today's concept of collaborative learning describes a kind of social didactic contract between peers (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The idea is that a pair of non-professional collaborators from a similar social grouping engages in a common task in which each individual works with and is accountable to each other. Smith and MacGregor's (1992) assumptions of dyadic interaction in the classroom were the main underlying principles of this research:

1. Learning is an active process whereby students assimilate information and relate new knowledge to prior knowledge
2. Learning requires a challenge that opens the door for active engagement with peers
3. Learners benefit when exposed to diverse viewpoints
4. Learning flourishes in a social environment
5. Learners are challenged socially and emotionally, thereby creating their own unique conceptual framework

Implicit in the process is that learning is active, and that there is a shift in learning from a teacher-centered to a more student-centered model of learning. This kind of flipped classroom seemed to be the ideal environment for the L2 AW classroom. Figure 1 illustrates the expected placement of collaborative instruction within the revised course principles:

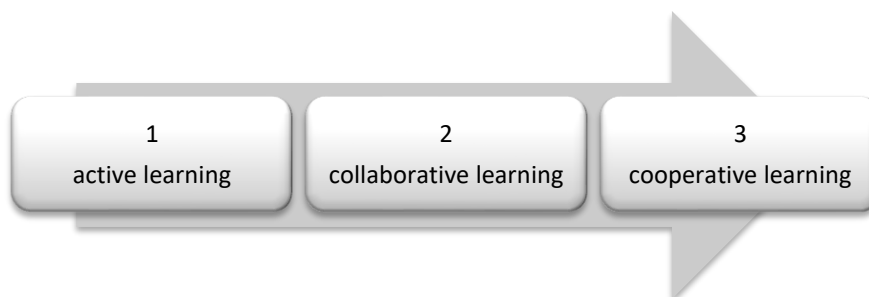


Figure 1. Developmental stages in the AW curriculum

Active learning as the first stage, saw students actively engaged with the assigned task. Collaborative learning as the second stage, saw students actively engaged with each other within the learning process. Cooperative learning as the third stage, saw students as having complete ownership of their learning along with collaborating with peers. The students in this study were considered to be at Stage 2 in their developmental progress.

In the L2 AW classroom in particular, collaborative learning practices have received considerably more notice in recent years (see for example, Storch, 2005, 2009; Arnold,

Ducate & Kost, 2009; Kessler, 2009; Elola & Oskoz, 2010; Kessler & Bikowski, 2010, 2012). It has been recognized widely as contributing in most studies to higher quality and increased ownership in writing (Storch, 2005); attention to pedagogical factors, particularly content, organization, and vocabulary (Shehadeh, 2011); increased opportunities of self-discovery and self-awareness (Hyland, 2003, 2010); analytical and critical reading and writing skills (Storch, 2005; Webb, et al., 2014) as well as providing students with real-time, meaningful and detailed feedback as formative assessment at both the local and global feedback levels (Li, 2013; Babaii & Adeh, 2019). Despite its popularity however, the number of teachers implementing PAL in L2 classrooms continues to remain low (Miao, Badger, & Zhen, 2006; Min, 2006). In the Japanese context, this is possibly due to resistance to independent or interdependent learning from students due to the traditional teacher-centered system of education experienced through K-12, the teacher's concern of student inexperience and inaccuracies in peer-editing, issues of fairness in the classroom, affective factors or a lack of training in how to implement PAL in the L2 classroom.

This research proposes PAL as a viable alternative for helping facilitate meaningful interaction and improve critical thinking skills through deep engagement with writing tasks. Two further areas of significance for conducting this study are related primarily to the situational context. First, it was conducted at a Japanese national university with participants from nine non-English majoring faculties (Engineering, Law, Economics, Sciences, Medicine, Design, 21st Century, Agriculture and Education) with varying language proficiencies. Most studies of this nature in Japan have been conducted at private or national universities on a small scale or in liberal arts universities with students who major or have a higher proficiency in English (see for example Hosack, 2003; Kondo, 2004; Yakame, 2005; Wakabayashi, 2008; Mulligan, 2011; Ruegg, 2015). Second, class sizes at this university were larger than the typical university L2 AW classrooms of 20-25 students, with teachers teaching an average of 30 students. Due to cutbacks in budget, hiring of less teachers, the increasingly large student numbers in classes and more demands being placed on teachers each year to produce students who were able to communicate in global contexts, new and innovative initiatives needed to be developed to meet administrative and institutional expectations.

Conducting this study was thus essential at this time for both teachers and students. For teachers, PAL aimed to develop a collaborative classroom culture and reduce workload. As collaborative learning has been shown to be a realistic approach for teachers to effectively manage large class sizes (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010), it was considered to be appropriate. For

students, it was expected that those who participated in the PAL process would achieve greater metacognitive awareness by activating prior L2 knowledge, sharing current micro and macro levels of knowledge and experiences through meaningful interaction, assuming more responsibility for their learning and becoming more independent-minded and critical in their approach to learning. Figure 2 illustrates the underlying concept behind the PAL approach.

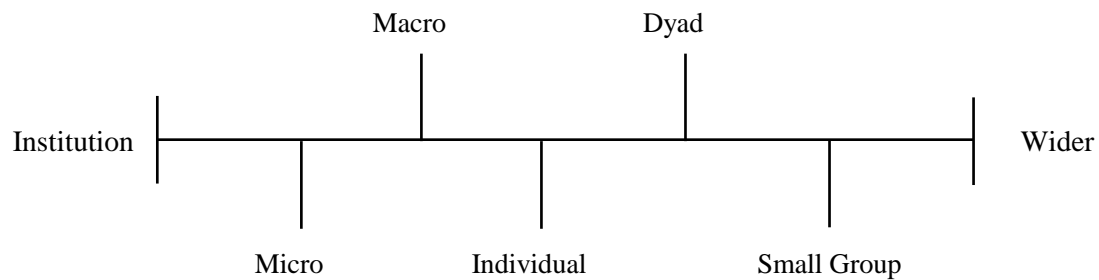


Figure 2. Continuum of micro and macro levels of social interaction

Contextual Situation

This study was carried out over two years with 261 freshman students at a national university in Japan. Participants in this study made up about 15% of the total number of students taking all freshmen AW class, so the researchers were able to gain feedback from a wide cross-section of students. Students majored in nine different faculties and had one mandatory 90-minute AW class per week. This meant, except for those with advanced levels of English, lack of motivation or purposeful study goals was a substantial challenge for many students who simply did enough to gain the credit. For teachers who had to struggle with how to sustain motivation for a course many students deemed unimportant, this was also a challenge. Teacher input, for the most part, was the traditional teacher-centered method of classroom management with little emphasis on dyadic interaction between students.

Research Design

The questions this research sought to answer were:

- (1) What are current perceptions of PAL among teachers?
- (2) Is a PAL approach suitable for large classes?
- (3) What are student perceptions of utilizing a dyadic interactive approach to writing through PAL?

- (4) Which type of instruction-type do students prefer, traditional teacher-centered, PAL or a combination of both?

Methodologically, four steps were taken to answer research questions: 1. Interviews, 2. Implementation of the PAL program, 3. Student observation/Teacher reflection and 4. Post-PAL survey.

1. Pre-PAL Interviews

An interview was conducted with AW teachers to ascertain whether they were using a PAL approach in class or not, and their reasons. The current AW curriculum required students to produce a well-organized, coherent three to five paragraph essay using a process approach. It was found that the teaching approach varied, according to teaching style, level of experience and number of classes being taught. Although the idea of PAL was fully supported by teachers, one teacher saying that is a “truly integral part of any interactive learning,” almost all teachers admitted to utilizing PAL “just a little” or “only once after returning first drafts.” For these teachers, there was interest in PAL, but no clear understanding of how to approach it in a way that was logistically viable, could motivate students and help them to be more open and communicative. Table 1 is a representation of the common reasons why most teachers resisted peer editing. These were attributed mainly to time, attitude, difficulty and cultural factors:

Table 1
Reasons for Not Implementing a PAL Approach

<i>Time</i>	“It takes away from speaking time which the students need. They can do writing for homework” “Only once, a bit after they have completed one draft”
<i>Attitude</i>	“Students don’t communicate”
<i>Difficulty</i>	“It’s just so hard!”
<i>Culture</i>	“Students I’ve taught in the United States are more open and talkative, so it works well. Japanese students are quite hesitant”

2. Implementation of PAL

PAL was introduced to 261 students to identify whether an alternative system could be adopted to increase learner ownership and help reduce the teacher’s workload. As each class had additional 6-8 students, the traditional method of process writing employed at the university had become excessively time-consuming, contributing to an even heavier work burden and increased stress levels. That is, students were expected to prepare three drafts of

a 5-paragraph, 800-1,000-word essay, which had to be checked by the teacher and returned in a timely manner. Having 4-5 classes of 30 students on average meant giving feedback on about 140 essays three times during this period. Each essay took 3-5 minutes of concentrated effort (about 2-3 hours per class), depending on errors found in formatting, content, syntax, lexis and mechanics. The increase in student numbers, in many cases, thus resulted in less and often reduced quality feedback. Added to the challenge was the realization that some students resubmitted the essay with the same mistakes, which led to further frustration.

In practice, it was explained to students, that having a well-structured, coherent essay was valued at 60% of their grade, which was the bulk of student assessment. Students were presented with model essays for comparative analysis, and then given self-directed instruction on correct formatting and organization. Specific grammar weaknesses which consistently appeared in previous writing assignments were addressed throughout the semester, in addition to the use of appropriate lexis, cohesiveness, appropriate citations and finally the mechanics of writing. The teacher's evaluation checklist was given to students at the start of the course to encourage them to participate in self-directed learning monitoring activities before collaborating with partners. This also ensured that students had the necessary vocabulary for effective communication as well as providing guidance for PAL discussions. Students were asked to read each other's writing in a "reading round" activity and then provide feedback on peers' essays. Students were shown real examples of constructive criticism written in the L1 and L2 on other students' writing in order to understand how to give effective feedback. Whenever students encountered a problem that they could not solve between themselves, teacher consultation was offered to assist with the problem. Thus, PAL aimed to teach students to be more responsible for their learning by encouraging them to be more active, think more critically about their writing without expecting all instruction to come from the teacher, give guidance to their best ability and ask for help when needed. As a motivational factor, an additional bonus was given to students who showed improvement from the first to final drafts. The teacher would only give bonus points however, to students who used a highlighter on the revised drafts showing changes made. This was done to prevent students from resubmitting the previously submitted essay without making any changes. Figure 3 illustrates the main differences between the traditional system and the newly implemented PAL system.

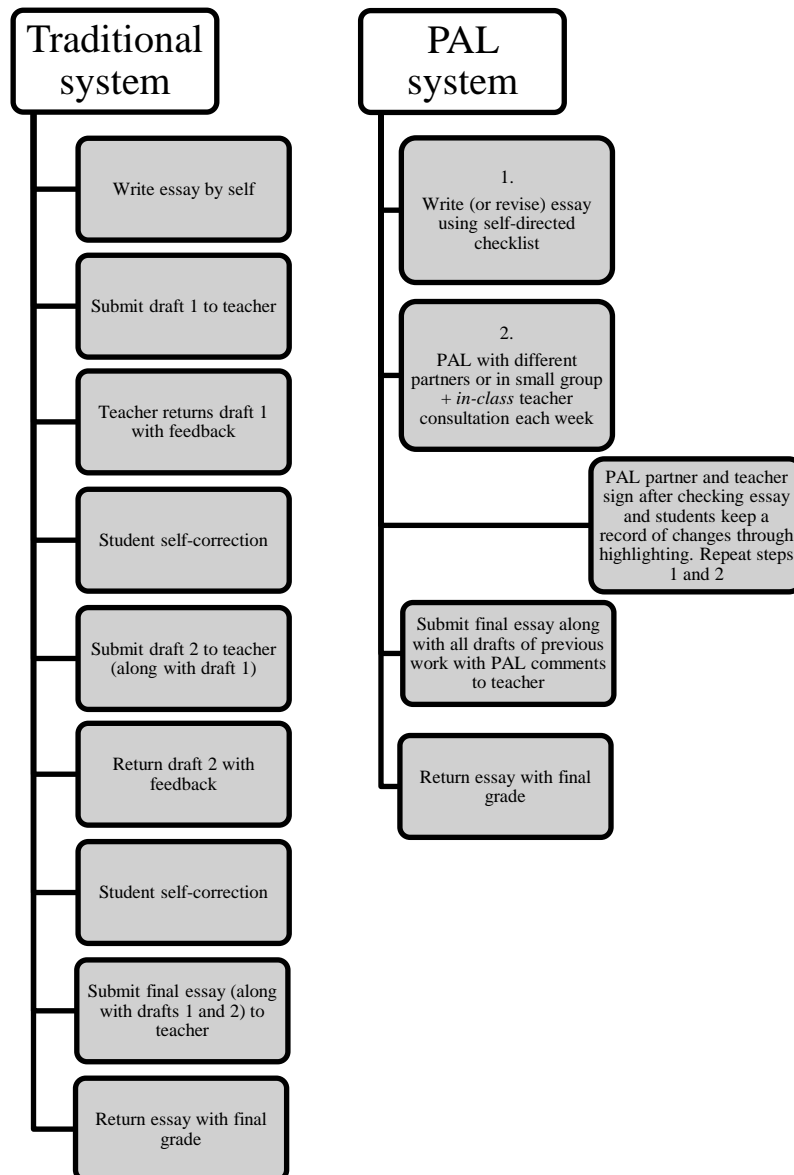


Figure 3. Comparison of traditional and PAL approaches employed in the AW class

3. Observations and Teacher Reflection

Non-obtrusive observation was done during lessons to collect qualitative data. Data collection over the 15-week semester involved detailed observation of the students as they were engaged in peer-review activities. The researcher used a covert approach in which the participants were unaware of the observation in order to minimize any changes to their behavior. It was thought that a voice recorder would be too intrusive and cause anxiety. Thus, extensive and detailed notes were made in a diary for each class to identify strategies commonly used when giving feedback. Notes were made up of verbatim and paraphrased

commentary of the students in their L1 (when possible) and L2; non-verbal language such as gestures and facial expressions; and the researchers' reflective comments.

Students were given the option to communicate in either their L1 or L2 when using the checklist as guidance. The teacher however encouraged use of the L2 to increase communicative competence. Use of L2 was observed to varying degrees. Observational data extracted from the teacher diaries found that students who had difficulty in sustaining discussions in English used the English terminology from the checklist, the instructor's verbal instructions used frequently during class, and photos taken of the visual diagrams drawn on the whiteboard and/or the teacher's instructional PowerPoint slides. This was, at times, interspersed with the L1 for meaningful communication. The higher-proficiency students used various strategies, such as comparative analysis with essay examples in the textbook and reviewing class worksheets to review the important points in each category on the checklist. Table 2 offers a brief example of PAL dialogic exchanges.

Table 2
Example of Dialogic Interactions

Example	Lower-proficiency	Higher-proficiency
1	<i>(L2: reading from class handout)</i> A: What is this? B: A hook. You can use a question or a...a quotation...	<i>(L2: Talking about essay content)</i> A: Is important point, biology? B: No. Interesting. For example, people like math better because..." A: eh? <i>Kore wa</i> B: Speak only in English! (laughter)
2	<i>(L1: translation mine)</i> "Let s read together." (students read paperaloud)	<i>(L2: Talking about structure)</i> A: Should I give an example? B: Yes"

This demonstrates that with sufficient guidance and scaffolding, students are able to communicate meaningfully while assisting each other.

4. Post-PAL Open-ended Survey

A survey was used to obtain quantitative data post-PAL. The following questions were asked:

1. Was PAL useful for you? If yes, how? If no, what were the difficulties you experienced?
2. In future AW classes, which system would you prefer: teacher checks, PAL or a combination of both? Please explain.

The survey was administered through *surveymonkey.com*. The researchers decided that an open-ended survey would generate data, which more accurately reflected student voices in the situational context and offer a rich source of qualitative data. The survey data was subsequently downloaded and reviewed separately by the two researchers to identify common categories through a grounded theory approach.

Survey Data Analysis

Using Glaser's (1992) grounded theory approach, the data was first coded separately and then examined collaboratively to ensure that categories were agreed upon. Notes were taken throughout the entire process to show relationships inductively as they emerged. Following this, a theory was generated. Initial results showed that approximately 80% of students found PAL to be effective in reducing stress and enhancing the classroom environment. Analysis of survey data yielded six main factors in which students found PAL beneficial:

1. Pedagogic (teacher; classroom)
2. Academic (relating to language skills)
3. Affective (motivation; confidence; anxiety)
4. Cognitive (analyzing/reasoning)
5. Metacognitive (reflection, problem-solving, awareness, discovery)
6. Social (friends, group members)

Student comments were then put into the relevant categories. Table 3 is the breakdown of the collected survey data and the number of references from the 261 participants.

The survey resulted in two general conclusions. First, interactional feedback offered comprehensible feedback as learners were able to understand class material more quickly, deeply and effectively than by solely a teacher-centered method; and second, even though learners were faced with affective issues and challenged by a lack of perceived L2 language weaknesses, they positively reported on the benefits of a PAL system. The most revealing result from student feedback was the importance of the interactive process in the classroom, as their social interaction seemed to work as a catalyst in activating higher-order thinking processes. That is, students, through dialogue, became more aware of errors and were able to solve problems with less teacher assistance. In most cases, this caused students to feel more comfortable about asking for help which resulted in an enhancement of writing ability. Salient points from each category follow.

Table 3
Benefits of PAL

Factors	Student references	Reference
Pedagogic (teacher; classroom)	1. Teacher explanation for childish mistakes wastes time and reduces teacher burden.	20
	2. It's a good use of class time.	3
	3. It is an innovative system.	3
Academic (relating to language skills)	1. It enhances my academic writing ability.	37
	2. I can improve my speaking ability.	11
	3. I can learn new vocabulary and phrases and improve spelling and grammar.	4
	4. I can improve my reading ability.	3
	5. I can understand my friend's ability.	2
Affective (motivation; confidence; anxiety)	1. It is easier/less stressful to ask friends than the teacher about mistakes.	26
	2. It's fun! The class is active I do not feel sleepy.	22
	3. I am motivated to do better work and be like my friends. I feel more confident.	12
	4. I enjoy one-to-one teaching.	8
	5. I am ashamed to hand in a bad essay. Editing helps to improve the essay before giving the teacher.	6
Cognitive (analyzing / reasoning)	1. I can improve editing skills.	5
	2. I can ask more academic questions to the teacher or student.	5
	3. I can imitate good writing.	1
Metacognitive (reflection, problem- solving, awareness, self- management)	1. I can realize my own mistakes and solve problems.	24
	2. I can learn from other students' writing (good writing and mistakes).	21
	3. I can analyze if my essay is good or not good and improve my own writing by myself.	20
	4. Teaching others and listening, I can understand the important points of an essay (structure/how to write/goals).	20
	5. I can develop a capacity for thinking / I can use my mind more.	18
	6. Students can learn more independently.	9
	7. I am more careful about my writing.	8
	8. I notice how to fix my essay by finding mistakes in another student's essay.	7
	9. We can understand our regular mistakes.	3
	10. We can continue learning outside the classroom (with checklists).	2
Social (friends, group members)	1. Discussion with friends develops general English abilities.	45
	2. Friends can pick up mistakes I miss (and opposite).	44
	3. I enjoy communicating and working with friends.	39
	4. I can get another student's opinion and advice.	24
	5. I can share information/ideas about the topic and get different viewpoints.	23
	6. Problems are resolved more quickly with friends.	12
	7. I can get extra feedback from more than just the teacher.	10
	8. I can read other students' essays.	8
	9. I can get to know classmates better and deepen friendships.	4
	10. I enjoy fighting/debating with friends.	3

Pedagogic factors: Within pedagogic factors, the main comment from students was that simple mistakes were a waste of the teacher's time and PAL helped to reduce the teacher's burden. This comment is atypical in this type of study, as most research tends to comment on factors related to benefits to students. However, it should be noted that although peer feedback may indeed reduce the teacher's editing or feedback workload, preparation time as well as in- and out-of-class consultation time increases (Deni, 2011).

Academic factors: As a result of sharing ideas, students commented on general gains in all language skills. Student however reported language gains, most significantly in their writing and speaking skills, less so with lexis and syntax. For students who communicated in the L2, they saw major improvements in purposeful communication skills. This is in line with research such as Ellis (1997), Hansen and Lui (2005) and Storch (2005) in which students' revisions of structure and content became superior after being introduced to PAL.

Affective factors: Although there are many studies in the L1 AW classroom, which proclaim the affective benefits of peer-review, L2 studies especially in the Asian context have received mixed findings (Zhang, 1995). However, by shaping the L2 learning process through social interaction, an active, positive learning environment was created. This finding is similar to Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003. Most of the remarks made by participants about PAL were positive in that they found it easier to communicate with other students than the (native) teacher. Thus, the class became more active, they responded that they felt less sleepy (especially after lunch), and finally, they felt increased levels of confidence as they became more deeply connected with the learning process. Some students even expressed a desire to be more like their friends. A few students felt anxiety showing their essay to other students. For these students who preferred to work independently, the instructor allowed them to do what they felt comfortable with. As part of constructing a non-threatening learning environment, it was felt that students should be given the choice whether or not to participate in the process and work quietly by themselves if they chose not to.

Metacognitive factors: Fundamental to any learning program is the ability for students to make use of their repertoire of knowledge and plan and reflect on their learning. Higher-order thinking was one of the most important factors mentioned by students as they gained more insight into their ability to learn intentionally. Students showed a heightened awareness of what constituted a good and poor essay; they could realize common errors in

their own work; and especially for more advanced students, learned self-monitoring skills in how to revise their writing independently outside of the classroom. These findings are substantiated by research, which has demonstrated increased metacognitive awareness of the writing process and self-efficacy through dyadic interaction (Yarrow & Topping, 2001; Tsai & Lin, 2012).

Social factors: A major consideration when considering PAL as an alternative approach to process writing was the level of collaboration expected between students. Cote (2006) suggests that the instructor may have a better idea of how to pair students who are most compatible with each other, but the researcher decided to use a more holistic approach and have students choose their own partners, so that they could feel more comfortable and fully enjoy the learning process. Of the six categories, social factors were the main category which students reported as most beneficial. Seven of ten references entered into the double digits, illustrating that students preferred a reciprocal learning process. Communicating with as many friends as possible ensured a greater number of chances to find errors, reorganize ideas, improve depth of knowledge of content and reach more agreements on revisions. This was similar to findings in Mulligan (2011). There were some cases in which students felt that PAL was a waste of time because friends chatted away the time instead of staying on task. Overall though, most students took the opportunity to use the class time to improve their essay with friends and consult with the teacher rather than having to complete it by themselves later for homework. Having access to friends and teacher consultation for immediate assistance during class was a significant motivating factor in the collaborative process.

Negative Comments about PAL

While most students considered PAL beneficial, there were some major problems noted. The negative comments from the 20% of students who did not feel comfortable using PAL are seen in Table 4.

Three particular positions raised by students which can be noted for future reference are:

1. It is more useful for the teacher to check students' essays
2. Students cannot accurately make judgments about other students' errors because of a low-proficiency level
3. It is difficult to find mistakes, especially grammar

Table 4
Challenges of PAL

Factors	Student references	References
Pedagogic (teacher; classroom) Academic (relating to language skills)	1. It's more useful for the native teacher to check essay drafts and point out mistakes	21
	2. It takes a lot of time	6
	3. Only the teacher can explain mistakes correctly/accurately (The teacher is God!)	6
	4. It's the teacher's job	4
	5. It does not fairly evaluate each student's ability	1
Academic Affective (motivation; confidence; anxiety)	1. Students cannot check work correctly or give bad advice because they lack skill/confidence	37
	2. We don't fully understand academic writing	9
	3. We cannot know the perfect style of writing	4
	4. PAL increases chance of making mistakes	4
Affective (motivation; confidence; anxiety)	1. I am scared of failing class or causing others to fail because of a poor essay	3
	2. I dislike or feel embarrassed about my draft being checked by others	2
Cognitive (analyzing / reasoning)	1. I cannot answer difficult questions	1
Metacognitive (reflection, problem-solving, awareness, self-management)	1. It is difficult finding mistakes (mostly grammar and expressions)	23
Social (friends, group members)	1. My partner and I are reluctant to check essays strictly	7
	2. Students do not believe me when I point out mistakes (and vice versa)	2

Regarding the first issue, many students felt the teacher would be the most competent in giving feedback. Their concern was mainly that students did not have the capacity to give appropriate feedback on lexical choices and natural grammatical constructions. A study by Gousseva-Goodwin (2000) also found that many students had a preference for teacher editing, thus wishing to complete essays by themselves. The lack of language proficiency was another deterrent for students as, at times, they found it difficult to judge the validity of their peer's comments. This issue was also raised by Kroll (2001). The third point is also valid in that students sometimes offered inaccurate or misleading advice. This was also a concern raised by Horowitz (1986).

For teachers interested in implementing PAL, these issues can be resolved by making it clear, throughout the PAL process, that the teacher will provide additional feedback on grammatical and lexical errors while students should, at first, focus on content and organizational and structural errors. For students who felt comfortable providing advice on grammatical structures, they were welcome to tackle the challenge (especially in more advanced classes). Further, by making use of in-class teacher consultation time and

changing partners frequently, students should be able to resolve major issues before the essay submission deadline.

A noteworthy point of consideration for instructors when conducting a PAL program, is to help students realize that they are not wholly without knowledge or experience as they bring to the classroom knowledge of the L2 learned throughout high school and content knowledge based on life experiences. By activating and engaging prior knowledge, students are able to naturally give guidance in their stronger areas; and through communication, they are able to improve their weaker areas. Although there were some negative responses to PAL, all in all the program was considered a success with 80% of students reacting positively to the collaborative process. As for the students' quality of writing, there was a marked improvement in almost all papers with teacher feedback focused largely on grammatical and lexical errors instead of basic structural and organizational errors of past. This is an area the researchers hope to pursue.

Implications

PAL was found to be effective with both lower and higher proficiency language learners when implemented in a non-threatening, encouraging and inclusive learning environment. That is, PAL needs to be explicitly planned, modeled, taught and controlled if it is to be successful. Without guidance, it would perhaps aggravate negative attitudes towards collaborative learning. It is suggested in particular, that with lower-proficiency students, a clear, easy-to-understand checklist be devised in simple English, rather than in the students' L1, to familiarize students with basic AW vocabulary and structure. Students should also be allowed to decide whether to speak in their L1 or L2 in order to remove any feelings of anxiety. Having more emphasis on structure and formatting which conforms to a specific rhetorical framework, rather than initial accuracy of grammar/lexis, is also suggested for a basic-level AW class. This would ensure that students are able to understand the differences between academic norms in their L1 and the rhetorical preference of the target audience (Walker, 2006). Once it is established that students have a solid AW foundation, teachers can then focus on various rhetorical forms in more advanced classes. Deciding on the type of peer-assessment – whether qualitative (advice and suggestions) or quantitative (assigning points according to specified criteria) or both, would further ensure a complete and mutual understanding between student/student and student/teacher during feedback sessions (Babaii & Adeb, 2019).

Finally, for teachers who feel tentative about implementing a PAL approach, the following is a breakdown of the wide range of strategies observed of students giving feedback that can applied to their own classrooms:

- Using a highlighter or pencil to check important structural and formatting rules
- Writing basic comments in English such as ‘Good!’ ‘Spell,’ ‘Clear thesis statement,’ ‘Needs another opinion’ ‘More support,” or ‘Same idea, different words’
- Revisiting the essay framework with the model essays for comparative analysis
- Using positive facial expressions and open body language
- Sitting close together side-by-side rather than face-to-face while assisting peers in order to remove the desk as an ‘obstacle’
- Using smart phones to translate words or sentences and find more appropriate vocabulary

Conclusion

The use of PAL in the EFL classroom rests on strong theoretical and pedagogical bases in its ability to help students develop higher-order thinking skills as well as deepen knowledge of the AW process. From a theoretical perspective, it is rooted in Vygotskian principles of social constructivism in which social interaction is emphasized. From a pedagogical perspective, the use of pair work helps to maintain classroom management by keeping the classroom active and providing students with numerous opportunities to use the L2 in a purposeful and meaningful way. In a traditional AW class, communication about writing tends to be minimal as students work alone on their tasks. With PAL, students not only communicated more, but they learned how to edit at a level beyond the word or sentence level, a problem which has surfaced in other PAL contexts. Through collaboration, students’ level of awareness of both organizational and syntactical elements of the AW process was raised, which may not have been possible had they continued to work by themselves. There was some improvement in knowledge of grammar, as students were able to better understand how to express their opinion through writing, rather than through translation of random sentences or doing grammar drills as they learned in high school. Students’ knowledge of lexis also improved greatly as they were expected to use a thesaurus to change basic vocabulary into vocabulary used at a higher academic level. By assuming joint responsibility over the writing, students seemed to feel less anxiety about submitting poor writing to the teacher, a concern held by some participants in this study. Although culturally, it has been said that Japanese students tend to be less talkative than other groups of students,

this study found that with clear guidelines (through checklists), a strong emphasis on structure and content(60%) and less emphasis on grammar/lexis (30%) and punctuation/spelling (10%), students were able to collaborate easily, enjoy the writing process and feel less overwhelmed about completing writing tasks.

Although PAL worked quite successfully in this L2 context, there were some concerns which need to be considered. Cultural expectations were initially a challenge as a few students were not outgoing or confident enough to participate in a communicative approach to writing. However, by encouraging students to look beyond the word or sentence level mistakes and focus on other areas such as structure and content, this helped to lessen anxieties. Another limiting factor that must be noted is the initial workload for the teacher. In order to have students effectively working together, checklists, various methods of modeling editing procedures as well as providing example essays at different levels and lengths needed to be prepared before the start of the semester. Therefore, although teacher feedback time in this research was cut by about 30-50%, the preparation time doubled. However, as the materials were recycled for the following courses, this was seen as a limiting factor only for the first cycle of the PAL program.

To conclude, this research suggests that there could be great potential for collaborative learning in higher education institutions in the L2 context depending on various factors, such as the learner's language skills as well as motivational levels of both the teacher and learner. Many teachers may be unsure about how, when, where and why to develop collaborative learning; however, based on the evidence presented here, there is a possibility that by introducing students to a PAL approach, a metacognitive classroom culture would be encouraged. Students participating in this study were more readily able to see the benefit of PAL after experiencing an approach in which they worked solely by themselves. Not only did they become more active participants in the writing process, but their knowledge of the writing process, which they had previously learned (and forgotten in many cases), deepened tremendously and they developed a more purposeful reason or enjoyable way to study English. Furthermore, students' essay letter grades in most cases went up by one grade through dyadic interaction compared to independent work. By the end of the course, students were able to edit their own writing in some capacity as well as teach other students, whether in their L1 or L2, how to improve writing. John Gay, English poet, and dramatist, once said, "Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand." By flipping the classroom, the researchers and students were able to engage more thoroughly and enjoyably with each other and the writing process.

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Metadiscourse in Japanese EFL Learners' Argumentative Essays: Applying the Interpersonal Model

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Abstract

This paper reports on a study that investigated the use of metadiscourse among Japanese learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) based on the interpersonal model (Hyland, 2004, 2005; Hyland & Tse, 2004). Several studies have used this model to examine EFL learners' metadiscourse use, comparing texts written by different groups (e.g., EFL learners vs. native speakers). However, most of the studies have focused on the usage frequency of metadiscourse items without conducting further qualitative analyses. Their comparison of texts on different topics is also problematic because metadiscourse use is largely determined by the development of an argument. Therefore, the present study focused on the appropriateness of metadiscourse in English essays drawn from the Nagoya Interlanguage Corpus of English (NICE). We compared the use of metadiscourse in the learners' essays to that in the corrections made by native English speakers. The results indicate that while the learners used more interactional than interactive metadiscourse, their misuse rates were higher for interactive than for interactional devices. Frequently misused metadiscourse markers, which could hinder a natural discourse flow, included transitions, engagement markers, and hedges. The present results demonstrate that Japanese EFL learners lack sufficient understanding of the interpersonal aspects of writing, and thus need to be instructed more explicitly.

Keywords: metadiscourse, interpersonal model, Hyland's list, argumentative essays, error analysis

Introduction

Two crucial goals in academic writing are to present one's standpoint effectively and to lead readers to interpret the text as one intended. According to Hyland (2004), there are certain key features of successful academic writing, including the ability to control the level of personality in the text, to claim solidarity with the reader, to evaluate the subject material, and to acknowledge alternative views. Expressions employed to attain these features are referred to as *metadiscourse markers*, including logical connectives (e.g., *however*, *therefore*, etc.),

sequencing items (e.g., *first, next, then*, etc.), and hedges (e.g., *might, perhaps, possibly*, etc.), and are widely taught in academic writing courses (Hyland, 2004).

An increasing amount of research has focused on metadiscourse in the writing of learners of English as a second language (ESL) and of English as a foreign language (EFL), comparing groups of writers in terms of their levels of proficiency, first language (L1) backgrounds, and academic disciplines (Hyland, 2004, 2010; Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995; Kobayashi, 2010; Li & Wharton, 2012; McCrostie, 2008; Petch-Tyson, 1998; Simin & Tavangar, 2009; Tan & Eng, 2014; Wu, 2007), and comparing ESL/EFL learners to native speakers and expert writers (e.g., Altenberg & Tapper, 1998; Granger & Tyson, 1996; Hinkel, 2003, 2005; Hyland, 2002; Hyland & Milton, 1997; Kobayashi, 2010; Lorenz, 1998; Petch-Tyson, 1998). The use of metadiscourse is regarded as a characteristic of good student writing, both for ESL/EFL learners and native speakers (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995; Sanford, 2012). Most of the research has examined particular functions or specific metadiscourse items employed by ESL/EFL writers, such as textual connectors (e.g., Altenberg & Tapper, 1998; Granger & Tyson, 1996), writer/reader visibility features (e.g., Hyland, 2002; McCrostie, 2008; Petch-Tyson, 1998), intensifiers (e.g., Hinkel, 2003, 2005; Lorenz, 1998), hedges (e.g., Hinkel, 2003, 2005; Hyland & Milton, 1997), and engagement resources (e.g., Wu, 2007).

More recently, an increasing number of studies have investigated ESL/EFL learners' use of metadiscourse markers more comprehensively, using Hyland's (2004, 2005) interpersonal model (e.g., Hyland, 2004, 2010; Kobayashi, 2010; Li & Wharton, 2012; Tan & Eng, 2014). However, these studies have focused on the frequency of metadiscourse usage in each sub-category used by ESL/EFL learners, without examining the appropriateness of their use. Appropriateness, in terms of English academic writing conventions, is critically important for those learners because they often transfer writing strategies from their L1 convention to second language (L2) texts, even though they are ineffective as persuasive discourse (Hyland, 1995). Identifying erroneous tendency in ESL/EFL metadiscourse use would be useful for instruction.

Another limitation of these previous studies is that only the items included in Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse item list were examined. It is predicted that the metadiscourse markers in ESL/EFL learners' academic writing may differ from those used in experts' scientific research papers, from which Hyland's (2005) list items were drawn. The inclusion or exclusion of the particular items to be counted may have a great effect on the frequency counts, which would change the research outcomes and their implications significantly. A

further limitation of previous studies is that the metadiscourse markers in texts of different groups were compared without considering the differences in their topics and content. This is problematic because the metadiscourse markers employed may be largely determined by the argument put forward.

Unlike these previous studies, the present study investigated the appropriateness of metadiscourse markers in the academic writing of Japanese EFL learners. The focus is on Japanese EFL learners, for whom metadiscourse appears to be particularly problematic (e.g., Kobayashi, 2010). In order to decide the appropriateness of their metadiscourse use, we compared them, using their argumentative essays, to the metadiscourse used in the corrections by English native speakers, who rewrote the original texts more naturally and conventionally. The learners' texts and the rewrites were comparative in terms of their topics and arguments, making for a meaningful direct comparison. The interpersonal model of metadiscourse (Hyland, 2004, 2005; Hyland & Tse, 2004) was applied to the analysis because it is regarded as the most comprehensive model of metadiscourse to date. Although we employed Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse item list (see the appendix in Hyland, 2005, pp. 218-224) for the basis of the analysis, we also conducted functional analysis of each marker to decide which ones should be included in the analysis. In this way, we can understand the metadiscourse use of Japanese EFL learners and their problems more comprehensively, which should provide valuable insights for writing instruction in EFL settings more generally.

Theoretical Background

There are several definitions of metadiscourse in the literature. Earlier studies tended to focus on the metadiscourse features of textual organization (Bunton, 1999; Mauranten, 1993; Valero-Garcés, 1996). However, some more recent studies (Hyland, 2004, 2005; Hyland & Tse, 2004) argue that such a focus is insufficient. Hyland points out that metadiscourse is not simply the "glue" that holds the more important parts of the text together. Instead, he suggests that all metadiscourse is interpersonally motivated to interact with readers. For instance, even so-called textual metadiscourse, such as conjunctions, is chosen by the writer to guide readers' understanding and lead them toward a writer's preferred interpretation of the text.

In light of this trend, we chose to base our work on Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse. In the model, metadiscourse is defined as "the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the

writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community” (Hyland, 2005, p. 37). Based on this definition, Hyland (2004, 2005) and Hyland and Tse (2004) classified metadiscourse resources according to their functions in a text. Borrowing Thompson’s (2001) terms, metadiscourse resources were first categorized as either interactive or interactional, and then further sub-categorized. Table 1 shows the function of each (sub) category, and some example items.

Table 1
An Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse

Category	Function	Examples
Interactive metadiscourse	Help to guide the reader through the text	
Transitions	Express relation between main clauses	<i>in addition/but/thus/and</i>
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences, or stages	<i>finally/to conclude/my purpose is</i>
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	<i>noted above/see fig./in section 2</i>
Evidentials	Refer to information from other texts	<i>according to X/Y states</i>
Code glosses	Elaborate propositional meanings	<i>namely/e.g./such as/in other words</i>
Interactional metadiscourse	Involve the reader in the text	
Hedges	Withhold commitment and open dialogue	<i>might/perhaps/possible/about</i>
Boosters	Emphasize certainty or close dialogue	<i>in fact/definitely/it is clear that</i>
Attitude markers	Emphasize writer's attitude to proposition	<i>unfortunately/I agree/surprisingly</i>
Self-mentions	Explicit reference to author(s)	<i>I/we/my/our</i>
Engagement markers	Explicitly build relationship with reader	<i>consider/note that/you can see that</i>

Note. Adapted from *Metadiscourse: Exploring interaction in writing* (p. 49), by K. Hyland, 2005, London, UK: Continuum. Copyright 2005 by Ken Hyland.

Hyland (2004, 2005) and Hyland and Tse (2004) note that metadiscourse is an open category to which new items can be added to fit the writer’s needs, and furthermore that the same item may function as a metadiscourse marker in one part of the text but not in another. For example, *now* can be used interpersonally to mark a topic shift, but the *now* in *it is now generally accepted that this theory is relevant* is not considered as metadiscourse in a text

because it indicates experiential time, rather than interpersonal time. Consequently, metadiscourse research begins with a functional analysis of the text (Hyland, 2004; Hyland & Tse, 2004).

Literature Review

Several studies have investigated EFL learners' use of metadiscourse based on the interpersonal model, especially in Asian contexts. For example, Hyland (2004, 2010) examined the use of metadiscourse in Master's theses and Doctoral dissertations written by Chinese EFL learners across a range of academic disciplines. Li and Wharton (2012) investigated the metadiscourse devices used in the academic writing of Chinese EFL undergraduates studying in China and Chinese ESL undergraduates studying in the United Kingdom. Tan and Eng (2014) compared the use of metadiscourse in argumentative essays of high and low English proficiency Malaysian undergraduates. Kobayashi (2010), in turn, compared the metadiscourse use of four groups, namely Japanese junior high school, senior high school, and university students, and English native speakers. The results of Hyland (2004, 2010) and Li and Wharton (2012) showed that interactive forms were more frequently used than interactional forms, whereas Kobayashi (2010) and Tan and Eng (2014) reported the opposite finding. In general, these studies found that more metadiscourse markers were used by more advanced EFL learners, in terms of English proficiency or academic career, than by less advanced learners. However, Kobayashi (2010) reported the opposite tendency, with less advanced EFL learners using more metadiscourse devices, especially transitions and self-mentions.

As outlined above, Hyland (2004, 2010), Kobayashi (2010), and Tan and Eng (2014) compared the use of metadiscourse markers by various writers, focusing mainly on the frequency of each sub-category, regardless of whether or not these were used appropriately. Li and Wharton (2012), on the other hand, did add a category for the *misuse* of markers to Hyland's model, and compared the frequency of misused metadiscourse devices between their two groups. However, their study did not involve any further quantitative or qualitative analysis of inappropriately used markers, although such examinations may prove insightful to researchers and instructors of English academic writing.

Another limitation of Hyland (2010), Kobayashi (2010), and Tan and Eng (2014) is that only those items appearing in Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse item list were included. The metadiscourse markers in EFL learners' academic writing may differ from those used by scientific expert writers, whose texts provided the basis for Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse

list. For example, EFL learners might use expressions like *as well as*, *all the same*, and *what is more* as transition markers, and these expressions do not appear on the list. As the inclusion or exclusion of particular items to be counted has a profound effect on the results, decisions regarding inclusion should be determined by functional analysis of each marker in the text.

A further limitation of previous studies, including those of Hyland (2004) and Li and Wharton (2012), is that the metadiscourse markers in texts of different groups were compared, regardless of their topics and content. Although the data were drawn from texts of a similar genre (e.g., Master's theses and Doctoral dissertations), the metadiscourse markers employed may be largely determined by the argument being developed. Thus, making direct comparisons across different texts may lead to superficial results. Comparing the relative frequencies of markers is also problematic, due to substantial variation in average sentence length in EFL learners' texts. As many metadiscourse markers are usually used only once in a sentence, comparing their frequencies across corpora may be less meaningful than expected, as even sub-corpora with the same number of words may differ greatly in the number of sentences. This is especially true when comparing groups with differing English proficiency, because more proficient learners usually produce longer sentences than do less proficient learners, as reported by many researchers (e.g., Bulté & Housen, 2014; Yang, 2014).

As pointed out above, few studies have focused on the appropriateness of EFL learners' metadiscourse, although such research would be insightful for foreign language instruction. While there is no established methodology for examining the appropriateness of EFL (or ESL) learners' use of metadiscourse in the literature, a number of studies have investigated L2 learners' grammatical or lexical accuracy (see Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, & Kim, 1998). While in many cases, researchers read learners' texts and intuitively coded their errors (e.g., Linnarud, 1986), in some cases, a third party rewrote learners' texts correcting their errors, and then the researchers compared the pair of texts and coded the learners' errors (e.g., Kaczmarek, 1980). The advantage of the latter method is that researchers' coding is less subject to confirmatory bias, which is the tendency to favor information that confirms their own hypotheses (Kane, 2006).

The present study was largely motivated by the literature discussed above, the main interest being the appropriateness of the metadiscourse occurring in English argumentative essays written by Japanese EFL learners, analyzed within the framework of the interpersonal model (Hyland, 2004, 2005; Hyland & Tse, 2004). We compared the use of metadiscourse in Japanese EFL learners' essays to that in the rewrites of two native English speakers, one a professional proofreader of academic papers, and the other an experienced EFL teacher. The

decision to compare Japanese EFL learners' texts to their paraphrases provided by native English speakers minimized the problems discussed above caused by differences across essays (i.e., differing arguments and varying sentence numbers), as well as problems related to confirmatory bias. The inclusion of texts corrected by native speakers also illustrates the potential benefit of this practice for EFL learners as well as their instructors and teachers. This is not only because such texts are free from grammatical and lexical errors, but also because they are more acceptable as academic English, while retaining the original content expressed by the respective EFL writers.

The present study addressed the following research questions:

1. What types of metadiscourse are used in argumentative essays written by Japanese EFL learners?
2. What types of metadiscourse are used inappropriately in argumentative essays written by Japanese EFL learners?
3. How are the above inappropriately used metadiscourse markers corrected by native speakers?

Methodology

Corpus Analysis Procedures

The data analyzed in this study comprised 30 essays randomly selected from the Nagoya Interlanguage Corpus of English (NICE) version 2.2,¹ which contains 342 English essays written by Japanese undergraduate and graduate students. As discussed below, the texts were manually annotated for instantiations of interpersonal metadiscourse, each of which was categorized by means of a qualitative, interpretive process. This process of annotation and analysis was labor intensive, requiring sensitive consideration of context and discussion between the two analysts. Therefore, this relatively small number of essays was regarded as appropriate for the present qualitative, contextually informed analyses. The NICE also contains English native speakers' paraphrases for 201 of the 342 essays, by which each text was revised to be more natural and appropriate as an English essay while retaining as many of the learners' original expressions as possible. Before data randomization, we selected only the essays of Japanese EFL learners with native speaker paraphrases. The 30 writers ranged from freshmen to PhD candidates, averaging 23 years of age, and their majors included linguistics, education, law, agriculture and medicine. The students' scores on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) indicated that they were intermediate to advanced learners of English, $M = 705.8$, $SD = 137.5$. The essays were argumentative in

nature; besides presenting facts, the students explained and analyzed social issues, such as the advantages and disadvantages of early English education, and generally argued in favor of a certain standpoint.

As for the native English speaker paraphraser, one (NTV1) held a Master's degree in the field of international environmental policy and had worked as a professional proof reader of academic papers for two years. The other native English speaker (NTV2) was a graduate student majoring in foreign language education and had worked as an EFL teacher for five years. NTV1 edited 148 of the 201 essays and NTV2 edited the remaining 53. Our analysis included 21 Japanese EFL learners' essays (70%) edited by NTV1 and 9 essays (30%) edited by NTV2.

The metadiscourse occurring in the original Japanese EFL learners' texts was compared to that in the paraphrases, assuming that if a particular use of metadiscourse was not corrected by either of the native speakers, the item was appropriately used. The learner corpus included 11,204 running words and the paraphrased corpus 10,780 running words.

Coding Procedures

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed for data coding. The authors identified and labeled particular metadiscourse features based on the interpersonal model (Hyland, 2004, 2005; Hyland & Tse, 2004) in the learners' writing and the native speakers' paraphrases, as well as labeling the manner in which a particular misuse of metadiscourse was corrected by one of the native speakers. The labels were annotated in the corpus files, where annotation is defined as "the practice of adding interpretative, linguistic information to an electronic corpus" (Leech, 1997, p. 2).

The first stage of the analysis utilized a computer program written in Perl 5.10.0 that searched the texts for approximately 300 metadiscourse markers listed by Hyland (2005) and automatically coded them. During this stage, all graphically matched items were coded, regardless of their function in the text. In the second stage of analysis, the first and second authors manually checked the computer coding and corrected it where necessary. These corrections included deletions of computer labeling where an item did not have a metadiscourse function in the text (e.g., *now in it is now generally accepted that X*), as well as the coding of items that had not been identified as metadiscourse markers by the computer program. Items newly identified as metadiscourse markers included, for example, *in this essay*, *I will* as a frame marker and *a survey says* as an evidential marker. Information about learners' errors and how they were paraphrased by the native speakers was also added.

Learners' errors (e.g., *at the result* instead of *as a result*) were also coded according to their intended meanings. Any cases of disagreement were discussed by the two coders, and agreement was reached. Figure 1 shows an example of coded data, in which the code JPN157 indicates a Japanese EFL learner and his/her file number.

<p>JPN157: US university professors focuses on developing students' basic knowledge <MD INT1 T CR>while</MD> Japanese university professors <MD INT2 H CR>tend to</MD> ignore building fundamental knowledge of the area. <MD INT1 T ER><DS>and</MD> teach their own professional interests, which is <MD INT2 H CR>sometimes</MD> <MD INT2 B CR>too</MD> advanced for bachelors students.</p>
<p>%NTV1: Professors in the US focus on the basics <MD INT1 T>while</MD> professors in Japan <MD INT2 H>tend to</MD> ignore this in favor of teaching their own areas of interest, which are <MD INT2 H>sometimes</MD> <MD INT2 B>too</MD> advanced for undergraduate students.</p>

Figure 1. Example of coded data. INT1 = interactive metadiscourse; INT2 = interactional metadiscourse; T = transition; H = hedge; B = booster; CR = appropriately used item; ER = inappropriately used item; DS = correction using a different structure.

Results

Japanese EFL Learners' Metadiscourse and Their Errors

Table 2 presents the numbers of tokens and types in each category of metadiscourse per 10,000 words. The term *token* refers to the total number of metadiscourse items in the texts, regardless of how often they are repeated. The term *type* refers to the number of different metadiscourse items used in the texts. For example, if a learner uses *in addition*, *moreover*, *on the other hand* as transition markers in their text, while employing *moreover* twice, their token of transition is four, while the type is three.

These data show that the learners employed more interactional than interactive metadiscourse markers in their essays. Transitions were the most frequently used metadiscourse items, followed by engagement markers and self-mentions. The outcomes of log-likelihood tests comparing the texts of the Japanese EFL learners' and those of the native speakers showed that the learners slightly overused metadiscourse in terms of the total number of tokens, $G^2 = 4.1$, $p < .05$. There were no significant differences between the two corpora in terms of frequency of use in any sub-category.

Although the frequency of metadiscourse markers did not differ significantly between the Japanese EFL learners and the native speakers, the data in Table 3 indicate that a substantial number of the learners' metadiscourse markers were corrected by the native

speakers. While the learners used more interactional than interactive metadiscourse, their misuse rates were higher for interactive devices than for interactional devices. Transitions yielded the highest proportion of the total errors, followed by engagement markers and frame markers. The lowest misuse rate was observed for self-mentions.

Table 2

Number of Tokens and Types for Metadiscourse Items (per 10,000 Words)

Category	Learners		Native speakers	
	Token	Type	Token	Type
<i>Total interactive</i>	762.5	117.1	706.5	115.0
Transitions	517.0	42.0	467.6	45.5
Frame markers	151.8	43.8	158.3	36.2
Endophoric markers	12.5	5.4	6.5	4.6
Evidentials	22.3	8.0	20.4	11.1
Code glosses	58.9	17.9	53.7	17.6
<i>Total interactional</i>	1125.0	233.1	1060.2	248.6
Hedges	191.1	60.7	195.4	53.8
Boosters	164.3	36.6	148.1	41.7
Attitude markers	181.3	62.5	177.8	74.2
Self-mentions	270.5	6.3	256.5	5.6
Engagement markers	317.9	67.0	282.4	73.3
Totals	1887.5	350.2	1766.7	363.6

Table 3

Japanese EFL Learners' Metadiscourse and Error Rates

Category	All expressions	Inappropriate expressions	Error rate	Proportion of total errors
Total interactive	854	366	42.9%	49.3%
Transitions	579	236	40.8%	31.8%
Frame markers	170	88	51.8%	11.8%
Endophoric markers	14	10	71.4%	1.3%
Evidentials	25	10	40.0%	1.3%
Code glosses	66	22	33.3%	3.0%
Total interactional	1260	377	29.9%	50.7%
Hedges	214	77	36.0%	10.4%
Boosters	184	64	34.8%	8.6%
Attitude markers	203	50	24.6%	6.7%
Self-mentions	303	56	18.5%	7.5%
Engagement markers	356	130	36.5%	17.5%
Totals	2114	743	35.1%	100.0%

Table 4

Japanese EFL Learners' Most Frequent Metadiscourse Items and Their Error Rates

Category	Item	Number of occurrences		Number of errors	Error rate
		Learners	NS		
Transitions	<i>And</i>	239	183	74	31.0%
	<i>But</i>	59	38	30	50.8%
	<i>Or</i>	56	57	14	25.0%
	<i>Because</i>	37	35	14	37.8%
	<i>So</i>	33	18	23	69.7%
Hedges	<i>Some</i>	28	25	8	28.6%
Boosters	<i>Think</i>	55	43	13	23.6%
	<i>Very</i>	26	23	6	23.1%
Attitude markers	<i>important</i>	31	27	7	22.6%
Self-mentions	<i>I</i>	248	228	39	15.7%
	<i>My</i>	26	24	9	34.6%
Engagement markers	<i>We</i>	87	77	24	27.6%
	<i>?</i>	32	30	2	6.3%

Table 4 presents the metadiscourse items used more than 25 times per 10,000 words by the learners, showing both their raw frequencies and the native speaker correction rates. These data indicate that the learners tended to use simple expressions. The most frequently used items were *I*, *and*, and *we*. Together, these three items accounted for 27% of all metadiscourse markers employed by the learners. High error rates were observed for *so*, *but*, and *because*, whereas error rates for question marks (?) and *I* were relatively low. The most often misused item was *and*, followed by *I*. Log-likelihood tests for the frequencies of these items in the texts revealed that the learners overused *and*, $G^2 = 5.4$, $p < .05$, and *so*, $G^2 = 3.9$, $p < .05$, in comparison to the use of these items in the native speakers' texts.

In certain instances, metadiscourse items occurred in the native speaker's paraphrased text where a learner had not used metadiscourse at all. Such items were also considered to have been misused (i.e., omitted) by the learners (see Dulay & Burt, 1973). Table 5 displays the frequencies of the appropriate and inappropriate use of the learners' metadiscourse expressions, as well as expressions inserted by the native speakers. We calculated the frequencies and the proportions of total errors judged by NTV1 and NTV2 separately. In the proportions of total errors, missing expressions were also included. The table shows that transitions accounted for the highest proportion of the total errors, followed by engagement markers and hedges. The results were consistent between the two native speakers. Therefore, we focus on these three subcategories of metadiscourse markers for the remainder.

Table 5

Japanese EFL Learners' Metadiscourse and Their Errors Judged by NTV1 and NTV2

Category	Appropriate expressions		Inappropriate expressions		Missing expressions		Proportion of total errors	
	NTV1	NTV2	NTV1	NTV2	NTV1	NTV2	NTV1	NTV2
Transitions	251	92	180	56	18	21	29.4%	33.6%
Frame markers	41	41	73	15	1	12	11.0%	11.8%
Endophoric markers	3	1	10	0	2	0	1.8%	0.0%
Evidentials	7	8	5	5	0	0	0.7%	2.2%
Code glosses	29	15	18	4	1	3	2.8%	3.1%
Hedges	98	39	67	10	17	20	12.5%	13.1%
Boosters	97	23	59	5	3	7	9.2%	5.2%
Attitude markers	103	50	46	4	3	8	7.3%	5.2%
Self-mentions	195	52	55	1	11	4	9.8%	2.2%
Engagement markers	126	100	86	44	18	10	15.5%	23.6%
Total	950	421	599	144	74	85	100%	100%

Japanese EFL Learners' Transitions and Their Errors

First, we examine Japanese EFL Learners' use of transitions, and further categorize the items based on their functions, namely addition (e.g., *in addition*, *and*, and *also*), comparison (e.g., *on the contrary*, *but*, and *however*), and consequence (e.g., *thus*, *therefore*, and *because*). Table 6 shows the frequencies of addition, comparison, and consequence markers in the learners' texts, as well as their error rates. These data indicate that the learners used transitions mainly for the purpose of addition, and that the error rate of transitions accounted for the largest proportion of total errors. From Tables 4 and 6, it is clear that the most frequently used addition marker was *and* (84.5% of addition items), that *but* and *or* accounted for 72.8% of comparison items, and *because* and *so* for 50.7% of consequence items. Among the transitions in Table 4, *and* yielded the highest proportion of total errors (31.4%), followed by *but* (12.7%), and the highest error rates were observed for *so* and *but*.

Figure 2 shows the types of errors found in the learners' transitions. The errors involving addition markers comprised mainly the use of unnecessary items (i.e., expressions deleted by the native speakers), inappropriate word or phrase choice, and missing items. The errors involving comparison and consequence markers were mainly due to inappropriate word or phrase choices and unnecessary items.

Table 6
Japanese EFL Learners' Transitions and Error Rates

Category	All	Corrected numbers		Error rate	Proportion of total errors
		Total	(NTV1, NTV2)		
Addition	283	93	(68, 25)	32.9%	39.4%
Comparison	158	62	(53, 9)	39.2%	26.3%
Consequence	138	81	(59, 22)	58.7%	34.3%
Total	579	236	(180, 56)	40.8%	100.0%

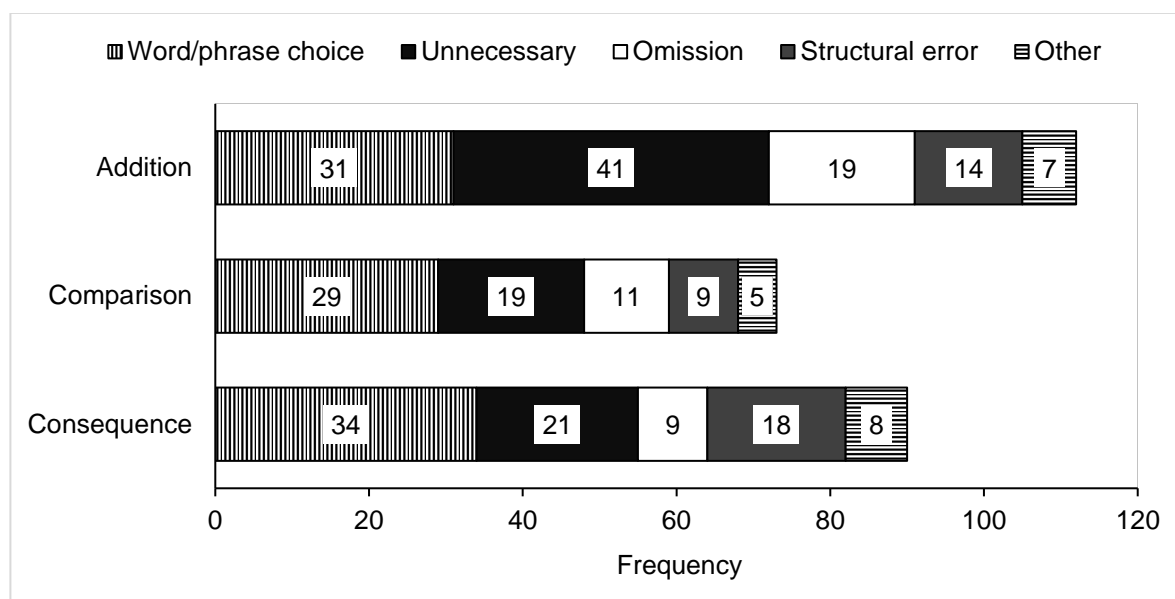


Figure 2. Types of errors for transitions

Further examination of the learners' inappropriate use of metadiscourse reveals that sentence-initial *and*, *but*, and *so* accounted for 65.4% (53 out of 81 cases) of unnecessary items (i.e., expressions deleted by the native speakers), and in the 29% (27 out of 94 cases) of word/phrase choice errors, adverbial connectors were judged more appropriate (e.g. *in addition* instead of *and*, *however* instead of *but*, *therefore* instead of *so*)².

It is also noteworthy that in 18 of the 31 word/phrase choice errors involving addition markers, the native speakers judged different markers with different functions to be more appropriate, such as comparison markers, consequence markers, and code glosses, allowing the clarification of pragmatic connections between ideas, as in the example below.

*JPN078: They were not different from us in abilities of giving opinions, but they had to do that consciously and just are used to doing that.

%NTV1: Americans are not different from Japanese in terms of ability to give opinions, but they are more used to doing it because they have had to do it consciously.

Among the omission errors, *and* was the most frequently missing item (nine cases in the essays of nine different learners). In most cases, as illustrated below, the native speakers judged *and* to be missing when a learner had combined two or more clauses without any connecting word or phrase, which is known as a run-on error (see Hurling & Yamazaki, 2007).

*JPN139: Recently, most young people graduate from their high school enter the universities.

%NTV2: Recently, most young people graduate from their high school and then enter a university.

Among the structural errors, *and* was again most frequently involved (12 cases in the essays of 10 different learners). The native speakers judged different structures, such as prepositional phrases or *to*-infinitives, to be more appropriate than coordinate clauses with *and*, as in the example below.

*JPN006: The “integrated learning period,” which is a new subject integrating all the existing subjects and attempts to foster the abilities to live in real life, seems to be a good opportunity for English education.

%NTV1: The “integrated learning period,” which is a new subject integrating all the existing subjects in an attempt to foster the abilities needed to live in real life, seems to be a good opportunity for English education.

Japanese EFL Learners' Engagement Markers and Their Errors

We turn now to the use of engagement markers, which accounted for the second highest proportion of errors. Figure 3 reveals that most of the errors were related to the learners' use of *we* and *you*, including their different cases (e.g., *our*, *us*, and *your*). In most cases (51 out of 73), *we* and *you* were either deleted when different structures were judged more

appropriate or substituted with third person pronouns or other nouns (e.g., *the students* and *Japanese people*). One example of such substitution is given below Figure 3.

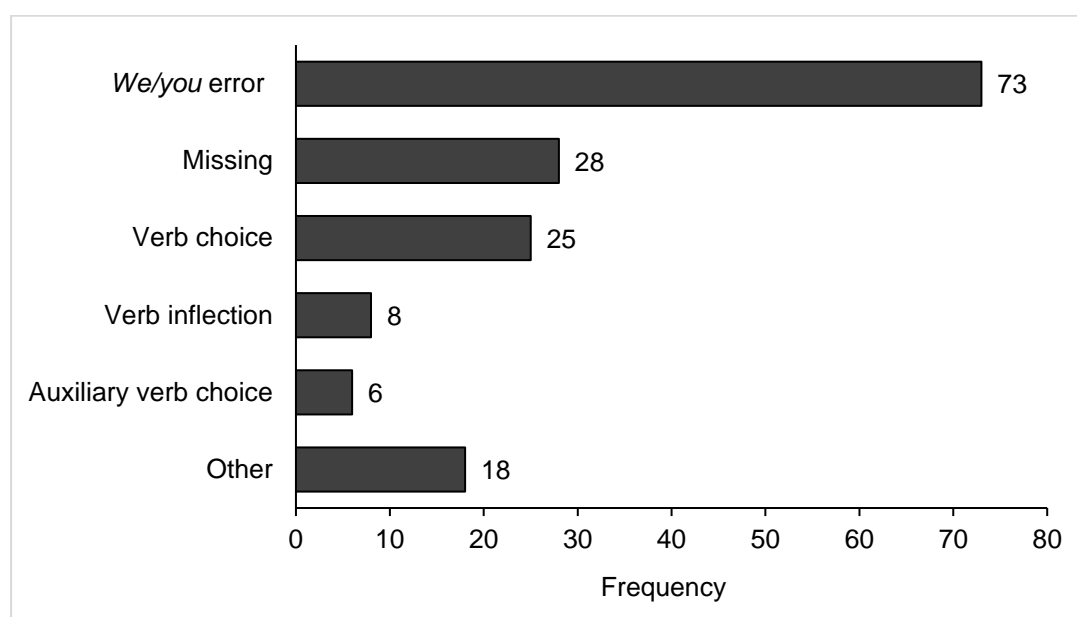


Figure 3. Types of errors for engagement markers

*JPN078: In Japan, we study about exact same stuff as other students in your age.

%NTV1: In Japan, all of the students of the same age study the same things.

Among the 28 omission errors involving engagement markers, either *we* or *you* was missing (i.e., inserted by the native speakers) in nine cases in the essays of six different learners, accounting for 32% of omission errors. Such corrections appear to be motivated by a desire to maintain a consistent tone and cohesion within a piece of writing. One such example is given below.

*JPN132: Remember your own childhood. Probably childhood is more curious than now.

%NTV2: Remember your own childhood. You were probably more curious during childhood than you are now.

Japanese EFL Learners' Hedges and Their Errors

Finally, we turn to the learners' use of hedges, which accounted for the third highest proportion of errors. Figure 4 shows that the most frequent type of errors involving hedges

were omissions, followed by word/phrase choice errors and unnecessary expressions. In 25 of the 37 cases of omissions, the native speakers judged auxiliary verbs to be missing, such as *would*, *could*, *may*, and *might*. In 31% of the word/phrase choice errors, different auxiliary verbs that decrease the degree of confidence expressed were considered more appropriate (e.g., *could* instead of *can*, *might* instead of *may*), as in the example below.

*JPN142: But these troubles may be experienced by everyone who goes to school.

%NTV2: These are troubles which might be experienced by everyone who goes to school.

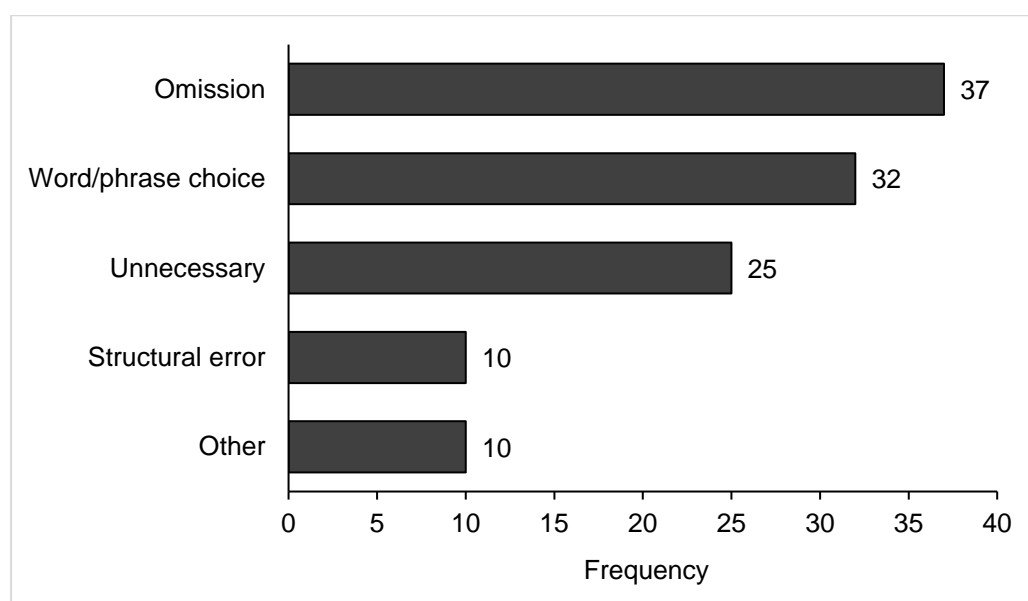


Figure 4. Types of errors for hedges

It is also noteworthy that a substantial number of learners' hedges were considered unnecessary. Of these 25 cases, nine involved adverbs (e.g., *perhaps* and *quite*), and seven involved expressions containing first person pronouns (e.g., *I don't think*, *I wonder*, and *I admit... but*). Such an example is given below.

*JPN169: But I cannot believe all of these ways, because I don't think that giving the "free" time to children is equal to the escape from children's stress.

%NTV1: I cannot believe all of these changes are good, because giving children more free time is not enough to reduce their stress.

Discussion

The first research question addressed by the present study focused on the types of metadiscourse used in essays written by Japanese EFL learners. The results show that they employed more interactional than interactive metadiscourse, and that the most frequently used types of metadiscourse were transitions, engagement markers, and self-mentions. Specifically, the items *I*, *and*, and *we* accounted for one quarter of all the metadiscourse markers used by the learners. These findings are closer to those of Kobayashi (2010) and Tan and Eng (2014) than those of Hyland (2004, 2010) and Li and Wharton (2012). These outcomes might be attributable to differences in text type. Hyland (2004, 2010) and Li and Wharton (2012) investigated the use of metadiscourse in students' academic papers (e.g., Master's theses), in which writers might have needed to direct readers logically using more interactive metadiscourse than interactional metadiscourse. On the other hand, Kobayashi (2010), Tan and Eng (2014), and the present study examined students' argumentative essays, in which writers tended to be more personal and employed more interactional metadiscourse markers than they may have done in academic papers. Another possible explanation is that cultural or educational differences caused the different outcomes. While the participants in Hyland's and Li and Wharton's studies were Chinese EFL learners, Kobayashi, Tan and Eng and this study examined Japanese and Malaysian EFL learners. McCrostie (2008) also reported that Japanese EFL learners characteristically used first and second person pronouns frequently in their argumentative essays and created a conversational tone. Finally, the learners' English proficiency levels may also have contributed to the present differences. Further research, in which these factors are systematically controlled, is required to clarify the issue.

The second research question addressed by the present study focused on the types of metadiscourse Japanese EFL learners used appropriately and inappropriately in their writing. Although the frequency of metadiscourse markers did not differ notably between the learners and the native speakers, the native speakers did correct a substantial amount of the learners' metadiscourse, allowing us to examine the nature of learners' metadiscourse use. The findings showed higher misuse rates among learners for interactive than for interactional devices. The present results support Hyland's (1995) argument that EFL learners lack sufficient understanding of interpersonal aspects of writing, and thus need to be taught explicitly. In the present data, transitions accounted for the highest proportion of total errors, followed by engagement markers and hedges. The high error rates for transitions were mainly due to sentence-initial *and*, *but*, and *so*, suggesting that Japanese EFL learners tend to use

coordinate conjunctions (e.g., *and* and *but*) at the beginning of sentences in the manner of adverbial connectors (e.g., *in addition* and *however*). Such use of transitions reflects features common in speech, as sentence-initial *and*, *but*, and *so* are more common in oral conversation than in written text (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999). This may also be attributed to negative transfer from the L1 (Japanese), in which it is permissible to use equivalent connectors in sentence-initial position. Previous research by Kobayashi (2010) also highlighted this tendency. These findings suggest that the present participants, and probably Japanese EFL learners in general, lack sufficient knowledge of formal writing conventions and differences in the use of connectors in Japanese and English, possibly due to a lack of explicit training and practice.

The third research question addressed by the present study focused on the nature of the native speakers' corrections of learners' metadiscourse markers. The analysis revealed that the learners' sentence-initial *and*, *but*, and *so* were often inappropriate, and they were either deleted or replaced with different expressions by the native speakers, mainly adverbial connectors (e.g., *moreover*, *however*, and *therefore*). Sentence-medial *and* was also often substituted with comparison markers, consequence markers, or code glosses, or rewritten using different structures, such as prepositional phrases and *to*-infinitives. These misuse cases suggest that Japanese EFL learners may require clarification on items that express pragmatic connections between ideas, and/or instruction on using a range of structures and expressions in the place of *and*. In contrast, however, note that *and* was also often absent where required, for example where two or more independent clauses were combined. These findings suggest that, although *and* is a basic term, it is prone to misuse by Japanese EFL learners.

This study also demonstrated that the learners tended toward inappropriate use of *we* and *you*, including their various cases, which were often considered unnecessary, and other expressions, such as third person pronouns or other nouns were considered more appropriate by the native speakers. This finding suggests that Japanese EFL learners may overuse *we* and *you* in their arguments, possibly in an effort to engage with their readers and encourage consensus when expressing opinions on social issues. This tendency may relate to aspects of Japanese culture, which places high value on belongingness, conflict-avoidance, and living in harmony with others (see Lebra, 1976; Maynard, 1997). Hyland (1995) argues that discourse features are culture specific, and that L2 learners at various proficiency levels transfer writing strategies from their first language to their L2, regardless of whether or not the strategies are effective. Such learners may require instruction on using a more objective, less personal style when writing academic English (see Hurling & Yamazaki, 2007).

Among the errors involving hedges, auxiliary verbs were frequently missing in the learners' texts, or other auxiliary verbs that decrease the degree of confidence expressed were considered more appropriate, and learners' hedges containing adverbs or first person pronouns were often considered unnecessary. These findings support Hyland's (1995) observation that EFL learners find hedging problematic, and failure to hedge statements adequately is a common feature among EFL writers, even those with good mastery of English grammar and lexis. Hinkel (2003, 2005) and Hyland and Milton (1997) also pointed out that EFL writers express greater certainty about and commitment to propositions than do L1 writers. Although the approach of the present study differed from that of these researchers' (i.e., comparing different texts with the same arguments rather than comparing different texts with different arguments), the findings were similar. Hyland (1995) argued that it remains rare for students to be taught explicitly about hedging, although hedging represents a major "rhetorical gap" that L2 students must cross before gaining membership of an academic discourse community. The present findings support Hyland's arguments suggesting that EFL teachers need to teach about hedges more explicitly, helping learners to recognize the importance of hedging in academic writing.

Conclusion

This study applied the interpersonal model of metadiscourse (Hyland, 2004, 2005; Hyland & Tse, 2004) to the essays written by Japanese university EFL learners, investigating the appropriateness of the metadiscourse markers employed. The learners' use of metadiscourse in essays was compared to that in paraphrases written by two native English speakers. The analysis revealed a number of overall tendencies in the Japanese EFL learners' use of a range of metadiscourse devices. First, while the learners used more interactional than interactive metadiscourse, their misuse rates were higher for interactive than for interactional devices. Second, the most frequently misused metadiscourse markers were transitions, engagement markers, and hedges. Third, *and*, *but*, *so*, *we*, and *you* in the Japanese EFL learners' texts were frequently deleted or substituted with other expressions, and auxiliary verbs were often absent from learners' texts and inserted in the native speakers' paraphrased text.

The present findings suggest that Japanese EFL learners do not fully understand the conventions followed in English academic writing. To emphasize a smooth and natural discourse flow, teachers need to teach them about transitions, engagement markers, and hedges in a more explicit manner, while showing them common errors and how to correct them. In this way, learners should be able to recognize their problems and understand more

appropriate uses of metadiscourse items. At the same time, teachers need to employ various methods for raising learners' awareness of the metadiscourse features of texts. For this purpose, they can train students to focus on metadiscourse features when reading a text, and having them practice what they observe, using particular metadiscourse devices in writing exercises. These metadiscourse instructions should be combined with various activities, such as debating, discussions, presentations, academic writing, and peer reviews in order to motivate students to argue effectively. Through such activities, students may cultivate critical literacy in their second language. Another example of metadiscourse instruction would be for teachers to compile a small corpus of writing by both learners and experts, requiring learners to identify and compare the metadiscourse items present in a variety of texts. Such data-driven learning and consciousness raising may be key in academic writing instruction, allowing learners to express themselves more confidently and appropriately in academic writing.

Although the findings of this study contribute to a better understanding of the use of metadiscourse in Japanese EFL learners' essays, some limitations should be noted. First, the number of essays examined in the study was small, and the corrections were made by only one native English speaker per essay. However, their corrections had similar patterns. For instance, the most frequent corrections were made on transition markers, followed by engagement markers and hedges. Therefore, we believe that our study is valid to a certain extent. Future research needs to investigate a larger number of students' compositions, each of which is corrected by at least two native speakers, so that we can appropriately control any biases that might occur with native speakers, and confirm the generalizability of the present findings. Second, although this study investigated overall tendencies in the learners' use of metadiscourse in a wide range of functions, the main focus was on a small number of frequently misused sub-categories and their particular items. Future research should conduct more detailed quantitative and qualitative analyses of learners' errors across a wider range of metadiscourse functions and markers, allowing a better understanding of learners' difficulties in the use of metadiscourse in English academic writing; this would facilitate improvement in EFL learner instruction. A third limitation is that the present study did not consider the diversity of the Japanese EFL learners' data in terms of their English proficiency level and L1 background. Further study is needed to compare academic texts written by EFL learners of differing proficiency levels and/or differing L1 backgrounds, in order to gain more insight into their use of metadiscourse. The final limitation we would like to point out is that items in the present data that appeared on Hyland's (2005) list were categorized without further

analysis. For example, *I think* was classified as a booster,³ in accordance with Hyland's (2005) classification. Hyland's decision appears to be reasonably based on discourse analysis of research papers, where researchers take responsibility for a claim by using *I think*, creating an impression of "conviction and authority" (Harwood, 2005, p. 1212). However, it is doubtful that Japanese EFL learners employ this expression to reflect confidence and authority in their perspectives or arguments. Rather, the expression *I think* may imply that a claim is based on the writer's personal opinion, and not on an established viewpoint or fact. Note that some researchers have classified *I think* as a hedge (e.g., Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995). Had we regarded *I think* as a hedge, learners' preference for self-mentions would have become even more significant in the use of hedges. Closer re-examination of Hyland's (2005) list may lead to better application in analyzing argumentative essays written by EFL learners.

Despite these limitations, our research provided a useful method and analysis that identified the problems of Japanese EFL learners' metadiscourse use. Although this study is only a small step in examining the appropriateness of the metadiscourse used by EFL learners, other researchers can follow our example, and our findings need to be compared to that of different L1 and/or EFL proficiency groups, so that we can understand EFL learners' problems more fully and use the information to improve our academic writing instruction.

Notes

1. The NICE contains English essays written by Japanese undergraduate and graduate students. Basically, the students wrote essays within 60 minutes without the use of any reference tools. The data is freely available at http://sgr.gsid.nagoya-u.ac.jp/wordpress/?page_id=17. Some students wrote several essays on different topics, but for the present study, each contributed only one essay.
2. A sentence-initial *so* was sometimes used as a shift topic marker (e.g., *So, let's move on to the next topic.*). In such a case, *so* was classified as a frame marker.
3. *I don't/do not think* were not on Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse marker list but were classified as hedges on the basis of our own text analysis.

Acknowledgments

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The Relationship between Vocabulary Knowledge and Use of Chinese Tertiary Learners

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Bioprofile

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Abstract

This study explores the development of the knowledge of collocation and lexical variation in learner writing from three levels of Chinese tertiary learners. The correlation was analyzed at holistic and different frequency levels. In addition, learners' exposure to English outside classrooms was also investigated. One hundred and ninety-five Chinese tertiary learners from three levels of study participated in this study. The knowledge of collocations was measured in multiple-choice format and the lexical variation was measured in their writing. The results of the study reveal the slow and uneven development in the knowledge and use of words. The correlation between the knowledge of collocation and lexical variation strengthens as the proficiency advances. The results indicate the lack of contribution of the exposure to English in the use of words. This study raised important pedagogical implications for teaching and learning English in the EFL context.

Keywords: Vocabulary Knowledge, Collocation, Lexical Variation, Frequency, Communicate Exposure

Introduction

The importance of vocabulary knowledge in second language learning is well-established in existing studies (Albrechtsen, Haastrup & Henrisken, 2008; Milton, 2009). The research interests in vocabulary knowledge are fueled by its complexity, and the potential factors that affect its acquisition and assessment (Nation, 2001, 2013; Schmitt, 2010). To shed light on the development of learners' vocabulary knowledge and use, it is necessary to understand the relationship between the two constructs. However, there are very few existing studies that have explored this relationship (Lemmouh, 2011). This study intends to explore the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and the quality of lexical use in writing. One aspect of the vocabulary knowledge is studied, i.e., the knowledge of collocations. The quality of lexical use is examined in terms of the range of words used in writing. In addition, this study also explores the variability of the relation across different levels of study and different frequency levels of words. An equally important factor that may influence the development of vocabulary knowledge and use is the exposure to the language outside classroom contexts. The exposure could be in receptive form as reading books, and watching movies or the active engagement in using the language to communicate. This study also investigates how the exposure to language relates to the quality of lexical use among learners from different levels of study.

Literature Review

The Relationship between Vocabulary Knowledge and Use

Understanding the relationship between vocabulary use and the underlying vocabulary knowledge can provide valuable insights. Theoretically speaking, exploring this relationship could enlighten us on the developmental pattern of the vocabulary knowledge and use and the extent to which these two dimensions relate to each other at different stages of learning. For language assessment, it could provide us with confidence on learner's vocabulary knowledge based on the score of lexical variation as part of the automated assessment tool. Pedagogically speaking, it could inform us on the aspects of vocabulary knowledge that could be the predictors of effective language use and aspects that require explicit learning.

Lemmouh (2011) carried out a longitudinal study to explore the relationship between vocabulary knowledge (operationalized as derivations, association, polysemy and collocation) and vocabulary use in academic writing (operationalized as lexical sophistication). At the end of the first term of study, collocation, derivations and synonyms showed moderate correlation with lexical sophistication. At the end of the second term of

study, significant correlation was found between association and lexical sophistication, while no such correlation found was found between collocation, derivation and lexical sophistication.

The study has two important implications. The first one is the need to examine different aspects of vocabulary knowledge. It shows that different aspects of vocabulary knowledge vary in terms of developmental progress, and contribution to the use of words. The second implication is to explore the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and use with learners at different proficiency level. It would be important to observe the knowledge and use with learners at different proficiency levels to explore the developmental pattern of the constructs.

Another important factor that needs to be considered beside proficiency level in discussing the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and use is the frequency level of words (Ellis, 2012; Kuperman, Stadthagen-Gonzales & Brysbaert, 2012; Schmitt, 2010). What can be concluded from the current play is that learners' knowledge of words decreases with the increase of frequency levels. What is unclear now is the role of frequency in the use of words. This relationship could only be partly deduced from the studies that measure both receptive and productive knowledge (e.g., Webb, 2008). However, there is a clear distinction between the productive knowledge of words and the use of words in language production (Lemmouh, 2011). Using a word in free writing involves much more complex processing than using a word in controlled productive knowledge test like translation and sentence completion. One possible way to explore the role of frequency in vocabulary knowledge and use is to examine the extent to which the knowledge of word at specific frequency levels contributes to the use of that word in writing.

The Measurements of Vocabulary Knowledge and Use

A variety of measurements of vocabulary knowledge has been proposed based on the different operationalizations of the construct. There are two strands of tests currently used in Applied Linguistics research. The first strand investigates the vocabulary knowledge as an integrated construct (Nation & Beglar, 2007; Qian, 2002; Schmitt, Schmitt & Clapham, 2001). While the second strand examines different aspects of vocabulary knowledge using a battery of tests, each tapping into one aspect of the knowledge (Webb, 2007; Peters, 2015).

The second strand examines each aspect separately to increase the sensibility of the measurement and reflect the dynamic changes in different aspects of the knowledge. Webb (2007) designed a battery of ten tests tapping into the receptive and productive knowledge of

vocabulary under the theoretical framework of Nation (2001; 2013). He explained the adoption of multiple tests as “it was important to have tests at different sensitivities to measure depth of knowledge” (2007: 54). This study echoed the call from Schmitt (2014) to fine-tune the tests to test specific aspects in vocabulary knowledge. He commented that “It may be time to dispense with the general notion of depth altogether and concentrate on more specific measures of the quality of vocabulary knowledge that are tuned more finely to specific research questions” (2014: 944).

Lexical variation is a measurement that quantifies the range of different words used in a text (Malvern, Richards, Chipere & Dur'an, 2004; Jarvis, 2013). The measure has been used extensively in a wide range of fields with linguistic interests (Malvern, Richards, Chipere & Dur'an, 2004; Friginal, Li & Weigle, 2014). To test the validity of the automated lexical indices, Crossley, Salsbury and McNamara (2014) showed that lexical variation demonstrated strongest correlation with human judgment ($r = .668$) among all the lexical indices. In addition, the lexical variation could explain the greatest variance (25%) in the lexical proficiency scores assigned by human raters.

A recent improvement on the measure of lexical variation is the *D* (Malvern, Richards, Chipere & Dur'an, 2004; McCarthy and Jarvis, 2010). The *D* has been found to be a “robust measure of lexical diversity which is not a function of sample size in the way of raw TTR” (Malvern, Richards, Chipere & Dur'an, 2004: 60). Basically, the higher of the value of *D* the text has, the greater diversity the text is. The application of *D* in measuring the speech and written texts of both adult and children has proved its advantage (Crossley, Salsbury & McNamara, 2014; Duran, Malvern, Richards & Chipere, 2004; Lu, 2011; Yu, 2009).

The Role of Communicative Engagement with Language in the Learning of Words

The role of communicative engagement with language in the learning of words has emerged from second language acquisition. It has important implication for acquiring of words and developing autonomous learning ability of L2 learners (Aldophs & Darrow, 2004; Nunan & Richards, 2015). There are studies that have empirically examined the contribution of the communicative engagement of language to the learning of vocabulary items. Fernandez and Schmitt (2015) measured the productive knowledge of collocations of 108 Spanish learners of English and investigated the correlation between everyday engagement with English and the knowledge of collocations. The results suggested that exposure to English correlate with English at a medium level and would explain 31.4% of variance in the productive knowledge of collocations. Immersing in English speaking countries showed the strongest correlation

with the productive knowledge of collocations, followed by reading, watching movies, social networking. The findings empirically demonstrated that there was a range of engagements that were effective for the learning of vocabulary items. However, the researchers noted that there were distinct differences between the knowledge of words and the use of them. To understand the contribution of engagement to the use of the words, it needs studies that directly measure the use of language.

In a recent study, Lin (2016) examined the development of three-word formulaic sequences used by Taiwanese students at beginning level during four-months of online interaction with native speakers of English. At the beginning of the online interaction, there were significant differences between the infrequent formulaic sequences used by learners and native speakers (15.51%). However, this difference dropped to 4.87% at the end of the four months. This decline in the difference indicated the convergence in the formulaic sequences used by learners and native speakers. The results supported the role of social interaction in promoting vocabulary learning.

These empirical studies suggest that exposure to English is a useful source for vocabulary learning for learners from beginning level to advanced level. It is closely related to the development in the knowledge of single words and collocations, and could promote the approximation in the use of formulaic sequences to native speakers' in speech and writing. Another possible angle to explore the pedagogical potential of communicative engagement of English is to examine the extent to which it is related to the lexical quality in language production. It could empirically investigate the contribution of communicative engagement of English to the use of words in writing.

Methodology

Participants

193 undergraduate students were chosen from a Chinese university from three levels of study, i.e. first-year, second-year and third-year undergraduate. This study collects cross-sectional data instead of longitudinal records. However, since learners move along these three years of study consecutively in tertiary education, these levels of study are representative of the stages in L2 writing (Verspoor, Schmid & Xu, 2012).

Data Collection

Test of Collocation

This research used pen-and-paper tests to examine the receptive knowledge of collocations. The test was in the format of multiple choices. Several issues were important in the process of the development of the tests.

Target Words

We would like to develop a sample of key words that could be representative of the words from a variation of frequency levels. To achieve this purpose, a well-recognized word list of single words developed from a corpus which is representative of authentic language use was needed. Also, we would like to choose words from different frequency levels to observe the change in the knowledge of words at distinct frequency levels with the progression of language learning. We chose 80 key words including words from 2000, 3000, 5000 and 8000 word levels that met the criteria of both frequency level and word class. All target words come from the frequency list based on Nation's study of 20 frequency levels in British National Corpus (BNC).

Two established dictionaries and one corpus were used to choose the correct items for each question. Some of the correct answers for the collocation text were chosen from Oxford collocations dictionary for students of English, 2nd edition (2009), which includes 9000 entries developed based on the Oxford English Corpus. In addition, the reference Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) was used to retrieve the correct items for target words (available from <http://corpus.byu.edu>). To identify the correct answers for collocations, those collocates with Mutual Information (MI) score higher than 3 were selected as correct collocates (Huston, 2002; Stubbs, 1995). MI score of 3 or above is the indicator of significant collocation. The control items were matched in word length and frequency levels with the correct answers.

The test included 80 questions with key words from four frequency level. Each frequency level has 20 test items. One point was given to the correct answer and zero point to the incorrect answers. The full scores for collocation tests were both 80 points. The test of collocations was given to five native speakers and forty-one EFL learners for pilot test to examine the clarity of the instructions and the appropriateness of the correct answers and control items. The Cronbach's alpha of the test was .708, which showed that the test was reliable.

Questionnaires

The questionnaires were designed to collect the background information of the participants and their communicative engagement of English outside classrooms. The section on communicative engagement of English was designed in a format similar to that of Fernandez and Schmitt (2015). The input of the language was categorized into three sub-sections: reading, listening to music and watching movies, films and videos. Reading is the effective way of learning both single words and collocations (Webb & Chang, 2012; Schmitt & Redwood, 2011). The recent surge in the use of social media has also been included in the questionnaire to explore the use of online tools and applications. This study changed the types of social media to adapt to the current use in China. It has included the widely used online communicative tools, such as, QQ, Wechat, in addition to the applications in Fernandez and Schmitt (2015). We asked the participants to choose the hours that they have spent on these activities every week (0-1, 1-2, and more than 2 hours).

Composition

The compositions were used to analyze the quality of lexical use of participants, i.e. lexical variation. Coh-metrix was used to analyze the test and retrieve index of the lexical variation of the writings. The writing prompt were provided in Chinese to prevent learners from copying the words and phrases in the prompt. The English translation of the prompts was: “Huang Xiaomin and Yang Ying have married in a luxurious way recently. Some people believe that this type of luxurious wedding would send the wrong message to the society. In your idea, luxurious lifestyle and simple lifestyle, which one is better?”

The participants were asked to write a composition of around 250 words, which is within the valid word limits of lexical variation index, and also the required length of their exams. McCarthy and Jarvis (2007) suggested that *D* is valid for speech and writing within the word limits of 100 to 400 words (Webb & Nation, 2012).

Procedure

The test of collocation and compositions were conducted in two normal classroom sessions without giving participants prior notice of the tasks. In the first session, the participants were asked to go through the vocabulary test paper. They were given 15 minutes to finish the test with clear instruction without using a dictionary. In the second session, they were asked to write a composition within 50 minutes without the help of a dictionary. Both the test paper and the compositions were in pen-and-pencil format. All the three levels of participants

finished both the test paper and the compositions within the same week, since their class schedules made it impossible to conduct the experiment on the same day.

Preparing Data for Analysis

After obtaining the compositions, all the files were edited for further analysis using Cohmetrix. Grammatical errors remained unchanged, because the primary focus of the study is on vocabulary use. For lexical errors, similar precautions for dealing with spelling mistakes were taken in a similar way as Yu (2009). When a word was spelt erroneously in some places but correctly in others, a correct form will be used to replace mistakes. However, when a word is spelt erroneously whenever it appears, it would not be corrected. Meanwhile, when a word was spelt erroneously in a number of ways in a text, one erroneous form will be used to replace all the other misspelt forms, since using different forms has the potential to increase lexical variation. After editing, the e-copies of the compositions were converted to plain text files to be processed by Cohmetrix to obtain the index of lexical variation.

Results and Discussion

Relationship between Knowledge of Collocations and Lexical Variation

The first research question intends to examine the relationship between receptive knowledge of collocations of learners from three years of study and the lexical variation of their writing. Pearson Correlation was used to analyze the relationship between the two variables based on the result of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov analysis.

The descriptive statistics of the variables for the three groups of learners are provided in the table 1. It seems that the two variables move in opposite directions. While the learners seem to score higher on the test on the knowledge of collocations, they tend to use fewer percentages of different words in the writing. This finding is different from the studies that have shown that lexical variation is a reliable discriminator of the proficiency levels (Crossley, Salsbury & McNamara, 2010; Saito, Webb, Tromovich, & Issac, 2016; Verspoor, Schmid & Xu, 2012). It seems that learners' knowledge and use of vocabulary improves on some aspects (knowledge of collocations) and not on other aspects (lexical variation).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics on Test Scores of Knowledge of Collocations and Lexical Variation

	Scores on knowledge of collocations	Lexical variation (D)
Year 1	37.4(5.3)	86.6(19.8)
Year 2	41.1(7.7)	84.6(20.5)
Year 3	49.4(8.8)	78.1(16.3)

Note: The mean of the scores and *D* are provided in the table with standard deviation in the bracelets. The maximum score on the collocation test is 80 points.

Pearson correlation was used to measure the extent to which the knowledge of collocations and quality of lexical use are related across the three years of study (Table 2). For year 1 learners, there is no significant correlation between knowledge of collocation and variety of words in the writing. It means that the ability to use wide variety of words in writing is independent from the receptive knowledge of collocations. For year 2 learners, there is medium correlation between knowledge of collocation and lexical variation in writing ($r = .33, p = .01$). This correlation declined for learners in their third year of study ($r = .25, p = .04$). The increase in the years of studying English would not contribute to the strength of relation between the two variables. This is quite against the common sense that, if learners possess greater knowledge of collocations, they would be able to use a greater variety of collocations in writing, which in turn, would improve the lexical variation of writing texts.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation between the Knowledge of Collocation and Lexical Variation

	Collocation (Year 1)	Collocation (Year 2)	Collocation (Year 3)
Lexical variation (D)	0.05 (0.726)	0.33** (0.009)	0.25* (0.043)

Note: The *r* value of correlation analysis is provided in the table with *p* value in the bracelets. *stands for significance at 0.05 level. ** stands for significance at 0.01 level.

The second research question concerned the knowledge of collocations at a variability of frequency levels. It intends to find out the variation of correlation between knowledge of collocation at difference frequency levels and lexical variation. Spearman's rho analyzed the relationship based on the result of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov analysis.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Knowledge of Collocations at Four Frequency Levels and Lexical Variation

	2000 level	3000 level	5000 level	8000 level	Lexical Variation (D)
Year 1	14.92(1.99)	10.62(2.52)	6.32(2.23)	5.54(2.27)	86.6(19.8)
Year 2	15.61(1.91)	11.93(2.99)	8.58(3.34)	4.96(2.52)	84.6(20.5)
Year 3	16.59(1.92)	13.92(2.89)	10.93(3.82)	8.05(3.07)	78.1(16.3)

Notes: the means of test scores at each frequency level and *D* value of lexical variation are presented in the table with standard deviation in the bracelet. The maximum score at each level is 20 points.

It is obvious that learners are making consistent improvement across years of study at almost all four frequency levels (Table 3). The only exception is the 8000-word level, where a little regression is shown between learners from the first and second years of study. However, sizeable improvement is shown from learners at second year of study and third year of study on collocations at this level.

Table 4

Results of Spearman Correlation Analysis of Knowledge of Collocations at Four Frequency Levels and Lexical Variation

		2000 level	3000 level	5000 level	8000 level
Lexical variation (D)	Year 1	-0.04	0.24	0.34*	0.04
		(0.806)	(0.105)	(0.017)	(0.766)
	Year 2	0.24	0.30*	0.32*	0.08
		(0.059)	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.541)
	Year 3	0.15	0.21	0.26*	0.25*
		(0.253)	(0.094)	(0.046)	(0.047)

Note: The Spearman's rho of the correlation is provided in the table with p value in the bracelet. * stands for significance at 0.05 level.

The results of the Spearman correlation analysis show that the knowledge of collocation at four frequency level correlates with lexical variation at different levels (Table 4). One notable issue emerging from the results is that knowledge of collocations at 5000-word level is the only level that shows positive and significant correlation with lexical variation across three groups of learners. It means that collocational knowledge of words at this level is crucial in helping learners to improve their variety of words in writing.

Relationship between Use of Language and Lexical Variation

The third research question explores the degree to which the use of language outside classrooms by learners is related to the variety of words they use in writing. Since the results of the questionnaire constituted non-parametric data, we used Kendall's tau to analyze the correlation.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics on the Use of Language

	Reading	Watching	Listening	Networking
Year 1	1.78(0.46)	1.87(0.62)	2.17(0.6)	1.35(0.47)
Year 2	2.1(0.4)	2.5(0.58)	2.43(0.62)	1.48(0.49)
Year 3	1.9(0.5)	2.25(0.63)	2.13(0.57)	1.45(0.57)

Note: the mean of hours is provided with standard deviations in the bracelets. *Reading* stands for reading books, newspapers, etc.; *watching* stands for watching movies, videos, etc.; *listening* stands for listening to music; *networking* stands for communicating with friends.

The average time of exposure to English outside classrooms varies for the three groups of learners (Table 5). Year 2 learners spend more time using English outside classrooms on all four activities than the other two groups of learners. For year two and year three learners, they spend most time watching movies and videos, while the year 1 learners spend most time listening to music. For all three groups of learners, the amount of time spent on social communication with friends face to face or over social media, is the least among the four types of activities. This shows that learners prefer receptive exposure to English through reading, listening and watching than didactic communication in English.

The results of Kendall's tau analysis of correlation between use of English and lexical variation are shown in table 6. It is surprising to find that there are very few significant correlations between the use of English and the variety of words used in the writing. It seems to suggest that the exposure to English outside classrooms does not witness improvement in the ability to use a wide range of words in writing. The two cases where significant correlations lie are in the activities of watching movies and videos for year 1 learners ($r=.22$, $p=.03$) and listening to music for year 2 learners ($r=.21$, $p=.05$). It is important to note that, although significant correlations were found in two cases, the strength of the correlation was small. The exposure to movies and TV could only explain 5% of the lexical variation in

writing. Likewise, the exposure to English songs could explain only 4% of the lexical variation in writing.

Table 6

Results of Kendall's tau Analysis of Correlation between Use of English and Lexical Variation

		Reading	Watching	Listening	Networking
Lexical variation (D)	Year	-0.07	0.22*	0.08	-0.05
	1	(0.95)	(0.031)	(0.387)	(0.669)
	Year	0.16	0.02	0.21*	0.12
	2	(0.134)	(0.853)	(0.045)	(0.3)
	Year	0.19	-0.05	-0.01	-0.09
	3	(0.057)	(0.625)	(0.898)	(0.392)

Note: the Kendall's tau is provided with *p* value in the bracelets. *Reading* stands for reading books, newspapers, etc.; *watching* stands for watching movies, videos, etc.; *listening* stands for listening to music; *networking* stands for communicating with friends.

General Discussion

The purpose of this study intends to explore the relationship between the knowledge of collocation, and the quality of lexical use in writing, and the relationship between ways of exposure to English outside classroom and quality of lexical use in writing. It reflects the learners' trajectories of learning by reporting the knowledge of collocations and the use of words based on test scores of 194 Chinese tertiary learners from three years of study.

In answer to the first research question, the results show that the correlation between the knowledge of collocations and quality of lexical use in writing (measured in terms of the lexical variation) changes in a non-linear manner across the three years of study. There is positive yet insignificant correlation between the two variables. The strength of the correlation in this study is lower than the relation between collocations and other aspects of language proficiencies found in the previous relevant studies ($r=.46$ to $r=.68$) (for a review, see Boer and Lindstromberg, 2012). The gaps in the strength of the correlation between this study and previous ones are possibly due to the methodological issues. Studies that have found relatively high correlation between knowledge of collocations and language proficiency (measured by holistic scoring of oral and writing tasks) included greater types of multi-word units as collocations than this study. For example, Keshavarz and Salimi (2007) included both lexical collocations and grammatical collocations. The second methodological

issue concerns the direction of knowledge of collocation measured in the study, and the types of task used to measure the oral and writing proficiency. Stengers, Boers, Housen and Eyckmans (2011) measured the productive use of formulaic sequences in oral story retelling tasks and investigated the correlation between the number of formulaic sequences used in oral tasks to the range of words used in oral presentation. They found a high correlation of $r=.63$. It is reasonable to expect a higher correlation between productive use of formulaic sequences and oral tasks.

The weak correlation between knowledge of collocations and lexical variation in writing is against our assumption of a close relationship. There are three possible reasons to explain the relatively low correlation. The first reason is that learners experience difficulties in learning collocations, and learning collocations require much longer period to develop (Levitzky-Aviad & Laufer, 2013). This study adds to this finding by revealing that the development of collocations (both the knowledge and use) is not a linear process as reflected in the improvement and regression in the correlation between knowledge of collocation and lexical variation. It is very likely that, although the receptive knowledge of collocation improved over the year of study, learners were reluctant to use collocation in their writing (Liao & Fukuya, 2004). Even for advanced learners, the repertoire of the collocation does not have much contribution to improving their lexical variation.

The other possible reason is learners' high reliance on a set of high frequency collocations in writing (Durrant & Schmitt, 2009; Laufer & Waldman, 2011). Previous studies into the use of collocations by second language learners have found that learners cling to a set of highly frequent collocations (Asif & Ulugbek, 2018; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2008). It is very likely that, even if the learners' receptive knowledge of collocation improves, they do not draw on the newly acquired collocations to use them in writing. This difficulty in using collocations may be an indication of how the collocations are represented in learners' mind. Stengers, Boers, Housen and Eyckmans (2011) raised the question that the difficulties for learners to use collocations in writing may be an evidence of the holistic storing of collocations in the mental lexicon. It is not clear whether learners may store the "canonical form" of the collocations in their mental lexicon instead of all the morphological variations of them. And therefore, when it comes to the time to use collocations in writing, the "canonical form" may have to be modified with variations to be correctly used. This modification would create extra working load for learners. During the writing process, learners are under great demand for online processing resources on multiple levels. They would resort to what they are most familiar to release the processing burden. This tradeoff in processing would very

likely lead learners to use the frequent collocations that are fully automatized to help them improve the fluency of writing.

The third plausible reason for the low correlation in writing could be L2 writer's repetitive use of words and phrases that appear in the writing prompt. This is a widely adopted coping strategy for writing among L2 learners (Yoon & Polio, 2016). There is consistent improvement in the receptive knowledge of collocations among L2 learners in this study. It is likely that learners repetitively use the expressions that appeared in the writing prompts, such as *luxury wedding*, *luxury ceremony*, *luxury life*. The overuse of these expressions undermines the range of words in writing and results in the low correlation between the knowledge of collocations and lexical variation.

The fourth reason supports the theory of the separate dimensions for collocations and single words. It is possible that the low correlation is the evidence of the two sub-dimensions of single words and collocations instead of regarding collocations as one aspect of knowledge of single words (Durrant, 2014). However, when we are conceptualizing a separate model of collocational knowledge and teasing it apart from the knowledge of single words, it should be noted that this collocational perspective seems more pertinent to advanced learners than beginning and intermediate learners. Advanced learners have accumulated a fair repertoire of vocabulary knowledge. They can approach the vocabulary learning in a more analytical way with a handful of learning strategies at their disposal. This prior knowledge can facilitate the learning of new items. However, the beginning and intermediate learning may not enjoy this facilitative effect. A comprehensive model of collocational knowledge covering learners from different proficiency levels will need to take this possibility into account.

The second research question reveals the dynamic and complex picture of the correlation between the knowledge of collocations of different frequency levels and lexical variation. It shows that, for learners at different levels of study, the strength of correlation between the two variables vary between frequency levels. The findings are in line with the development trajectory of the learners. With the increase in the proficiency level, learner would need the knowledge of more advanced words to improve the range of words used in writing. It is noteworthy that, for all three levels of learners, knowledge of collocations of words at 5,000-word level is a useful contributor to the improvement of the range of words in writing. 5,000-word level is a crucial vocabulary size level for learners to achieve adequate comprehension of English text (Dang & Webb, 2014; Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovsk, 2010; Hsu 2014). Upon entering the college, learners are supposed to master the most frequent 2000 and 3000 words. Although, we do not argue for full mastery of these word families, evidence has shown that

phrasal verbs made of highly frequent words could still post difficulties for advanced L2 learners (Garnier & Schmitt, 2016). We are stating that the mid-frequency words should be the primary goal to help learners enlarge their vocabulary size and improve the usage of these words and collocations in productive ways.

The third research question intended to find out the usefulness of exposure to English outside classrooms in improving the range of words in writing. The study yielded rather surprising findings in showing that the correlation between various activities and the range of words in writing is positive yet quite weak. This finding suggests that exposure to English outside classrooms for leisure purposes has very little contribution to the range of words used in writing by L2 tertiary learners. The reasons of their poor intake of vocabulary items from activities outside classrooms might be the frequency of encounters, the quality of engagement and the learning strategies. Recent studies on collocations unravel the similar trend. Webb, Newton and Chang (2013) suggested that a repetition of 5 times would witness gains in receptive knowledge of form and a repetition of 15 times is needed to witness sizable gains on both receptive and productive knowledge of form and meaning. However, receptive activities such as watching movies may not afford enough repetition for learning to occur. Rogers and Webb (2011) showed that, in one TV series, *House*, 51% of the word families occur only once, and 6% of the word families occur for 10 times and more. The range of words that occur for more than 10 times was much lower in unrelated TV series, which were 2%. For learning to occur, learners should be aware of the necessity to stay on the related movies or TV series if they regard watching movies and TV series as potential sources of learning vocabulary items.

The quality of engagement also affects the extent to which the exposure to English outside classrooms contributes to the use of words in writing. The strongest correlation between immersion and knowledge of collocations in Fernandez and Schmitt (2015) accentuates the importance of authentic linguistic environment in language learning (Adolphs & Durrow, 2004). The participants in this study have no prior experience of staying in English-speaking countries. Their exposure to English could hardly offer authentic socio-cultural integration that is essential for sizable gains in language development. The primary part of the input they receive from outside classroom engagement were receptive learning mode. It is very likely that the exposure may have greater contribution to the receptive knowledge of vocabulary, but quite limited to the productive use of them in writing (Webb, 2012).

Another factor that contributes to the quality of the engagement is the motivation of learners. Bardovi-Harlig (2012) found that users' positive engagement in the interaction is crucial to the appropriate use of formulaic sequences. Dornyei, Durow and Zahran (2004) concluded that "success in acquiring formulaic sequences is strongly related to the learners' active involvement in some English-speaking community" (2004:102). One interesting result of the study is that only in the second year of study when positive correlation was found between activities outside classrooms and the range of words in writing. The data was collected four months prior to a high-stake national exam on English-major study. Students were under great pressure at the time of data collection, and they had great extrinsic motivation to improve their knowledge of collocation and range of words in writing to help them pass the examination.

Learning strategy adopted by learners is also another factor that contributes to the potential incidental learning of vocabulary items from exposure to English. Gu (2003) found out that, regardless of their high achievement in language learning and style of using learning strategies, the two learners use rote learning extensively. Chinese learners' dependence on rote learning is well documented in various researches into learning strategies (Ding, 2007; Gan, Humphreys & Hamp-Lyons, 2004). It is possible that, without special attention on vocabulary items using rote learning, the exposure to English outside classrooms is rather inefficient in contributing to the vocabulary learning.

Pedagogical Implications

There are three important pedagogical implications of this study. When learning or teaching the collocational knowledge of target words, it would be very useful to include information, i.e., morphological variation that might help learners to use words productively in writing. The weak correlation between receptive knowledge of collocation and lexical variation reveals the difficulties that learners have in translating receptive knowledge into productive use in free writing. Teachers and learners might use the dictionary entries of the node words in order to teach the collocates of the words to entrench the various morphological forms in learners' memory. For example, when learners encounter the new word *entrench*, the morphological variations like *entrenches*, *entrenched*, *entrenchment* might be elaborated to help learners understand various forms in order to use them in writing with confidence.

The second pedagogical implication is to teach the mid-frequency words explicitly, especially the words at 5,000-word level, to tertiary learners. The tertiary learners are at a stage when they are aspired to move on to academic study at postgraduate level. Mid-

frequency words would be especially useful for them at this stage of learning. Zhang and Liu (2015) found out that, for the three textbooks that were used by most Chinese universities, the target vocabulary size was 2,976, 4148 and 3501 respectively. These are well below the 5,000-word level. The finding suggests that the textbooks that learners use could hardly satisfy their needs for vocabulary learning. Teachers and learners alike might need to put serious efforts on expanding their vocabulary size using supplementary materials from extra-curricular resources.

The last pedagogical implication concerns the need for guidance on the English-medium activities outside classrooms to increase the possibility for incidental learning. Learners need to be aware of the possible factors that might influence incidental learning efficiency, for example, frequency of occurrence, learning strategies and quality of engagement. In the selection of books for reading or TV series to watch, it would be beneficial to select the same author's book series, books of the same genre to improve the frequency of occurrence of vocabulary items (Chang, 2016). The same method applies to TV series. To witness significant improvement in incidental learning takes much longer period considering the current amount of exposure to English outside classrooms indicated by the participants. Teachers might step in and guide tertiary learners in organizing the English-medium activities outside classrooms, at least at the initial stage, rather than let learners grope in the darkness.

Conclusion

This study explores the correlation between receptive knowledge of collocations and the quality of lexical use in writing (measured in terms of lexical variation) and the correlation between exposure to English outside classroom and the quality of lexical use in writing. This study has raised important pedagogical implications for EFL tertiary learners.

The results show that, instead of demonstrating stronger correlation with the improvement in proficiency, the strength of the correlation between the two variables do not follow a linear development with the progression of study. The correlation between the receptive knowledge of collocations and lexical variation were quite weak based on the results of the analysis. Significant correlation between the two variables are found among year two and year three learners.

The analysis into the correlation between knowledge of words at four frequency levels and lexical variation shows that, with the improvement in the proficiency levels, learners need knowledge of more infrequent words to improve the variety of words used in writing.

Among the knowledge of words of four frequency levels, significant correlation with lexical variation across three years of study is only identified in the 5000-word level.

There are very weak correlations between the exposure to English outside classrooms and lexical variation in writing. The results show that watching movies and television programs and listening to music are correlated weakly to first year and second year learners. There are no correlations found between reading books and social communication with lexical variation for all three levels of learners. The results raise serious concern among EFL learners and teachers alike who intend to make a beeline for improving the use of language through incidental learning.

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Professional Development Experiences in Reading Comprehension Instruction: L2 Teacher Reactions to Strategic Approaches in South Korea

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Abstract

The L1 and L2 reading research to date (see van Keer & Verhaeghe, 2005; Scharlach, 2008) reveals that reading strategies have widely been acknowledged as effective methods that contribute to achieving higher-level reading comprehension. Although significant empirical research has been embarked upon in order to confirm theories of reading comprehension, research on teacher education of reading strategy instruction has been limited (Sailors &

Price, 2015). Considering that effective teaching influences students' performances, it is imperative to strengthen the tie between research and practice in teacher education on reading strategy instruction, aimed at propagating the use of reading strategies in the educational environment. This article analyzes data from a teacher development program, and assesses reading comprehension strategies in a Korean educational context. The data analysis is based on the reflective writings of 87 EFL teachers who registered for TESOL graduate programs in South Korea. The report reveals overall positive views on the use of reading strategies in improving students' reading comprehension, but simultaneously shows teachers' concerns over the practical applicability of the methodologies in the classroom. Such doubts prevail to an extent whereby teachers perceive the challenges as overwhelming obstacles. This perception must be overcome in order successfully to implement reading strategies.

Key words: reading comprehension, reading strategies, reading strategy instruction, teacher education, English as a foreign language, South Korea

Introduction

Reading comprehension strategies have been identified as contributing significantly to improving reading comprehension (Kim, 2015; Park, 2010; Scharlach, 2008; Song, 1999; van Keer & Verhaeghe, 2005). The higher mental agencies of cognition and metacognition are seen to work interactively with the lower-level reading processes involving letter identification and decoding text, and the interface between these two dimensions of reading processes assists in achieving higher-level reading comprehension (Hudson, 2007). The value of reading strategy instruction (RSI) is also reflected in a number of studies which reveal that better readers are likely to use such strategies more effectively for text comprehension and for trouble-shooting (McNeil, 2012).

As a teaching method, RSI implements a number of approaches in the course curriculum, designed to enhance reading comprehension. These include reciprocal teaching (RT) (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) and questioning the author (QtA) (Beck & McKeown, 2001), on which the current study is based. RT is a type of reading intervention designed to help poor readers through "comprehension-fostering and comprehension-monitoring activities" (Palincsar & Brown, 1984, p. 117) including "summarizing (self-review), questioning, clarifying, and predicting" (p. 120). One of the main goals of the intervention is to improve autonomy in students' reading of new, unfamiliar texts by encouraging readers to use cognitive and metacognitive techniques. QtA, another popular intervention utilizing

reading strategies, is designed to direct student attention to identifying and connecting the ideas in the text (McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009). Its aim is to foster comprehension through classroom discussion created by, among other things, open-ended teacher questions, and following-up on student responses, to support a coherent and collective understanding of the text being read.

Despite the apparent benefits of RSI, reading instructors often find it difficult to incorporate the methodology into their regular reading curriculum, describing it as challenging and difficult to teach. A number of studies involving teacher training, and coaching of reading strategies, document challenges and barriers teachers face in implementing RSI (Akyol & Ulusoy, 2010; Bryant, Linan-Thompson, Ugel, Hamff & Hougen, 2001; Hilden & Pressley, 2007; Kennedy, 2016; Sailors & Price, 2009, 2015). Additionally, even teachers who participate in development programs, and report a positive change in attitude toward RSI, express less willingness to teach reading strategies than would be expected based on their praise of the positive effects that RSI can create in enhancing reading comprehension (Klapwijk & van der Walt 2011; Pomerantz & Pierce, 2013; Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm & Klingner, 1998).

To address this commonly observed issue in teacher training/coaching programs of RSI, previous studies have documented the types of difficulty teachers experienced (Bryant, Linan-Thompson, Ugel, Hamff & Hougen, 2001; Hilden & Pressley, 2007; Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, & Klingner, 1998). Some have classified experimental conditions which have resulted in better performance in reading instruction given by participating teachers (Pomerantz & Pierce, 2013; Sailors & Price, 2009), and others have categorized types of reading strategies applied by good reading teachers (Akyol & Ulusoy, 2010). Additional research has identified kinds of help needed to achieve better preparation among teachers through reinforcing motivational factors (Klapwijk & van der Walt, 2011) and by boosting teachers' self-efficacy (Varghese, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans, 2016).

In South Korea (Korea, hereafter), although research that investigates the effect of reading strategies affecting students' reading comprehension is plentiful (Joh, 2000; Kim, 1993; Kim, 2007; Park, 1996; Park, 2015; Park & Lee, 2011), teacher training literature on RSI is almost nonexistent (Joh & Seon, 2007; Lee, 2015; Maeng, 2014; Moodie & Nam, 2016). Although it cannot be singled out as the sole reason for the conditions on the ground, it has been pointed out that the Korean education system plays a major role in affecting how the class dynamics unfold. In particular, the "test-driven nature of education" (Moodie & Nam, 2016, p. 78) has been identified as one of the major sources of confusion and

frustration among educators, as well as other stakeholders such as students and parents in Korea, when it comes to applying non-traditional teaching methodologies, such as the communicative approach. The lack of progressive literature on teacher training programs for English education in Korea could well be linked to changes in English education policy and state-level targets.

Although there have been teacher education programs for English instructors in Korea since 1982, more systematic English teacher training programs, with a greater educational focus on improving the communicative competence of students, did not begin until 1997 as a result of government initiatives (Kim, 1999). In 2007, also as a result of government initiatives, teacher training programs were further organized and systematized. The Korean Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) put forward teacher training programs aimed at improving the ability of teachers to teach English in English (Kim, Kim, Lee, & Woo, 2010). Since English education before the policy changes was heavily criticized due to students' general underperformance in the area of speaking, the emphasis of the revisions was not placed on reading skills. Reading and writing skills were not actively encouraged (although they were not deliberately discouraged) as a national policy for high school students until 2015 when the latest educational policy changes took place. For example, in accordance with a report published by Ministry of Education in 2015, reading and writing skills were newly-added as target skills to be reinforced for middle school and high school curriculums, while they were absent from the previous educational standards set by the Ministry of Education in 2009 (Ministry of Education, 2015).

This study represents an initial attempt to address English teacher training program on RSI in Korea, uniquely, by addressing attitudes and evaluations toward RSI as assessed by the participating teachers themselves. It reveals that although participating teachers were mostly positive about the use of reading strategies, their expressed concerns and reported difficulties in implementing RSI in class, confirmed a need to appropriately approach the new student-centered reading skills. This study aims to clarify the sources of teachers' perceived problems with the implementation of RSI. Scrutinizing the root causes of difficulties as perceived by teachers, can suggest ways to overcome the challenges and help increase the chance that teachers implement RSI successfully in their classrooms. In addition, the design of teacher development programs can be more robust if based on actual needs analysis and the perceptions of challenges reported by teachers themselves, rather than on government-oriented, plan-driven goals and objectives (Kim, 2012), which can often ignore teachers' perspectives and underestimate teachers' roles in the process of teacher development

(Klapwijk, 2012). Furthermore, by identifying the features of RSI for better teacher preparation, this study aims to help propagate the use of reading strategies in actual reading classrooms for the benefit of students.

The paper commences with a review of the literature relevant to teacher training or professional development programs of RSI in Korea and other countries. This will be followed by an overview of the data utilized in this analysis. The findings of the current research are then developed from a qualitative perspective under the three main themes: (1) analysis of teachers' generally positive attitudes toward RSI; (2) description of their perceptions concerning difficulties and challenges they will face in implementing RSI in the classroom; and (3) assessment of the impact of teachers' confusion surrounding RSI. The paper concludes with pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research.

Literature Review

Concerns surrounding RSI

Reading intervention training programs for teachers are seen as essential in promoting RSI in real classroom settings (Liang & Dole, 2006; Sailors & Price, 2015). Professional development programs for reading intervention strategies are designed to assist teachers who do not feel they know enough about RSI to teach them (Hilden & Pressley, 2007) or for those who express that ways to implement RSI in the classroom are unfamiliar to them (Klapwijk, 2012). However, in reality, even teachers who reported that they used reading strategies during their own reading time also failed to use RSI when teaching in class.

Examining practices of strategies-based instruction (or a "metacognitive strategy approach", p. 108), Kuzborska (2011) compared bottom-up driven reading instruction (or "skills-based approach", *ibid.*) with top-down reading instruction (or "whole-language approach", *ibid.*). She followed the practices of eight EFL teachers in a Lithuanian university and found that in real teaching situations, most teachers relied more on skills-based approaches than strategies-based approaches. Akyol and Ulusoy (2010) conducted a study in Turkey based on questionnaires conducted with 505 pre-service teachers, revealing that although teachers reported that they used reading strategies a great deal, in classrooms their actual teaching of reading strategies was far less than what they reported they used for their own reading.

Although professional development programs seek to enhance teacher knowledge and qualifications with the ultimate aim of impacting students' performance, concerns have also arisen regarding the quality of the professional development programs themselves. Designs

and processes of some development programs aimed at training teachers, also differ greatly from the general recommendations of researchers in the field, thereby causing confusion for teachers looking to attain skills appropriate to teaching strategies. Dewitz, Jones, and Leahy (2009) point out that training programs frequently offer more strategies than what is recommended by researchers, potentially leading to a loss of focus on the skills critical to reading strategies.

Kennedy (2016) also claims that not all development programs are bound to succeed. Based on a review of 28 articles addressing development programs for teachers, she found that different foci of individual programs, and disjointed perspectives of teacher educators interpreting how they should be run, yielded differing effects to those mandated by research-based recommendations.

Challenges and Difficulties in Implementing RSI

Although reading intervention programs for teachers are seen as essential in promoting RSI in class (Liang & Dole, 2006; Sailors & Price, 2015), many studies report discrepancies between teachers' positive testimony on RSI and their less enthusiastic implementation of related practices in class (Akyol & Ulusoy, 2010; Kuzborska, 2011).

Teacher reluctance in adopting RSI in the classroom was related to challenges and barriers faced in the implementation of reading strategies. In a report on development programs designed to help general education teachers improve reading and writing skills among students with learning disabilities, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, and Klingner (1998) recorded factors that hindered implementation of the practices as well as those facilitating it. To illustrate, after practicing Collaborative strategic reading (CSR), one of the four intervention programs employed in the study, teachers reported time as being an issue when implementing strategies. Generally, it was felt that CSR took too much time as students progressed very slowly, and the situation was exacerbated by the presence of lower-level students, as well as other conflicting educational aims, such as students' preparation for standardized tests.

Such challenges were also reported by teachers when learning to teach strategy-based instruction for reading. Hilden & Pressley (2007) documented nine challenges based on researcher field notes, class observations, and informal interviews with five fifth-grade teachers in Michigan. These challenges were: 1) a gap between strategy instruction provided by researchers and the real classroom situations; 2) teacher reluctance in trying specific reading approaches; 3) integration issues of the programs with the regular school curriculum; 4) difficulty in finding texts appropriate for student levels; 5) challenges in leading students

to use strategies on their own; 6) classroom management issues; 7) teachers' difficulty in finding time to study and read professional materials relevant to reading strategies; 8) a limited range of student ages fit for strategy instruction (for example, only fit for the students in 5th grade); and 9) difficulty in assessing student performance.

In addition, when teachers implement RSI themselves, a number of practical issues have been documented. Pomerantz and Pierce (2013) report the challenges faced by 25 teachers who participated in the first year of their research project, and 11 teachers in the second year, at a low-performing school in an American urban city. While a majority of participants reported no trouble explaining and describing strategies to students, many teachers under- or over-modeled the strategies, making it difficult for students to practice them on their own.

The challenges teachers experienced while teaching RSI were also researched developmentally. Klapwijk (2012) reported challenges in the initial stage of a 15-week long teacher development program in South Africa, from three participating teachers who were new to RSI. After a half-day workshop learning about RSI, and a one-week long preparation with the help of the researcher, the teachers began to teach RSI to a total of 163 fourth to sixth graders for two academic terms. Based on the classroom observations and informal group meetings during the period, the researcher filed teachers' reactions to RSI and recorded the developmental changes that the teachers experienced, using a modified "four distinct phases" by Block & Duffy (2008, cited in Klapwijk, 2012, p.195): "(1) expectation, (2) implementation, (3) experimentation, and (4) independence" (*ibid.*). The findings were that teachers' initial high expectations on the effect of intervention programs were soon confronted with a realization that the success of the program depended on time and effort invested by the teachers on a constant basis. The implementation phase is characterized as constant monitoring of performance by the teachers against the norms of RSI in a somewhat unsophisticated manner, mainly in terms of a strict dichotomy of "right" and "wrong". In the experimentation phase, teachers gain a deeper understanding of RSI, from simple application of specific techniques, to synthesizing various aspects of teaching RSI holistically. Reaching the final phase of independent use of RSI was found to be difficult, as only one participant showed increased autonomy, not needing any help from the researcher. During the whole process of practicing RSI, pre-existing factors such as class size or students' literacy levels remained influential on the participating teachers' learning trajectory.

Korean Literature on Reading Comprehension Instruction

In a Korean context, the effect of RSI enhancing students' reading comprehension has been relatively well documented (Kim, 1993; Kim, 2007; Park, 1996; Park, 2015). There is little research, however, on teacher education regarding RSI beyond marginal mention in several meta-analyses on RSI, reading research in general, or English teacher training programs. Joh and Seon (2007) reviewed 77 papers published from three major Korean journals, from 1995 to 2005, on the subject of reading in the Korean context. Among four categories identified, 26 papers were written on reading instruction. Among them, reading instruction for learners and step-wise reading instructions were the main two sub-categories, but none discussed teacher training regarding reading strategies.

Maeng (2014) conducted a meta-analysis on studies relevant to RSI, for which she initially searched 448 RSI related articles, but found that few mentioned or were concerned with teacher education on RSI. If there were any, they seemed to discuss general experiences and challenges that teachers felt after attending a government-led teacher training program. The lack of existing literature in the area of teacher training on RSI in a Korean context is also mentioned in Lee (2015) through a meta-analysis on the 123 reading-related articles published in Korea from 1965 to 2014. RSI accounts for 14% of studies during this period, with none written on teacher training on RSI. In a review of recent studies from 2009 to 2014 on English language teaching in Korea, Moodie and Nam (2016) discuss education programs for English language teachers. However, none of the studies reviewed were on RSI. Where articles addressed teacher training, they were more to do with general English education on, for example, teaching English through English (TETE) or how to help teachers focus more on communicative-centered teaching (e.g., Ahn, 2010; Kwon, 2010).

Although research on teacher education for general English has a limited presence in the literature, research specific to RSI is almost nonexistent. This article, therefore, aims to investigate reading strategy instruction for teachers in the Korean educational context based on the written reflections of a sample of 87 teachers. The analysis aims, in particular, to clarify the origins of teachers' perceived problems with RSI implementation. Scrutinizing the causes of difficulty, and in particular developing an understanding of the way teachers perceive the obstacles, can help increase the chance of finding a solution to them that will facilitate teachers' implementation of RSI in their classrooms. Furthermore, by identifying the features of RSI for better teacher preparation, this study may help propagate RSI in actual reading classrooms for the benefit of students. Thus, this article aims to capture a clearer

picture of the teacher's perceived problems and challenges and how this affects the level of confidence in using RSI among teachers by examining their reflective writings.

Data

The participating teachers in this analysis are in-service and pre-teachers who enrolled in a TESOL program at a Korean university in Seoul. The data collected for this analysis relate to three separate classes that were open from 2013 to 2014, and in 2016, with a total of 87 reflection papers collected. The course curriculum was designed to guide teachers in teaching reading comprehension strategies, and in the use of two reading interventions; reciprocal teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) and questioning the author (Beck & McKeown, 2001).

The data is roughly evenly divided between the two strategies, with 44 reports for RT, and 43 for QtA. The following procedures were utilized in order to collect data. First, general theories and various ways to execute RSIs were delivered and demonstrated to teachers in a three-hour-long class. They then selected one of the RSIs for a 20-minute-long microteaching session. Drawing on peer-reviews, and guided by several open-ended questions, the teachers wrote a reflection on their own teaching in English, which was then edited by the authors for clarity. The guiding questions (for the complete questionnaires, see appendix 1) were designed as semi-open ended so that teachers could reflect freely on the lesson they prepared and executed. It aimed to encourage teachers to evaluate their own teaching of RSI, so that they would be able to gauge the compatibility of RSI with their individual teaching habits, patterns, and styles. In addition, it encouraged teachers to position themselves as potential instructors of RSI in deciding whether or not to adopt it in their own teaching, and also how best to modify RSI in a way optimally to fuse it into their regular teaching class.

The participants' reflections on their own microteaching performance are the major source of data for the current study. Such experience provides the participants with opportunities for both evaluating the practical skills and strategies, and gauging their applicability for practice (Ahn, 2010 & 2013; Park, 2009). The activities, therefore, play a significant role bridging theory and practice (Park, 2009). Reflection-based methodology has been adopted as a way to collect data for research of practical theories. Practical theories in an educational sector are mainly concerned with teachers' formative experience and their own perspectives on it, as a psychological and social construct; for example, under the terms of, "teacher identity formation" (Korkko & Turunen, 2016, p. 199), "commitment" (Moodie & Feryok, 2015), and "narrative inquiry" (Moodie, 2016, p. 3). These studies have utilized reflection by the participating teachers as a core research instrument to reveal how teachers'

past experiences influence the formation of teachers' pedagogical beliefs and perspectives, as new knowledge comes in through, for example, teacher education programs in "social, political and cultural contexts" (Korkko & Turunen, 2016, p. 199).

Finally, the current study adopts qualitative analysis following the "card sort technique" proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Nunan & Bailey, 2009, pp. 424-5). As a method developed for the analysis of qualitative data, this technique is often adopted to find themes in written as well as spoken data. The methodology helps to establish categories found in the data in a way to specify descriptors of the identified themes.

Findings

From the teacher responses (teacher comments are transcribed in the immediately following section) several themes emerged. First, teachers displayed generally positive attitudes toward RSI, praising the method as an effective tool to help increase students' reading comprehension. However, their approvals did not come without difficulties and challenges being raised with regard to practicing various skills required to implement RSI in class. Furthermore, confusion arose regarding how to implement RSI, as is revealed in the conflicting responses among teachers. These three themes will be discussed in detail in the following analytical section. They have been summarized and organized in accordance with the following headings.

1. Teachers' generally positive attitudes toward RSI
2. Perceived difficulties and challenges in implementation
3. Confusion surrounding RSI

Teachers' Generally Positive Attitudes toward RSI

The teachers generally approved the positive role of RSI in contributing to improved reading comprehension, while critical comments about RSI were rare in their reflections. Below can be found excerpts of teacher comments under the five main themes identified.

The five themes shown in the left-most column of Table 1, correspond to the well-known aspects of RSI as established in the previous literature (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Each theme was categorized by recurring words that were written by the teachers. In other words, the terms are related to these themes and to the perceived positive impact of RSI, as they occur in the reflective reports that teachers completed after microteaching.

Table 1

Teachers' Positive Comments on RSI

Themes	Teacher comment
1. Independent reading skills	L. W. (RT 16-3), "What is more, its goal of raising an independent and autonomous learner may be a common dream for all language teachers."
2. Deeper understanding	H. J. (QtA16-5), "Also, teachers help students develop much deeper understanding through follow-up questions. Response processes make learners interact with text deeply."
3. Scaffolding	R. S. (QtA 16-3), "The scaffolded support helps all students to participate. Fundamentally it gets students thinking and engaging with a text, and delineates the reading process."
4. Student participation and collaboration	H. W. (RT 14-10), "I learned that students enjoyed learning with social interaction. I am sure that it is more dynamic and fun than teacher-directed lessons."
5. Metacognition	H. Y. (RT 16-4), "Students had opportunities to ask their own questions and to assess the quality of their questions."

(In parentheses: Type of reading strategies, where RT is Reciprocal Teaching, and QtA is Questioning the Author. Comment numbered in accordance with Year-Teacher report)

As teachers had studied the RSI related literature before microteaching, their reflection could serve as a confirmation process of the RSI theories they learned previously in comparison with the practical experience of instructing RSI. The terms used reveal that teachers viewed positively the potential effects among learners of such features associated with RSI. Independent reading skills and achievement of a deeper understanding of text, as identified in Themes 1 and 2, were mentioned by teachers as two major gains, as they believed RSI ultimately contributed to a better student reading performance, again, confirming their understanding of the pre-studied literature about RSI. Themes 3, 4, and 5, scaffolding, participation and collaboration, and the use of metacognition are concerned with the methodological aspects of RSI; features that are associated with how the purposes of RSI, for example, those of Themes 1 and 2, could be achieved. Scaffolding, under Theme 3, is a concept in developmental psychology that was proposed by Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Its major premise is that a student's learning should be facilitated by expert mediation, with the student initially observing the expert's modeling and then gradually increasing participation and responsibility, until they reach the full potential of performance of the targeted skill. It was apparent that participating teachers in this study were aware of their scaffolding role and how it contributed to students' reading comprehension. Teachers also paid attention to students' active participation and cooperation with their peers,

under Theme 4. Their awareness of student participation and cooperation also reflects their understanding of RSI based on the literature. For example, through students' modeling and offering feedback for one other (Palincsar & Brown, 1998) and questioning and initiating comments voluntarily among students (Beck & McKeown, 2001), a higher standard of performance may be achieved. Lastly, under Theme 5, teachers understood rather thoroughly the dependence on metacognition when using RSI. Metacognition, according to Palincsar & Brown (1984), is used when monitoring comprehension and the progress of the reader's understanding of the text.

In general, teacher reflection revealed a positive reception of RSI. Although their experience with RSI had only just begun, with the classroom lecture and discussion, and their first microteaching, the teachers on the whole showed enthusiasm to learn more about RSI and a willingness to teach RSI to their students. However, their reports also revealed recognition of potential difficulties and challenges in implementing RSI during and after microteaching, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Perceived Difficulties and Challenges in Implementation

While teachers' responses to RSI were positive in terms of its role in enhancing students' reading comprehension, they also reported a degree of hesitation in the use of RSI in their actual teaching, revealing a lack of teacher confidence. Again, while a handful of teachers reported confidence in their ability to employ RSI in future classes, the majority were skeptical about utilizing RSI in classrooms. Even the teachers who considered themselves confident using RSI, expressed a desire for more time to practice its methodology. In other words, teachers generally held positive attitudes toward what RSI could potentially offer, but were negative about the applicability of RSI in their own teaching. Table 2 is derived from a detailed analysis of teachers' reports, and reflects teachers' perceived difficulties and challenges in implementing RSI.

Difficulties and challenges were reported in several areas. In some instances, teachers perceived problems as originating from their own shortcomings, attributing the source of implementation challenges to lacking confidence in their own ability. These can be categorized as internal factors. In other areas, they identified challenges they met while interacting with the students in the process of instructing RSI, categorized below as procedural factors. External factors, viewed as conditions related to the broader operating environment within which RSI is taught form a third category of reported challenges. External factors identified for this study involve, for example, a wrong choice of text, mixed

level students, or size of class unfit for RSI. Teacher comments also related to cultural perspectives associated with the Korean education system. Finally, teachers pointed to language issues when teaching RSI in English as a medium of instruction, revolving around being second language speakers themselves while also teaching L2 students. Each theme will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Table 2

Perceived Difficulties and Challenges in Implementing RSI

Themes	Difficulties and challenges in implementing RSI	Teacher comment
1. Internal factors	Teachers attributing challenges to their own shortcomings, taking them as issues that arise as part of personal development	L. W. (RT16-3), “The biggest limitation of my microteaching is not on the change of the format, but the fact that I didn’t make the quality question important for the class.”
2. Procedural factors	Teachers meeting challenges while conducting RSI, e.g., sequencing questions or scaffolding	M. N. (QtA 13-8), “So far so good until I asked closed questions to my active student, Mike, “Do you agree with SK?” But, I should have asked a follow-up question, “if yes, why?”
3. External factors	Teachers locating incidences of teaching challenges which rest outside their control, e.g., class management, choice of reading text, and student level	K. Y. (RT 14-1), “Choosing a text would be challenging... because of the difference of students’ reading proficiency.”
4. Social and cultural factors	Difficulties that stem from culture unique to Korea, e.g., the Korean education system affecting the way in which students respond to RSI	R. K. (QtA 16-2), “(from feedback received from classmate-students), they didn’t know how to respond to my questions (during microteaching). I need to realize that the open-ended nature of some of the questions is quite foreign to students who are comfortable with learning a ‘correct’ answer.”
5. Language issues	Issues that arise when EFL teachers conduct a lesson in the L2	H. J. (RT 14-6), “RT needs teachers to have a certain level of professional skills and language ability. I have to develop my own teaching skills and language ability.”

Theme 1. Internal Factors

The microteaching experience seems to have drawn teachers' attention to their personal ability and confidence, related to whether they would be able to teach RSI in their own classrooms. Such internal evaluation led teachers to reflect on the compatibility of their current level of expertise with their perceived knowledge of RSI and its requirements. Overall, this seemed to have caused confusion, fear of making mistakes, and underestimation of their potential, which is normally observed in the initial stage of teacher reaction in a teacher training program (Lee & Chung, 2012).

In the data, a number of teachers reported that they did not feel ready to teach RSI due to a lack of confidence in their own ability. They expressed concerns that teaching RSI is not an easy task, that it requires long-term practice (e.g., thorough preparation for text analysis with extensive background knowledge), time to familiarize oneself with the teaching techniques, and more teaching experience, expertise (e.g., thorough understanding of the strategies), and patience. Comparing what is required to implement RSI as a would-be successful teacher, with the assessment of their current level of knowledge on RSI, seemed to lead to a negative view of RSI in terms of its applicability. Below can be found several teacher comments regarding their self-perceived ability to run RSI.

J. K. (QtA16-11), "I followed the flow chart of potential QtA of 'Answer part'. However, when they get a wrong answer, it was a bit confusing to follow the answer 'No part' because those instructions were not familiar to me."

H. J. (QtA 16-5), "I have to observe other teaching videos using QtA and practice a lot in order to use it freely and properly, and focus on observing students and helping them. Also, I think I have to know how to analyze a text thoroughly."

S. Y. (RT 14-2), "...because I am so used to teacher-centered lessons. (Also) using RT takes so much effort in preparation."

Generally, teachers seem to know intuitively the level of understanding with which they should be equipped when it comes to performing a certain teaching methodology, regardless of whether or not their actual level of knowledge meets the expectations required for the pedagogy to be implemented (Lee, 2006). Thus, teachers' evaluation on what they lack at the initial stage of applying the method should make a good starting point before they attempt launching it in practice. Despite concerns over their ability to teach RSI, the data shows that teachers were able to make a fair judgment on what was needed to be known and exercised for a successful implementation of RSI. This is important because such evaluation helps teachers locate where they are, assessing the current state of knowledge in the initial stage of learning a new teaching method from a long-term perspective (Sailors & Price, 2009). The

result of teachers' internal evaluation of their own ability and confidence carries practical significance as it can influence decisions on whether or not to adopt RSI in their teaching routine, and also, consequently, affecting the time and effort teachers would be willing to invest in learning and teaching RSI.

Theme 2 Procedural Factors

Procedural factors are difficulties teachers encountered while conducting RSI, such as challenges that occurred while scaffolding and sequencing questions during interaction with students. In the teachers' reflective writings, for example, despite being fluent EFL speakers, many of them felt that they were not good enough to provide online assistance in making the right type of quality questions, expanding a students' initial question to more focused follow-up questions, and developing students' thinking processes in terms of scaffolding. The following comments illustrate such concerns.

E. H. (RT 13-3), "Even though I understood the importance of scaffolding or L2 learning, it was really difficult to practice it with patience. While watching students confusing my directions, I became anxious too, and resorted to my old teaching practice. Without providing students with the needed scaffolding, I kept encouraging them to answer at least my questions and decided to move on. Practicing scaffolding was much tougher than I expected it to be."

M. J. (QtA 14-13), "Before microteaching, I made a list of as many initiating questions and follow-up questions as possible. Because there were some moments when it did not go as I expected, I had to change some questions on the spot."

Many teachers seemed to have difficulties during the process of running RSI. Most were aware of the need to assist students step-by-step through developing questions from general to more focused, in a way that was appropriate in each developmental stage, while at the same time interacting with the students. Whereas their knowledge of RSI was apparent before and during microteaching, their actions did not seem to reflect the level of knowledge they possessed. As a result, many resorted to traditional teaching methods, basically giving the answers to students, or rushing into giving the wrong follow-up questions during scaffolding. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that, although some teachers who were aware of the need and difficulty to provide online assistance during scaffolding prepared a list of questions to ask beforehand, the spontaneous nature of interaction between teacher and students demanded questions differing from the ones that were already prepared.

The challenges that occur procedurally while instructing RSI are developmental in nature, meaning the teachers' ability to deal with procedural challenges requires extensive

experience and expertise. Concerns surrounding these issues are reflected in much of the previous literature. For example, Hilden & Pressley (2007) suggested that for successful implementation of reading strategies, teachers should familiarize themselves with the strategies for a minimum of a year, as RSI requires long-term practice. Pomerantz & Pierce (2013) observed that a more extended time frame is needed for teachers to implement RSI. In a two year-long teacher training program that the researchers initiated, only a handful of participating teachers among 25 participating ones were able to transfer responsibility of the use of strategies to students; a so-called, “gradual release of responsibility” (p. 104) process of guiding students to the independent use of strategies by the students themselves. According to the authors, RSI proceeded with a regular application of “explicit teaching and demonstration of a skill or strategy, guided practice, and independent application (by the students themselves)” (ibid.). It was only after the post-experimental period, after the 2-year time frame, when all but one of the teachers showed strong signs of active application of RSI in terms of gradual release of responsibility.

The procedural and developmental aspect of RSI carries a significant implication which needs be fully informed or even pre-warned to the participating teachers in the initial stage of the training program before it begets frustration to a point where effort is abandoned. That is to say, the scaffolding nature of RSI, with the gradual release of responsibility, requires experience and expertise developed over a long period of time, and which cannot be acquired with a single, one-time effort. Teachers need to be aware of this time commitment, and the incremental nature of knowledge acquisition.

Theme 3 External Factors

Whereas internal factors reflected the teachers’ own perceived shortcomings, they also reported external factors existing beyond their control as potentially hindering their ability to practice RSI. Among these, many teachers listed uneven levels and unbalanced participation among students, large class sizes, lack of teacher autonomy in choosing a text to read, resulting in the use of an officially designated textbook that does not match with the students’ level, and a lack of time to prepare RSI, as it was perceived as a time-intensive methodology. As external factors are perceived as beyond the ability of teachers to control, the room to ease the difficulty caused by the external factors seems to be limited. This is reflected in the teacher report below,

M. J. (RT 16-8), “Since I would not be able to select the text I find appropriate for my class in most cases, I would have to find a way to incorporate RT using the text assigned to me regardless of how horrible I think the reading may be.”

The treatment of external factors to relieve the pressure teachers might feel in running RSI may need be addressed through administrative intervention. This includes at the institutional level, such as support from the school principal regarding supplies of reading materials and time to be allotted for sustainable reading over a long-term period and on a regular basis (Pomerantz & Pierce, 2013); and also at the governmental level such as implementation of education policies in a way to promote and support RSI (Beck & McKeown, 2001).

Theme 4 Social and Cultural Factors

Social and cultural factors were derived from references to the Korean educational environment; for instance, the Korean education system affecting the way in which participating teachers responded to RSI. References to the Korean education system were made fairly frequently; about 20 times among 87 teacher reports. Teachers’ comments under this theme were mostly negative, mainly concerned with a low compatibility of RSI with the Korean educational focus for teaching English. For example, Korean educational goals are test-centered, and the national educational policy primarily determines the interaction between teacher and students as unidirectional, strictly from teacher directing, to students receiving teachers’ instruction. This serves, in a way, to meet the mutual goal for both parties in producing the largest number of correct answers in a limited time-frame. Test-oriented lessons are strongly associated with a teacher-fronted class, and the systems are mutually supportive with little conflict. Such a relationship consequently leads to the dominance of teacher talk over student talk, putting more emphasis on finding one correct answer, and viewing the process of learning (central to RSI) as insignificant.

C. S. (RT 14-9), “I found myself answering and summing up the student’s questions instead of making my student do it. I was in a hurry... I was not comfortable with using this technique because I have a tendency to talk a lot, just like my real class. Actually, discussion or asking questions between students are not common in almost every Korean English class in public school.”

J. Y. (QtA 16-11), “If general questions are asked, students might feel pressured because Korean students are familiar with answering only very specific questions and finding one answer.”

S. H. (QtA 14-15), “I did not respond to students’ comments on the author’s intentions or to their opinions in general. I just moved to the next step without continuing the discussion with students.”

The functioning of the Korean educational system may explain why RSI can be viewed as a construct foreign to teachers as well as students in the Korean context. Many teachers also consider RSI incompatible with the learning style with which most Korean students are familiar. They worry that Korean students do not feel comfortable expressing their own ideas and thinking for themselves in the L1 let alone in the L2 due to the extreme rarity of discussion-oriented classes paired with a lack of student participation in regular classes in Korea. The following comment reflects this aspect of difficulty in implementing RSI in a Korean context.

J. S. (QtA 13-11), “In the real second language class, I usually observe that the teacher leads the students and pushes them to read and write. Most students are passive in acquiring the language and their tasks. Maybe their teacher or their parents expect high test results. That’s why teachers can’t use various strategies in their class and they feel that it’s waste of time.”

Despite all, however, teachers displayed a positive stance in terms of the applicability of RSI in a Korean context, as stated below.

H. L. (QtA 16-8) “Although students in Korea feel that it is difficult to discuss their opinions in class, I think that QtA seems possible to use because students are not asked to talk about the right answers, or only important things. They are asked to express how they feel and learn to try to find clues together from the text.”

Under the current condition of Korean educational system, teachers think RSI can be put into use provided that RSI was applied with modification, for example, dividing the large class into smaller groups led by group leaders.

M. J.(QtA14-13), “Even though I know that QtA is a good strategy to use in improving students’ reading comprehension skills, I find it really hard to use this in my classes. The low applicability of QtA in Korean public school context comes from several reasons. I can come up with two reasons at the moment: the big class size and the mixed level class. To overcome the barriers, I can design it as group activity.”

In addition, teachers expressed the hope to learn more about successful cases from previous RSI research so that they could make a judgment themselves on the applicability of RSI in the Korean context.

N. N. (QtA 14-4), “It was not easy to teach the lesson applying the QtA as I had to elicit the answers with open-ended questions and summarize what students said and ask them back to connect their ideas to the text... My barrier is making open-ended questions regardless of genres of the reading. If I would have a chance to use this technique in my lesson, I think I have to read more books to become more knowledgeable as a teacher. I would like to take a look at more examples dealing with various genres and how it is used in actual classes in America so that I can apply to my class for Korean students.

All in all, teachers’ comments reflect the need for RSI in class despite the perceived limitations that cultural and social characteristics in the Korean educational system may generate when trying to put it in their own reading classes. To overcome these constraints, teachers intuitively sense that RSI needs modification to be applied in the Korean context, such as dividing up the class into smaller groups. For example, Shin (2005) reports that the success of a certain methodology depends on the ways in which the task being applied. According to her, as for cooperative reading strategies, small groups work better to create meaningful interaction. Teachers in this report do not seem to perceive cultural and social constraints as insurmountable, provided there is additional practice and training, or RSI is implemented with modification.

Theme 5 Language Issues

Difficulty in teaching RSI in the L2 was also identified as one of the biggest challenges for both teachers and students. For students, despite more participation in class discussion, they were seen as reluctant in speaking and participating in the L2 due to a lack of L2 proficiency. Teachers also displayed discomfort teaching RSI in class, especially when teachers had to ask follow-up questions eliciting students’ responses while scaffolding.

Y. H.(RT 14-1), “...making students accustomed to asking questions would not be easy because of their lack of L2 proficiency.”

However, teachers seemed to perceive the language issue as one which can be overcome significantly if, 1) their L2 proficiency is also improved through practice teaching

in the L2;2) they read more books written in the L2; and 3) they practice speaking and discussion in the L2.

K. G. (QtA 14-2), “In order to use this technique in my class, I should develop my language skill as well as metacognition.”

Y. J. (RT 14-8), “I need to practice questioning strategies ... in English. Because English is not my mother tongue, it’s not easy to make questions quickly and accurately with proper pronunciation, and using correct grammar that can be more understandable.”

K. M.(QtA 14-7), “(before microteaching) I thought I would be comfortable to use this technique but when I met difficulties, I started to feel uncomfortable. So, I had better read more books and develop speaking skills to overcome challenges. I would like to use QtA in my class.”

S. H.(QtA 14-15), “In order for me and my students to use this technique, students and I should improve fluency (in the L2). Also in order for me to use this strategy well, I need to improve my skill to lead the discussion.”

Such teachers’ general optimism over L2 use as a medium of instruction, to some extent, corresponds with the data in previous developmental research that demonstrated positive change among participants. In a six-month teacher training program for general English education, Lee & Chung (2012) reported that most participating teachers directed focus primarily on their lack of English proficiency at the initial stage. Toward the end of the program, however, the focal point of the self-evaluation on their own performance moved from mere English proficiency, toward the autonomous use of content knowledge and teacher skills.

Some teachers also suggested that RSI be applied in a regular content-based classes in the L1 as well as L2, stressing the cognitive and metacognitive aspects of RSI. Reporting a successful case of teaching QtA in L1, the following teachers’ comments are illuminating.

E.J. (QtA 13-3), “I think QtA is useful not only in English class but also in other classes in Korean. In fact, as for now, it seems that QtA is more proper to use in other classes taught in the students’ first language, where the students’ cognitive level and language level go together. In English class the students’ language level and cognitive level do not match, so it cannot be helped but to use simple and easy storybooks, especially for elementary students. If I use QtA in English class, I think, the Korean language can be allowed in discussion after reading.”

G.H. (QtA 13-7), “I could use this technique not in English class but in social science or art class using Korean language. I need to study how to apply this technique to my English class in an EFL environment.”

Considering that RSI is a top-down reading strategy based on the strength of higher mental agencies of cognition and metacognition, which was originally proposed in the L1 environment, L2 teachers’ comments as above reveal their clear understanding of the mechanisms of RSI. Through microteaching, teachers experienced that RSI relied heavily on teacher-student interactions, which also might have raised concerns over the language of interactions. Additionally, RSI requires teachers to use instructional language in particular ways, such as gradually releasing responsibility of the task, and scaffolding student thinking and performance during teacher-student interactions. This is important considering that teachers in Korea have shown concerns about controlling teacher talk (Park, 2009) and operating in an L2 (Lee & Chung, 2012).

The teachers’ comments made in this section confirm Korean English teachers’ general anxiety concerning speaking and teaching in the L2 at the initial stage, but this concern was perceived as something that can be improved over time. It indicates that a teacher development program needs be designed in a way to reflect teachers’ concerns about using L2, which can meet the needs of the learner-teachers and reflect the developmental change that is taking place as the program proceeds.

4.3 Confusion Surrounding RSI

The feedback from teachers revealed their understanding of reading strategies, not only in a way that corresponded to the literature of RSI but also that which differed from it, which potentially could have been a source of confusion among teachers. Instances of confusion in the responses are relatively limited in number. As such, from a quantitative perspective they are of dubious statistical relevance. Nevertheless, from a qualitative perspective, they are important as they are the product of substantial reflection on the part of the participants, and reveal how the RSI mission could actually be undermined from its inception in these cases. They confirm that in this series of activities, that is, reflection after microteaching, the participants thought deeply about what they understood to be the fundamentals of RSI, and the way these fundamentals manifest in practice through teacher-student interaction. Even if, as a result of confusion on these elements, some participants may have misunderstood aspects of the process, at the very least, this feedback gives evidence of

active engagement and thinking about the pedagogy, and identifies areas in which RSI instruction could perhaps be more clearly delineated.

Misconceptions over RSI arose in terms of 1) the amount of teacher talk; 2) the effect on students' free thinking, and 3) the choice of text in relation to student level. Regarding the amount of teacher talk, some teachers felt RSI required more teacher talk than traditional teaching methods. This is revealed in the following teacher comment,

S. Y. (RT 13-5), "In order to use the strategies well, I need to know about teacher talk, whether a teacher or a leader as facilitator in RT could give students the right answer to any questions related to the text after peers' scaffolding, and could repeat students' answers and add other information. My question is that it looks like too much teacher-talk."

While microteaching, this teacher was following the protocols of RSI as she understood them based on her prior reading of literature relevant to RSI, as revealed in a comment in another part of her reflection as shown below,

S. Y. (RT 13-5), "I had tried to encourage peers to think again about their own thought process and helps peers learn to be actively involved and monitor their comprehension as they read."

It is apparent that S. Y. was aware of the teacher role as an assistant helping students to stay on the right track towards the answer by eliciting students' participation and responses, while avoiding giving students an easy teacher-provided answer. However, going through this process, confusion occurred, leading her to conclude that RSI requires her to engage more, thereby resulting in "too much teacher talk". Quite a few teachers shared this sentiment regarding RSI as revealed below,

S. O. (RT 13-10), "To make students fully understand, RT will take more time than the traditional method."

T. M. (QtA 13-1), "This seems to be a teacher-centered technique as the teacher guides the students through discussion to help with comprehension of difficult ideas within a text."

Considering that the majority of participating teachers made positive comments about RSI in that it encouraged student participation via student discussion among peers as well as

with the teacher, these statements are somewhat surprising. Furthermore, other participants came to opposing conclusions about teacher talking time as recorded below.

J. Y. (RT 14-12), “(In RT), teacher should not talk too much, instead, they let students share their ideas freely and teachers just help them build the meaning themselves.”

S. H. (QtA 14-15), “In the teacher-centered classroom, too much teacher talk often occurs, which is hard to carry on. For QtA, students are the core of the learning process, and the teacher should listen carefully to student.”

It was also thought, by some respondents, that RSI might be more difficult to carry out than a traditional teacher-centered class. While being fully aware of the role of the teacher in implementing RSI as a guide rather than a director, as revealed in the comments above, teachers felt this role a harder one to fulfill than that required of them in a traditional teaching environment. In addition, some teachers were worried about the possibility of infringing upon students’ free exercise of independent thinking during RSI, as below.

M. J. (QtA 14-13), “the teacher added her ideas to student’s response and explained the text. It meant that the teacher did well in annotating and recapping, but I realized that I tried to put my ideas to shape students’ thinking to get the right answer I expected.”

One of the major objectives implementing RSI is to facilitate independent, autonomous reading skills that necessarily require independent thinking. These objectives were also shared and agreed upon by many participating teachers before practice of the microteaching. However, it seems that the teacher overstressed the part of getting “the right answer” from the student while following one of the key RSI protocols, namely, scaffolding. The teacher may, therefore, have lost the balance between process and product.

Confusion also arose surrounding the choice of text in relation to student level. Most teachers considered RSI appropriate only when using easy books.

T. M. (RT 13-1), “The RT method looks very useful for young learners beginning to learn to read, and younger students who are struggling to advance with reading, but I’m not convinced of the value of doing this kind of activity with adults, particularly with more difficult texts such as novels and articles.”

E. H. (RT 13-3), “As the text was not easy to read, the students of my microteaching did have actual comprehension problems. Since they were not able to understand what they read, making questions based on it was also not easy to

do. Maybe I should have selected a text that can be easily understood by them and focused on guiding them to practice using a strategy for the first intervention.”

While it is true that RSI was originally designed to help lower-level students, it is also aimed at helping students read independently more challenging texts. For example, Beck and McKeown (2001) propose QtA as a way “to help students deal with texts ...because students often have to face difficult and inconsiderate texts” (p. 229). However, some teachers’ evaluation of RSI, that is to fit only for young students, or only with the use of easy texts, does not concur with the proposed aim of RSI. As Beck and McKeown (2001) proposed as above, students are eventually to move on to more difficult texts to read on their own, with the help of skills that they learn from practicing RSI. Dwelling solely on easy texts, or focusing only on young readers when it comes to use of RSI, is not what it was originally proposed for. This miscomprehension may come from the confusion over applicability of the methodology and the target to be accomplished in the later stage. Success of a task, in many cases, depends on the level of the task being carried out (Choi, 2005). In the case of the current report, it may be that an easy text guarantees success of RSI more so than difficult one. However, the easy text does not warrant the attainment of the goal for which RSI is set out, namely, to be able to deal with “difficult and inconsiderate texts” in the later stage.

Reported teachers’ confusion surrounding RSI as elaborated above could affect negatively teachers’ perception of RSI before its implementation. This implies that teacher training programs of RSI need to address these issues in a way to clarify the confusion and ultimately to encourage teachers to adopt RSI freely for future teaching.

Discussions and Conclusions

The current data reveals that teachers were initially positive about RSI because they approve the theoretical strength of RSI in enhancing student reading comprehension. However, such positive attitudes did not necessarily coincide with a high rate of anticipated possible application of RSI in real teaching. As indicated in the data analysis, the five areas of challenges and difficulties reported by teachers, and the areas of confusion identified in their reflections, seem to indicate a lower level of teacher willingness to adopt RSI in their actual classes. This result implies that the difficulties and challenges teachers face are multi-faceted and must not be treated uni-dimensionally. Table 3 (below) summarizes the findings.

Table 3

Findings and the Sub-Themes Identified

Findings	Themes	Sub-themes
1	Teachers' generally positive attitudes toward RSI	a) Independent reading skills b) Deeper understanding c) Scaffolding d) Participation and collaboration e) Metacognition
2	Perceived difficulties and challenges in implementation	a) Internal factors b) Procedural factors c) External factors d) Social and cultural factors e) Language issues
3	Teachers' confusion surrounding RSI	a) the amount of teacher talk b) effect on students' free thinking c) the choice of text in relation to student level

On a professional level, teachers feel that most problems can be dealt with because the difficulties and challenges stem from lack of experience and confidence, which they believe can be overcome with time and practice. However, the ability to scaffold in accordance with the student's developmental phase, which is classified under procedural factors in the data analysis, is a highly-developed form of teaching skills, which requires long experience and knowledge of human learning. As Beck and McKeown (2001) point out, the difficulty in implementing RSI is that the constant exchange between students and teacher is central, but will not necessarily lead to meaning-building unless the teacher not only attends to the content to what is being read, and the ideas important for building meaning from that content, but also monitors where students are in that construction process, and then pulls from that combination of factors ways of directing the dialogue to promote understanding. The personal efforts that need be invested diachronically, with experience and time, and synchronically, by providing online assistance for the student, are indeed challenging to make from the perspective of teachers who are new or unfamiliar with teaching RSI.

In addition, external factors that are deemed to reside outside of their control and are mostly determined by national education policy, add another layer of complexity to the effort of making RSI realized in actual classrooms. The concerns over external factors may act to lower teachers' willingness to use RSI in their own classrooms by directing teachers' attention to what cannot be done rather than what can be done, as the room for using their own discretion as a teacher is perceived limited. Therefore, running RSI might be perceived as too difficult, despite a belief among teachers of the efficacy of RSI.

The data of the current study demonstrates the importance of considering these three dimensions, internal, procedural, and external, in order to design for an optimal application of RSI. Although similar factors have been identified in previous literature on teachers' learning experience of RSI in an L1 environment (for example, Brown, 2008; Hilden & Pressley, 2007), most previous studies were not conducted in an EFL environment (e.g., Brown, 2008; Bryant, et al., 2001; Pomerantz & Pierce, 2013). Research on RSI in an EFL environment must take into account the socially and culturally conditioned mindsets of participants, teacher and students alike, and educational priorities which influence and perhaps even determine the dynamics between the teacher and students. Confirming evidence for this can be found in the fact that participating teachers in the current study reported difficulties in implementing RSI in the L2 for various reasons. This implies that EFL teachers who have to conduct RSI in their second language may feel even harder pressed to do so, given that implementing RSI is not an easy task even for regular subject teachers who teach RSI in their first language.

Confusion over RSI was also identified in several aspects. Teachers held conflicting views and beliefs on several components of RSI over, for example, the optimal amount of teacher talk, or choice of text which they consider adequate for adopting RSI in their reading class. No literature has, to date, prescribed measures to address the sources of confusion identified in this study. Such confusion does, however, seem to spring from misunderstanding of RSI in the early stage of its implementation, and could be a possible factor discouraging teachers from using RSI in practice. This also, therefore, highlights the need for a teacher training program on RSI in order to clarify these issues and avoid confusion.

The findings of this research have pedagogical implications in terms of both teacher education and practical application in class. First, teacher educators need to design carefully, professional development programs based on teachers' needs and past experiences in an EFL situation, in order to educate teachers in RSI. Development programs necessarily influence both teacher perception of RSI, and how RSI is taught in classrooms. Teachers often initially approve the theories and rationale of the educational strategies when they are first introduced. Yet, in many cases, they are quick to identify special needs, challenges, and concerns. This also necessitates a two-way dialogue in which teacher educators clearly enunciate the aims and methodologies of a new approach, but also engage in active listening, whereby they solicit feedback from the practitioners. By displaying the factors influencing such dynamics, the research findings may be able to play a foundational role identifying the starting line for adequate application of RSI in practice.

Second, for realistic and more vigorous practice of RSI in class, the findings suggest a need to consider both dimensions of reading instruction: the bottom-up approach with consideration of lower-level reading processes; and the top-down approach with the use of RSI. This is especially true in the context of reading in the L2. A number of RSI skills, such as Collaborative Strategic Reading (Klingner & Vaughn, 2000), and Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (Saenz, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2005) were originally proposed to help lower-performing students who have difficulty in learning in general, by facilitating the higher mental agencies of cognition and metacognition (Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm & Klingner, 1998). Indeed, RSI is a method which generally places more emphasis on higher-level reading processes. However, L2 learners continuously undergo L2 learning in the dimension of lower-level processes, even after they achieve a higher-level L2 proficiency (Nassaji, 2014; Kato, 2009). In an EFL environment, therefore, it is important to adapt RSI to take into account the other end of the spectrum, a bottom-up approach, and to implement both simultaneously.

This study does contain several limitations which need to be addressed in further research. The first regards the quality of data and their variations. Some teachers reported a simple description of what was happening during microteaching, while others presented deeper analyses of how and why the lesson went the way it did. Shallow reflection of microteaching experience therefore carries limited value for analysis. Considering that the quality and the depth of reflection depends on “a critical aspect of reflection that is more typical to more experienced individuals than to novices” (Korkko & Turunen, 2016, p. 199), reflective writings for the current study might not have revealed the full potential power of reflection-based research methodology. Reflection-based studies, therefore, may need to select data pools among more experienced subjects, or supplement reflective writings that are written in an initial phase of professional development, with the ones written in its closing phase.

Second, the current analysis is cross-sectional in character, and therefore does not contain the benefits offered by longitudinal studies. A cross-sectional analysis has the advantage of providing a large amount of data, but does not reveal the long-term effect of developmental changes or, in the case of the current study, it lacks insight into what a developmental program for teacher education offers in each phase of training in the long-term. The support from longitudinal research on the study of RSI appears crucial as expertise in the “release of responsibility” in RSI, to the student from the teacher, is achieved over the long run (Hilden & Pressley, 2007; Pomerantz & Pierce, 2013).

Third, the Korean educational context is uniquely encumbered by environmental considerations. Since the early days of English education in the country, social and cultural conditions, as well as educational emphases which have evolved to cope with changing global needs, from structural syllabus to communicative approaches (Moodie & Nam, 2016), have coalesced within the larger frame of so-called, test-centered language education. The whole of educational experience lives also within the perception of teachers in Korea and influences the way the teachers teach English (Moodie, 2016). Careful analysis is required, before applying a new methodology which carries very different interests and values from what has dominated the classroom to date, within such a social and cultural framework. The current study only touches the surface of teachers' consciousness observed and reflected from a one-time teaching experience with an RSI. Although it provides relatively rich data on what is shared, with many teachers belonging to the same educational culture, it could be built upon through separate, independent, in-depth cultural and social investigations, in order to propagate RSI in the educational scene in Korea.

To conclude, this paper presents a study about potential contributions of RSI in the Korean context, taking it as an effective reading method that is, as yet, foreign to most Korean students as well as their teachers, and also perhaps to education policy makers. As an initial step, this study collected data based on microteaching experiences from teachers who were unfamiliar with RSI, during and after the course of learning the methodology and teaching RSI to fellow teacher-classmates. These teaching experiences were reflected in their own introspective writing. Findings reveal that challenges teachers encountered were multifaceted. They involved personal needs and external factors, which were further complicated by the diachronically demanding nature of RSI within the context of Korean social and cultural conditions. As a final remark, it is hoped that this initial contribution on RSI research will stimulate future research into the field, and will be of benefit to students, teachers, the trainers of teachers, and to education policy-makers in Korea and further afield.

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Appendix - Questionnaire

- a. Which part(s) of the micro teach went well and which part(s) could be improved?
- b. Among the peer feedback you received, which feedback was the most helpful and why?

- c. What are the main components of the intervention? Which components did you target in your lesson?
- d. How did you teach these components? How effective was this teaching and why?
- e. Were there times when your students needed help using the strategy/skill? How did you facilitate its use?
- f. What did you learn about this teaching technique from the micro teach?
- g. How comfortable would you be with using this technique in your class? What barriers/challenges would you need to overcome in order to use it? What more do you feel you need to know about this technique in order to use it well?



**“You Should Force Us to Talk.”—Symbolic Power, National Rhetoric,
and Oral English in China**

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Abstract

In the past few decades, the hegemonic power of English on local educational and language policies has been put under scrutiny. A growing number of researchers have begun to look at English teaching through the lens of power relations. Drawing on Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic power, this study examines how symbolic power of oral English plays out in shaping teachers’ and students’ understanding of the importance of oral English in China. Analyzing focus group and interview data with teachers and students from a larger study which examines power issues related to College English teaching in China, this study reveals that symbolic power of oral English is exercised through both top-down educational policies and bottom-up complicit embracement of those policies by the teachers and the students. Findings in this study also suggest that when teachers and students are not invited into the educational decision making process, they are subject to the symbolic power of English and they further perpetuate the symbolic power of English. This is realized through the internationalization of a national rhetoric that emphasizes the importance of oral English. Findings also indicate that when the importance of oral English is universalized through top-down educational policies, some students might be marginalized because of their low oral English proficiency. This study contributes to current literature on College English teaching in China by examining the symbolic power of English and revealing unequal power relationships between institutions, teachers, and students. The study calls educational policy

makers in non-English speaking countries to critically examine English teaching policies in their countries to see who they might benefit and who they might marginalize. It also argues for the importance of inviting teachers and students into educational decision making.

Key words: symbolic power, College English, oral English in China

Introduction

The last few decades have witnessed an increasing research attention to the hegemonic power of English as a global language (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 1992). A large portion of this research was done in countries that fall under Kachru's (1992) classification of the outer circle where English is used as a second language or a lingua franca in former British colonies, such as South Africa, India, Kenya and a host of others. Research about these countries focuses on examining the ideological and cultural colonization of local communities brought about by the English language (Makoni & Pennycook, 2005; Reagan, 2001). Another large portion of this research was done in inner circle countries where English is used as a primary language, such as the United States and Britain. This body of research centers around looking at experiences of immigrant and refugee students and a lot of attention was given to the debate between the policies of English-only and bilingual education (Bialystok, 2016).

Compared with studies carried out in outer circle and inner circle countries, studies done in countries, such as China, that belong to the expanding circle where English is brought mainly by globalization and is used as a foreign language have been on the periphery (Sharifian, 2009). Research in expanding circle countries largely focuses on technical issues related to the effective use of particular teaching approaches and much of this research looks at ways to successfully adopt or adapt Western TESOL pedagogies in these countries (Liu, 2015; Lu & Moore, 2018; Zheng & Borg, 2014). For example, researchers examining College English in China have devoted a lot of attention to the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in College English classes. Though a few researchers report successful use of CLT in English classes in China (Ning, 2010; Zhang & Head, 2009), most researchers found CLT to be unsuitable for the Chinese context due to students' unwillingness to communicate in English (Liu & Jackson, 2009; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Rao, 2002; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). The reasons that contribute to Chinese students' unwillingness to communicate in English include students' low English proficiency (Peng & Woodrow, 2010), language anxiety (Yan & Horwitz, 2008), big class size (Peng, 2007), etc.

Among these factors, students' low English proficiency has been identified as the primary reason for students' unwillingness to speak in English classes.

Another line of research examining teaching English as a foreign language in outer circle countries examine issues related to power relations, ideology, and linguistic hegemony. However, this line of research is rather scant compared to research focusing on technical issues related to teaching English as a foreign language. Among the few studies that do focus on power issues, most of them discuss the problem on a macro-level where policies and institutional practices on a global stage are the core of the discussion (Crystal, 2003; Nunan, 2001, 2003; Sharifian, 2009). In these studies, the researchers analyzed government documents and interviewed stakeholders in educational policy making. Little has been done on a micro-level in examining local teachers' and students' understanding of the educational policies and pedagogical practices brought about by the global popularization of the English language. While it is important to understand how the global popularization of English affects local policies and institutional practices, it is equally important to understand how teachers and students respond to these policies and practices. Thus, this paper looks at how English globalization affects teachers and students on a micro-level by eliciting their voices.

Background: The National Rhetoric and its Impact on College English Teaching in China

Following the implementation of China's Open Door Policy, there is now more frequent exchange and communication between China and other countries and the importance of teaching English has been elevated to an unprecedented level of the Chinese government's agenda. Today, English serves as a tool for the Chinese government to advance its socioeconomic development in its competition with other countries (Gao, 2012). As with other domains in Chinese society, the Chinese government holds a firm grip on the educational section which in turn plays an essential role in producing future citizens for the nation (Law, 2014). This firm grip is realized through the government's control over the Chinese Ministry of Education, which is in charge of drawing educational policies for the whole nation and effecting top-down educational reforms according to the government's needs (Wang, 2011). For example, in the opening paragraph of *College English Teaching Curriculum Requirements* (referred to as the *Requirements* hereafter) drawn by the Ministry of Education, it is explicitly stated that an important reason for the reform is to produce "qualified personnel" for the modern Chinese society (Ministry of Education, 2007). College English teaching is thus put under the national agenda of economic and social development.

As English is the most widely used language in global communication, to advance China's socioeconomic development, the Chinese government has been promoting a national rhetoric that emphasizes the importance of English, especially the importance of spoken English. Such a promotion can be seen in the establishment of College English as an independent subject required for all non-English major students in the 1980s (Ruan & Jacob, 2009) and an increase in the separation of Oral English classes from the general College English classes in recent years (Liu, 2012). Additionally, the national rhetoric is reflected in recent changes in the *Requirements* which show a switch of emphasis from reading and writing to listening and speaking (Ruan & Yacob, 2009). According to the opening statement in the *Requirements*, the shift of emphasis was largely propelled by Chinese government's need of talents with good communicative competence in English in a globalized world. With the *Requirements* guiding institutional practices, the national rhetoric was translated into educational policies in individual higher educational institutes where teachers and students navigate these policies in their teaching and learning. The national rhetoric finds voices in the narratives of both teachers and students whom the author interviewed.

Theoretical Framework

With a national emphasis on the importance of English, English has become a stepping stone to academic achievement and success in the Chinese society (Nunan, 2001). However, when we look at the impact of the English language in the current Chinese society, it is not enough simply to look at it from a functionalist view of language where English is reduced to a tool for gaining material benefits. It is true that the English language is highly connected to one's social and economic mobility, but if we want to have a full understanding of the increased devotion to the study of English in China, we need to look at the issue through the lens of power, specifically what Bourdieu (1991) calls "symbolic power." Defined as "an 'invisible' power which is 'misrecognized' as such and thereby 'recognized' as legitimate" (Thompson, 1991, p. 23), symbolic power influences how people perceive things and how people act in particular situations through the "production and transmission of symbolic forms" such as language, myth, and art (Thompson, 1995, p. 46).

Kramsch (2014, Introduction) argues that knowledge of and ability to use a foreign language gives the user "additional symbolic power and prestige" (p. 302). Her claim also applies to our understanding of teaching English as a foreign language in the expanding circle countries, such as China. For example, in Gao's (2012) study of a small town in China that attracts many foreign tourists, the author argues that English has become "a middle-class

stylistic resource” much sought after by many Chinese people (p. 38). People associated the ability to speak in English with being modern and the inability to speak in English with being backward and “dumb” (Gao, 2012, p. 38). In this sense, spoken English is not only a tool for international communication, but also a symbolic representation of prestige and elite status. As Kramsch (2007) points out in another article, in the global linguistic market, which language enjoys a higher status is largely dependent upon how we perceive the language as a symbol of “legitimacy” and “power” (p. 56). For example, when English is considered a “middle-class stylistic resource” in China (Gao, 2012, p. 38), it is not only the material benefits associated with knowing the English language that people pursue, but also the social status and prestige represented by using English in communication.

The symbolic power of English has been found to exert its influence on the language policies in non-English speaking countries and to further enlarge the gap between the socioeconomically haves and have-nots. For example, in Tabuenca-Cuevas’s (2016) study, the author found that because of the important role that English plays in the European Union as a lingua franca, the symbolic capital of English has been further elevated. Alongside this elevated status of the symbolic capital of English came tensions and paradoxes in language policies concerning the official national language and co-official regional languages in Spain. Analyzing letters to the editor of a Bangladeshi English newspaper debating the identity of graduates from English-medium schools, Hamid and Jahan (2015) conclude that the debate is not about the languages and their associated cultural belongings, but a debate rooted in social and economic privileges and inequality in the society. The authors further argue that “the semiotic significance of English—as an expression of the divide between privilege and denial—can be traced to British colonial rule, which introduced English to the privileged but denied it to the masses” (p. 95). Though the historical and social background in China is different than those in Spain and India, the influence of the symbolic power of English in Chinese society is similar to that in the other two countries. English is promoted by the Chinese government as an important language to be studied by all college students; meanwhile, it is feverishly worshiped by parents and students alike. Under the symbolic power of English, private English training organizations have mushroomed over the past decades in China. Now, as both a commodity that can be purchased in these private organizations and a signifier of higher social status, English further divides the haves and have-nots by serving as a gatekeeper of success in Chinese society.

An important claim that Bourdieu (1991) makes about symbolic power is that symbolic power is exercised through oppression from the top (those who benefit from the system) and

subordination from the bottom (those who are disadvantaged in the system). For example, in the construction of the symbolic power of oral English, on the one hand, globalization plays an undeniable role in elevating oral English's status in the global linguistic market. With English playing a dominant role in international commerce, world politics, and scientific exchange, the Chinese people are "at a linguistic disadvantage" compared with their counterparts in English-speaking countries (Lu & Ares, 2015, p. 116). In this sense, Chinese people are subjected to the symbolic power of English and are at a disadvantaged position in the global linguistic market. On the other hand, Chinese people's devotion to learning English further promoted the status of English. As the ones on the bottom in the hierarchical global linguistic market, Chinese people are complicit in the construction of the symbolic power of oral English.

Lin's (1999) study of four classrooms from different socioeconomic backgrounds in Hong Kong well illustrates Bourdieu's theorization of symbolic power as constructed by oppression from the top and subordination from the bottom. In the study, the author found that despite students' socioeconomic backgrounds, students all recognized the important role that English plays in shaping their lives (e.g. furthering their education and securing a job). Though the school's English-only policy puts students from a lower socioeconomic background at a disadvantage because of their lack of opportunity to practice spoken English outside of school, these students accepted their poor performance in English class and their slim likelihood of future social success with passivity. The author calls for a critical social theory of practice in combating the symbolic violence of English on students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Similarly, in Jantrasakul's (2010) study of Thai undergraduate students, the researcher found that it is easy for students from higher socioeconomic background to orient towards schooled teaching practices which favored the urban culture (representing middle and upper classes in Thailand) while students from suburban backgrounds (representing lower class in Thailand) tended to be marginalized in such an educational setting. However, all the students unquestionably accepted the authoritative discourses of EFL learning regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds. The author questioned the dominant culture and pedagogy embedded in the English curriculum through interrogating the symbolic power of English.

Lin's (1999) and Jantrasakul's (2010) studies demonstrate that symbolic power is formed through both oppression from the top and complicity from the bottom (Bourdieu, 1991). Both studies were carried out in a context that is similar to that in China where English learning is emphasized by the government. Though compared to his more widely applied concepts, such

as habitus and social capital, symbolic power is much less used in discussions of the global spread of English and its effect on the local language educational policies, Bourdieu's (1991) theory of symbolic power is highly relevant to our understanding of the current status of English as a global language and how that plays out in teaching English as a foreign language in non-English speaking countries, such as China. Thus, the present study examines College English teaching through the lens of symbolic power. It addresses the following research question:

How does symbolic power play out in shaping teachers' and students' understanding of the importance of oral English in China?

Methodology

Research Context

Data in this study came from a larger study examining power issues (i.e. symbolic power of English, state and institutional power, authoritative power of the teacher in the classroom, agentive power of teachers and students) in College English teaching in China. In the larger study, data were collected through semester-long observations in a required college Oral English class in Modern University¹, interviews with the teacher of the class, a focus group with three other teachers in the same department, semi-structured individual interviews with eight students, and artifact gathering (i.e. the textbook, the teacher's PowerPoint slides, documents on the university's website). This article mainly focuses on analyzing data from the focus group and individual interviews with the student participants as data from these sources are more pertinent to the research question in this paper—How does symbolic power play out in shaping teachers' and students' understanding of the importance of oral English in China?

Research Participants

Teacher participants in the larger study were first recruited through convenience sampling and later recruited through purposive snowball sampling (Babbie, 2011; Patton, 2002). After recruiting the author's acquaintance as a research participant, the acquaintance assisted the

¹ Modern University is a prestigious university in an economically developed seaport city on the northeastern coast of China. Home to more than 30 thousand students and more than four thousand faculty and staff, Modern University is one of the universities under direct jurisdiction of the Chinese Ministry of Education and receives funding from the central government. The College English Department in which this study was carried out is in charge of teaching non-English major students in Modern University.

author in recruiting other teachers based on the author's selection criteria. Table 1 below shows basic information of the teacher participants.

Table 1.

Teacher Participants

Surname	Gender	Age	Years of Teaching	Title	Study Abroad Experience
Lee	male	Over 45	26	Associate professor	With
Feng	male	Mid 30	12	Lecturer	Without
Lu	female	Mid 30	10	Lecturer	With
Chang	female	Early 40	17	Lecturer	Without

Student participants in the larger study were recruited through purposive snowball sampling. Mr. Lee, the primary teacher participant in the study, introduced the author to his class on her first day of class observation. After observing the class for half a semester, six of the eight students that the author identified as potential participants agreed to be interviewed. Mr. Lee recruited two other students for the author based on her selection criteria. Table 2 below shows basic information of the student participants.

Table 2.

Student Participants

Name	Gender	Major	Class Participation*	Oral English Proficiency**
Gong	male	Industrial Engineering	Active	High
Lei	male	Architecture	Active	High
Kang	male	Biochemistry	Inactive	Low
Xiao	male	Chemical Engineering	Active	High
Shi	female	Construction Management	Active	High
Nan	female	Law	Inactive	Low
Kun	female	Hydraulic and Hydro-power Engineering	Inactive	Low
Jing	female	Construction Engineering	Active	High

*In this table, whether a student is active or not in class participation is primarily based on the author's perceptions through class observations.

**Students' oral English proficiency is based on the author's class observations and the author's interviews with them.

Data Collection

Interviewing has been used widely and successfully in educational research in examining teachers' and students' perceptions of their teaching and learning experiences (Fang & Warschauer, 2004; Liu & Jackson, 2009; Ouyang, 2000; Shi, 2003; Tsui, 2007; Yan &

Horwitz, 2008). Semi-structured interviews are frequently used by qualitative researchers because of the flexibility that they provide. In semi-structured interviews, researchers come to the research site with a set of prepared questions to guide their interviews. Meanwhile, they will follow the lead of the interviewees to ask probing questions during the interview process. In the present study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight students.

Focus group is especially advantageous over other types of interviews in generating insights through group interactions and providing basic information of a community relatively quickly (Schensul, 1999). To gather information about teachers' understanding of the university policies concerning the Oral English class, a focus group interview was conducted with three teachers from the College English Department Division I in Modern University. At the time of this study, all three teachers were teaching in the College English Department Division I which is in charge of teaching first-year non-English major students in Modern University.

Both semi-structured individual interviews with the students and focus group interview with the teachers were conducted in private spaces on the Modern University campus. The focus group interview lasted for one and a half hours. The interviews with students lasted from 50 minutes to one hour. Interviews were all conducted in English, though student interviewee, Nan, answered some of the questions in Chinese. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and the Chinese parts were translated into English by the author. (See appendices for interview protocols.)

Data Analysis

In this article, the author analyzed data from her focus group interview with three teacher participants—Ms. Lu, Ms. Chang, and Mr. Feng and individual interviews with the students with a specific focus on interviews with student participants Nan and Kun. Constructivist grounded theory guides the data analysis process because it is congruent with the theoretical framework in this study. As Charmaz (2014) points out, constructivist grounded theory “locate(s) participants’ meanings and actions in larger social structures and discourses of which they may be unaware of” and it recognizes that “their (participants’) meanings may reflect ideologies; their actions may reproduce current ideologies, social conventions, discourses, and power relations” (p. 237, 241). By adopting constructivist grounded theory, the study attends to the larger social and cultural contexts under which the interviews were carried out.

In the larger study, the author followed Saldaña's (2009) advice in data collection and data analysis, where the two went hand in hand and informed each other. The author did six class observations and wrote analytic memos. After the fourth observation, the author started analyzing the observation field notes and the analytic memos with open coding (Charmaz, 2014). The open codes of these data informed the focus for the last two class observations as well as the questions for the interviews with the teachers and students. After all data were collected, the author did focus coding of the data where a large quantity of seemingly unrelated open codes were "sifted through" and put into categories (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 143). Then, data were further analyzed through axial coding in which themes were identified (Charmaz, 2014).

Findings

This section discusses two primary themes identified in the data analysis process—both teachers' embracement and students' acceptance of the official discourse that speaks to the importance of oral English. The first theme was exemplified by the teachers' hesitant and sometimes self-contradictory comments on why the university put so much emphasis on students' oral English. The second theme was illustrated by both the teachers' recount of students' desire to be pushed to speak English in class and by students' explanations of how they understand the importance of oral English.

"Maybe, maybe..." Rationalizing the Official Discourse

Following the national rhetoric which speaks to the importance of communicative competence in English, the *Requirements* repeatedly mentions the importance of developing students' listening and speaking abilities (MOE, 2007). Such an official discourse is reflected in the changes made to the College English courses in Modern University over the years. According to the three teacher participants in the focus group interview, years ago, Modern University only offered intensive reading classes to non-English major students. Then, in an effort to reform College English teaching, they started to offer a Listening and Speaking class to students. After that, an experimental program was set up and students from the School of Automation were selected to participate in the program where they were offered a separate English Speaking class. The experimental program was then extended to all non-English major students in the university. At the time of this study, students had to take the English Listening class for one year and the Oral English class for two years in addition to taking a Reading, Writing, and Translating class for two years.

The teachers in this study acknowledged the school's emphasis on developing students' English speaking abilities and this acknowledgement seemed to come from their personal understanding of the university practice of allotting more time for the Oral English class over the years instead of direct instruction given by the university. For example, when asked about what they believe to be the goals of English teaching and what they consider to be the most important aspect of learning English, Ms. Lu contrasted her personal belief with what she believed to be the intention of the university.²

Lu: I think the topic is a little general... because when we consider our belief, I think first we should consider the situation of the students...so, what students we are teaching. For example, we are teaching non-English majors and most of the students are engineers, they will be engineers in their lives, they major in engineering. So, the goal of our school is... for example, we should put more effort into speaking. So, we have oral class, English speaking class. So they will study English speaking for two years. But, I think that is too much. I think for the students they still should study more grammar and also they should practice their writing. Writing is, I think, is a weak point for the students. That's my view.

Me: So, you just mentioned that the school wanted the teachers to help students to develop their oral English skills?

Lu: Yes, that's my understanding. In my understanding, I think, the school, encourages the teachers to help students practice speaking. So, we had some reform. Several years ago, we had a special department or school. We chose some students and form some classes and these students just practice speaking.... (Focus group interview, 12/15/2014)

Ms. Lu started with an explanation of the special characteristics of her student population and turned this explanation into what she believed to be the rationale for the university's emphasis on speaking English with a "so." However, she did not provide further explanation of why spoken English is important for engineering students. She also emphasized that it was her personal understanding that "the school encourages the teachers to help students practice speaking" and she related this understanding to the university's reform effort of giving students more time to practice spoken English. In fact, she was not entirely sure herself why the university put so much emphasis on speaking for their engineering students. Her uncertainty of the university's rationale is further illustrated later in the interview and a similar uncertainty was echoed in Ms. Chang's narratives as well. In their talk, Ms. Lu and Ms. Chang used "maybe" frequently when explaining their understanding of the reasons for an emphasis on spoken English. The following excerpt from the focus group interview revealed the teachers' efforts in providing a rationale for the university's emphasis on spoken English and deciphering the goals of the Oral English class. The "maybe's" are

² The interview data in this paper are original data without correction of grammatical errors.

underlined in the excerpt to highlight the teachers' hesitations and uncertainties when they tried to explain the university's reform effort and expectations of their Oral English class.

Chang: I think, you know, the school has a purpose, I think, maybe you know, because we teach English just for general purposes. For them to communicate, every day, about the everyday life. So maybe fluency, I think, is very important because fluency can help them to communicate successfully. We can help them to achieve the everyday purpose, for instance going to a bank or order some food in a restaurant. That's what we need to cover in our oral English class. As for writing, I think, maybe, you know, if they want to improve their writing skill and they can write very well, or they need to publish some academic papers, I think maybe, and also how to find a job, I think maybe, they should improve their English after, you know, in the third year or in the fourth year. Then they have kind of a specific, English for specific purposes. That kind of class maybe will help them to do that.

Me: Ok. You just mentioned that the general purpose promoted by the school is to teach students how to use English to communicate in their daily lives.

Chang: Yes.

Me: How much do you think the students will need to use English in their daily lives?

Chang: Of course, you know, in China, they can seldom use English for their daily life. I think this is for preparing them to have a life in a foreign country, in an English-speaking country. For instance, for short visits, or for long time visits. That's the purpose.

Me: Um...Do you [Ms. Lu] have any response to what they just said about the oral English part?

Lu: I think, if you, for example, talk about the importance of our speaking class, maybe the purpose is to help students for better communication, and maybe because more and more students actually are finally studying abroad. So, maybe it's also useful. Because more and more students, especially in some other schools, or some special majors, or some students, maybe there will be a lot of students who would go abroad.

Me: I know that you don't have a specific number in mind of how many students will go abroad in the future, but do you have a general idea of the proportion of the students who's going to go abroad to study?

Chang: I don't know. I don't have much knowledge about that.

Feng: Well, I think there is only a slight number of students in Modern University who will apply for study abroad. In a whole class like 30 people or 35 people, only a few of them will speak kind of fluently or clearly. Most of them do not have the courage to speak in the class... (Focus group interview, 12/15/2014)

Though earlier in the interview, Ms. Lu expressed her belief that taking the Oral English class for two years is "too much" for the students and that grammar and writing should be given more attention, in the excerpt above, she tried to defend the university's emphasis on spoken English by siding with Ms. Chang in saying that the purpose of the Oral English class is to prepare students to go abroad. However, the "maybe's" in her narrative revealed that she was not entirely certain of the rationale behind the university's practice of allotting so much

time to developing students' speaking skills in English. Similarly, Ms. Chang also used a lot of "maybe's" in her narratives. In the beginning, she stated that helping students to communicate in English in their daily lives was what she believed to be the purpose of the Oral English class. However, when confronted by the question of how much students will need to use English in their daily lives, she changed what she believed to be the purpose of the Oral English class to be preparing students for a life abroad, though she later admitted that she did not know the percentage of the students going abroad.

While coding data from the focus group interview with the teachers, the author followed Charmaz's (2014) suggestion of using *in vivo* codes³ when possible to keep the original meanings of the interviewees. "Maybe" is one of the *in vivo* codes that the author used in the open coding of these data. Reading through the focus group interview data multiple times and writing analytic memos at the same time helped the author to put these "maybe" *in vivo* codes into perspective and double code them as "perception of (College English teaching)" and "teaching beliefs". The teachers' perceptions of College English teaching refer to the teachers' understandings of the university policies regarding College English and they contrast to the teachers' teaching beliefs which refer to the teachers' personal understandings of what are important in teaching and what counts as effective teaching. The contrastive meanings that the *in vivo* code "maybe" carries reveal possible incongruence between the school policies and the teachers' personal beliefs. In fact, the "maybe's" in the teachers' narratives showed their endeavor in making sense of the university reform of allotting more and more time for students to practice their spoken English over the years. In a sense, they were trying to persuade themselves into agreeing with the university on putting a heavy emphasis on spoken English even though they realized that for some students, there will be very few opportunities to speak English again after they graduate. This realization of limited usefulness of spoken English for some students can be best seen in Mr. Feng's somewhat self-conflicting narrative below.

But I think the two most important aspects of English is speaking and writing. And the most important is speaking. And then writing. Writing has only limited area for the society. For those who are, maybe who go to like educational institutions or some kind of other units like that, maybe they will consider the skills in writing a little more. But mostly they want to communicate with foreign people, they need to speak. But speaking is (unintelligible words). But a lot of other students who don't go to the foreign, like those top five hundred companies in the world, they don't need English at all. They just have to deal with people in China. Most of the time they just need to

³ In doing *in vivo* coding, the researcher uses short phrases or sentences from interview or survey transcripts as codes to keep the original meanings in the data as much as possible (Charmaz, 2014).

speaking Chinese. In that case, they will forget English year after year. They don't need to speak, to learn English, making much effort. The most important is speaking. And follows that is writing. (Focus group interview, 12/15/2014)

Though realizing that for “a lot of other students” who do not go to foreign companies after they graduate, they probably do not need to speak English at all in the future, Mr. Feng still put speaking over writing as a more important skill that students need to develop in studying English. In the earlier excerpt, he also mentioned his belief that only a small percentage of students would apply to study abroad. Putting these two factors together, in his mind, only a small number of students would actually need to use English in their oral communication in the future. This understanding of the situation with the students is somewhat conflicting to his belief in the importance of spoken English. Additionally, his argument of why writing is less important a skill than speaking was not all that convincing because he excluded situations where one might need to communicate in written forms in English instead of by oral means. By excluding those situations, Mr. Feng found a convenient explanation to the university's emphasis on spoken English without questioning its rationality.

This lack of critique of the university practice is also reflected in the inconsistency in Ms. Chang's explanation of the importance of the Oral English class. When asked whether they thought English would be important for students' future lives and careers, Ms. Chang gave a positive response without any hesitation. Then, she explained that English was important because many Chinese companies used passing College English Test Band 4 or Band 6⁴ as requirements for hiring future employees. However, when asked whether the companies have special requirements on their potential employees' speaking ability in English, she sounded a little hesitant, “Speaking skills? Um...they also have, in Band 6, they also have oral English test. That's the...but speaking abilities is not so important as other, as tests result. So maybe, maybe that's why they don't feel the need to talk in English. ” (Focus group interview, 12/15/2014). Comparing Ms. Chang's narratives in the beginning of the interview to this statement made towards the end of the interview, we can see an emerging critical reflection on the importance of spoken English in students' lives from Ms. Chang. Though not certain of the rationale for the university's practice of increasing students' study hours for spoken

⁴ College English Test Band 4 and Band 6, commonly known as CET4 and CET6, are the fourth and sixth levels of College English Test administered by the Chinese Ministry of Education. CET4 consists mainly of multiple choice questions which test students' vocabulary and reading comprehension. Non-English major students in most Chinese universities are required to pass the test to get a diploma. CET6 also has a separate oral English test. Only those who score certain points in the written test can participate in the oral test.

English, in the beginning, Ms. Chang was trying to provide an explanation for it. From helping students to communicate in English in their daily lives to preparing students for a life abroad, initially, Ms. Chang endeavored to rationalize the university practice rather than question it. However, as our conversation deepened, Ms. Chang questioned her initial belief in the soundness of the university practice and reached a realization that speaking ability is not as important as test results. She also related this new realization to students' unwillingness to speak in English in her Oral English class. By questioning the school policies, Ms. Chang made a big step as a loyal policy-follower towards connecting the policies to the practices that she engaged in and challenging the rationale behind the policies.

"You Should Force Us to Talk."

The national rhetoric which speaks to the importance of spoken English is not only readily accepted by the teachers, it also finds willing followers among students. According to the teacher participants, a large proportion of students either do not like the Oral English class or struggle to speak in English in class. As Mr. Feng speculated, "In a whole class like 30 people or 35 people, only a few of them will speak kind of fluently or clearly. Most of them do not have the courage to speak in the class" (Focus group interview, 12/15/2014).

Looking at students' unwillingness to speak in English from such a perspective, we can understand why "forcing" students to talk is not only a strategy that all my teacher participants used in their Oral English classes, but also something desired by some students. Talking about strategies to motivate her students to talk in English in class, Ms. Lu recalled the following instance:

After all, that depends on my students. I remember that once I had a class and they were always silent. But I think that I should give them freedom to choose whether they talk or not. So, I never forced them to speak. So, after a whole term's study, (chuckle), after all the classes are over, and a student told me that "You should force us to talk." (All laugh.) That was really ridiculous. I never actually have them do anything without their button [agreement]. But, the student said "If you never told us what to do, actually, we didn't want to do anything." (All laugh.) So, that's one big lesson I drew from... (Focus group interview, 12/15/2014)

In a sense, Ms. Lu was forced by her students to force them to speak in English. All the teacher participants mentioned that oftentimes, students would not volunteer to speak in class and that they had to point at individual students and ask them to speak. Though the teachers exercised their power as teachers to pressure students to speak in English by singling individual students out to answer questions, the "forcing" should not be considered as entirely

oppressive as in most cases, power connotes. For some students who do not want to be considered by others as being hypocritical or fake or showing off, being asked by the teacher to speak in English without volunteering to do so is a shield against possible negative comments from other people. The student's comment that "you should force us to talk" indicated that for some students, even though they felt uncomfortable speaking in English, they nevertheless embraced the national rhetoric speaking to the importance of spoken English and believed that practicing spoken English in the Oral English class was necessary and important. Being forced by the teacher to speak in class eliminates the worry about being considered a show-off by other students, which has been identified by some researchers as a reason for Chinese students' unwillingness to speak in English classes (Zhang & Watkins, 2007).

For some other students, according to the interview data, speaking in English is not only something that makes them highly uncomfortable, but also something that they probably do not need to do after they graduate. However, instead of questioning the university's policy which requires them to take the Oral English class for two years, they willingly accepted the national rhetoric and the official discourse which speaks to the importance of spoken English and strived to participate in the Oral English class in their own ways despite their psychological struggles.

"It's My Job (To Take the English Classes)"

In the interviews with the students, all the students expressed a strong desire to speak English well. For example, when asked whether they would like to be interviewed in Chinese or English, all the students chose to be interviewed in English, saying that it would be a good opportunity to practice speaking in English. Additionally, five out of eight students asked me for advice regarding how to speak English well at the end of the interviews.

Nan is the least proficient student in terms of oral English among the student interviewees. Though she preferred to be interviewed in English because as others, she took the interview as an opportunity to practice speaking in English, we had to switch into Chinese many times during the interview. She also needed extra time to write the answers down on a piece of paper in English before she read them aloud when answering some of the interview questions. Nan is one of the two student interviewees who openly admitted that they did not like studying English, the other student being Kun who also has a relatively low oral English proficiency. Nan said that she would not choose to take English courses in the university if

they were not required. When asked how she felt about being required to take English classes in the university, her reply was “I think it’s my job” (Interview with Nan, 12/28/2014).

Interestingly, though Nan considers studying English to be quite a “headache”, she is highly aware of the importance of the English language and she showed a sincere eagerness to improve her oral English. In the following excerpt, Nan talked about why she thought English would be useful after graduation.

Me: What role would English play in your career or life after you graduate?

Nan: (4 minutes writing) I think when I graduate, English need not the exams. 英语就不是考试了。[English won’t be about exams anymore.] I think it may change into a tool to communicate. I just use it, I use English when I communicate.

Me: 就是在你毕业以后，你觉得你还会不会用到英语？在哪些方面你会再用到英语呢？[After you graduate, will you still use English? In what ways will you use English then?]

Nan: 如果我真的成一名律师的话，应该就是在找某些，参考某些标准类的论文的时候会用到翻译吧。[If I become a lawyer, I will need English for translating some papers on standards.]

Me: 这是从你职业的角度来讲，如果从你日常生活角度来讲呢？你觉得会用到吗？[You were talking about how English will be useful for your career. What about your daily life? Do you think you will use English in your daily life?]

Nan: 应该用得到。因为比如说看电视剧什么的。[I should be able to use it. For example, I may use English to watch TV shows.]

Me: 你觉得英语学习很重要吗？[Do you think learning English is important?]

Nan: 挺重要的，虽然我是真心对它有抵触心理，但是毕竟作为一个国际性的语言，掌握它总是有好处的。[It is quite important. Though it’s quite a headache for me, as an international language, it is beneficial to master it after all.]

Me: 你能想到就是说掌握英语对你的好处有哪些呢？[What are the benefits that you can think of by mastering English?]

Nan: 在交流上吧。比如说你遇到外国人，你可以跟人家打招呼，虽然我是不打。(chuckles) 然后，应该是就这些吧。[For communication. For example, if you see a foreigner, you will be able to greet him, though I wouldn’t do so. Just this.] (Interview with Nan, 12/28/2014)

What is intriguing in Nan’s answers is that Nan associated the importance of English to its status as an international language and she saw the real use of English after graduation as a tool for communication. However, when it came to herself, she did not actually see the prospect of using English to communicate as she said that “For communication. For example, if you see a foreigner, you will be able to greet him, though I wouldn’t do so.” (Interview with Nan, 12/28/2014) The change of the subject from “you” to “I” indicates that Nan distinguished the use of English in a general sense and the use of it by herself; while the former speaks to English’s status as an international language, the latter responds to particular

situations that an individual might be in. Though Nan mentioned reading English articles related to the law and watching English movies as possible uses of English after she graduates from the university, these uses of English do not involve using English to communicate or speaking in English. It can be argued that Nan's eagerness to improve her oral English is more due to the symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) of English and the institutional emphasis on spoken English than to Nan's anticipation of the actual usefulness of English in her future life and career. Though disadvantaged in an educational system that places a high value on spoken English, Nan accepted the official discourse that oral English is important despite her apparent inability to see the actual need to speak in English after graduation.

Nan's "want-hate" relationship (Lin, 1999, p. 394) with English also found resonance in Kun's narratives. Similar to Nan, as a student majoring in Hydraulic and Hydro-power Engineering, Kun did not see an immediate use of English in her current daily life or much use of it for her future career. Kun wanted to pursue a Master's degree after graduation, but she did not want to go abroad to get the degree. However, she thought that "it (English) will be useful" because "so many countries use English" and she wanted to travel around the world (Interview with Kun, 12/28/2014). On the one hand, Kun disliked studying English and she was not interested at all in speaking in English in the Oral English class; on the other hand, she saw the benefit of being able to communicate in English and she told me that she would still choose to take English classes even if they were not required by the university. Though Kun did not make a statement like Nan saying that "It's my job (to take the English classes)," Kun's willingness in taking English classes are in no small part due to the symbolic power of English (Bourdieu, 1991) and the hegemony of English as a global language (Lu & Ares, 2015; Pennycook, 1999; Phillipson, 2001).

Discussion

This study examines how symbolic power plays out in shaping teachers' and students' understanding of the importance of oral English in China. The findings in this study further support prior researchers' claims on the important role that symbolic power of English plays in shaping local educational and language policies (Tabuenca-Cuevas, 2016). Data from focus group interview with the teachers and semi-structured interviews with the students indicate that symbolic power of English is exercised through both top-down educational policies and teachers' and students' embracement and acceptance of those policies. First, state power plays an important role in creating top-down educational policies that elevate the

status of English in the Chinese society. As Wang (2011) points out, educational reforms in China are top-down in nature. Though the Chinese government has been trying to involve various stakeholders in educational decision making, including experts, school authorities, parents, students, etc., educational reforms in China are still largely state-based which means that the Chinese government plays a central role in making curriculum changes according to its needs (Law, 2014). Law argues that “curriculum making is a social process that determines and legitimizes what knowledge, skills and dispositions are distributed through education and how, with the state as principal regulator” (p. 334). In the Chinese curriculum making process, the Chinese government legitimized its emphasis on spoken English by making the national rhetoric an official discourse in the *Requirements* announced by the Ministry of Education which was in turn taken on by universities. In this process, different forms of power are in play. The state power is exercised through the central government’s almost exclusive influence over the Ministry of Education. When the *Requirements* was translated into university policies, institutional power became salient in affecting what teachers believe to be important in their teaching.

Second, teachers’ belief in the importance of oral English is largely shaped by university’s top-down reform policies. Data from the focus group interview revealed that the teachers were not given explicit explanations as to the rationale behind the university’s reform on the College English courses, let alone to be involved in the decision-making process. When the teachers were left out of the decision-making process and expected to simply follow the policies, unequal power relations between the institute and the teachers were disguised as taken-for-granted institutional decisions on policies and practices and the exercise of power was made rather invisible through the teachers’ unquestioning acceptance of those decisions. Without being invited to discuss the rationale behind the reform, the teachers took the university reform “as is” and unconsciously accepted the official discourse which speaks to the importance of spoken English. Even when there was a conflict between personal belief and the university practice as shown in Ms. Lu’s case, they tried to find explanations for the university practice and rationalize the university’s decisions in reforming the College English courses. Thus, the rationality behind the university’s adoption of the official discourse which puts a heavy emphasis on spoken English was left as law.

Third, students are complicit in their own subjugation to the symbolic power of English. Though students’ socioeconomic background was not considered when recruiting participants for this study, during the interviews, the author asked questions about students’ parents’ profession and educational level which reflect the socioeconomic background of the

students. Data reveal that regardless of students' socioeconomic background, all the student participants expressed a strong eagerness to practice and to perfect their spoken English skills. Such a finding echoes the findings from Lin's (1999) and Jantrasakul's (2010) studies. In both studies, students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds accepted the institutional policy concerning English teaching and the pedagogical practices without questioning who gets privileged and who gets disadvantaged by those policies and practices. This finding contradicts some researchers' belief that Chinese students are unwilling to practice speaking in English because the Chinese testing system heavily emphasizes reading and writing skills instead of listening and speaking skills in English (Ling, 2015; Rao, 2013). It also contradicts some researchers' belief that students with lower English proficiency are unwilling to communicate in English (Peng & Woodrow, 2010). Interviews with the students in the present study clearly show the eagerness of practicing spoken English on the students' part regardless of their socioeconomic background and English proficiency, even though such eagerness might not be all that visible in classrooms.

Further, Nan and Kun's narratives confirmed the findings in the literature about Chinese students' "want-hate" relationship with English. Despite their struggles in the oral English class because of their low English proficiency, both Nan and Kun recognized (or rather internalized) the importance of oral English and wanted to speak English well. For them, studying English is their obligation even though they believe oral English to be irrelevant to their future careers. Such a conflicting sentiment can be seen expressed in both Yu's (2010) and Zhao and Campbell's (1995) studies. Surveying 398 undergraduate students from four universities in China, Yu (2010) found that students were generally dissatisfied with the English education that they were receiving, but they recognized the importance of English in their educational and career advancement. Zhao and Campbell found that Chinese students studied English because they "have to" given English's importance in their educational achievement even though they resented learning the language (p. 383). Such an attitude towards English learning well illustrates Bourdieu's (1977) claim that "a language is worth what those speak it are worth, i.e., the power and authority in the economic and cultural power relations of the holders of the corresponding competence" (p. 652) and that is why in a Bourdieuan sense, language is not only "an instrument of communication or even of knowledge," but also "an instrument of power" (p. 648).

The teachers' and students' embracement of the official discourse exemplifies what Bourdieu discusses as the complicity from the bottom because the compliance of teachers and students with the official discourse comes from the symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991) that

English holds as a global language. As discussed earlier in this article, English in China today, is not only a means for personal development, but also a stylistic embodiment indexing one's social prestige (Gao, 2012). As Gao argues, "English in its current stage of development has somehow retained its hegemonic power, but in a more covert form" (34). The covert form of the hegemonic power of English is on the one hand exemplified by the fact that some Chinese companies make CET 4/6 a requirement in their hiring process even though English is not used in their daily work (Liu, 2013). McPherron's (2016) study shows that most Chinese graduates have very limited use of oral English in their work places. On the other hand, the hegemonic power of English can be exemplified by the fact that students and teachers accept the national rhetoric speaking to the importance of spoken English even though the rhetoric does not serve the needs of all students.

It is important to note that as Foucault (1984) points out, power is best realized "politically, by its discretion, its low exteriorization, its relative invisibility, the little resistance it arouses" (p. 207). That is to say, the more invisible power is, the more likely it is accepted without being questioned. The *Requirements* states that English is "a required basic course for undergraduate students" and it strongly emphasizes developing students' listening and speaking abilities (MOE, 2007). Considering the progression of globalization and the increase in the number of foreign companies in China, it appears that mandatory teaching of English to all university students and an emphasis on listening and speaking skills serves the good of all students. The national rhetoric, translated into the official discourse in the *Requirements*, is that competence in English, especially in spoken English, serves the good of the nation as well as every individual. This is what Thompson called universalization which is defined as "institutional arrangements which serve individual interests represented as serving the interests of all" (Janks, 2010, p. 40). Through universalization, the power of the state is made much more invisible. It is under this invisible power of the national rhetoric that teachers and students accept the university policies concerning College English teaching without questioning their rationality, thus, participating in their own subjugation to the symbolic power of English.

Conclusion

So far, this article has discussed how symbolic power plays out in shaping teachers' and students' understanding of the importance of oral English in China. With a strong centralization of power governing national educational policies, the Chinese government's effort of strengthening the nation's economy and global competitiveness was easily translated

into a national rhetoric that speaks to the importance of oral English in the Chinese society. Such rhetoric was first reflected in the *Requirements*, then further realized through university policies that gave increasing emphasis on students' oral English competence. There is no denying that high oral English competence can bring one material benefits such as better job opportunities; however, these benefits should not be magnified or universalized.

An important contribution of this study to existing literature is examining College English teaching through the lens of symbolic power. The focus group interview showed that the teachers readily accepted the national rhetoric even though they realized the limited usefulness of it for some students. Interviews with the students revealed that some students also embraced the national rhetoric without questioning its rationality and how it affects their educational choices or lack thereof. When oral English competence is held as an indication of one's middle class lifestyle and elite background (Gao, 2012), it is not only material benefits that drive both teachers and students to a belief of its universal importance; the symbolic power of oral English plays an essential role in shaping such a belief as well. In a Bourdieusian sense, the symbolic power of oral English was exercised through both the Chinese government's top-down educational policies and the teachers' and students' complicit embracement of those policies.

Findings in this study can have important implications for educational policy makers in China and those in other countries where English is used as a foreign language as well. First, it is important to note that advocacy for the universal importance of oral English may benefit some students while marginalize others. China is a vast country and there are huge regional differences in terms of socioeconomic development. In regions that have frequent contact with English-speaking countries, oral English competence might be highly important; in regions that lack such contact, it might be less so. Some studies have shown that most Chinese graduates have very limited use of oral English in their work places (McPherron, 2016). However, when the importance of oral English is universalized through a combined projection of symbolic power and the national rhetoric, students who are less proficient in oral English are naturally viewed as less competent and may be discriminated against in the job market (Liu, 2013). What is also of particular concern is that when competence in spoken English is viewed by a society as indication of one's socioeconomic background and status, students who are less competent in spoken English could be marginalized from the more popular and elite in schools. At a time when English is regarded as a language with high social status in many countries in the expanding circle (Gao, 2012; Jantrasakul, 2010), it is important for policy makers to take into consideration differences in regional development

and personal pursuit and put the interests of individual students at the core of making decisions about educational policies.

Second, it is important for policy makers to realize that when educational reforms are carried out top-down while teachers are not involved in the decision-making process, there could be incongruence between school policies and teachers' personal beliefs of what is important and what is not. Without an open dialogue about the incongruence, teachers could mechanically follow the policies without clear understanding of their intentions. This could result in unenthusiastic teachers in classroom practices. It is highly important for educational policy-makers not only to communicate their rationales to the teachers, but also invite teachers to the decision-making process. This is especially true to countries where educational decision making is highly centralized, such as China, Vietnam, Thailand, etc. (Kirkpatrick, 2016).

Bourdieu's critical social theory is oftentimes criticized because it depicts social structures and power relations in a "pessimistic, deterministic, and reproductive" way (Pennycook, 1999, p. 335). By pointing out the essential role that symbolic power plays in shaping teachers' and students' understanding of the importance of oral English in China, the author does not intend to victimize the students for their subjugation to the university's decision on what is important and what it not in their education or to criticize the teachers for their passivity in following the university policies. Data from class observations indicate that some students who are in complicit embracement of the importance of oral English can at the same time covertly resist the symbolic power of oral English by their passivity in class participation. Because of the constraint of space, it is impossible to include discussions of resistance in this article; however, it is an important topic to be explored in future articles.

Because of the small sample size, this study has some limitations. The university where the study was conducted is a prestigious university located in a socioeconomically developed city in China and the university is most famous for its science and engineering programs. These unique features make it inevitable that the findings in this study bear uniqueness to its participants. More studies need to be done in the future in different types of universities and in different regions in China. Additionally, ideally speaking, a study of educational policies should include voices from different stake holders. However, because of the constraint of time and access, policy makers and university administrators were not recruited as participants in this study. Future studies should involve voices from different stakeholders, including administrative staff and university leaders as well as teachers and students.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol for Focus Group

Thank you for your participation in the interview. Remember that your participation in this interview is voluntary. You are free to decline answering any questions that you don't feel comfortable answering. You are welcome to stop the interview at any time, for any reason. The interview will be audio recorded for future transcription and analysis. Your identity will remain anonymous in any transcripts and analysis of the interview.

1. Tell me about yourself, e.g. where you are from, your educational background, how many years you have been teaching, etc.
2. Tell me about your teaching beliefs. What would you consider to be the goal of English teaching? What do you think is the most important aspect of learning English (e.g. grammar, pronunciation, fluency in speaking, etc.)? What would you consider to be effective/good teaching? (How do you understand communicative competence? How do you help students to develop communicative competence in your teaching?)
3. What do you find most difficult in teaching English to non-English major Chinese students? How do you address the issue?
4. What do you think of your job? How would you categorize your social status as a College English teacher?
5. How do you see the importance of English in students' future careers and lives?
6. Where are the students in your class from? What do you think of your students from other provinces, in terms of their English competence?

Appendix B

Interview Protocol for Students

Thank you for your participation in the interview. Remember that your participation in this interview is voluntary. You are free to decline answering any questions that you don't feel comfortable answering. You are welcome to stop the interview at any time, for any reason. The interview will be audio recorded for future transcription and analysis. Your identity will remain anonymous in any transcripts and analysis of the interview.

1. Tell me about yourself, e.g. where you are from, where you received prior education, your major, etc.
2. What do your parents do? What level of education did they receive?
3. How much time do you spend studying English everyday compared to the time that you spend on other subjects?
4. What was your experience of studying English like before you entered college? How would you compare the way that English is taught in college with the way that it was taught in your high school? (How much opportunities did you have practice oral English before you entered college? Do you feel comfortable speaking English in class?)
5. What do you want to do after you graduate? What role would English play in your career or life after you graduate?
6. Do you prefer to have a foreign teacher or a Chinese teacher for your oral English class? Why? What are your reasons for choosing Mr. Lee's class?
7. How do you see yourself as a student in the oral English class? Do you consider yourself to be an active student?
8. Describe your way(s) of learning English.



Typography's Effect on Language Learners' Reading Processes: An Eye Tracking Study

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Bioprofile

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Abstract

Typography, in shaping how language appears, functions as the element of design that most influences the way people access a text to extract meaning. One of the many roles EFL educators assume is that of a materials developer, creating texts which are then distributed and consumed by language learners. All texts inherently contain typographical cues and hierarchy that may influence reactions to and processing of texts. This paper reports the findings of a study designed to investigate the effects of typographical cueing and hierarchy on the reading patterns, recall, and comprehension of participants whose first language is not English. Participants were split into two groups: The control group was exposed to an 'undersigned' document, while the experimental group read a 'designed' version of the same document containing typographical hierarchy and cueing. Participants' reading process was measured by an eye tracking camera. Participants completed comprehension and recall questions post reading. The results show significant differences on recall and comprehension tasks, with the experimental group performing better than the control group. Eye tracking data also showed differences between the two groups regarding fixations and reading patterns

used within the texts. This study shows how typography influences both access to and comprehension of texts read by language learners. The results provide support for the importance of well-designed materials and should encourage EFL educators, whether design savvy or not, to focus more on the typography of their materials.

Introduction

Language surrounds us and permeates our environment in many forms, both auditory and visual. Language, in its various forms and modes, is partially duplicitous in its nature, “some things can be ‘said’ only visually, others only verbally” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 2). Though language is split into these modes, the process of extracting meaning from language, both auditory and visual, forms the basis for communication. In the case of visual communication, the appearance of the medium itself plays a role in meaning making. Typography, “what communication looks like” (Felici, 2012, p. ix), is to visual communication what register or phonology are to verbal communication. Candlin (2001) promotes typography as a “central part” and “key point of access to the rhetoric of a range of subjects” (p.1). Typography also has an effect on our engagement with a text (p.1). Lupton (2010) elucidates this idea further by providing insight into the process of typographical design in this manner:

Designers provide ways into-and out of-the flood of words by breaking up text into pieces and offering shortcuts and alternate routes through masses of information...one of design's most humane functions is, in actuality, to help readers avoid reading. (p. 87)

There are many methods of designing a text that can effectually enable typography to guide the reader through a text (see Beck, 1984; Foster 1979). Walker (2001) states “the role of a typographer [is to] articulate the meaning of a text, making it easy for readers to understand” (p. 3). Second language acquisition and education is an ideal field where “shortcuts and alternate routes” that facilitate ease of understanding to play a key role. Logic would suggest that typography could be used to expedite the process of extracting meaning from a text. However, empirical data is needed to prove that typography directly influences both the reading process and post-reading recall. There have been only few studies investigating the effect of typography on the reading process, and none that specifically focus on second language learners. The current study combines traditional recall measures with state of the art eye tracking, in a novel approach to measure how typography can alter language learners’ reading processes and ability to recall details. This study’s experimental design involved two

groups exposed to two different typographical variations of a text as a basis for measuring the relationship of typography, recall, and reading patterns. The two variations of the text were lexically identical, but with typographical modifications put into place for the experimental group. Participants' gaze was measured by an eye-tracking camera and participants were tested on their recall of the passages. In this manner, the study was designed to fill the gap in our knowledge of how typography, as an element of design, affects the way language learners interact with print or digital materials. Analysis of the data suggests that language learners' comprehension and reading patterns are indeed altered by the application of typographical design principles, contributing to our understanding of learners' reading processes and interactions with texts.

Literature Review

Texts may serve a variety of roles in the EFL classroom. Sometimes, instructional texts may be used to give learners instructions or guidance, while at other times, texts will be examined intensively and in great detail. First, this review will explore typography's role in the literature of supporting texts in fulfilling their purpose and outcomes. Following this, research concerning typographical cueing and hierarchy will be presented as a way to show how classroom texts can be enhanced by using typographical principles. Finally, the literature on eye tracking, reading, and typography will be covered to show how technology can provide insightful data into the complex reading process.

Typography, Readability, and Legibility

Typography is intimately connected with the process of reading texts that are designed to fulfill a wide range of purposes. Therefore, for each textual type and audience, typography is modified to best serve its capacity of supporting the meaning and purpose of the text. There are two key concepts that inform the typographical style: readability and legibility. According to Williams (2006, p. 33), "Readability refers to whether an extended amount of text—such as an article, book, or annual report—is easy to read." A novel or short story would be examples of texts that need to be readable. "Legibility refers to whether a short burst of text...a headline, catalog listing, or stop sign—is instantly recognizable" (Williams, 2006, p. 33). In our daily encounters with texts both in print and online, we may spend a substantial portion of our reading time scanning the text quickly. Legible text allows us to quickly pull relevant information from a text. As Lupton (2010) commented, "One of design's most humane functions is, in actuality, to help readers avoid reading" (p. 87). Typography can

enhance either the legibility or readability of a given text to better fulfill its role as a communicative medium.

Typography and Reading Fluency

Whether a text is designed for legibility or readability, the time spent interacting with a text is an important measure of a text's efficiency in communicating a message. Many researchers have thereby focused on the relationship of typography and reading fluency. A great majority of these studies use four key typographical variables, typeface, point size, spacing, and line length (Papadopoulou, Manoli, & Zifkou, 2014, p. 24) and measure their influence on reading rate. Beymer, et al. (2008), for instance, found a "slight reading speed advantage for larger fonts" with longer fixation periods on smaller fonts (p. 16). Thiessen and Dyson (2010) conducted a similar study concentrated on type size and spacing's impact on reading performance, albeit with children as participants (N=6). "Findings indicated that the performance of the children varied based on the size and spacing between the two groups" (p. 371). Specifically, the children performed better with the smaller sized texts. Dyson and Haselgrove also indicate that line length can affect reading rate, which in turn affects performance on comprehension measures (p. 589). These studies suggest appropriate manipulation of font size and line length can be used to slow down or speed up the reading process, allowing materials developers to draw attention and reader resources to important textual details.

The aforementioned study by Beymer, et al. (2008) is one of the only studies in the literature to study if having English as a first language makes a difference on the reading process. Their results indicate that the "non-English first group" read at a predictably slower rate, and re-read the text significantly more times. However, other than the time considerations, the non-English first group performed equally well on comprehension measures (p. 18).

Typographical Cueing and Education

Typeface, point size, spacing and line length are all holistic typographical features of a text. Generally, researchers have maintained the internal consistency of a text by keeping these variables the same throughout. Aside from these more holistic variables, there are other typographical features used to enhance either readability or legibility. These are known as typographical cues, which are used "to signal the important ideas in a text" (Waller, 1991, p. 245). Typographical cueing focuses on the more granular details of type, such as weight, style, or color, rather than the more holistic hierarchy of the entire document. Research by

Papadopoulou, et al. (2014) established that even preschool age children notice typographical cues (p. 34).

Jourdenais, et al. (1995) demonstrated that typographical cues can move beyond noticing to integration and application. They enhanced a text by highlighting (a form of typographical cue) preterit and imperfect verb forms. After reading, participants were given a language production task. The treatment group's productive language was found to contain more of the target typographically-cued structures (p. 183). Typographical cueing in this case was found to have a direct impact on post-study language production. These results are in line with Coles and Fosters' (1975) observation that "people are more likely to remember cued ideas" (p. 106), but expand this by showing that cueing can extend its influence to language production.

Waller (1991) notes that "[a]nything about a text which is discernable to readers may affect their perception of the status of a document and consequently their expectations, critical stance, reading strategies, goals, and outcomes" (p. 344). Authors of a given text may desire a specific outcome following interaction with their text. Educators, for example, may desire to improve the recall and uptake of certain key information. Lorch, et al. (1995) studied this by creating 3 different versions of a text with cueing ranging from none (the control group), light, and heavy. Results indicate that "[c]ued recall was better in the light condition than in the control or heavy conditions, which did not differ" (p. 51). Excessive use of cueing can normalize the cues, minimalizing their impact on retention. Lorch, et al. found that capitalizing target words, a rather simple cue and feature of the 'light' passage, slowed the reading process and increased participant's ability to recall the targets (p. 51).

Typographical Hierarchy

Typographical cues provide important visual distinction in a text that makes it easier to navigate by establishing a hierarchical structure within a text. Depending on the language, text flows in numerous ways, punctuated by entrance and exit points into chunks of text. For example, English text flows right to left, top to bottom, generally with a number of breaks that signify idea units or groupings. Typical texts have an established hierarchy to guide the reader through a text. Lupton (2010) explains, "A typographic hierarchy expresses the organization of content, emphasizing some elements and subordinating others" (p. 132). This process of emphasis and subordination takes place using typographical cues such as headings, spacing, line length, and indentation.

In addition, there are some guiding principles that help establish a clear hierarchy in a text. The design principles of contrast, alignment, proximity, and repetition (see Williams, 2006, p. 13) can be applied to a text to establish a clear hierarchy of display text, titles, headings, subheadings, and body text, furthering the ease of reading a document. Bergstrom and Schall (2014) also endorse using headings and subheadings to construct a clear hierarchy (p. 167). Canning (2004) notes that considering design principles helps to “display the overall structure of the text by visibly segmenting the text into distinct sections” (p. 2). A text with a clear flow created by typographical hierarchy is easier for any reader to access.

Eye-Tracking Studies

Measuring the effect of typography on the reading process is an arduous process. Reading, including reading in a foreign language, is an intricate harmony of complex thought patterns and minute optical muscular movements. Our understanding of this multifaceted process has been enhanced in recent years by the advent of eye-tracking technology. This technology allows us to track the complex patterns of eye movement. Many studies have been completed in the fields of psychology and linguistics, revealing the way our eyes move through text. For the purpose of this study, we’ll examine eye tracking research’s contribution to knowledge concerning how the nature of the text affects the reading process.

Godfroid, et al. (2013) used eye-tracking to investigate whether increased attention leads to enhanced learning. Their study used eye tracking to measure participants’ attention to different words. They found that the more participants fixated on words, the more they were able to recall vocabulary on a posttest (p. 484). This study, though not focused on the design of the text itself, supports the noticing hypothesis and the idea that as content becomes more salient, it becomes easier to recall.

Interpretation of a text is inherently subjective, including judgments based on the general appearance of the text. Rello and Marcos (2012) investigated readers’ preferences for specific textual features and compared these with eye tracking data to ascertain if features actually were effective in drawing reader’s attention. In summary, the researchers stated that, “Text customization has an impact on readability. At the same time, some textual layouts are preferred to others regarding reading comfort.” (Rello & Marcos, 2012, p. 64). One feature that had an impact on readability was font size, the smallest size, 14pt, was the least preferred size, but increased the duration of fixation on the text.

Furthermore, the words of a text themselves have been found to affect reading in one’s native language. Traxler and Pickering (1996) used eye tracking to measure processing of

plausible and implausible grammar structures and found that in improbable cases, the fixation time was considerably longer (p. 461). Bergstrom and Schall (2014), provide a concise summary of the features of written language that lead readers to fixate on or notice particular words. The type of word, content or function, and even word length influence reading patterns (see Carpenter & Just, 1983; Rayner & McConkie, 1976). While the words themselves were not typographically cued, these studies show how the application of the eye tracking can provide information on how even minute details of text influence reading.

However, all of the aforementioned studies have focused on reading in one's first language. Beymer, et al. (2008) is one of few studies to research the effect of typeface, point size, and spacing using eye-tracking and employing participants with a first language other than English. Their study showed that participants whose first language was not English approached the text in a different manner, with more rereading, but achieved similar results on the comprehension measures (p. 18).

While there is substantial evidence that reading skills transfer from learned languages to additional languages (see Roberts, 1994), there is a need for empirical data to support the application of the findings in the literature to language learners. The current study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on English language learners and their exposure to educational texts.

Rationale and Research Questions

Research indicates that typography can greatly influence reading and post-reading performance. Typographical cueing, hierarchy, line-spacing, typeface, point size, word choice, all influence the reading process. There is a shortage of research regarding the effect typography has on language learners. In addition, empirical data is needed to connect typography, the reading process and post reading recall. This study uses two versions of text, one 'undesigned' and the other 'designed' with typographical cueing and hierarchy to increase the salience of valuable information. Rather than focus on typeface, point size, or line spacing as has been done in many past studies, the researcher focused on the use of typographical cueing and hierarchy. Using two versions of a text, an eye-tracking camera, and a post-reading quiz, the researcher focused on these research questions:

- 1 Does the inclusion of typographical cueing in a text lead to increased comprehension and recall of a text?
- 2 Which hierarchical or typeface related cues are most effective at drawing the attention of participants?

3 How do typographical cues influence the way participants access a text?

Methodology

Passage

The researcher created a passage on phonology for the test passage, due to students' unfamiliarity with the subject matter and small likelihood of completing comprehension tasks based on prior knowledge. The researcher was careful to include enough thought groups with key points that could be used for recall tasks. The original version of the text was approximately 200 words in length. Following pilot testing, the length of the passage was reduced to 140 words to focus more on the essential information. The typeface, Helvetica at 12-point size, was selected for two reasons: First, the ubiquity and familiarity of the typeface, especially for participants accustomed to smartphone use, and second, researchers have noted Helvetica's neutrality and lack of distraction (see Itkonen, 2006; Waller, 2011, p. 8). Leading (line spacing) was set at exactly 20 points. Line length was set at 157mm. All of the features above were used to create both the undesigned and designed passages. Both passages were not only identical lexically, but also the typeface, base point size, line length, and line spacing were controlled. See Appendix A for the baseline, undesigned passage (U).

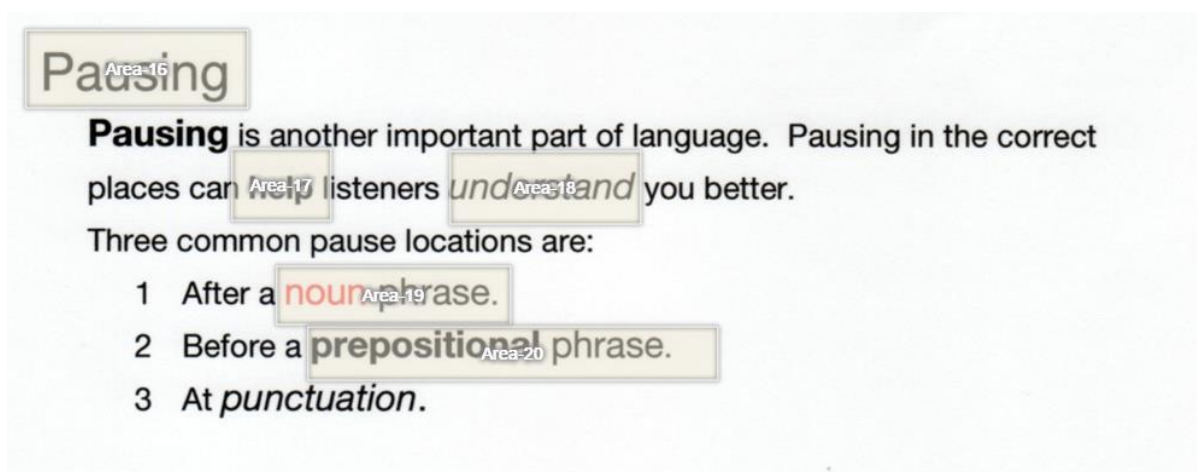


Figure 1. *Sample of Areas of Interest Groupings for the Designed Passage*

The designed passage was then altered to include typographical and hierarchical cueing. First, hierarchy was created by increasing the point size of titles and headings. Cues were added to increase the salience of important words. These cues included color, bold, italics, baseline shift, and size adjustments (but not altering the base point size). See Appendix B for the designed passage (D). There were a total of 21 changes made to the

designed document. For eye tracking purposes, each of these changes was selected in the eye-tracking software as an Area of Interest (AOI). The corresponding areas in the undesigned document were also marked as AOIs so that comparative analysis could be undertaken.

Participants

Participants were selected from a pool of Japanese 2nd and 3rd year university students ($N=65$) majoring in English. All participants had achieved a TOEIC score of 480 or higher at the time of completing the study. None of the students had lived for a considerable time (more than 6 months) outside of Japan. Their ages ranged from 19-21 years old and there was a mix of both male and female students.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to the control or experimental group. Participants were compensated at the student employee rate for their time. Participants completed the tasks individually one-by-one. First, participants were led into a quiet, controlled environment to a computer with an eye tracker attached. Participants read and signed an informed consent form in their native language of Japanese. They were then presented with a simple set of instructions, also in Japanese.

Participants were oriented in front of a monitor with a resolution of 1920x1080, set at 80% brightness. An eye tracking camera was set below the display. This eye tracker, The Eye Tribe Tracker from The Eye Tribe, features a sample rate of 30-60 Hz and accuracy of 0.5-1 degree. Participants were oriented in front of the tracker at a fixed distance. Participants then completed a calibration process to ensure the tracker accurately measured eye movement. Following calibration, participants were presented with either the designed or undesigned text. The text was displayed for 70 seconds, due to feedback from pilot testing. Post reading, participants completed a set of comprehension and recall questions on the computer. These questions included both multiple choice and open-ended response items.

Analysis

Eye-tracking data was compiled using the Eye Proof Suite of tools for research and analyzed using Sofa Stats statistical analysis software. The eye-tracking camera was unable to track several participants' eye movements, so these students' data were removed from the study. Data analysis was completed for 23 participants exposed to the designed passage and 22 participants exposed to the undesigned passage ($N=45$). Areas of Interest (AOI) were

normalized according to size and analyzed for fixation differences between the two versions of the passage.

Comprehension and recall items were assigned numerical values. Open-ended items were scored using a rubric. This data was also analyzed using Sofa Stats statistical analysis software.

Results

Eye-tracking Data

There was no significant difference in the average fixations of members of both groups. This indicates that participants were attentive to, and actively tried to read their version of the document within the time frame.

Percent fixated is a measure of how many participants focused on a particular area of interest (AOI). The average value for percent of AOIs fixated was higher for the designed group (D) at 67.38% than the undesigned group (U) at 64.66% [$t=0.193$, $df=43$, $p=0.8482$], though not significant. However, there were specific AOIs that showed greater variance between groups. Specifically, AOI 6, which was fixated by 100% of D group participants and only 62.07% of U group participants [$t = 3.273$, $df = 43$, $p = 0.0021^*$]. Area 6 contained multiple typographical cues, including size, baseline shift, and boldness.

Other AOIs from the designed passage (D), 1, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 21 all were fixated in excess of 10% more than their undesigned counterparts, though these were not found to be significant. Interestingly enough, all of the above areas, with the exception of area 11, contained multiple typographical cues, e.g. color and size.

On the other hand, AOIs 4, 17, 19, 20 were fixated in the undesigned passage at a rate greater than 10% more than they were in the designed passage. AOI 4 occurred at the beginning of a line, and areas 19 and 20 were part of a list, which are both examples of simple typographical hierarchy present in the undesigned text.

Averaged reading patterns showed both groups began the task by fixating on the center of the document, following which they quickly moved to the top of the page. The designed group focused more on the headings and large words, while the undesigned group seemed to focus more on the beginning of each line text, relying on their knowledge of rhetoric to guide them through the text.

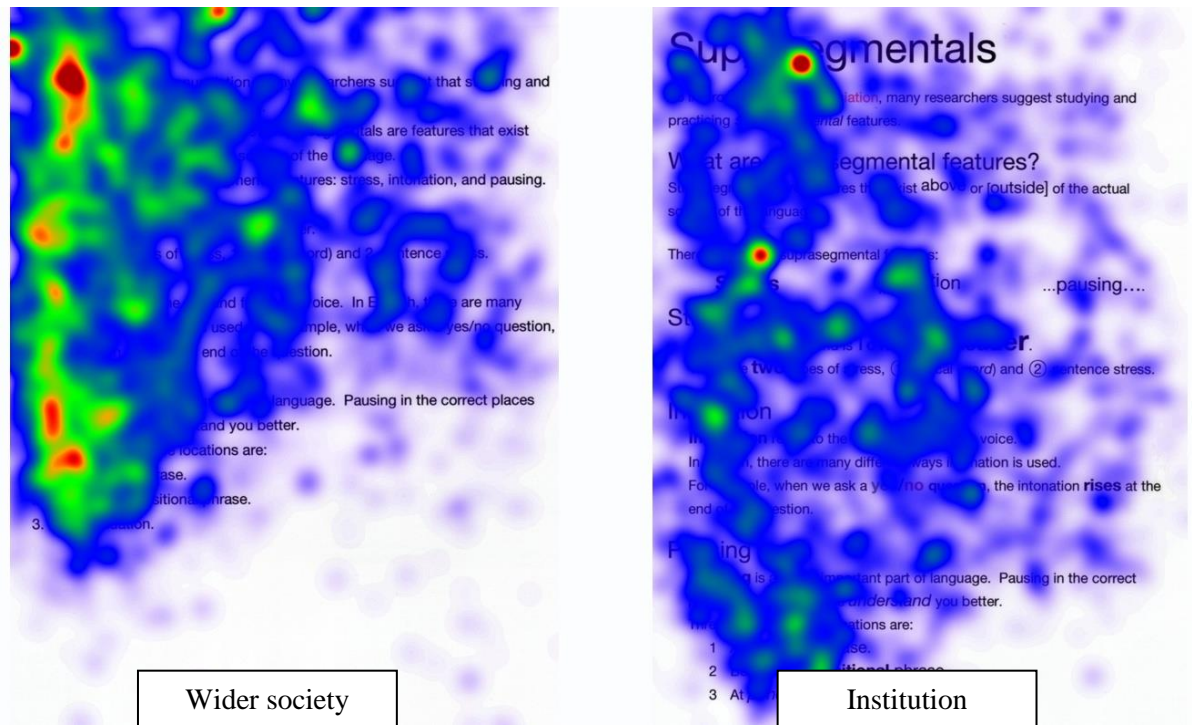


Figure 2. Comparison between heatmaps for the designed and undesigned texts.

Comprehension and Recall

Due to the normal nature of the data, with participants randomly chosen out of homogenous pool, a t-test was determined as the best statistical measure to determine differences between groups. Participants' total scores on the posttest measures were analyzed using a t-test (see Table 1). The analysis showed significant difference between the two groups.

Table 1.

T- test of Total Comprehension Recall Scores

Group	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	T
Designed	23	8.78	2.80	4.0	13.0	3.532
Undesigned	22	5.68	3.09	1	12.0	

$p < 0.001^*$

Degrees of Freedom (df): 43

An ANOVA was also performed on the total scores, to provide further information about the nature of variance between the two groups.

Table 2

ANOVA for Designed and Undesigned Groups

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Between	108.114	1	108.114	12.474	< 0.001*
Within	372.686	43	8.667		

Similarly, the *ANOVA* indicated that there was indeed significant variance between the two groups.

Next, a *t*-test (see Table 3) was performed on the total score for the multiple-choice questions.

Table 3

T- test of Multiple-Choice Questions

Group	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	T
Designed	23	2.83	0.83	1	4.0	3.57
Undesigned	22	1.82	1.05	0	4.0	3.57

$p < 0.001^*$

Degrees of Freedom (*df*): 43

A significant difference was observed between the two groups. The designed group's scores higher than the undesigned group. Additionally, a *t*-test of participants' scores on the open-ended recall items (Table 4) showed similar results, albeit with a slightly higher *p* value.

Table 4

T- test of Open-Ended Questions

Group	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	T
Designed	23	5.96	2.67	2	10.0	2.62
Undesigned	22	3.86	2.70	0	10.0	2.62

$p = 0.01223$

Degrees of Freedom (*df*): 43

Additional analysis in the form of *t*-tests, was run for each individual item on the comprehension text, in an effort to isolate areas of interest linked to typographical cueing.

Question 3, linked to Area of Interest 4, was found significant at a p value of 0.05 [$t = 1.974$, $df = 43$]. Area of Interest 4 contained a size adjustment and baseline shift. Question 5 reached a higher level of significance [$t = 3.287$, $df = 43$, $p = 0.002$] and was linked with AOI 5 and 6, cued by boldness, baseline shift, and size. Question 10 [$t = 2.996$, $df = 43$, $p = 0.004$] was linked with AOI 13, which was cued using size and baseline shift. All questions with significant differences were linked to AOI enhanced by size and baseline shift, although it cannot be concluded whether this relationship is causal or merely correlational.

Discussion

Research Questions

Does the inclusion of typographical cueing in a text lead to increased comprehension and recall of a text?

Typographical cueing does seem to influence comprehension and recall of information from a text. However, as the comprehension test was taken directly following interaction with the text, this supports the findings of Coles and Foster (1975) that typographical cueing will lead people to remember cued ideas and improve immediate recall. Language learner's ability to immediately recall information is an area of concern for classroom practice. If the saliency of information is enhanced through typography, the avenue of spaced review and repetition are available to help cement ideas and concepts in learners' longer term memories. The inclusion of typographical cuing opens the doors to deeper learning of material.

The results of this study also indicate that the nature of typography itself contributes to uptake of materials. The presence of multiple typographical cues in significant recall items suggests that noticeably visibly altered portions of text draw the attention of the reader and enhance recall ability. Nevertheless, the inclusion of too much typographical cues may also desensitize learners to cuing, detrimentally impacting the ability of students to recall key ideas from the text. An optimal amount of typographical cues has not been determined by prior research, but it may be possible to posit an answer based on the data collected for this study. The data indicate significant difference in recall when one to two typographical cues are added per paragraph. Educators would do well to think of what information they most want their students to remember and apply typographical cues to enhance the saliency of that text.

Which hierarchical or typeface related cues are most effective at drawing the attention of participants?

Creating a hierarchy of importance from the title to the headings to the body text using contrasts in typeface size seem to have the largest influence on drawing the attention of participants. The design principle of contrast is clearly at work here. To put it simply in the words of Robin Williams, “To make a contrast of size work effectively, don’t be a wimp” (2006, p. 188). Contrasts in type size are one of the simplest ways to show difference between body text and key phrases or words. In this case, statistical difference was found when using text altered by two to eight points in size over the base text size. Headings were sized at 20 points compared to the base font size of 12 points. The difference between texts created a clear hierarchy and flow of information. Typographical cueing using point size can enhance the hierarchy and the salience of important information in the text.

Furthermore, the data indicate that using baseline shift to interrupt the homogeneity of a line seems to draw attention to lexical items. In this case, this technique is not widely employed in normal texts, therefore instantly recognizable by readers for its peculiarity. For readability purposes, breaking the baseline is not generally recommended as it can potentially slow down the reader. On the other hand, if an educator really wishes to draw attention to an item in a text, by breaking the flow of the text, they can immediately force the reader to spend time processing the shifted text, bolstering it in their memory.

In addition, the data indicate that when more than one typographical cue is applied to text, such as a change in font style and size, language learners are more likely to notice and fixate on the altered text. This finding is in accordance with William’s (2015) principle of contrast, which she succinctly summarizes thus, “If two items are not the same then make them really different...Don’t be a wimp” (p. 65). As language educators and materials developers design texts for language learners, they should consider the ways they can aid uptake and recall of the materials and apply typographical cues to reach the intended objectives of the text.

How do typographical cues influence the way participants access a text?

Other than the reasons mentioned above, analyses of the eye tracking data indicate that texts featuring typographical cueing and hierarchy allow the reader to approach a text in different ways. Returning to words of Lupton (2010) concerning the nature of typography, “Designers provide ways into-and out of-the flood of words by breaking up text into pieces and offering shortcuts and alternate routes through masses of information” (p. 87). By reinforcing the hierarchy of the text and inserting typographical cueing, the researcher created different

access points into the text of the designed version. The heat maps for both passages support this by showing a much heavier focus on conventional top-down left to right reading patterns for participants who read the undesigned passage. The designed passage, with its more developed hierarchical structure featured many access points for participants. Each heading allowed the participants to jump in and access a topically-relevant block of text. Due to this fact, the participants were able to read in a less linear structured fashion. Returning to prior information was easier in a text with more positional cues. The potential for rereading and review is strengthened when texts offer visual differentiation.

On the other hand, before educators decide to employ copious amounts of cueing to all the texts they use in their classes, it is vital to consider the nature of the text. Due to the fact that typographical cues will alter reading patterns, cueing in the manner described in this study may not always be an appropriate choice. First, educators need to consider whether the main purpose of the text is for readability or legibility, a distinction which leads into potentially disparate design philosophies. Once this has been determined, the post-reading outcomes should be determined. Is immediate recall important? Will the meaning of the text be clarified through other mediums? Only then can the degree to which typographical cues are inserted into a text be decided.

Limitations/Suggestions for Future Research

Though this study provides evidence to support the idea that typographical cueing leads to increased memory and recall, it cannot be interpreted to mean that retention of ideas is enhanced. This study primarily focused on short-term recall.

Second, it is difficult to make conclusions about the impact of different typographical features – since the study did not isolate for any particular typographical cues. Further work would need to be conducted to isolate specific typographical features.

Additionally, participants were all of a Japanese language background, therefore the results of this study could have limited applicability to a wider population. Furthermore, a larger sample size would perhaps yield more informative results.

Conclusion

The data provided by this study helps demonstrate this important connection and the potential benefits of design for second language acquisition and education. Simple design provides ways to enhance and make texts more suitable for achieving their intended purpose. Learners are exposed to a myriad of texts containing a wide variety of text types, aesthetics, and genres. Educators can enhance their materials through typography and design for not only

aesthetic purposes, but to improve the pedagogical impact of the texts. Typography and design play a demonstrable part in positively or negatively influencing the way learners interact with a text. In the field of education, where every innovation, ideology, and practice is scrutinized and critiqued to ascertain the best way to teach and learn, design and typography cannot be ignored as they are the gatekeepers of textual-based interaction. Design ushers language learners to important portions of the text and shepherds them from one idea to the next while pointing out important landmarks on the way. All educators would benefit from considering the way how typography and design can positively enhance the amount of material noticed and processed by language learners. Typography is one way to effectually create “an increase in efficiency in how knowledge is communicated” (Lanham, 2006, p. 92).

Language learners are also becoming increasingly design savvy and tend to be more aware of design problems that may influence their learning process. Online culture has created avenues for sharing and discussing educational materials. Classroom materials are often uploaded, critiqued or mocked for their questionable design. Language learners should expect good design that doesn’t impede or hinder their language acquisition, but instead enhances it by providing paths of access, hierarchy, and cues. In ideal circumstances, language learners take ownership of the design of texts and work in conjunction with educators to develop materials that will be best suited for them. This aligns perfectly with Murphey, et al. (2009) assertion that incorporating student voice into ELT practices improves educational quality. The present study adds empirical data to support both institutional and grassroots application of design to materials development and argues for more integration between the fields of design and education. As design and typographical principles make their way into every teacher’s classroom and into international conferences and forums we will see a more effective dissemination of ideas that allows for better teaching and, as a result, more effective learning.

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Appendix A

Undesigned Passage

Suprasegmentals

To improve English pronunciation, many researchers suggest that studying and practicing suprasegmental features.

What are suprasegmental features? Suprasegmentals are features that exist above or [outside] of the actual sounds of the language.

There are three main suprasegmental features: stress, intonation, and pausing.

Stress

Stress means a sound is longer and louder.

There are two types of stress, 1. lexical (word) and 2. sentence stress.

Intonation

Intonation refers to the rise and fall of the voice. In English, there are many different ways intonation is used. For example, when we ask a yes/no question, the intonation rises at the end of the question.

Pausing

Pausing is another important part of language. Pausing in the correct places can help listeners understand you better.

Three common pause locations are:

1. After a noun phrase.
2. Before a prepositional phrase.
3. At punctuation.

Appendix B

Designed Passage

Suprasegmentals

To improve **English pronunciation**, many researchers suggest studying and practicing **suprasegmental** features.

What are suprasegmental features?

Suprasegmentals are features that exist **above** or [outside] of the actual sounds of the language.

There are **3** main suprasegmental features:

Stress

intonation

...pausing....

Stress

Stress means a sound is **longer** and **louder**.

There are **two** types of stress, ① lexical (*word*) and ② sentence stress.

Intonation

Intonation refers to the **rise** and **fall** of the voice.

In English, there are many different ways intonation is used.

For example, when we ask a **yes/no question**, the intonation **rises** at the end of the question.

Pausing

Pausing is another important part of language. Pausing in the correct places can **help** listeners *understand* you better.

Three common pause locations are:

- 1 After a **noun** phrase.
- 2 Before a **prepositional** phrase.
- 3 At *punctuation*.

Book Review

Putting CLIL into Practice, Phil Ball, Keith Kelly, John Clegg, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp.1 + 320. Reviewed by Oliver Hadingham, Rikkyo University, Japan.

This book, like most books on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), has a large potential readership. For many years, CLIL has been talked about as a way to adapt to increasing numbers of EFL students who desire more of a content focus to their English classes. Such students may have had exposure to English from a young age, may have spent time living abroad, or may simply realize that as the world globalizes English is fast becoming a core practical skill used to do something else. The increasing number of international schools throughout Asia reflects this trend, as does the rising number of colleges choosing English as their language of tuition. Teachers seeking a better grasp of CLIL will benefit from reading *Putting CLIL into Practice*, the best attempt yet in clarifying how CLIL methodology can be used in the classroom.

Chapter one provides a thorough overview of CLIL. As a methodological approach, it continues to unsettle many in the TESOL community. The authors are aware that doubt and confusion has hovered over CLIL as a methodology. Many within TESOL community still view CLIL as confused and confusing, and, if the implication is that EFL instructors are to somehow morph into subject specialists, over-ambitious and impractical. The authors argue that such confusion stems from the lack of clarity surrounding the term CLIL.

Chapter two wrestles with defining the parameters of CLIL. CLIL is a broad term that first emerged in Europe in the mid-1990s as an offshoot of various ‘content-based’ practices. A key distinction emerged between ‘Hard’ and ‘Soft’ CLIL, with Hard (or ‘strong’) CLIL being taught by content instructors with the stress on subject knowledge, and a Soft (‘weak’) CLIL approach favored by language teachers that devoted less time to subject knowledge and more to the language component. Doubts linger over how CLIL works in practice: language teachers have not been adequately trained to handle content goals and assessment, just as their subject-specialist counterparts may struggle to integrate and assess a clear language component. Ball, Kelly, and Clegg point out that the distinction between language teaching and content teaching are not as clear-cut as before. As CLIL has developed a dual-focused approach has emerged combining content and language to varying degrees, ensuring that both subject-specific and language feature. What the authors stress is that this approach does not fully appreciate that content is to some extent *linguistic*. What is meant by this is that

language in CLIL methodology should not be understood as a vehicle through which content is delivered, or that the language component of a CLIL class can be bolted on to a lesson plan whose overriding purpose is teaching a subject.

Ball, Kelly, and Clegg suggest a three-dimensional approach to CLIL in chapter three, involving treating the content as subject-specific concepts, as procedures (the cognitive skills required to handle the concepts), and, crucially, language (the specific language needed to use the concepts). In a three-dimensional model, the content is better understood if students do something with it - interpreting, evaluating, comparing, etc. - and use a certain type of language to do it, they argue. Each of the three dimensions should be adjusted depending on the particular demands of a task or class. Concepts, procedures, and language always co-exist, the authors state, but the instructor is free to adjust the weighting given to each. This seems a more subtle and flexible approach, but one that requires instructors to think carefully about how and when to adjust the dimensions.

The authors go on to discuss the practice of language in CLIL (chapter four), arguing that it is important that language is treated as ‘layered’, with a subject-specific layer (key terminology used in the academic discipline), a more general academic layer (language used to think about the subject), and a peripheral layer (language the instructor uses to give instructions, assign roles, co-ordinate groups, etc.). The implication is that many CLIL instructors mistakenly assume that the language is simply a vehicle through which the subject is taught and neglect what exactly the language component means in practice, the authors highlight. Language should be integral to lesson preparation. Instructors, the authors underline, should strive to predict and prepare for possible linguistic difficulties, and ensure language is embedded within materials and tasks, not just added on as an afterthought to the perceived content goals.

The book provides chapters on how to guide the input of content (chapter five) and support its output by students (chapter six). Scaffolding is central to guiding content input, and supporting output involves an effort by instructors to build in to a lesson plan chances for students to assimilate and express newly acquired subject knowledge in their own words. This is followed by a focus on materials design in chapter seven. The authors offer seven principles that ought to guide the design of materials in CLIL.

Chapter eight grapples with the issue of assessment in CLIL. As most readers will be language teachers, fears over how to assess conceptual content must loom large in their fears. The authors advance the idea that formative-type assessment is especially suited to CLIL. The ideal CLIL classroom is an active one in which students are actively doing things, within

each class and through the entire course. Assessment needs to be rooted in the same ‘concept, language, production’ framework introduced earlier in the book. Chapter nine is devoted to how to manage CLIL in schools, more a topic for the future, should, as seems likely, CLIL continues to seep into school and college curricula. Chapter ten focuses on training teachers, but seems perfunctory in merely outlining certain challenges.

Although the last two chapters are less detailed, and perhaps a little cursory, *Putting CLIL into Practice* is nonetheless an invaluable addition to the growing literature on CLIL. Like most CLIL books, it is at times a dense read. Yet it does provide an extremely useful summary of what CLIL actually involves, establishes the parameters of CLIL as a methodology, and outline a three-dimension model for language instructors to understand how to handle the ‘content’ component. Few resources are available that adequately marry methodological theory to practical material development. This book does, and the authors should be commended for their efforts in outlining how CLIL can be put into practice and better prepare our students for an ever changing and competitive world.

This submission has not been previously published or is not being considered for publication elsewhere.

About the Reviewer

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Unlocking English Learners' Potential. Diane Staehr Fenner and Sidney Snyder. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2017. Pp. xi+264.

Reviewed by Lucas Kohnke, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, English Language Centre, Hong Kong

This book provides hands-on examples and tools for exploring how English language teachers can draw on their own expertise as well as work in collaboration in order to leverage the various kinds of know-how that they have to offer. *Unlocking English Learners' Potential* focuses on three main ideas: first, no matter the subject being taught, the students are learning English; second, collaboration is essential for English learners' success; and third, focusing on English learners' assets prepares them for success. The discussion addresses the vibrant nature of today's educational landscape, which is populated with learners from all walks of life.

The activities, suggestions, and strategies included in this book are anchored in sound research and designed to assist teachers in connecting with a new generation of students of all ages. It takes into account the needs of both English language and content teachers, and it successfully brings together issues that are of concern to anyone teaching students for whom English is not a first language. The title thus accurately describes how educators can help learners to succeed.

Chapter 1 begins by stressing the importance of supporting English language learners and understanding both their potential and their achievement gaps. Particular attention is given to five guiding principles regarding English learners: i) they bring many strengths to the classroom; ii) they learn best in a welcoming and supportive school climate; iii) they should be taught language and content simultaneously; iv) they benefit when their teachers collaborate; and v) they excel when their teachers demonstrate advocacy and leadership skills.

The second chapter makes clear the importance of culture for English language learners, in particular how the dominant culture influences classroom instruction, expectations, and interactions. Included are activities and approaches sure to assist teachers in understanding and connecting with students in a "cross-cultural zone" (Saifer et al., 2011). The two reflective questions at the end of the chapter nicely connect the approaches presented therein with teachers' own experiences.

Chapter 3 introduces scaffolding as an essential aspect of developing English language learners' proficiency and discusses recent research on the topic. Here the authors present various materials such as checklists and practical tools that teachers can use to scaffold instruction. For those new to the concept, this chapter helpfully provides easy-to-grasp steps for scaffolding a lesson. Even experienced teachers will find these materials useful and inspiring.

In Chapter 4, the authors provide guidance for teachers in developing effective oral language activities by fostering engagement in academic discussions. Particularly helpful again are the tools and activities for achieving these goals, which can be easily adapted to fit a variety of contexts, such as English-Medium Instruction, Content and Language Integrated Learning, and Higher Education.

The next chapter takes up the issue of what constitutes academic language and its importance for the success of learners. Instructors can benefit from discussions of how to analyze academic language in a text and how to teach linguistic forms and functions in order to help their learners deal with challenging language. The suggested activities thus nicely interweave academic language and content instruction.

Chapter 6 focuses on vocabulary acquisition, a crucial aspect of learning English. Issues discussed include the importance of carefully selecting vocabulary for input, and a useful tool is introduced to assist teachers in introducing content-specific vocabulary. Teachers will find the listening and speaking activities designed to develop English learners' vocabulary range especially helpful. As focused teaching of academic vocabulary is critical to English language learners' development, listening and speaking activities will allow opportunities to actively and effectively practice and reinforce newly introduced academic vocabulary.

Chapter 7 introduces a new, four-step framework: Assess, Select, Activate and Teach for determining the types of background knowledge to be taught with respect to students' backgrounds, which are increasingly diverse in terms of knowledge and experience (Fisher et al., 2012). This discussion serves as a reminder that teachers who are unfamiliar with their students' backgrounds run the risk of assigning texts that are too challenging for them to be able grasp the content (Guthrie, 2008).

Chapter 8 surveys research that examines what it means for English language learners to read for multiple purposes. The key focus is on text-dependent questions as a positive tool to support such reading. The information provided here will help teachers who are unfamiliar with these kinds of questions to get started using them in the classroom.

The final chapter stresses the importance of creating formative assessments of English learners' acquisition of academic language and content. Here the focus is on six areas: Assessment instructions (clear and easy instructions), Format and use of technology (technology needs to be familiar to the students), Linguistic accessibility (limit the linguistic load), Cultural bias (content which student can relate to), Scoring (only assess constructs), and Scaffolds (differentiated assessments). Focus on these areas can help teachers ensure that their assessments are valid, and contextually appropriate, for learners of various proficiency levels.

Though it certainly represents a valuable contribution to education research, *Unlocking English Learners' Potential* would be more practice-oriented and user-friendly if it were accompanied by e-source so that teachers could cut, paste, and personalize the various tasks within the specific learning environment platforms or apps through which they interact with their learners. Additionally, while the activities and suggestions are practical and keyed to specific developmental levels, it would have been useful to suggest proficiency levels for them.

In sum, this volume includes numerous interesting pedagogical ideas with which language teachers throughout Asia should be familiar. As such, it serves as a valuable starting-point for promoting collaboration between English language teachers and content teachers in specific classroom contexts. The authors are to be commended for presenting thought-provoking resources for approaching the unique characteristics of every student as assets rather than deficits.

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This submission has not been previously published or is not being considered for publication elsewhere.