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Foreword

Drawing on the seminal work by Corder (1967) and Selinker (1972), Krashen's (1981, 1982, 1985) Monitor Model would strongly influence language teaching contexts in the following decades to this day. Despite criticisms to the model's validity, it paved the way to different lines of research within second language acquisition. The model had a significant impact on the (re)definition of teaching and learning strategies, the role of teachers and learners and, above all, on the type of input that should be made available to the learners in the classroom context. Krashen's proposal has also contributed to the debate on the representation of knowledge and processing models. Concepts such as "comprehensible input" and the dichotomy between "explicit/implicit knowledge" have been central for research in the past decades leading both researchers and teachers to quest for the most adequate and effective teaching and learning strategies and approaches.

The *TESOL International Journal*'s current issue includes a selection of research articles that take such concepts into consideration, even if indirectly. Focusing on language acquisition, teacher beliefs and teaching approaches and how they impact teaching strategies, the research articles of the current issue bring up-to-date and interesting perspectives on these topics.

Lewis III and Datzman's study focuses on the use and role authentic audio materials have on vocabulary. Drawing on Lehmann & Murray's (2005) Multisensory Learning (MSL) Theory, they argue that combining authentic audio materials (AAM) with mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) permeates "(…) exposure to authentic language use (…)" since the existence of a context helps learners "(…) internalize the dynamic interplay between word form, word meaning, and word use (…)". The results show that AAM-based instruction strategies "promoted vocabulary learning".

John Baker's paper gauges the effects of topic interest in the "readability of rhetorics". The main focus of the paper is to understand whether background knowledge and interest in the topic affects readability in adult English language learners. As shown by the existing literature on NSs, interest in the topic facilitates comprehension of the texts and interest in the topic of the texts is correlated with the background knowledge. The analyses of the results show that the level of interest the students had in a specific topic influenced their perception of the degree of difficulty of the text(s). Results also show that interest is correlated with background knowledge, the text's logical organization, its length, sentence complexity, and vocabulary.

The third study by **Ji Hye**, **Myoung Eun Pang**, **Tuba Angay-Crowder**, **Jayoung Choi** and **Aram Cho** addresses the context of language teacher education in the United States of America. The main objective of this study was to understand how ESOL teachers made use of multimodal resources to empower "(…) identities through critical perspectives and transformed practice." The authors claim that it is crucial for teachers to reflect on the "(…) strong relationship between identities and teaching practices (…)". Should they not take this into account, they will not be able to take "(…) the student's cultures, values, and language ideologies as valuable, critical, and transformative resources in classrooms (…)". The authors support their study on the multiliteracies framework proposed by the New London Group (1996) (NLG). This framework understands literacy, cultural and linguistic diversity in a broad sense, and as the authors put it: "Today's learners possess multiple linguistic, professional identities, and literacy skills that can enable them to utilize the potential of the diverse modes of communication offered by new technologies." The study shows that teachers used multimodality in a limited way, even if it is clear that students

showed an ability to develop their identities and autonomy through multimodality.

Thao Vu, **William Winser** and **John Walsh's** study also addresses the language teachers' beliefs about new approaches to language teaching in a Vietnamese context. Following the Government's changes in the foreign language curriculum in Vietnam, the authors look into the teachers' attitudes regarding the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and learner-centeredness in the curriculum reform. The study results show that while teachers favour curriculum reform, they evaluate the feasibility of the new approach negatively, since the fact that the change was imposed in a top-down fashion, imposed several constraints in its implementation. One of such constraints is related to the teachers' beliefs in a "conventional transmission-style classroom".

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Contents

Foreword 1

The Effects of a Mobile-based Multisensory Approach to Vocabulary Learning in a Japanese EFL Context 4

Dawson R. Lewis III
Brien Datzman

An Exploration of How Interest Contributes to the Readability of Writing Center Self-access Materials 33
John R. Baker

Bringing Transformed Practices and Identities into the Center of Language Teachers' Pedagogy: Neglected Components of Multiliteracies 60
Ji Hye Shin
Myoung Eun Pang
Tuba Angay-Crowder
Jayoung Choi
Aram Cho

Teacher Attitudes Towards the English Language Curriculum Change: The Case of Vietnam 84
Thao Vu
William Winser
John Walsh

The Effects of a Mobile-based Multisensory Approach to Vocabulary Learning in a Japanese EFL Context

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Abstract

This article reports on a 16-week study that examined the effect of mobile-based authentic audiovisual materials (AAM) on the vocabulary acquisition of Japanese university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design study was employed to compare the differences in vocabulary learning between a control and treatment group, as well as those between below and above average achievers in the treatment group. The study included a sample of 66 non-English majors from the Engineering and Environmental Studies departments at a flagship university in southwestern Japan. The mobile-based AAM were drawn from YouTube and aligned with vocabulary from the textbook used by both groups. Intralingual subtitles and task-based comprehension questions accompanied each of the eight AAM treatment sessions. In class, both groups activated their vocabulary knowledge through group discussion and short presentations. The achievement data were gathered from a 20-item multiple-choice and short-answer vocabulary test. Results indicated the intervention had a significant positive impact on vocabulary learning. Further analysis revealed prior vocabulary knowledge was not predictive of vocabulary acquisition, which led the authors to conclude the intervention was equally effective for low and high achievers. Other pedagogical implications of this study and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Key words: multisensory learning theory, authentic audiovisual materials, vocabulary, intralingual subtitles, higher education

Introduction

Vocabulary knowledge is the linchpin of communication (Schmitt, 2010). As Wilkins (1972) observed, "while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (pp. 111–112). Researchers have linked vocabulary knowledge to listening (Bonk, 2000; Stæhr, 2009), speaking (Koizumi & In'Nami, 2013; Ola, Manalo, & Greenwood, 2009; Saito, 2017), reading (Hu & Nation, 2000; Shibasaki, Tokimoto, Ono, Inoue, & Tamaoka, 2015), and writing proficiency (Karakoç & Köse, 2017). The fact that the most popular language learning applications, such as Duolingo and Memrise, explicitly teach vocabulary while only providing incidental grammar instruction implies learners recognize the importance of developing a rich lexicon.

Despite the Ministry of Education's (MEXT) aggressive English vocabulary targets for secondary students, lexical knowledge stagnates or even regresses between the first and third years of high school (Akase & Uenishi, 2015). Among science students, such as the participants in this study, vocabulary knowledge continues to decline between the first and second years of university (McLean, Hogg, & Rush, 2014). This trend is especially problematic in light of MEXT's (2014) ambitious *Tobitate* (i.e., outbound study abroad) and *Top Global University Project* (i.e., English medium of instruction – EMI) policies, for which a substantial aural vocabulary is crucial (Bradford, 2016; Nation, 2013; Uchihara & Harada, 2018). Fujimura, Takizawa, and Wakamoto (2010) argue that sluggish vocabulary development is due to the persistence of rote memorization methods. Japanese EFL teachers and students reflexively adopt the same cramming and repetition strategies used for learning *kanji* (i.e., the logographic character system adopted from Chinese) to learn English vocabulary (Barfield, 2012; Tahira, 2012). Without context, students fail to internalize the dynamic interplay between word form, word meaning, and word use (Nation, 2013). Consequently, EFL students with scant exposure to authentic language use struggle to employ vocabulary correctly in authentic situations.

Online resources offer a possible solution to limitations faced by learners in "culturally and linguistically homogeneous" contexts (Aubrey & Nowlan, 2013, p. 129). Unfortunately, Japanese universities have been reluctant to adopt digital tools, so little is known about online vocabulary learning in Japan besides the low digital literacy of its so-called digital natives (Mehran, Alizadeh, Koguchi, & Takemura, 2017; Son, Park, & Park, 2017). Watkins and Wilkins (2011) proposed that Youtube would be especially beneficial for Japanese EFL learners' vocabulary learning, but to the authors' knowledge, no study has yet been conducted in Japan. The aim of this quasi-experimental quantitative study is to examine the effects of a mobile-based authentic audio-visual

materials (AAM) instruction strategy on Japanese EFL vocabulary learning.

Theoretical Framework

According to Multisensory Learning (MSL) Theory, experiencing stimuli through multiple senses (i.e., visual, auditory, sensory-motor) facilitates processing, encoding, retention, and retrieval (Lehmann & Murray, 2005). It is important to note that MSL is not synonymous with Multiple Intelligences Theory, which holds that the optimal learning modality depends on the cognitive disposition of the individual (Gardner, 2011). Rather, MSL theorists contend that because most real-world stimuli penetrate the awareness through multiple senses, humans have evolved to process information through multiple senses simultaneously (Shams & Seitz, 2008). A neuroimaging study revealed that different types of sensory input activate separate regions of the brain (Willis, 2007), indicating multisensory associations enhance unimodal recognition (Kriegstein & Giraud, 2006). Traditional rote memorization of vocabulary elicits visual-reading skills to the exclusion of all other faculties even though lived experiences of vocabulary rarely filter through the single decontextualized modality of a flashcard (Hahn, Foxe, & Molholme, 2014). In short, restricting learning to unisensory input renders learning artificial and less effective.

Literature Review

Authentic Materials

Authentic materials – whether expository, educational, or entertaining – have traditionally been defined as those designed by and for linguistic and cultural natives (Gilsan, 2015; Harmer, 2007; Tomlinson, 2013). Pinner (2016) rejects this definition as outdated, arguing the international character of virtual environments and the profusion of non-native English users mean authentic materials should encompass global voices. Indeed, recent estimates indicate the number of non-native English speakers is roughly double that of native speakers (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2019). Other scholars have offered more inclusive definitions, which characterize authentic materials as any text or speech developed by real speakers for real (i.e., non-instructional) purposes (Gilmore, 2007; Nunan, 1989; Porter & Roberts, 1981).

Nunan (2001) contends language learners should observe natural speech acts not just to acquire language, itself, but also to understand how social norms within culturally specific contexts govern language use. Cognitive theorists hypothesize that "noticing" morphological, syntactic, and paralinguistic features reinforces vocabulary learning (Gruba, 2006; Wigglesworth, 2001). Gilmore (2011) argues that highly contextualized authentic materials facilitate language learning

and also rescue language from the sterile vacuum of the classroom. This "fun factor" of authentic materials contributes to motivation (Mindog, 2016; Saedi & Ahmadi, 2016), self-efficacy (Noroozi & Mehrdad, 2016), and learner motivation (Jiuhan, 2013).

Empirical studies indicate authentic materials can facilitate vocabulary acquisition. Ghanbari, Esmaili, & Shamsaddini, (2015) divided 66 female EFL students from an Iranian English academy into experimental and control groups to investigate the effects of newspaper articles on vocabulary learning. Independent t-test analysis of Oxford Placement Test results revealed the group which received instruction with authentic readings significantly outperformed the group which received textbook-only instruction. In Japan, Gilmore (2011) exposed the treatment group to a range of authentic materials, including movie clips, news articles, and sound bites, and uncovered similarly significant results. Bal-Gezegin (2014) investigated the difference between authentic video and audio-only groups of Turkish EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge and discovered a significant difference in favor of the video group. Based on thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, the Bal-Gezegin (2014) echoed Kellerman (1991), concluding that visual representations engaged students while paralinguistic cues, such as gestures and facial expressions, facilitated comprehension.

Several researchers have pointed out logistical, linguistic, and curricular challenges of implementing authentic materials for less proficient language learners (Day & Bamford, 1998; Donna, 2000; Sullivan, 2012). The same factors which make authentic materials beneficial also make them challenging for teachers to adapt for instructional purposes (Guariento & Morley, 2001). Complex grammatical structures, idiomatic language, and low-frequency vocabulary can render content ineffective and even deleterious (Nunan, 2001). Krashen (1989) insists that materials which exceed the learner's i+1 or what Vygotsky (1978) termed the Zone of Proximal Development offer no educational benefits and only demotivate learners. A significant challenge for language instructors, therefore, is locating authentic materials that do not exceed the learners' comprehension (Rusmawaty, Atmowardoyo, Hamra, & Noni, 2018).

Thomas (2015) insists authenticity does not necessarily amount to relevance. Students may feel disenfranchised by materials that disregard their home cultures. While authentic materials can provide examples of the target culture's natural language and vital contextual information for developing intercultural competence (Chen, 2012; Vivaldo-Lima, 2008), they can also highlight the cultural and linguistic differences between the students' home cultures. EFL students may relate more with culturally responsive artificial scripts than a genuine artifact from an alien culture (Tamo, 2009). Educators may be able to generate interest and reduce cognitive load by drawing

resources from the local context or catering to the interests of the students (Hadley, 2001; Huessien, 2012).

Authentic Audiovisual Materials

Using authentic audiovisual materials (AAM) for language learning is neither untested nor unsupported. Before the turn of the century, several researchers discovered television news exposure could promote language learning (Baker, 1996; Berber, 1997; Mackenzie, 1997). AAM aids comprehension by targeting multiple senses and linking abstract vocabulary to concrete sounds and imagery within the relevant socio-cultural situation (Ahmed, 2018; Pisarenko & Arsaliev, 2016). Bahrani and Sim (2012) compared the effects of regular AAM exposure on intermediate EFL learners in Iran against informal social interaction on ESL learners in Malaysia and found that AAM was more effective for raising communicative skills than face-to-face conversations. Peters and Webb (2018) discovered that even brief exposure to audio-visual material can spur incidental vocabulary learning.

As with any tool, AAM are not universally effective but, rather, dependent on the task, context, instructor, and learner. Beyond the amount of time teachers must exhaust laboriously scouring the media for applicable, exploitable, and level-appropriate samples, additions to the curriculum are often infeasible (Mehmet, Sule & Seçer, 2016). Even assuming an instructor locates suitable samples and enjoys the curricular freedom and administrative support to implement AAM, many instructors either lack the competence or digital literacy to implement AAM adequately (Park & Son, 2009). Additionally, most AAM exceeds the ability of low-proficiency learners (Mackenzie, 1997), which can lead to boredom, anxiety, and demotivation (Mathew & Alidmat, 2013; Morris, 2011). Mansourzadeh (2014) argues that coupling visual aids with teacher support is more appropriate for less proficient EFL learners.

However, when well-executed, AAM can facilitate language learning (Alluri, 2018; Kalra, 2017; Yue, 2019) and, specifically, vocabulary acquisition (Iranmanesh & Darani, 2018; Ismaili, 2013; Soltani & Soori, 2015). First, in order to capitalize on the multisensory input, the visual and aural input should be congruent (Graddol, 1994; Gunter, 1987). Many news broadcasts, for instance, depict scenes of news coverage with a reporter's voice-over, which effectively reduces the material to audio-only. Bahrani and Sim (2012) argue that AAM with coherent story lines are not only more engaging but also easier for lower-level learners to follow. A further means of avoiding cognitive overload is to limit AAM to short sequences, such as those available on Youtube, instead of entire films (Odone, 2011; Watkins & Wilkins, 2011). Next, because AAM

summon only receptive processing skills, instructors should assign tasks which compel students to interact with the material and one another (Qiang, Hai, & Wolff, 2007). Useful tasks include during-task comprehension and critical thinking questions and post-task position papers and discourse with peers.

Subtitled Audio-Visual Learning

Numerous studies have confirmed that intralingual/bimodal subtitles or captions (L2 speech and text) promote vocabulary acquisition among lower and intermediate learners more effectively than no-subtitles or interlingual/standard subtitles (L2 speech and L1 text) (Bellalem, Neddar, Bouagada, & Djelloul, 2018; Bird & Williams, 2002; Garnier, 2014; Naghizadeh & Darabi, 2015; Peters, Heynen, & Puimège, 2016; Soltani & Soori, 2015; Sydorenko, 2010). Two Iranian studies of interlingual and intralingual subtitling demonstrated that intralingual subtitles bolstered vocabulary recognition, recall (Zarei, 2009), and production (Zarei & Rashvand, 2011). Indeed, a meta-analysis of ten intralingual subtitling studies revealed a large effect size on vocabulary learning (Perez, Noortgate, & Desmet, 2013).

Though subtitles may cause English learners to neglect listening comprehension, intralingual subtitles perform the vital function of addressing spelling and pronunciation variations (Stewart & Pertusa, 2004). Due to a confluence of historical factors – including Germanic, Latin, French, and Greek etymologies, early printing technology, the Great Vowel Shift, and classicist interventions – the English lexis is riven with orthographic peculiarities, such as the following list: **gh**ost, lau**gh**, hi**gh**, b**ea**r, b**ea**t, tr**ea**d, h**ea**rt. Chapman (2017) adds that intralingual subtitles help learners bridge the spelling and pronunciation deviations between nations, such as the American "filet" (fɪˈleɪ) versus the British "fillet" (filət). In this sense, subtitles serve as an ongoing didactic aid (Caimi, 2006).

Some researchers have argued that intralingual subtitles are too difficult for language learners to track (Koolstra, Peeters, & Spinhoff, 2002; Yang & Chang, 2014). However, Szarkowska and Gerber-Moron (2018) examined the effect of subtitle speed on comprehension with eye-tracking technology and discovered learners were not only equally capable of processing faster subtitles but were frustrated by slower subtitles. Other researchers claim limiting or even eliminating subtitle use mitigates the split-attention effect (Mayer, Lee, & Peebles, 2014; Mayer & Moreno, 2003), but a study of Chinese EFL learners showed that full captions were no less effective than non-verbatim subtitles for promoting vocabulary acquisition (Hsu, Hwang, Chang, & Chang, 2013). In fact, for EFL learners with more experience reading than listening, subtitles

reduce cognitive load and raise comprehension (Lin, Lee, Wang, & Lin, 2016).

Mobile-Assisted Vocabulary Learning

Though Burston (2011) credits the emergence of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to the Portable Digital Assistant, the smartphone, namely the iPhone, and its accompanying applications, have rendered mobile language learning a feasible and, arguably, a superior alternative to Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) (Abdollapour & Maleki, 2012). Smart devices enable language learners to escape the temporal and spatial boundaries confining CALL and classroom learning (Gourova, Asenova, & Dulev, 2013). Comparative studies have demonstrated that MALL is more effective for vocabulary learning than traditional paper flashcards (Başoğlu & Akdemir, 2010; Nikoopour & Kazemi, 2014; Pamintuan et al., 2018; Suwantarathip & Orawiwataakul, 2015).

Social media platforms and YouTube, in particular, offer isolated language learners access to authentic examples of the target language (Nejati, 2010). YouTube remains the fastest growing video sharing website in the world, and every month YouTube viewers consume over 60 billion hours of free content. Scholars maintain that YouTube has enormous potential for promoting language acquisition (Alimemaj, 2010; Alhamami, 2013; Alwehaibi, 2015; Bonk, 2008; Terantino, 2011). Despite YouTube's popularity, very few studies have investigated YouTube as a vocabulary instruction tool. The results from one quasi-experimental study revealed YouTube music videos were more useful for raising vocabulary achievement among Malaysian secondary students than traditional teacher instruction (Abidin et al., 2011). Kabooha and Elyas (2018) investigated the effect of YouTube videos on the vocabulary achievement of 100 Iranian female EFL learners. The experimental group received supplemental YouTube video exposure, while the control group received standard instruction. Not only did the experimental group significantly outperform the control group, but 84% of the participants also reported satisfaction with the instruction method.

YouTube's entertainment appeal should not be overlooked. Several studies have demonstrated the positive impact Youtube videos can exert on learner motivation (Chang & Kang, 2013; Joe, 2013; Kim & Chan, 2017). Wang and Chen (2019) contend that students are more likely to hold themselves accountable and engage in self-directed learning because Youtube videos are more enjoyable, flexible, and interactive than traditional classroom materials. Although the researchers concede that YouTube is not suitable for test preparation, Kim, Kim, and Kim (2018) argue that traditional approaches and artificial materials are stressful and demotivating, which

ultimately strains English learning resilience.

Scholars have offered suggestions for maximizing YouTube's pedagogical potential. Unlike other social media platforms, which emphasize synchronous and asynchronous communication between acquaintances, YouTube user behavior is typically receptive or interpretive. While there is a comment section, there is no private messaging function, which means teachers would need to incorporate other platforms or activities in order to facilitate interpersonal communication (Cardoso, 2018). Lee (2017) discovered that quality, not quantity, correlated with vocabulary achievement, which suggests instructors should incorporate a limited number of carefully selected YouTube videos into the curriculum, rather than bombarding students with only moderately useful material.

Selection criteria include alignment with curricular objectives (Zhyrun, 2016), relevance to students (Bahrani & Sim, 2013; King, 2002), demands on language skills (Calder, 2009), congruence of visuals, audio, and text (Cross, 2009; Zabalbeascoa, 2008), clarity of plot line (Stewart, 2006), and presence of paralinguistic features (Gruba, 2006). Additionally, to avoid attention drain, videos should be brief; between 30 seconds to three or four minutes (Talaván & Ávila-Cabrera, 2015; Tomalin, 1991). More crucial for learning are the pre-task, during-task, and post-task activities that engage the students and anchor the content to the curriculum (Salazar & Larenas, 2018).

The literature suggests AAM can be combined with MALL to promote vocabulary learning achievement. Authentic materials serve as real-world models of language use which provide learners with much needed context for vocabulary learning. Meanwhile, videos with intralingual subtitles facilitate comprehension by triggering multiple language processing centers in the brain. However, low-proficiency learners may struggle with natural speech patterns, so interlingual subtitles may be necessary to avoid cognitive overload. Instructors, who lack the competence to implement high-quality, level-appropriate AAM into the curriculum, may do more harm than good, especially considering the time-intensive nature of AAM. Due to its inherent flexibility, MALL may represent a solution to this logistical obstacle. With MALL application, learners gain the time and space to study the content while also benefiting from immediate, explicit feedback. To the authors' knowledge, no study of a mobile-based AAM instructional strategy' effects on vocabulary achievement among Japanese EFL university students has been conducted. The following section delineates how the current study aimed to fill this gap in the literature.

Research Questions

RQ1: What effects, if any, does a mobile-based AAM instructional strategy exert on the vocabulary learning achievement of Japanese EFL university students?

$H1_0$: The mobile-based AAM instructional strategy will exert no significant effect on the vocabulary achievement of Japanese EFL university students.

RQ2: To what extent does vocabulary knowledge predict the effect of the mobile-based AAM instructional strategy?

$H2_0$: Vocabulary knowledge will have no significant moderating effect on the mobile-based AAM instructional strategy.

Method

Participants

This study employed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design. Two non-English major English communication classes (n = 68) at a flagship university in southwestern Japan were recruited for this 16-week study in the 2018 fall semester. Participants had six years of experience learning English as a foreign language and ranged from low to high-intermediate. The treatment group (n = 32), which received online AAM vocabulary homework assignments, comprised Environmental Studies majors, and the control group (n = 36), which completed textbook-based vocabulary drills, comprised Engineering majors. Because two students failed to complete either the pretest or posttest correctly, their data were discarded from the study, leaving the treatment group with 31 participants and the control group with 35 participants for a total sample size of 66 participants. All participants possessed smartphone devices. Both groups were taught by the same instructor.

Materials

The integrated language skills textbook, *Scraps* (Cullen & Mulvey, 2008), which emphasizes basic interpersonal communication skills was used as the primary course book. Scrapbook photos accompany each of the eight unit's tasks to facilitate listening and reading comprehension, as well as peer interaction. Additionally, the textbook leverages motor-sensory learning by concluding each unit with a scrapbooking activity. The textbook introduces 240 thematically organized vocabulary words, spread across eight units. The mobile learning application, Kahoot, was used for bi-weekly in-class formative assessments of vocabulary achievement. Communicative skills were assessed with individual scrapbook presentations, followed by small-group discussions.

The G Suite application, Google Forms, was adopted for designing and administering the

treatment group's vocabulary assignments, which consisted of multiple-choice and short-answer vocabulary questions, embedded AAM, and post-task comprehension and critical thinking questions. The embedded AAM were selected from YouTube for their topical relevance, audio-visual-textual congruence, language complexity and speed, and brevity (under four minutes). To diminish the influence of confounding variables related to digital literacy, the researchers decided not to introduce a virtual learning environment. Rather, the instructor submitted printed QR codes, which were linked to the homework assignments, to the treatment group in class. The participants accessed the homework by scanning the QR codes with their mobile devices.

Data Collection Instrument

A researcher-designed, 20-item, multiple-choice and short-answer vocabulary test was employed to gauge vocabulary achievement. Each item was worth one point. To ensure content validity of the instrument, the vocabulary, as well as their meanings and applications, were drawn directly from the course textbook. Three university EFL instructors from a university separate from the research site were consulted to confirm the construct validity of the instrument design and content. Based on their feedback, the researchers modified the distractors on two items. Finally, a pilot test was administered to 95 non-English major students in spring 2018 to confirm the reliability. A split-half test yielded a KR-20 coefficient of .962, indicating acceptably high internal consistency (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996).

Procedure

The 90-minute classes were held once per week for 16 weeks. During the first class, the groups completed the vocabulary pretest. The instructor provided brief instruction to the treatment group about the mobile learning application, Google Forms. For the remainder of the academic term, both groups received the same in-class instruction, with a particular focus on interpersonal communicative competence. Every two weeks, groups were assigned vocabulary homework in addition to their scrapbook assignment. On Google Forms, the treatment group accessed bi-weekly AAM vocabulary assignments. Each assignment consisted of vocabulary review exercises as well as one or two short authentic videos, which included the target vocabulary. Subsequent video comprehension questions summoned recall and activation of the vocabulary. In the following week, a Kahoot vocabulary quiz was administered to both groups at the beginning of class and followed by scrapbook presentations and discussion. At the end of the term, the vocabulary posttest was administered to both groups.

Results

IBM SPSS version 25 was employed to conduct statistical testing. Descriptive statistics revealed that both groups demonstrated vocabulary learning progress (Table 1). First, assumptions testing was conducted on the data. A Shapiro-Wilk and Levene's test of the pretest scores yielded non-significant results, signifying normality and homogeneity of variances, respectively, and the viability of parametric testing. A one-way ANOVA revealed the groups were not significantly different, and a homogeneity of regression test on pretest-posttest data confirmed ANCOVA assumptions were met. Next, a one-way ANCOVA was performed to examine the relationship between the AAM intervention and vocabulary achievement. The posttest results proved statistically significant ($p < .02$), with a medium effect size ($\eta^2 = .09$) in favor of the treatment group, indicating the intervention exerted a significant positive effect on vocabulary learning (Table 2). Therefore, the null hypothesis of the first research question was rejected.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Achievement and Outcomes

		Pretest			Posttest		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Err.	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Err.
Control	35	6.4571	2.24057	.37873	8.3143	2.58697	.43728
Treatment	31	6.5484	1.87685	.33709	9.7742	2.39039	.42933
Total	66	6.5000	2.06249	.25387	9.0000	2.58397	.31807

Table 2
Control and Treatment Between Groups ANCOVA Results

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	94.146[a]	2	47.073	8.726	.000	.217
Intercept	216.651	1	216.651	40.161	.000	.389
Pretest	59.109	1	59.109	10.957	.002	.148
Groups	33.025	1	33.025	6.122	.016	.089
Error	339.854	63	5.395			
Total	5780.000	66				
Corrected Total	434.000	65				

To determine the predictive effects of baseline vocabulary knowledge on the intervention, a linear regression analysis was performed on the treatment group's gain scores. The results indicated vocabulary knowledge did not predict vocabulary learning (Table 3). Additionally, an ANCOVA of below-average and above average sub-groups returned non-significant results (Table 4). These findings indicate the baseline performance was unrelated to achievement. Therefore, the null hypothesis of the second research question was not rejected.

Table 3
Baseline Vocabulary Knowledge as Predictor of Vocabulary Achievement

			Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		R-squared	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)		5.075	1.626		3.121	.004
	Trt_pre_centered	.046	-.043	.036	-.214	-1.182	.247

Table 4

Below-Average and Above-Average Vocabulary Knowledge ANCOVA Results

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	32.180[a]	2	16.090	3.236	.054	.188
Intercept	116.751	1	116.751	23.478	.000	.456
Pretest	15.432	1	15.432	3.103	.089	.100
Groups	11.420	1	11.420	2.297	.141	.076
Error	139.239	28	4.973			
Total	3133.000	31				
Corrected Total	171.419	30				

Discussion

This study investigated the effects of a mobile-based AAM instructional strategy on the vocabulary learning of Japanese EFL university students. Based on the significant results of ANCOVA, it can be concluded that the mobile-based AAM instructional strategy promoted vocabulary learning. Further analysis revealed that prior vocabulary knowledge was not correlated with learning achievement.

In terms of general effectiveness, the findings of this study are consistent with other studies investigating the effects of intralingually subtitled authentic videos on vocabulary acquisition (Naghizadeh & Darabi, 2015; Soltani & Soori, 2015; Sydorenko, 2010). The authors surmise that contextually situated vocabulary instruction expanded not only the students' vocabulary size but also their thematic range, which allowed them to intuit how words operate within new semantic patterns. Additionally, this study lends further support for MSL theory, which posits that appealing to multiple senses simultaneously boosts comprehension, processing, and memory retention (Lehmann & Murray, 2005; Shams & Seitz, 2008). As Zanon (2006) insists, subtitling helps learners monitor their comprehension and recognize how vocabulary functions within natural speech. The MALL application allowed learners to access content and receive immediate corrective feedback anytime, anywhere, and as often as required.

The finding that vocabulary knowledge did not predict of the effectiveness of the AAM strategy echoes Perez, Noortgate, and Desmet (2013), whose meta-analysis of captioned video learning studies yielded no correlation between vocabulary proficiency and vocabulary learning. Meanwhile, to the extent which vocabulary correlates with language proficiency (Laufer & Nation, 1999), the finding contradicts arguments that intralingual subtitles distract or cognitively overload language learners (Koolstra, Peeters, & Spinhoff, 2002; Lin, 2006; Mayer, Lee, & Peebles, 2014; Yang & Chang, 2014). As the results of linear regression analysis and sub-groups ANCOVA revealed, baseline vocabulary knowledge was not predictive of vocabulary gains.

Because most Japanese universities, including the research site, organize EFL classes by academic major, language proficiency within a single class can vary considerably. Consequently, EFL instructors must often strike a delicate balance between keeping high-proficiency learners engaged while also ensuring low-proficiency learners satisfy course objectives. The authors attempted to mitigate vocabulary knowledge gaps with MALL, intralingual subtitles, and comprehension tasks, and the results indicate these measures were sufficient. Instructors who intend to incorporate AAM into the curriculum should consider using any or all of these techniques to address problems resulting from baseline differences.

The implications of this study extend beyond vocabulary acquisition. AAM represents, albeit in an abbreviated format, cultural and linguistic immersion (Al Darwish, 2014). Several studies indicate that Japanese EFL learners in full-immersion study abroad programs exhibit learning gains no different from students who remain in domestic classrooms (Cutrone & Author, 2015; Dewey, 2004; Taguchi, 2014). Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler (2019) found that pragmatic routines and recurrent exposure to pragmatic language was a significant predictor of language achievement. AAM allows learners to decode the relationship between language and context inductively, familiarize themselves with the local register, and mentally prepare themselves for cultural clashes (Godwin-Jones, 2016). Due to the sanitized language that necessarily characterizes classroom study, there is no way to eliminate a study abroad student's learning curve entirely. However, pre-departure exposure to authentic cultural narratives may equip students with the sociolinguistic awareness of language and cultural diversity necessary for assimilation. More generally, because the language demands on study abroad students are analogous to those in EMI programs, AAM should be considered an essential component of all EFL curricula.

Limitations

Limitations, namely, sample size and study length hampered this study. Although the results provide insight into the applicability of mobile-based AAM for vocabulary learning, the authors are reluctant to argue for the generalizability of the findings due to the relatively small sample size (n = 66). A post-hoc power analysis yielded a moderate 0.68. The moderate sample size also explains the decision to couple a linear regression analysis with a sub-groups analysis of covariance. Additionally, the length of the study may have been insufficient for the treatment group to acclimate to the unfamiliar learning strategy. Expanding the sample size, extending the study to a full academic term, and instituting a 2x2 design with high and low achievers is necessary to secure more definitive evidence that AAM promotes vocabulary learning in a Japanese context. Finally, because the authors lacked the resources required for oral communication assessment, a written test was employed. Though reliable and valid, the instrument assessed the participants' vocabulary recognition and recall, rather than production.

Future Research Implications

Despite the limitations of this study, the results contribute to the growing body of Web 2.0 literature. Among this group of Japanese university EFL learners, AAM proved uniformly effective for low and high vocabulary achievers although the moderate effect size suggests other variables, such as affective domain factors, influenced vocabulary learning. Additionally, while the mobile-based AAM strategy leveraged simultaneous content interaction, the linguistically homogeneous environment meant learners had to wait until the following class to apply their learning synchronously.

Future iterations of this study should investigate not only the interpretive aspect of YouTube, but also its productive functions. Language learners may reap linguistic rewards as well as gains in intercultural communicative competence from content generation. Similarly, MALL was exclusively used for individualistic study to avoid the various personal and research-related complications that accompany a virtual learning environment. Those issues notwithstanding, asynchronous online discourse would reduce the time-lag between initial AAM exposure and communicative performance while furnishing an additional learning modality.

Researchers should consider exploring AAM's potential for learning collocations, transitives, and other syntactically marked expressions. Research on study abroad returnees has shown that incidental vocabulary acquisition is insufficient for addressing these linguistic particularities. Pre-departure preparation and study-abroad curriculum may benefit from AAM

inclusion. Additionally, as mentioned above, AAM exposure may accelerate assimilation and facilitate sociolinguistic competence, but further study is needed to determine its effects on study abroad outcomes. Finally, academic English vocabulary proficiency will need to improve drastically before Japanese universities can even consider pursuing MEXT's globalization benchmarks. The uninspiring results from EMI programs in Japan indicate a fundamental shift in how educators approach vocabulary instruction is warranted (Bradford, 2016; Brown, 2016). Future research might, therefore, examine the effect of AAM on more academically rigorous language learning.

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An Exploration of How Interest Contributes to the Readability of Writing Center Self-access Materials

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Abstract
The idea that genre-specific reading benefits apprenticing writers is a concept that the field of teaching writing values as an underlying constant. Following this, writing center directors select rhetorics (anthologies of writing exemplars) for their self-access library shelves from the over 200 rhetorics presently in print. To choose these texts, quantitative readability formulae (e.g., the Lexile Readability Formula) are often employed. However, such formulae only measure two (i.e., semantic, syntactic) of the many features that impact readability. Other important features that require qualitative exploration are not considered (e.g., interest). To address this, this article reports the findings of a sequential, mixed-methods study conducted in a Taiwanese university writing center setting. The study found that interest influences the readability of rhetorics both as (a) a primary (i.e., an isolated feature) and (b) a conjoined feature (i.e., consisting of two or more associated entities where the second impacts the first). The article also makes a recommendation for teachers, writing center staff, and the publishing industry that interest be considered when considering the difficulty of exemplars in rhetorics.

Keywords: text selection, readability, interest, Lexile, rhetorics, essays, writing center administration

Introduction

University writing centers have become commonplace in Asia (Baker, 2018; Chang, 2013; Paiz, 2017; Tan, 2011), the goal of which is to help writers become better writers (Hill, 2016). The composition-related texts writing center directors stock their shelves which have also become standard fare (Baker, 2019; Kincead & Harris, 1993), to include rhetorics: anthologies of paragraphs and essays "which explicate major rhetorical forms, present sample texts exemplifying major rhetorical patterns, and offer procedures to show students how to reproduce these patterns and genres in their own writing" (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005, p. 130). These texts are made available because writing center directors generally accept that centers should be more than fix-it shops (North, 1984). They should be a "physical locus for the ideas and ideals the university has about writing" (p. 446). One idea congruent with this goal is that reading (Krashen, 2004), and more specifically genre-specific reading (e.g., rhetorics), provides reading-writing-related benefits (Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006) in that reading model essays helps apprenticing writers to produce better writing (Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Saengsrichan, 2014), as much as a .70 correlation (Grabe, 2003).

Accepting that maintaining a self-access library of reading materials is a worthwhile part of writing center pedagogy is one thing; stocking it with appropriate texts is another, as directors must choose books that will be a good fit for the readers who might use them (Baker, 2019), a task which requires a consideration of text readability, i.e., how difficult the texts might be for intended readers (Dubay, 2007a). Looking at the extensive work done in the field of readability over the last century, it can be seen that readability is a widely and pervasively studied area (Armbruster, 2016). However, rhetorics, or more specifically the appropriacy of rhetorics for post-secondary native speaker (NS) populations, received only a limited and short burst of attention in the 1970s and early 80s (Auvenshine, 1978; Cline 1971; Dunn, 1983; Fox, 1978; Morrison, 1978). Each of these five historical studies employed what has become the prevailing method: First, a quantitative readability formula (e.g., Dale-Chall Readability Formula; Fry Readability Formula; Gunning Fog Index; Raygor Readability Estimate; Smog Readability Formula; Spache Readability Formula) was utilized to examine a varying number of texts (5-33), which included a limited number of rhetorics (1-4). Second, a varying number of students' (222-334) reading levels were examined via a quantitative, standardized reading assessment (e.g., the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, ETS Cooperative English Test). Finally, the texts' readability levels and students' reading levels were compared, with each study finding that the rhetorics were above the students' reading levels.

The aforementioned examinations utilized quantitative readability formulae, as these instruments measure two features that have been found to be reliable predictors of readability

(semantic, syntactic) (Dubay, 2007a). However, such two-factor formulae do not measure the many other features that contribute to text difficulty (Armbruster, 2016; Chall & Dale, 1995; Kintsch & Vipond, 1979; Lexile, 2010), features that are highly relevant to text adoption decisions (Armbruster, 2016; Mesmer, 2008). Accordingly, O'Hear, Ramsey and Baden (1992) offered an alternative to the traditional quantitative paradigm by including a qualitative component. The authors first used the Flesch Reading Ease Formula to determine the readability of three first-year college writing textbooks (two of which were rhetorics), albeit the authors did not (as previous studies had done) explore students' reading levels. Instead, in a second step, they qualitatively employed a cline method and questionnaire to explore how the students ranked the texts with regard to reading ease and interest. O'Hear, Ramsey and Baden reported that (a) the students found the texts to be in different orders of difficulty and easier than the formula indicated and (b) that interest was a mediating factor.

More recently, pointing out that readability is a richly explored field but that rhetorics have received limited attention in the NS arena and no attention in the English language learner (ELL) context, Baker (2019) enlisted a similar quantitative approach to that of 1970-80s NS literature. Working in an Asian post-secondary writing center context, utilizing the Lexile Readability Formula to examine rhetorics, and employing the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) to explore students' reading levels, Baker reported similar results. The texts were generally found to be above the students' levels. Informed by a long trajectory of NS literature beginning with Ojemann (1932) (see Armbruster, 2016; Kintsch & Vipond, 1979; Chall & Dale, 1995; Gunning, 2003; Fry, 2002; Lexile, 2010; Meyer, 2003) that argues relying on readability formulae provides a very limited view of what makes up text readability (Mesmer, 2008), Baker suggested that we must also subjectively explore what features beyond those measured by readability formulae influence English language leaner (ELL) students' perceptions of text difficulty when reading exemplar (essays) excepted from rhetorics.

Interest and How It Affects Students' Perceptions of Difficulty

Drawing on the early education treatises of Herbart (Felkin & Felkin, 1895) and Dewey (1913), modern discussions describe interest in one of three conditions: (a) individual interest, "a relatively long-term orientation of an individual towards a certain topic, or a domain of knowledge" (Schiefele & Krapp, 1996, p. 143), and (b) personal interest, "an intrinsic desire to understand a particular topic that persists over time" (Schraw & Lehman, 2001, p. 24). Individual and personal interest are also often described jointly as individual interest and distinguished from a third type (c), situational interest: an emotional state aroused by specific textual features (Schiefele & Krapp,

1996; Schraw & Lehman, 2001).

Following this, the effect of interest with NSs of other languages has drawn a moderate amount of attention (Boscolo & Mason, 2003; Brantmeier, 2006; Leloup, 1993; Schiefele, 1990, 1992; Schieffle & Krapp, 1996). A moderate amount of empirical work with younger and adult native speakers (NSs) has also been undertaken, studies which have informed research with the target focus of this study, adult ELLs.

Research with Native Speakers of English

There has been a moderate number of explorations of the effects interest has on the reading comprehension of younger NSs (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002; Asher, 1980; Baldwin, Peleg-Bruckner, & McClintock, 1985; Belloni & Jongsma, 1978; Bernstein, 1955; Oakhill, & Petrides, 2007; Shnayer, 1968; Soemer & Schiefele, 2019; Splinter, 2014; Stevens, 1979, 1980). A limited body of research has also been completed with NS adults, where it has been found that the degree of interest readers have about a topic can influence their comprehension (Bargh & Schul, 1980; Benware & Deci, 1984). Bargh and Schul (1980), for instance, studied the influence of interest by artificially inducing interest in undergraduates who were enrolled in an introductory psychology course. In their study, the experimental subjects were told that they would teach the contents of an article to other students. The control subjects, however, were simply told that they would be examined on the material. The results showed that the experimental group demonstrated greater recall.

Benware and Deci (1984) conducted a similar study. They presented two groups of psychology majors with a passage on higher brain functioning. Benware and Deci likewise explained to the experimental subjects that they would teach the article, whereas the control students were told simply to learn the material. Benware and Deci concluded that the experimental group demonstrated greater conceptual understanding of the material.

Research with adult NSs has also demonstrated a relationship between interest and background knowledge (Entin, 1981; Lin, Zabrucky, & Moore, 1997). Entin (1981) explored the influence of interest and background knowledge on undergraduates' comprehension of expository passages from *World Book Encyclopedia*. She reported that students with high interest demonstrated greater comprehension than those with low interest. She also indicated that students with high background knowledge demonstrated higher comprehension than those with low background knowledge. Regarding the interaction between interest and background knowledge, she reported that some topics the students reported to be of high interest were also ones they

reported having background knowledge in and vice versa. However, Entin (1981) noted that students who (a) have little knowledge about a topic may have interest in the topic and (b) students who know quite a lot about a topic may not be interested in reading about it.

Lin, Zabrucky and Moore (1997) investigated the influence of undergraduate psychology students' interest on their comprehension of expository texts from a variety of domains (i.e., biology, economics, engineering, geography, philosophy, political science). The results showed that students who reported having interest in the domains demonstrated higher comprehension. The results further illustrated that students who reported high interest similarly reported having background knowledge, as measured by the amount of confidence they expressed about the subject matter.

Research with English Language Learners

Drawing on late twentieth century work with NSs, a limited body of extant work with older ELLs, the focus of this study, and interest has likewise evidenced that (a) interest has a facilitative effect on comprehension and (b) interest and background knowledge are connected (Bugel & Buunk, 1996; Carrell & Wise, 1998; Erçetin, 2010). Bugel and Buunk (1996), for example, carried out a study with Dutch ELLs in their terminal year of high school to examine the influence of gender-related interest and background knowledge. They separated the students by gender and then presented them with narrative and expository texts on gender-specific topics the participants reported being interested in and having background knowledge about (i.e., motorcycle helmets for males; body image for females). Bugel and Buunk reported that each group demonstrated higher comprehension of their gender-respective passages than the alternate passages.

Carrell and Wise (1998) examined the influence of interest and background knowledge with undergraduates ELLs from 17 countries. They first presented students with a pre-reading interest-background inventory and articles from *Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia* and a post comprehension test thereafter. Carrell and Wise found that interest and background knowledge both have a facilitative effect on comprehension but that the two are not correlated. Similar to Entin (1981), who worked with NSs, Carrell and Wise maintained that students could express low interest in topics they have a fair amount of knowledge about and, conversely, indicate high interest in topics they have little knowledge of, i.e., be interested in learning more about such topics.

In a more recent investigation, Ercetin (2010) explored the effects of interest and background knowledge on Turkish undergraduate ELLs' comprehension of a scientific hypermedia text. Using separate interest and background pre-reading inventories and a combination of

instruments (i.e., electronic indicators in the text, interviews, and a recall protocol), they demonstrated that students' interest had a significant effect on text recall, but that background knowledge did not. They found no direct correlations between interest and background knowledge. They did, however, report that those with low background knowledge expended more effort to understand the text.

Tabatabaei and Bagheri (2013) explored interest and background knowledge with Iranian high school students and a selection of ELL textbooks. Exploring the correlations between text readability, interest, and background knowledge, they measured exemplars from the texts with the Flesch Reading Ease Formula, utilized an interest-background inventory questionnaire, and correlated the results. Tabatabaei and Bagheri found that interest increased as text difficulty levels decreased. They further reported that no significant correlation was found between readability and background knowledge. However, they did report a significant positive relationship between students' interest level and background knowledge, thus suggesting that background knowledge is a mediating variable of interest.

More recently, Asgari, Ketabi and Amirian (2018) explored the effect of providing high interest materials with undergraduates with similar background knowledge (e.g., health profession). Using an experimental design, they utilized a pre-reading interest inventory and a pretest. After this, they provided the control group with low interest materials (e.g., non-health-related materials), whereas the experimental group received only health-related materials, finding that the students who received high interest materials outperformed those who did not.

The Gap That Needs to be Addressed

Readability is a widely studied area, and readability and interest have received a moderate amount of attention in the literature. However, there has been only a limited number of NS rhetoric readability studies and a lack of attention to rhetorics in ELL contexts (Baker, 2019). The latter is not surprising. It is, however, disappointing. This is because (a) hundreds of rhetorics have been published since they first appeared in the 1890s, and many are still in regular use, up to two hundred in any given year (Bloom, 1999); (b) the reading difficulty of exemplars has been cited as a factor to be considered when including them in rhetorics (Bloom, 1999); and (c) the readability of the exemplars therein, such as the difficulty of reading materials for all subjects, has been shown to impact the experience of students when reading these texts (Auvenshine, 1978; Baker, 2019; Cline 1971; Dunn, 1983; Fox, 1978; O'Hear, Ramsey, & Baden, 1992; Morrison, 1978).

To address this gap in the ELL literature, this article explores one research question:

What benefits and difficulties does interest pose for post-secondary ELLs in the Taiwanese context when they read exemplars excepted from rhetorics?

Method

This article provides an in-depth discussion regarding how interest affects ELL readers' perceptions of text difficulty, a feature that was identified in a larger unpublished sequential, mixed-methods study that identified 16 features that affect post-secondary ELLs' perceptions of difficulty when reading exemplars from rhetorics[1]. Separating the study and publishing separate articles regarding each feature was done in the interest of length so as to give each unique feature's literature review and data set full attention and discussion within the length of one article. To explore the effect of interest, one Taiwanese writing center context was selected: Jinwen University of Science and Technology in Taipei, Taiwan.

To collect and analyze the resulting data, an adaption of Creswell's (2013) sequential mixed-methods design was employed (Figure 1).

[1] This article reports the results of a larger unpublished sequential, mixed-methods study (i.e., the author's 420 page doctoral dissertation).

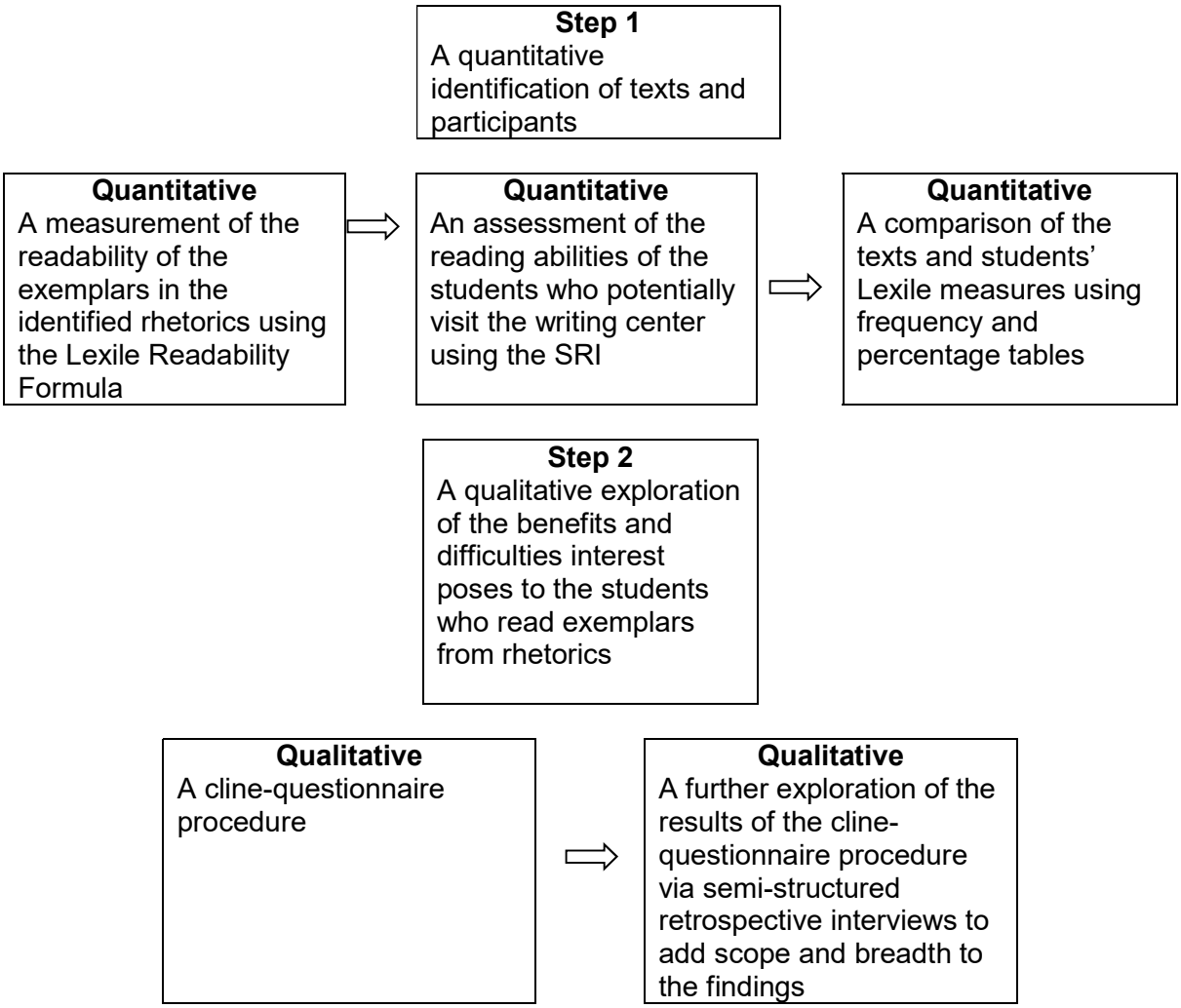

Figure 1: Sequential Mixed-Methods Research Design

Following the sequential mixed-methods design, two sections (steps) and their relevant subsections are described here: (1) Identifying Texts and Participants and (2) An Exploration of the Benefits and Difficulties Interest Provides Students When They Read Exemplars Taken from Rhetorics, Essays.

Identifying Texts and Participants

To identify potential texts and participants for study, three steps were performed: (a) an examination of the exemplars' readability levels, (b) an examination of students' reading levels and (c) a comparison of the two. To identify potential exemplars for study, the readability levels (Lexile readability levels) of exemplars (N = 893) from 12 rhetorics available on the local market

were examined using a non-fee-based computerized version of the Lexile Analyzer [2] available to researchers.

To determine the readability (Lexile) levels of potential participants, the SRI was administered to a purposive sample of students enrolled in five of the seven sections of sophomore composition at the university (N = 91), as this group makes up the majority of visitors to the writing center. To determine which exemplars are accessible to the reading levels of the selected participants, a comparison of the exemplars' readability levels and target students' reading levels was performed.

Following Kvale's (1996) suggestion that the number of informants tends to be 15 ± 10 in interview studies, and in keeping with qualitative theory (Creswell, 2013), a smaller cluster sample (n = 14) was identified from the larger sample. The prospective participants were identified because they received SRI scores in the top 15% of their class (828-928L), which allowed them to examine a wide range of exemplars and help the researcher holistically explore the research question (Merriam, 1991). After this, they were queried by e-mail if they would be willing to participate in a paid, follow-up, post-course interview (i.e., 1,000 New Taiwan Dollars—appx 30 U.S. Dollars—per participant). Paid, post-course interviews were utilized to help ensure the informants would perform to the best of their ability.

Twelve informants assented and were provided with pseudonyms. The makeup of the sample (seven females, mean age 20.14 years; five males, mean age 20.8 years) (Table 1) was indicated by the students' Lexile measures, which identified them as appropriate participants rather than any purposeful intent of the sampling procedure (e.g., ethnicity, gender, age).

[2] The Lexile Readability Formula uses two indicators (vocabulary and sentence length) to assess how difficult a text will be for a reader. The Lexile Framework has a range of 10L (Lexile) to 2200L. The SRI is a standardized reading test that utilizes Lexile measures to report students' reading levels.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Respondents

	Gender	Age	Lexile Measures
Kala	Female	20	864L
Jacob	Male	21	869L
Eve	Female	20	861L
Marsha	Female	20	877L
Harold	Male	21	837L
Linda	Female	20	892L
Ben	Male	21	858L
Cara	Female	20	828L
Dan	Male	20	870L
Nelson	Male	21	869L
Olivia	Female	21	926L
Annie	Female	20	928L

Identifying Exemplars

Five exemplars (range 610-1010L) were purposively chosen to be below, within, and slightly above the informants' Lexile range (i.e., 828-928L) (Table 2). This number was chosen in accordance with face validity. That is, allowing enough variety for the informants to engage in thoughtful comparisons and small enough to be examined and discussed within a reasonable time via the cline-questionnaire and interviews so that valuable data could be gleaned but informant fatigue could be avoided. The exemplars were additionally chosen to be approximately 100L apart instead of a larger measure (e.g., 200L) which would make the Lexile ranking more obvious and possibly reduce students' thoughtful reflections regarding the features under investigation.

Table 2
Exemplars Chosen for the Study

Exemplars	Lexile Measures
Traig, J. A Guide to proper hand-washing technique. In M. L. Conlin (Ed.), *Patterns plus: A short prose reader with argumentation* (pp. 176-178). Cengage.	610L
Hughes, L. Salvation. In S. V. Buscemi, & C. Smith (Eds.), *75 readings plus* (pp. 10-14). McGraw-Hill.	740L
McDonald, C. P. A view from the bridge. In T. Cooley (Ed.), *The Norton sampler: Short essays for composition* (pp. 37-41). Norton & Company.	810L
Harris, S. Freedom and security. In G. Levin (Ed.), *Prose models* (pp. 389-392). Wadsworth.	910L
Dalfonos, D. Grammy rewards. In T. Cooley (Ed.), *The Norton sampler*: *Short essays for composition* (pp. 206-208). Norton & Company.	1010L

Description of the Exemplars

The A Guide to Proper Hand-washing Technique essay was rated as the easiest of the five essays by the Lexile Readability Formula (610L). The editor of the anthology described it as a process essay that explains how to wash one's hands. Subjectively, it was expected that the students would be somewhat interested in the topic, both because of the background knowledge they have about the subject and the personally engaging subject matter.

The Salvation essay was rated as the second most difficult of the five essays (740L). It is described as a narrative that offers an autobiographical account of the author's childhood experience at a church revival meeting. Subjectively, it was expected that students who are familiar with revival meetings may be interested in the text and that those who are not might be interested in learning more, as many Taiwanese are Christians.

The A View from the Bridge essay, rated as the third most difficult of the five essays (810L), is descriptive essay with elements of narration where a jogger comes across a visually impaired boy who is attempting to land a fish. The jogger helps the boy bring in the fish, and the boy in turn helps the jogger see things in a new way. It was assumed that the students would find the text interesting as many of the students will be familiar with the idea of an adult helping a child and what interesting things one might see while jogging.

The Freedom and Security essay was rated as the fourth most difficult of the five essays (910L). Described as an argumentative/persuasion essay with elements of contrast and

comparison, the essay illustrates the abstract concepts of freedom and security as polarities. It was assumed that some of the students may be interested in political discussions.

The Grammy Rewards essay was rated as the most difficult of the five essays (1010L). The editor describes the essay's organization as a contrast essay that uses a point-by-point structure to contrast two grandmothers on the basis of how they interact with their granddaughter. It was assumed that the students would find the text to be interesting, as the subject appears to be personally involving.

An Exploration of the Benefits and Difficulties Interest Provides Students When They Read Exemplars Taken from Rhetorics, Essays

Once the texts and the participants were identified, the effects of interest were explored via a two-stage process: (a) a quantitative cline-questionnaire procedure and (b) qualitative semi-structured retrospective interviews.

The Cline-questionnaire Procedure

The purpose of the cline procedure was to have the students read the essays and put them in a cline of difficulty **(**from easiest to most difficult**)** so that the students would be able to reflect on this activity while completing a closed-response, Likert questionnaire. The exemplars were presented to the informants in random order, and criteria for ranking were withheld to ensure the informants engaged in the type of decision-making process "normally used when making such judgments" (Chall, et al., 1996, p. 77).

After the informants ordered their clines, they completed a closed-response questionnaire. This phase was administered to help the informants reflect on why they created the cline the way they did and relate it in such a way that would provide insight into what other factors beyond the Lexile Readability Formula they feel influence their perceptions of difficulty when reading exemplars excerpted from rhetorics. This phase lasted for an average of 24.4 minutes (range 17.4-32.4).

The questionnaire addressed 16 features related to comprehension (Appendix A), one of which was interest: How interested I was in the topic of each text influenced my decision about how to arrange the texts in the way that I did.

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, it was translated into the students' L1 (Mandarin) using a back-translation procedure, checked with a second translator for accuracy, and pretested with a small number of respondents who were not part of the sample in the study (n = 2).

Interviews

To triangulate the data from the questionnaire, the informants (after creating the cline and completing the questionnaire) participated in semi-structured retrospective interviews. Each interview, in accordance with Creswell (2013), began with structured questions from the questionnaire and was followed up with semi-structured prompts that later became open-ended (Nunan, 1996). A bilingual research assistant was present to assist with any language difficulties, and an observational protocol, which included both video and audio taping, was utilized to record the interviews.

The interviews lasted for an average of 32.5 minutes (range 19.3 - 57.4). Variation was dependent on how much each informant had to offer and how much translation was required.

After the interviews were completed, the audio tapes were transcribed, and the transcripts were member checked. Once these steps were completed, the informants' responses were explored using Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen's (1993) emergent category analysis procedure. "To add strength and fertility to the entire analysis" (pp. 128-129), a second-level group debate procedure was also included.

Results and Discussion

This sequential mixed-methods study had two steps. The first quantitatively identified potential texts (N = 5) and participants for study (N = 14). Twelve participants assented and 11 reported to the test site, ten of whom successfully completed the procedures and thus provided useful data. The second step helped to answer the research question: What benefits and difficulties does interest pose for post-secondary ELLs when they read essays excerpted from rhetorics?

Cline Procedure

The second step began with a cline procedure where the informants ranked the essays from easiest to most difficult. The Friedman test was used to compare the predictive Lexile measures with the student rankings. The results showed that the student rankings (a, d, e, b, c) ran contrary to the Lexile results (a, b, c, d, e) (Table 3). The results further demonstrated a significant difference in the ranking of each (χ^2 (4) = 23.28, $p < .001$), thus illustrating that the informants made definitive

choices in their rankings.

Table 3
Comparison of Lexile and Participants' Cline Rankings

Lexile Cline	Student Cline	Student Mean
a_ A Guide to Proper Hand-washing (610L)	a_ A Guide to Proper Hand-washing (610L)	1.00
b_ Salvation (740L)	d_ Freedom and Security (910L)	3.00
c_ A View from the Bridge (810L)	e_ Grammy Rewards (1010L)	3.10
d_ Freedom and Security (910L)	b_ Salvation (740L)	3.90
e_ Grammy Rewards (1010L)	c_ A View from the Bridge (810L)	4.00

Questionnaire and Interview

Examining the informants' responses from the questionnaire and interview, it was found that the informants, as a group, perceived interest to be both (a) primary (i.e., an isolated feature) and (b) a conjoined feature (i.e., consisting of two or more associated entities where the second impacts the first), perceptions that influenced their overall perceptions of difficulty, i.e., how they ranked the essays.

Interest as a Primary Feature

Interest was cited as a primary feature by seven (70%) of the informants (Ben, Harold, Jacob, Kala, Linda, Marsha, Nelson). These informants explained that they perceived an essay as easy if they were interested in its topic and more difficult if they were not. Several informants (Ben, Harold, Jacob, Linda) illustrated this by simply pointing out that they found one essay more interesting and thus easier than another. Linda, for example, when contrasting the Grammy Rewards and Salvation essays, found the first simply more interesting and easier than the second, a result which is in contrast to the Lexile Readability Formula's ranking that indicated the reverse to be true.

Others provided specific reasons from which conclusions can be drawn and related to relevant research. Two of the informants (Marsha, Nelson), for example, expressed a lack of interest in the religious content of the Salvation essay and explained that their lack of interest influenced their perceptions of difficulty. Their reports ranged from general disinterest to a display of a high affective filter (Krashen, 1982). Marsha, for example, explained that she was simply uninterested in religious issues and that made the essay seem more difficult to her. Nelson,

however, strongly objected to the content: "This one is... like [the] Bible. I don't like this [the Bible], so I think it is difficult. Maybe I don't believe [in] God." Together, these reports are generally in agreement with other researchers' findings that have shown that the amount of interest readers have in a text influences the difficulty they have with it (Bargh & Schul, 1980; Benware & Deci, 1984; Bugel & Buunk, 1996; Carrell & Wise, 1998; Ercetin, 2010; Lin et al., 1997).

One informant, Linda, also commented that in addition to having no interest in religious issues, she had little background knowledge in religion. This could indicate, though it does not specifically show, that interest and background knowledge are related, a conclusion which is supported by Bugel and Buunk (1996) and Lin et al.'s. (1997) findings. Not surprisingly, all three informants consistently found the text regarding religion the most difficult, even though the Lexile Formula found it to be the second easiest.

A second informant, Kala, explained that she found the Grammy Rewards essay interesting and that this impacted her sense of ease. She explained that the reason she was interested in the essay was that it allowed her to learn about life-styles she was not familiar with. This finding is related to Entin (1981) and Carrell and Wise's (1998) studies that found that students can be interested in things of which they do not have specific background knowledge. Kala's report is also interesting because she positioned the Grammy Rewards essay as the second easiest, whereas the Lexile Formula positioned it as most difficult.

Another informant, Jacob, who positioned the A Guide to Proper Hand-washing Technique as easiest reported it to be interesting and thus easy because he felt it was humorous. This finding goes against previous research that concluded that comical, embellishing details reduce comprehension (Reder & Anderson, 1982; Schiefele & Krapp, 1996; Schraw & Lehman, 2001).

Conjoined Features

Interest was reported to be conjoined with other features by four (40%) of the informants (Annie, Ben, Kala, Harold). Five features were reported to be related to interest: (a) background knowledge, (b) logical organization, (c) overall length, (d) sentence length, and (e) vocabulary.

How Interest Is Influenced by Other Features. Interest was found to be influenced by four features, both negatively and positively. It was found to be positively influenced by logical organization and sentence length and negatively influenced by overall length and vocabulary (Table 4).

Table 4
Features the Informants Reported to Influence Interest

Conjoined Features ⇦	Influential Features	Influence
Interest	Logical Organization	+
	Overall Length	-
	Sentence Length	+
	Vocabulary	-

Kala, for instance, offered a comment about vocabulary. She explained that she was interested in the topic of the Grammy Rewards essay but that the amount of difficult vocabulary in the essay diminished her understanding of its content and thus her perceptions about whether she could understand the essay. Kala's report supports the idea that readers feel that vocabulary is an important predictor of whether they can understand a passage (Statman, 1987; Yorio, 1971), but her ranking is intriguing. Kala found it to be the second easiest, yet the Lexile Formula (which measures vocabulary) found it to be the most difficult.

Harold offered comments about the other three features: (a) logical organization, (b) overall length, and (c) logical organization. He pointed out the Salvation essay's overall length reduced his interest and thus increased his negative perception of difficulty about the essay. Harold's report is loosely supported by Schriver's (1997) work that has shown that a text's appearance can influence readers' interest and their perception of difficulty, making them feel the essay is formal and unapproachable if they associate the look of a text with other texts they have had negative experiences with in the past (e.g., length). This is curious, as Harold's positioning is in contrast to Lexile's. He found it to be the second to last in difficulty, whereas the Lexile Formula found it to be the second easiest.

Harold also offered reports that are related to student efficacy, specifically logical organization and sentence length. Harold commented that his understanding of the type of logical organization (i.e., point-by-point contrast structure) used in the Grammy Rewards essay raised his interest in reading this essay, as he was familiar with this pattern. This is because it can be assumed that Harold, as a reader who is aware of his past successful and unsuccessful reading encounters, is able to reflect on what contributed to his past experiences when predicting his success with the current materials, an idea that is related to Schiefele & Krapp (1996) and Schraw & Lehman's (2001) discussions of situational interest. Remarkably, Harold found this essay to be the third easiest, but the Lexile Formula found it to be the most difficult.

Harold also explained that he felt that the short sentences in the Salvation essay increased his interest in reading it. This report is associated with work that has found that shorter sentences

facilitate reading comprehension (Coleman, 1962; Coleman & Miller, 1968; Freedle & Kostin, 1993; Gray & Leary, 1935; McElree, 2000; McElree et al., 2003; McLaughlin, 1969; Mikk, 2008). This report, too, is surprising. Harold found the Salvation essay to be the second easiest, but the Lexile Formula found it to be in the fourth of five positions of difficulty.

How Interest Influences Other Features. Interest was also found to influence two other features: (a) vocabulary and (b) background knowledge. It was found to both positively and negatively influence vocabulary and positively impact background knowledge (Table 5).

Table 5
Features the Informants Reported to Be Influenced by Interest

Conjoined Features	⇦	Influential Features	Influence
Vocabulary		Interest	+-
Background Knowledge			+

Two (20%) of the informants (Ben, Annie) offered feedback about how they felt interest was influenced by other features. Ben offered a general comment, explaining that he is willing to spend more time to understand an essay with difficult vocabulary if he is interested in the topic.

The second informant, Annie, illustrated how her background knowledge about and interest in religion influenced her perceptions of difficulty about the vocabulary in the Salvation essay. She explained that her interest in the topic (i.e., religion) helped her to have a large vocabulary to draw on when reading the essay: "If you have more interest in some topic, you may know more ... vocabulary." We, the researchers who coded the data, interpreted her response to mean that she felt that her interest in religion facilitated her background knowledge that in turn led to her increased vocabulary in this area. Accepting this interpretation, her report is related to research that has found a correlation between background knowledge and interest (Bargh & Schul, 1980; Bugel & Buunk, 1996; Carrell & Wise, 1998; Entin, 1981; Ercetin 2010; Lin et al., 1997) as well as background knowledge and vocabulary (Allen & Garton, 1968; Anderson & Freebody, 1979; Chalmers, Humphreys, & Dennis, 1997; Huang, 1999; Lankamp, 1989; Ulijn & Salager-Meyer, 1998). Interestingly, Annie's vocabulary-based positioning of this article and all of the articles was in line with that of the Lexile Formula (which also utilizes vocabulary as a leading determinant).

Conclusions and Implications

Interest (how interested students are in the topic presented in a text) was found to influence readers' perceptions regarding how easy or difficult they found texts to be. This was demonstrated in two ways. First, interest was found to influence readers' perceptions as a primary feature (i.e., an

isolated feature, e.g., increased interest contributed to perceptions of ease; lack of interest contributed to perceptions of difficulty). Second, interest was found to interact with five other features to influence readers' perceptions of text difficulty (background knowledge, logical organization, overall length, sentence length, vocabulary).

Considering these findings together, the claim that readability formulae are valid predictors of readability with regard to the two features they measure (semantic and syntactic difficulty) (Dubay, 2007b) is not contested. It is, however, argued that interest also needs to be considered when holistically thinking about readability and the text selection of writing center materials (Baker, 2019; Chall & Dale, 1995; Fry, 2002; Gunning, 2003; Lexile, 2010; Meyer, 2003; Weaver, 2000; Zakaluk & Samuels, 1988). Therefore, this article reiterates the stance that quantitative readability formulae are a good starting point for explorations of readability but that other features they do not measure (e.g., interest) need to be explored in a hybrid fashion. First, a quantitative readability formula is used to explore a text's readability levels (with regard to semantic and syntactic difficulty), a standardized test (correlated with a readability formula) is employed to measure the students' reading levels, and then the two data are compared. This provides an approximate ranking. Second, additional features are explored subjectively to provide a more complete picture regarding students' perceptions of difficulty.

Taken as a whole, the findings further readability literature about how interest contributes to the readability of exemplars excerpted from rhetorics (i.e., essays) when read by ELL apprenticing writers. The findings also offer practical implications for those who support apprenticing ELL writers (instructors, writing center staff, and the research community as a whole), as the subject of readability during text selection is an ongoing concern (Mede & Yalcin, 2019). The data are also suggested for use by members of the publishing industry during the consideration of exemplars to include in rhetorics. This is because reading difficulty has been cited as a factor to be considered when including exemplars in the 200 plus rhetorics that are published each year (Bloom, 1999).

Suggestions for Future Study

The findings of this study further readability and interest literature and offer practical text selection implications for those in the field of writing education. However, the resulting data also raise additional questions that merit investigation. One is that interest and its relation to readability and rhetorics received a moderate amount of historically relevant attention in the North American

context, attention which prematurely ceased in the late 80s, yet readability with regard to rhetorics is still a highly relevant yet under researched area in Asia and other non-North American contexts. Thus, as this article purposively provides an exhaustive literature review and detailed methodology section, it marks a starting point for further discussions of the importance of how interest contributes to the readability of exemplars excerpted from rhetorics when read by ELL apprenticing writers. Another question related to this has a broader potential focus. That is, in-depth discussions of each of the other features that contribute to readability with regard to the Lexile Readability Formula and exemplars contained in rhetorics are still necessary.

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Bringing Transformed Practices and Identities into the Center of Language Teachers' Pedagogy: Neglected Components of Multiliteracies

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Abstract

The infiltration of technology into our daily lives, which often combines multiple modes of learning, has expanded how we make meaning in language and literacy education. Although teachers and learners interact with multimodal texts for various purposes, in multiliterate research, few explorations have been conducted to examine teachers' pedagogical use of multimodal resources within critical framing. This study investigated the ways in which ESOL teachers utilized multimodal resources in their lessons and how they used multimodal resources for transformative purposes. In a graduate TESOL education online methodology course, the researchers included a multimodally-oriented curriculum that had a potential for empowering identities through critical perspectives and transformed practice. An analysis of 43 teachers' lesson plans, teaching videos, and reflections showed that most teachers utilized multimodal resources to primarily present information, not to have ELLs critically engage in using multimodal texts. Only a few teachers were found to scaffold students for critical perspectives and encouraged students' linguistic and cultural identity development. The findings suggest that multimodality was utilized in a limited sense in our sample ESOL lessons, which has implications for teacher educators and multimodality research.

Keywords: TESOL teacher education, Multimodal resources, Multiliteracies, Transformed practice, Identity development

Introduction

Multiliteracies theory (New London Group [hereafter NLG], 1996) and related pedagogical practices using multimodal resources has the potential of crafting students' identities through critical perspectives (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Yet, in multiliteracies research, emphasis on "critical framing" and "transformed practice" that helps develop plural identities, has mainly focused on students and their academic development in K-12 settings (e.g., Cummins, 2004, 2009; Cummins et al., 2015; Harman & Shin, 2018; Hughes & Morrison, 2014).

Studies of teachers' critical perspectives that lead to transformed practices and identities in the context of multimodal pedagogies have recently begun to be reported in the literature (e.g., Giampapa, 2010, Higgins & Ponte, 2017; Stein, 2004; Vitanova, 2016; Zhang, 2015). Within the few studies related to teachers' pedagogical use of multimodal resources with critical approaches, the main focus was on how teachers used technology and privileged the concept of design. Less emphasis has been given to how teachers promote the use of multiple modes with "transformed practice" (NLG, 1996, p. 87) that highlights the value of transformation rather than the simple substitution of one learning mode for another. Still, missing opportunities are transformed perspectives on plurilingual identities and linguistic diversity with commitments to equity and social justice in local and global contexts (Kendrick & Early, 2017). There is a lack of awareness in critical language teacher education on the benefits of helping teachers recognize multiliteracies pedagogies full potential in classrooms (Choi & Yi, 2016; Rajendram, 2015). When language teachers do not reflect on the strong relationship between identities and teaching practices, they lose the vision regarding student's cultures, values, and language ideologies as valuable, critical, and transformative resources in classrooms (Basalama & Machmud, 2018; Jain, 2014; Motha, et al., 2012). The current study investigates how teachers promote transformed practice and students' identity development in a K-12 English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher education online course at a large university in the southeastern United States. The purpose of this study is to utilize the neglected component of the "pedagogy of multiliteracies" (both the "what" and the "how") (NLG, 1996, p. 60) in a graduate course for K-12 ESL pre-and in-service teachers. Accordingly, we aim to explore the critical engagement or the full potential of multiliteracies by which teachers as well as students utilize language, power, and creativity to design their future identities and "achieve success through fulfilling employment" (NLG, 1996, p. 60) in a new world order.

We offer a comprehensive analysis of 43 teachers' use of multimodal resources for the

purpose of creating transformative practices and appealing to students' identities in ESOL lessons. Drawing on data collected in a graduate course, Methods and Materials for Bilingual and ESOL Teachers (methods course hereafter), in two semesters (2011 and 2014 respectively), we examine how teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) utilize multimodal resources (i.e., visual, audio, and various technologies) in teaching ELLs in K-12 classes and how closely their uses align with the full potential of multimodally-oriented pedagogies that put emphasis on critical framing, transformed practice and identity development. This detailed look at teachers' use of multimodal resources in ESOL lessons that they design and teach sheds light on what multimodal teaching and learning look like in K-12 ESOL classrooms.

The study is guided by one research question: How does teachers' use of multimodal resources contribute to transformed practices as well as ELLs' identities? We first turn to the theoretical framework, multiliteracies as theory and pedagogy, followed by a literature review related to multimodal pedagogies that ESOL teachers implement.

Multiliteracies Theory and Multimodal Pedagogy

The theoretical framework of multiliteracies was initially proposed by a team of literacy researchers in NLG (1996), referring to the literacies required of students amid ever-changing technologies. The theory suggests that reading and writing is composed of plural literacies shaped by varying social contexts and cultural identities. In addition to emphasizing a broader concept of literacy as well as cultural and linguistic diversity, the theory of multiliteracies addresses the importance of multimodal representations since 21st century skills require working with multimodal texts, which represent visual, audio, gestural, spatial, or linguistic modes to enrich and appropriate meaning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kress, 2000). Today's learners possess multiple linguistic, professional identities, and literacy skills that can enable them to utilize the potential of the diverse modes of communication offered by new technologies. However, the types of multilingual education prove to be insufficient for the type of complex multimodal skills and multilingualism that globalization has brought to the forefront (García, 2009). Hence, new approaches to language and teaching are necessary since literacy practices, as well as related theories and pedagogies that underlie teachers' work, are changing rapidly worldwide.

NLG (1996) developed the multiliteracies theory, emphasizing its "direct use in educational practice" (p. 89). The group provided a conceptual framework for literacy pedagogy that has four related components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and

transformed practice. Situated practice is an "immersion in meaningful practices within a community of learners who are capable of playing multiple and different roles based on their background and experiences" (NLG, 1996, p. 85). Overt instruction includes "active interventions on the part of the teachers and other experts that scaffold learning activities … that allow the learner to gain explicit information" (NLG, 1996, p. 86). It also includes "the introduction of explicit metalanguages," which helps learners understand the texts and activities in different modes (NLG, 1996, p. 88). Here, mode refers to a "regularized and organized set of resources for meaning-making, including, image, gaze, gesture, movement, music, speech, and sound effect" (Jewitt & Kress, 2003, p. 1). It is important to note that the purpose of metalanguage is to explain differences between texts and to explain the contexts of culture and situations in which language functions (NLG, 2000). On the basis of students' mastery with the metalanguage, the teacher, then, should emphasize critical framing to provoke students' critical questioning. With critical framing, learners have the ability to "frame their growing mastery in practice and conscious control and understanding in relation to the historical, social, cultural, political, ideological, and value-centered relations of particular systems of knowledge and social practice" (NLG, 1996, p. 86). This leads to transformative practices, through which "students can demonstrate how they can design and carry out, in a reflective manner, new practices embedded in their own goals and values" (NLG, 1996, p. 87). The application of real-life situations into classroom practices is integral to this process. In this stage, learners enact problematic situations and find possible solutions collaboratively. Through these four components, students engage in the "knowledge processes" of experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing and applying (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005).

The current study draws upon the potential of the multiliteracies theory and pedagogy to understand teachers' transformative use of multimodal resources in a methodology course. In this study, the course instructor created a multimodally-oriented curriculum that had the potential for crafting and empowering identities through critical perspectives on teaching and learning. The curriculum that she implemented had a transformative agenda in which language teaching was about not only mastering skills and transmitting knowledge but also inspiring for design and creativity with agentive learners who are willing to advocate for social justice, transformation, and cultural competence (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

Most research on multimodal practices highlighted how language pre-and in-service teachers used multimodal resources for learners, which did not give attention to student's critical thinking, but it focused on how the use of various multimodal projects with features such as graphics and videos resulted in enhanced vocabulary and reading abilities for ELLs (Kim &

Gilman, 2008; Lin & Tseng, 2012). The research showed that watching English videos with subtitles could be more beneficial to EFL learners' listening and reading comprehension skills (Saeidi & Ahmadi, 2016). However, very few studies examined how language teachers used multimodal resources to construct students' identities in the ESOL context and in relation to L2 teaching coursework in language teacher education programs (e.g., Giampapa, 2010; Higgins & Ponte, 2017; Stein, 2004). In Giampapa's (2010) study, teacher learning and identities were constructed by another multiliteracies project, Identity Text, where an elementary teacher drew on students' identities to create a multiliteracies project for ELLs to access academic literacies through multimodal, dual language identity texts. Through these texts, both the teacher and students reflected on their lived experiences to explore what native language means and what it means to be a second language learner; thus, they critically, meaningfully, and creatively explored their identities, language, and culture through topics such as bullying, war, and peace. Similarly, in Higgins and Ponte's (2017) study, a group of L2 teachers created multilingual print environments and drew on students' identities to increase attention to students' diverse multilingual identities in classroom practices. These two studies demonstrated how teachers have developed multimodal pedagogies, opened room for home languages, and created a community of practice in the classroom.

In another multimodal project initiated by teachers, Cummins and Early (2011) explored how teachers encouraged students to use multimodal skills to create literature and art for the purpose of gaining insights about social and personal realities. The authors concluded that these literacy practices were identity-affirming and that they increased students' literacy engagement. Inspired by Cummins and Early (2011), Stille and Prasad (2015) investigated the role of multimodal practices in language teaching and learning and discovered that many teachers used multimodal texts creatively. More particularly, they found that teachers used "multimodal identity" texts for the purpose of engaging students in the active use of multimodal resources in meaningful ways. Importantly, these teachers did not view multimodal texts as part of an add-on practice, but they placed them in the center of instruction. Thus, the text became "the products of students' creative work or performances carried out within the pedagogical space orchestrated by the classroom teacher ... [which] then holds a mirror up to students in which their identities are reflected back in a positive light" (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. 7). The authors finally drew attention to the significance of using multimodal texts in teaching social justice, imagination, and critical language awareness.

In all of these research studies, the teacher's role in encouraging critical perspectives and

transformative practices was significant in that it showed how teachers could use multimodal texts that aimed for transformed practice. It is important to note that Kitson (2011) and Tang (1991) cautioned against the assumption that presenting learning materials through non-linguistic modes to ELLs automatically leads to enhanced learning that requires transformed practice. The authors argued that teachers need to explicitly direct students' attention to the non-linguistic modes in resources and then engage students in critical framing or discussions for the purpose of changing students' perceptions about how messages are delivered, made, and interpreted through various modes.

The existing literature shows the importance of examining teachers' multimodal resources and how teachers make critical use of these resources in their lessons for ELLs. Despite recent attention to ELLs' multimodal learning in TESOL, more research still needs to be conducted in TESOL education (Block, 2013; Hafner, 2013), especially with regard to what teachers do with resources in K-12 ESOL lessons and how teacher education programs address multimodal teaching and learning (Royce, 2002). The lack of research in the transformative use of digital multimodal resources in ESOL classrooms leads to further investigation of what kind of multimodal technologies teachers utilize to tap into student identities in the classroom and how these resources are presented to and received by ELLs.

Methodology

Pedagogical Context

The study was conducted in an 8-week online TESOL methods course at a university in the southeastern USA in the spring semesters of 2011 and 2014. This was a required course for pre-service teachers of ESOL and in-service teachers who were seeking an ESOL endorsement (i.e., teacher candidates and licensed teachers). This course aimed to equip teachers with the pedagogical knowledge and practice in lesson planning, WIDA[1] ESOL standards, ESOL testing, various language teaching methods, approaches and strategies, and multimodal teaching. One of the authors of this paper was the instructor of the course for both years. Although a few readings were updated in 2014, both semesters were much the same, especially the final project, which is the primary data source in this study.

The final project in the course required each teacher to plan a thematic unit of their choosing for a week to teach ELLs in a K-12 class. Each teacher planned this unit at the midpoint of the course by submitting a progress report to the instructor who provided extensive feedback. The teachers' final projects were then shared and commented on by the class in the discussion

forum. While planning a unit for five days, they had to align their detailed lessons with WIDA and Common Core State Standards (CCSS[2]), "teach multimodally", and finally teach at least two of the five lessons and document their teaching in a multimodal format, such as through a video, PowerPoint, or Prezi. Example topics for the thematic unit included The Life of Butterflies in a Kindergarten ESOL Inclusion Class, Immigration' in an ESOL Middle School Pull-Out Setting, and Different Englishes and Dialects' For High School ELLs. Each final project document, which was approximately 10 pages long, included the following components: introduction and rationale for the unit while citing literature; day-by-day unit overview in a chart format that includes goals, standards, language tasks, resources, and assessments for each lesson; two consecutive 45-90-minute-long detailed lesson plans; teaching resources and an annotated description of each resource; and references. Along with the detailed document, each teacher also submitted a multimodal text in the form of multimedia or PowerPoint presentation while including edited video clips of their teaching in the unit. In addition, some teachers chose to write a teaching reflection in a separate Microsoft Word document while others incorporated it into their multimedia text.

The teachers had ample opportunities to learn about multimodal teaching and learning before embarking on the final project in the methods course. Prior to this course, the teachers read, wrote about, and discussed two articles on the topic in another required course, Applied Linguistics for Bilingual and ESOL Teachers. The readings included examples of multimodal composing of adolescents, one through a digital video in an afterschool (Hull & Nelson, 2005) and another through pen and pencil drawings in an ESOL classroom (Ajayi, 2008). Within the course, the teachers also had the opportunity to compose multimodally by creating video, animated PowerPoint, and Prezi presentations. Furthermore, the instructor of both courses modeled multimodal teaching by presenting materials such as multimodal compositions created by linguistic, non-linguistic, and digital tools, and facilitated discussions by using Blackboard Collaborate (a video conferencing platform), Voice Thread (an interactive presentation tool that allows participants to include audio comments), Padlet (a web-based bulletin board), and so on. Although the instructor provided examples of multimodal productions to the students as scaffolding, she made room for teachers to decide what multimodal teaching would look like in their ESOL lessons for the final project.

A total of 43 teachers (25 in 2011; 18 in 2014) gave consent to participate in the study. Most of the participants were female and had 2-5 years of teaching experience at the elementary school level at the time of their participation. Among them, 19 teachers had taught and were teaching ESOL while 24 teachers had not. The names referenced in this paper are pseudonyms.

However, all of the participants were working towards either being certified or endorsed to teach ELLs upon the successful completion of their graduate studies. Although 10 teachers did not hold a teaching certification at the time of the study, they were teaching as provisional or substitute teachers in K-12 schools as well as in their communities. In addition, for the course final project, as many as 30 teachers taught ESOL lessons in K-5 classrooms, and teachers who were not teaching at the time of the study sought classes to teach as a guest teacher. Lessons were taught to small to large groups of ELLs in push-in, inclusion, and pull-out contexts. Table 1 provides information about the participants.

Table 1
Information About Participants and Grade Level Chosen for Final Project

Categories		2011	2014	Total
Gender	Female	23	15	38
	Male	2	3	5
Years of experience	0-1	1	3	4
	2-5	19	10	29
	6-15	4	3	7
	16-25	1	2	3
Grade level taught	K-5	16	15	31
	6-8	5	1	6
	9-12	4	1	5
	Adults	0	1	1
Teaching certification	Certified	23	10	33
	Not Certified	2	8	10
Content	ESOL	9	10	19
	Others	16	8	24
Grade level chosen for final project	K-5	15	15	30
	6-8	6	2	8
	9-12	3	1	4
	Adults	1	0	1

Procedures

The instructor collected all the electronic data as she was teaching the online course both years. The main data sources for the study were 43 teachers' final projects and associated documents (i.e., progress reports, lesson plans, reflections) created in the methods course. Interested in how teachers utilize multimodal resources in teaching ELLs, we focused on the paper-based final project as well as teaching videos as these demonstrated teachers' use of resources in their lessons. The teachers' multimodal texts, such as multimedia and video clips of their teaching, were analyzed for content. We created tables to show the types of multimodal resources that teachers used and the ways in which teachers used multimodal texts with ELLs. The tables enabled us to identify teachers' use of multimodal resources and students' critical engagement of transformed practices in each of the multimodal resources. To verify transformative practices and identity development, we cross-checked teachers' written data using a comparative and contrast analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). We created tables that included the participants' final reflections and progress reports and color-coded them based on how the participants used multimodal resources. During the coding process, we, the researchers, met several times and came to an agreement regarding the findings. We also analyzed multiple sources of data through iterations and triangulated data to "strengthen the precision, validity, stability, and trustworthiness of the findings" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 33).

We initially devised two broad coding categories, one being the use of multiple modes as a scaffold, which represents "available resources for meaning making in the classroom" (Jewitt, 2008, p. 252). In this category, teachers made use of multiple modes and resources in a way that did not aim for, demonstrate, or encourage critical framing or transformed practices for themselves and/or their students. The second category is the use of multimodal resources that required critical perspectives and transformed practices. Here, teachers carefully planned their lessons; selected texts and media for relevant purposes; incorporated explicit scaffolding for technologies and appropriate language; encouraged reflection and critical thinking; and appealed to the students' professional and linguistic identities (for example, see Ellis, 2016). In this way, students could establish successful interconnection between modes. By engaging in a collaborative coding process (Smagorinsky, 2008, p. 401), we further refined the coding categories and developed emerging themes by rereading and discussing the raw data from both years numerous times (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). For example, we expanded our original coding manual by adding categories, such as "teachers' explaining content through multimodal resources but not bringing students' attention to the importance of generating new

meaning through different modalities" and "teachers having ELLs create a visual representation of their meaning making process and helping them realize the new meanings generated" in their lessons. Table 2 presents the final coding manual that includes the major codes as well as their definitions.

Table 2
Coding Manual

Multimodal resources	Ts use of multimodal resources as scaffolding	Ss use of multimodal resources
Gesture/ Movement	Ts using gestures and/or movements to explain content (e.g., teacher demonstrated read-aloud)	Ts having ELLs use gestures and/or movements purposefully (e.g., reframe understanding of content through skits, acting out, performances, interviews, role plays)
Non-technological/ Visual	Ts explaining content through visuals but not bringing Ss' attention to the importance of generating new meaning through different modalities. (e.g., use of graphic organizer, KWL chart, semantic map, pictures, map, 3D arts, vocabulary cards, flash cards)	Ts having ELLs create a visual representation of their meaning making process and helping them realize the new meanings generated (e.g., student-generated drawings, 3D arts, maps, graphic organizers, vocab cards, flashcards)
Music	Ts having ELLs listen to songs as part of a lesson	Ts having ELLs create songs or lyrics of songs to express their understanding and learning
PPT	Ts using PowerPoint to explain or present content of a lesson	Ts having ELLs generate PowerPoints to present their learning and understanding.
Instructional videos	Ts showing either teacher-created videos or videos available on the web (e.g.,	Ts having ELLs create videos to demonstrate their learning or facilitate critical discussions

	YouTube) to ELLs as part of a lesson	
Websites	Ts presenting information or content through educational websites (i.e., online dictionaries and readings on the web)	Ts having students browse websites to locate information and use it for critical discussions and broadened perspectives

Findings

An analysis of 43 teachers' use of multimodal resources in their detailed 5-day lesson plans, unit plans, unit overview, rationale, teaching videos, and final reflections prompted us to closely examine the ways in which teachers had ELLs interact with multimodal texts by using each of the resources. The deeper analysis of the teachers' uses of multimodal resources showed that most of the teachers used multimodal resources as scaffolding. Furthermore, we found a few examples that demonstrated that teachers planned to use multimodal resources for transformed practice and witnessed the identity development occurring in students' learning experiences.

Teachers' Use of Multimodal Resources with Critical Framing That Led to Transformed Practices and Identities

As teachers participated in the course, many of them reflected on their use of videos and multimedia for instructional purposes. Their reflections showed how these teachers achieved or aimed for critical framing and transformative perspectives. Among them, Jude, working with four 4th grade Latinx students, took critical approaches to her content teaching of social studies. She planned critically to provide students' group a Revolutionary War era newspaper using a political cartoon that had a famous photo and drawing of the Boston Massacre. She also created a PowerPoint to critically reflect on the causes of the Revolutionary War with the students and discussed it in a small group setting. She asked one of her students, Beth, who had immigrated with her family to America from Mexico about two years ago, to create vocabulary books for the Revolutionary War. In her progress report, Jude stated how the multimodal project supported Beth's understanding of the Boston Massacre by providing comprehensible input, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and different registers in different settings. Jude realized that Beth had come up with a different interpretation from what Jude had intended. In her final project reflection, Jude stated:

Beth's explanation of the Boston Massacre photo (what it symbolizes, how she interprets it, how it makes her feel, etc.) will be different from the political cartoon, which will be different from her [student] information in her [student] book about the causes of the war, etc.

By asking Beth to demonstrate meaning through technological modalities, to which she did not have access at home, Jude could ignite Beth's enthusiasm. Besides the fact that this student did not have much experience of using technology at home and school, Jude was surprised that "the students were able to take that information, synthesize it, make meaningful connections, and create their own artifacts" in their multimodal projects. When Jude was creating a video using the Movie Maker, Beth volunteered to speak for the podcast and described her work samples and her interpretation or new understanding of the Boston Massacre photos through symbolism. In a previous study conducted by one of the authors, they explained Jude's critical use of multiple modes helped improve Beth's nuanced understanding of content knowledge about complicated historical concepts (Choi & Yi, 2016).

Similarly, a preservice teacher, James, teaching in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context, reflected on how he validated students' identities through his instruction about English dialects and accents in a small group in a high school ESOL pullout class. When James started to plan his lesson, he had a critical purpose to change ELL students' prejudices and biases regarding English dialects and accents. He stated clearly at the beginning of his reflection that I began this project to teach my students that English was much more varied than what they listened to in recordings or were taught in the classroom. I also wanted to explore the discrimination that many people who speak an English dialect like AAVE [African American Varieties of English] face every day.

He also found that people faced discrimination not only in the USA but also in Korea, especially related to language variance. He explained that he thought that using multimodal resources was an effective way to present a variety of Englishes spoken outside the classroom. In his reflection, he shared his critical framing for the lesson plan which focused on how to impact his students to be proud of their language or their dialect. He believed that students' dialects and accents convey meanings about themselves. After completing a multimodal project in his lesson, he also realized how the multimodal project supports students' transformed practices and identities by stating that

I'm thankful that in a multimodal world we have access to videos, music, and other media that showcase people who are experiencing similar discrimination, but still find pride and beauty in the way they speak. The true power of the multimodal approach is that it could bring my students

together, AAVE speakers of America, Patois speakers of Jamaica, and three young 사투리 [saturi] dialect speakers in Korea. These multimodal approaches to English education gave my ELLs a glimpse at the struggles that other people go through with freedom of expression.

Through his unit, James empowered his students' identities by legitimizing their accents and different Englishes rather than adhering to the standard English that EFL students are often exposed to. And, as he reflected, showing YouTube video clips featuring speakers who proudly speak different varieties of Englishes was effective in his lesson. James explained that he thought video to be a meaningful resource through which he could facilitate students' new perspectives that led to transformed identities.

During the multimodal project, an ESOL teacher, Sharon, also witnessed her students' transformed identities. Sharon created a lesson for 9th grade biology, the topic of which was Eight Characteristics of Living Things. Among her five ELL students, Sharon invited Maria to work with her to create a movie for the final project. Sharon explained how she was impressed with Maria's work. The badger story that Maria created was one that her grandmother had told her when she was little. Maria drew all the pictures, and Sharon and Maria scanned them before they bounded them. Sharon added that she had not seen many of her ELLs stay focused for such a long time. She elaborated how this work gave Maria a new sense of identity which Maria had not imagined earlier:

> Maria thought it was the coolest thing ever that she was included in a college project and took a lot of pride in her work. She even began to make comments about going to college and had the counselor add her name to the SAT schedule.

The project helped Sharon realize her student's capacity and new identity. Although Maria was relatively proficient in speaking English, she struggled with academic writing and reading skills, and, due to a lack of confidence, she had not dreamed of going to college. Maria's accomplishment in this project transformed her perceptions about her future self to include a successful career. Sharon's reflection demonstrated the use of multimodal resources in a lesson facilitated not only students' understanding but also their identity development.

Nadia, an ESOL teacher, showed another example of how students made a connection with their cultural identity as they learned about course content. In this lesson, Nadia collaborated with a content teacher of social studies to teach the first two lessons from the unit and worked with a small group of six intermediate ESOL Latinx students in a pullout setting. Nadia motivated her students to gain a deeper understanding of the course content by utilizing multimodal resources and asking critical questions about the regions and communities where the ELLs, their mainstream

classmates, and teachers live. In this process, Nadia became more confident about using multimodal resources to teach core concepts because the whole class engaged in the successful discussions of design through multimodal modes. Students also discussed the cultural and social implications of the subject matter based on the regions and community settings the students lived in. Nadia commented, "Integration through a multimodal approach is probably the best way to start capturing my ESOL students' attention and understanding of content." Students used multimodal texts to make connections to real-life situations through conversations about cultural, social, and regional issues concerning their peers and friends in real life, which facilitated students' involvement in content. Nadia further reflected: "Hearing and seeing them in a real life setting and connecting their knowledge with the real world was amazing." By giving students opportunities to explore others' cultural backgrounds through diverse resources such as online dictionaries, video, PowerPoint and a time machine game, Nadia realized that she had opened up possibilities of validation for cultural identities not only in the ESOL classroom but in the mainstream classroom as well. Students understood what it meant to live in a certain region as immigrants or international students and specific social groups in the community. Nadia's ELL students described themselves as a unique social group based on their specific culture, one that is different from that of students in the mainstream classroom and most of their teachers. Nadia reflected on how students' discourses that define the ways of acting, believing, and being in the world (Gee, 1996) might be different than that of mainstream classroom members and how their relationship with teachers might be different from other student groups in the school. This reflection represented Nadia's transformed perspective on how ELLs, as a specific social and cultural group, can make meaning through resources in unique ways.

Challenges and Limitation in Teachers' Critical Use of Multimodal Resources

As discussed above, we found a few examples among 43 teachers who used multimodal resources within critical framing for transformed practices and students' identity development. The data showed that most teachers utilized multimodal resources, but some of them faced challenges to utilize multimodal resources within critical framing. The teachers simply presented the learning materials, meaning that multimodal resources served as a direct substitute for the content teaching with no functional change towards the real purpose of criticality. Some of them tried to use multimodal resources with critical framing in mind. However, they ended up presenting learning materials without involving students in using technologies that facilitate students' transformed

practice. In addition, teachers' selection of multimodal resources was limited, and sometimes they struggled to have ELLs actively engage in the creation of these multimodal texts.

Throughout the course, it was evident that many teachers reflected on the usefulness and values of utilizing multimodal texts in class. Nevertheless, our data showed that most teachers relied on technological multimodal resources at the most rudimentary level, considering them to be simple substitutes for written or printed contents to present information. Specifically, with respect to videos, most teachers showed educational and commercial video clips to ESOL classes as part of previewing and/or reviewing concepts, and that often was followed by a whole-class discussion of the video clip regarding the concepts. For instance, a kindergarten teacher, Alice, planned to teach students a character traits unit using short YouTube video clips from commercial movies, i.e., Frozen and Despicable Me. Immediately following the video clips, she elicited responses from the whole class about the characters' traits. We could not find any purpose for using these multimodal resources within critical framing other than initiating conversation or drawing students' attention. She did not make a meaningful connection between the video clip and the lesson. Similarly, Kay, in a persuasive writing unit, had ELLs watch commercial videos from YouTube to teach about persuasive writing and reviewed the parts of the writing process by watching a BrainPOP[4] video, online educational resources created with animated and curricular contents. She scaffolded the persuasive writing process by providing instructional video to the students; however, she did not broaden the students' critical thinking about how to write an essay for persuasive purposes with their own arguments. These ELL students might have gained knowledge about the process of persuasive writing, but the teacher could have developed students' thoughts using videos critically instead of replacing their instruction with the watching of a video.

In addition, a number of teachers expressed difficulties, to include using multimodal texts in class, because of their lack of competency using technology. Many of the teachers shared that they struggled with becoming skilled in using technological multimodal texts. For example, a high school teacher, Ann, reflected the stress and agony that she felt while creating a video by saying that "I am burnt out. It was not the applied linguistics that was the problem. It was the technology, the multimodal aspect. A ten-page research paper is a breeze compared to this." She faced several technical issues while creating a teaching video and integrating technological multimodal resources in her lesson. These difficulties and challenges hindered her from including multimodal texts and resulted in failing to incorporate any critical framing or transformed practice. Ann also reflected on her lesson that although using multimodal texts has motivated her students to engage in the lesson; they did not pay attention to content. She stated, "Classwide motivation existed for

adding music to their PowerPoints and a little bit for the audio play, Television and the video, the book…. They asked for a repeat on both. Only one student really understood that both were a parody or mockery of the attention we pay to a machine." She felt that it could not facilitate the deepening of the students' learning and transformed practice as she expected. As she could not provide appropriate scaffolding to the students due to the lack of technological competency, students only focused on practising technological skills in multimodal texts.

Despite the technological challenges that these teachers experienced, they showed a positive attitude toward the potentials and possibilities of using multimodal resources. A 6th grade teacher, Jason, implemented diverse multimodal resources in his literature class and stated: "This was the first time I mixed a lot of different technologies together. I used PowerPoint, Audacity, iTunes, Garage band, and a lot of animation. Combining them was a challenge…, but I think using them together helped me learn how to use them better." He knew how to use multimodal resources independently, but he had not tried creating his own multimodal project for specific lessons before. Similarly, Sophia mentioned that "I must say it was a learning experience from the beginning to the end. To use any form of technology was a challenge for me, and I wanted to produce something outside my comfort zone." Although teachers did not experience incorporating many multimodal resources before creating their own multimodal project in the methods course, they welcomed being challenged to incorporate multimodal texts in their lessons, and it was critical to provide appropriate and enough support for teachers.

Furthermore, some teachers shared that they tried to use multimodality with critical framing but failed to see the evidence of transformed practice. Although they tried to include multimodal resources in their lesson plans, they could not connect the multimodal resources with the deepening and broadening of students' learning and critical thinking. For example, although many teachers pointed out the benefits of using videos for instruction for ELLs, one teacher, Alex, reflected on how using videos in his instruction did not help his ELLs, who were migrant students, understand the content about the condition of migrant farmworkers (MFWs). Alex explained, "They [the ELLs] did not seem to make the connection of what the video, Harvest of Dignity, was trying to convey: That little has changed for MFWs over the last fifty years." In his teaching video, although the students were provided with history-related video clips in Spanish, they never had a chance to talk about what they had learned from the video clip or to discuss what they watched in English. Alex was critical about his lesson and final project: "I really didn't do well in creating dialogue that led to deeper thinking. Finding good resources was one of the most time-consuming aspects of developing this unit, and the ones I finally chose, I feel, were not interesting to my

students." As Alex stated, teachers spend additional time and effort in finding the right tools or technologies to utilize multimodal resources in the lessons. However, they sometimes learn new tools that they did not feel comfortable with, and they could not secure time to prepare their lesson plan incorporating critical framing and transformed practice.

Discussion and Conclusion

More than a decade ago, Stein (2000) urged the TESOL field to consider "multimodal pedagogies that recognize students as remakers and transformers of the representational resources available to them" (p. 336). However, our examination of 43 teachers' use of various resources in the ESOL classroom shows teachers using multimodal resources primarily as scaffolding to present information, not necessarily to promote critical framing and transformed practice.

While some teachers in our study became conscious about their transformed perspectives through their reflections, a few teachers focused on explaining how they scaffolded students' critical perspectives and encouraged students' identity development around their linguistic and cultural aspects. To integrate resources with transformative purposes, teachers planned their work carefully. That is, they deliberately selected their texts and media for intended purposes and their own students and provided scaffolding for the use of technologies with critical perspectives. Teachers intentionally helped students transfer meaning in new contexts for creative purposes, reflected on their identities and new learning, and developed new practices based upon what they learned in language and literacy classes. With teachers' scaffolding in multimodal practices, students did not only replicate or imitate representational conventions but also became sign makers as they transformed meaning. All these examples are accounts of how multimodal resources can emphasize the many meaningful or transformative ways in which students can experience communication and come to develop new understandings through these rich resources.

As Kitson (2011) and Tang (1991) emphasize the teacher's role in encouraging critical perspectives and transformative practices, it is important to note that we found significant connections between how teachers can use multimodal texts that aim for transformed practice and students' identity development. As research has highlighted meaningful meaning-making and thus an improved sense of agency by learners creating and producing multimodal texts, the findings of this study show that students can take agency and develop their identities by engaging in multimodal texts. The findings also suggest that multimodality is utilized in a limited sense in the K-12 ESOL classroom (e.g., Early & Marshall, 2008; Hull & Nelson, 2005) if teachers do not plan to use multimodality in the class within critical framing. This is congruent with Ware's (2008)

study that demonstrated that less sophisticated uses of multimodality, such as middle school ELLs' limited use of computers to produce PowerPoint presentations, did not lead to meaningful learning experiences.

The findings of this study urge teachers and teacher educators to revisit multimodality not only as tools to present learning materials more interactively and engagingly but also as something that allows ELLs to become text makers and designers of their meaning-making. In other words, the interpretation of the findings is not to discourage teachers of ELLs from using visual and video clips as stimuli and/or scaffold for linguistic text for ELLs. Rather, it is for teachers to encourage ELLs to be transformative meaning-makers and signifiers of meaning whereby they gain agency and control of their learning. Studies have shown that the use of multimodality does not automatically lead to increased student learning unless the teacher is intentional and purposeful about the resources being utilized (Kitson, 2011; Maher, 2011; Tang, 1991). This also calls for multimodal resources to be used more prudently and intentionally by both teachers and students as Shanahan (2013) argued, "Ultimately, teachers and students need to have explicit knowledge of the five sign systems to strategically leverage the communicative potential of each" (p. 224).

Given that it was left open for teachers to design their understanding of multimodal teaching, this study importantly shows what teachers of ELLs have easy access to, what they deem as multimodal teaching, and what might be plausible in the K-12 classroom context. Although only a few teachers successfully had ELLs compose multimodally, this study could be closer to what might be currently available in the everyday teaching context. The teachers in our study did not employ more varied technology in instruction, other than the predominant use of non-technological visual aids, videos and PowerPoint. Following this, the reason for the teachers' limited use of technology could be related to the school curriculum, lack of technical support, or teachers' unfamiliarity with advanced technology. To reach the full potential of multimodal pedagogies in the education of ELLs, teachers should be exposed to a variety of approaches to using multimodal resources, especially technologically oriented resources, in broader and more sophisticated ways by which ELLs actively remake and transform multimodal texts.

By looking at teachers' use of resources through the critical lens of multiliteracies, we intended to disrupt the power dynamics in the classroom. We thus gave chances to teachers who wanted to make their students' voices heard and promote social justice in the classroom with an awareness of how important identity construction is for ELLs. The pedagogical implications of such empowering practices have been enormous in the literature (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). However, more research on how teachers can apply the empowering concept of transformed

practice in their teaching is needed to address this imbalance. In response to the increasing political tensions related to racial and cultural issues and incidents of violence that we witness in news and social media, we must update the pedagogies we offer to learners who continue to face serious questions about human rights and social justice (Hawkins & Norton, 2009).

Thus, it is also important to explicitly address what multimodal teaching means for teachers in teacher education courses, both using multimodal resources to present materials and to have students engage in implementing meaningful ideas. When in- and pre-service teachers enhance their capacity to design and implement lessons with critical lenses for ELLs, they will be empowered to develop multiliterate identities for themselves and their students (Yi & Choi, 2015). To encourage empowering teachers' identities as "transformative intellectuals" (Giroux, 1985, p. 379), teacher educators need to open more spaces where teachers can engage in multimodal practices (Choi & Yi, 2016).

When using multiliteracies, the purpose is not to provide an effective supplemental mode but to create a creative synergy through the combination or orchestration of modes. Future studies could investigate the ways in which multimodal resources are being utilized in the ESOL classroom to capture the current use of multimodal resources more accurately and whether classroom practice precisely matches research.

Endnotes

[1] WIDA is a consortium to develop English Language Development Standards based on multiple theories and approaches and to support educators and students (see www.wida.us/index.aspx). Recently, WIDA decided to stop using the acronym definition. Now, WIDA just means WIDA.

[2] Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are the guidelines for English language arts and mathematics for each grade level with the objectives of college and career readiness.

[3] On the website of www.blabberize.com, students can create their own 'blabber' with images and sound recordings.

[4] BrainPOP is an animated educational site for children: www.brainpop.com.

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Teacher Attitudes Towards the English Language Curriculum Change: The Case of Vietnam

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Abstract

With the spread of English as a global lingua franca, many governments have developed and implemented new curricula and pedagogies, aiming to enhance English competence for personal and national participation in a globalised world. In Vietnam, the Government established Project 2020 (since relabelled Project 2025), a reform of the national English language curriculum in the schooling system to renovate the English education at the school level. However, little is known about how Vietnamese teachers actually regard the change and the practical challenges to the curriculum implementation at the local level. This paper explores the attitude of Vietnamese teachers towards the new curriculum for secondary classrooms. Drawn from an online survey and interviews with teachers, the research findings indicate positive attitudes among the teachers concerning the necessity of the curriculum reform, while showing their doubts and more negative evaluations of the overall feasibility of the new curriculum, both its goals and its pedagogic approach. A number of constraints hindering the success of the change are discussed and recommendations are made including the need to establish appropriate in-service teacher professional development as an essential aspect of the reform.

Key words: Teacher attitudes, Curriculum innovation, Communicative Language Teaching, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Appraisal, Vietnam

Introduction

One outcome of globalisation has been the uptake of English as a global lingua franca, with many governments becoming concerned about the lack of English competence across their populations for personal and national participation in the global economy. This pragmatic need has motivated numerous English Language Teaching (ELT) reform initiatives at a national level, with focused and determined efforts being dedicated to innovations and renovations in curricula, materials and pedagogies. Common to such reform efforts was the move towards various versions of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Particularly in the Asia Pacific region, CLT has become a 'slogan', and communicative competence has been adopted as a central component of government rhetoric (Butler, 2011; Littlewood, 2011; Nunan, 2003).

As a developing country in Kachru's global framework, one positioned as part of the Expanding Circle (Kachru, 1992, 1999), Vietnam has followed this trend towards communicative-based curriculum reform. The National Foreign Language Project 2020 (now rebadged as Project 2025) was launched in 2008, and this initiative provided the context and data for this study. Within the project, emphasis has been placed on enhancing student communicative competence, with new curricula and a new series of textbooks designed for the three levels of schooling from Year 3 to Year 12, all adhering to the principles of CLT to drive a learner-centred pedagogy. The adoption of CLT has intended to bring about a radical change in classroom practices and processes across the country, transforming the traditional, grammar-based, teacher-centred classroom into an interactive and learner-centred space.

Implementing a new curriculum and pedagogy at a national level is a complex process, one element of which is the deep-seated issue of teacher attitude and its interconnection with teaching practices in the shift to the new approach to teaching (Fullan, 2015; Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015). This paper, located within a larger study aiming to inform the question of intention versus reality of the recent ELT curriculum reform in Vietnamese schools, presents an investigation of the Vietnamese teacher attitude towards the curriculum change in this South-Eastern Asian country.

Teacher attitude and educational reform

Studies of teacher attitudes in the context of educational reforms have reinforced the view that attitude should be understood as a vital and inevitable part of any pedagogic innovation (Datnow, 2012; Gregory & Noto, 2018; Macfarlane & Woolfson, 2013). As argued by Karavas-Doukas (1996), teacher attitude has a strong influence on classroom practice, and directly impacts what students learn in classrooms. If there are incompatibilities between teacher attitude and the philosophies and values underlying innovations, teachers are more likely to reject the change or

enact the change on the 'surface' – with little actual change at the level of classroom practice (Fullan, 2015; Humphries & Burns, 2015). Therefore, substantial efforts may be required to make sure that teachers "revise, refine, or change attitudes which may not be compatible with the principles of the approach" (Karavas-Doukas, 1996, p. 188).

In curriculum innovation, a positive teacher attitude is considered a key prerequisite for successful implementation of change (Saloviita & Schaffus, 2016). Thus, in the domain of language teaching, there has been a growing attention globally to the significance of investigating language teacher beliefs and attitudes in shaping classroom practices. Studies include those in South Korea (Li, 2001), in Thailand (de Segovia & Hardison, 2009), in Japan (Tsushima, 2012), in Turkey (Kırkgöz, 2008), in Libya (Orafi & Borg, 2009), in China (Fang & Garland, 2014; Hu, 2005; W. Wang, 2014; Zhang & Liu, 2014; H. Zheng, 2015), and in Hong Kong (Carless, 2007). Studies have uniformly reported that teacher attitudes have not always aligned with the communicative curriculum, and that this has contributed to the poor outcome of CLT reform (Ching-Ching & Kuo-Hung, 2018; Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996). Li (1998) reported that the teachers on South Korea disregarded CLT as they believed that this pedagogy could not prepare their students for the written, grammar-based examinations. Hu (2002) reported that CLT failed to achieve the expected outcomes in China partly as a result of clashes between the interactive, learner-centred principles underpinning CLT and Chinese traditional classrooms, with the outcome that teachers resisted employing CLT. CLT also caused substantial confusion at the classroom level, so that teachers held different views with regards to 'how to teach' the communicative curriculum, resulting in its limited success (H. Wang, 2008; X. Zheng & Borg, 2014).

English Language Teaching in Vietnam

English language education in Vietnam has been inextricably linked to political, economic and social change. A history of conflict with different enemies created soured relations with the outer world for a long period. At the end of lengthy periods of conflict, the languages of Vietnam's enemies disappeared from the school curriculum (Wright, 2002). English has gained prominence since the Open Door policy of 1986 which saw the demand for English proficiency surge, leading to "English language fever" (Le, 2007, p. 172). In the late 1990s, the government proclaimed English a compulsory foreign language at school and tertiary levels. English has now become part of the high-stakes examination system, serving as an important gatekeeper in the educational system.

Despite its increasingly prominent role in the national education system, the quality of

English teaching and learning in Vietnam has commonly been evaluated as "unsatisfactory for everyday communicative purposes as well as for specialised use" (Le, 2007, p. 175). English instruction in schools was sustained by old-fashioned textbooks and generations of teachers who focused on the mastery of grammar and lexis in order to prepare students for the entrenched high-stakes, discrete-point, written tests and examinations. Oral skills were largely neglected, leaving students unable to master any communicative functions in the target language. Classroom pedagogy reflected the examination structure, characterised as teacher-centred, textbook-based and exam-oriented (Le, 2015; Le & Barnard, 2009). Large class sizes, poorly motivated students, and a lack of appropriately qualified teachers remained as major challenges to English education (Le, 2007, 2015; Pham, 2007). This questionable standard of English language education in the formal schooling system was unable to respond to the country's ambitious social and economic development demands (Vu & Burns, 2018).

The National Foreign Language Project: Project 2025

Project 2025 is the most recent governmental response to the increasing dissatisfaction with the quality of English education in Vietnam. The economic benefits of globalisation are seen to be the major driving force for the launch of this language initiative as competent English users are in high demand. With a planned expenditure of approximately 426 million USD, the project was the most prominent and ambitious initiative in the Vietnam's educational history, reflecting a strong commitment by the government to ELT education (Le, 2015; Nguyen & Bui, 2016). As part of the project, English is made compulsory from Year 3 to Year 12, and after ten years of study, there is an expectation that school graduates will be independent, intermediate users of English. The goal of the project was that by 2025:

> *"Vietnamese young people graduating from secondary, vocational schools, colleges and universities will be able to use a foreign language confidently in their daily life, study and work in a multicultural and multilingual environment, making foreign languages a competitive advantage of Vietnamese people to serve the cause of industrialisation and modernisation of the country."*
>
> *(Government of Vietnam, Article 1.1, Decision 1400, 2008, p.1).*

Since its inception, Project 2025 has been the topic of vigorous public and scholarly debate. There has been scepticism from both international and domestic researchers (Hayes, 2008; Le, 2008, 2015; Le & Do, 2012; Vu, 2013) who have expressed concerns about the achievability of its goals. H. Nguyen (2011) explored the implementation in two primary schools, revealing discrepancies between what was intended at the policy level and what actually

happened in classrooms. Major concerns relating to the innovation were also discussed by Nguyen et al. (2018) who criticised the use of the European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for setting learning outcomes as "over-ambitious and likely unachievable for students in the near future" (p. 222).

Teacher competency has remained as a major issue, particularly when test results indicated that among the 80,000 teachers of English, 83% of primary school teachers, 87% of lower secondary school teachers, and 92% of high school teachers failed to meet the mandated proficiency level to teach the new curriculum (Nguyen, 2013). Whilst some attention has been devoted to teacher in-service training and professional development, this has often been in the form of 'quick-fix' training workshops. Furthermore, more than 90% of English teachers are females who are expected to wear "too many different hats" at home and at work (Le, 2015, p. 186). Additionally, low salaries have forced many to tutor extra classes to boost income, which has caused them to forego the opportunities to develop themselves professionally.

Although the Vietnamese Government has put substantial emphasis on teaching communicative English, implementing a new curriculum and pedagogy nationally brings enormous challenges involving numerous factors and impediments of various sorts. There are potentially more deep-seated issues, including the attitude of the teaching force to the curriculum change. In fact, little is known about how Vietnamese teachers actually regard the change besides the practical challenges to the curriculum implementation at the local level. The paper attempts to inform this gap regarding how the key agents of the change, that is the English language teachers, evaluate the curriculum reform.

The study

The study explored how the reform was evaluated by investigating the attitudinal responses of Vietnamese teachers in lower secondary schools in Vietnam through two research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of lower secondary school EFL teachers to the new curriculum?
2. What are the constraints perceived by these teachers to the implementation of the new curriculum?

The data collection was based in one northern province of Vietnam. A mixed methods research design was used, which enabled concurrent use of both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The potential for triangulation within this research design offered the construction of meaningful and coherent explanations from both numeral and verbal data, therefore, enhancing the reliability and validity of the research findings. The data were drawn from an online survey (n=112) and

interviews (n=11).

The survey

The study employed purposive sampling strategies (Creswell, 2012). The local Department of Education and Training provided the information that 88 schools had been trialling the new curriculum, and 178 teachers in these schools were invited to participate in an online survey[3]. The online survey was used for the reasons that it saved time in distribution to teachers of different locations, and in gathering and processing the data (Bryman, 2012). The aim of the survey was to elicit teacher perspectives on a number of issues relating to curriculum reform. In total, 172 emails were successfully delivered, and after a one-month period, 112 responses to had been received, a response rate of approximately 65%. Descriptive statistics (Bryman, 2012) were employed as the tool for the univariate analysis in which patterns and frequencies in the responses were calculated. Verbal data deriving from the open-ended item were treated qualitatively.

Table 1 presents demographic information of the 112 teachers participating in the survey, and provides biographic details relating to their gender, qualification, teaching experience and current levels of English language proficiency.

Table 1
Teacher demographic information

Demographics	***Summary of Participants (n = 112)***
Gender	Males: 7% (n = 8) Females: **93% (n = 104)**
Formal Education	BA Degree (four-year undergraduate): **93% (n = 104**) BA Degree (three-year undergraduate): 7% (n = 8)
Teaching Experiences	2 - 5 years: 5% (n = 5) 6 - 10 years: 10% (n = 11) 10 - 15 years: 17% (n = 19) 15 - 20 years: **60% (n = 67)** > 20 years: 9% (n = 10)
English Language Proficiency	B1: 6% (n = 7) B2: **84% (n = 94)** C1: 10% (n = 11)

More than 93% of the teacher participants were female, pointing to the fact that English language education, at least at the lower secondary level, in Vietnam is overwhelmingly a female

[3] It is noted that the old curriculum is still being used in parallel with the new curriculum. The teachers who did not teach the new curriculum were not invited to this survey.

profession. All of the teachers had a relevant qualification in English language teaching with 93% having a four-year undergraduate degree. These teachers had a great deal of experience in teaching English at the lower-secondary level, with 85% having more than 10 years' experience. Regarding English language proficiency, 94% had achieved a Proficiency Level B2 or above, which met the mandated level required by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). A clear picture emerged that the typical participant was a well-qualified female teacher with many years' experience in teaching English at the lower-secondary level.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with 11 teachers from four schools, two urban and two rural (Table 2). The selection of schools in different locations provided responses from different teaching and learning contexts. The interview protocol included questions about their evaluation of the new curriculum as well as their concerns about the implementation process.

Table 2
Details of the interview teachers

#	Name	School	School type	Experience (years)		Location
				of teaching English	of the new curriculum	
1	Teacher A	School 1	Selective	32	2	Rural area
2	Teacher B	School 1		21	4	
3	Teacher C	School 1		13	3	
4	Teacher D	School 1		12	3	
5	Teacher E	School 2	Normal	18	3	
6	Teacher F	School 2		30	4	
7	Teacher G	School 3	Selective	12	3	Urban area
8	Teacher H	School 4	Normal	20	3	
9	Teacher I	School 4		30	4	
10	Teacher J	School 4		14	3	
11	Teacher K	School 4		15	2	

Appraisal: An analytical framework for understanding attitude

The study used the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) for analysing the evaluations expressed in the interviews and survey open-ended questions. The framework outlines the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) system of the language of evaluation, that is the meaning-making resources by which speaker/writers express their emotions, judgements and appreciations of different entities, both human and non-human (White, 2015).

The Appraisal system separates evaluative resources in language into three semantic categories, namely Attitude, Engagement and Graduation (Figure 1). Attitude concerns the resources for expressing emotions and attitudes and is the focus in the study. The sub-system of

Attitude, consists of three types, namely Affect, Judgement and Appreciation. While Affect deals with language recourses for expressing emotions and feelings, Judgement refers to resources for evaluating human behaviour and character by reference to ethics/morality and other systems of conventionalised and/or institutionalised norms. Appreciation relates to the evaluation of objects, artefacts, states of affairs and processes with regards to how their values are assigned socially.

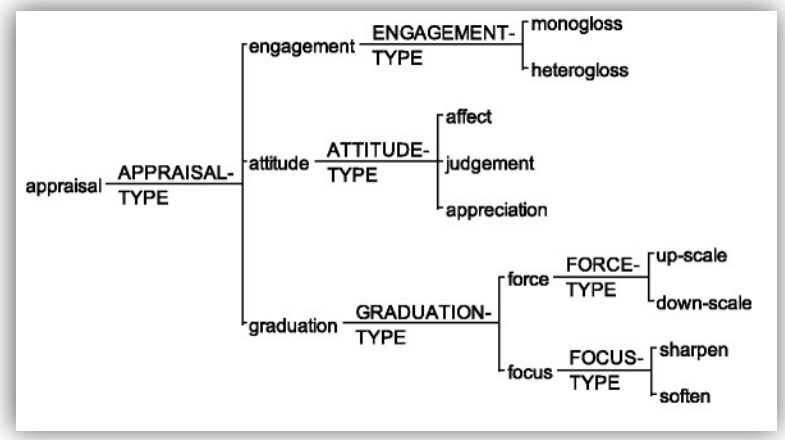

***Figure 1**. Basic system for Appraisal (Martin & White, 2005)*

The Appraisal system was used to analyse how the teachers expressed their attitude, specifically their language choices of Judgement, Appreciation and Affect, either positive or negative in relation to the curriculum reform. The analysis included inscriptions of evaluation where it was explicitly stated, as well as the implicit invoking of evaluation where meaning was less clearly obvious or could not be simply tied to the choice of lexical item, and where the evaluation was necessarily understood in relation to the context. As attitudinal meanings can be expressed by combinations of words beyond the level of the clause in particular textual settings (White, 2015), the analysis looked at both individual clauses, and also strings of clauses expressing the attitudinal meaning of the speaker/writer. The process involved identifying the Source of the Attitude, that is the appraiser and also the Target of the Attitude, that is the appraised entity or human participant. As interpretation of the attitude of the teachers participating in the survey and in interview was based on the evidence provided by the analysis.

Findings

The necessity and feasibility of the new curriculum

As seen in Table 3, 93% of the survey respondents advocated the need for the curriculum change, indicating overwhelming support for the innovation. Of these approximately 60% viewed the change as necessary and 34% as very necessary.

Table 3
Teacher responses to the need for a curriculum change

	Not necessary	Somewhat necessary	N/A	Necessary	Very necessary
Percentage of responses	1%	4%	2%	58%	34%

A Pearson chi-square test[4] showed no statistically significant relationship between teachers' perceived necessity of the curriculum change and their gender (p=.272), their education (p=.636), their teaching experience (p=.206) or their level of English proficiency (p=.965). This suggests that teacher attitude about the need for a curriculum renewal was not shaped by their background or prior training and experience.

In relation to the achievability of the two specified curriculum goals (Table 4), the first covered a broad sweep and may have been viewed as overly ambitious, and on that basis, the teachers may have been reluctant to fully endorse its achievability. About 76% of the respondents believed it could be partially achieved, whilst nearly 20% regarded this first goal as unachievable. The second goal was much more concrete, as it was related to a specific English language proficiency level. Two thirds of the teachers (66%) viewed this goal as partly achievable. Only 13% of respondents expressed real confidence that students could reach the Proficiency Level A2 with a larger number (21%) taking the view that this goal was not at all achievable. More teachers took the view that their students would not reach the target proficiency than those who believed they would reach the required level.

Table 4
Teacher responses to the achievability of the curriculum goals

#	***Overall goals of the new curriculum***	*Percentage of mentions*		
		Achievable	*Partially achievable*	*Unachievable*
1	English language education at lower-secondary schools aims to help students practise and develop their communicative competence in English, which becomes a foundation for the use of English as a tool for study in school and life, helps to create the habit of life-long learning, and develops themselves to become responsible citizens in the context of globalisation.	5%	76%	19%
2	After finishing lower secondary school, students achieve level A2 of proficiency on the CEFR.	13%	66%	21%

[4] p-Value is based on a Pearson Chi-square test, confidence level at 95%.

Again, a Pearson chi-square test showed no statistically significant correlation between teacher attitude about the achievability of the curriculum goals and their background, including gender, education, experience and English proficiency levels (p>.005). In fact, the teacher attitude was grounded in their perceived understandings of the constraints hindering the achievement of the specified goals which were made evident through the Appraisal analysis of teacher attitude towards the new curriculum.

Teacher attitude towards the new curriculum

Table 5 provides a summary of the evaluations expressed by the teachers as evident in the Appraisal analysis of the interviews, along with the data generated from the open-ended survey questions. The table presents details of the specific type of positive or negative Attitude identified in the analysis. Positive evaluations accounted for 20% of the total, while negative evaluations were four-fold higher at 80%. Negative Appreciation was the most frequently expressed Attitude type, at 58% of the total of negative evaluations. Instances of emotional Affect were rare and only positive, accounting for only 4%, while Judgement in relation to accepted norms accounted for 22% of the total of negative Attitude.

Table 5
Appraisal instances in teacher responses, based on types of Attitudes

Attitudes	Instances	As %
Positive	**39**	**20%**
Affect	6	4%
Judgement	1	-
Appreciation	32	16%
Negative	**158**	**80%**
Affect	-	-
Judgement	44	22%
Appreciation	114	58%
Total	**197**	**100%**

Table 6 details the inscribed/explicit versus invoked/implicit expressions of Attitude. Whilst there was a clear distinction between negative and positive Attitude, the ways in which both were expressed were very similar. Very close to 50% of the positive Attitude tokens were inscribed and the same percentage invoked. The same was evident in relation to the negative

Attitude expressed.

Table 6
Appraisal instances in teacher responses, based on inscribed and invoked Attitudes

Attitudes	Instances	As %
Positive	**39**	**20%**
inscribed	22	11%
invoked	17	9%
Negative	**158**	**80%**
inscribed	79	40%
invoked	79	40%
Total	**197**	**100%**

Positive Attitude

Thirty-nine instances of positive attitude were found, constituting 20% of the total. In this category, Appreciation was the prevalent choice (16%), while instances of Affect were rare (4%), and only one instance of positive Judgement was evident.

Positive Appreciation was the most common means by which the teachers made positive evaluations of the new curriculum. Typically, these positive comments were about the value of the new curriculum and were expressed explicitly rather than implicitly, as in the following example:

> "I really like the new curriculum because it's rich in terms of knowledge and can help students develop their skills… Generally I think the new curriculum is good" (Teacher D)

Instances of positive Affect were far fewer and showed explicit expression of positive feelings by the teachers about the new curriculum, for example about the new curriculum and also about the new textbooks.

Sometimes positive Appreciation was conveyed implicitly, as when a teacher expressed appreciation because the new curriculum could foster critical thinking rather than memorising grammar and lexis. Furthermore, the new curriculum placed communicative ability at the centre of learning, which was implicitly evaluated in a positive manner, as evident in the following comment.

> "For the old curriculum, hard work is the determinant of achieving good results. But this new one asks the students to be more critical. One thing about this curriculum is that it requires the use of English as the final aim". (Teacher D)

It is of note that a number of positive evaluations were made when the teachers made a comparison between the new and old curricula. Some teachers explicitly acknowledged the advantages of the new over the old. These teachers' positive comparisons linked to the fact that the new curriculum promoted the development of language skills among the students. In the previous iteration, the study of grammatical structures and vocabulary was understood as the main focus, whereas the new program was perceived as more advanced because it was designed to develop students' ability to use the language:

> "When working with the new curriculum, I found that obviously it has more advantages over the old one in that it can help to develop students' language skills" (Teacher A)

The textbook series developed alongside the new curriculum was a frequent target for appraisal. Positive appreciations of the new textbooks included the appealing appearance of the books and their rich visual resources as in the following comment:

> "Generally, the appearance of the books is eye catching and motivating to the students with a lot of visual images. It is not boring at all" (Teacher C)

This teacher appreciated the design of the new textbooks because they sparked interest and motivation. The diversity of learning tasks in the textbooks were also positively evaluated because they were varied in terms of difficulty levels, and, therefore, allowed for flexible use with different levels of students, as in the following comment:

> "I think the level of difficulty of tasks in the textbooks is varied. The books can be used for different levels of students. There are tasks for good students, and other easier ones for weaker students". (Teacher K)

Despite these positive evaluations, the analysis revealed a far greater number of negative comments, including the achievability of curriculum goals and the teachers' perceived constraints of contextual realities.

Negative Attitude

Negative Attitude was by the predominant evaluation of the reform. A total of 158 instance were recorded, 80% of the total of expressed Attitude. Negative Appreciation was the most frequently expressed (58%), followed by negative Judgement (22%). There were no instances of negative Affect. The number and target of these negative evaluations revealed the extent of the teacher

concerns, including the challenges faced in curriculum implementation in local contexts.

(i) Partial achievement of the curriculum goal

All the teachers shared the view that it was difficult for their students, especially those at the mid-range of achievement in non-selective schools, to attain the level A2 of proficiency. The estimated proportion of students who could gain the desired level varied for different teachers, as evident in the following comments.

> "They [students] can't achieve A2 level of proficiency. No… I think about 40 to 45% of students in top classes can achieve. In other classes, there may be about 30 to 35%, and only 10 to 15 percent of students in the lowest ranked classes" (Teacher C)

> "I think my students can't reach A2 level. Even for selective classes, I'm not sure whether 20% of the students can achieve A2 level" (Teacher E)

This supports the finding from the survey data where the majority of the participants responded that only a partial achievement of this goal could be possible, as only some but not all of the students could achieve the desired level.

(ii) High level of difficulty

A primary concern among the teachers was about the level of difficulty of the new curriculum for mainstream students. From the teacher perspective, the new program was "difficult" in terms of the skills and knowledge required, and "heavy" in terms of the workload allocated for classroom teaching and learning. Many teachers were concerned that the new curriculum was too challenging and demanding for mid or lower range students. By contrast, it was understood to be suitable and beneficial for high achievers, especially those in top classes or in selective schools. Negative appreciations were used to describe the new program, as illustrated in the following comments.

> "I think the new program is more difficult in terms of both linguistic knowledge, the number of new words and level of difficulty. I think the new program is more suitable for good students who will develop their language skills, especially speaking skills. However the students who are not very good will achieve nothing" (Teacher E)

> "The specific objectives set out in the curriculum are only suitable for selective classes

and schools. For students in rural and mountainous areas, it is difficult to achieve because the program is too heavy" (Teacher S4)

Several negative appreciations about the textbooks were also found in the teacher interviews, mostly regarding the ineffective design of some sections, and the choice of topics unfamiliar to both teachers and students, which made it even more challenging, exemplified in:

"However, some topics or contents for learning in the books are not familiar to the students, even for the teachers. If the teachers have almost no ideas about the topics, how can they explain to the students? Sometimes I feel that some of the contents are "up to the clouds", and have almost no relation to the students' everyday life" (Teacher K)

(iii) Mixed ability students with different levels of motivation

Commonly, the teachers associated their students' ability levels with the success of the curriculum reform. The teachers classified their students on their performance as "the top" and "the other", "the good" and "the not-very-good", or "the good" and "the weak". If the students were good and worked hard, they would benefit greatly from the new curriculum. On the contrary, the students who were not good would achieve little. An example of this kind of judgement follows, made more interesting by the positive appreciation of the curriculum:

"But it [the new curriculum] is difficult for weak students. For top classes, I can achieve most of the objectives of the lesson. But for other classes, I can only cover half of the target. Generally I think the curriculum is good, but only for good students from selective classes" (Teacher D)

Other instances were found where a teacher expressed her discontent about her students' laziness and lack of motivation to learn, as in:

"I have to say that students are lazy. They are not keen to learn English. Students in rural areas have little motivation for learning English" (Teacher E)

Another teacher expressed her concerns that her students did not have a good foundation of English in their earlier years of their schooling, making it more challenging to assure success in English study at the secondary level. This teacher also complained that the students were too quiet during communicative lessons. The teachers also noted the challenge of English instruction in economically disadvantaged areas where the students were often under-motivated to learn

foreign languages. These students normally achieved very limited success as a result of insufficient support coupled with a lack of incentive to learn:

> "Students do not gain much from their primary English studies, so it is difficult for them to go on with English 6. Sometimes the class is too quiet for communication lessons. What can I do if the students don't talk" (Teacher G)

The parents were also one of the targets of judgement. In commenting on the role of parents in the success of a student at school, one teacher explicitly named the parents as a significant factor contributing to the attitude and achievement of their children. Another teacher in a rural area stated her concern that when the parents did not pay attention and give encouragement to their children, there was little motivation for learning, resulting in poor school performance:

> "Students in rural areas have little motivation for learning English. If the students have little motivation and passion for learning, they don't spend time studying… Their parents do not really care much about their studies because they think that if their children do not perform well at school, then it is not necessary for them to invest resources on learning. These students do not take any further tutorials besides formal classroom instruction" (Teacher E)

(iv) Heavy workload

The heavy workload was also linked to the finding that teachers lacked time to cover the content. Teachers complained that they had to 'race' to finish lessons in the 45 minutes of allocated instructional time.

> "… the learning contents in the textbooks are too much with a lot of exercises and tasks. Teachers had to quickly move on to new exercises and tasks, which made both teacher and students demotivated and tired" (Teacher S3)

> "Most of the sections are long, so we have to race to meet the time. Sometimes I want to skip some parts, but there are new words or new knowledge in those parts which may be included in the tests. For example, if I skip one part, but other teachers don't. Therefore I always try to cover all sections in the mandated textbooks" (Teacher H)

(v) Large class sizes

Large class sizes made it overly challenging to implement and monitor effective communicative activities as well as to give individual feedbacks and keep track of the progress of individual students. This became even more difficult when the one teacher was responsible for teaching multiple classes in an academic term:

> "There are 41 or 43 students in one class. I think the class needs to be divided into 2 or 3 smaller classes in order to teach and learn effectively. How to run communicative tasks in a class of 43 students?" (Teacher C)

(vi) The washback effect of written examinations

The washback effect of high-stake examinations was evident in the teacher interviews. While the curriculum goal was to develop communication skills, the high-stakes examinations remained unchanged, focused on written and grammar skills. A shared concern among the teachers was that an intensive focus on communicative ability would be at the expense of grammar practice, resulting in poor achievement in tests and examinations:

> "One student may understand the lesson and use more English, but he or she may not perform well in the tests where there are grammar items included. Students who are good at communicative English may not be good at grammar" (Teacher D)

> "However the entrance exam to Year 10, there are only reading, writing and grammar. Therefore, students are not encouraged to develop their communicative skills and they still study for the exam to Year 10" (Teacher S12)

The washback of the entrenched written examinations has led to an increase in private tutoring alongside formal schooling. Private tutoring is an issue in the Vietnamese education system where a strong desire for good marks has created a context in which many students and parents are reliant on private tuition. Many teachers admitted that they participated in private tutoring regardless of the government's restrictions because of the strong demand from students and parents:

> "It's not allowed to teach extra lessons to according to the regulations. I do teach but you know I can't really say it in public. It's kind of confidential information shared by the teacher, students and their parents. Administrative officers said extra teaching should be banned. They said that it should be stopped, but their children all go to our extra classes". (Teacher C)

Teacher C further commented that the students who could achieve the targeted level of proficiency were those subscribed to more private tutorials:

> "So I suggest that you should note further information here is that the students take more lessons outside school. They can achieve A2 level as result from their family investment, rather than from the school and me" (Teacher C)

(vii) Unconfident teachers

Some of the judgements were about the teachers themselves, related to that fact that the English proficiency level of the teachers was still low. Furthermore, it appeared that there was a lack of, or ineffective teacher support, with the outcome that the teachers were confused or did not know what they should do. Teacher H claimed that there might not be any teachers who could say that they were confident teaching the new curriculum:

> "Honestly when I taught the new curriculum for the first time, I was not confident at all. There was only me working on my own. I complained all the time. I always lacked of class time to cover the syllabus, and I had to teach during the break time. I was too tired, and there was no one out there to ask" (Teacher B)

> "To be honest, I'm not very confident [teaching the curriculum] because there are a lot of things that I haven't been very clear, like the teaching methodology… If being asked whether I am confident about teaching the new curriculum, I may say that no one can say they are confident" (Teacher H)

(viii) Limited facilities

The lack of facilities to aid teaching and learning was another constraint frequently mentioned by the teachers. In the following instances, the teachers expressed discontent about the ill-equipped classrooms:

> "I just say simply about Vietnam's education is that there is a lack of facilities, lack of teaching aids, audio-visual equipment. We are not provided with teaching aids like disc players, speakers, so we have to buy. We are not supplied with necessary facilities for teaching and learning foreign languages, but are required to achieve this objective or that objective. This sounds silly" (Teacher C)

Discussion

> Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and as complex as that (Fullan, 2007, p. 129)

In the Project 2025 curriculum reform, significant emphasis appeared to be placed on product development (i.e. the curriculum and textbooks), on the legislation and on other formally expressed changes (i.e. the decisions and guidelines) in a way that seemed to minimise the variable ways that the teachers at the local level would respond to the task of enacting the change. This was informed in the research findings that whilst the teachers accepted the need for curriculum renewal, they voiced negative attitudes and concerns about the feasibility of the curriculum goals, which they considered to be overly ambitious. The common view was that the desired Proficiency Level A2 was achievable by high-performing students but was too challenging for those in the mid-range and below. For example, one teacher in a rural school estimated that only 20% of her students could reach the required level after the four years of the new curriculum. Whilst this teacher was at the lower end of estimating overall outcomes, the general sense was that the achievement standard was generally neither feasible nor realistic for the great majority of mainstream students. This view was corroborated by research at the upper secondary level where Le (2015) described the overall goal of the reform as "ambitious and unrealistic" (p. 196). The establishment of a rigid 'one-size-fits-all' proficiency goal also failed to override the influences, the social determinants that students brought to school – their socio-economic backgrounds, their ethnicity, their motivations for schooling, and their different interests and capabilities. On this basis, H. Nguyen et al. (2018) described Project 2020 as "a biased access policy" (p. 224), and concluded that the reform might only work to increase the gap among individuals, communities and regions, as well as among high and low performing schools and students.

The negative attitude of the teachers about the curriculum reform was largely concerned with various potential barriers in implementing this communicative-based curriculum in the local context. The constraints raised ranged from macro level to classroom level factors, including the heavy workload, the washback effect of the written examination systems, large class sizes with limited facilities, the mixed-level students with different levels of motivation and the unconfident teacher. It is not difficult to realise that some of these constraints were not new, e.g. in Le (2007, 2015); Pham (2007). Many of these constraints documented here were first documented more than 20 years ago, e.g. in Carless (1998); Li (1998), and have been echoed in accounts from other contexts, e.g. in Butler (2011); Coskun (2011); Humphries and Burns (2015); Nunan

(2003). It is disappointing to realise that Project 2025 was developed in the context of an extensive literature on reforms in the domain of English language teaching and learning in a range of similar contexts. There has been no lack of cases, experiences and lessons to be drawn from the various attempts to adopt CLT in curriculum innovation. It might be expected that Vietnam would learn from both the successful and unsuccessful attempts of the past to plan and initiate curriculum change which would be more contextually sensitive (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). However, the reported constraints reveal an obvious misalignment between what policymakers believed as the achievable goals and what the teachers perceived as practical and feasible for the students in their local contexts. This misalignment was a result of the top-down approach to curriculum reform.

The top-down curriculum reform

A major problem within the curriculum reform in Vietnam was the lack of collaboration amongst the various stakeholders in the process of planning, shaping and implementing the reform. This was in line with Fullan's (2007) observation of the two 'divergent worlds' involved in the complex process of curriculum change:

> We have a classic case of two entirely different worlds: the policymakers on the one side, and the local practitioner on the other. To the extent that each side is ignorant of the subjective world of the other, reform will fail - and the extent is great (p. 99)

The way MOET shaped its curriculum, although sponsored by the best intentions of the educational authorities, failed to accommodate the voice of the teachers – the ultimate end-users of the curriculum and the decisive agents in the success of change who ultimately held the power to transform the intentions of the curriculum policy into practical reality within each and every Vietnamese classroom. Essentially, there was an absence of teacher voice in relation to the reform package, importantly in setting the proficiency goal and the time frame for its achievement, in the pedagogy to be used and in the type and extent of professional development which was required for the English teachers. This lack of collaboration resulted in a loss of shared understanding between policymakers and policy implementers in relation to the why, what and how of change. At the macro level, policymakers and politicians have often been decried for their "desperate craving for a magical solution" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 1996, p. 294), resulting in ambitious overarching goals and high accountability standards. In the case of Vietnam, this 'magical solution' was the ambitious proficiency target which was judged by teachers to be impossible to achieve in mainstream classrooms. The lack of interaction and collaboration

amongst the various stakeholders in the hierarchical system resulted in a mismatch between policy intent and teacher belief and enactment of the curriculum.

Preparation for the communicative curriculum

The research findings reveal a lack of preparation for the communicative curriculum to be implemented successfully in the classroom. Nothing has changed in regard to large class sizes and the ongoing washback effect of high-stakes written examinations, both of which are counter-productive to the intended communicative curriculum.

Communicative lessons could not flourish in overcrowded classrooms and in traditional classroom set-ups which are more likely to inhibit than support authentic communicative interaction. The literature of curriculum reform suggested it was unrealistic to expect teachers to conduct communicative lessons in over-crowded classrooms (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008). In large classes, it was "very difficult, if not entirely impossible", as Li (1998, p. 681) concluded, to introduce and manage performance-based activities which tended to be more difficult to organise and time-consuming in overcrowded classrooms. The strong washback effects of written examinations were evident in the study. The need for students to develop accuracy as a priority over fluency in order to pass the highly competitive examinations would remain the paramount teaching and learning target. The 'victim' is communicative teaching and learning in that "only lip-service is paid to communication" even though the communicative approach is the official pedagogy (Le & Barnard, 2009, p. 28).

Insufficient professional support for the teachers has been one of the major hurdles to its success. This lack of professional training resulted in a feeling of isolation among many teachers in the study, expressed in ongoing pedagogic confusion and even frustration with the process of implementing the innovation. "Too tired" and "no one out there to ask", as one senior teacher put it, probably best describes the lack of professional support and the feeling of isolation amongst the teachers. Furthermore, the language competence of English teachers remains a major concern in Vietnam and other countries in Kachru's Expanding Circle (Crystal, 1997, 2003; Kachru, 1992). Many teachers reported that they remained unconfident and uncomfortable in using English to teach, despite their appropriate level of proficiency. This finding is linked with the potential for shared anxiety among non-native-speaker teachers because their language proficiency is believed to influence their professional self-esteem and confidence (Medgyes, 1994, 2001). They may be anxious about making errors when speaking in English, so losing the respect of their students. Previous research had noted that these anxieties and questions of self-confidence in language proficiency had created feelings of inferiority and had also impacted

adversely on teaching (Braine, 2005; Medgyes, 2001; Moussu, 2006). This was an important factor in the lack of uptake of the communicative approach prescribed in the intention of the reform.

The question of ideology

A broader and more deep-seated issue in the context of Vietnam is the potential clash between the student-centred, interactive principles of CLT and the traditional Vietnamese classroom where the legacies of Confucian ideology are clearly in evidence. Of particular relevance are the philosophical assumptions about teaching and learning, and the perceived roles and responsibilities of teachers and students in the classroom.

There is no question that CLT is essentially a contemporary Western industrialised creation, inherently displaying the ideologies and cultural values of its origins in Europe and the USA. When exported to non-Western locations such as Vietnam, there is a potential conflict between its Western-based premises and the beliefs and understandings about education in non-Western locations. In Vietnam, Confucian beliefs and values are implicit across many areas of culture, no more so than in education. Learning is conceptualised as an acquisition of information and knowledge which resides principally in books. The teacher is regarded as the possessor and transmitter of valued knowledge, and the learner is the recipient of the teacher's wisdom. In this way, a relationship of power difference pertains between the teacher and the student, and the student pays due deference to the teacher in this asymmetric relationship. Students in traditional Vietnamese classrooms are expected to speak only when being addressed, and spontaneous interactions are traditionally not evident or welcomed in classrooms. In this transmission-oriented pedagogy, there is strong teacher authority and minimal student individuality, resulting in a teacher-centred classroom.

CLT inherently promotes an individualistic approach to learning. It rewards independence and individuality, and encourages authentic interactions in the target language as one of its core principles. CLT is constructivist-based and aims to place the learner at the centre of teaching and learning. The prescribed pedagogy in Project 2025 embodies an educational philosophy alien to Vietnamese culture, and has made assumptions about teacher and student roles at odds with those which have been ingrained within the local culture. It was bound to meet with resistance, likely to find only limited success, even failure as was the experience in China (Hu, 2002, 2004).

In Vietnam, there is no doubt that a clash of educational values has been an important impediment to the success of Project 2025. Relevant to this outcome is the following comment

by Elmore (2004) which gets to the importance of the major professional development focus which will be required for success in the curriculum change:

> Cultures do not change by mandate; they change by the specific displacement of existing norms, structures, and processes by others; the process of cultural change depends fundamentally on modelling the new values and behaviour that you expect to displace the existing ones (p. 11)

The cultural change implicated here relates essentially to the roles and relationships of the teachers and learners in the English language classrooms. The intended shift to a CLT approach marks a monumental shift for Vietnamese teachers and students. The modelling of the changes required for success must be addressed in the professional development programs and materials which are now crucial for teachers. Without them, Project 2025 and any other reform in the future can only result in limited changes, well short the magnitude targeted by the policymakers and needed by the country.

Conclusion

This study reports the results of an investigation into teacher attitudes about the new curriculum reform at the secondary school level. Although the findings showed a proportion of positive teacher attitude about the reform, negative attitude was far more in evidence. The negative attitudes highlighted potential barriers to the success of the curriculum implementation, including macro-level and classroom-level constraints. Perhaps more importantly there was a potential clash of ideologies between the conventional transmission-style classroom and the interactive, individualistic ideology of CLT classrooms. These constraints made clear that, from the teacher perspective, it was too challenging for this communicative-based curriculum to be enacted in their classrooms.

Project 2025 is the product of a top-down approach where the need for change was decided at the central bureaucracy within the Communist Party. Past experiences in education reform indicate that real change is difficult to achieve in spite of significant top-down effort, so the question arises what should be done to make the curriculum change actually work in the Vietnamese classrooms? There is perhaps no single answer to this question. Systematic changes are necessary to make communicative classrooms more possible, including smaller and better-equipped classrooms, together with equivalent changes in the testing and assessment system. Of equal importance is the need to have strong guidance from the centre alongside participation and

collaboration of the teachers in the process of planning, shaping and implementing the reform.

Change will need time and effort from the multiple stakeholders, especially the teachers. It cannot be assumed that teachers will automatically implement the intentions of the policymakers and curriculum designers (Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996; H. Wang, 2008). They need to be well-served and well-supported to be able to enact the intended change. They need to have input into the proposed change. Teacher training and support should be given as a top priority. The present and future focus of professional learning for Vietnamese NNS teachers should be on two key matters: (i) enhancing teacher competence in English, and (ii) strengthening teacher understanding of CLT and how to apply CLT flexibly within their local classrooms. By doing so, teachers can develop greater autonomy, flexibility and power to make contextual adaptations in their daily practices, so as to respond to changing teaching/learning demands and the diverse needs of learners. This is of critical importance particularly in the "post-method era" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) when there is "no single golden method that works well for everybody regardless of context" (Butler, 2011, p. 51). In Vietnam, as access to professional development often varies considerably among teachers in different locations, teacher support must be also be provided on the basis of teachers' actual needs, and more importantly, their local teaching contexts. As Le (2015) argues, there is a need to develop a 'community of practice' within each school and small geographical area in order to "[celebrate] local knowledge" and "to localise pedagogies" (p. 195).

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethics approval (H-2017-027, 09 Mar 2017) granted by the Human Research Ethics Review Group (Faculty of Arts and Faculty of the Professions, The University of Adelaide). This study was considered to be low risk with minimal risks for the research participants.

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