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A journal dedicated to exploring and promoting best practices in language education

Patrick Dougherty, Editor

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The THT Journal is dedicated to the memory of William "Bill" Balsamo (1943 - 2008) the founder of Teachers Helping Teachers.

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Foreword

A Reflection on Teachers Helping Teachers

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Foreword

A Reflection on Teachers Helping Teachers

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What does Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) offer that other conferences and professional development seminars do not? I have participated in THT programs in Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, the Philippines, and will be a delegate in Vietnam in August of this year. What draws me to be a THT delegate in as many THT programs as possible? My answer would be the people involved in making the programs happen – the participants, the organizers, the delegates, and the local officials – all committed to making sure that everyone feels included in the THT family. The THT family ties are strong (and getting stronger!) because there is something in each THT program that makes delegates leave with that feeling of "we want some more, we want some more, we want some more," which happens to be what THT participants in Manila were saying in response to a delegate's presentation. This may explain why I have been a delegate for THT Kyrgyzstan three times and for the Philippines twice. Obviously, once was not enough; I needed a family reunion! The success of THT programs depends on the representatives of the host agencies and participants who must feel as if they would like to continue having THT delegates visit and give workshops. In other words, what makes THT special is that those who are involved in THT programs can never get

enough of being a part of the THT family! Indeed, it is the feeling of being part of an instant community of teachers who are determined to make a difference in their classrooms and in the world that makes me always go back for more.

I heard about THT from my coworker who was a THT delegate in Bangladesh five years ago. He showed me pictures of the schools he visited, the delegates, the participants, and the food, and regaled me with stories about how being a delegate with THT gave him the opportunity to work with some of the best teachers in Japan and abroad. When I asked my coworker what inspired him to participate in the THT Bangladesh program, his response was, “Marian, if you go, you will know what I mean. Just go and experience it for yourself.” So, the following day, I went to the THT website and decided to become a THT delegate in the Philippines. I did not know what to expect but I believed that the THT experience would give me a chance to work with some of the most dedicated teachers in the world.

Being a THT delegate in the Philippines was absolutely exhausting, exhilarating, and life-changing. Exhausting because it resembled “boot camp,” certainly not for the faint hearted. The delegates, who were all staying in the not-so-luxurious Denara Hotel – were up usually at 5 or 6 am. Although there were days when we were able to sleep in until 8 am, because our driver was expected to arrive at a certain time (plus or minus 45 minutes), we usually assembled at the hotel lobby at a given time. We were taken to the venue about an hour or two hours away (depending on the traffic) in a crowded van or *jeepney*, completed our presentations and workshops (usually three in a day) by about 5 pm, taken to dinner, taken back to our hotel, and socialized until midnight, sharing stories about why we had decided to embark on this THT journey and how we wanted to continue on this journey. There were also days where we visited schools, were serenaded to music (as the Philippines is a country

full of people who love to sing!), and participated in community events that usually included dancing, singing, and food. There were even days where the local organizers took us shopping, an excursion and distraction I certainly welcomed as I had promised my family and friends that I would come home with souvenirs from Manila. Throughout my time as a THT delegate in the Philippines, I was perpetually sleep-deprived (thanks to the disco that was located on the first or second floor of our hotel and the little critters that crawled about) and running on pure adrenaline. At times, I missed the comfort of my home where I could get a good night's sleep and wake up feeling refreshed.

So, why did I volunteer to be a delegate for six other THT programs after this exhausting experience? Why would I want to spend all my time with the THT delegates, be stuck in the same hotel as them, withstand the traffic in Manila, give two to three presentations or workshops in a day over three consecutive days, and end up being incredibly tired? The simple answer would be because the exhilaration that I inevitably felt after meeting some of the best people in my life and giving workshops to an appreciative audience outweighed the exhaustion that came from being part of an intense THT program. The participants in Manila who attended the sessions were teachers funded by the government to attend THT's professional development seminar. They were so eager to learn about new theories, classroom activities, and teaching principle that they were the ones saying "we want some more, we want some more, we want some more" at the end of a delegate's presentation. I gave several workshops in non-air conditioned classrooms with blackboards that should have been replaced eons ago. I gave up on PowerPoint even before I left Japan and decided that I would use handouts that I had created in my writing classes on word choice, sentence variety, and paragraph writing. I conducted my workshop explaining how I taught my learners to write effective paragraphs. During the workshop, the participants completed the

handouts in pairs as if they were learners in an EFL classroom and eventually produced descriptive paragraphs with complex word choice and sentence structures (e.g., simple, compound, complex, relative clauses, etc.). At the end of the workshop, they told me that they would use the classroom writing activities that I had shared with them in the workshops. More than the positive feedback I received from the participants, however, what I was most impressed by was the overall sense of commitment and enthusiasm from the participants in attending as many sessions as possible over three days. This was not only boot camp for delegates but also boot camp for the participants! These participants were invested in becoming better teachers – they were teachers who were open to learning anything that THT delegates could offer to become better teachers. After meeting these participants, I felt humbled and decided that I needed to be more open to learning from teachers who could help me become a better teacher. It was at this point that I understood why my coworker could not explain in words how he felt about his THT experience and told me to experience it myself. From the THT experience in the Philippines, I recognized that delegates who thrive in THT programs are those who end up being inspired by the people they encounter during their THT journey and want to continue on this journey to see how they might be able to become better educators through subsequent opportunities to be a delegate with THT programs.

THT delegates come from all walks of life. Some have a strong spiritual background, others come from an international development background like me, and some are artists, travel addicts, or linguists. The THT delegates I have met have not only enriched my experience during the THT program but have also changed my life in Japan. There must be something about spending five days or more with the same people away from familiar territory that makes people bond immediately. The bonding, in some ways, resembled my backpacking days in

Europe. Friendships are made instantly, information is shared rapidly, and cooperation becomes an absolute necessity. In the Philippines, we spent every meal together, attended each other's sessions, and even traveled together by coordinating our flights. We certainly had ample time to get to know each other. THT delegates are indeed some of the most helpful and big-hearted people I have ever met in my life. They are the ones who I consider my family away from home in Japan. Although we might not be able to meet up with each other very often, I believe that if I were to see them again, such as the delegate who lives in Miyazaki who used to be a professional ballet dancer, the delegate in Tokyo who has written numerous poems, or the delegate in Kyoto who has a passion for haiku, I am certain that we would be able to start from where we left off. That is perhaps the beauty of THT delegates who are all teachers with unique personal and professional missions in life, willing to open their hearts and minds to people from all walks of life and remaining staunchly committed to fulfilling the overall mission of Teachers Helping Teachers.

Preface

The Second Volume of the *THT Journal: The Journal of Teachers Helping Teachers*

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Preface

The Second Volume of the *THT Journal: The Journal of Teachers Helping Teachers*

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Welcome to the second volume of the *THT Journal*. It consists of seven articles that all give homage to the underlying philosophy that directs this publication. They are dedicated to exploring and promoting best practices in language education.

Nguyen Ngoc Bao Chau explores the use of drama and role play in motivating students in their language studies. Though a case study from Vietnam, her examples and supporting research could inform teaching practices across the academy and pre-tertiary educational settings in any context where an educator is valiantly working to inspire and motivate students.

Joseph Wood investigates the use of five communication strategies by Japanese students during a study abroad experience in New Zealand. His research supports the need for inculcating the teaching of such strategies into foreign language curricula on an on-going basis.

Greg Rouault delves into the use of text analysis to help teachers diagnose student needs for writing instruction. He offers specific methodologies educators can use to scrutinize student writing samples, and he explains clearly how to use the data to develop pedagogical support for students in their efforts at mastery of this essential language skill.

Patrick McCoy argues for the benefits of utilizing warm up activities in the language classroom. He adumbrates five specific benefits the use of such activities provide as well as providing examples of warm up activities that he has used in his own language classrooms.

Rubina Khan and **Taslima Irine Ivy** examine a multimedia lesson developed from a traditional classroom text. They offer a nuanced argument for how multimedia lessons can be developed to challenge the traditional information acquisition singularity of the Bangladeshi classroom ethos. The goal, as they assert, is to promote a more constructivist approach to teaching and learning.

Cherie Brown describes a live radio-show project by study abroad students while studying at their host institution in New Zealand. She contends that such projects, ones that empower students and encourage collaboration and creative production of the target language, can achieve the aims of improving target language skills and increasing student confidence in language use.

Arifa Rahman eloquently highlights the significance of actively engaging the learners in the learning process via language practice. She urges teachers to accept the responsibility of developing and managing classroom tasks that will provide students with abundant instances for consequential language practice.

These articles were selected for inclusion in this volume because they offer not only evocative theoretical constructs but keep their feet clearly on the ground. They offer seasoned and sage advice to the working educator on how to improve practice and enhance student learning. Indeed, they provide an excellent example of *teachers* helping *teachers*.

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Teaching Speaking Through Plays: A Vietnamese Experience

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Teaching Speaking Through Plays: A Vietnamese Experience

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Abstract -- In speaking courses at Hue University - College of Foreign Languages (HUCFL), lessons often consist of communicative activities, short role-plays, discussions and/or presentations. Large-scale plays which include costumes, script writing, rehearsal or large groups of students are a rare phenomenon. As the drama technique has gained considerable success in EFL classes around the world, experimental lessons were carried out to investigate whether students and teachers in the Vietnamese context would be willing to incorporate it into their lessons. This paper describes the lessons that were taught using plays, the attitudes of students and teachers towards this technique, and its applicability of integration in classes at HUCFL.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years in Vietnam, a new interest has been given to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and English classrooms in Vietnam began adopting tasks and activities that promote real communication rather than focusing solely on grammar and structure. As suggested by Savignon (2002), one

component that could support the CLT approach in both theory and practice is “theatre arts”. Theatre arts involve elements of pretending and imagination. In other words, theatre arts can be understood as drama, for according to Holden (1981:131), “drama” can be a “convenient umbrella term for activities which involve an element of ‘let’s pretend.’”. Using drama in a language classroom can provide learners with the tools they need to act, that is, to interpret, express, and negotiate meaning in a new language (Savignon, 2002). For that reason, drama can be used as a method of language teaching that allows the language classroom to enhance its students’ communicative proficiency.

However, the implementation of drama in English teaching is still overlooked in Vietnamese universities. For English majors studying at HUCFL, the implementation of drama in English classes is mainly limited to to small role-plays or dialogue activities which are embedded within the language lessons. Thus, in a hope to contribute to the diversification and effectiveness of teaching/learning English at HUCFL, experimental lessons using full-length plays were carried out.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the language classroom, play-acting or drama is known as “a mode of learning” (O’Neill & Lambert, 1994: 11). Holden (1981) sees it as any kind of activity where learners draw on their knowledge and experience of the real world in order to create a make-believe world. Drama is recognized as a powerful and effective teaching tool because it has been known to bring many benefits that the conventional classroom often lacks. According to Wessels (1978: 10), the benefits of drama can be summed up as follows:

(1) The acquisition of meaningful, fluent interaction in the target language, (2) the assimilation of a whole range of pronunciation and prosodic features in a fully contextualized and interactional

manner, (3) the fully contextualized acquisition of new vocabulary and structure, and (4) an improved sense of confidence by the student in his or her ability to learn the target language.

Apart from allowing students to develop their communicative competence, drama teaches cooperation and decision making skills as well as encourages leadership, teamwork, compromise, authentic listening skills and practice with behaviors that are appropriate in social situations (Boudreault, 2010).

Nonetheless, teaching and learning with drama entail various difficulties for teachers and students. At times, teachers are hesitant to use drama activities in their classrooms for various reasons, as Royka (2002: 1) listed: "They don't know how to use the activities, limited resources, time constraints, a fear of looking and feeling foolish." Some teachers do not feel comfortable going away from their normal routines in class and might flinch at the thought of a chaotic, loud and unstructured pandemonium (Lucas and Hiltunen, 2002).

Time constraint is also one of the main concerns teachers have when thinking about using drama in the language classroom (Senf, 1996). In many Eastern countries, such as China, Taiwan, and Japan, where a centralized educational system and textbook-oriented teaching prevail, the use of creative methods and innovative techniques such as drama have to take into consideration time effectiveness (Liu, 2002).

The second source of difficulties is from the students who are unwilling to participate in anything that is not obviously important to their own learning and might be hostile to methods that conflict with the ones that they are used to (Wessels, 1978). In addition, with older learners there might be problems of inhibition and embarrassment (Zafeiriadou, 2009). Regardless of

the realistic challenges of drama teaching, it is also apparent that there are considerable advantages of using drama.

EXPERIMENTAL LESSON DEVELOPMENT

The subjects of this research are five teachers of the Speaking II course and 95 students of three Speaking II classes at HUCFL. The teachers have had from two to ten years of experience of teaching English at HUCFL. The students are first year students who are studying in their second semester.

Two model lesson plans were developed for experimental teaching. The lesson plans were built incorporating different features and aspects of drama. The lesson plans' structure was based on the components of a drama lesson plan suggested by Wessels (1978). The content of the two lessons covered two topics “Traditional and Modern” and “Good luck and Bad luck”. These topics are in the required textbook used for the Speaking II course at HUCFL. Experimental teaching was carried out in three Speaking II classes at HUCFL. Each lesson was two periods long (100 minutes). The two lessons were carried out in two consecutive weeks. The teachers and students of these classes were informed of the research prior to the experimental lessons. In-progress activities were video recorded for post-lesson analysis.

One structured questionnaire was given to students after the second experimental lesson. To contribute to the validity of the data, the questions in the questionnaire were translated into Vietnamese to eliminate the possibility of misunderstanding due to insufficient language ability. The teachers were interviewed in a semi-structured interview with a framework of questions after they had either observed the lessons in person or read the lesson plans and watched the videos of the lessons. The collected information was numerically quantified and the data were statistically analyzed.

FEEDBACK

Attitudes towards the lessons

The result from the questionnaire demonstrated that the majority of students had a positive perception towards the lessons that they participated in (Table 1).

Table 1: Students' reactions (N=95)

Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1. I enjoyed studying these lessons.	9.5%	6.4%	84.0%
2. I was interested in the content.	2.2%	4.2%	93.7%
3. I was enthusiastic in participating.	8.5%	21.3%	70.2%
4. I liked watching my classmates act.	3.2%	4.2%	92.7%
5. The lessons were not stressful.	1.1%	7.4%	91.6%
6. The plays were interesting.	2.1%	12.8%	85.2%

Although the six statements from students did not fully demonstrate the advantage of the drama method, they do encourage its application in teaching English at HUCFL.

The interviewed teachers reported of having used drama in their teaching but the implementation had been scarce. The overall attitudes towards drama of the interviewed teachers were very positive. They mentioned that drama "*is a great way to teach English*". Even though these five teachers have not had frequent use of drama in their teaching, they all felt confident in its effectiveness in the classroom.

Benefits of learning/teaching English with drama

Results from the data analysis showed that the majority of students believed in the benefits that the drama lessons can bring. The students felt that their confidence had been boosted

from the first lesson to the second lesson and close to half believed that their acting improved in the second lesson. However, there was no distinguishing improvement in language use. This can be due to the fact that one lesson is not yet enough to clearly observe student's maturity in language use.

The main advantages for students that the teachers mentioned are related to their language skill development. The teachers mentioned that with the drama method, students can practice speaking more meaningfully and more naturally. The teachers also said that drama stimulates students' creativity, imagination and motivation to learn. In addition, some teachers pointed out that drama increases students' confidence and benefits towards the students' work ethic and personal development. All of the interviewed teachers believed that drama helps students work together better and take the initiative in their learning.

Benefits for teachers were also mentioned. When observing students working in a smaller group, the teacher can see which students are weak, which have a better command of English, and which have natural leadership ability in them. One teacher expressed that because drama offers such a creative environment, it can be very inspiring and motivating for teachers. From what the students bring into their plays, teachers can gain an insight into students' thoughts, personality, and feelings.

Difficulties in learning/teaching English with drama
The difficulties students encountered are summarized below.

Table 2: Difficulties students encountered (N=95)

Acting ability	72%
Embarrassment	38%

Trouble in group work	8%
Insufficient language ability	48%
Difficulty with plays' topics	5%
Other difficulties	9%

The hardship most mentioned by teachers was trouble with controlling students' language use and practice. According to the teachers, many students would try to use Vietnamese whenever the teacher was not around to monitor. Another difficulty teachers often encounter was related to students' cooperation. There is the problem of students who are unwilling to participate because they "*want to study in an exam-oriented way*". Some other students are shy and often find it hard to do the kinds of activities that require speaking in front of others. Material preparation is the next aspect that teachers have difficulty with. Most teachers pointed out that in order to incorporate drama into the lessons while still following the syllabus can be difficult.

CONCLUSION

After the total of 12 periods (10 hours) of experimental teaching, it could be seen that though the majority of students have not had much experience with drama and the teachers have not used it often in their teaching, the attitudes towards drama of both teachers and students were very positive and encouraging. The majority of students and all of the teachers believed in its applicability in speaking courses at HUCFL. Many students agreed that they would like to study using drama more in the future and all of the teachers said they are willing to teach it.

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Communication Strategy Awareness During a Short-Term Study Abroad

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He would like to thank Dr. Kazuyoshi Sato of Nagoya University of Foreign Studies for his valuable notes, insights, and overall support in regards to this paper and his research.

Communication Strategy Awareness During a Short-Term Study Abroad

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Abstract - Communication strategies (CSs) are essentially verbal tools to help speakers overcome communicative problems they may face. Are speakers aware of it though when using a CS? Although previous studies have shown the benefits of teaching language learners to use CSs (Dörnyei, 1995; Nakatani, 2005, 2006, 2010; Wood, 2010), many of the studies have taken place in a classroom context where students' interlocutors have shared the same L1. This study will report on 25 Japanese university students' awareness and use of five specific CSs during a five-week study abroad trip to New Zealand. Students were provided with a list of the strategies and taught how to use them in hopes of raising their strategic awareness while abroad, but received no specific in-class strategy training. Survey results and interviews concluded that students were not always aware of their CS use and that in-class strategy training over time could potentially better raise students' CS awareness.

INTRODUCTION

CSs gained interest among language researchers and educators in the early 1970s and that interest continued into the 1980s as definitions and taxonomies were continually redeveloped or reworked. They were viewed as a key component to a learner's

overall communicative competence (Savignon, 1972, 1983; Canale and Swain, 1980) and were seen as tools to compensate for language deficiencies a language learner may have. By developing a learner's strategic competence it could in turn possibly strengthen their overall communicative competence (Chen, 1990). While much of the focus and the definitions surrounding CSs tend to emphasize the role they potentially play in preventing communicative breakdowns with interlocutors, they can also be used simply as message enhancers at times when no such problems exist (i.e. fillers or simply expressing interest in order to encourage interlocutors to continue talking).

Tarone (1977) defined the phenomenon by writing that "Conscious communication strategies are used by an individual to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual's thought" (p. 195). In Tarone (1981) though, her view changes with her stating that she would "prefer to avoid specifying degree of consciousness in any definition of communication strategies" (p. 287).

Faerch and Kasper (1983) gave a similar definition to CSs as Tarone (1977), but like Tarone (1981), felt the need to reconsider the issue of consciousness. Instead of avoiding the issue of consciousness though, they decided to add the word "potentially" in front of "conscious", thus further contributing to the debate of whether CSs are used consciously or not by learners. They write that CSs are "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" (p.36). According to Ellis (1985) there are "two key concepts" within discussions concerning CS, that they are conscious as well as problem-oriented (p. 180).

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been two sides to the awareness and teachability

argument with some researchers (Tarone, 1984; Willems, 1987; Dörnyei, 1995) promoting the explicit teaching of CSs in class to help raise awareness and others (Bialystok, 1990; Poulisse, 1990; Kellerman, 1991) who argue against the need for strategy training. The pro-strategy training group believe that learners can be taught to consciously and actively use CSs in an L2 while those against explicit strategy training do not see the evidence needed to merit spending valuable class time teaching learners to use such strategies. One of the strongest arguments against strategy training is that language learners use CSs in their L1, so in theory they should be able to potentially transfer those strategies consciously over to an L2 when needed. Faucette (2001) writes that because of the "focus on cognitive processes and findings that indicate similarities between L1 and L2 CS use, as a rule, the Cons do not advocate teaching CS (e.g., Kellerman, 1991)" (p.2). Bialystok (1990) believes that "What one must teach students of a language is not strategy, but language" (p. 147) while Kellerman (1991) in agreeing with this sentiment adds that we should "Teach the learners more language and let the strategies look after themselves" (p. 91).

From a pro-strategy perspective (e.g., Tarone, 1984; Willems, 1987; Dörnyei, 1995; Nakatani, 2005, 2006, 2010) it can be argued that by either making learners aware of the verbal tools they already posses in their L1 and teaching them to take advantage of those tools, or by potentially giving them new tools to work with, learners may possibly learn to communicate more effectively and longer thus increasing their skills in the L2. Consciously and actively using CSs can help students become aware of how and when to use them to keep their communication from breaking down. By using CSs, it will not only give students more time to speak, but will also potentially give them more valuable time to listen to their interlocutors.

Dörnyei (1995) looked at the teachability issue concerning CSs as well as the effects of strategy training among 53 high school students in Hungary over six weeks. 56 students in a controlled group that received no strategy training were then compared to the experimental group. The strategy training also involved "awareness-raising discussions and feedback" (p. 68). Dörnyei found that the strategy-training group increased their use of circumlocutions and fillers and that their improvement of speech rate was highly significant compared to the controlled group. In short, students appeared to benefit from learning to use CSs.

Nakatani (2005) researched the effects of raising students' awareness of CSs during a 12-week study among university students in Japan. Nakatani's study also used a strategy training group (28 students) and a controlled group (34 students) that received no such training. The study concluded that by increasing students' general awareness of CSs and training them to use CSs, the students in the strategy training group were able to raise their oral proficiency test scores significantly while the test scores of the controlled group did not show significant improvements.

Wood (2010) also examined the effect of CSs and the role they play in the language classroom. His study though differs in that it was a longitudinal study lasting a full school year and that there was no controlled group to use as a comparison. Four small classes at a Japanese university with an all-together total of 44 students took part in the study. The results of the study showed that students' use of the CSs explicitly taught in class gradually increased over the year following a developmental sequence (Willems, 1987; Sato, 2005), appearing to strengthen their strategic competence over time. Like Dörnyei (1995) and Nakatani (2005), Wood's study also concluded that students appeared to benefit from in-class strategy training.

Hatch (1978) writes that “language learning evolves out of learning to carry on a conversation” (p. 405) and that “the learner should be taught not to give up” (p. 434). CSs, when used effectively, have the potential to help learners do exactly that, to keep their conversations going and to not give up. Using CSs can aid communication and prevent communicative breakdowns, but it helps if learners are aware of how they are using them. According to Kasper and Kellerman (1997) though, there is “the possibility a speaker or hearer may not always be aware of using a CS but can become conscious of it after the fact, or that repeatedly used CS may become routinized” (p. 7). With this study, it was hopeful that even if students were not aware of how or when they had used CSs during their study abroad, they could potentially become aware of it after returning to Japan. Hopefully the study would have helped students to at least begin to think about CSs.

RESEARCH ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Within the framework and study of CSs a key question remains unanswered, do students attempt to use CSs on purpose or are they at least aware of having done so after the fact? Schmidt (1990) writes that “One of the more controversial issues in applied linguistics concerns the role of conscious and unconscious processes in second language learning” (p. 129). In essence, this study looks to shed light on whether students use CSs consciously or not or would in-class strategy training be necessary to raise consciousness? How aware are English language learners of their actions in English? To help examine students’ awareness of CSs and their effect while abroad, two research questions were formulated for the study:

1. Would students be able to consciously use the five communication strategies they were taught before leaving and be aware of their successes or shortcomings?

2. Is simply encouraging students to use certain communication strategies enough to make them aware of how and when they use them or would students benefit more from in-class strategy training?

METHODOLOGY

This study examines how 25 students' (19 females and 6 males) awareness of CSs was affected after introducing five specific strategies to them before they left for a five-week study abroad trip to New Zealand. Students spent four weeks studying English at a university in Palmerston North with the fifth week being used to travel up the North Island, ending with a three day stay in Auckland. The students were made up of first and second year students majoring in English at a private university in Japan. Because the students came from different classes, there was no specific in-class strategy training involved.

Before leaving for New Zealand students were given a handout entitled *Useful communication strategies to improve your homestay experience* as well as an explanation of each CS and how to use it, including multiple examples for each (see Appendix A for handout). The researcher spent about 30 minutes explaining the handout and going through the examples of each strategy, teaching students how to use each one. The five CSs on the handout were selected due to their potential usefulness during the students' study abroad and homestay. The CSs taught to students were: *Asking for clarification, Asking follow-up questions, Interjecting, Making polite requests, and Finding the right word/Asking for help with a word.*

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection were used for the study. Survey data were anonymously collected twice from

students, once before leaving Japan and just before returning from New Zealand. Surveys asked students about their knowledge of CSs before the trip and which ones they had used (if any) while they were in New Zealand. The survey also asked students if they thought the CSs had been useful during their time abroad. All reported information from students in this study is presented exactly how students wrote or said it with no grammar corrections having been made. This includes all student comments from the surveys as well as what was said by students in the interviews.

Survey 1

The goal of the first survey (table 1) was to raise students' awareness of CSs as well as to obtain information concerning what they already knew about CSs. The survey also asked students whether or not they learned CSs in their other classes and asked for examples of what students thought CSs were.

Survey 2

The goal of the second survey (table 2) was to see if students had actually raised their awareness of CSs while abroad. The second survey also asked for specific examples of communicative problems students may have faced while abroad and whether or not they had used the CSs from the list provided to them before leaving for New Zealand.

Interviews

The researcher selected five students in New Zealand and each agreed to be interviewed in English after returning to Japan about their study abroad experience and how they had used CSs. The interviews were recorded and afterwards transcribed by the researcher. Each interview lasted around 30 minutes with students being asked questions concerning their homestay families, how they had communicated with them, and about their use of CSs. The researcher also asked students if they had

any problems using English with their homestay families or others in New Zealand, and if so, asked students to provide examples of how they had handled or overcome those problems. The hope of asking these types of questions was to elicit specific examples of how (or if) students had successfully used CSs.

SURVEY RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of the first survey students took before leaving to New Zealand. It was used to collect general information about students' knowledge of CSs before going abroad.

Table 1: First survey results before leaving

1. Do you learn communication strategies in any of your classes now?
Yes- 19/ No- 6

2. Would you like to learn how to use more communication strategies?
Yes- 25/ No- 0

3. Are you nervous about speaking English with your homestay family?
Yes- 22/ No- 3

4. Do you think communication strategies can help you talk with your homestay family?
Yes- 25/ No- 0

An open-ended question was also included in the first survey asking students 'What do you think a communication strategy is?' Below are a few example answers:

“Eye contact and gesture."

“We could communicate more easily.”

“Help us to communicate with someone. Gesture.”

“There are many vocabulary and example of follow-up questions, so it is good for improve my communication skill.”

“It is important. When someone says a vocabulary that I don’t know, I want to know how to ask.”

“Confidence. Gesture.”

From the results of the first survey, it appears that although the majority of students reported learning CSs in their other classes at the university, they were still unsure of what exactly a CS was, giving quite varied examples of what they thought CSs were. In short, the concept of using gestures to communicate seemed to be a general theme among students’ answers along with the importance of making eye contact. Some students reported that CSs help with communication, but did not provide any concrete examples of oral CSs. The second survey was given just before returning to Japan and asked students if they had had any communicative problems with their homestay families, and if so, asked students to provide specific examples. The second survey also asked students if they had used any of the CSs from the list to help them (see Table 3 for details of CSs reportedly used).

Table 2: Second survey results before returning

1. Did you have any trouble communicating with your homestay family? If yes, can you give an example? (See below this chart

for example student answers)
Yes- 11/ No- 14

2. If you used any of the communication strategies, were they useful?
Yes- 20/ No- 3

3. Do you think it is important to learn communication strategies in class?
Yes- 25/ No- 0

Student example answers for question #1:

"My father's English was fast, so I couldn't understand sometimes. Brothers are shy, so I couldn't communicate much."

"At first, I couldn't catch and understand because kiwi accent. However, I can do now. My host family spoke more and more until I could understand."

"Kiwi accent is difficult for me."

"Sometimes very fast, different pronunciation between I learned."

"Sometimes I couldn't understand their words."

Table 3: CSs students reported using in New Zealand

Asking for clarification	5
Follow-up questions	7
Interjecting	7
Making polite requests	7

Finding the right word/Asking for help	12
Total CSs used:	36

After observing the CSs that students reported using (see Appendix B for a more detailed chart showing which students used which specific strategies) it can be concluded that the majority of students were only aware of using one or two strategies during their five weeks abroad. The survey data show that only four students were aware of using all five of the CSs during their trip while eight students either did not use any CSs at all or were simply not aware of having done so. To supplement the survey data as well as to get more detailed and specific examples of how students had used the CSs in New Zealand, interviews were conducted and incorporated into the study.

INTERVIEW RESULTS

From the interview data, five themes or issues began to appear. They involved three students being aware of when and how they had used CSs, two students wanting to use more CSs, four students feeling that their homestay families helped them or that they were easier to understand than other people they talked to in New Zealand, three students finding alternative ways to fix communicative problems, and three students admitting to simply giving up or abandoning their communicative goals without trying to use any CSs. Students' names have been changed for privacy reasons in the interview data. Students chose their own pseudonyms for the study.

Three students were aware of when and how they used CSs:

Kenji: In Auckland, me and the other boys went to Auckland Zoo and then on the way to Skytower we tried to take a bus and

then I asked the driver, ‘this bus will go to the Skytower?’ But the driver speaked fast, so I couldn’t hear what she said. I said ‘What did you say? Could you tell me what you said again please?’ Then maybe she realized we are travellers, so her face was not angry (laughs).

Rina: I used Asking for clarification or Interjecting, she (student's host-mother) asked Follow-up questions, ‘So what do you think this movie?’ or ‘How about you?’ ‘What else did you buy everyday?’

Taro: When I was shopping and we have to talk to shopper…yeah, so…sometimes I couldn’t hear the price, so I say ‘Sorry, what did you say?’ But…it is not difficult…it was not difficult.

Two students felt they wanted to use more CSs or learn new ones to help their communication:

Risa: That was my first study abroad, so I couldn’t understand many things and they…my mother speaks very fast so I often couldn’t understand, so I used these things (points to list of CSs). But I want to ….I used only same strategies, so I want to use more other strategies.

Kana: When I go to New Zealand, I always talk with native speaker, so I used naturally (CSs)…so I think we should study about communication strategies more and more….

Four students felt that their homestay families helped them or were easier to understand than other people they talked to in New Zealand:

Rina: Her (student’s host-mother) English was very clearly.. yeah…clearly than other students’ host-families. She talked for me slowly and clearly.

Kenji: He (student's host-brother) used strange English so I couldn't understand and then my mother gave me help. One day when we went to…before going to the beach, he said to me…um..could you find my jandal?..so I couldn't understand what his mean. So I asked my mother.

Taro: My host-family was very kind, they could understand my gestures. …..when I communicated with other people, so not host-family, so New Zealanders didn't know me…about me…so…um.. I couldn't often use gesture, so yeah, I often use these sentences (points to list of CSs).

Kana: No problem. Always she (student's host-mother), always kind to me. So, I can communicate with her very easily and smoothly.

Three students found alternative ways to fix communicative problems (i.e., gestures, dictionaries, etc).

Taro: I often used gestures. When I go to cut my hair, gesture looks like cutting. So, my host-family was very kind, so they can, they could understand my gestures.

Kana: I say more easy vocabulary and um, very slowly and I tried something.

Risa: I didn't use Asking for help with a word. I used the dictionary (laughs).
Three students gave up or abandoned communicative goals:

Kana: First, I tried to understand what they said, but I couldn't ask again many times because I feel sorry for them. So, sometimes I gave up.

Kenji: Sometimes it's hard to reply and then I gave up.

Taro: I wanted to cut my hair…so, maybe I got home late a little bit. So, I have to um…say that I'm sorry that I'm late today, but I couldn't explain why I was late.

From the interview data it can be concluded that some students, but not all were aware of when and how they had used CSs during their trip. Students who were aware of it were able to provide specific examples of how they had used CSs in New Zealand. Students relied not only on oral CSs, but also on gesturing, electronic dictionaries, or help from their homestay families. Students who reported successfully using CSs in one situation also admitted giving up or abandoning communicative goals in other situations. The interview data suggest that not all students were actively trying to use CSs.

CONCLUSION

In answering the first research question, based on the survey data as well as the interviews, it appears that some students were aware of when and how they had used CSs, but many of the students seemed to be unaware or unable to remember. The survey data showed a very low number overall of CSs that students had reported using, including eight students who reported not using a single CS during the entire five-week trip. This perhaps is the biggest indicator of students not being aware of when or how they had used the strategies. It is suspected by the researcher that students used some of the CSs that were on the initial handout, but were not aware of having done so for various reasons. Students who were interviewed were able to give more examples of how they had used CSs, but only after being elicited to do so by the interviewer. The interviewed students also knew while they were in New Zealand that they would be interviewed about CSs after returning, this may have

helped raise their consciousness of the strategies and awareness of how they were using them. The 20 non-interviewed students may have used some of the CSs unconsciously or reflexively thus leaving them unaware and unable to assess their impact or success/failure. Awareness is a key component to improving language skills in general and students should be taught to be aware of how they use language. In contrast to being unaware, some students may have been aware of CSs, but did not actively or consciously try to use them. As Brown (2007) writes, "Awareness without action will be relatively useless" (p. 131). From the interview data it appears that some students did not always try to solve their communicative problems with CSs, but instead at times relied on gestures or even electronic dictionaries. It is interesting that some students admitted to simply giving up or abandoning communicative goals even though those same students reported using CSs in other situations. This could possibly be attributed to the fact that the majority of students interviewed (including specifically the students who admitted giving up when they had problems) reported that they basically felt more comfortable talking with their homestay families and that their families either helped them or seemed to understand their English better. It is important to include here that all of the students' homestay families were quite experienced with having international students live with them and therefore may have been able to understand students' English better, even if it was not correct or was spoken with a non-native accent. A working theory by the researcher is that because the homestay families were so used to interacting with L2 English users, this may have impacted students in an unforeseen slightly negative way. Other native speakers that students interacted with outside the home may not have been as patient or understanding towards them or their non-native pronunciation of English as their homestay families were. Some students reported that their homestay families spoke slower to them and better understood them and their gestures than others they interacted with in New Zealand.

In regards to the second research question, the study provides further support that students could benefit from explicit CS training in the classroom. The second survey reported that 100% of the students thought that learning CSs in class was important. In the interviews some students reported that they used the same CSs repeatedly and that they wanted to learn how to use more of them. Simply encouraging students to use CSs, even though they use them in their L1 does not appear to be enough. From the survey and interview data, it appears that students could not easily transfer the CSs they use in their native Japanese over to English when needed. Students need to be trained to communicate with a world outside of the classroom, a world where they cannot just fall back or rely on their L1 when they have communicative trouble. Many students spend time in class learning "Textbook English", but that is not enough to prepare them for potential language problems that they may face in an English speaking country. Outside of the classroom it is harder for students to anticipate the various ways a native speaker will reply to their memorized or planned questions, so students can benefit from learning how to keep a conversation going when they suddenly no longer have control of it. With these things in mind, it appears that if we truly want our students to be aware of CSs and how they use them while communicating with others, strategy training would be a logical first step.

Dörnyei (1995) gives a 6 part criteria for training students to use CSs. Most importantly, in relation to this study, is what he lists as his first criteria, that teachers should be "raising learner awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs by making learners conscious of strategies already in their repertoire, sensitizing them to appropriate situations where these could be useful, and making them realize that these strategies could actually work" (p. 63). So, in essence, raising students'

awareness of CSs is key to strategy training and a great place to start.

One obvious limitation of this study is the fact that no conversational data were recorded, collected, or analyzed from the students' interactions in New Zealand. It was not possible to record how students actually interacted with native speakers on their study trip. According to Ellis (1985) "the identification of the use of communication strategies needs to make use of introspective research techniques as well as the analysis of speech data" (p. 183). Another limitation of the study was that the trip was too short, not giving students enough time to really practice using the CSs and to learn how they work. Learning to use CSs involves a developmental sequence (Willems, 1987; Sato, 2005; Wood, 2010) in which learners begin using easier CSs at first and gradually learn to use more difficult L2 based CSs as time goes on and their strategic competence becomes stronger. The study also would have been stronger had the researcher been able to identify exactly which students had used which CSs abroad, especially the students who were interviewed after returning. Because the survey data were collected anonymously, this was not possible. While this study sheds light on the issue of awareness and CS use while abroad, without actual speech data and analysis, this study remains speculative. Not many studies look at how students use CSs while abroad, so it remains a fruitful area for further research.

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Appendix A

<u>CSs handout given to students before leaving to New Zealand</u>

Useful communication strategies to improve your homestay experience

<u>Asking for clarification:</u>
When you don't understand something that was said, ask for clarification.

How much did you say?
What time does it start?
Excuse me. Where is the bus stop?
Sorry. What room is the class in?
Pardon me? How do I get there?
What did you say? What time does the bus leave?
Did you say __________ ?

<u>Follow up questions:</u>
To keep your conversation going, remember to ask lots of follow up questions. Remember, good questions = good conversations!

What do you think?
How about you? What did you do after that? What else did you buy? Do you usually go there on weekends?
Why did you do that?

<u>Interjecting:</u>
When someone says something to you, it's good to respond with small words letting the speaker know you're listening. We call this "interjecting." It works even better when you add a follow

up question after interjecting.

A: I saw a great movie last night.
B: That's nice. What movie did you watch?

Some interjecting words: That's nice. That's great. That's interesting. Wow! Really?

Interjecting to sad/not good news: That's too bad. I'm sorry to hear that. Too bad.

Polite requests:
It's important to be polite when you can, especially at school or with a homestay family.

Would it be possible if I _____________ ?
Would it be okay if I watch/eat/go to/borrow your __________ ?
Do you mind if I _________ ?

Finding the right word/Asking for help with a word: When you just can't remember the word you want to use in English, don't be afraid to ask for help! Everyone needs help sometimes, don't worry about it!

What do you call ________________ ?
I can't remember the word….it means the same as ________ .
We use it for ___________ . / It's used for _______________ .
Do you know the word for ___________ ?
What do you say when ______________ ?

Appendix B

Individual breakdown of CSs* reportedly used by students on the second survey:

Students (S)	CS-1	CS-2	CS-3	CS-4	CS-5
S-1	X	O	X	X	X
S-2	X	X	X	X	O
S-3	X	X	X	O	O
S-4	X	X	X	O	X
S-5	X	O	X	X	X
S-6	O	O	O	O	O
S-7	O	O	O	O	O
S-8	O	O	O	O	O
S-9	O	O	O	O	O
S-10	X	O	X	X	X
S-11	X	X	X	X	O
S-12	X	X	X	X	O
S-13	O	X	X	X	O
S-14	X	X	X	O	X
S-15	X	X	X	X	O
S-16	X	X	X	X	X
S-17	X	X	X	X	X
S-18	X	X	X	X	X
S-19	X	X	X	X	X
S-20	X	X	X	X	X
S-21	X	O	X	X	O
S-22	X	X	X	X	X
S-23	X	X	X	X	O
S-24	X	X	X	X	X
S-25	X	X	X	X	X

*Notes
0 = CSs used
X= CSs not used

CS-1: Asking for clarification
CS-2: Follow-up questions
CS-3: Interjecting
CS-4: Polite request
CS-5: Finding the right word/Asking for help with a word

Text Analysis: A Tool for Teaching and Learning L2 Writing

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Text Analysis: A Tool for Teaching and Learning L2 Writing

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Abstract -- This paper presents guidelines for how teachers can use analysis of a written text to assess and develop the writing output of foreign language students. A given sample of learner writing is used to introduce various elements of text analysis and evaluation according to genre, discourse cohesion, lexical form and meaning, syntax, and overall written structure. General guidelines for the improvement of generic competence are provided and summarized under the principles of systemic functional grammar. Teachers are also provided some hints and reminded of some caveats to reflect on in their L2 writing instruction.

INTRODUCTION

One of the critical roles for educators in post-structuralist times is to set up, facilitate, and support activities and classroom conditions for learning to occur. In teaching writing to foreign language students, the teacher is at the interface between the learner and the linguistic theories and language tools needed to

execute purposeful written communications. Systemic functional grammar offers a model to understand the relationship between functions and grammar through the ideational, interpersonal, and textual "metafunctions" (Halliday, 1976). Approaching the instruction of writing as a social activity brings together language, content, and context. As principles for a writing course, the focus should be on learning to use language to meet specific communicative needs and expectations with explicit outcomes (Hyland, 2004).

GENRE

In an interview in 2013, Ken Hyland defined genre as "something we recognize in texts because we see texts as being similar, we can group them together on the basis of certain characteristics… [genre] is essentially the repeated use of language to accomplish particular purposes in routine situations" (Rouault, 2014, p. 14). Hyland (2004) explicates further that genre is made up of the conventions used in society to organize and convey messages. As such, in instruction it is critical to be aware of what students do when they write, the types of texts they need to be able to write, and the writing curriculum that would best meet these needs. Mickan (2013) argues that a text-based approach to foreign language curricula constructed around writing as social practice works well with present-day pedagogical directions toward task-based teaching and project- or problem-based learning for 21st century skills. The schematic structure for the recount genre includes an orientation which provides the setting and an introduction to the characters, representation of events often with a complication, and reorientation or resolution (Gerot, 1995). Appendix 1 is an example of a narrative text or recount genre where the purpose is to relate past events in a temporal sequence. In this sample of student writing, clauses 1-13 show an orientation, clauses 14-62 offer a representation of events, and clauses 63-76 close with a suitable reorientation. Different than in more highly

contextualized oral communication, in written discourse, the writer must recreate the context (Burns & Joyce, 1997) and introduce new participants and actions in doing so. This sample of learner writing does not, however, follow the pure chronological order of events typical of a recount. Clauses 28 and 79 are personalized comments from the author working as an aside which lack coherence with the other themes developed and also fall outside of the guidelines for this written genre.

The sample text focuses on three dominant participants: (a) life, (b) family, and (c) school. An analysis breaking down the lexical strings (Appendix 1) allows the choppy sentence structure and lack of punctuation to be overlooked to reveal the "thematic progression" (Er, 1993) used by the author. In clauses 1, 2, 3, 5 and 16-22, the foreign language student writes using theme to theme progression typical of recounted narratives. This is achieved by using given information as the content which is presented first. A second form of progression in clauses 30-31, 38-40, 46-53, and 54-62, shows new information being introduced in the end position, *rheme*, which is then taken up in the opening theme of the following clause. Both cases successfully use sentence position prominence to introduce and contextualize the content in the written mode. The ability to understand and construct theme-theme and theme-rheme development suggests an important area for teachers and students to work on for improved topic focus and textual meaning in writing tasks.

The combination of field, tenor, and mode applied in a particular situation or context for a specific communication purpose allows authors and writing instructors to predict the grammatical resources required in the text. The "field" (Derewianka, 2001) relates to the *what* or the subject matter of the text. In the lexical strings making up the sample text (Appendix 1), noun groups figure prominently as the grammatical function used to describe

the participants in school and family. Looking at the whole text, the writing rather successfully represents the ideational meaning or the processes, participants, and circumstances (Knapp & Watkins, 1994) through Halliday's concept of "lexicogrammar" (1976) which recognizes the difficulty in separating grammar from lexis/vocabulary.

In building the writer-reader relationship or "tenor" (Er, 1993), the clausal elements take on wider significance in successfully conveying attitude and interpersonal meaning. Examples of this are seen when contrasting life in Cambodia and Australia in clauses 14-27, 33-37, 38-40, 42-45, 46-56, 57-62, 63-66, and 67-76. Most of these clauses introduce an emotional affect, through the writer's identity that may nevertheless rest outside the personal schema of experience for the readers. A teacher naïve to these issues in intercultural communication may incorrectly suggest the writer soften the intensity in clauses 3, 42, 48, and 62. A more relevant problem with clarity and cohesion appears when, possibly due to such emotion, the author demonstrates weak control over writing as an act of communication for a specific reader. In such cases, experience has shown how unrelated information may often be added by students in Asia. For example, clause 6 lacks coherence with the clauses and lexical strings around it.

COHESION AND REFERENCE

Cohesion refers to "the resources within language that provide continuity in a text" (Gerot & Wignell, 1994, p. 170). Reference allows the identity of participants to be introduced and tracked through a text. Lexical cohesion is achieved through repetition and word chains and is shown by the reference chains focused on the participants (life, family, and school) in Appendix 2. In this sample of student writing, pronoun reference, particularly personal pronouns in the subject position and possessive pronouns are widely used as a cohesive resource (see Thornbury,

1997, p. 229).This sample of L2 writing shows mixed success in the area of grammatical cohesion. The author has effectively applied some past tense, typical in recount genre. Common irregular simple past *was*, *had*, and *were* are used frequently together with less frequent irregular forms *felt* (48) and *began* (52). Occasionally, other tenses and forms are also used correctly such as clause 8 (*should have spent*) and clause 14 (*was living*). Seemingly simpler errors in past construction, even with the regular '*ed*' form, occur in clauses 20 (*support*), 22 (*manage, barter*), 27 (*work*) and 43 (*arrive*). These errors could indicate some differences in usage when contrasted with the author's L1. However, since the structure is used correctly in clauses 30 (*wanted*), 32 (*refused*) and 42 (*decided*) it may simply be a slip in performance, and not an issue of overall "linguistic competence" (Derewianka, 2001). Article reference and other determiners present an area of strength for the author of this sample, even rather oddly applying the correct pronoun in clause 60 while not correctly using the plural form of *civilian*. The writing sample effectively uses relative clauses, marked as (*rel*) in Appendix 1, to clarify and expand on details. Writing resources such as "grammatical substitution" and "ellipsis" (see Thornbury, 1997) may be assumed to be beyond the proficiency level of the author.

In addition to reference, systems of retrieval allow who is who and what is what to be tracked in a text. The types of *phora* for reference and retrieval are coded in Column 2 of Appendix 2. The dominant use of *homophora*, suggested by Gerot and Wignell (1994, p. 172) to refer to retrieval through the "context of culture or situation," is routinely followed by *anaphora* which asks readers to link back in the text for the referent. In clauses 67-71, the writing deftly employs *cataphora* by engaging the reader in a forward reference which only later clarifies for readers who is actually being represented. A couple reference errors are marked with * in Appendix 2. Clause 46 introduces the

concept of the brother and sister having to attend the School. *Here* in clause 47 and *we* in clauses 48-50 would suggest that the author is also involved in the action. The use of *they* in clause 55 is unclear whether it is in reference to the school or some other agency. In clause 66 *they* lacks an appropriate, clear referent, Australian = people versus Australia = country. These errors may be useful for the sake of analysis, but their limited frequency would suggest that teachers would be better to offer hints for individual attention and self-correction or review exercises for the whole class rather than exploring this grammar usage in depth through direct teaching.

Text analysis can therefore provide teachers with a tool to prioritize areas for development in writing and isolate features for subsequent study after resolving more important problems such as coherence through conjunction use. The mix of accurate and mistaken use of conjunctive functions positions the text as having come from an L2 user. Clauses 4, 26, 32, 35, 37, 49, 50, 58, 59, 61, and 64 begin with effective conjunction use. *Because* is used comfortably in complex sentences to add cause and effect logic and depth to the writing. The student is also comfortable with the "paratactic" use of *and* to coordinate ideas (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). This student writer should however be made conscious that overuse actually reduces cohesion and thus be prompted to explore other options for what Er (1993) refers to as "additive relationships." For example, clause 41 is not used by L1 English speakers. A distinct problem area for this student is the use of connectives for the temporal sequencing across sentences as required in the recount genre. Clauses 29, 42, and 46 show such errors in use with *a couple of years later*, *thus*, and *subsequently*. The author is however conscious of the need to make links through the use of such transitional markers. The student is just not yet proficient or consistent with correct applications of terms such as *When* (35) and *But now* (37) and these present priorities that all learners can be reoriented to in

self-corrections, peer editing and pair work, and review or new instruction as needed.

LEXICAL FORM AND MEANING

Although not parsing the sentences following a strict, traditional view of grammar, text analysis at the level of lexis and vocabulary used to express meaning can be instructive. The student has done an excellent job of mobilizing some descriptive vocabulary with appropriate connotations for the context (e.g., *admire* (25), *adore* (26), *smack* (34), *threaten* (62) and *blackmail* (62)). The student also shows an interest in idiomatic expressions. Hot and cold L2 user performance can be seen in terms of appropriate nuance. This is evident in examples such as clause 76 *be true to yourself* and then clause 3 metaphor *life is as simple as sheep* and clause 21 *when good and bad times occur*. Translation from L1 or a creative interpretation through circumlocution to represent unfamiliar vocabulary can be seen in *dad side grandma* (29).

Similar to Japanese students (see Thompson, 2001 for details of usage in the Japanese context), problems with word ending '*s*' usage, in both plural nouns and 3rd-person singular verbs, indicate errors of "omission" and "overgeneralization" (Ellis, 1997). Examples include *live* (5), *other* (22), *teacher* (34), *stays* (39), *childrens* (40), *truck* (45), *civilian* (60), *enjoys* (71) and *experiences* (78). Since both correct and mistaken forms appear, the challenge in EFL learning and teaching may be to overcome an error that has become somewhat "fossilized" (Ellis, 1997). On the other hand, they may simply have been mistakes that were overlooked or poorly proofread. Further error analysis uncovers the following:

Clause 6 – *having any kind of disease* - vocabulary
Clause 8 –*spent time with them* - collocation overgeneralize

Clause 16 present participle *pleasing* for qualitative adjective participle
Clause 37 – possible cultural application of capital M to *Money*
Clause 62 – *to threaten or [to] blackmail or even [to] death to you* - death as infinitive verb

These rather minor issues at the level of lexis do not affect the general comprehensibility of the text. Nevertheless, they are areas that can be improved on for the long term. The language level shown clearly belongs to an L2 user but demonstrates a far greater proficiency than encountered in personal experience with freshmen university students in Japan who frequently have rather limited experience with written work. More specific aspects of proficiency measurement and standards are beyond the scope of this paper and will not be covered here. The next section examines the building of lexical units into syntax.

SYNTAX

In terms of syntax (i.e., the way in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses, or sentences), the student has shown some abilities with relative clauses and also with complex sentences to recount cause and effect relationships. As can be common with L2 students, basic sentence development in the simple recall of events has been done rather well. Also common is the greater deficiency observed in constructing the introduction and the closing. These sections rely less on the direct recall of past events, but rather address the relationship with the reader in the tenor and interpersonal meaning. Consequently, foreign language students may often be instructed to complete the introduction and conclusion only after organizing the multiple paragraphs that make up the body of a short paper. These elements, contextualized in the field, tenor, and mode, are associated with the ideational, interactional, and

textual macro-functions. This relationship between the contextual parameters and the associated functions is presented in Appendix 3.

The complexity in grammar functions of tense, modality and address (Knapp & Watkins, 1994) for L2 English learners highlights and clarifies a greater prediction of error. As guidance for this writing learner, attention must be drawn initially to the structural development of one main idea at the sentence level. Improvements in grammatical execution in sentence level syntax and corresponding punctuation will lead to greater accuracy in written communication. Such improvements in syntax are believed to be attainable through direct instruction and well within the grasp of this student based on the proficiency already demonstrated. The syntax and ways that words are put together to form sentences offer an interesting issue for teaching and correction of language as social communication. Clause 13 presents a grammatically correct imperative. In clause 58, the writer correctly employs a comparative structure (*friendlier*) and superlative (*most importantly*). Clause 17 can be said to overgeneralize neither… nor into, *nor…nor*. Teaching and correction at the level of syntax alone, similar to discreet point testing in Japan and many test-oriented contexts in Asia, would prioritize clause 17. However, at the level of discourse, it is clear the "inappropriate" imperative (Arndt, Harvey, & Nuttall, 2000) and excessive punctuation are the most significant changes needed for more competent interaction or output through academic writing. Further implications for teaching are covered next.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

The approach taken here is one of experiential learning by moving from more explicit understanding or concrete knowledge to abstract knowledge for cognitive development. Two important premises from the Teaching/Learning Model from Knapp and

Watkins (1994) include that writing is learned through writing and that language can be learned through students' writing. In this writing sample, the student is generally forthcoming with volume of ideas and output, which can otherwise be a challenge with writing and writing instruction in certain Asian contexts. Once the aspect of event sequencing is sorted out, possibly by using a model text or an outline, more attention can then be paid to developing paragraphs around a single topic sentence. With paragraphs anchored around topic sentences, the student will have a better opportunity to apply and trial linguistic features for expression and expansion of ideas in writing. Further development of the written structure for the specified stages for the recount genre should incorporate the student's existing areas of strength and be the principal focus for teaching implications for improved written work. Reading samples or even other students' work and viewing models of correct visual layout with spacing and indentation are basic teaching strategies to support the development of the written structure and layout for the academic writing of students at this level.

Since the emphasis for training in productive skills is on developing effective English language use, writing teachers must be conscious of what to teach and which errors to correct. Teachers must be attuned to the complexity in grading and sequencing functions with the stages of writing development readiness of their students. As pointed out previously with this student writing sample, some grammatical and syntactical errors need not be addressed directly. Since much of the knowledge for "generic competence" (Bhatia, 2000, cited in Paltridge, 2000) to participate in new and recurring genres exists outside the text, students must be made aware of the culture, circumstances, and purposes of various genres. Just as studying clarification strategies more likely enable users to negotiate across such unpredictable settings in spoken communication, teaching the predictable patterns in writing allows students to tackle written

discourse.

As a first draft or work in progress, this L2 student has successfully addressed the assignment task that can be imagined, and in providing feedback this fact should be positively reinforced. Clearly an exploration of errors that looks into all of the issues with meaning, function, context, and grammar simultaneously will not allow students to absorb all the corrections introduced by the teacher. Halliday's (1976) "metafunctions," summarized by Knapp and Watkins (1994) in Appendix 3 offer a model of systemic functional grammar which accounts for the relationship between functions and the grammatical system. Functional grammar allows teachers to approach relevant language in use and context at the discourse or text level and below at the sentence level. With a focus on language to achieve real-life purposes and the grammatical resources to achieve them, functional grammar provides teachers an overview to identify language development in students and to target the following learner needs: (a) linguistic resources to represent the world, (b) linguistic resources to interact with social competence, and (c) linguistic resources to produce coherent, cohesive discourse (Derewianka, 2001).

Effective teaching of writing is often proposed to incorporate both product and process approaches. The former focuses on the actual outcome or type of document output in writing. Alternatively, a process approach concentrates on the pre-writing, drafting, reviewing, and rewriting stages. An ethnographic analysis of the context for writing tasks as shown in Appendix 4 (Paltridge, 2000) will allow students to understand the important considerations as they take on written work. Such resources would allow intermediate learners to initially explore some perspective on genre beyond the use of narrative storytelling or the recount of personal experience common to writing tasks for beginners. Teaching students to

preview and predict grammatical patterns and language features associated with specific genres would allow students in Asia a preferred measure of accuracy to build upon in their performance. Accuracy in lexical use and grammatical structure must however co-exist with elements of reference for cohesive text. Introducing a visual schematic structure for various genres and general writing conventions (see Palmer, 2014 for figures of how this can be presented using content adapted from a textbook) will help students overcome the problems most prominently seen in the sample reviewed here. Reading and modeling to notice particular features, sub-component development of topic sentences and paragraphs, and doing revisions and rewritings collectively provide students the necessary practice and experience with the process of writing. As Derewianka (2001) points out, "functional analysis is most revealing when used to make a comparison with other texts that construct different meanings through making different grammatical choices" (p. 259). Peer review and error correction focused on specific expectations or distinct pre-taught features can assist students in Asia to develop higher quality written products with less anxiety, confusion, and trepidation or hesitation – issues which are highly relevant for performance in time sensitive writing tasks in standardized tests such as TOEFL and IELTS and essays in exams overseas.

WRITING IN THE JAPANESE CONTEXT

As in some other Asian contexts, the traditional use of grammar translation in Japan may cause some to look at contrastive rhetoric for answers to issues with written discourse. At this time, research is still largely inconclusive on the impact of culturally determined L1 discourse patterns in L2 writing. In general, written discourse is more distant in time and space than speech, and writers are required to anticipate the detail and contextual support the reader needs. In the recount genre, even students with a less outwardly expressive identity or a more

reserved sociocultural self can be empowered since they alone possess the base of background knowledge for the choices they chose to share and produce in writing. Narrative recounts therefore can provide an entry point for students into written work which currently has seen limited focus in school contexts in Japan. With better knowledge of written language at the text level, teachers can help students in Asian school settings to produce written texts "independent of physical context" (Derewianka, 1990). In doing so the writers may avoid overlooking assumptions of what the reader may or may not know and retain more formal register, not writing as they would speak. Appropriate introduction and dissection of model texts through the analysis suggested in this report can provide scaffolding for students of all levels to develop written work for a variety of purposes.

CONCLUSION

This essay outlines the application of text analysis to evaluate a sample of student writing. The observations made through the analysis were used to highlight target areas for error correction and approaches to instruction for improved generic competence. Particular features of systemic functional grammar which underpin genre were introduced as a framework for analysis and instruction. With better knowledge of written language at the text level, teachers can help students in Asian school settings to produce written output through lexical and grammatical choices to convey a range of communicative purposes. Addressing what students need to know, covering the writing genres they need to produce, and outlining the tools for development and organization in written discourse are the important ongoing challenges teachers face. Text analysis has merit for both the teacher and the student writer.

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Appendix 1

Clause Breakdown and Lexical Strings – *Life*, <u>Family</u>, and (School)

1. *Life* is special to everybody
2. it means different to any one
3. *life* is as simple as sheep
4. though many people think (*rel*) that *life* is too short to live in this society today
5. *Life* brings joys and happiness to peoples live
6. once you found out (*rel*) that the person you hate the most whether <u>your father, mother</u> and the list goes were having any kind of disease (*rel*) that have no cure
7. Later on stage you will realize
8. how many minutes and seconds you should have spent time with them as much as possible
9. that's why
10. enjoy your *life* now
11. while you can
12. its not too late
13. Remember every one!!!!!
14.When I was *living* in Cambodia
15. in a city called Komp Pong Chan
16. My <u>family</u> was very pleasing with the way our *lifestyle*
17. We were nor rich nor poo
18. we were just normal
19. [we were] like my <u>other relatives</u>

20. We support and help each other
21. when *good and bad times* occur
22. We manage to help other (*rel*) that are really poorfor example we barter the food
23. I have big family with 5 sisters and 3 brother
24. and I think (*rel*) [that] I'm one of the luckiest children (*rel*) who could not ask for better parents
25. I really admire
26. and adore my Dad
27. because he work hard every day in order to support his naughty eight children
28. of course we goodie children hehehehehehehehe
29. A couple of years later my dad side grandma (rel) who live in a country name Australia
30. [grandma] wanted us to go and live there
31. and leave our relatives behind
32. But my dad refused to leave
33. The school in Cambodia is very unusual
34. Because the teacher always smack any students(*rel*) who are lazy to do their homework[who are] being naught
35. When my parents was teenager
36. The teachers was very kind, friendly and helpful to any students
37. But now all they care about is Money…not teaching the students at all
38. Some family cannot afford their children to go to school
39. Instead they had to stays at home
40. and [they had to] look after their brother and sister, not just Cambodia children's(*rel*) who cannot afford to go to school i.e. Pakistan, Malaysi
41. and the list goes on
42. Thus my grandma decided to manipulate my family to commit to start *brand new life*, new world in Australia
43. When we arrive at Melbourne Airport

44. everything is clean and perfect view
45. The place was huge and there were so many cars and truck though not many motorbikes
46. Subsequently <u>my brother and sister</u> had to attend (Blackburn Language School)
47. The (teachers) here are kind and supportive
48. The (first day) we all felt petrified and anxiou
49. because we could not speak a word of (English
50. though we manage to improve the (language) day by day
51. We eventually made some (friends)
52. also began to like the *style of living* in Melbourn
53. where <u>my grandma</u> live at Wantirna South
54. Here the (school) was huge and beautiful
55. and they paid half of the (school fees) for us
56. we thank them for their kindness
57. The *style of living* in Cambodia compared to Australian is totally different
58. Here more *freedom of speech, friendlier neighbor* and most importantly the *government* is not corrupted
59. Whereas in Cambodia the *government* only concern for <u>their own family</u> and friends only
60. They don't care about the *civilian*
61. If you try to *protest* about anything that related to their *right*,
62. they would sent someone to *threaten* or *blackmail* or even *death* to you
63. I recommend to any one (*rel*) that if they come to *Australia* (*rel*) and that they have made the *right decision*
64. because Australia is *one of the safest countries* in the world
65. Australia provides any *opportunities* to any one
66. They are cooperative and respective
67. Though if you want to *succeed*
68. you have to be able to *work hard*
69. and be committing to your *ambitious*
70. Just don't *work too hard*

71. and *enjoys* while you can
72. also help others when needed
73. I guess that all I wanted to say to the people(*rel*) who just came to *Australia*
74. Everyone *welcome* you
75. don't be nervous
76. but *be true to yourself*77. That makes life interesting
78. because you can *experience* so many other thing (*rel*) that others *experiences* though *good and bad times*
79. Thank you for reading my experiences in Australia. Bye

(Reprinted from ECL 753 *Linguistics in Language Teaching: Unit Guide,* 2004)

Appendix 2

Reference chains

Clause	**Reference***	Life	*Family*	(School)
1)	**H**	Life		
2)	**A**	it		
3)	**H**	life		
4)	**A**	life		
5)	**H**	Life		
9)	**H**	your life		
16)	**H, A**		*Family, our*	
17)	**A**		*We*	
18)	**A**		*we*	
19)	**H**		*other relatives*	
20)	**A, A**		*We, each other*	
22)	**A, A**		*We*	
23)	**H, H**		*Family,*	
24)	**H, H**		*children, parents*	
26)	**H**		*my Dad*	
27)	**A, H**		*He, his children*	
28)	**A, A**		*we, children*	
30)	**A**		*us*	
31)	**H**		*our*	
32)	**H**		*my dad*	
34)	**H, A**			(any students)
35)	**H**		*my parents*	
36)	**H, H**		*any students*	(teachers)
37)	**A**			(they)
38)	**H**		*children*	
39)	**A**		*they*	
40)	**A, H, C**		*their brother &sister*	
42)	**H, H**	Australia	*my family*	

43)	**A**		*we*	
45)	**A**	The place		
46)	**H, H**		*my br. &sis.*	(Black. School)
47)	**A**			(* here)
48)	**A**		* *we*	
49)	**A, H**		*we*	(English)
50)	**A, A**		*we*	(the language)
53)	**H**	Wantirna S.		
54)	**A, A**	Here		(the school)
55)	**A, A (?)**		*us*	(*they (?))
56)	**A**		*we*	
57)	**H**			(Australia)
58)	**A**			(here)
59)	**H, A**	government,		
60)	**A, bridging**	they	*civilian*	
61)	**A, A**	their	*you*	
62)	**A, A**	they	*you*	
63)	**H, A, A**			(Any one, they)
64)	**H**	Australia		
65)	**H**	Australia		
66)	**A**	they		
67)	**C**			(you)
68)	**C**			(you)
69)	**C**			(your)
70)	**C**			([you])
71)	**C**			(you)
73)	**H**		(people who came to Australia)	
74)	**A**			(you)
76)	**A**			(yourself)
78)	**A**			(you)

***H = homophoric A = anaphoric C = cataphoric**
E = exophoric

Appendix 3

Connectedness of context, text, grammar

Context
Field: What it's about

Tenor: Who's involved

Mode: How it's being communicated

Text
Ideational: The way the text represents what's 'going on' or the content matter being communicated

Interpersonal: The way the text relates to the listener/reader. The degree of certainty or 'truth' to which things are represented

Textual:The shape and form of the text. The way the text delivers its message

Grammar
Ideational: The way the text uses participants (nouns and noun groups), processes (verbs and verb groups) and circumstances (phrases, adverbs and adjectives)

*Interpersonal:*The way the text uses the tense system (past, present, future), modality (obligation and probability), address (first, second and third persons)

Textual: The way the text uses theme/rheme, reference, lexical cohesion and logical connections to deliver a coherent and cohesive message.

(Knapp & Watkins, 1994, p. 14)

Appendix 4

An ethnography of writing

- the setting of the assignment
- the purpose of the assignment
- the content of the assignment
- the intended audience, reaction and assessment criteria
- the relationship between the reader and writer
- general discourse community expectations and conventions for the assignment
- the background knowledge, values and understandings shared with the readers
- the relationship the assignment has with other genres

(Paltridge, 2000)

Warm Up Activities

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Warm Up Activities

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Abstract -- The purpose of this paper is to introduce the idea of using warm up activities in English as second language lessons. Five benefits supporting the use of these types of activities are presented and discussed one by one. The benefits illustrate how these activities set the tone to create a positive atmosphere for learning, get students to start thinking about schemata and in English, revise and recycle previous material, enhances language and communication, and allows the teacher to assess student character and ability. This is followed by a discussion of selected warm up activities: Bingo, English "Shiritori", Hangman, Listening Pyramids, Pictionary, Questions, Telephone, and Tongue Twisters. The conclusion suggests that these activities can also be used as gap fillers and/or as a way to wrap up lessons at the end of class.

INTRODUCTION

It can be useful to use warm up activities prior to launching into a regular English language lesson from a textbook or a prescribed curriculum schedule. Warm up activities are useful for most age groups and levels. It might be said that activities at the start of the lesson deserve more attention than they usually receive. This is because the initial activities that start the class are very important for the following reasons: they set the tone to create a positive atmosphere for learning, get students to start thinking about schemata and in English, they provide opportunities for revision and recycling of previous material, enhance language and communication, and allow the teacher to

assess student character and ability. In the next section each of these benefits will be examined more closely.

BENEFITS

Positive Atmosphere

When students arrive for the lesson, their minds are full of other things that might distract them from the purpose of learning. It is widely recognized that we learn best when we are comfortable and relaxed – Maslow's (1943) theory on the hierarchy of needs suggests that people need to be physically comfortable, not too hungry or cold, and most importantly they need to feel safe, loved even. This is not to suggest that one cannot learn when the conditions are not ideal, but that people learn best when their physical and emotional needs are satisfied. Krashen's (2003) theories regarding dynamics and optimal conditions for second language development are the cornerstone of modern ESL teaching practice. The most important ideas are those of input hypothesis and affective filter hypothesis. The affective filter hypothesis suggests that emotions can have an impact on second language learning. That is students who are self-confident and highly motivated tend to make more progress in second language learning than those who are not. In addition, a student's level of anxiety (affective filter) is crucial in the amount and speed of second language development. In addition, Dornyei and Csizer (1998: 215) have created a useful list of motivational strategies to consider as instructors plan and enact their course of study, and number six on that list is instructors trying to make the language classes interesting for students. So a warm up activity that promotes relaxation and fun, that does not stress students or demand too much of them, is a good place to start. Moreover, warm up activities set the tone of the lesson. For example, an activity that students find too difficult or confusing can prove discouraging or demotivating, a fun warm up activity can raise energy levels.

Schemata in English

A teacher will often use a warm up activityat the start, in order to lead into skills work as part of the lesson plan. Warm up activities get students to begin thinking and focusing on English. They may not have used English in a few days, a week, or even longer. A little time at the beginning of the class will improve receptivity later in the lesson. This activity can provide a transition into a lesson or topic. A warm up activity at the start of the lesson activates pre-existing knowledge on a subject, and may even get students to use (or consider) some of the ideas, vocabulary, or even grammar important to the lesson. In addition, the purpose can be seen from a cognitivist viewpoint, where learning is not passive but an active process of making sense of things. The teacher who warms up to the reading by introducing the topic and inviting students to discuss is activating schemata – alerting the student to any prior information, knowledge or experience of the topic of the text so that they can access the lesson most effectively. According to Jannuzi (1997), a schema can be said to be a kind of memory, based on expectations of what normally happens. When people look at texts in their own language they unconsciously recall previous knowledge of a topic or area. A warm up activity is a way for a teacher to help students to make links in an additional language and transfer skills – creating the memories in another language. So in terms of learning theory, the warm up plays a very important part in the process.

Revision and recycling

Many teachers use the warm up activity to review material from the previous lesson. The teacher can see how much has been retained by the students and decide where to proceed next. This can be seen as advantageous for the learner too, as the student can measure his or her own progress through homework and revision tasks. Some learners will be more successful in

accessing the material the second time around. This might be due to having it presented in a manner that they find more appealing, such as visually, kinesthetically etc. It has been well documented that people find it difficult to retain new language unless it is seen again within 24 hours, and then again within a week, a month and so on.

Language and communication

Most communicative approaches to learning English recognize the fact that a good learner needs to have ownership of the language. It is now widely understood that restricted written or spoken practice, where a student can manipulate language in a very controlled manner seems to have little effect outside the classroom. Many students have studied for years and years, however, they cannot actively speak the language. Warm up activities, give students have the chance to be playful with language. They can create their own communication, which is an important step to effective language ownership. Errors should be tolerated at this stage, because the main purpose is for the students to have conversational interaction. Another purpose of these types of warm up activities is to have fun, which is part of the motivational strategy for learning.

Student character and ability

Some students work well together, and others do not. Some students have good days, and bad days. During the initial warm up activity, the teacher can determine who will form the best groups for subsequent activities during the lesson.

SELECTIVE WARM UP ACTIVITIES

The following list of warm up activities is by no means exhaustive, but shows the variety of activities available to teachers. The following activities will be discussed: Bingo, English *"Shiritori"*, Hangman, Listening Pyramids, Pictionary, Questions, Telephone, and Tongue Twisters.

Bingo

This is a game that requires the players to form a pattern of five squares on a grid of a bingo sheet provided by the teacher. There are many versions of this game and the one that will be introduced here is where each student completes each square with a different yes/no question. Some squares give prompts for students. After completing this part of the activity the students will then stand up, move around the class, and ask their classmates the questions. They will write the name of a classmate on the line below the question, only if his or her answer to the question is "yes." The first student to get five names in a row ("Bingo!") is the winner.

English "Shiritori"

Shiritori ("Taking the end") is a Japanese word game where the players have to say a word that begins with the final kana (word sound) of the previous word. This is an activity that requires little preparation or materials to engage in. In the English version students need to write words in English on the board and then pass the chalk to the next person in the row who is required to write a word that begins with the last letter of the word that was written the turn before them. The game is usually played with a time limit of 3-5 minutes. The teacher can add other restrictions such as the words written on the board need to be more than five letters. When the time is up the instructor will count the words and eliminate any words that were not the minimum length or spelled incorrectly.

Hangman

This is a word guessing game that can be played on the board as a whole class or as two teams by dividing the class into teams. To begin, choose a word for the students to guess, this is your chance to review vocabulary from a previous lesson (nouns, verbs, adverbs, etc.). Draw underscored lines for the number of

letters in the word. Then as students guess, record letters that are not in the word on top of the hangman's noose, and put the correct letters in the appropriate space of the series of underscored lines. For each missed letter the team loses it's turn and a body part is drawn on the hangman's noose, for example, head, torso, legs, arms, etc. you can extend it by drawing a tie or hat or even shoes. If a student thinks they can guess the word they have the opportunity to win the point if they guess correctly, if they do not guess the word correctly, they lose their turn and a body part is drawn. If the man is hung, fully drawn, before the word is guessed the game is over. A variation would to give students clues to capture the point anyway with clues supplied by the teacher.

Listening Pyramids
This activity requires advance preparation where the teachers prepare a pyramid sheet with minimal pairs of words that are similar sounding. The teacher will read each word choice and the students will choose a word in descending order until they have arrived at a number. The teacher will reveal the correct number location. Then the teacher can repeat the words to show how they arrived at the word. See an example in Appendix 1.

Pictionary
This is a home board game that is played with teams with the team members trying to guess specific words from their teammates' drawings. Teachers can create their own version using simpler vocabulary from their curriculum for classroom use without much preparation. Some word examples include: (nouns) truck, tree, cat, etc., (action verbs) swim, run, jump, etc., and (adverbs/adjectives) slow, quiet, big, rich. This can be done as a whole group activity with the teacher drawing on the boards and the class divided into two teams or word cards can be drawn up in advance and given to small group teams. There are some rules such as not using numbers, letters or symbols. The teacher

may decide to use a two-minute limit for the guessing.

Questions

This activity simply involves the teacher walking around the room or calling random names from the front of the class and asking them questions in English such as the following:

Good Morning, how are you today?
What did you have for breakfast?
What are you going to do after school today?

What are you going to do this weekend?
What are you going to have for lunch?

Songs

Songs can be used a variety of ways. For example a song can be taught and be sung from time to time when students' energy levels are flagging. Another way to use songs is to create a cloze activity for students in advance where they have to listen and fill in the missing words. See the example, "Woman" by John Lennon from <u>Hit Parade Listening</u> in Appendix 2.

Telephone

This activity is also often used as a game. The instructor can write out a sentence or verbally tell the first students per row, who will compete against each other to rewrite the sentence correctly on the board. Some example sentences according to grammar points being studied are: (present continuous) *I am going to eat chicken for dinner* and (conditionals) *If you are tired you should get some rest*. The first person whispers the sentence to the second person and so on until the last person has heard the sentence. Then this person will rush to the board to write the sentence on the board as correctly as possible. The first team to write the word correctly gets a point.

Tongue Twisters

Tongue twisters are a string of words or sounds that are difficult to pronounce quickly and correctly. These are also easy to prepare by merely writing them on a board or providing students with a list and challenge them to say them as fast as they can. Here are a few of the many examples available:

She sells seashells by the sea shore.
How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood.

Rubber Baby Buggy Bumpers.
How much ground would a groundhog grind if a groundhog could grind ground.
A big black bugs bleed black blood
Mixed biscuits, mixed biscuits
We surely shall see the sun shine soon.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this discussion, the preceding activities were introduced as being ideal for warm up activities. There are several reasons that support this: set the tone to create a positive atmosphere for learning, get students to start thinking about schemata and in English, revise and recycle previous material, enhances language and communication, and allows the teacher to assess student character and ability. However, it is also possible and useful to use these activities as filler in between activities or as a wrap up at the end of the class where the main lesson for the day has been concluded earlier. These activities create a positive tone for learning; provide an opportunity for revision and recycling of previous learned material, and offer opportunities for using language and communication whenever they are used. This discussion has just scratched the surface of these kinds of activities. There are many more useful types of activities such as

ice breakers (which allow students to get to know each other while using language and communication), memory games, games with word cards, students giving each other descriptions, and many more. These types of short activities seems ideal for teachers who do not have much room for original content in their curriculum due to a standard they are required to uphold.

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Appendix 1

bed bad

thirst first thirst first

dug dog dug dog dug dog dug dog

fur fear fur fear fur fear fur fear fur fear fur fear fur fear fur fear
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Appendix 2

"Woman" John Lennon*

Women, I _____ hardly express
My _____ _____ and my thoughtlessness
After all, I'm forever in your _____
And woman, I will try to express my inner feelings and _____
For showing me the meaning of _____

Ooh, well, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo.
Ooh, well, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo.

Woman, I know you understand the _____ _____ inside a man
Please remember, my life is in your hands, and woman
Hold me _____ to your heart, however distant don't _____
_____ _____.
After all it is _____ in the stars

Ooh, well

Woman, please let me _____
I never meant to _____ _____ sorrow or pain
So let me tell _____ _____ and again and again
I love you, yeah, yeah, yeah, now and forever I love you, yeah, yeah, yeah, now and forever.

* Disclaimer: These lyrics are provided for eductional purposes only.

An in-depth analysis of a Bangladeshi EFL multimedia classroom

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An in-depth analysis of a Bangladeshi EFL multimedia classroom

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Abstract --This paper is an in-depth analysis of the instructional design of a multimedia (PowerPoint) lesson used in a Bangladeshi secondary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The aim of the analysis was to explore the philosophy behind multimedia instructional design in terms of three metaphors of multimedia Second language learning (i.e. response strengthening, information acquisition or knowledge construction) derived from a framework which combined both multimedia learning theories (Mayer, 2009) and second language acquisition theory (Plass and Jones, 2005). Against our expectation, most textbook tasks themselves supported a knowledge construction view of language learning. However, the role of the PowerPoint was mainly limited to projecting textbook tasks and hence the philosophy behind using the PowerPoint could be said to reflect an 'information acquisition' view which is common to the educational culture of Bangladesh. Suggestions on how the instructional design may be modified to use the PowerPoint not only to project the tasks but also to enhance the tasks (through using more interactive features) to promote more constructive learning as aimed by the government of Bangladesh, are also provided.

INTRODUCTION

Under a project titled 'Access to Information' (A2I) secondary level teachers in Bangladesh are being given training on creating multimedia content for their classrooms. Despite the financial constraints of a developing country, the government has targeted 15,200 secondary schools and 5,300 Madrasah (religious)

schools which are being provided with a projector, internet connection and a laptop and teachers are being trained to create their own multimedia materials specifically by using the PowerPoint software (http://a2i.pmo.gov.bd/content/multimedia-class-room). The vision of A2I is to break an educational culture which promotes mainly learning through information-acquisition or knowledge transmission (i.e. learning which prioritizes one way learning from the teacher/textbook through listening to lectures and decontextualized memorization) and initiate better understanding and more interaction in classrooms through using multimedia content (Sarwar, 2012). This 'teacher led digital content development' program therefore has the goal to create a push towards a learner centred classroom where students will construct their own knowledge.

However, literature (e.g., Somkeh, 2008; Glover et al., 2007, Kearney and Schuck, 2008; Li and Ni, 2011; Zhong and Sen, 2002) shows that the implementation of multimedia has not always produced the desired goal of initiating more understanding, interaction or pedagogical change. The reason may lie in the fact that, the key to using multimedia to promote better learning lies in the instructional design which is learner centred i.e. takes into consideration the cognitive processes of learning through multi modal input and is aimed to prime cognitive interaction with stimulating multimedia tasks and appropriate pedagogy (Mayer, 2001, 2003, 2009; Aldrich, Rogers, and Scaife, 1998; Schmid, 2008, p.1556; Mayes and de Freitas, 2007, p. 17); rather than design which is technology centred i.e. designed for transferring information by primarily harnessing the projection affordance of the software. In other words multimedia content designed with a view of 'knowledge construction' (see sec 4.3) holds the prospect for promoting better learning as aimed by A2I. In Bangladesh, the use of multimedia in classrooms is a very recent introduction, and as such there has been no research on how teachers are designing

‘digital’ content after training.

For the purpose of this article we decided to analyze one teacher prepared EFL PowerPoint to explore the instructional design view of a Bangladeshi multimedia lesson. We were given permission by the senior consultant of A2I to use the PowerPoint while conducting a project evaluation of A2I.

This particular PowerPoint lesson has also been showcased in a conference arranged by the ministry of education and A2I (http: //www.digitalworld.org.bd/showcasing-teacher-led-digital-content-for-multimedia-classroom/) as a representative one from among thousands of teacher prepared multimedia materials.

LIMITATIONS

Only one PowerPoint in no circumstances will reflect what is happening throughout the country. Moreover, like most qualitative papers, our analysis may be regarded as subjective. In Simpson and Tuson’s (1995, p.2) words, “What we see is determined by many individual, subjective factors, in particular our own past experiences." Therefore, the analysis and interpretation presented in this paper may well be colored by our past experience of the culture and subjectivity. We have not observed the actual use of the PowerPoint in the classroom and as such what kind of learning, interaction and understanding is actually happening in the classroom cannot be commented on without long term classroom observation.

However, this approach helped us thoroughly understand every small design feature, features which sometimes are not possible to focus on in a large scale research. In other words the focus was on depth rather than breadth. This paper therefore, may act as stepping stone and show possible areas for large scale research.

THE CONTEXT

Before analyzing the PowerPoint there is a need to understand the EFL teaching/learning scenario in Bangladesh. The view of education in Bangladesh is transmissive or reflects an ‘information-acquisition’ view. This term is best explained by Rahman, Kabir and Afroze (2006), "Knowledge is considered a finite inflexible object and the role of education is to bestow this block of knowledge, conserve national identity and impart a moral and cultural base to society. A transmissive, top-down approach to learning is prevalent." (p.6)

This mindset of teaching/learning is also evident in EFL classrooms and the main features of these classrooms can be summarized in the following way:

1) Language is taught in a reading-writing based Grammar Translation method that is, through practicing translations and memorizing the structural rules and vocabulary of the language.

2) The approach is heavily teacher and textbook centred. Throughout classes teachers read from the textbook and students work individually more than in groups. Sometimes the teacher asks closed questions.

3) In an observation study on 252 classrooms EIA (2009) found that the students were occasionally encouraged to speak in English (only 2% to 4% of the time). Teachers explained in English very infrequently (only 0% to 5% of the time). It was also found that in 58% of the time there was no use of thoughtful stimulating questions and only in 48% of the time there was use of challenging tasks. (EIA, 2009; Hamid and Baldauf, 2008; Chowdhury and Le Ha, 2008; Chowdhury, 2003; Rahman, Kabir, and Afroze, 2006)

In a nutshell then, we can say that English teaching is

characterized by teacher and textbook centeredness, little interaction, de-contextualized memorization, more use of native language than the target language and lack of stimulating tasks and challenges.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: BRINGING MULTIMEDIA LEARNING AND SLA TOGETHER

Mayer (2009, preface p. ix) defines multimedia instruction as "the use of words and pictures to foster effective learning." The words may be in the form of audio or printed text and the pictures may be static or dynamic (video/animation). The images used in the PowerPoint under discussion are static and the texts are printed. On the other hand, effective learning in EFL terms means learning that promotes the acquisition of *English.* Therefore, in this paper, we will be looking into how the combination of static images and texts in the PowerPoint are being used to foster English language acquisition.

Mayer (2009, p. 14) uses three metaphors which reflect three kinds of learning philosophy of the multimedia designer, namely response strengthening, information acquisition and knowledge construction. Although, Mayer (2009) discusses learning in terms of general education rather than language learning; we believe these three views of multimedia learning can be related to second language acquisition (SLA) in the following way:

Response strengthening and language learning

When the designer views learning to occur as strengthening of responses, the multimedia materials will be designed to enable drill and practice and act as a reinforcer. This view holds that "the learner's job is to make responses and then receive rewards or punishments, such as "right" or "wrong" (Mayer, 2000, p.15). Therefore, with this view of language learning, multimedia materials in the EFL classroom will be designed to enable drilling (language structures) and providing right or wrong

answers.

Information acquisition and language learning
When the designer views learning to happen as a result of information acquisition, multimedia will be designed for delivering information. Therefore, EFL lessons with this view of language learning will use multimedia for delivering language input i.e. providing sentence structures, vocabulary, phrases etc. for the student to be able to absorb.

Knowledge construction and language learning
Mayer (2009, p.14) believes that if we want to use multimedia for knowledge construction that is better understanding and retention, multimedia will have to be used as a cognitive aid. This means the goal for using multimedia will not only be limited to information presentation but also include guidance for processing information, showing what to pay attention to, how to organize it and relate it to one's prior knowledge and most importantly probe the learner to *actively* process information rather than *passively* receive. Therefore, it may be said that the key to better understanding and more interaction with the aid of multi modal input as aimed by A2I lies in designing multimedia content with a view of knowledge construction.

To promote knowledge construction in terms of SLA, multimedia materials should aid the cognitive processes involved in SLA. According to Plass and Jones (2005) the cognitive process of second language acquisition entails 'the process of receiving (input), attending to (interaction), and assigning meaning (output) to verbal (aural or written) and/or visual stimuli (p.476).

Therefore, knowledge construction in SLA with multimedia can be defined as "the use of words and pictures to provide (support) meaningful input, facilitate meaningful interaction with the

target language and elicit (and negotiate) meaningful output" (Plass and Jones, 2005, p.476). These processes can be further facilitated by drawing attention to features of language being covered and also activating prior knowledge or schemata.

For the purpose of this paper, we believe, Mayer's (2009) *metaphors of* ***multimedia learning*** as discussed can be used as the three *metaphors of* ***multimedia Second language learning*** when the defining features are adapted as following:

Table 1: Three metaphors of multimedia second language learning

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Metaphor1: Response Strengthening
Definition: Strengthening or weakening association through drilling.

Content: Associations

Learner: Passive recipient of right and wrong answers

Teacher: Dispenser of right and wrong answers

Goal of multimedia:Enable drill and practice; act to reinforce

Metaphor 2:Information Acquisition
Definition: Adding information (vocabulary, phrases, structures) to memory.

Content: Presentation of language rules, chunks, vocabulary, structure

Learner: Passive receiver of language

Teacher: Information provider

Goal of multimedia: Deliver information, Act as a delivery vehicle.

Metaphor 3: Knowledge Construction
Definition: Facilitating cognitive processes of SLA: meaningful input, interaction, and output.

Content: Noticeable meaningful input, material for interaction and stimuli to attend to language and elicit output

Learner: Actively using language and attending to meaning

Teacher: Cognitive guide

Goal of multimedia: Provide cognitive guidance, act as helpful communicator, promote active cognitive processing.

[Adapted from Mayer (2009, p. 14) Three metaphors of multimedia learning]

ANALYSIS
The PowerPoint is based on chapter 13 named 'Dinosaurs! Dinosaurs!' of the national EFL textbook for class 9. The students are of the pre-intermediate (14/15 years) level. The textbook chapter is thematically designed around the topic of dinosaurs with three small passages about three kinds of dinosaurs. The aims of the material as described at the beginning of the PowerPoint is to enable students to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and learn the vocabulary spike, alligator and lizard. At first, we looked at the structure of the PowerPoint lesson and it can be said to be organized in the

following sequence:

Aims: speaking, listening, reading, writing, and vocabulary

Sequence of tasks:

1) Activate schemata/prior knowledge:Practicing dialogues based on provided structure. PowerPoint presents structure, images and feedback

2) Pre-reading and vocabulary Input: PowerPoint presents vocabulary: definition and images

3) Post reading and eliciting output:PowerPoint presents trues false, graphic organizer, images for matching and images for writing a contrasting paragraph. Instruction for group writing

4) Homework:PowerPoint presents homework topic

A detailed analysis of the slides is as follows. For images of the slides, please refer to Appendix 1.

THE SPEAKING TASK: RESPONSE STRENGTHENING

Slide 1 introduces a question and answer structure "where are the Cheetahs found?' and 'Cheetah's are found in Africa' as a basis for a speaking task in pairs. It includes the structures and the images of different animals to talk about and a set of clues about where the animals may be found. It seems the slide is designed for speaking through drilling the structure with regard to different animals. This task is taken from the textbook. The PowerPoint is being used to add color to the textbook task.

In this slide however, pictures and texts are not being used as complements to each other. The use of multimedia promotes learning when images, with corresponding text, enables learners

to build both verbal and visual representations in the memory. The pictures of the animals are acting as a kind of visual stimuli about different animals but not a basis for learning the structure.

Slide 2 is giving the feedback for the speaking task in slide 1. The design represents a response strengthening view of learning as it is providing right/wrong answers for the drill. In the slide the stimulus "*Cheetah's are found in*" is connected with the response "*Africa*". The map of Africa is being used to elicit the response and then the name of the country appears.

TURNING RESPONSE STRENGTHENING TO KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION

Instead of using the software for projecting what is already in the textbook the software may be better exploited to aid knowledge construction by integrating a video to give 'meaningful input'. A video/animation on the history of dinosaurs may be used to activate prior knowledge before reading, teach vocabulary/structure and also provide listening skills practice.

Learning to speak involves not only knowing grammatical structures but also using the language in the "context of structured interpersonal exchange where many factors interact" (Shumin, 2002, p.204). For generating dialogues then, a short video based on two people speaking about animal habitat could be played where the structure 'Cheetahs are found in' is used and highlighted. For instance, when the speaker uses the structure, the structure may appear on the screen and be colored or signaled by arrows to catch the learner's attention. Research by Mayer (2009, p.108) has shown that students learn better when cues highlight and emphasize the essential aspects.

Questions could be given (What are the features of a dinosaur's

habitat?) before playing the video. This will result in active processing (Mayer, 2009, p. 21) that is; learners will be working cognitively during the video. After the video ends the learners can be asked to talk about the dinosaur age based on what they have seen and heard. For feedback the teacher may monitor the speaking and type into the PowerPoint language errors noticed during the task.

This video may be called an 'advanced graphic organizer' i.e. "an instructional unit that is introduced in advance of direct instruction. It is generally presented at a higher level of abstraction and is intended to connect learners' prior knowledge to what they will learn" (Ausubel, 1963 in Chen and Lin, 2007). Research done by Mayer (1989) (in Mayer, 2009, p. 238) has shown repeatedly that students who are provided an advance graphic organizer before the main text perform better on transfer tests than students who do not. In terms of SLA it may be said that, advanced organizers may help to understand the meaning of a text better and activate schemata.

Although the same could be done with a set of static pictures we are in favor of using videos. Research by Lin and Chen (2007) and Chun and Plass (1996) have indicated that the use of dynamic advance organizers (animation, video) in contrast to static visuals in the pre-reading activities produced better comprehension and retention.

VOCABULARY: KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION

The multimedia principle (Mayer, 2000, p.223), perhaps the most fundamental principle of multimedia design, holds that words and pictures combined strategically rather than words alone promote better learning. Presenting information as words alone may encourage learners to build a word based representation but does not prime learners to build a picture based representation or to build systematic connections between

picture based and word based representations which may generate deeper processing called generative processing (i.e. cognitive processing for organizing/integrating new knowledge).

Research by Plass, Chun, Mayer and Leutner (1998) and Plass and Jones (2002) have shown that vocabulary learning improves when words are presented visually and verbally, that is images and text definitions are combined rather than texts alone. The design of Slides 3 and 4 meet the multimedia principle effectively by integrating images and definitions to present new vocabulary.

Slides 3 and 4 also meet the spatial contiguity principle (Mayer 2009, p.135). Research by Mayer (2009, p.135) on this principle shows that "Students learn better when corresponding words and pictures are presented near rather than far from each other on the page or screen." As the textbook has no kind of vocabulary explanation for the reading text, the teacher has effectively used the PowerPoint to present the vocabulary definitions and images together to aid vocabulary acquisition.

ELICITING OUTPUT: KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION

We believe like Chapelle (1998) that, if learners produce language mindlessly language acquisition will not happen. Language needs to be produced so that, learners may notice errors, adjust errors, communicate ideas, attend to meaning, solve problems etc. This kind of output is termed comprehensible output (Swain, 1885). Slides 5-10 have been designed to elicit output from the students. In other words slide 5-10 are post reading tasks i.e. tasks which are completed after reading a text to further clarify and develop interpretations.

In slide 5, the students have to answer true false questions. After answering the true/false task they receive feedback on click. By asking students to think about if the sentence is wrong or right it

is requiring students to be cognitively attentive to meaning, thus knowledge construction is happening. The role of the PowerPoint is to project right and wrong answers.

Slide 6 requires students to match word-based (the text they have read) and image-based representations. Integrating word based and image based representations is a cognitive act. This kind of use of cognitive activity has been termed 'active learning' by Mayer (2009) and he is of the opinion that the goal of efficient multimedia design is to foster active learning. In SLA terms, the visual stimuli is being used effectively to elicit meaningful output. The students have to attend to the meaning of the text more to be able to match it with the pictures. This task therefore, may be said to be promoting knowledge construction. The PowerPoint is being used to project the textbook task.

According to Mayer (2009, p. 237) illustrations can be of four kinds decorative (not enhancing the message), representational (portraying the element), organizational (map/chart etc.) and explanative (explaining systems). Mayer (2009, p.237) is also of the opinion that organizational and explanative illustrations are the ones that enhance learning.

The chart in slide 7 may be said to be an organizational image. This chart is aiding text reconstruction (i.e. reorganize/classify pieces of information in a text) through providing a compare-contrast matrix and providing the answers. Reorganizing concepts into different structures requires active mental processing. During this process of producing output students may encounter problems in comprehension which may result in further interaction with the meaning of the text. This process, termed *negotiation of meaning*, facilitates L2 development. (Chapelle, 1998; Long, 1996). Therefore, the task in slide 7 is aiding language acquisition by priming the cognitive process of reorganizing language and attending to meaning. Again, the role

of the PowerPoint is limited to projecting the textbook task.

The image of the giraffe and dinosaur in slide 8 are representational images to elicit output. Students will have to generate language using the visual stimuli. In other words they will have to build a verbal representation of the visuals which requires cognitive activity and attending to meaning. This slide then can be said to represent the knowledge construction view. As before, this task is taken from the textbook and the PowerPoint is mainly being used to project the textbook task.

The features of the PowerPoint for this slide may have been used differently. For instance, by making the parts to be compared animated on click or the teacher may say limbs and on click circles could appear around the legs and arms of the T-rex and the giraffe.

Slide 9 provides phrases for contrasting the giraffe and the Dinosaur. This slide is provided by the teacher and not taken from the textbook. Slide 10 and 11 provide instruction for a writing task based on dinosaurs. Slide 10 where learners are asked to write on "what they would do if they fell in front of a dinosaur" can be turned into an effective ghost writing exercise by playing an audio-track with cinematic sound effects (e.g. trailer of Jurassic park). Students may be asked to write down words that come to the mind when they are listening to different sounds (roar, footsteps, etc.). At the end the whole class can write a narrative together with the teacher typing on the PowerPoint slides.

The errors can be highlighted by the teacher and students may be asked to produce the correct forms. Although there is a lot of extraneous music in the trailer, somehow we feel the seemingly 'redundant' music aids the learner to get the feel of the dialogues and facilitates output production. Our auditory and visual

processing channels have limited capacity to process incoming information and overwhelming music with video and text may create more information than it is possible to process together i.e. cognitive overload. Therefore, the researchers are in favor of using an audio-track rather than video and text.

DISCUSSION

Although we assumed that, the slides will represent a totally transmissive view of language learning, our analysis shows elements in this multimedia lesson that could be said to be a departure from the traditional EFL learning context. For instance, whereas in the traditional classrooms vocabulary is memorized with Bengali translations provided by the teacher, slides 3 and 4 presented the image as well as English definitions for students. The designer effectively uses the PowerPoint to combine texts and images for vocabulary learning.

Slide 6 made efficient use of pictures for eliciting output from students, slide 7 made efficient use of the chart to elicit output from students and slide 7 made use of images to aid the cognitive task of comparing/contrasting. All of these can be said to be aiding knowledge construction as they are helping to provide meaningful input and elicit output. However, all of these tasks are taken from the textbook and the role of the software is mainly to project these textbook tasks.

In other instances too, the projection affordance seems to be prioritized. For example, the vocabulary 'spike, alligator and lizard' is what is specified in the teachers' guide to teach from the text. In CLT students need to learn language important for communication. Multimedia could have been used for teaching these specified (institutional requirements) and more important vocabulary that students genuinely need through the use of an extra video or audio on dinosaurs. Same goes for the comparing of giraffes and dinosaurs. It is a variation of the textbook task to

contrast dinosaurs with dolphins and other animals. Keeping the underlying aim of teaching writing intact, this could have been done in a way which promotes learning by bringing in the affordances of using multimedia. For example, Students could be asked what differences they see between the environment today with that of the dinosaur era (based on the video we have proposed as an advanced organizer for activating schemata while discussing slides 1 and 2).

The reason for the 'projection' feature to get priority may lie in the fact of large classrooms. In Bangladesh there are about 60-80 students per classroom with more than half the class not being able to see the writing on the blackboard properly. The whole class usually cannot interact together. The PowerPoint by projecting the images to a learner who never sees or hears what is going on in the front, will first of all, gain attention. This may lead to better student language acquisition in the classroom just because of motivation and opportunity to engage.

This kind of motivation and engagement has been reported with the use of interactive whiteboards too by Wall, Higgins & Smith (2005): "The attributed cause of such engagement is varied and includes quality presentation, incorporating large visual images with a more modern or contemporary feel which satisfy the expectations of pupils already immersed in a world of media images." (p.96)

After the initial excitement wears off the enthusiasm is likely to fade away-a concept termed the "wow-factor" in multimedia learning (Murray and Barnes, 1998). But even if the excitement fades away we believe PowerPoint will be indispensable in Bangladesh to project the lesson content and provide the whole class an opportunity to be involved in the lesson which would never be possible in non-multimedia classrooms. The importance of projection cannot be felt by a person who has not been in a small congested classroom full of students and half of the

students failing to see *what* the teacher is even talking about. However, the lesson is designed mainly by transferring the textbook tasks to the slides with color with little exploitation of the features a PowerPoint can offer i.e. animation, games, integrating audio, video etc. This is in keeping with the educational culture which is heavily textbook-centered and is more transmissive than interactive.

Therefore, the class may be termed to be a 'technologized traditional classroom (Zhong and Sen, 2002, p. 46) where the teacher is still in control and delivers and presents "more efficiently a pre-packaged information kit" i.e. the textbook rather than facilitating and aiding language acquisition which utilizes the affordances of using multimedia. This tendency to teach the textbook may be the effect of considering English as a 'subject' (see sec 2) and the goal is to get high marks in the board examination (therefore emphasis on the text) rather than a language to be learned. Moreover, this may be the effect of using the PowerPoint software, as the fixed format of this software easily probes the use of the projection affordance and the interactive features are seldom exploited in classrooms (Krippel, McKee, and Moody, 2010, p.2).

CONCLUSION

Contrary to our expectation, we found that the instructional design of this PowerPoint displayed some departure from the complete information acquisition educational culture of Bangladeshi EFL classrooms. For instance, the use of English definitions and images for teaching vocabulary reflected a student centered constructive learning approach. In addition, the design for eliciting output by comparing/contrasting and the use of the organizational charts do point to constructive modes of learning. However, all tasks were taken from the textbook and projected on screen. Therefore, the overall design philosophy reflected a heavy dependence on the textbook as common to our

context. This learning philosophy (learning form the teacher/textbook) may have led to using the PowerPoint more as a tool for projecting the textbook in a fixed format than using more interactive features (i.e. interactive audio, video, games, interactive feedback etc.) to enhance the textbook content. That is, the overall design may be said to prioritize a technology centered approach.

While projection is important for the context, more emphasis on the pedagogical aspects of promoting constructive EFL learning with multimedia (see 4.3) rather than the technical aspects (Color, projection etc.) in EFL classrooms may ensure the utmost output of multimedia use in Bangladesh.

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Appendix 1

The Power Point Slides

Objectives Slide 1 Slide 2

Slide 3 Slide 4 Slide 5

Slide 6 Slide 7 Side 8

Slide 9 Slide 10 Homework

Using a Collaborative Project-based Learning Approach to Develop English Language and Learning Skills: Producing Community Radio Programs

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Using a Collaborative Project-based Learning Approach to Develop English Language and Learning Skills: Producing Community Radio Programs

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Abstract -- This paper describes a live radio-show project undertaken by Japanese study-abroad students in their host institution in New Zealand. The project formed part of a six-week program designed to improve English language skills and confidence, and serves as an example of how a student-driven, collaborative teaching/learning approach may successfully achieve these aims. With minor modifications and some creativity, the project may be readily adapted to other teaching and learning contexts.

BACKGROUND

International students studying in New Zealand in a pre-tertiary English language program were introduced to live radio as a teaching/learning tool when a teacher from their host institution forged a link with a local community radio station. This led to a regular show, planned and delivered by the students themselves, with teachers as continuity hosts. Students worked in groups and co-operatively prepared short, scripted segments on topics about their own cultures or reflections on life as a foreign student in New Zealand, which were broadcast, live, to a city audience, once a week.

The rigorous demands of producing a weekly show, and changing institutional requirements, eventually saw the demise

of the broadcast in its original form. However, the concept was retained for use with groups of Japanese students on annual, six-week study abroad programs (SAP). Each SAP involved several intensive projects, of which the radio show was one, and earned credits transferrable to the home university. The aim of the Japanese sending institution was to improve general English language skills, promote long-term English language use, and provide 'natural' English learning opportunities to students with diverse English language abilities. The size of each group averaged around 20.

PROJECT RATIONALE

Aside from the stated purpose and goals, the project approach was deemed useful because of the focus on collaboration and the belief that the learning *process* is as important as the *product*, and reflects studies indicating that co-operative learning results in more positive learning, social and psychological outcomes than an individualistic, competitive approach, Johnson and Johnson (1990). Kagan (1993) and Cohen (1994) also indicate that higher academic standards can be achieved through co-operative learning, which is enhanced when positive interdependence and individual accountability are factored into the learning process, Slavin (1990).

PROJECT STRUCTURE

The project began with a short talk by a visiting radio host, who offered suggestions about how to create an interesting show. Students formed themselves into groups of three or four, which remained constant for the entire project. Students aimed for heterogeneous groupings, remembering that each group was essentially mono-cultural and shared the same language, Japanese. Factors such as gender, relative English skills, personality and interests were considered. A written project

outline was provided, which described the overall purpose, specific goals, task requirements, and information about materials, resources and assessment guidelines (see below).

PROJECT OUTLINE – A LIVE RADIO SHOW

Description
You will work in small groups to plan, present and evaluate short, live radio segments on ‘Planet FM’, which is a community radio station broadcasting over 500 programs in 50 different languages each week. Shows are informative and/or musical in nature.

Purpose
1) To *participate* and *co-operate* in a group situation requiring discussion, negotiation, planning and task achievement, in English

2) To *communicate effectively* with, and *inform* people in the local community about Japanese culture and issues using English

3) To *reflect* on cultural similarities/differences and *develop a deeper understanding* of these

4) To provide a process-based language project for *assessment* purposes

Learning Goals
1) To *select* and *organize* an item about Japan or student experience that would be interesting for the local audience. (E.g. a story, experience, custom or traditional event.)
2) To build *fluency* and *accuracy* in listening and speaking, through mutual planning, selection of material, negotiation, rehearsal, delegation of tasks, making requests, agreement,

disagreement and assessment of performanc
3) To *communicate a message* effectively
4) To *improve pronunciation*
5) To *build confidence*
6) To *demonstrate creativity*
7) To *develop independent problem-solving skills* using English
8) To *develop useful presentation techniques.*

Requirements
Students will…

1) Critique a radio program from a previous year, identifying strengths and weaknesses

2) Select a topic for a timed radio segment (no shorter than eight minutes, no longer than ten minutes)

3) Plan a radio script in which ALL group members speak. (Apart from your main topic, you may include a small amount of other material such as a song, joke, recipe etc.)

4) Set specific written goals for successful segment completion. Maintain a daily process diary demonstrating how your group managed the preparation time. Rehearse the segment to a high standard, adapting material to fit within the time limit. (Record yourselves and listen to the playback!)

5) Participate in the live radio show

6) Give positive, critical feedback about your performance and that of other groups

7) Write a personal evaluation of the project as a language-learning

8) Experience stating positive and not so positive aspects, giving reasons for your opinions and making recommendations for future projects

Materials / Resources
1) Guest speaker, radio personality or drama coach
2) Recording of 'model' or similar radio program
3) Handouts with task instructions
4) Recording equipment
5) Suitable music to accompany your segment
6) Computer and printer, photocopier and paper
7) Process diary booklet

Assessment
Each group will be assessed using the following five-point scale (This scale reflected the assessment standards of the study-abroad students' sending institution):

0 = Unacceptable
1 = Poor
2 = Fair
3 = Good
4 = Excellent

Five areas will be assessed: content, structure, presentation skill, interest and a general section. (The general section covers group co-operation, use of English when planning, 'impact' of segment, and successful goal completion.) As you prepare, your teachers will make written notes about your use of English and how well you work together, to use when making assessment decisions. Your teacher will observe, make suggestions and answer questions, but it is your responsibility to make the key decisions about how your project will take shape and to complete

the project on time to the required standard.

All students in a group will receive the same grade. If one student does not participate at all or actively works against the group's effort, the grade for the general section will be at the teachers' discretion. Normally, non-participation will NOT negatively affect the overall grade of the group, provided the group has made a clear, constructive effort to encourage the non-participating member to co-operate. An uncooperative individual may receive a separate grade in that case. Your teacher will also give verbal and written feedback in a group interview after the broadcast.

Students in the New Zealand radio project were given five class days in which to prepare, and an extra day for the broadcast. While writing scripts and practicing these, students also completed in-class work identifying fact from opinion, and mini-tasks designed to develop an awareness of how to express opinions using appropriate functional language. They also participated in group workshops with their teacher, who listened to a recording of their segment and offered advice about pronunciation and the presentation generally.

Students also had the opportunity to give small 'impromptu speeches' on previously unconsidered topics, which were designed to bolster confidence when speaking in English, 'on the spot'. This was done in case of an unexpected event during the live broadcast (e.g. too much time and nothing scripted or a technical malfunction).

Topics selected by students included:

1. 'Freeters' (casual workers in Japan)
2. Japanese Anime / Manga

3. The use of mobile phones and their impact on Japanese society
4. Sushi
5. The Japanese public transport system
6. ‘Must sees’ in Japan

The radio show took one hour. Students entered the studio one group at a time, while the others waited outside. In some years, if the group was large, half the group presented in one half-hour slot, while the others listened back at school. This process was repeated on another day with the other group.

A teacher acted as continuity host, prepared a ‘promo’ for the show, which was used to advertise it the week before, and guided the group through the show according to a student-planned ‘cue-sheet’ describing the entire show from beginning to end, with timing and group order noted, including music selections for use between each group segment. This ‘cue-sheet’ was given to the radio station ahead of the broadcast and was also used by the station’s technical staff on the day.

Students met with the teacher/continuity person prior to the final rehearsal, discussed the final arrangements and had a ‘dress-rehearsal’ before going to air. The show was recorded, and a master copy given to the continuity person, copies of which students were later able to purchase. The master copy remained on file to be used the following year.

Students listened to each other’s segments and participated in a feedback session after the radio show. Other classes were invited to listen to the live show and give feedback.

Students then wrote an evaluation of their individual and group performance and the project. The teachers met and discussed assessment. Finally, grades were distributed in group meetings,

along with written and spoken comments.

APPLICATIONS

The ‘live’ radio show can be readily adapted to suit other contexts. If the option of a live broadcast from a real radio station is not available, students could record podcasts, or ‘You-tube’ clips for publishing online. Alternatively, the show could be ‘simulated’ and presented in-class, or to other classes. Another option is to pre-record it for broadcasting on a school announcement system, or do it live in the same way. The ‘live’ broadcast introduces an element of challenge that most students, though nervous, seem to enjoy. The satisfaction of successful completion is worth the risk!

CONCLUSION

If our aim as teachers is to help improve our students’ ability to function effectively as users of English, then a project-based approach, such as that described here, can help towards this end in that it bridges the gap between the classroom and ‘real life’ (Fried-Booth 1997).

The process of learning thus becomes as significant as the product (the broadcast), so classroom time is used purposefully. Students sometimes also work together voluntarily outside of class-time in concentrated planning sessions, using English to develop their ideas.

Project work enables students to use English in a real way to communicate effectively, as they plan together, negotiate ways of achieving their goals, select appropriate language, organize ideas, state opinions and reach consensus about how to solve any emerging problems. They must delegate tasks and assume responsibility for themselves and the group, decide from where, and how, to gather information and resources, organize this and then present it. These skills promote a quality end-product, but,

more importantly, may be transferred to other learning tasks and contexts, so it is important to remind students that the 'how' of what they are doing is just as important as the 'what', and to help them make connections between the skills they are developing and those required for other work they do.

In collaborative project work, even lower-level learners are able to make a useful contribution. Every participant has background knowledge and experience which will help achieve group goals. Therefore, each participant's contribution is considered valuable, and if all members are conscious of their common goal, mutual scaffolding, including language correction, can occur in a supportive manner and be accepted without offence.

Since the final outcome is a public performance, students are naturally concerned to be as accurate as possible. The end result does not need to be 'perfect' but should demonstrate thoughtful, critical self-correction and language development. Pronunciation difficulties assume a specific focus, and repetitive practice before the public broadcast enables students to rehearse thoroughly until they are comfortable presenting and confident that their listeners will understand them.

Motivation is usually high, as is the level of commitment to the group and a high standard of performance. The students in this project enjoyed the collaborative process, and in many cases continued to maintain their friendships, using English with each other, long after the study abroad experience was over.

Student feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and consistently described how the group project had substantially improved skills and confidence when using English. There was, of course, the added excitement of creating something unique, and sharing it with a large, diverse and very real public audience, and the challenge of achieving something none of them had ever done

before – a real-life radio broadcast in a foreign language!

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Effective Language Practice in the Classroom

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Effective Language Practice in the Classroom

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Abstract --The aim of this article is to highlight the importance of truly effective language practice in the classroom where learners need to be pro-actively engaged in the learning process. As language practice is arguably one of the most important stages of learning, it underscores the teacher's responsibility to initiate and manage activities that will provide learners with ample opportunities for meaningful practice. The focus thus is on Practice with a capital P.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

As language practitioners we need to understand the basic principles that form the foundation of 'meaningful practice'. Harmer (2007) sees it as repeated encounters with language which are not simply repetitive but varied, spaced out over time and which provide plenty of opportunities to use language, thus stimulating learners to be actively engaged. Why are *repeated* encounters necessary?

Penny Ur explains this phenomenon by drawing a parallel to the three-stage process of skills-learning through the stages of *verbalization, automatisation, autonomy* (Ur 1996: 20). The first stage i.e. *verbalization* is the presentation phase where teachers

may define, describe, demonstrate or elicit from learners. The second stage is the longer-term phase of meaningful practice through the target language by repeatedly doing various practice activities that involve concentration, thinking about and paying attention. It is the process of gradually moving on to the stage of performing correctly or efficiently without conscious thinking, thus resulting in *automatization*. The final stage is *autonomy* where learners take their behavior further and improve on their own by speeding up and by perceiving and creating new combinations, thus allowing themselves to go on to advanced levels of language use. These three stages help to consolidate learning by activating the subconscious mind, gradually leading to 'mastery'. As English language teachers, we are probably quite happy with the first two stages of learning i.e. verbalization and automatization and leave the autonomy stage to be pursued by learners themselves through a process of self-directed development.

In addition, links are drawn to *the psycholinguistic processing of learning*. This needs to be undertaken by facilitating the complex process of language intake from short-term memory to long-term storage. It is therefore necessary to provide learners ample opportunities for automatization of language use by activating the sub-conscious mind. This assists in consolidating learning, improving performance, leading to competence. An important component in this process is the cognitive element of *'noticing'* (Schmidt 1990). 'Noticing' emphasizes that unless language is noticed, learners are unlikely to focus on the learning process. 'Consciousness raising' is facilitated by this noticing phenomenon through activities that involve learning in a meaningful way.

Finally, there is a preference for the *discovery approach* to learning (Bruner 1967) which advocates learning by doing i.e. experiential learning. Discovery learning can occur when

students are not provided with an exact answer but rather the materials in order to find the answer themselves. It allows the learner to explore and find out elements that develop understanding of language through plenty of exposure to language in use and plenty of opportunities to use the language. These elements are crucial for learning to take place.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Ur (1996) lists the following factors as being necessary for a language learning activity to be *effective*:

Validity – This focuses on whether the declared skill of the lesson is actually being practiced in the class and not some other skill(s), e.g. the teacher declares it is a speaking class and then does a reading lesson with few opportunities for the learners to speak. Of course, we need to be aware that there is an integration of different skills in any lesson but the main focus needs to be the on the skill that the lesson in supposed to be practising.

Based on pre-learning – This indicates that it is not a completely 'out of the blue' lesson. There needs to be some previous familiarity or link which is perceived by the learners, i.e. they have been introduced to the content or language structures in a previous class or the teacher may use some lead-on materials, perhaps even a warm-up.

Volume – This is very important as it refers to the amount of language that the learners actually engage with during the activity, i.e. the amount of meaningful language generated by learners (not necessarily always accurately). We can use a simple metaphor of a glass of water – the more water there is in the glass, the more learner-generated language has occurred. At the end of the lesson, the teacher can reflect on the amount of learner-language that has been produced.

Success-orientation – The activity needs to be of such a level, both linguistically and cognitively, that there is the likelihood of learners achieving success at most times; otherwise learners become de-motivated and lose interest. On the other hand, teachers need to be careful that the activity is not too easy – there has to be some challenge. Otherwise, learners might be bored.

Heterogeneity – This is an attempt to address the issues of different learning styles and levels of learners. Besides providing variety in the activities and the content, it also focuses on different levels of competence. This may be achieved by asking learners, for instance, to do at least 3 out of 6 given questions, thus allowing weaker learners to fulfill requirements without losing face.

Interesting – This has become the keyword in learning materials and tasks. The topic, task and the input material need to attract the learners so that they get involved and engaged in the activity.
Teacher assistance – The teacher needs to be encouraging and appreciative and be available to answer questions during the activity.

The factors of effective language practice mentioned above ties in with insights from Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research (Tomlinson 2011) which further forms the basic principles of the *communicative approach* which advocates that learners learn a language through using it to communicate in authentic and meaningful ways and that learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error (Richards & Rodgers 2002).

CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES

How can teachers provide opportunities for *effective* language practice in the classroom? This has already been referred to in

section 2 above. When teachers apply the *'discovery approach'* to learning without first giving learners all the explanations and rules, they actually provide opportunities for learners to *'notice'* language items and '*discover'* for themselves what the answer might be. This also encourages learners to engage actively in the task.

Skills-based activities are more amenable to interactive modes of learning such as group and pair work, even if the class size is very large. These interactive modes provide opportunities for learners to tackle the activity along with their peers. After completing the task, teachers may assess the activity and evaluate it in terms of the criteria of *effectiveness* presented above. It is likely to be more meaningful through collaborative professionalism where the teacher may ask one or two colleagues to sit in and observe his/her class. Even students may be asked to apply one or two, if not all, the criteria, particularly the elements of interest, volume and success-orientation. Letting students reflect on an activity they have just completed is an effective way to make learners understand the usefulness of engaging and participating in class activities.

Reference may be made here to the concept of '*grammaring'* advocated by Thornbury (2001) which argues that classroom grammar activities need to: provide appropriate conditions for consciously looking at language through interesting texts and exercises; allow engagement with language; and allow language to emerge from learners.

Unless learners *notice* elements of language, they are unlikely to process it. This obviously negates rule-based grammar teaching and favors *discovery* approaches that *provoke* noticing through a process of exploration and cognitive effort. Plenty of exposure to *language in use* and plenty of opportunities *to use language* are vitally important for effective language practice in the

classroom.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Grammar Activity (see Appendix 1)

Reading Activity (see Appendix 2)

REFERENCES:

Bruner, J. S. (1967). *On Knowing: Essays for the left hand.* Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching. Fourth Edition. Essex: Pearson Longman.*

Richards, J & T. Rodgers. *(2002). Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schmidt, R. (1990). 'The role of consciousness in second language learning'. *Applied Linguistics* 11: 129-158.

Thornbury, S. (2002). *Uncovering Grammar.* Oxford: Macmillan

Tomlinson, B. (2011). *Materials Development in Language Teaching*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

APPENDIX 1

Discovering Grammar

Level: Beginners/ Lower Intermediate

Objective: Focusing on forms of regular and irregular verbs.
Read the text. Do you find anything funny in it?

A small boy ran into a neighborhood shop. He <u>pushed</u> his way to the front of the counter He <u>started</u> to speak to the shop assistant but he told the boy to wait. Other customers <u>wanted</u> groceries. He <u>served</u> them while the boy <u>waited</u>. Every time the boy <u>opened</u> his mouth, the assistant told him to wait. After about ten minutes, the assistant <u>asked</u> what the boy <u>wanted</u>. The boy said, "Sir, there was a man near your car. He broke the lock and took something from inside".

Now look at the <u>underlined verbs</u> in the text again. How is the past tense form of the verb made? Can you make a rule for the way the past tense is formed in these words?

After you have finished, find some <u>other past tense verbs</u> that are used here. How are they different from the underlined verbs? Can you think of a different rule for them?

APPENDIX 2

Reading Activity: 'The neighbor's cat', adapted from Harmer (2007)

Level: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate

Objective: Ordering paragraphs, reading for gist, reading for specific information, prediction, discussing possibilities, discussing cultural matters, role-play.

Except for the first two paragraphs, paragraphs 3-7 are jumbled in the story below. Put them in the right order by writing the numbers of the paragraphs.

The Neighbor's Cat

1) The Moriarty family moved into a house two doors down the road one sunny Wednesday in July. They seemed like nice people. We invited them for a drink the following Friday.
2) Our next-door neighbor Jane loves animals. She has a rat and two budgerigars. She knocked on our door on Thursday morning. 'Is this your cat?' she asked. She was holding an old, thin ginger cat with a little green collar. 'No', we replied. 'We've never seen it before. Why?'
3) 'How are you getting on in your new home?' one of us asked.
4) 'I don't think it's very well', Jane said. 'I'm going to take it to the vet'. We agreed with her idea. She cares about animals a lot. But when we saw her again that evening, she was looking sad.
5) 'Oh fine', said Mrs Moriarty looking happily at her husband and her two young children. 'But there's just one problem. Our cat's gone missing'.
6) 'You know that cat?' she said, 'the ginger one with the green

collar? Well, the vet said it was very old and very sick. So he gave it an injection. Put it to sleep. It's in cat heaven now. Well, what else could he do? We didn't know whose cat it was.'
7) On Friday evening, the Moriartys came for a drink. So did Jane and two other friends from across the street.

Activities:

A) Decide exactly who is at this small party.

B) In groups, decide how the story continues. Does the next-door neighbor explain what has happened? Do they keep quiet about this and continue their conversation? Do they tell the Moriarty family quietly the next day? How will Mr Moriarty/Mrs Moriarty react? What will the children feel? How does Jane feel?

C) Role-play in groups : one of the people who knows about the cat goes to the Moriarty's place the next day and tells what has happened.

(Teacher may make up other relevant activities)

THT

01.07.10
Class: XII
Sec: C (Sci.)
Total: 141
Present: 63
Absent: 78

Absent Rolls: 1, 6, 8,
10, 13, 14, 16–20, 22, 25, 29–3
35–37, 39, 42, 44, 45, 47
50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 71–79, 86, 90,
91, 94, 96–99, 102, 10
105, 107, 114–116, 121
124, 126–128, 133, 134
137, 138, 139, 142