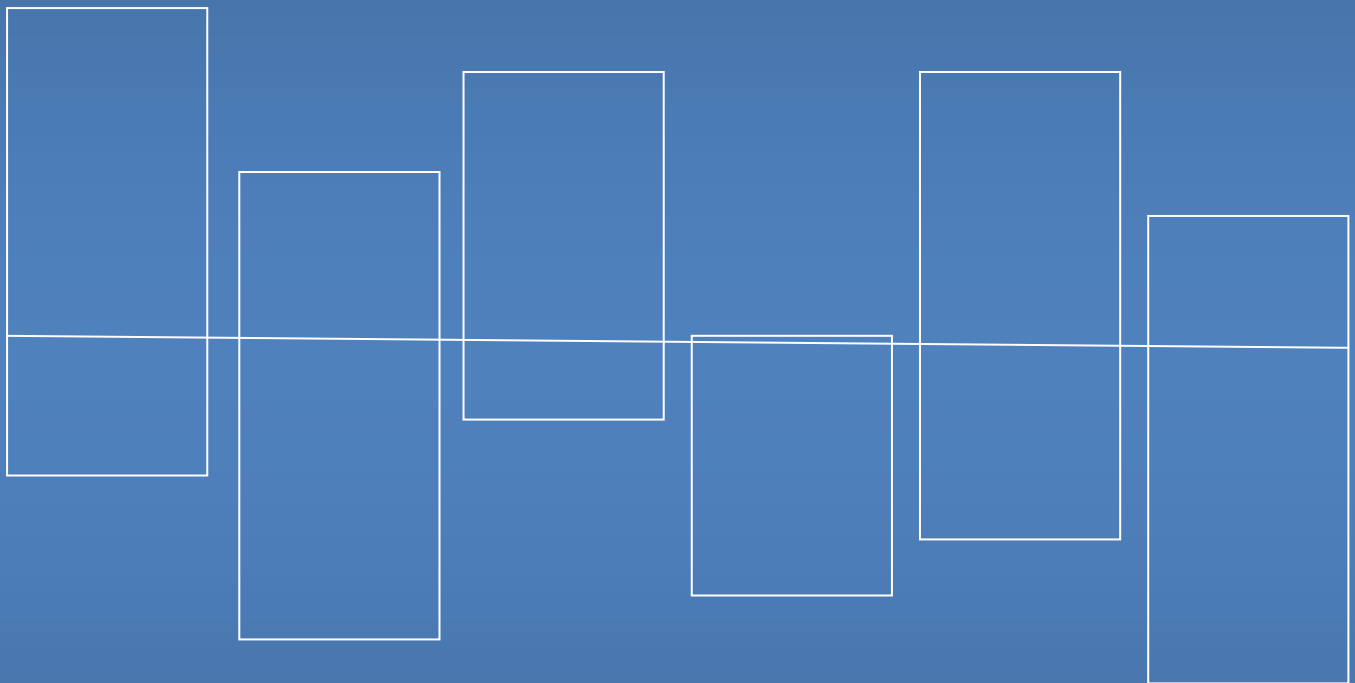


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Foreword from the Editor

I would like to welcome the readers to the third volume of the TESOL Journal. Since the beginning of the journal in December 2009, it has rapidly grown in terms of two indicators. First is the rapid increase in the number of submissions per issue and the journal being abstracted in several databases. Having several submissions in the journal made the editorial team to carefully select articles that are publishable and attractive to researchers across the globe. The journal is now abstracted and indexed in Asian Education Index, Social Science Research Network, Summons Serial Solution Index by Proquest, Google Scholar, Open J-Gate, NewJour, and Ulrich's web. The articles are rapidly accessed by numerous readers across the globe and the articles citations are improving.

I would also like to formally welcome the new set of associate editors for the journal who agreed to work in the selection and review of suitable articles. The new associate editors are Maria Belen Diez-Bedmar (Universidad de Jaen Paraje las Lagunillas, Spain), Karen Kow Yip Cheng (University of Malaya), Airil Haimi Mohd Adnan (Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia), Ali Jahangard (Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran), Nuray Alagözülü (Baskent University Faculty of Education), Liu Xinghua (University of Reading, UK), Monica Stella Cardenas Claros (The University of Melbourne, Melbourne-Australia), and Caroline Ho (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore).

This issue provides a perspective about the development in the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages. Richard Gonzales provided empirical evidence on individual difference variables to account for the motivation to learn foreign language among students. Junfeng Xin and Rochelle Irene Lucas found that bilingual children exhibited noun bias in their English language and verb bias in Mandarin when interacting with caregivers. Glenn Toh and Darryl Hocking asserted that change in pedagogy is needed in order to improve students' academic writing. Nora Binghamdeer found evidence that challenge existing framework of adults learning a second language. Yi-Ching Pan provides teachers a variety of techniques for students to learn the reading and listening parts of the TOEIC. Carlo Magno Magno provided evidence that when teachers use scaffolding, students in the primary grades improved their reading speed, reading proficiency and decrease reading anxiety. Eden Regala Flores analyzed different grammar course syllabus and describe the current status of teaching grammar in the Philippines.

The articles in this issue are focused on different angles on how to improve teaching and learning of the English language that are deemed useful for educators, teachers, and language researchers.

Motivational Orientation in Foreign Language Learning: The Case of Filipino Foreign Language Learners

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to determine the extent of which motivation differentiates foreign language (FL) learners. The secondary purpose of this study is to compare motivation of Filipino FL learners using the Foreign Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire and to investigate whether age group, sex, FL being learned and length of studying of FL could influence differentiation in the motivation of FL learning among Filipino students. Thus, it was hypothesized that the variables included in this study could differentiate motivation of FL learners. The participants of this study were 150 students who had elected to study foreign languages from three universities in Metro Manila. Eighty of the participants are females (53.3%), while 70 are males (46.7%). Data were cross-sectional in nature with 26 learning Chinese (17.3%), 40 learning French (26.7%), 50 learning Japanese (33.3%) and 34 learning Spanish (22.7%). Results show that younger learners motivational orientation is towards cultural understanding, cultural integration and self-satisfaction. Females are more motivationally oriented than males towards communication and affiliation and self-efficacy. Japanese language learners are more motivationally oriented towards career and economic enhancement, French language learners towards affiliation with foreigners, and Spanish language learners towards self-efficacy. The study recommends some instructional and pedagogical strategies for teaching foreign languages.

Keywords: Motivation in language learning, Foreign Language Learning, Motivational differences, Filipino foreign language learners, motivational factors in language learning, Second Language Learning, cultural integration, language and culture, motivational orientation, FL learning motivation questionnaire, Filipino learners, language acquisition.

Introduction

Over the years, various research studies on second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) learning revealed that motivation is one of the affective factors that significantly differentiate learners (Carreira, 2005; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994; Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003; Gardner, 2005; Matsumoto & Obana, 2001; Yang, 2003; Yu & Watkins, 2008) and influences learning achievement (Brown, 2000; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Guilloteux, 2007; Guilloteux & Dörnyei, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2005; Skehan, 1989, 1991). The seminal work of Gardner

and Lambert and their colleagues that introduced the Socio-Educational Model of Language Learning (Gardner, 1985, 1988, 2000, Gardner & Tremblay, 1994) instigated the interest of research on motivation in language learning. The initial construct of their motivational model classified motivation into two orientations, namely: 1) *integrative orientation* (positive attitude toward the foreign culture and a desire to participate as a member of it); and 2) *instrumental orientation* (goal of acquiring language in order to use it for a specific purpose, such as career advancement or entry to further studies and education). Their studies strongly suggested that “integratively” motivated learners were more successful in learning languages than those learners who are instrumentally motivated (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Furthermore, their studies resulted in the development of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), which at the outset was designed to assess what appeared to be the major affective factors involved in the learning of French as L2 in Canada (Gardner, 1985). Consequently, the AMTB has contributed to further popularization of motivation research in language learning. Guilloteaux (2007) noted that the publication of AMTB has triggered motivation studies in many different parts of the world to explore students’ motivation to learn L2 (e.g., Mondada & Doehler, 2004), heritage languages (e.g., Noels, 2005; Syed, 2001), FL (e.g., Inbar, Donitsa-Schmidt & Shohamy, 2001; Ushioda, 2001) and English as FL and international language (e.g., Brown, Robson & Rosenkjar, 2001; Lamb, 2004).

Although Gardner and Lambert studies have been used as the anchor of further studies on motivation in FL and L2 learning and acquisition, the search to further define, redefine and conceptualize motivation in FL and L2 continued up to the present and even revisited by many researchers (e.g. Spolsky, 2000). Consequently, many studies tried argue and challenge Gardner’s best-known constructs concerning language learning motivation (Au, 1988; Belmechri & Hummel, 1998; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Norton, 2000; Oxford, 1996; Oxford & Sherin, 1994). During the later part of the 80s and the decade of 90s, new agendas, redefinition and conceptualization of motivation in FL and second language (L2) learning have emerged, particularly the series of studies done by Dörnyei and some colleagues (1990; 1994; 1998; 2001; 2005). However, in spite of the challenges and arguments, Guilloteaux (2007) maintained that the most universally accepted contribution of Gardner’s seminal work to the field has been that learning a second language is unlike learning any other subject. This is because it “involves imposing elements of another culture into one’s own life space” (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 193), and because it is easily influenced (positively or negatively) by a range of social factors, such as prevailing attitudes toward the language, geo-political considerations, and cultural stereotypes (Dörnyei, 2005).

Gonzales (2006) and Spolsky (2000) noted that the later part of the 80s and the decade of the 90s marked the popularity of motivation research in language learning. New developments and conceptualization of motivation in L2 and FL populated lots of literature. In 1989, Julkenen conducted a study of motivation in FL learning that utilized sixth and eight grade Finnish children who were studying English as a foreign language. This study was based on the earlier work of Boekerts (1987; 1989) that tried to investigate both role of motivation as a trait and a state in language learning and its relationship to student competence and attribution processes. Using a questionnaire to gather

students' general FL motivation, the study was able to identify eight factors, namely: (1) a communicative motive; (2) classroom level intrinsic motivation; (3) teacher and method motivation; (4) integrative motivation that reflects position attitudes towards English and Americans; (5) helplessness factors; (6) anxiety; (7) criteria for success and failure; and (8) a factor that deals with the latent interest in learning English.

In 1990, Dörnyei started to conduct a series of studies that aimed to define the relevance and characteristics of integrativeness and instrumentality in FL learning. Using a Hungarian sample, he administered a motivation questionnaire to young adult learners of English. His study yielded a motivational construct that encompasses four motivational factors, namely: 1) an instrumental motivational sub-system; 2) an integrative motivational sub-system that includes four dimensions such as general interest in FL, a desire to broaden one's view and avoid provincialism, a desire for new stimuli and challenges, and a travel orientation; 3) need for achievement; and 4) attribution about past failures.

Using another sample of uni-cultural Hungarian setting, Clement, Dörnyei, and Noels (1994) did a further study that applied the socio-educational construct to the acquisition of English. In this study, they were able to draw out five factors that they called: (1) xenophilic orientation, a factor that corresponds to a friendship orientation reported by Clement and Kruidenier (1983); (2) identification; (3) socio-cultural or interest in cultural aspects of the English world; (4) instrumental knowledge orientation that suggests that being more educated and knowledgeable is related to success in work and studies; and (5) English media factor which is similar to but more general than the "reading for nonprofessional purposes" and "passive socio-cultural" dimensions described by Dörnyei (1990).

Other studies that challenged Gardner's socio-psychological approach were those conducted by Au (1988), Crookes and Schmidt (1991), and Oxford and Shearin (1994). They argued that integrative orientation proved far less important in FL setting where such integration is virtually not possible. Leaver (2003) supports this argument because in some cases, highly ethnocentric learners who do not even like the culture of the languages they are learning have achieved very high levels of FL proficiency. These contradicting and contrasting research findings stimulated more new studies about learners' motivation in FL and L2 and prompted Gardner and his colleagues to expand substantially the Socio-Education Model based on new research (Tremblay & Garner, 1995). These studies further resulted in the growing interest in making motivation research more relevant to classroom practice that undeniably stimulated by the 1994 debate in the *Modern Language Journal* (Dörnyei, 1994a, 1994b; Gardner & Tremblay, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994).

Crookes and Schmidt (1991, 1994) studies noted the importance of the relevance of classroom related factors. They found that teachers' style, competence, rapport, self-confidence, classroom atmosphere, and group cohesion are important contributors to motivation. From then on, the situation-specific classroom factors were found to be significant contributors to L2 and FL motivation in the foreign language classroom (Julkenen, 1989, 1991; Clement et al., 1994). This new conceptualization of motivation in L2 and FL learning was further confirmed by Dörnyei's (1994, 2006, 2008, 2009) conceptualization of motivation that is more classroom-based. Part of his

framework rests on the Learning Situation Level, which is associated with situation-specific factors ingrained in various aspects of L2 and FL learning within a classroom setting. His framework includes three components: (1) course-specific; (2) group-specific; and (3) teacher-specific.

Alternatively, Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed another model of understanding motivation that widely used in education psychology. They presented a dichotomy of motivation - intrinsic and extrinsic. They conceptualized intrinsic motivation as something comes from within the learner and are related to learner's identity and sense of well-being. They described that learners are intrinsically motivated when they consider learning as a goal in itself. Conversely, extrinsic motivation is something that comes from outside the learner. Learners are extrinsically motivated when they attached learning process with rewards (such as grades, awards or honors) and viewed that their learning performance has an equivalent rewards or consequences. Their earlier concept of motivation has been expanded with the introduction of self-determination theory (STD). According to Deci and Ryan (2008), STD is an empirically based theory of human motivation, development and wellness. As a macrotheory of human motivation, STD addresses such basic issues as personality development, self-regulation, universal psychological needs, life goal and aspirations, energy and vitality, nonconscious processes, the relationship of culture to motivation, and the impact of social environments on motivation, affect, behavior, and well-being (p.182). They further suggest that STD is applicable to issues within a wide range of life domains.

Erhman, Leaver, and Oxford (2003) suggested that intrinsically motivated learners find reward in the enjoyment of learning activity itself and achieve a feeling of competence in doing a task, which Bandura (1997) called it as self-efficacy. Csikszentmihalyi (1991) opined that in such tasks, learners may experience flow and optimal sensation of enjoyment and competence that has yet to be sufficiently explored in the L2 field. Furthermore, a number of researchers and theories such as Walqui (2000) have found a strong correlation between intrinsic motivation and success in language learning than extrinsic motivation. However, they also underscored that that a learner's total motivation is most frequently a hybrid of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Pintrich and Schunk (1996), further argued that external rewards play an important role in learning. External rewards can either increase or decrease intrinsic motivation, depending on how they affect self-efficacy. In 1996, Schmidt, Boraie, and Kassagby used this dichotomy of motivation in their study. Their study yielded nine factors: 1) determination; 2) anxiety; 3) instrumental motivation; 4) sociability; 5) attitudes to culture; 6) foreign residence; 7) intrinsic motivation; 8) belief about failure; and 9) enjoyment. They argued that intrinsic-extrinsic distinction to integrative-instrumental distinction espoused by Gardner (1985), Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) and Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic (2004).

Within Asian contexts, studies on motivation of L2 and FL learning and related factors have also been widely carried out. In Japan, Kimura, Nakata, and Okumura (2001) conducted a study that explored types of language learning motivation possessed by Japanese EFL learning from across-sectional learning milieus. They indicated that some factors are characteristics of certain learning milieus, while other are common to all situation. Lay (2008) also a conducted a study that looked into the motivation of learning German in Taiwan as a pilot

study on the FL-specific motivation among Taiwanese learners of German language. Her study concluded that most Taiwanese students are interested in language learning and the ability to speak several languages is important to them because multilingualism carries a high-value in contemporary Taiwan society. In Hong Kong, Lau and Chan (2003) did a study on reading strategy use and motivation among Chinese good and poor readers, while Wang (2009) conducted study in China and both studies concluded that most Chinese students in key universities have a high motivation to learn English well because a good level of English will help them more considerably to obtain better jobs, especially those in companies or joint ventures which have international network or subsidiaries, to read technical materials and to study abroad.

In terms of other social and psychological variables, Yang (2008) looked into the motivational orientations and selected learner variables of East Asian language learners. Using a 341 college students, the study found out that East Asian language learners were highly influenced by interest, language use, and integrative motivational orientations. Integrative was more important than instrumental motivation. The students had a stronger desire to learn a speaking and listening skills than to learn reading and writing. Yang also found out that Korean learners were more strongly motivated than Chinese or Japanese learners. Muñoz and Tragant (2001) also did a study that determine effects of age and instruction. They found out that FL learners' motivation increase with school experience. Their study also uncovered that younger learners show more intrinsic types of motivation, while older groups show more extrinsic types and a preference for an instrumental type of motivation. On the other hand, Yu and Watkins (2008) investigated the relationship among motivational factors, cultural correlated and L2 proficiency using Western and Asian student who were learning Chinese at university level in People's Republic of China. The results of their study implied that the degree of integrativeness into Chinese culture and motivation was significantly and positively related to Chinese language proficiency, while language anxiety was significantly and negatively correlated to such proficiency.

In the Philippines, Lucas, Miraflores, Ignacio, Tacay and Lao (2010) conducted a study that focused on intrinsic motivation factors that may help identify what specific L2 communicative skills are more helpful to students to learn. The study showed that selected freshmen college students from different universities in Manila are intrinsically motivated to learning speaking and reading skills and that they are intrinsically motivated via knowledge and accomplishment. They further reported that by and large, the Filipino students are intrinsically motivated to learn English because of their exposure to the language. Moreover, they argued that Filipino learners are inherently motivated to use English in speaking, reading and listening due to the nature of these skills and the tangible rewards that these skills may bring the learners.

Synthesizing from various language learning models and previous studies on motivation for FL learning, Gonzales (2000) conducted a study to investigate into the internal structure and external relevance of FL motivation and he conceptualized and defined FL learning motivation among Filipino learners using factor analysis. This study led him to develop the Filipino Foreign Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire (FFLLM-Q). His study yielded six motivation orientation towards FL learning: (1) desire for career and economic enhancement; (2) desire to become global citizen; (3) desire to

communicate and affiliate with foreigners; (4) desire for self-satisfaction in learning; (5) self-efficacy; and (6) desire for cultural integration. Gonzales (2006) suggested that summing up the six factors, Filipino who are learning FL are driven by goal-orientation, cultural orientation, and self-orientation. To further scrutinize these factors that emerged from his study and the contradicting and complementary results of previous studies and emerging relevance of motivation in FL, the researcher takes this new study. Moreover, the limited number of studies of motivation in language learning in general in the Philippines makes this study relevant and timely.

In sum, the major purpose of this study is to determine the extent of which motivational orientation differentiates learners of FL in Philippine context. The secondary purpose of this study is to compare motivation among Filipino FL learners using the FFLM-Q and to investigate whether age group, sex, FL being learned, nature of FL and length of study of FL could influence differentiation in the motivation of FL learning among Filipino students. Thus, it was hypothesized that the variables included in this study could differentiate motivational orientation of FL learners.

Methods

Participants

The participants of this study were 150 students who had elected to study foreign languages from three universities in Metro Manila. Eighty of the participants are females (53.3%), while 70 are males (46.7%). The participants were learning different foreign language: 26 learning Chinese (17.3%), 40 learning French (26.7%), 50 learning Japanese (33.3%) and 34 learning Spanish (22.7%). The ages were between 17 to 20 years old, each with at least one semester/trimester of foreign language prior to the survey. They have been studying FL for at least one semester/trimester to 4 semesters/trimesters, and majority or 78 are taking FL as a required major subject (52.0%), 62 are learning FL as required minor subject (41.3) and only 10 are taking it as an elective subject (6.7%).

Instruments

The main instrument used for this study is the Filipino Foreign Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire (FFLLM-Q) developed by Gonzales in 2001. This questionnaire consists of 50 Likert-items that measure six motivational orientations in FL learning, namely: (1) desire for career and economic enhancement; (2) desire to become global citizens; (3) desire to communicate and affiliate with foreigners; (4) desire for self-satisfaction; (5) self-efficacy and (6) design to be integrated with other cultures.

This questionnaire has alpha coefficient reliability index of .98 and the combined factors can account for 62.0% of the total variance of the test. In this questionnaire, the participants were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with each statement, using as scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The second instrument used for this study elicited information about the participants' age, gender, number of semester/trimester of FLL prior to the survey, nature FL class; and foreign language being learned.

Procedures and Data Analysis

Students who were enrolled in foreign language classes during the school years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 were administered the FFLM-Q during their FL classes. Their FL teachers administered it. Upon completing the main questionnaire, the students were also asked to accomplish the accompanying respondent's information sheet. The students were not given any reward for accomplishing the questionnaire.

The responses of each individual respondent were encoded using Excel and later subjected to data analysis using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, t-test, and ANOVA were used to describe and compare responses of the subjects according to age group, sex, number of semester/trimester of learning FL prior to survey, reasons for studying Japanese languages and other languages being learned.

Results

Motivational Orientation of Filipino FL Learners

Using the FFLM-Q, overall the most primary motivational orientation of Filipino FL learners is towards career and economic enhancement (Factor 1: $M=4.12$; $SD=0.55$). The Filipino FL learners are more motivated to learn FL in order to have better chances in getting a good job in the future, having a high paying job, having a competitive edge over others because of knowledge of FL, and obtaining better opportunities to work and study abroad. The Filipino learners are also motivated to learn FL because of their desire to communicate and affiliate with foreigners (Factor 3: $M=3.99$; $SD=.56$) and desire to understand other cultures and become global citizens (Factor 2: $M=3.89$; $SD=.50$).

Results strongly indicate that Filipino FL learners' motivational orientation is towards goal orientation signifying that they basically learn FL having a definite goals in mind - that is to have better careers and more opportunities for economic enhancement in the future and in the process being able to communicate and understand the culture of the target language community.

Differentiation of Motivational Orientations

Table 1 shows the influence of sex on the motivational orientation of FL learners. The results show that females and males differ significantly in their motivational orientation towards their desire for communication and affiliation with foreigners and self-efficacy. Females are more motivated to learn FL to be able to communicate effectively to foreigners so that they can easily affiliate with the speakers of the target language community. It was also revealed that female learners are also more motivated to learn an FL because of self-efficacy, that is,

they believe that having the ability and skills to learn FL will give them more drive to pursue FL learning.

Table 1
Comparison of Motivational Orientation by Gender

Factors		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
1. Career and economic enhancement	Male	70	4.07	.59	0.851
	Female	80	4.16	.51	
2. Cultural understanding	Male	70	3.88	.48	0.002
	Female	80	3.89	.52	
3. Communicative and affiliation with foreigners	Male	70	3.89	.59	4.274*
	Female	80	4.08	.50	
4. Self-satisfaction in learning	Male	70	3.89	.66	0.181
	Female	80	3.85	.53	
5. Self-efficacy	Male	70	3.41	.61	11.741**
	Female	80	3.76	.63	
6. Cultural integration	Male	70	3.49	.56	1.127
	Female	80	3.59	.62	

* > .05 ** > .01

In terms of age group, it was revealed that learners differ significantly in their motivational orientations in three factors of the FFLLM-Q. Results show that oldest learners (20 years old and above) are the more motivated to learn FL because self-satisfaction they gain from learning. It was also revealed that oldest learners are the most motivated toward cultural integration. On the other hand, youngest learners (17 years old or younger) were found to be most motivated toward cultural understanding and desire to become global citizens.

When the learners were grouped according to the FL they are learning, it was revealed that they differ significantly in two factors: communicative and affiliation with foreigners and self-satisfaction. Spanish learners are the most motivated to learn FL because of self-satisfaction that they gained in learning the language while the Chinese learners are the most motivated to learn FL because of their desire to be able to communicate and affiliate with the target language community. While there were no significant differences among the learner groups in Factor 1, results revealed that Japanese language learners are most inclined to learn FL because of career and economic enhancement and for cultural understanding.

Table 2
Comparison of Motivational Orientation According to Age Group

Factors	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
1. Career and economic enhancement				
17 years or younger	46	4.06	.55	1.226
18 years old	34	4.01	.71	
19 years old	38	4.23	.40	
20 years old or older	32	4.17	.44	
2. Cultural understanding				
17 years or younger	46	4.10	.38	6.805***
18 years old	34	4.90	.46	
19 years old	38	3.63	.52	
20 years old or older	32	3.87	.53	
3. Communicative and affiliation with foreigners				
17 years or younger	46	3.95	.53	2.370
18 years old	34	3.81	.63	
19 years old	38	4.11	.55	
20 years old or older	32	4.10	.48	
4. Self-satisfaction in learning				
17 years or younger	46	4.03	.58	6.455***
18 years old	34	3.59	.54	
19 years old	38	3.73	.61	
20 years old or older	32	4.08	.49	
5. Self-efficacy				
17 years or younger	46	3.65	.58	1.334
18 years old	34	3.40	.74	
19 years old	38	3.65	.62	
20 years old or older	32	3.66	.62	
6. Cultural integration				
17 years or younger	46	3.78	.40	37.724***
18 years old	34	3.23	.51	
19 years old	38	3.07	.45	
20 years old or older	32	4.06	.43	

* > .05 ** > .01 *** > .001

Table 3
Comparison of Motivational Orientation according to FL being Learned

Factors	N	Mean	SD	F
1. Career and economic enhancement				
Chinese	26	3.99	.66	2.179
French	40	4.09	.50	
Japanese	50	4.32	.50	
Spanish	34	4.06	.52	
2. Cultural understanding				
Chinese	26	4.02	.58	1.496
French	40	3.96	.43	
Japanese	50	3.82	.56	
Spanish	34	3.82	.50	
3. Communicative and affiliation with foreigners				
Chinese	46	4.08	.55	2.859*
French	34	4.14	.39	
Japanese	38	3.83	.60	
Spanish	32	4.01	.60	
4. Self-satisfaction in learning				
Chinese	26	3.61	.70	3.585**
French	40	3.78	.53	
Japanese	50	3.93	.56	
Spanish	34	4.07	.55	
5. Self-efficacy				
Chinese	26	3.35	.49	1.674
French	40	3.67	.73	
Japanese	50	3.58	.62	
Spanish	34	3.69	.66	
6. Cultural integration				
Chinese	26	3.43	.65	0.347
French	40	3.58	.63	
Japanese	50	3.55	.50	
Spanish	34	3.55	.65	

* > .05 ** > .01

Table 4
Comparison of Motivational Orientation according to the Nature of FL

Factors	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
1. Career and economic enhancement				
Required major subject	78	4.11	.49	0.258
Required minor subject	62	4.14	.58	
Elective/Not required subject	10	4.03	.79	
2. Cultural understanding				
Required major subject	78	3.93	.49	0.447
Required minor subject	62	3.84	.51	
Elective/Not required subject	10	3.90	.46	
3. Communicative and affiliation with foreigners				
Required major subject	78	4.07	.46	2.203
Required minor subject	62	3.95	.63	
Elective/Not required subject	10	3.70	.65	
4. Self-satisfaction in learning				
Required major subject	78	4.05	.57	8.430***
Required minor subject	62	3.67	.56	
Elective/Not required subject	10	3.64	.54	
5. Self-efficacy				
Required major subject	78	3.61	.66	0.251
Required minor subject	62	3.56	.67	
Elective/Not required subject	10	3.70	.28	
6. Cultural integration				
Required major subject	78	3.78	.53	15.300***
Required minor subject	62	3.30	.55	
Elective/Not required subject	10	3.20	.55	

* > .05 ** > .01 *** > .001

Another learners' variable that was investigated in this study is the nature of FL learning. Two factors revealed significant differences when the group was divided according to whether the FL they are learning is a major, a minor or an elective subject. Learners who are studying FL because it is their major subject were found to be the most motivationally oriented towards the self-satisfaction and desire for cultural integration. Noticeably, those studying FL as elective or not required subject are the least motivated in these factors. Those who are studying FL as a major subject were also found to be the most motivationally oriented towards cultural integration.

Table 5
Comparison of Motivational Orientation According to FL being Learned

Factors	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
1. Career and economic enhancement				
1 semester/trimester	50	4.17	.56	0.941
2 semesters/trimesters	46	4.01	.63	
3 semesters/trimesters	22	4.19	.41	
4 semesters/trimesters	32	4.18	.44	
2. Cultural understanding				
1 semester/trimester	50	4.01	.42	2.680*
2 semesters/trimesters	46	3.78	.54	
3 semesters/trimesters	22	3.87	.45	
4 semesters/trimesters	32	3.66	.53	
3. Communicative and affiliation with foreigners				
1 semester/trimester	50	3.85	.59	8.807***
2 semesters/trimesters	46	3.84	.50	
3 semesters/trimesters	22	4.46	.41	
4 semesters/trimesters	32	4.10	.48	
4. Self-satisfaction in learning				
1 semester/trimester	50	3.93	.62	3.424**
2 semesters/trimesters	46	3.68	.58	
3 semesters/trimesters	22	3.78	.58	
4 semesters/trimesters	32	4.08	.49	
5. Self-efficacy				
1 semester/trimester	50	3.52	.57	0.569
2 semesters/trimesters	46	3.58	.76	
3 semesters/trimesters	22	3.65	.63	
4 semesters/trimesters	32	3.71	.57	
6. Cultural integration				
1 semester/trimester	50	3.60	.47	3.760**
2 semesters/trimesters	46	3.33	.56	
3 semesters/trimesters	22	3.07	.48	
4 semesters/trimesters	32	4.10	.43	

* > .05 ** > .01 *** > .001

In terms of length of period of studying FL, results revealed that the learners significantly differ in four factors measured by FFLM-Q, the only variable that yielded significant differences in four factors. When students were grouped according to the number of terms that they are studying FL, their motivation orientations towards all the three factors pertaining to culture and relationship to the language target community were found to be significant. In addition, they also differ in terms of self-satisfaction to learning FL. Further analysis of the means revealed that, the longer they study FL, the more they differ in motivational orientation, that those who studied FL for four terms have higher motivational orientation in FL learning towards cultural integration, communicative and affiliation with foreigners and self-satisfaction in learning than those who have studied only for a term. On the contrary, motivation

towards cultural understanding is higher among those who studied FL only for a term than those who studied for more than two terms.

Discussions

In the Philippines, language learning is considered a necessity because of the presence of a mother-tongue or first language and mandatory second language which is English and/or Filipino (*Tagalog*) and a foreign language required among selected high school and university students. There are more than eighty mother-tongues or local languages (*some are called dialects*) in the country. In all schools, Filipino and English are the media of instruction, although mother language is used on the first two to three years of elementary schooling. Hence, English is not considered an FL in this study, but rather a second language (L2). Languages such as Japanese, French, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, German, Russian, Korean, among others, are considered FL in Philippine language classrooms. Although, Chinese language, particularly Mandarin, are studied at Chinese Schools even at elementary level. Likewise, basic Arabic is also taught in some schools in country, particularly those following the Madrasah curriculum.

In this present study, the respondents who took part are university students who are taking FL primarily as a major, a minor or elected subject in their courses of study. These students are enrolled in bachelors' courses such as International Studies, Asian Studies, Hotel and Restaurant Management, International Business Management and few are taking Humanities, Literature, International Politics, Foreign Relations and Engineering. They take one language course per term with an equivalent of 3 units, that is, spending at least 3 hours of language class per week. Some FL courses include additional laboratory time for writing and speaking.

This study tried to explore the motivational orientations of Filipino FL learners in terms of the motivational factors measured by FFLLM-Q namely: (1) desire for career and economic enhancement; (2) desire for cultural understanding to become global citizens; (3) desire to communicate and affiliate with foreigners; (4) desire for self-satisfaction in learning; (5) self-efficacy; and (6) desire to be integrated with other cultures. The factors indicated in this study are drawn from seminal works of Gardner and Lambert (1979) and succeeding models of motivation such as those of Dörnyei (1994, 1998, 2003, 2007, 2009), Deci and Ryan (1985), Julkenen (1989, 1991), Oxford and Sherin (1996) and Schmidt, Boraie and Kassabgy (1996). In this regard, it would be interesting to inquire how such motivation orientations identified in the earlier study of the author likely to differentiate learners when grouped according to identified variables.

In general, the study found out that Filipino FL learners are instrumentally and extrinsically motivated. They are highly motivated to learn FL because of economic and career opportunities, indicating that they are more instrumentally motivated, that is, they desire to learn FL for pragmatic gains such as getting a better job and even employment abroad. Looking at Gardner's (1985, 1998, 2000) construct of motivation, it can be said the Filipino learners predominantly belong to instrumental dichotomy of motivation arising out of a need to learn FL and/or second language for functional or external reasons. Although, in most Gardner and Lambert initial studies (1959; 1972),

particularly their Canadian research, found integrative orientation to be more significant and argued that integrative motivation is more paramount than instrumental orientation in language learning. The result of this present study also compliments their earlier findings among Filipino language learners (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). They found that instrumental orientation is more powerful factor in learning than integrative orientation among Filipino English language learners. The result of this study also reaffirms other viewpoints of motivation that instrumental goals such as having a good career in the future play a prominent role in learning a language be it an L2 or FL (Dörnyei, 1990; Julkenen, 1989, Dörnyei, Csizer & Nemeth, 2002; Ehrman, 1996).

Looking beyond the major motivational orientation of the Filipino FL learners being mainly instrumental in nature, this study also found that their motivational orientation also include the desire to communicate and affiliate with foreigners and to be integrated with the culture of the target language community. Thus, it is a hybrid of other dichotomies and constructs of motivation advocated by Gardner et al and other motivational research scholars such as Dörnyei (1994, 2003, 2008) Deci and Ryan (1985, 2008), Ramage (1990). Although they clarify that the main emphasis of Gardner's et al motivation model has been on general motivational components grounded in the social milieu rather than in the FL classroom. In addition, they contend that instrumental motivation and extrinsic motivation may be more applicable and appropriate for FL learning because students have limited or no experience with the target language community and as a result are 'uncommitted to integrating with that group'.

Obviously, the results of this study categorically reaffirms that Filipinos learners' motivational orientation is a hybrid of both instrumental and integrative motivation and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Likewise, the motivational orientation of Filipino learners is influenced by their achievement goal orientation and level of competence they achieved while learning the language. Looking at the achievement goal framework espoused by Elliot and McGregor (2001), achievement goals are viewed as the purpose of competence-relevance behavior, in this instance foreign language learning (Elliot, 1997; Maehr, 1989). Learners are motivated to learn a language in order to achieve mastery to get integrated into the language community and competence in order to get employed and/or accepted in further studies that require FL skills. Hence, the motivational orientation of Filipino learners can also be interpreted in term of mastery goals and performance of the achievement goal framework.

The exposure of Filipino learners to various languages and different culture including the luxury of choice to enroll in any FL would probably explain this finding. The opportunities of the learners included in this study to have potential exposures abroad and to the target language community, in the form of exchange scholarships, study visits and even internship programs, would also explain why they are both instrumentally and integratively motivated. Therefore, it is important that language educators should look at motivation as a multifaceted dynamic phenomenon where learners can be motivated in multiple ways and that it is important to understand the how's and why's of learner motivation (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002).

In this study, there are two individual factors that were considered – sex and age of the learners. It is hypothesized that males and females' motivational

orientation are the same and learners' age does not influence motivational orientation in FL learning. This study revealed that males and females differ significantly in some of the motivational factors measured by the FFLLM-Q, particularly the desire for communication and affiliation with foreigners and self-efficacy. It was found out that females have higher motivational orientation than males in these two factors. Females tend to study FL because they have higher desire to communicate and affiliate with foreigner, thus making them more integratively motivated than males. This finding is consistent of the

findings of Swanes (1987) that Asian women were found to be significantly less instrumentally motivated than Asian men but no such difference were found among the Europeans, Americans, Middle Eastern and African women. However, she also opined that low instrumental motivation among females could be due to lack of opportunities for them to work abroad and use FL in their future career. This may also hold true among Filipinos females. Although going abroad is an open option to both males and females, males are preferred to go abroad, thus they have better chance and opportunity than females. The different motivational orientation between males and females is partly explained by the fact that the courses are offered in connection with special needs such as working abroad, joining an international development agency, becoming a foreign service staff, and working in hospitality industries abroad. The study also confirms earlier findings of Williams, Burden and Lanvers (2002) that girls found learning French is being "cool" and really make an effort to learn the language.

In terms of age group, the respondents of this study were grouped into four age groups. It was found out that the respondents differ significantly in three motivational factors - cultural understanding, cultural integration and self-satisfaction in FL learning. Collier (1988) and Gomleksiz (2001) expressed that successful language acquisition depends on the learner's age. Both authors believe that there is a certain period in acquisition of L2 and that the motivational orientation is affected. They also asserted that older students learn faster, more efficient acquirers of school language than younger learners.

In this study, the younger group (17 years old and below) has significantly higher desire to understand other cultures than older groups (19 and 20 years old and above). On the contrary, the oldest group (20 years old and above) has higher desire for cultural integration than younger learners. The understanding and appreciation of cultures as well as language acquisition is affected by biological factors and age. Lenneberg (1967) claims that there is certain period in acquisition of L2. He theorized that the acquisition of language is an innate process determined by individual's biological and social growth. He implied that younger adolescents can learn a language via understanding of cultures better than older ones, while older learners can learn a language via cultural integration. Other earlier findings such as the study of Thompson and Gaddes (2005) that concluded older students appear to have an advantage over so-called younger learners in terms of language and cultural maturation and the study of Lasagabaster and Doiz (2003) that maturational factor was decisive, with older students showing more complexity in linguistic performance, support this present study. Hence, it can be said that Filipino beginner learners of FL are more motivated to learn when cultural understanding is part of the learning process and as they go on learning the FL, they become more integratively

motivated, shifting their motivational orientation from merely understanding a culture to being integrated into the target language community.

The other three variables included in this study are the FL being learned, length of time of studying FL and nature of FL being studied. It was also hypothesized that course-specific variables do not influence the motivational orientation of Filipino FL learners. The results show that when the respondents were grouped according to FL being learned, their motivational orientation differs in terms of communicative and affiliation needs with foreigners and self-satisfaction in learning. The results show that the respondents differ significantly in factors pertaining to integrative orientation and intrinsic motivation. They differ significantly in factors related to instrumental and extrinsic motivational orientation. These results confirm what Okada, Oxford and Abo (1996) in study of Americans learning Japanese and Spanish. They found out that the motivation of American learners of Japanese is more of integrative and intrinsic motivation. There was far greater integrative motivation among learners of Japanese than of learners of Spanish and concluded that self-satisfaction and motivation must be higher when one tries to learn more difficult language because greater persistence and determination are needed to cope with the stress of a difficult situation. The presence of Hispanics in the US and Chinese in the Philippines will also partially explain why there is a strong motivational orientation in Spanish learning among Americans and Chinese learning among Filipinos. Hence, it can be implied that the presence of a target language community in foreign country would enhance integrative motivation of FL learners. The common assumption is that the FL learners can use their FL knowledge in integrating themselves into the target language community more easily. On the other hand, self-satisfaction in FL learning can be a prime motivation especially when the FL is perceived to be a difficult language to learn and no potential opportunity to be integrated, and yet, they still acquire certain level of competency.

Notwithstanding the similarities in results and conclusions, longer exposure to FL classroom learning was also found to influence motivational orientation of FL learners. Muñoz (2006) in her reviews of morphological acquisition, opined that a certain amount of exposure is needed to ensure accurate performance. Conceivably relative frequency of various structures in the input becomes a salient factor for learners once they have enough of the L2 to 'tune to the frequency', that is, beyond the very elementary level of the less proficient learners in her study. This argument supports the findings of this present study. This study revealed that the longer time spent in studying FL would influence learners' shift of motivational orientation. Those who have studied longer tend to be more motivated by self-satisfaction achieved in learning FL, cultural integration and communicative and affiliation with target language community. The tendency to cling towards integrative orientation is stronger as the learners study an FL longer. This conclusion brings new light to an important debate pertaining the role of input in FL learning. FL teachers must be able to encourage shift motivational orientations towards self-satisfaction rather than simply learning a language for utilitarian reasons.

A combination of individual and course-specific factors definitely influences the motivational orientation of FL learners. In any context, FL learning presents an exceptional situation due to the multifaceted nature and role of language (Dörnyei, 1994, 2008). FL learners come to study FL with diverse

background, interests, motivation and attitude. As Yu (2010) pointed out, learning a foreign language abroad is affected by a number of affective variables including adaptation, attitudes and socio-cultural variables. He further argues that socio-cultural adaptation and academic adaptation are important factors in developing FL motivation and positive attitudes. It is therefore essential for FL teachers to ensure that they have accurate information about their students. Their awareness and knowledge of the kinds of attitudes and goals their students bring with them should be used in identifying the strategies that they need to enhance those motivations in order to develop better language learning classroom situation. Their knowledge of learners' motivational orientation should serve as a guide in designing a more responsive FL classroom curriculum, program of study and learning materials. All in all, while motivational orientation may be viewed as transitory, it should be tapped to maximize learners' capacity to learn and appreciate not only the target language but also the target language community. Hence, the use of diagnostic assessment - both cognitive and non-cognitive measures is strongly suggested especially when the background and composition of FL learners is diverse and contrasting.

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Noun versus Verb Bias in Mandarin-English Bilingual Pre-School Children

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Abstract

This study investigated the presence of noun or verb bias in 15 Mandarin-English bilingual pre-school children. The naturalistic bilingual child-caregiver interactions were tape-recorded for 30 minutes each time. The study also addressed the relationship between children's language production and the salient positions of the caregivers' language input. The findings show that the bilingual children exhibit a noun bias in their English vocabularies and a verb bias in their Mandarin words. However, more verbs were significantly produced in children's Mandarin production as compared to those in English language. In order to determine if there is a correlation between salient positions of nouns and verbs in bilingual caregivers' language and children's language production of nouns and verbs, a Two-Way Analysis of Variance was used. The results suggest that such hypothesized correlation does exist. Specifically, in Mandarin, caregivers' frequency of nouns in the final position of utterances seemed to influence the noun bias displayed in bilinguals' early lexicons. In English, the frequency of nouns in the final position of caregivers' language input was a robust variable, which was most likely to predict the noun bias manifested in bilingual children's early vocabularies.

Keywords: noun bias, verb bias, bilingual children, salient positions, correlation

Introduction

This paper examined the presence of noun or verb bias in Mandarin-English bilingual pre-school children in the Philippine context. The naturalistic interactions between 15 Mandarin-English bilinguals and their bilingual caregivers were tape-recorded for 30 minutes each time. The study showed that more verbs were significantly produced in children's Mandarin production and that the correlation between children's language production and the salient positions of the caregivers' language input with regard to nouns and verbs was found. The study addressed four research questions: (1) Do Mandarin-English bilingual preschool children produce more verbs than nouns? (2) Do they

produce more verbs than nouns in both Mandarin and English? (3) Do the salient positions of nouns or verbs in the caregivers' input influence the bilingual children's production of nouns and verbs? (4) Is the influence of caregivers' input the same with Mandarin nouns and verbs and English nouns and verbs?

One of the debates on children's lexical studies is to examine whether they exhibit a universal "noun bias" when learning a language. Such universality of a noun-dominated early vocabulary was termed as "noun bias" (Tardif, 1996, p. 494). Past research on this topic has provided a large body of evidence supporting this lexical bias (Nelson, 1973, cited in Hoff, 2001; Gentner 1978, cited in Hoff, 2001; Benedict, 1979, cited in De Boysson-Bardies, 1999; and Bates, et al., 1983, cited in De Boysson-Bardies, 1999; Goldfield, 1993, cited in Tardif et al., 1997; Nelson, et al., 1993, cited in De Boysson-Bardies, 1999). However, "noun bias" had been questioned ever since. Some researchers argue that "verb bias" dominates children's early vocabularies in English (Bloom et al. 1993, cited in Hoff, 2001; Fernald & Morikawa, 1993, cited in Hoff, 2001), Korean (Gopnik & Choi, 1995, cited in Hoff, 2001), and Mandarin (Tardif, 1993, cited in Tardif, 1996; Tardif, 1996; Tardif, Shatz, & Naigles, 1997; Tardif et al., 1999).

Obviously, lexical bias in children's early words has been well documented so far. What has been studied is monolingual children's lexical development. Tardif (1996) reexamined this noun bias universality by conducting a research among ten 22-month-old monolingual Mandarin-speaking children, who were recorded while talking to their caregivers at home. Another study was conducted by Camaioni and Longobardi (2001), who recorded the naturalistic interaction between Italian adults and their children to test the verb bias hypothesis since Italian is a pro-drop language, which allows syntactic subjects to be omitted. Fifteen monolingual Italian-speaking mothers and their children took part in the study. Each 45-minute audio-video recorded session entailed three contexts: play with familiar toys, play with new toys, and meal time. They concluded that Italian mothers produced more verb types and tokens and placed verbs more frequently in salient utterance positions, they also posited that children's actual verb-biased input predicted their verb-oriented pattern of acquisition.

Still, other monolingual studies investigated the lexical bias cross-linguistically. Tardif, Shatz, and Naigles (1997) recorded naturalistic interactions between the caregivers and toddlers in their homes from three languages: English, Italian, and Mandarin. For the English data, six children from a larger sample of 63 mother-child dyads from Wisconsin were included. The Italian data came from the Calambrone corpus and included recorded interactions between six children and their caregivers in their Pisa homes. The study concluded that variations in the input were consistent with children's spontaneous production, to be specific, the English-speaking caregivers highlighted nouns, the Mandarin-speaking counterparts emphasized verbs, and the Italian monolingual caregivers showed an uncertainty.

Tardif, Gelman, and Xu (1999) compared English and Mandarin 20-month toddlers. This study highlighted the role of activity context. Based on the analysis and discussion, they concluded that nouns prevailed in book reading, but they did not show dominance in toy play. Given all these research, it can be concluded that the “noun bias” hypothesis is subject to many factors, such as the sampling methods and the context wherein the experiments are taking place.

However, studies of lexical bias on bilingual children are few, and nonexistent among Mandarin-English bilinguals. The lexical bias in the early lexical development has also gained recognition in the area of bilingual language development. By “bilingual,” Hangen (1953) posited that it begins at the point where a speaker of one language can produce complete, meaningful utterances in the other (Editorial work by Anthony Liddicoat Research and Publications Officer, 1991). Lucas and Bernardo (2008) pioneered an updated way to view the “noun bias” among bilingual children in the Philippine setting. Lucas and Bernardo (2008) highlighted the importance of nouns for children, “nouns are important linguistic blocks of learning, and the development of other parts of speech may greatly depend on the young language learner’s acquisition and production of these lexical categories in the initial phase of language acquisition.” (p. 149). Sixty Filipino-English bilingual pre-school children and their caregivers constituted the participants, with 30 coming from each gender. Their ages ranged from 3 to 3.92 years. They reached the conclusion that the noun bias was solely obvious in bilingual children’s English production rather than in their Filipino utterances. In English, the noun bias displayed in children’s early vocabularies was found to be associated with the frequency of nouns in the caregivers’ language input and with the initial positions of nouns of the caregivers’ utterances.

Method

This section specifies the design and the methodology of the present study. The study made use of both quantitative and descriptive design. The researcher used the recordings of “naturalistic interactions” as the research technique since among the three generally used research techniques (the other two being caregivers’ diaries and the checklist measure of vocabulary such as the MacArthur Communicative Development Inventory [CDI]), this technique was more representative of language features of speech produced by children and their caregivers. Additionally, it was more feasible for the researcher to use this technique in conducting the study.

Language Context

According to Ang-Sy (1997), the Chinese in the Philippines occupy roughly 1.3% of the total Philippine population. Although Fookien is still the lingua franca of the Chinese community because 85% of the Chinese immigrants come from Fujian province, their first language is no longer Fookien

but the local Filipino language or English. The use of Fookien is largely confined to the older generation and the business community. However, the number of preschool children who already know Fookien is very limited; Mandarin is the medium of Chinese-language instruction in most Chinese schools. Therefore, children who reside in the Chinese communities in the Philippines but are educated in the Mandarin language tend to be Mandarin-English bilinguals. The Chinese community in the Philippines constitutes the backdrop of the present study.

Participants

Fifteen Mandarin-English bilingual children (10 girls, 5 boys) were recruited from three medium classes of the kindergarten section of the Philippine Cultural College for the recordings of their naturalistic interactions with their caregivers; each session lasted for around 30 minutes. The age ranged from 5 to 6 years old ($M = 5.25$ years, $SD = 0.32$ years). The children were admitted by their teachers as good speakers in both Mandarin and English. All the children were first born and had middle socioeconomic status (SES). Caregivers are two Chinese graduate students studying at De La Salle University-Manila. They are Mandarin-English bilinguals, proficient in Mandarin and English. Therefore, they met the criteria to be caregivers in terms of language proficiency.

Procedure

Permission and assistance were asked from the Principal of the Philippine Cultural College and Kinder / Nursery Supervisor of the school before the recordings. The school library was finally selected as a proper location to generate clear recordings of the participants. Before each recording session, the research purposes were made known, and the instructions were followed to guarantee effective recordings. Additionally, nicknames or pseudonyms were used to protect participants' privacy or to make them feel comfortable. During the recordings, they were allowed to talk about any interesting topics based on children's picture books, which the researcher prepared in advance.

The recorded audio files were saved for analysis. Afterwards, the voice files were transcribed by the researcher. The transcripts followed the transcription conventions devised by Cameron and Coates (1998, cited in Coates, 1998), the following variables were analyzed: (1) the frequency of nouns and verbs in children's language production; (2) the frequency of nouns and verbs in children's Mandarin and English language; and (3) the correlation between caregivers' salient positions of nouns and verbs in Mandarin, and English and children's nouns and verbs production in Mandarin and English. Finally, a doctoral graduate student studying at De La Salle University-Manila

was invited as the inter-rater to countercheck the transcripts of the present study.

Coding

After the recordings, the data were transcribed. The Mandarin utterances were underlined and translated into English. The researcher coded every single word as it appeared in an utterance. Repetitive words or words from a song or poem were exempted from the analyses. The transcription conventions devised by Cameron and Coates (1998) employed in the present study (Cameron & Coates, 1998, cited in Coates, 1998, p.xx, see the Appendix 1).

Data Analysis

This section is about how the data were analyzed in detail, for instance, in the present study, how nouns and verbs were defined in Mandarin and English, how the frequency and salient positions were analyzed specifically, and what statistical methods were used.

This part includes four topics: (1) how nouns and verbs were defined in Mandarin; (2) how nouns and verbs were defined in English; (3) analysis of the frequency of nouns and verbs; and (4) analysis of salient positions of nouns and verbs.

How nouns and verbs were defined in Mandarin in the present study.

With some modifications, the present study used the definitions of nouns and verbs in Tardif's (1996) study. The definitions of Mandarin nouns and verbs that were used in the present study were summed up in what follows:

Definitions of Mandarin nouns used in the present study. a) Common Nouns, such as “*niao*”(bird); b) Proper Nouns, such as “*Xianggang*”(Hong Kong); and c) Pronouns, “this” and “that” used pronominally, such as “*Wo jingchang qu gongyuan, wo xihuan na li.*”(I always go to park, I like *there*.)

Definitions of Mandarin Verbs used in the present study. a) Main Verbs, such as “*He shui*”(Drink water); b) Qualitative Verbs, such as “*Wo xihuan zhe fu hua*” (I like this picture); c) Classificatory Verbs, such as “*Wo xing wang*” (My last name is wang); d) Copula “*Shi*”, such as “*Wo shi xuesheng*” (I am a student); e) Verb “*You*”, such as “*Wo you henduo wanju*” (I have lots of toys); f) Stative Verbs, such as “*Da huilang shui zhao le*”(The wolf *is asleep*); g) Adjectives, such as “*Tian hei le*” (It is dark); and h) Nouns, such as “*Wo liusui*” (I *am six years old*).

How nouns and verbs were defined in the English data of the present study. A **noun** is a word or word group that names a person, a place, an idea, or a thing (object, activity, quality, condition). When it is used to label a particular person or object, it is said to be a *proper noun*; for example, *Catharine, New York*; when it labels someone or something in a general way, it is a *common noun*, for instance, *boy* and *country* (LaPalombara, 1976).

A **verb** is a word or word group that expresses action, condition, or state of being. It may be a single word or it may be preceded by one or more auxiliary words. It may also be particles. The verb function is referred to as **prediction**. A verb is either **intransitive**, which requires no words to complete its meaning, for example, “The new term *starts*,” **transitive**, which requires a direct object to complete its meaning, for example, “He *caught* the ball;” or **linking**, which links the subject to a nominal or an adjective in the predicate, for example, “Jane *is* a passionate speaker” (LaPalombara, 1976).

Frequency of nouns and verbs. Based on the definitions of nouns and verbs in Mandarin and English discussed above, nouns and verbs categories were counted by using the table below to investigate the lexical bias manifested in the development of early vocabularies of Mandarin-English bilingual preschool children. The frequency of nouns and verbs was counted in Mandarin and English respectively to identify in which language nouns and verbs were more prevalent in lexicons of Mandarin-English bilinguals.

Salient positions of nouns and verbs. Caregivers’ nouns and verbs that appeared in the initial position and final position of English and Mandarin utterances were counted. This tabulation was designed to find out whether the salient positions of caregivers’ language input of nouns and verbs would result in the noun or verb bias in children’s language production.

Regarding sentence salient positions, following Tardif et al.’s (1997) method, the lexicons were to be coded as “initial” position if they are located at the beginning of utterances and as “final” position if they are located in the end of utterances. Take the following Mandarin and English utterances for example:

Example 1 (Mandarin utterances):

Caregiver: *Xi huan yingyu ma?* (Mandarin)

(Do you like English?) (English translation)

Child: *Xi huan.* (Mandarin)

(Yes, I do.) (English translation)

Example 2 (English utterances):

Caregiver: What do you like to do?

Children: Reading.

In caregiver's Mandarin utterance, "*Xihuan*" (Like) was located at the beginning of the utterance, therefore, it was tabulated in "MANDARIN-Initial position-VERBS;" because "*yingyu*" (English) was located at the end of the Mandarin utterances, it was tabulated in "MANDARIN-Final position-NOUNS." In caregiver's English utterance, "do" was located in the end of an utterance, so, it was tabulated in "ENGLISH-Final position-VERBS."

The present study employed the word "utterance" as the unit to analyze the salient positions of nouns and verbs as they appeared in the naturalistic interactions between the bilingual preschool children and their bilingual caregivers. An utterance is "a unit into which the stream of speech could be separated intonationally" (Crookes & Rulon, 1985). It is a stream of speech with at least one of the following characteristics: (1) under one intonation contour; (2) bounded by pauses; and (3) constituting a single semantic unit. "Utterance" was used as an analysis unit because it met the following two criteria of utterance: One is the "reliability," the other is the "validity."

Statistical Treatment

To answer whether bilingual Mandarin-English preschool children will produce more verbs than nouns in their interaction with their bilingual caregivers, mean scores and standard deviations of nouns and verbs in all the data were computed respectively and compared. As for the lexical dominance in each language, the *t*-test was used to test the difference between Mandarin and English on the nouns and verbs children and their caregivers used in their conversation. In order to further trace whether children's lexical bias follows the same pattern as that of their caregivers, the mean scores were compared to each other under the category of noun and verb. With regard to the question whether children's language production of nouns and verbs in initial and final positions across mandarin and English was influenced by their caregivers' salient positions of language production, mean scores and percentage of both children and caregivers in every salience (initial Mandarin, final Mandarin, initial English and final English) were tabulated and compared, then a Two-Way Analysis of Variance was employed to test the possible correlation between caregivers' salience of nouns and verbs and children's language production in both languages.

Results

This section statistically explores the research questions from the following three facets: (1) comparison between verbs and nouns that children and their caregivers used in the interactions; (2) difference between Mandarin and English on the nouns and verbs in bilingual children's utterances; and (3) the correlation between the salient positions of caregivers' language input and the noun or verb bias in bilingual children's language production.

Difference between Verbs and Nouns for Children and Caregivers

To answer the first research question, mean scores and standard deviations were computed and compared for nouns ($M = 72.27$) and verbs ($M = 70.07$) in overall data. Results revealed that the number of nouns and verbs Mandarin-English bilingual preschool children produced in the interactions had almost the same frequency; the number of nouns was only slightly higher than that of verbs. This noun prevalence in children's language production was consistent with a noun bias in the caregivers' language input, which manifested an average of 311.93 nouns and 304.87 verbs. This seems to suggest that nouns are more prevalent in children's and caregivers' discourse. Children's presence of noun bias seemed to be compatible with the noun bias in caregivers' language input. However, children's nouns and verbs are not significantly different.

Table 1

A Comparison of Mean Scores and Standard deviations of nouns and verbs in overall data between children and caregivers

	Children		Caregivers	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Nouns	72.27	46.54	311.93	53.28
Verbs	70.07	46.39	304.87	57.30

The *t*-test for two dependent samples was used to further test the difference between the nouns and verbs bilingual preschool children produced, $N = 15$, $df = 14$, $p = 0.841$. Marked differences are significant at $p < .05$; therefore, the conclusion was that there is no significant difference in the number of nouns and verbs produced by the children. In other words, Mandarin-English bilingual five-year-olds seemed not to display an apparent noun bias. Mean scores were identical for children's nouns and verbs.

Do the bilingual children produce more verbs than nouns in both Mandarin and English? This question was explored in the next section.

Difference between Mandarin and English on the Nouns and Verbs of Bilingual Children Used

Verbs seemed to be more prevalent in the Mandarin language. The Mandarin-English bilingual children produced an average of 48.20 nouns ($SD = 40.68$), as compared to verbs ($M = 58.20$, $SD = 44.76$); however, in the English language, it seemed to be totally different: nouns dominated bilingual children's language production, for bilingual children produced an average of 24.70 nouns ($SD = 21.12$), as compared to verbs ($M = 11.87$, $SD = 16.16$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the presence of noun bias was found in the English discourse of the Mandarin-English bilinguals, and the existence of verb bias was apparent in their Mandarin discourse.

Table 2
The Difference between Mandarin and English on the Nouns and Verbs Bilingual Children Used

	<i>M</i> _m	<i>M</i> _e	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>N</i> _m	<i>N</i> _e	<i>SD</i> _m	<i>SD</i> _e	<i>F</i> Variances	<i>p</i> Variances
N	48.20	24.07	2.04	28	0.0510	15	15	40.68	21.12	3.17	0.0197
V					0.0008	15	15	44.76	16.16	7.67	0.0005

The *t*-test for two independent samples was used to further test the difference between Mandarin and English on the nouns and verbs bilingual preschoolers used in the naturalistic interaction with their caregivers. Regarding nouns produced by children the result was $p = 0.051$ because marked differences are significant at $p < .05$, so, the results showed that there is no significant difference between Mandarin and English on the nouns children produced. However, when Mandarin and English were compared, the result was $p = 0.0008$, thus, more verbs were significantly produced for Mandarin ($M = 58.20$) as compared to English ($M = 11.87$).

Also, children's verb bias may be associated with their caregivers' lexical bias. To explore this possible relationship, the lexical dominance was compared between children and caregivers in the following table.

Table 3 presents a possible relationship between children and their caregivers. Results showed that children displayed noun bias in their English language production and manifested the verb bias in their Mandarin language production. This accorded with their caregivers' noun prevalence and verb dominance in their English and Mandarin languages input respectively. This suggested that Mandarin-English bilingual children's noun / verb bias may have been conditioned by their caregivers' language input, and there was a positive correlation between them.

Table 3
A Comparison of the Lexical Dominance between Children and Caregivers

	Children (<i>Mean</i>)		Caregivers (<i>Mean</i>)	
	Mandarin	English	Mandarin	English
Nouns	48.20	24.07	159.53	152.40
Verbs	58.20	11.87	179.53	125.33

However, apart from the caregivers' influence in terms of frequency, was it possible that the salient position of caregivers' input could be another factor influencing the noun / verb bias in children's language production? To test possible correlations, data were analyzed in detail from four sub-topics: initial Mandarin; final Mandarin; initial English; and final English, in order to give answers to research questions 3 and 4.

Salient Positions of Caregivers' Language Input Influencing the Noun versus Verb Bias in Children's Language Production

The present study attempted to explain the noun or verb bias, which appeared in the vocabularies of Mandarin-English bilingual preschool children by considering the interaction between caregivers' salient positions and children's noun versus verb bias. In doing so, mean scores and frequency of nouns and verbs in salient positions were compared between caregivers and children (see Table 4). A correlation between caregivers' salient positions and bilingual children's lexical bias was found. This seemed to suggest that the nouns and verbs on the salient positions of caregivers' language input may be an important factor, which causes the noun bias or verb bias in children's discourse.

Table 4
A Comparison of Mean scores (M) and Frequency (%) between Caregivers and Children in Terms of Salient Positions in Mandarin (m) and English (e)

	I m*		F m*		I e*		F e*	
	<i>M</i>	%	<i>M</i>	%	<i>M</i>	%	<i>M</i>	%
Caregivers Nouns	30.60	19.18	50.80	31.84	17.40	11.42	46.60	30.58
Caregivers Verbs	24.47	13.63	36.60	20.39	12.47	9.95	18.60	14.48
Children Nouns	19.07	39.56	20.87	43.29	12.47	51.80	8.80	36.57
Children Verbs	20.87	35.85	13.40	23.02	2.00	16.85	2.73	23.03

* I m: Initial Mandarin; F m: Final Mandarin; I e: Initial English; F e: Final English

A Two-Way Analysis of Variance was employed to test the possible correlation between caregivers' salience and children's language production, as can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5
Univariate Results for Salient Positions: Sigma-restricted Parameterization Effective Hypothesis Decomposition (overall data)

	Level of Factor	Level of Factor	N	I m*		F m*		I e*		F e*	
				<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Total			60	22.92	18.82	30.43	23.21	11.08	12.10	19.18	21.95
Influence	Caregiver		30	25.87	18.25	43.73	22.71	14.93	13.06	32.60	23.77
Influence	Child		30	19.97	19.22	17.13	14.62	7.23	9.82	5.77	6.54
Word	Nouns		30	24.83	16.48	35.83	25.07	14.93	14.67	27.70	26.08
Word	Verbs		30	21.00	20.99	25.03	20.17	7.23	7.20	10.67	12.26
Influence* word	Caregiver	Nouns	15	30.60	16.82	50.80	22.74	17.40	17.18	46.60	24.30
Influence* word	Caregiver	Verbs	15	21.13	18.94	36.67	21.08	12.47	6.73	18.60	12.67
Influence* word	Child	Nouns	15	19.07	14.44	20.87	17.46	12.47	11.72	8.80	7.26
Influence* word	Child	Verbs	15	20.87	23.55	13.40	10.40	2.00	1.89	2.73	4.01

* I m: Initial Mandarin; F m: Final Mandarin; I e: Initial English; F e: Final English

As Table 6 presents, a Two-Way Analysis of Variance was used to determine if children's nouns or verbs bias was influenced by caregivers' initial Mandarin words. The results indicated that the influence of the caregivers' salient position had no significant main effect on the frequency of children's Mandarin words. Nouns ($M = 24.83$) and verbs ($M = 21.00$) also did not significantly vary on the frequency of initial Mandarin words. Results suggested that the interaction between the influence caregivers' initial Mandarin position and children's lexical bias was not significant in this case.

Table 6

Univariate Results for Initial Mandarin: Sigma-restricted Parameterization Effective Hypothesis Decomposition

	<i>df</i>	<i>I m* - SS*</i>	<i>I m - MS*</i>	<i>I m - F</i>	<i>I m - p</i>
Intercept	1	31510.42	31510.42	89.72	0.00
Influence	1	522.15	522.15	1.49	0.23
Word	1	220.42	220.42	0.63	0.43
Influence* Word	1	476.02	476.02	1.36	0.25
Error	56	19668.00	351.21		
Total	59	20886.58			

* I m: Initial Mandarin; SS = Sum of Squares; MS = Mean Square

Then, a Two-Way Analysis of Variance was similarly used to determine if children's lexical bias was influenced by caregivers' salient position in the case of the final Mandarin words (see Table 7). The results indicated that the influence of the caregivers had a significant main effect on children's frequency of Mandarin words (mean scores of caregivers = 43.73, mean scores of the children = 17.13). Nouns ($M = 35.83$) and verbs ($M = 25.03$) significantly varied on the frequency of final Mandarin words. But the interaction between the caregivers' influence of salient position and children's lexical prevalence was not significant in this case.

Table 7

Univariate Results for Final Mandarin: Sigma-restricted Parameterization Effective Hypothesis Decomposition

	<i>F m* - SS*</i>	<i>F m - MS*</i>	<i>F m - F</i>	<i>F m - p</i>
Intercept	55571.27	55571.27	161.722	0.00
Influence	10613.40	10613.40	30.89	0.000001
Word	1749.60	1749.60	5.0916	0.027965
Influence* Word	166.67	166.67	0.4850	0.489037
Error	19243.07	343.63		
Total	31772.73			

* F m: Final Mandarin; SS = Sum of Squares; MS = Mean Square

In the same way, as can be seen from Table 8, a Two-Way Analysis of Variance was employed to determine if the noun or verb predominance across the language production of the Mandarin-English bilingual preschool children was influenced by caregivers' English vocabularies in the initial position. The results indicated that the influence of the caregivers had a significant main effect on the frequency of initial English words (mean scores of caregivers = 14.93, mean scores of the children = 7.23). Moreover, nouns ($M = 14.93$) and verbs ($M = 7.23$) significantly varied on the frequency of initial English words. Nevertheless, the interaction between the influence of caregivers' salient position and word bias on the frequency of initial English words that the Mandarin-English bilingual preschool children produced was not significant.

Table 8

Univariate Results for Initial English: Sigma-restricted Parameterization Effective Hypothesis Decomposition

	I e* - SS*	I e - MS*	I e - F	I e - p
Intercept	7370.42	7370.42	61.25	0.0000
Influence	889.35	889.35	7.39	0.0087
Word	889.35	889.35	7.39	0.0087
Influence* Word	114.82	114.82	0.95	0.3329
Error	6739.07	120.34		
Total	8632.58			

* I e: Initial English; SS = Sum of Squares; MS = Mean Square

A Two-Way Analysis of Variance was used to determine if the Mandarin-English bilingual preschool children's noun or verb bias was influenced by their bilingual caregivers' English words in the final position (see Table 9). The results indicated that the influence of the caregivers' salient positions did have a significant main effect on the frequency of English words of children's language production. Nouns ($M = 27.70$) and verbs ($M = 10.67$) also significantly varied on the frequency of final English words. There is a significant interaction between the influence of caregivers' final English position and word predominance of bilingual preschool children.

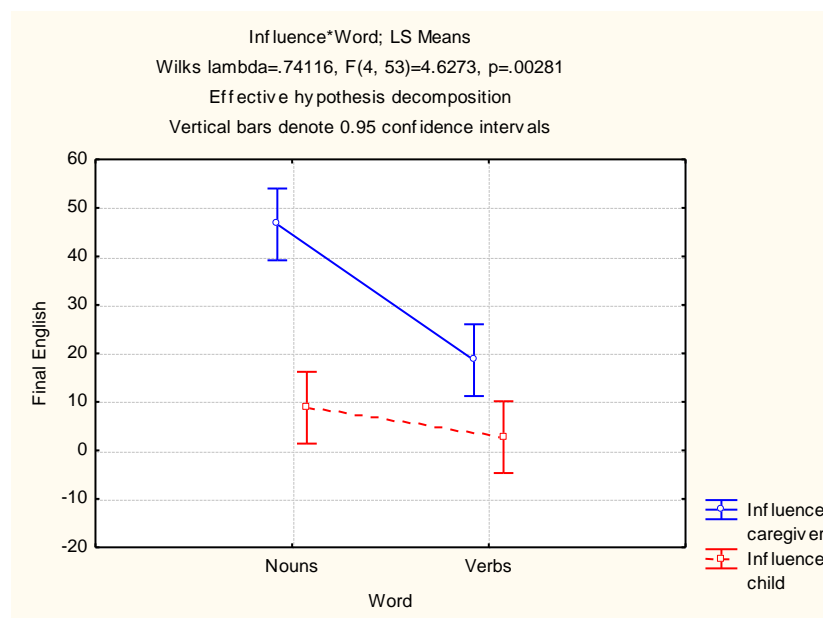
Table 9
Univariate Results for Final English: Sigma-restricted Parameterization Effective Hypothesis Decomposition

	F e* - SS*	F e - MS*	F e - F	F e - p
Intercept	22080.02	22080.02	107.76	0.0000
Influence	10800.42	10800.42	52.71	0.0000
Word	4352.02	4352.02	21.24	0.000024
Influence* Word	1804.02	1804.02	8.80	0.004414
Error	11474.53	204.90		
Total	28430.98			

* F m: Final Mandarin; SS = Sum of Squares; MS = Mean Square

As Figure 1 illustrates, the hypothesized correlation between the nouns and verbs of caregivers' final English words and children's lexical bias had been further verified. Results showed that more nouns were produced by Mandarin-English bilingual preschool children in the final English words. Children's noun prevalence had been more influenced by the caregivers' language input of nouns in the final English salient position. However, in the case of verbs, the correlation between caregivers' salient position and children's language production appeared to be weak.

Figure 1
Correlation between the nouns and verbs of caregivers' final English words and children's lexical bias



Discussion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that there is no significant difference in the number of children's production of nouns and verbs ($p > .05$) because the number of nouns and verbs Mandarin-English bilingual learners produced had the same frequency. According to hypothesis 1, it was expected that Mandarin-English bilingual preschool children will produce more verbs than nouns; such claim may be hypothesized from prior monolingual studies (Nelson, 1973, cited in Hoff, 2001; Gentner, 1982, cited in Hoff, 2001; Goldfield, 1993, cited in Tardif et al., 1997; Benedict, 1979, cited in De Boysson-Bardies, 1999). Because the meanings of nouns are much easier than verbs for children to understand, their early vocabularies tend to be noun biased. The results also suggested that caregivers' higher proportions of nouns in their interactions might contribute to the noun prevalence in the bilingual children's language production. This connection was also found previously, for example, Goldfield (1993) claimed that the correlation between parental noun types and those of children was significant (Goldfield, 1993, cited in Tardif, Shatz & Naigles, 1997, pp.540-541).

The question is why there is no significant difference in the number of children's production of nouns and verbs. One possible reason is that although the caregivers' language input manifested a slight noun bias across all data, an average of 311.93 for nouns and 304.87 for verbs, basically shows that the mean scores of nouns and those of verbs are very similar, this similarity in terms of frequency of caregivers' language input may result in an identical frequency of children's language production of nouns and verbs.

Another reason may be caused by the liberal method of counting nouns in the present study. Tardif (1996) noticed that monolingual Mandarin-speaking children produced more verbs than nouns when a conservative method of counting was employed; however, neither noun bias nor verb bias was found when a more liberal method of counting nouns was used.

The age of the Mandarin-English bilingual may also explain this language phenomenon. According to Gentner (1978, cited in Hoff, 2001), the relational meanings that verbs encode are less available to young children through nonlinguistic experience. After the production of children's first words, there occurs the word spurt. This vocabulary explosion happens for most children at the age of approximately 16 to 19 months (Benedict, 1979, cited in Bloom, 2002; Goldfield & Reznick, 1990, cited in Bloom, 2002; Nelson, 1973, cited in Bloom, 2002). When children become five years old, their language capacity may become matured enough to make sense of the relational meanings that verbs encode. The five-year-olds are able to use verbs much better, therefore, the noun bias may not be so apparent in their vocabularies.

In the language production of Mandarin-English bilingual children, verbs seemed to have a higher frequency in Mandarin language; conversely, in the case of English language, nouns seemed to be prevalent in bilingual

children's language production. The results supported previous studies on the conclusion that verb bias is shown in the early vocabularies of Mandarin children (Tardif, 1996; Tardif, Shatz, & Naigles, 1997; Tardif, Gelman, & Xu, 1999). In the English language, a number of studies, which recruited monolingual children, reported the noun bias in children's early lexicons (Nelson, 1973, cited in Hoff, 2001; Gentner, 1982, cited in Hoff, 2001; Goldfield, 1993, cited in Tardif et al., 1997; Benedict, 1979, cited in De Boysson-Bardies, 1999). Lucas and Bernardo (2008) studied the Filipino-English bilingual children; they reported that the noun bias was also obvious in these bilinguals' English language production. Replicating the previous results, the present study suggested that Mandarin-English bilingual children, in the same way, showed an apparent noun bias in their English vocabularies.

It was seen that children's noun bias in the English language and the verb bias in the Mandarin language, are consistent with their caregivers' lexical biases in their English and Mandarin language input respectively. Such accordance may result from the caregivers' and children's parallel frequencies of nouns and verbs to begin with. For bilingual children, the mean scores of Mandarin verbs were higher than that of Mandarin nouns; in the same way, the mean scores of English nouns were higher than that of English verbs. Moreover, their caregivers seemed to show an identical pattern in terms of frequency of nouns and verbs in both languages. This seemed to replicate Tardif et al.'s (1997) results, which reported that Mandarin-speaking caregivers emphasize verbs over nouns; caregivers' verb bias may also affect children's noun bias, which emerges from their language production.

A second possible explanation is that the syntactic feature of Mandarin language may lead to the verb bias, which displays in children's Mandarin language production. Grammar of Mandarin allows noun-dropping, for example, "*Zhidao* zhege gushi ma?" (verb was italicized). This Mandarin sentence may be stated in English, "*Know* this story?" (Word-for-word translation). Such syntactic feature tends to place verbs at a salient position in a sentence, thus making verbs occur more often in children's language production.

But, further results from *t*-test suggested that there is no significant difference between Mandarin and English on the nouns of children's production. However, more verbs were significantly produced for Mandarin as compared to English.

Regarding research questions 3 and 4, a Two-Way Analysis of Variance was used to determine if the salient positions of nouns or verbs in caregivers' language input would influence the Mandarin-English bilingual children's production of nouns and verbs. The results revealed that the influence of the caregivers had no significant effect on the frequency of initial Mandarin words regardless of nouns or verbs. And nouns ($M = 24.83$) and verbs ($M = 21.00$) did not vary significantly on the frequency of initial Mandarin words. There was no significant interaction between caregivers' influence and

the frequency of initial Mandarin words in this case. In the case of final Mandarin and initial English words, the influence of the caregivers had a significant main effect on bilingual children's production of nouns and verbs. In both cases, the frequency of nouns was found being an important variable best predicting the noun-prevalence in final Mandarin and initial English utterances.

Prior studies confirmed such correlations. For example, Tardif (1993, cited in Tardif, 1996) reported that Mandarin-speaking mothers were found to place verbs at the beginnings and ends of utterance with much higher frequencies than they place nouns. This was very likely to result in their children's verb bias. Goldfield (1993, cited in Tardif, Shatz, & Naigles, 1997) reported that in multi-word utterances, nouns occurred more often in final position, whereas verbs occurred often in medial position in English. This seemed to suggest that nouns are more salient in the child-directed speech than verbs. It may explain the predominance of nouns in children's early vocabularies. Lucas and Bernardo (2008) indicated that children's lexical bias may be attributed to caregivers' salient positions; however, the influence of salient position is considerably different. Specifically, the frequency of Filipino nouns in the final position of utterances is a significant predictor; in contrast, the frequency of English nouns in the initial position is significant. Regarding verbs, the proportion of Filipino verbs in the initial position is a significant indicator; nevertheless, the proportion of English verbs in the final position is significant.

But, the interaction between caregivers' influence and children's frequency of final Mandarin words and initial English words was not significant. With regard to the final English words, findings seemed to be very significant, not only because caregivers' influence had a significant main effect, but also because nouns in the final English words were a significant predictor. Most importantly, a significant interaction between caregivers' influence and children's frequency of final English words was manifested.

After the discussion based on the initial findings, there were still some questions, which need to be explored in depth. Responses to these questions are expected to answer the divergences that emerged from the results.

One question was very intriguing to explore: Based on the total number, why was caregivers' initial Mandarin lexicon noun biased, when children's language production in the Mandarin initial position verb biased? The first reason may be that although the total number of children's language production in the Mandarin initial position was verb biased, children's noun frequency was higher than verb frequency. Therefore, the results did not deny the accordance between caregivers' lexical bias and that of children. Second possible reason was that grammar of Mandarin allows noun-dropping, this nature of Mandarin syntax structure made verbs occur more often in children's language production.

Another question was why Mandarin-English bilingual caregivers' and children's lexicon across all salient positions, namely, initial Mandarin, final Mandarin, initial English, and final English, seemed to be noun biased in terms

of frequency (%). A very plausible reason may be a fact that the naturalistic interactions between bilingual caregivers and children in the present study were based on the picture-books, which these preschool bilinguals had used in their classes. Most probably, conversations were confined to a “question-and-answer” model of activity context, which may expect children to produce more nouns, although some children were encouraged to talk more aside from the chosen topics. This nature of activity could be an important reason for such noun bias manifested both in caregivers’ language input and in children’s language production across all salient positions of utterances.

Activity context was also regarded as an important factor, which is related to the lexical bias in children’s early vocabularies. Tardif, Gelman, and Xu (1999) emphasized that the noun bias hypothesis is subject to many factors, such as the sampling methods and the context wherein the experiments are taking place. They concluded that nouns prevail in book reading, but nouns are not predominant in toy play.

In conclusion, the results from the study suggest that nouns and verbs in Mandarin-English bilingual children’s language production had an identical frequency; therefore, it appears very hard to differentiate the lexical bias across overall data. Tardif’s (1996) standpoint that method of counting nouns may contribute to the lexical bias of Mandarin-speaking children was validated in a bilingual setting in the present study. However, verb bias was found in bilingual children’s Mandarin vocabularies and noun bias appeared in their English words. Replicating a great number of previous studies, the present study drew the conclusion based on the bilingual participants. The results suggest that caregivers’ frequency of nouns in the final position of utterances seemed to influence children’s noun bias in Mandarin. The frequency of nouns in the final position of caregivers’ language input was a robust variable best conditioning children’s noun bias in English.

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Appendix 1 Transcription Conventions 2

-
 A: newspapers and stuff/ A dotted line marks the beginning of a stave and indicates that the words enclosed by the lines are to be read simultaneously.
- B: yes / be read simultaneously.

- A: papers and [stuff/ Brackets around portions of utterances indicate the start of overlap.
- B: Yes/ good/ start of overlap.

- A: they're mean to be= Equals signs indicate that there is no discernible gap between the two chunks of talk.
- B: = adults/ discernible gap between the two chunks of talk.

- She pushes him to the limit/ A slash (/) indicates the end of a tone group or chunk of talk.
- Pregnant? A question mark indicates the end of a chunk of talk which is being analyzed as a question.
- He's got this twi-twitch/ A hyphen indicates an incomplete word or utterance.
- He sort of . sat and read Pauses are indicated by a full stop (short pause - less than 0.5 seconds) or a dash (long pause).
- ((mean)) Double round parentheses indicate that there is doubt about accuracy of the transcription.
- ((xxxx)) Double round parentheses enclosing several 'x's indicate untranscribable material.
- <LAUGHING> Angled brackets give clarificatory information, relating either to that point in talk or to immediately preceding underlined material.
- MEXICO Capital letters are used for words / syllables uttered with emphasis.

<i>Mexico</i>	Emphatic stress on italicized item.
% bloody hell %	The symbol % encloses words or phrases that are spoken very quickly.
.hhh	This symbol indicates that the speaker takes a sharp intake of breath.
[...]	The symbol [...] indicates that material has been omitted.

Note. From *Language and gender: A reader* (p. xx), edited by Jennifer Coates, 1998, USA: Blackwell Publishers. Copyright 1998 by Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

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Good idea and opinion seem not important: Reflections on Students' Conceptualisations of Academic Writing

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Abstract

This article reports on a study done at a New Zealand university seeking to determine the way overseas students respond to the teaching academic writing using a text functions or structures approach, which focuses on discrete language structures and skills. Feedback was gathered from a class of 30 students through the use of a written questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The data was analysed using keyword and pattern analysis. The findings reveal a palpable disjuncture between overseas students' prior academic writing experiences and their present learning using a text functions or structures approach. The article argues that more dialogic and discursively oriented approaches to the teaching of academic writing will bring about greater value-addedness to academic writing courses even as they help alleviate students' struggles while making the switch from L1 to L2 writing.

Keywords: Academic Discourse, Academic Literacies

Introduction

This article concerns the teaching of writing for academic purposes and relates to a study conducted on students' conceptualisations of academic writing. In the course of our work teaching pre-sessional academic writing in a tertiary institution, we have come to observe that a skills-based curriculum emphasising paragraph structures, rhetorical units, discourse markers, and decontextualised vocabulary remains popular in academic writing textbooks. This tradition emerged during the 1960s (Paltridge, 2001) and according to Hyland (2002) continues to be common even though in the last twenty years there has seen an increase in the number of empirically based studies of academic writing or theoretically rigorous critical analyses which advocate approaches framed by a deeper understanding of genre (Swales, 1990, Johns, 1997, Molle and Prior, 2008); writing as a social practice rather than a set of transferable skills (Lea and Street, 1998, Lillis 2001; Barton, 2006); subject specificity (e.g. Hyland 2004) and disciplinarity (Prior, 1998).

Described by Paltridge (2001) as a *Rhetorical functions* approach, the skills-based tradition is characterised by an emphasis on "combining and arranging sentences into paragraphs based on prescribed formulae" (p. 7), as well as paragraph or short essay length writing tasks which practise a limited range of syntactic or rhetorical patterns. In Hyland's (2003) categorisation of

curriculum options for the teaching of writing, this tradition can be located within his *Focus on Text Functions* category, which he states aims to “help students develop effective paragraphs through the creation of topic sentences, supporting sentences, and transitions, and to develop different types of paragraphs” (p. 6).

Cumming’s (2003) analysis of the theoretical concepts that determine the writing instructor’s preferred approach categorises this emphasis on atomistic and decontextualised units of writing as a *Text Functions or Structures* conceptualisation. Cumming’s study identifies this approach as informing the teaching practices of 23 percent of the instructors he interviewed. One instructor he cites provides a clear description of this approach:

In the English for Academic Purposes course, students start with paragraphs then go through to a full essay. We are mainly concerned with academic conventions, such as quotations, bibliographies, not plagiarizing, etc. I have developed a manual that covers topic sentences, paragraph completion, proof-reading, organizing ideas, and all the usual things. We stress the structure and content, assuming they have the basics of grammar. (p. 76)

An important underlying assumption here is that firstly the paragraph is a complete unit of meaning framed by a single topic and acts as a building block for further knowledge construction in the text. Also implied is a singular, monolithic and transferable perspective of academic writing that can be developed through a series of stages.

The concept of the paragraph as a complete and logical unit of discourse as described above has been contested in the literature (Braddock, 1974; Rodgers 1966; Stern 1976). Braddock conducted an empirical analysis of both the existence and frequency of the topic sentence. He found that topic sentences occurred in only 14 per cent of his data and not always in the conventional form or placement, leading him to state that he “did not support the claims of textbook writers about the frequency and location of topic sentences” (p.301). Stern’s (1976) investigations also led him to the following conclusion:

The paragraph is not a logical unit and we should stop telling our students it is. It does not necessarily begin with a topic sentence; it does not necessarily “handle and exhaust a distinct topic” as the textbooks say it must do. It is not a composition-in-miniature, either – it is not an independent, self contained whole but a functioning part of discourse; its boundaries are not sealed but open to the surrounding text; it links as often as it divides (p. 257).

Furthermore the belief that academic writing can be taught as a transferable set of conventions or skills is also contested by academic literacies researchers such as Hyland (2004) who argues that:

Disciplinary conventions are both subtle and complex, offering a guiding framework for writers as they struggle to present their arguments in the ways that are most likely to gain their reader’s acceptance. Writing is

produced and mediated through writer's experiences of prior discourse, rather than explicit knowledge of rules, and involves making rational choices based on an understanding of how texts work within and for specific contexts and audiences (p. 145).

Reasons for Persistence of Reductionist Approaches

With the increasing number of empirical studies into the practices of written academic discourse, it would be interesting to consider why such beliefs about academic writing remain. Speed or economy is often highlighted as an important factor. Turner (2004) suggests that there is often an urgency to prepare the many EFL students like ours to enter English-medium content courses, while in actuality, developing an awareness of academic writing practices requires more time. Many institutions would like swift student enrolments into degree programmes because this improves cash-flow. As a result, EAP study becomes limited to short courses where the development of a syllabus beyond the introduction of a single model for paragraph structure and a set list of rhetorical expressions is difficult. Toh (2005) confirms this by arguing:

there are...constraints for encouraging students to think deeper into matters concerning writing...and ideology. There is, for example, the belief that an EAP programme should concentrate on modelling the structures and forms of academic English because students are paying good money to the university to learn English - they are the proverbial geese that lay the golden eggs. They will be writing for...academia and should be thoroughly enculturated into the forms and structures of academic writing both because it is a time-honoured practice and there is so little time for anything else (Toh, 2005, p. 34).

A further reason for the emphasis on the surface level tradition, also pointed out by Turner (2004) is the influence of IELTS as a regulatory requirement - a popular test that emphasises surface level skills - into instructors' conceptions of what constitutes academic writing.

Turner also suggests that the marginalisation of English for Academic purposes writing programmes in the academy means that instructors are often on short-term contracts and are not provided with research and professional development opportunities. Benesch (2001) speaks in the same vein about EAP's and ESL's perceived "service function" and "low status" (p. 40) and how this contributes to its "unequal position" vis-à-vis other disciplines, hence contributing to its "undertheorization" (p. 47). Benesch notes that 'the EAP teacher is not expected to question the pedagogical or intellectual soundness' of classroom activities and academic practices (p. 41). Instead, the "EAP teacher is mainly a conduit...rather than an activist" who would actively participate in professional dialogue about, for example, the ideological forces at work in academia or the nature of academic writing (Benesch, 2001, p. 51).

One might also add that a fair number of writing instructors would have had their initial pedagogical training in short TESOL or TEFL certificates or diplomas which focus primarily on second language teaching methodological approaches rather than substantial investigations into the nature of writing practices beyond the accessible topic-sentence structure of the paragraph.

An ethnographic case study by Curry (2006) supports this observation. The study in point follows the progress of an inexperienced part-time writing instructor, George Cleary, who uses a skills-focused curriculum with most of his assessments involving the writing of discrete paragraphs. Curry records Cleary as justifying this approach through his belief that “the paragraph is the brick that builds the building of writing. And if you can produce a good paragraph you can produce any length of document” (p.186). However, eventually 75 percent of Cleary’s students withdrew from the class leading him to conclude that:

These assignments did little to introduce students to Academic Writing. Their brevity precluded students from gaining practice in structuring and developing extended ideas or arguments, creating transitions between sections of an essay, or sustaining the task of writing over time (Curry, 2006, p. 186).

One area, however, that needs to be studied more deeply is the effect that the *Text Functions or Structures* approach has on students own conceptions of academic writing, and how by understating the linguistic complexity of written academic discourse, or by undervaluing the importance of social practices in both disciplinary and institutional contexts, writing instruction can in fact contribute to the struggle of second language writers as they try to come to terms with academic culture.

Hence this study aims at examining the tensions that emerge as learners’ struggle between their instructor’s conceptualisation of academic writing as simple, transparent, and structurally conceived, and their own prior knowledge and experience of academic texts as complex, opaque and conceptually conceived.

Research Context

The research was conducted in the context of an end-of-course evaluation exercise where overseas students enrolled in an English for Academic Purposes writing course were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the course content.

Table 1 provides a summary of the syllabus used for the writing course. The course comprises a one-semester Writing for Academic Purposes programme taught to pre-sessional students, before they are allowed to enrol for academic content courses taught at the university. Such an academic writing programme seeks help students with formal essay writing, particularly academic essay writing, which is an important requirement when it comes to the way academic courses at university are assessed. Writing instruction was generally carried out for 4 hours a week over a 14 week semester. It can be seen that the weight given to paragraph writing (almost 19 percent) and to rhetorical functions (approximately 32 percent) clearly indicates that the syllabus exemplifies the approaches discussed above.

Table 1
Summary of the prescribed writing syllabus

Thematic	Total pages ($\Gamma = 59$)	Percentage
1. Introductory discussion (warmer or ice-breaker) about academic writing	3	5.1
2. Differences between spoken and written forms of writing	2	3.4
3. Paragraph writing		18.6
topic sentence	7	11.9
ordering of sentences in a paragraph	2	3.4
concluding sentences	1	1.7
paragraph coherence	1	1.7
4. Rhetorical function paragraphs		32.2
enumeration	1	1.7
classification	1	1.7
exemplification	2	3.4
processes (natural and man-made)	3	5.1
narrative	2	3.4
comparison	4	6.8
cause and effect	4	6.8
discussion	2	3.4
5. Organising the essay	2	3.4
6. Research report		19.9
definition	1	1.7
model of small questionnaire-based research report	9	15.2
7. Tentative Language (adapted from Swales and Feak, 1994)	3	5.1
8. Academic Style (adapted from Swales and Feak, 1994)	3	5.1
9. Data Interpretation/ IELTS (adapted from Swales and Feak, 1994)	2	3.4
10. Writing paraphrases and quotations	3	5.1
11. Bibliographic Referencing	1	1.7

Research Method

Participants

The feedback was gathered from our class of 30 foreign students. The countries of origin are: China, Korea, Japan and Thailand, enrolled on our full-time one-semester writing programme. While ethical guidelines did not permit gathering of information on actual ages, the age range of the participants was between the twenties and the thirties. Ethical guidelines did not permit our gathering information on gender. In terms of language proficiency, the students

were intermediate level in English. All 30 students provided responses to the questionnaire as part of their end-of-course feedback.

Data Collection

As part of our university's overall initiative to encourage instructors to better understand students' experiences with learning English, we (Researchers A and B) sought for end-of-course feedback from students in our writing course. We administered an end-of-course questionnaire with open-ended questions about students' difficulties as well as wider involvement in the writing process and what they felt about the approaches taken to writing instruction and assessment. The questionnaire was administered by Researcher B, who was not the home instructor of the class. The end-of-course questionnaire was approved by the university ethics committee and was completed by students without either instructor being present. English was chosen for as the language for the questionnaire as it was (1) the common language among the instructors and all the participants from the different countries (2) the language used in classroom instruction throughout the semester (3) the means of communication outside the classroom.

In keeping with ethnomethodological research tradition adopting an empathic mode, which is one in which feedback from informants are treated as an important cultural and educational resource (Lawler, 2008), the administration of the questionnaire was followed up with semi-structured interviews. This was done within the same fortnight conducted by Researcher B, who took notes of students' oral responses. The average length of the interviews was 14 minutes, with the longest going for approximately 19 minutes. The semi-structured interview approach was chosen because it was felt that semi-structured interviews, as opposed to structured interviews (Handwerker, 2001) would allow opportunity for students to either voice out fresh themes and/or ideas or to emphasise certain important points they wished have us hear, while not deviating from the interview schedule. The interview schedule followed questions based on the same themes as in the questionnaire, namely, questions regarding difficulties students faced in academic writing in New Zealand, challenges students faced when they had to source for information research and students' expectations of how their work would be graded.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the answers to the questionnaires was analysed by the two researchers. The approach taken to analyse the data was pattern analysis. Pattern analysis was used to identify dominant or recurrent themes or patterns in the responses (Le Compte and Schensul, 1999). As an approach to qualitative data analysis, pattern analysis involves careful reading of the material being analysed and the identification of key phrases for further in-depth scrutiny. In various types of qualitative research, this has involved patterns emerging from key words in context, key words indicating independent, indigenous, generic or even semiotic categories (Le Compte and Schensul, 1999; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Silverman, 2001). In our case, our analysis of emergent patterns and the dominant themes thereof were cross-checked with the data from the semi-structured interviews conducted by Researcher B.

Reliability

The analyses of the data from the written questionnaire were triangulated in the following ways. They were (1) compared among the two researchers who worked independently, but with periodical consultation (2) confirmed with the students during the semi-structured interviews (3) compared against the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews. In addition, attempts were made in the written questionnaire to pose questions that were centred around a similar concern, in order to facilitate cross-checking of information provided by students. For students, different questions centred around a similar concern would mean that they had greater opportunity to provide their feedback as well as to have this put across and/or emphasised in different ways. For example, Questions 4 and 5 are elaborations of Question 2 and are centred around the concern over difficulties students faced during the composition process. Responses to these questions can be used as cross-checks against each other for reliability.

Limitations of the Study

Ideally, the study could have examined specific effects of the teaching of grammar on academic writing, or even students' ideas to do with the way meanings and knowledge are constructed and enacted within specific academic writing activities, but the scope of such studies would go beyond that of an end of course feedback framework. In addition, such research would warrant deeper justifications before the university ethics committee. Hence, the data obtained cannot be used to make conclusions on the processes of meaning construction in and through writing. Ideally too, the research could have been conducted across two classes doing similar courses, but this was not the case.

Findings

Among the responses from the students were matters relating to difficulties in sourcing for information from the library, difficulties in writing reference lists as well as challenges faced when reading dense and difficult articles. However, in terms of recurrent patterns, deeper analysis revealed important patterns relating to students' conceptions of audience, students' conceptions of the complexity of academic writing, students' conceptions of contextual factors that relate to academic writing and students' expectations concerning assessment. The palpable tensions occurring between the students' conceptions of academic writing and those constructed by the course syllabus was one persistent theme that we believe warrants deeper professional reflection.

Conceptions about Audience

Our course manual only mentioned the concept of audience once in one of the introductory pages. In contrast, our students showed a strong perception of the role of audience, in their particular situation, the teacher-audience reading their work. This can be seen in the following comments where the

students bring up the problem of differences in expectations among teacher-audiences and how this presents a challenge for the student-writer.

But the problem is different: teachers have different styles in writing. So I think it's better for students to ask the teacher what kind of writing they prefer. And this also makes me confused in my writing too. (Student 9, Question 11)

It is easier to write an essay in my home country because I know more about my country than New Zealand. And I can predict what the teacher wants. (Student 12, Question 9)

The above is confirmed by what the following student has to say about 'confusion' over different 'styles' preferred by different readers:

Sometimes I feel confused about the lecturer's needs because every lecturer has a different style of writing or skills, therefore it is very hard to (know) which is the correct one. (Student 12, Question 2)

The above suggest that reader expectations and audience analysis are where we ought to begin in our writing classes. Brandt (1990) confirms this finding. Talking about the importance of teaching audience consciousness in writing Brandt (1990, p. 14) notes that literacy is "not the narrow ability to deal with texts, but the broad ability to deal with people". Also relevant is what Hyland (2003) has to say about courses that focus on language structures and text functions: such courses tend to overlook the role of audience and context - as did our curriculum.

Conceptions about Complexity

Our students reported their perception of writing in English as being simple and emphasising transition mechanics *rather than critical depth of thought or creativity*. For example:

In my country critical thinking is the most important thing, creativeness is also important to get high marks, but in New Zealand logical order, good linking words are important. (Student 3, Question 8)

As a result, they say that the conceptualisation of writing that has come across from their experience in New Zealand is that writing is 'easy' and involves merely following a set of 'rules':

To be honest, writing in NZ is much easier than in my home country because of the rules in NZ writing are simple and easier to understand. (Student 9, Question 9)

The impression that writing in English is simple extends even to simplicity in the use of vocabulary and the lack of complexity in sentence structure and idiom.

Absolutely in my language, you should write as long as possible and use a lot of complex sentences. (Student 13 Question 10)

I will use lots of difficult words and idioms when I am writing for my teacher in my home country because I can get higher marks. (Student 6, Question 10)

The above responses provide us with a number of insights. Firstly students' prior understanding of written academic discourse is that it is abstract, opaque, as well as syntactically complex. This is a view supported by linguistically focused empirical studies of academic prose (Swales 1990, Bhatia, 1993) as well as Turner (2004) who notes the high level of language complexity in academic genres. Indeed, in studies such as Dong (1998) which looks at students' perceptions of the differences between L1 and L2 writing, the observation that English writing is less complex than L1 writing is not uncommon. One of Dong's students for example said that 'an English text sounds like an elementary school student's essay (p.382), while another said that "English writing stresses more logic; Chinese is kind of descriptive so sometimes [it] is loose in logic" (p.382).

Conceptions about Engagement with Context

In their responses, students pointed out the importance of orientating the reader with adequate descriptions of context and providing other pertinent background information before turning to key arguments. This contributes to an overall feel of well roundedness in a piece of writing as opposed to a feel of sententiousness or abruptness.

In an insightful extract, a student relates how writing in the home country and in New Zealand is different:

My country: They require a lot of explanation such as history, the background of a topic based on previous knowledge; they require background facts to be written before opinions. (The comment is accompanied by a diagram with the following list - history of explanation, point, conclusion).

In New Zealand every sentence must have a key point and every paragraph must have a topic sentence; more personal or private ideas are required. (The comment is accompanied by a diagram with the following description - every sentence must have a point that is related to the topic) (Student 4, Question 10)

Here the series of steps noted as coming from the student's home country more closely resembles a set of traditional essayist or research writing expectations; including for example, the provision of a contextual overview based on published sources, which is subsequently worked into an argument or point of interest and then developed towards a conclusion. In the New Zealand context, the academic writing process has been reframed around a personal viewpoint, rather than as deeper engagement with and critique of source or contextual material. Writing is also thought of in a more atomistic topic-based way,

highlighting a discrete series of key points rather than an extended development of and engagement with ideas and meaning.

Here, one is reminded of Turner's (2004) call for the teaching of writing to include a dimension of rhetorical *felicity* (Turner, 2004), or in Rose's (1998, p. 30) words, the need for "craft and grace" to be "incorporated into the heart of our curriculum", as opposed to the belief that writing should be clipped, terse or bulleted.

Conceptions of Assessment Expectations

In relation to assessment, the students' responses were also very revealing. The following comments relate to what students thought of the approach to assessment they encountered in New Zealand.

In my home country, teacher don't mark assignments from every word and every sentence. (Student 6, Question 8)

I think it's totally different. In my home country teacher will concentrate on opinion and idea. In New Zealand teacher concentrate on grammar and academic style. (Student 5, Question 8)

In both the above responses, it can be seen that students find the fine combing of scripts for grammar and mechanics instead of depth of thought, opinion and idea, important enough to comment on.

To be honest, writing in NZ is much easier than in my home country because of the rules in NZ writing is simple and easier to understand. (Student 9, Question 9)

It's harder to write an essay in New Zealand. The big problem is language, such as grammar, spelling and academic style. Good idea and opinion seem not important. (Student 5, Question 9)

The responses reveal that students' conception of what constitutes good writing in the minds of their teachers is inherently related to 'surface' level features, such as grammar, vocabulary. The teacher goes through written pieces with a fine comb and checks for mistakes in every word and sentence. Opinion and idea do not seem that important.

Discussion

Surface Features and Technicisation of Language

The above findings bear further discussion vis-à-vis current literature on academic literacies. In the first instance, one might note that the pattern of concerns over teacher-audience preferences and assessment are a natural pre-occupation among students, particularly those for whom a positive opinion on the part of the teacher as well as a good grade would mean entry to a good course at university. Yet, these concerns and the concerns over the way academic writing came across as being simple and technicised would suggest

deeper struggles over differences between their prior notions of the complexities of academic writing, meaning construction and discursive action and what came across through the Text Functions or Structures syllabus that was used to teach them. The literature would confirm that the students' anxieties are at least warranted. Turner talks about a "technicisation of language" (p.97) which Rose (1998) describes as "atomistic, focusing on isolated bits of discourse, error centred, and linguistically reductive" (p. 11) and based on what he says is a rather outdated "mechanistic paradigm that studied language by reducing it to discrete behaviors" (p 12). Land and Whitley (1998) suggest a shift away from concentration on surface features in writing courses. Calling this "surface-level tunnel vision" and "rhetoric-level myopia" where attention is "riveted on surface concerns", they argue for this shift because of "rigid, oversimplified notions of how essays should be structured" (p. 143). Toh (2005) notes with irony that the teaching of "phrasal verbs, prepositions, collocations and active and passive voices" are "old favourites" among the surface level features taught in writing courses (p. 34).

Furthermore, Penaflorida (1998) offers a description of the misconceptions concerning grading. She notes that if 'success' in learning writing is thought of as mastering surface features, good teaching would be seen as direct skills transfer, as well as the ability to explain the meaning of phrasal verbs such as 'make up to' or 'wake up to' or the fact that 'wake' collocates with 'up' and not 'on'. 'Diligent' grading would be concurrently seen as "red penciling all over the papers" revealing that "form rather than substance is given...attention" (Penaflorida, 1998, p 73).

Implications

To help alleviate the sorts of struggles faced by the students, it appears that a shift in pedagogy would be desirable, in particular, to a pedagogy that moves away from surface concerns and superficial conceptualisations of academic writing and meaning construction. Such a pedagogy would, firstly, understand that a piece of writing is by nature a heteroglossia of different voices and that a student writer is, to use Scott and Turner's (2004) words, "beset" with different voices "the voices of past instruction, the voices of current tutors, the loud or faint voices of the student's assumptions and expectations regarding writing in English" (p 152). This gives rise to the "in-between space" which many students find themselves in - the need to have to negotiate the style and voice of, for example, a source text and that of the distant disembodied voice characterising "essay text literacy" expected in some quarters of academia (Scott and Turner, 2004, p 146). The point here is that concentration on surface features in a writing course would create yet another source of struggle, an in-between space that adds to the mixture of voices that besets student writers, instead of helping them to understand and negotiate the social, historical and contextual forces that shape such spaces. The fact is that students are aware of the importance of grader-audience. As one student commented "It is up to which teacher marked my assignment. Usually female teachers are more strict than males in New Zealand. In my home country, teachers don't mark every word and every sentence of the assignment".

Indeed, a concentration on surface features would deepen the anomaly of being found in an in-between space, the voice of the New Zealand teacher

being linked to a concern for language problems like grammar or spelling. In addition comments like the following - that “Good idea and opinion seem not important” and “In my home country, teachers don’t mark assignments from every word and every sentence” both suggest students’ being caught in an in-between space - the space between the importance of idea and opinion versus grammar, spelling and academic style.

Secondly, a pedagogy that moves away from surface considerations would need to include the element of dialogue with students concerning audience and readership, audience expectations, context and various ideological forces that come to bear on context and writing, as well as the whole issue of the complexity of written text. Lillis (2003) talks about the importance of providing opportunities for dialogue with students about the sorts of meanings they wish to have come across in their writing, instead of providing categorically rigid feedback about what is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’.

Thirdly, consideration of what Rose (1998) calls a “rich model of written language development and production” (p. 28) as a counter to an atomistic model of language, would be important. The model of language adopted must also “honor the cognitive and emotional and situational dimensions of language” (Rose, 1998, p. 28) in keeping with its place in academia in the creation of knowledge and meaning. Consequently, students’ cultures, experiences, circumstances and unique histories will be taken into account and valued, particularly in how these come to bear on writing practices and conceptions of writing. Wilson notes how students and their writing have a tendency to be conceptualised ahistorically. By not attending to their cultures, circumstances and histories, writing and other educational experiences, students could be treated as abstractions rather than people, or in Wilson’s words to fellow educators, “we refuse to see them historically...we continue to conceptualise the students as our Other, as essentially different from us” (1992, p. 679). These can be through, for example, giving students pat formulas and heuristics:

By conceptualising...student ahistorically and by providing them with heuristics that purport to have universal applicability and that ignore the students’ social and cultural circumstances, we continue to shortchange them. (Wilson, 1992, p. 678)

He further notes that such heuristics, formulas and even textbooks are often fairly stilted and mechanical, producing “a kind of simulacrum...providing students with formulas, which purport to make them experts”, but actually creating an “illusion of authority that insures most of them will remain neophytes” (p. 679). It is in this connection that a richer model of writing embracing notions like the socio-historicity of text and contextual variations in writing practices might prove somewhat more useful.

Conclusion

We have attempted to reflect on how academic writing courses that focus on the *Text Functions or Structures* approach, with a particular topic sentence perception of paragraph structure could construct academic writing practice as simplified, technicised, and atomised. Creating a disjuncture between

students' prior academic writing experiences and their present learning, this could contribute to the struggle students encounter in the new institution. In order to bring about greater value-addedness to writing courses, changes of assumptions in pedagogy may be necessary. Such changes can be by way of approaches where teachers engage students in dialogue about the nature of writing as well as social forces that shape writing practice. Such reorientations could also be founded on more enriched paradigms of the nature of writing and writing instruction.

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Appendix
Questionnaire

1. What do you think is good quality academic writing in English?
2. What problems/difficulties have you experienced with academic writing in English since coming to university?
3. Before writing an essay or project in English what do you normally do to source for information?
4. Since coming to New Zealand and/or AUT, have you found it easier or harder to get information for your essays?
5. What are some of the difficulties you face when finding information (for example from a library)?
6. When you start writing your assignment, what are some of the difficulties you encounter?
7. Since coming to New Zealand, have you been able to find solutions to your difficulties with academic writing? Or has academic writing become more difficult? Please try to explain why?
8. Do you expect your assignments to be marked more strictly in your home country or in New Zealand? Please try to explain why?
9. In your opinion, is it harder to write an essay in your home country or in New Zealand? Please try to explain why?
10. Will you write differently if you are writing for your teacher in your home country? Please try to explain why?
11. Has your study at this university helped you to solve your academic writing difficulties? If so, please describe how.

About the Authors

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The Effects of Age and Input Enhancement on L2 Vowel Production: A Longitudinal Study

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Abstract

This longitudinal study investigated the vowels produced by adult female learners. They were 30 first year university students studying at the college of education to become English teachers. Their L1 was typologically different from English. They read word lists at three different times of the year and their production of English vowels rated by native speakers and was acoustically analyzed. The results supported the tenets of Flege's Speech Learning Model that input enhancement had positive effects on the participants' accent in spite of the age factor, and that the adults' performance at the three different times reflected a progressively shifting slope in accent. The results should dismiss myths that all adults are incapable of mastering an L2 when exposed well after the closure of the sensitive period. Investigating the trainability factor should contribute to our understanding of effective teaching that leads to adults' success in language learning.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, English proficiency

Introduction

Phonetic inaccuracies are assumed to arise from the amount of experience with L2, the age period during which L2 was acquired, and differences in sounds between L1 and L2. The question whether or not L2 sounds are resistant to training after the critical period has created false assumptions that L2 learners face a desperate situation of accent attainment. However, some views imply that if sufficient native speaker input is given, an adult can produce certain L2 vowels with native-like accuracy (Best & Strange, 1992); and others indicate that the capacity to learn new sounds remains intact over the life span (Flege, 1981, 1995; Flege & Liu, 2001; Flege & Mackay, 2004).

Vowels were under analysis in this present research because they display varieties that bear more problems for learners to attain, and they reflect foreign accent the most. Hence, pronunciation attainment is of vital importance to the present participants because they are trained to be English language teachers. Their production was investigated here because age-based limitations on learning are firmer for productive than perceptual aspects of L2 acquisition.

The effects of age and "input enhancement", a term used by Ioup (1995), are better clarified through longitudinal research such as the present one. This type

of research is rare, because it requires more time and energy. In other words, any problems about time in relation to learning can be interpreted only within a full longitudinal perspective (Ortega & Iberri-Shea, 2005, 26).

Critics of the idea of the critical period would have a much more convincing case if they could produce native speakers of typologically different languages who could survive rigorous testing, despite a late start in the L2 (Long, 2005). This current assessment considered two typologically distant languages, Arabic and English. Moreover, previous studies have shown that learners' performance that improved with experience in English varied as a function of L1 background. Hence, a study of Arabic as an L1 should contribute to this research area when compared to analyses performed on other languages.

Flege's Speech Learning Model (SLM) was adopted in this present study. This model characterizes the intermediate position regarding L2 sound acquisition theory. According to this model, one possible explanation for differences between early versus late L2 speech learning is that the L1 and L2 interact differently depending on the age at which the L2 is learned. The interaction hypothesis which is one tenet of the SLM holds that L1 and L2 are less likely to interact in younger than in older learners because early learners' L1 categories are malleable while late learners' L1 categories are fully developed. As a result, late learners may require an amount of experience with the L2 in order to overcome the pervasive effect of their L1 on their processing and learning of L2 sounds (Flege 1981, 1992b, 1995, 1999; Flege & Liu, 2001; Flege & Mackay, 2004). Flege claimed that "adults' performance in an L2 will improve measurably over time, but only if they receive a substantial amount of native speaker input" (Flege & Liu, 2001, p. 527); and that "late learners typically produce L2 vowels more accurately as they gain experience in the L2" (Flege & Mackay, 2004, p. 2).

This model further suggests that there is a progressively shifting slope in accent but with the likelihood of positive outcomes (Flege & Fletcher, 1992; Flege, MacKay, & Meador, 1999). It's a model that claims that due to neurological, psychological, cognitive, and contextual factors, a late L2 learner may sound native-like while an early L2 learner may have a foreign accent (Munro & Mann, 2005).

The other two positions of the model indicate the two extreme ends. One proposes that there is a constant ability to learn a native like accent that does not change with age of immersion (Bongaerts, 1999; Bongaerts, van Summeren, Planken, & Schils, 1997; Moyer, 1999; Neufeld, 1977; Neufeld & Schneidermann, 1980); and the other claims that L2 accent acquisition drops abruptly and irreversibly at some common young age (Lenneberg, 1967; David, 1985; Patkowski, 1990; Ramsey & Wright, 1974; Scovel, 1969).

In this research, the vowels produced by 30 learners were evaluated at the beginning (T1), middle (T2), and end of the year (T3). This empirical study delivered an extensive assessment of L2 vowel production in adulthood as it chronologically progressed to see the effects of input enhancement on learners' vowel production in spite of the age factor.

Literature Review

Studies on foreign accent explored different factors influencing attainment such as age of L2 learning (AOL), length of residence in the L2 environment (LOR), gender, instruction, aptitude, and L1/L2 interaction. One of the rare studies that investigated Arabic as an L1 was Munro (1993). He analyzed the production of English vowels by speakers of Arabic living in the US for six years. In the accentedness judgment test, the majority of the nonnative utterances were distinguished from native utterances on the basis of pronunciation. He also observed individual but not group approximation of some vowels to the native speakers' counterparts. On the other hand, Suter (1976) examined participants from different L1 backgrounds; Arabic, Japanese, Persian, and Thai. He noted that speakers of Arabic and Persian had better pronunciation of English than speakers of Japanese and Thai. He considered the L1 factor as the strongest predictor of foreign accent. He also reported that the number of weeks the subjects spent in formal training in English pronunciation bore no relationship to their accuracy. However, the factors he studied did not include age of learning L2.

Munro and Mann (2005) dealt with Chinese learners of English comparing accent, age of immersion, and gender. Age of immersion was found to be a predictor of accent while gender was not. Other studies have implemented longitudinal designs such as Macdonald, Yule, and Powers (1994) where they compared the pronunciation of four groups of Chinese graduate students studying in the US. Each group received a different type of instruction to improve their pronunciation. The participants were recorded three times: before the intervention (T1), immediately after (T2), and two days later (T3). In the self-study and the interaction conditions a slight improvement was observed at T2 but was lost at T3. As for the teacher led practice, a very slight improvement was reported at T3 as compared to T2. The no intervention participants' performance at T3 was relatively no worse than any other group at T3. The results showed that no single intervention was beneficial to all learners. In the same year, Ma (1994) found that adult Chinese students were successful in producing some vowels, and reported a scale of vowel difficulty.

In his quest to reveal factors influencing language learning, Flege conducted several studies on the production of various languages. For instance, Flege and Liu (2001) assessed the performance of groups of adult Chinese residents in the US. The student group with a long LOR performed better than that with a short LOR. The two nonstudent groups performed almost the same despite their different LORs. The study concluded that simply living in the L2 environment for an additional five years did not result in a close to a native speaker's performance, and that a rich L2 input is needed for a successful L2 learning. This echoed what Jun and Cowie (1994) had said that an improved production of L2 vowels is inevitable given a sufficient amount of native-speaker input as their experienced Korean subjects produced English vowels more accurately than did the less experienced ones.

In her Ph. D. dissertation on the interlanguage production of Korean university students, Ahn (1997) noted correct instances for some vowels. Another Asian language was dealt with by Riney and Flege (1998). They compared

sentences produced by Japanese university students in their first year (T1) to those produced in their senior year (T2). Some of the students at T2 showed significant differences in accent ratings. Most of them resided in the L2 environment for one year. This led the researchers to conclude that “in the early phases of L2 learning, additional experience in the L2 may lead to significant decreases in degree of L2 foreign accent” (p. 199).

Studies on European languages replicated the same findings. Flege (1992b) examined the foreign accent of adult Spanish learners of English with two different LORs. The results showed significant differences between the two groups due to their differing age of learning. On an evaluation of English spoken by Italians, Flege, Munro, and MacKay (1995) determined that the LOR factor played a more significant role for those subjects who were still in an early stage of L2 Learning. Four years later, 62 of its Italian subjects were re-examined by Meadore, Flege, and MacKay (2000). The latter study supported this conclusion, but noted that the highly experienced subjects did not show significant improvement in their foreign accent with the additional 4 years of experience. Italians were also dealt with in Piske, MacKay, and Flege (2001). They analyzed their production of English as an L2. The results showed that AOL is the most important predictor of degree of foreign accent, and that “ultimate attainment in the pronunciation of an L2 is dependent on various factors, not just on the state of neurological development at the age of first intensive exposure to the L2” (p. 212). They stated that motivation was a major factor for subjects “who are required by their profession to speak an L2 without a foreign accent but not so much for ordinary immigrants” (p. 211). In a previous study, Munro, Flege, and MacKay (1996) analyzed the production of 11 English vowels by Italian speakers living in Canada. The results showed that the subjects who arrived early produced native like vowels, while the late ones produced some vowels without accent. Although the rest of the vowels were intelligible, there was no vowel that was mastered by the majority of the late group.

More languages were explored to gain more substantial evidence on this aspect of English as an L2. With Dutch as an L1, Flege (1992a) proved that the English vowels spoken by Dutch students with mild accents were more intelligible than those spoken by students with stronger foreign accents. In the same year, Bohn and Flege (1992) presented their research that examined native German subjects who had lived in the US either for less than 1 year or for more than 5 years. Acoustic measurements showed that the relatively experienced Germans produced English vowels more accurately than did the relatively inexperienced subjects by forming a new phonetic category for English sounds that did not have a counterpart in German.

Finally, Bongaerts et al. (1997) analyzed the sentences produced by excellent Dutch students who were late learners of English. Some learners were judged as native speakers. They also repeated a similar study (Bongaerts, 1999) on Dutch learners of French to generalize the results to learners of languages typologically different from their L1, and reached the same results. They stated that successful learning was due to three factors: “high motivation, continued access to massive L2 input, and intensive training in the production of L2 speech sounds” (p. 154). Likewise, Moyer (1999) noted that his late L2 learners produced results comparable to native speakers’ due to intensive training in the perception and

production of L2 sounds. They were learners of German whose L1 was English. They were highly motivated as they were graduate students employed as teachers of German at their university.

Research Questions

Did the results support the tenets of Flege's Speech Learning Model that:

a. Input enhancement had positive effects on the participants' vowel accuracy and accent in spite of the age factor?

b. Were there significant differences between the adults' performance at the three different times of the year reflecting a progressively shifting slope in accent with positive outcomes?

Method

Materials

The words under analysis were part of a longer word list the researcher comprised based on students' most frequent pronunciation difficulties in vowels. They were not given as handouts or specifically targeted while teaching. Rather, they represented common words that usually appeared in most phonetic course books, and were generally found to have severe fossilization in the Saudi learners' vowel production.

The sounds analyzed were six vowels /i:/, /i/, /e/, /o:/, /u/, /u:/; and two diphthongs /ou/, and /ei/. The symbols used here are devised to match the system of this journal. Each vowel/diphthong had four words making a total of 32 words. They were as follows:

<i>reach</i>	<i>rich</i>
<i>breathe</i>	<i>breath</i>
<i>lift</i>	<i>left</i>
<i>built</i>	<i>belt</i>
<i>did</i>	<i>dead</i>
<i>greet</i>	<i>great</i>
<i>eat</i>	<i>eight</i>
<i>late</i>	<i>date</i>
<i>food</i>	<i>foot</i>
<i>books</i>	<i>box</i>
<i>full</i>	<i>fault</i>
<i>took</i>	<i>talk</i>
<i>shoe</i>	<i>show</i>
<i>soup</i>	<i>soap</i>
<i>rule</i>	<i>role</i>
<i>bought</i>	<i>boat</i>

The total number of words to be investigated was 2880 words (32 words x 30 students x 3 times). Each pair represented two vowels that were usually

substituted for each other (except *great*, *eight*, *late*, and *date* where students either use the vowel /i:/ or the Arabic sound /e:/).

Participants

The participants in this study were 30 female first year students in the English Department, College of Education, Princess Nora University. They were English language majors trained to be English teachers. They were on average 19 years old. They had already passed the critical period when they started learning English at age 13. They had already gone through six years of English before college that consisted of only 3-5 hours per week. In their first year in college, English input was considerably enhanced as they had forty two hours of courses covering English language and literature. All students were exposed to the same learning situation in college. Some of their professors had native speaker fluency, and others had good mastery of English with some traces of foreign accent. The course dealt with in this research was Spoken English and Phonetics. It was a two-term course with three hours per week that included intensive exposure to native speaker models in the language lab and continuous feedback on students' errors. Weekly pronunciation assignments were also given which required a minimum of two hours of home oral practice per week.

The three native speaker raters who were called up to evaluate the vowels produced by the students spoke General American English. They were female. Rater 1 was 48 years old and was an inexperienced rater as she had only been in that Arabic speaking country for a few weeks. Likewise, Rater 3 was also an inexperienced rater. She was a 42 years old housewife who had been in that country for a year. On the other hand, Rater 2 was a 45 years old experienced language instructor and she had been in that country for seven years.

Procedure

The words under analysis were randomly spread within the longer list not as pairs but as separate words to prevent the participants from comparing words within pairs. They were also read in isolation to avoid the effect of context. The students were presented with the word list and were asked to read at a normal speed. Their reading was recorded in the English Department language lab.

Data Analysis

To establish judgment reliability, three native speaker raters were instructed to determine whether each vowel was accurately produced then indicate the degree of a student's overall foreign accent on a 10-point scale ranging from 1 (strong foreign accent) to 10 (no foreign accent). They were urged to rate vowels and ignore consonants. When the native speakers differed in distinguishing the quality of a certain vowel, especially sounds from the students L1, its F1 and F2 were calculated to support the oral evaluation using SFSWin Version 1.7 (2008) by Mark Huckvale from the Department of Phonetics and Linguistics, University College, London.

Statistical analyses, a Paired Samples t-Test and an Independent Samples t-Test, were performed to compare students' accurate production instances within the context of time progression. Due to the extensive results investigated here, the quality of the mispronounced vowels, their L1-L2 similarities, and the learners' strategies of vowel substitution were dealt with in a separate study (forthcoming).

Results

The vowels determined to be accurate were analyzed using a Paired Samples t-Test that yielded significant differences between the means of the vowels at T1 and T2 ($p < .042$). The means of the vowels at T2 were higher. There were also significant differences between the means of the vowels at T1 and at T3 ($p < .000$). The means of the vowels at T3 were higher. Likewise, the means of the vowels at T2 and at T3 were significantly different ($p < .000$). The means of the vowels at T3 were higher (Figure 1).

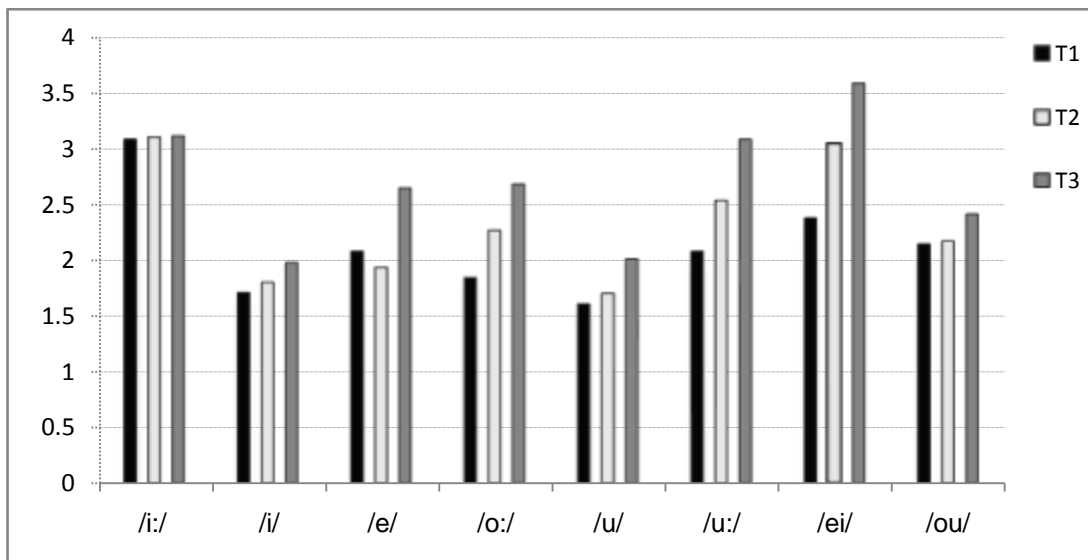


Figure 1. The Means of the Vowels at T1, T2, and T3

When comparing the means of the same vowel at T1 and T2, significant differences were found for /o:/ ($p < .040$), /u:/ ($p < .020$), and /ei/ ($p < .000$). The means of the vowels at T2 were higher. Significant differences were also seen at T2 when contrasted with T3 for /e/ ($p < .002$), /o:/ ($p < .016$), /u:/ ($p < .011$), and /ei/ ($p < .002$). The means of the vowels at T3 were higher. Finally, when the means of the same vowel at T1 and T3 were assessed, significant differences were obtained for /e/ ($p < .035$), /o:/ ($p < .000$), /u:/ ($p < .000$), and /ei/ ($p < .000$). The means of the vowels at T3 were higher. The means of /i:/ at T2 and at T3 were the same. However, the only vowel that showed some setback was /e/ at T2 as compared to T1 (Figure 1).

To explore further the differences between vowels in their scale of difficulty at each point in time, an Independent Samples t-Test was employed. It revealed

that at T1, the mean of /i:/ was significantly different from the means of the other seven vowels, because it was an easy vowel for the learners. The test also showed that the mean of /i/ was significantly different from that of /ei/ because the former was a difficult vowel. Equally, the mean of /u/ was significantly different when compared to those of /ei/ and /ou/, because the last two were easier. While the test indicated that the means of /e/ and /u:/ were the same, it did not yield any significant differences for the rest of the vowel comparisons owing to the fact that most of the vowels had low means at T1 (Table 1).

Table 1
The Differences between the Means of the Vowels at T1

	/i:/	/i/	/e/	/o:/	/u/	/u:/	/ei/	/ou/
/i:/		p < .000	p < .000	p < .000	p < .000	p < .000	p < .017	p < .001
/i/			p < .175	p < .589	p < .694	p < .175	p < .023	p < .104
/e/				p < .370	p < .083	p < 1.00	p < .317	p < .809
/o:/					p < .341	p < .370	p < .060	p < .240
/u/						p < .083	p < .009	p < .045
/u:/							p < .317	p < .809
/ei/								p < .428
/ou/								

Note. The significant differences are in bold.

At T2, the significant differences found between the vowel means at the same point in time reflected the degrees of sound difficulty more than at T1. That was due to the clear improvement of certain sounds while the others resisted change. Those degrees were seen in the significant differences between the mean of /i:/ as compared to the means of all the other vowels except /ei/ as those two were the easiest vowels at T2. Hence, the /ei/ data showed significant differences when contrasted with the still challenging vowels /i/, /e/, /o:/, /u/, and /ou/. Furthermore, it was clear that /u:/ developed since it reflected significant differences when compared to the three worst vowels at T2, /i/, /e/, and /u/. A further significant difference was noted between two of the difficult vowels, /u/ and /o:/, as the former stayed the same with the lowest mean while the latter improved (Table 2).

Table 2
The Differences between the Means of the Vowels at T2

	/i:/	/i/	/e/	/o:/	/u/	/u:/	/ei/	/ou/
/i:/		p < .000	p < .000	p < .003	p < .000	p < .045	p < .817	p < .002
/i/			p < .610	p < .073	p < .735	p < .007	p < .000	p < .198
/e/				p < .151	p < .394	p < .015	p < .000	p < .370
/o:/					p < .039	p < .258	p < .003	p < .695
/u/						p < .004	p < .000	p < .116
/u:/							p < .054	p < .167
/ei/								p < .002
/ou/								

Note. The significant differences are in bold.

Table 3
The Differences between the Means of the Vowels at T3

	/i:/	/i/	/e/	/o:/	/u/	/u:/	/ei/	/ou/
/i:/		p < .000	p < .115	p < .131	p < .001	p < .907	p < .078	p < .023
/i/			p < .015	p < .009	p < .907	p < .000	p < .000	p < .122
/e/				p < .889	p < .022	p < .078	p < .000	p < .371
/o:/					p < .013	p < .089	p < .000	p < .288
/u/						p < .000	p < .000	p < .155
/u:/							p < .016	p < .010
/ei/								p < .000
/ou/								

Note. The significant differences are in bold.

At T3, /ei/ had a higher mean yielding, yet again, significant differences when compared to all the other vowels, not including /i:/ whose mean was fairly high. The test performed on /e/, /o:/, and /u:/ did not reveal significant differences between their means and the high mean of /i:/; and that indicated their considerable progress. Even though improvement was a general trend at T3, there was evidence that /i/ and /u/ were still the most challenging as there were significant differences between them and the rest of the vowels, apart from /ou/ which was relatively difficult (Table 3).

When we investigated the averages of the raters' measurements of accent, we noticed that the raters gave higher points as time progressed as seen in Table 4. Only 2% of the students were given seven on the accent scale at T1 and T2, and 4% were given eight at T2. At T3, however, a significant progress was recorded as 23% were ranked seven and 6% were ranked eight. This improvement was also observed as 8% at T2 and 21% at T3 were ranked six, while no students reached that scale at T1. The middle point of five was chosen for 13% of the participants at T1 with slight improvement at T2, 16%, and no change at T3. The percentages are also irregular at point four as they almost doubled at T2, 24%, then they drop back to 14% at T3. Yet again, the percentages of students' accents dropped dramatically with time as the 41% ranked three at T1 fell to 28% at T2 and to 17% at T3. On the other hand, 30% were ranked two at T1, but only 16% at T2, and a low 3% at T3. It's worth mentioning that the number of accurate vowels for individual students did not determine the raters' overall accent marking as some students with the same number of errors were given different points on the accent scale. This could be due to errors in consonants or to the type of vowel substitutes that students used to replace accurate vowels.

Discussion and Conclusions

When we compared the accent rating results to those reached for vowel accuracy, we noted that the total accent rating for each time reflected the progress recorded in vowel production. At T1, the percentage of the accurate vowels was 53% then reached 67% at T3. Likewise, 71% of the students were ranked the lowest points of two and three on the accent scale at T1, but only 5% were ranked as low at T3. On the other hand, 50% of the students were ranked six, seven, or eight at T3 but only 2% were ranked seven at T1. As there was clear improvement at T2 and T3 just as predicted in the hypotheses mentioned above, it was tentatively concluded that input enhancement played a significant role regardless of the critical period. That was in agreement with the conclusions of some previous studies on the SLM such as Jun and Cowie (1994), Flege and Mackay (2004), Piske et al. (2001), and Riney and Flege (1998). Such results may be interpreted as “evidence suggesting that claims concerning an absolute biological barrier to the attainment of a native-like accent in a foreign language are too strong” (Bongaerts, 1999, p. 154).

Table 4

Accent Scale	Number of Students								
	Rater 1			Rater 2			Rater 3		
	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3
10									
9									
8							4	5	
7			6			12	2	2	3
6		3	6		1	3		3	10
5	3	6	3	3	8	3	6		8
4	2	3		3	7	9	7	12	4
3	11	9	15	18	12		8	4	
2	14	9		6	2	3	7	3	
1									

Ratings of Students' Accent at the Three Times of the Year. The Scale Ranged from 10 (No Foreign Accent) to 1 (Strong Foreign Accent)

Looking at the vowels individually (Table 5), it was clear that all showed improvement. Three of them, /o:/, /u:/, and /ei/, displayed significant progress. The only case of backsliding was /e/ which deteriorated 6% at T2 but gained 20% at T3. This is one of the processes of language learning where speakers produce certain non target language forms at times, although at other times they are able to form target like forms (Washburn, 1994, p. 79).

An encompassing view at the learners' performance from T1 till T3 revealed that all sounds improved with given instruction, but with varying degrees. The significant differences between sounds at the same point in time showed that /u/, /i/, and /o:/ were the worst cases at T1 prior to input enhancement. The most difficult sounds that had modest improvement were /u/ and /i/ at T2; but /e/, /u/, and /i/ at T3. These sounds in particular call for more training. Had the word list under study been specifically targeted in training, a more positive outcome could have been reported here, but the aim of the present study was a broad input enhancement. Furthermore, the finding that sounds improved differently proved past remarks that experience-driven improvement in segmental accuracy was often noted for some L2 learners and for some sub-components of their phonetic system, with other aspects resisting change (Bohn & Flege, 1990).

Table 5
Vowel Percentages in Previous Studies and in the Current Study

	/i:/	/i/	/e/	/o:/	/u/	/u:/	/ei/	/ou/
Munro (1993)	72%	54%	39%				58%	
Munro et al. (1996)	50%	20%		42%		25%	58%	
Ahn (1997)		65%		53%	23%			
Current study (before training)	77%	43%	52%	46%	40%	52%	59%	53%
Current study (after training)	78%	49%	66%	67%	50%	77%	89%	60%

More evidence to the learners' positive reaction to more instruction was seen at T3. Besides the three sounds indicated above, /e/ emerged from its T2 setback to gain significant development. That is a sign of another phase in language learning which is improvement after an initial setback. It is also indicative of gradual development over time as learners receive more native speaker input (Flege & Liu, 2001; Flege & Mackay, 2004). While the sounds /i/, /u/, and /ou/ improved; /i:/ stayed the same. This was due to its being the easiest from T1, and its mean was the second highest out of all sounds at all three times (Table 5).

The overall conclusion was that the vowels /ei/, /u:/, /o:/, /e/, and /u/ showed the positive reaction of some sounds to continuous pronunciation input. On the other hand, the vowels /i/ and /ou/ reflected the difficulty facing learners to overcome some fossilized sounds, and the need for training targeting certain areas. Moreover, it was observed that the sounds that had lower means before training presented a greater improvement, while the sounds that had higher means improved slightly. The sounds /e/, /o:/, and /u:/ had lower means before training and they displayed significant improvement, whereas /i:/ had a high mean at T1 and improved slightly.

Viewing the vowels under study from another angle, it was evident that the learners achieved 67% accurate production of their problematic sounds. Their performance was better than the 30% reported in Munro's (1993). The highest

scores for the vowels in this analysis were in /ei/ and /i:/. Although those results were in agreement with his finding certain sounds easy, his percentages were lower than the ones reported here for /ei/ and /i:/. In contrast, the lowest score for the present learners' accurate production instances was 49% for /i/, and that narrowly matched Munro's 54%. Similarly, Munro's subjects' production of the sound /e/ was very poor recording 39% correct instances, and the participants here had to struggle with it too. They took an uneven path of 52% at T1, then a setback at T2 with 48% before reaching an intermediate score of 66% at T3 (Table 5).

Comparing the results of the present research to other studies on adult students learning English should prove that learners' production that improved with experience in English differed as a function of L1 background (Suter, 1976). For instance, the Italian subjects in Munro et al. (1996) produced /i:/, /o:/, and /ei/ far better than /u:/ and /i/. While the total percentage of these five vowels rated as native-like was around 39%, the total of their 11 vowels was 33%. These were far lower than the one reached in this paper, but there was agreement on the conclusion that /i:/ and /ei/ were far easier than /i/ (Table 5).

Moreover, the scale of difficulty reported in Ma (1994) designated /ei/ as an easy vowel but /i/ and /e/ as difficult ones. The vowel /i:/ was situated in the middle of his scale. His scale was similar to the one suggested here, except for /i:/ which was one of the easy vowels for the learners in the current study. On the other hand, it was found that his adult Chinese learners of English were successful in producing correct instances of /ei/ for both males and females and /i:/ for females. Thus, females performed better than males. Similarly, the present female subjects' performance was higher than that reported in other studies which had mixed or male learners. Therefore, it was tentatively assumed that gender affected performance. This corresponded to the observation presented by Piske et al. (2001) that the studies reporting gender as a predictor of foreign accent noted that females received higher ratings than males such as Flege et al. (1995).

Furthermore Ahn (1997) stated that /i/, /o:/, and /u/ might cause difficulty for her Korean learners of English. The percentage of /i/ and /u/ in her study was in agreement with the results reported here, but /o:/ was very low while it reached the middle of the scale for the present learners. As for the longitudinal research, Macdonald et al. (1994), a slight improvement at T2 and T3 in all three teaching conditions was recorded; but in this current research the learners' pronunciation improved significantly at both times. They stated that the no intervention participants' performance at T3 was relatively no worse than any other group at T3. While their conclusions showed that no single intervention was beneficial to all learners, this study reported significant change with constant input enhancement, even though the instruction condition was kept the same throughout the year.

On the whole, the total changing rate for the present vowels was 22%. While the most receptive vowels to training were /ei/ increasing 44% and /u:/ increasing (33%), the vowel /o:/ was a weak changing sound with 3% development. In addition, /ou/ was a challenging sound with 11% changing rate, but /i:/ was an easy sound from T1 and hence the 1% change was explicable. Medium progress was also reported for /i/ (14%), and /e/ (27%).

In conclusion, we assumed that this current study introduced comparatively better results than those reported in the vowel production studies. That could be related to considerable L2 input and to the fact that its participants were more motivated as they were trained to be English language teachers. Similar reasons were previously put forward in Bongaerts et al. (1997), Moyer (1999), and Piske et al. (2001).

Taken together, the results should dismiss persistent myths that all adults are incapable of mastering an L2. The easiest way to refute claims for a critical period in language acquisition “would be to produce learners who have demonstrably attained native-like proficiency despite having begun exposure well after the closure of the hypothesized sensitive periods” (Birdsong, 1992, p. 707). Language learning is influenced by age because it is associated with social, educational, motivational, and other factors that can affect L2 proficiency, not because of any critical period (Marinova-Todd, Marshali, & Snow, 2000, p. 28). Our attention should turn to the issue of trainability because native like attainment is possible for late learners if they have sufficient L2 input (Birdsong, 1992; Klein, 1995). Investigating the factors that normally lead to native like proficiency can contribute to our understanding of what leads to an adult’s success in an L2, and can inform practical decisions about the allocation of resources for effective teaching.

Although this study reported on aspects of vowel production, it leaves unanswered many questions about vowel perception. The results of this research are limited to the accurate production of Arab female speakers of English as an L2. On the other hand, the nature of the mispronounced vowels and the learners' strategies for sound substitutions, including transfer from their standard and nonstandard L1 are also beyond the scope of this present study.

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The Effects of Age and Input Enhancement on L2 Vowel Production: A Longitudinal Study

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Abstract

This longitudinal study investigated the vowels produced by adult female learners. They were 30 first year university students studying at the college of education to become English teachers. Their L1 was typologically different from English. They read word lists at three different times of the year and their production of English vowels rated by native speakers and was acoustically analyzed. The results supported the tenets of Flege's Speech Learning Model that input enhancement had positive effects on the participants' accent in spite of the age factor, and that the adults' performance at the three different times reflected a progressively shifting slope in accent. The results should dismiss myths that all adults are incapable of mastering an L2 when exposed well after the closure of the sensitive period. Investigating the trainability factor should contribute to our understanding of effective teaching that leads to adults' success in language learning.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, English proficiency

Introduction

Phonetic inaccuracies are assumed to arise from the amount of experience with L2, the age period during which L2 was acquired, and differences in sounds between L1 and L2. The question whether or not L2 sounds are resistant to training after the critical period has created false assumptions that L2 learners face a desperate situation of accent attainment. However, some views imply that if sufficient native speaker input is given, an adult can produce certain L2 vowels with native-like accuracy (Best & Strange, 1992); and others indicate that the capacity to learn new sounds remains intact over the life span (Flege, 1981, 1995; Flege & Liu, 2001; Flege & Mackay, 2004).

Vowels were under analysis in this present research because they display varieties that bear more problems for learners to attain, and they reflect foreign accent the most. Hence, pronunciation attainment is of vital importance to the present participants because they are trained to be English language teachers. Their production was investigated here because age-based limitations on learning are firmer for productive than perceptual aspects of L2 acquisition.

The effects of age and "input enhancement", a term used by Ioup (1995), are better clarified through longitudinal research such as the present one. This type

of research is rare, because it requires more time and energy. In other words, any problems about time in relation to learning can be interpreted only within a full longitudinal perspective (Ortega & Iberri-Shea, 2005, 26).

Critics of the idea of the critical period would have a much more convincing case if they could produce native speakers of typologically different languages who could survive rigorous testing, despite a late start in the L2 (Long, 2005). This current assessment considered two typologically distant languages, Arabic and English. Moreover, previous studies have shown that learners' performance that improved with experience in English varied as a function of L1 background. Hence, a study of Arabic as an L1 should contribute to this research area when compared to analyses performed on other languages.

Flege's Speech Learning Model (SLM) was adopted in this present study. This model characterizes the intermediate position regarding L2 sound acquisition theory. According to this model, one possible explanation for differences between early versus late L2 speech learning is that the L1 and L2 interact differently depending on the age at which the L2 is learned. The interaction hypothesis which is one tenet of the SLM holds that L1 and L2 are less likely to interact in younger than in older learners because early learners' L1 categories are malleable while late learners' L1 categories are fully developed. As a result, late learners may require an amount of experience with the L2 in order to overcome the pervasive effect of their L1 on their processing and learning of L2 sounds (Flege 1981, 1992b, 1995, 1999; Flege & Liu, 2001; Flege & Mackay, 2004). Flege claimed that "adults' performance in an L2 will improve measurably over time, but only if they receive a substantial amount of native speaker input" (Flege & Liu, 2001, p. 527); and that "late learners typically produce L2 vowels more accurately as they gain experience in the L2" (Flege & Mackay, 2004, p. 2).

This model further suggests that there is a progressively shifting slope in accent but with the likelihood of positive outcomes (Flege & Fletcher, 1992; Flege, MacKay, & Meador, 1999). It's a model that claims that due to neurological, psychological, cognitive, and contextual factors, a late L2 learner may sound native-like while an early L2 learner may have a foreign accent (Munro & Mann, 2005).

The other two positions of the model indicate the two extreme ends. One proposes that there is a constant ability to learn a native like accent that does not change with age of immersion (Bongaerts, 1999; Bongaerts, van Summeren, Planken, & Schils, 1997; Moyer, 1999; Neufeld, 1977; Neufeld & Schneidermann, 1980); and the other claims that L2 accent acquisition drops abruptly and irreversibly at some common young age (Lenneberg, 1967; David, 1985; Patkowski, 1990; Ramsey & Wright, 1974; Scovel, 1969).

In this research, the vowels produced by 30 learners were evaluated at the beginning (T1), middle (T2), and end of the year (T3). This empirical study delivered an extensive assessment of L2 vowel production in adulthood as it chronologically progressed to see the effects of input enhancement on learners' vowel production in spite of the age factor.

Literature Review

Studies on foreign accent explored different factors influencing attainment such as age of L2 learning (AOL), length of residence in the L2 environment (LOR), gender, instruction, aptitude, and L1/L2 interaction. One of the rare studies that investigated Arabic as an L1 was Munro (1993). He analyzed the production of English vowels by speakers of Arabic living in the US for six years. In the accentedness judgment test, the majority of the nonnative utterances were distinguished from native utterances on the basis of pronunciation. He also observed individual but not group approximation of some vowels to the native speakers' counterparts. On the other hand, Suter (1976) examined participants from different L1 backgrounds; Arabic, Japanese, Persian, and Thai. He noted that speakers of Arabic and Persian had better pronunciation of English than speakers of Japanese and Thai. He considered the L1 factor as the strongest predictor of foreign accent. He also reported that the number of weeks the subjects spent in formal training in English pronunciation bore no relationship to their accuracy. However, the factors he studied did not include age of learning L2.

Munro and Mann (2005) dealt with Chinese learners of English comparing accent, age of immersion, and gender. Age of immersion was found to be a predictor of accent while gender was not. Other studies have implemented longitudinal designs such as Macdonald, Yule, and Powers (1994) where they compared the pronunciation of four groups of Chinese graduate students studying in the US. Each group received a different type of instruction to improve their pronunciation. The participants were recorded three times: before the intervention (T1), immediately after (T2), and two days later (T3). In the self-study and the interaction conditions a slight improvement was observed at T2 but was lost at T3. As for the teacher led practice, a very slight improvement was reported at T3 as compared to T2. The no intervention participants' performance at T3 was relatively no worse than any other group at T3. The results showed that no single intervention was beneficial to all learners. In the same year, Ma (1994) found that adult Chinese students were successful in producing some vowels, and reported a scale of vowel difficulty.

In his quest to reveal factors influencing language learning, Flege conducted several studies on the production of various languages. For instance, Flege and Liu (2001) assessed the performance of groups of adult Chinese residents in the US. The student group with a long LOR performed better than that with a short LOR. The two nonstudent groups performed almost the same despite their different LORs. The study concluded that simply living in the L2 environment for an additional five years did not result in a close to a native speaker's performance, and that a rich L2 input is needed for a successful L2 learning. This echoed what Jun and Cowie (1994) had said that an improved production of L2 vowels is inevitable given a sufficient amount of native-speaker input as their experienced Korean subjects produced English vowels more accurately than did the less experienced ones.

In her Ph. D. dissertation on the interlanguage production of Korean university students, Ahn (1997) noted correct instances for some vowels. Another Asian language was dealt with by Riney and Flege (1998). They compared

sentences produced by Japanese university students in their first year (T1) to those produced in their senior year (T2). Some of the students at T2 showed significant differences in accent ratings. Most of them resided in the L2 environment for one year. This led the researchers to conclude that “in the early phases of L2 learning, additional experience in the L2 may lead to significant decreases in degree of L2 foreign accent” (p. 199).

Studies on European languages replicated the same findings. Flege (1992b) examined the foreign accent of adult Spanish learners of English with two different LORs. The results showed significant differences between the two groups due to their differing age of learning. On an evaluation of English spoken by Italians, Flege, Munro, and MacKay (1995) determined that the LOR factor played a more significant role for those subjects who were still in an early stage of L2 Learning. Four years later, 62 of its Italian subjects were re-examined by Meadore, Flege, and MacKay (2000). The latter study supported this conclusion, but noted that the highly experienced subjects did not show significant improvement in their foreign accent with the additional 4 years of experience. Italians were also dealt with in Piske, MacKay, and Flege (2001). They analyzed their production of English as an L2. The results showed that AOL is the most important predictor of degree of foreign accent, and that “ultimate attainment in the pronunciation of an L2 is dependent on various factors, not just on the state of neurological development at the age of first intensive exposure to the L2” (p. 212). They stated that motivation was a major factor for subjects “who are required by their profession to speak an L2 without a foreign accent but not so much for ordinary immigrants” (p. 211). In a previous study, Munro, Flege, and MacKay (1996) analyzed the production of 11 English vowels by Italian speakers living in Canada. The results showed that the subjects who arrived early produced native like vowels, while the late ones produced some vowels without accent. Although the rest of the vowels were intelligible, there was no vowel that was mastered by the majority of the late group.

More languages were explored to gain more substantial evidence on this aspect of English as an L2. With Dutch as an L1, Flege (1992a) proved that the English vowels spoken by Dutch students with mild accents were more intelligible than those spoken by students with stronger foreign accents. In the same year, Bohn and Flege (1992) presented their research that examined native German subjects who had lived in the US either for less than 1 year or for more than 5 years. Acoustic measurements showed that the relatively experienced Germans produced English vowels more accurately than did the relatively inexperienced subjects by forming a new phonetic category for English sounds that did not have a counterpart in German.

Finally, Bongaerts et al. (1997) analyzed the sentences produced by excellent Dutch students who were late learners of English. Some learners were judged as native speakers. They also repeated a similar study (Bongaerts, 1999) on Dutch learners of French to generalize the results to learners of languages typologically different from their L1, and reached the same results. They stated that successful learning was due to three factors: “high motivation, continued access to massive L2 input, and intensive training in the production of L2 speech sounds” (p. 154). Likewise, Moyer (1999) noted that his late L2 learners produced results comparable to native speakers’ due to intensive training in the perception and

production of L2 sounds. They were learners of German whose L1 was English. They were highly motivated as they were graduate students employed as teachers of German at their university.

Research Questions

Did the results support the tenets of Flege's Speech Learning Model that:

- a. Input enhancement had positive effects on the participants' vowel accuracy and accent in spite of the age factor?
- b. Were there significant differences between the adults' performance at the three different times of the year reflecting a progressively shifting slope in accent with positive outcomes?

Method

Materials

The words under analysis were part of a longer word list the researcher comprised based on students' most frequent pronunciation difficulties in vowels. They were not given as handouts or specifically targeted while teaching. Rather, they represented common words that usually appeared in most phonetic course books, and were generally found to have severe fossilization in the Saudi learners' vowel production.

The sounds analyzed were six vowels /i:/, /i/, /e/, /o:/, /u/, /u:/; and two diphthongs /ou/, and /ei/. The symbols used here are devised to match the system of this journal. Each vowel/diphthong had four words making a total of 32 words. They were as follows:

<i>reach</i>	<i>rich</i>
<i>breathe</i>	<i>breath</i>
<i>lift</i>	<i>left</i>
<i>built</i>	<i>belt</i>
<i>did</i>	<i>dead</i>
<i>greet</i>	<i>great</i>
<i>eat</i>	<i>eight</i>
<i>late</i>	<i>date</i>
<i>food</i>	<i>foot</i>
<i>books</i>	<i>box</i>
<i>full</i>	<i>fault</i>
<i>took</i>	<i>talk</i>
<i>shoe</i>	<i>show</i>
<i>soup</i>	<i>soap</i>
<i>rule</i>	<i>role</i>
<i>bought</i>	<i>boat</i>

The total number of words to be investigated was 2880 words (32 words x 30 students x 3 times). Each pair represented two vowels that were usually

substituted for each other (except *great*, *eight*, *late*, and *date* where students either use the vowel /i:/ or the Arabic sound /e:/).

Participants

The participants in this study were 30 female first year students in the English Department, College of Education, Princess Nora University. They were English language majors trained to be English teachers. They were on average 19 years old. They had already passed the critical period when they started learning English at age 13. They had already gone through six years of English before college that consisted of only 3-5 hours per week. In their first year in college, English input was considerably enhanced as they had forty two hours of courses covering English language and literature. All students were exposed to the same learning situation in college. Some of their professors had native speaker fluency, and others had good mastery of English with some traces of foreign accent. The course dealt with in this research was Spoken English and Phonetics. It was a two-term course with three hours per week that included intensive exposure to native speaker models in the language lab and continuous feedback on students' errors. Weekly pronunciation assignments were also given which required a minimum of two hours of home oral practice per week.

The three native speaker raters who were called up to evaluate the vowels produced by the students spoke General American English. They were female. Rater 1 was 48 years old and was an inexperienced rater as she had only been in that Arabic speaking country for a few weeks. Likewise, Rater 3 was also an inexperienced rater. She was a 42 years old housewife who had been in that country for a year. On the other hand, Rater 2 was a 45 years old experienced language instructor and she had been in that country for seven years.

Procedure

The words under analysis were randomly spread within the longer list not as pairs but as separate words to prevent the participants from comparing words within pairs. They were also read in isolation to avoid the effect of context. The students were presented with the word list and were asked to read at a normal speed. Their reading was recorded in the English Department language lab.

Data Analysis

To establish judgment reliability, three native speaker raters were instructed to determine whether each vowel was accurately produced then indicate the degree of a student's overall foreign accent on a 10-point scale ranging from 1 (strong foreign accent) to 10 (no foreign accent). They were urged to rate vowels and ignore consonants. When the native speakers differed in distinguishing the quality of a certain vowel, especially sounds from the students L1, its F1 and F2 were calculated to support the oral evaluation using SFSWin Version 1.7 (2008) by Mark Huckvale from the Department of Phonetics and Linguistics, University College, London.

Statistical analyses, a Paired Samples t-Test and an Independent Samples t-Test, were performed to compare students' accurate production instances within the context of time progression. Due to the extensive results investigated here, the quality of the mispronounced vowels, their L1-L2 similarities, and the learners' strategies of vowel substitution were dealt with in a separate study (forthcoming).

Results

The vowels determined to be accurate were analyzed using a Paired Samples t-Test that yielded significant differences between the means of the vowels at T1 and T2 ($p < .042$). The means of the vowels at T2 were higher. There were also significant differences between the means of the vowels at T1 and at T3 ($p < .000$). The means of the vowels at T3 were higher. Likewise, the means of the vowels at T2 and at T3 were significantly different ($p < .000$). The means of the vowels at T3 were higher (Figure 1).

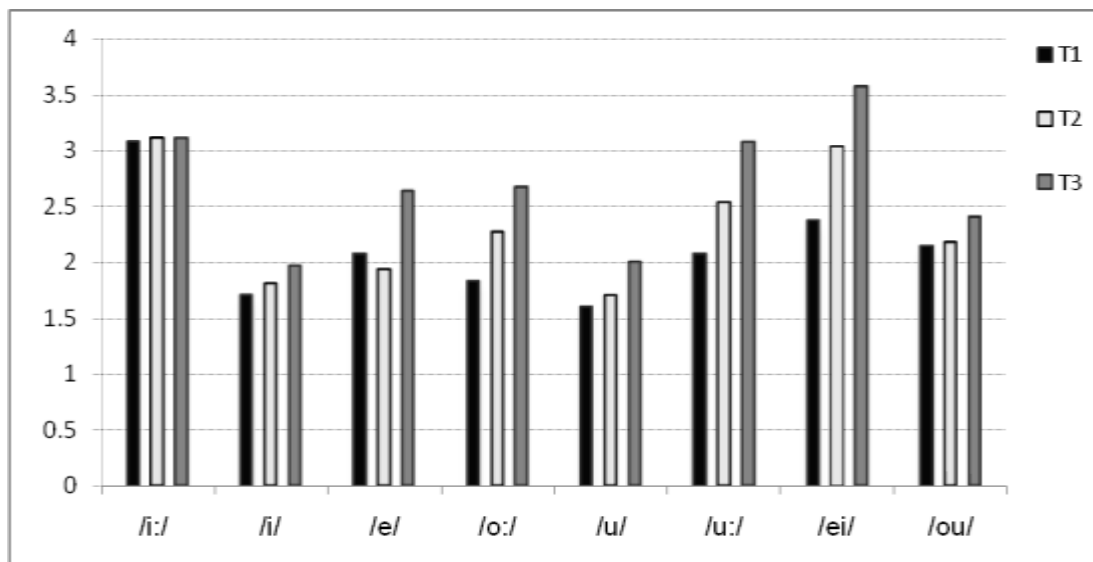


Figure 1. The Means of the Vowels at T1, T2, and T3

When comparing the means of the same vowel at T1 and T2, significant differences were found for /o:/ ($p < .040$), /u:/ ($p < .020$), and /ei/ ($p < .000$). The means of the vowels at T2 were higher. Significant differences were also seen at T2 when contrasted with T3 for /e/ ($p < .002$), /o:/ ($p < .016$), /u:/ ($p < .011$), and /ei/ ($p < .002$). The means of the vowels at T3 were higher. Finally, when the means of the same vowel at T1 and T3 were assessed, significant differences were obtained for /e/ ($p < .035$), /o:/ ($p < .000$), /u:/ ($p < .000$), and /ei/ ($p < .000$). The means of the vowels at T3 were higher. The means of /i:/ at T2 and at T3 were the same. However, the only vowel that showed some setback was /e/ at T2 as compared to T1 (Figure 1).

To explore further the differences between vowels in their scale of difficulty at each point in time, an Independent Samples t-Test was employed. It revealed

that at T1, the mean of /i:/ was significantly different from the means of the other seven vowels, because it was an easy vowel for the learners. The test also showed that the mean of /i/ was significantly different from that of /ei/ because the former was a difficult vowel. Equally, the mean of /u/ was significantly different when compared to those of /ei/ and /ou/, because the last two were easier. While the test indicated that the means of /e/ and /u:/ were the same, it did not yield any significant differences for the rest of the vowel comparisons owing to the fact that most of the vowels had low means at T1 (Table 1).

Table 1
The Differences between the Means of the Vowels at T1

	/i:/	/i/	/e/	/o:/	/u/	/u:/	/ei/	/ou/
/i:/		p < .000	p < .000	p < .000	p < .000	p < .000	p < .017	p < .001
/i/			p < .175	p < .589	p < .694	p < .175	p < .023	p < .104
/e/				p < .370	p < .083	p < 1.00	p < .317	p < .809
/o:/					p < .341	p < .370	p < .060	p < .240
/u/						p < .083	p < .009	p < .045
/u:/							p < .317	p < .809
/ei/								p < .428
/ou/								

Note. The significant differences are in bold.

At T2, the significant differences found between the vowel means at the same point in time reflected the degrees of sound difficulty more than at T1. That was due to the clear improvement of certain sounds while the others resisted change. Those degrees were seen in the significant differences between the mean of /i:/ as compared to the means of all the other vowels except /ei/ as those two were the easiest vowels at T2. Hence, the /ei/ data showed significant differences when contrasted with the still challenging vowels /i/, /e/, /o:/, /u/, and /ou/. Furthermore, it was clear that /u:/ developed since it reflected significant differences when compared to the three worst vowels at T2, /i/, /e/, and /u/. A further significant difference was noted between two of the difficult vowels, /u/ and /o:/, as the former stayed the same with the lowest mean while the latter improved (Table 2).

Table 2
The Differences between the Means of the Vowels at T2

	/i:/	/i/	/e/	/o:/	/u/	/u:/	/ei/	/ou/
/i:/		p < .000	p < .000	p < .003	p < .000	p < .045	p < .817	p < .002
/i/			p < .610	p < .073	p < .735	p < .007	p < .000	p < .198
/e/				p < .151	p < .394	p < .015	p < .000	p < .370
/o:/					p < .039	p < .258	p < .003	p < .695
/u/						p < .004	p < .000	p < .116
/u:/							p < .054	p < .167
/ei/								p < .002
/ou/								

Note. The significant differences are in bold.

Table 3
The Differences between the Means of the Vowels at T3

	/i:/	/i/	/e/	/o:/	/u/	/u:/	/ei/	/ou/
/i:/		p < .000	p < .115	p < .131	p < .001	p < .907	p < .078	p < .023
/i/			p < .015	p < .009	p < .907	p < .000	p < .000	p < .122
/e/				p < .889	p < .022	p < .078	p < .000	p < .371
/o:/					p < .013	p < .089	p < .000	p < .288
/u/						p < .000	p < .000	p < .155
/u:/							p < .016	p < .010
/ei/								p < .000
/ou/								

Note. The significant differences are in bold.

At T3, /ei/ had a higher mean yielding, yet again, significant differences when compared to all the other vowels, not including /i:/ whose mean was fairly high. The test performed on /e/, /o:/, and /u:/ did not reveal significant differences between their means and the high mean of /i:/; and that indicated their considerable progress. Even though improvement was a general trend at T3, there was evidence that /i/ and /u/ were still the most challenging as there were significant differences between them and the rest of the vowels, apart from /ou/ which was relatively difficult (Table 3).

When we investigated the averages of the raters' measurements of accent, we noticed that the raters gave higher points as time progressed as seen in Table 4. Only 2% of the students were given seven on the accent scale at T1 and T2, and 4% were given eight at T2. At T3, however, a significant progress was recorded as 23% were ranked seven and 6% were ranked eight. This improvement was also observed as 8% at T2 and 21% at T3 were ranked six, while no students reached that scale at T1. The middle point of five was chosen for 13% of the participants at T1 with slight improvement at T2, 16%, and no change at T3. The percentages are also irregular at point four as they almost doubled at T2, 24%, then they drop back to 14% at T3. Yet again, the percentages of students' accents dropped dramatically with time as the 41% ranked three at T1 fell to 28% at T2 and to 17% at T3. On the other hand, 30% were ranked two at T1, but only 16% at T2, and a low 3% at T3. It's worth mentioning that the number of accurate vowels for individual students did not determine the raters' overall accent marking as some students with the same number of errors were given different points on the accent scale. This could be due to errors in consonants or to the type of vowel substitutes that students used to replace accurate vowels.

Discussion and Conclusions

When we compared the accent rating results to those reached for vowel accuracy, we noted that the total accent rating for each time reflected the progress recorded in vowel production. At T1, the percentage of the accurate vowels was 53% then reached 67% at T3. Likewise, 71% of the students were ranked the lowest points of two and three on the accent scale at T1, but only 5% were ranked as low at T3. On the other hand, 50% of the students were ranked six, seven, or eight at T3 but only 2% were ranked seven at T1. As there was clear improvement at T2 and T3 just as predicted in the hypotheses mentioned above, it was tentatively concluded that input enhancement played a significant role regardless of the critical period. That was in agreement with the conclusions of some previous studies on the SLM such as Jun and Cowie (1994), Flege and Mackay (2004), Piske et al. (2001), and Riney and Flege (1998). Such results may be interpreted as “evidence suggesting that claims concerning an absolute biological barrier to the attainment of a native-like accent in a foreign language are too strong” (Bongaerts, 1999, p. 154).

Table 4

Accent Scale	Number of Students								
	Rater 1			Rater 2			Rater 3		
	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3
10									
9									
8								4	5
7			6			12	2	2	3
6		3	6		1	3		3	10
5	3	6	3	3	8	3	6		8
4	2	3		3	7	9	7	12	4
3	11	9	15	18	12		8	4	
2	14	9		6	2	3	7	3	
1									

Ratings of Students' Accent at the Three Times of the Year. The Scale Ranged from 10 (No Foreign Accent) to 1 (Strong Foreign Accent)

Looking at the vowels individually (Table 5), it was clear that all showed improvement. Three of them, /o:/, /u:/, and /ei/, displayed significant progress. The only case of backsliding was /e/ which deteriorated 6% at T2 but gained 20% at T3. This is one of the processes of language learning where speakers produce certain non target language forms at times, although at other times they are able to form target like forms (Washburn, 1994, p. 79).

An encompassing view at the learners' performance from T1 till T3 revealed that all sounds improved with given instruction, but with varying degrees. The significant differences between sounds at the same point in time showed that /u/, /i/, and /o:/ were the worst cases at T1 prior to input enhancement. The most difficult sounds that had modest improvement were /u/ and /i/ at T2; but /e/, /u/, and /i/ at T3. These sounds in particular call for more training. Had the word list under study been specifically targeted in training, a more positive outcome could have been reported here, but the aim of the present study was a broad input enhancement. Furthermore, the finding that sounds improved differently proved past remarks that experience-driven improvement in segmental accuracy was often noted for some L2 learners and for some sub-components of their phonetic system, with other aspects resisting change (Bohn & Flege, 1990).

Table 5
Vowel Percentages in Previous Studies and in the Current Study

	/i:/	/i/	/e/	/o:/	/u/	/u:/	/ei/	/ou/
Munro (1993)	72%	54%	39%				58%	
Munro et al. (1996)	50%	20%		42%		25%	58%	
Ahn (1997)		65%		53%	23%			
Current study (before training)	77%	43%	52%	46%	40%	52%	59%	53%
Current study (after training)	78%	49%	66%	67%	50%	77%	89%	60%

More evidence to the learners' positive reaction to more instruction was seen at T3. Besides the three sounds indicated above, /e/ emerged from its T2 setback to gain significant development. That is a sign of another phase in language learning which is improvement after an initial setback. It is also indicative of gradual development over time as learners receive more native speaker input (Flege & Liu, 2001; Flege & Mackay, 2004). While the sounds /i/, /u/, and /ou/ improved; /i:/ stayed the same. This was due to its being the easiest from T1, and its mean was the second highest out of all sounds at all three times (Table 5).

The overall conclusion was that the vowels /ei/, /u:/, /o:/, /e/, and /u/ showed the positive reaction of some sounds to continuous pronunciation input. On the other hand, the vowels /i/ and /ou/ reflected the difficulty facing learners to overcome some fossilized sounds, and the need for training targeting certain areas. Moreover, it was observed that the sounds that had lower means before training presented a greater improvement, while the sounds that had higher means improved slightly. The sounds /e/, /o:/, and /u:/ had lower means before training and they displayed significant improvement, whereas /i:/ had a high mean at T1 and improved slightly.

Viewing the vowels under study from another angle, it was evident that the learners achieved 67% accurate production of their problematic sounds. Their performance was better than the 30% reported in Munro's (1993). The highest

scores for the vowels in this analysis were in /ei/ and /i:/. Although those results were in agreement with his finding certain sounds easy, his percentages were lower than the ones reported here for /ei/ and /i:/. In contrast, the lowest score for the present learners' accurate production instances was 49% for /i/, and that narrowly matched Munro's 54%. Similarly, Munro's subjects' production of the sound /e/ was very poor recording 39% correct instances, and the participants here had to struggle with it too. They took an uneven path of 52% at T1, then a setback at T2 with 48% before reaching an intermediate score of 66% at T3 (Table 5).

Comparing the results of the present research to other studies on adult students learning English should prove that learners' production that improved with experience in English differed as a function of L1 background (Suter, 1976). For instance, the Italian subjects in Munro et al. (1996) produced /i:/, /o:/, and /ei/ far better than /u:/ and /i/. While the total percentage of these five vowels rated as native-like was around 39%, the total of their 11 vowels was 33%. These were far lower than the one reached in this paper, but there was agreement on the conclusion that /i:/ and /ei/ were far easier than /i/ (Table 5).

Moreover, the scale of difficulty reported in Ma (1994) designated /ei/ as an easy vowel but /i/ and /e/ as difficult ones. The vowel /i:/ was situated in the middle of his scale. His scale was similar to the one suggested here, except for /i:/ which was one of the easy vowels for the learners in the current study. On the other hand, it was found that his adult Chinese learners of English were successful in producing correct instances of /ei/ for both males and females and /i:/ for females. Thus, females performed better than males. Similarly, the present female subjects' performance was higher than that reported in other studies which had mixed or male learners. Therefore, it was tentatively assumed that gender affected performance. This corresponded to the observation presented by Piske et al. (2001) that the studies reporting gender as a predictor of foreign accent noted that females received higher ratings than males such as Flege et al. (1995).

Furthermore Ahn (1997) stated that /i/, /o:/, and /u/ might cause difficulty for her Korean learners of English. The percentage of /i/ and /u/ in her study was in agreement with the results reported here, but /o:/ was very low while it reached the middle of the scale for the present learners. As for the longitudinal research, Macdonald et al. (1994), a slight improvement at T2 and T3 in all three teaching conditions was recorded; but in this current research the learners' pronunciation improved significantly at both times. They stated that the no intervention participants' performance at T3 was relatively no worse than any other group at T3. While their conclusions showed that no single intervention was beneficial to all learners, this study reported significant change with constant input enhancement, even though the instruction condition was kept the same throughout the year.

On the whole, the total changing rate for the present vowels was 22%. While the most receptive vowels to training were /ei/ increasing 44% and /u:/ increasing (33%), the vowel /o:/ was a weak changing sound with 3% development. In addition, /ou/ was a challenging sound with 11% changing rate, but /i:/ was an easy sound from T1 and hence the 1% change was explicable. Medium progress was also reported for /i/ (14%), and /e/ (27%).

In conclusion, we assumed that this current study introduced comparatively better results than those reported in the vowel production studies. That could be related to considerable L2 input and to the fact that its participants were more motivated as they were trained to be English language teachers. Similar reasons were previously put forward in Bongaerts et al. (1997), Moyer (1999), and Piske et al. (2001).

Taken together, the results should dismiss persistent myths that all adults are incapable of mastering an L2. The easiest way to refute claims for a critical period in language acquisition “would be to produce learners who have demonstrably attained native-like proficiency despite having begun exposure well after the closure of the hypothesized sensitive periods” (Birdsong, 1992, p. 707). Language learning is influenced by age because it is associated with social, educational, motivational, and other factors that can affect L2 proficiency, not because of any critical period (Marinova-Todd, Marshali, & Snow, 2000, p. 28). Our attention should turn to the issue of trainability because native like attainment is possible for late learners if they have sufficient L2 input (Birdsong, 1992; Klein, 1995). Investigating the factors that normally lead to native like proficiency can contribute to our understanding of what leads to an adult’s success in an L2, and can inform practical decisions about the allocation of resources for effective teaching.

Although this study reported on aspects of vowel production, it leaves unanswered many questions about vowel perception. The results of this research are limited to the accurate production of Arab female speakers of English as an L2. On the other hand, the nature of the mispronounced vowels and the learners' strategies for sound substitutions, including transfer from their standard and nonstandard L1 are also beyond the scope of this present study.

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Enhancing Students' Communicative Competency and Test-Taking Skills Through TOEIC Preparatory Materials

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Abstract

With the aim of enhancing students' English proficiency, many Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand are adopting TOEIC as a component of tertiary-level EFL exit requirements (IIBC, 2005, p. 7; Pan, 2010). However, preparing students for international standardized tests such as TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS is often considered unethical because of concerns over the issues of narrowing the curriculum, overemphasizing test-strategy instruction and mechanical practice, neglecting high-order thinking skills, and causing test-wiseness (Haladyna et al, 1991; Hamp-Lyons, 1998; Miller, 2003; Noble & Smith, 1994). The goal of this paper, which has a foundation in the metacognitively-based approach, is to offer teachers a variety of activities dealing with how to both teach the TOEIC® listening and reading test interactively and to prepare their students for success.

Keywords: washback, metacognitively-based approach, test preparation

Introduction

With the aim of enhancing students' English proficiency, many Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand are adopting TOEIC as a component of tertiary-level EFL exit requirements (IIBC, 2005, p. 7; Pan, 2010). However, preparing students for international standardized tests such as TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS is often considered unethical because of concerns over the issues of narrowing the curriculum, overemphasizing test-strategy instruction and mechanical practice, neglecting high-order thinking skills, and causing test-wiseness (Haladyna et al, 1991; Hamp-Lyons, 1998; Miller, 2003; Noble & Smith, 1994). Because of this, many teachers resist offering test preparation in regular English classes although students request more of such instruction and practice in order to pass the test (Hanson-Smith, 2000; Pan, 2010). It is the intent of this paper to provide teachers with techniques that can help students to do well on the test without the instructors themselves teaching to the test.

The TOEIC® Listening and Reading Test

The TOEIC® (Test of English for International Communication) test measures test taker's communicative ability of everyday English skills with others in business, commerce, and industry (TOEIC Handbook, 2008, p. 2). It covers Section 1: Listening and Section 2: Reading. Each section consists of 100 multiple-choice questions. The listening tasks consist of four parts: (1) choosing the best

description that matches the photograph, (2) responding to one short question or statement, (3) choosing the best response to the question from a conversation, and (4) choosing the best response to the question from a short talk. The reading section includes three parts in the forms of (1) incomplete sentences, (2) error recognition or text completion, and (3) reading comprehension.

The Integration of Communicatively-Oriented Instruction and Test and Test Preparation in Curricula

Hughes (2003) and Messick (1996) contend that the alignment of curricula with test content can generate positive effects. In addition, the offering of test-preparation instruction could increase student confidence when preparing for tests (Green, 2007). However, many test preparation classes are teacher-centered, where the students were engaged in test-oriented activities, such as listening to the recording and choosing the correct answer on a picture, repeating after the teacher, and practicing the possible alternative answers to the oral questions (Pan, 2010). Falout (2004, p. 39) also observed similar phenomenon in his classes:

Using examples of past tests, or mock exams, learners practice taking the test in samples as short as one question at a time. Then the teacher explains why answers are right or wrong. Often students listen to the same audio segment again and again and the teacher explains why they listened to. Or the teacher explains discrete points, especially the ones often found in the reading section. Teachers might also prime learners for a practice test by focusing on a phonological or grammatical feature, or a learning or test-taking strategy”

In order to elicit beneficial washback from test preparation classes, the following sections explain how to use TOEIC practice tests as preparatory materials to enhance both students’ communicative competency and test-taking listening and reading skills.

Metacognitive-based Approach to teaching the TOEIC Listening and Reading Test

Metacognition is a concept that refers to one’s awareness about his/her thinking processes. It has been applied extensively to describe the process of second language learning (Ellis, 1994; Ellis 2003; Woolfolk, 1995). However, strategies for teaching metacognition are not yet widely developed or discussed in this field. This section discusses how to design metacognitively-based instruction activities to enhance students’ communicative competence and prepare them for success on the test.

According to Woolfolk (1995), there are three types of metacognitive awareness: 1) declarative knowledge; 2) procedural knowledge; and 3) conditional knowledge. Declarative knowledge refers to knowledge about knowing something, procedural knowledge refers to how to do something, and conditional knowledge refers to one’s awareness of what to do in order to complete the task.

Based on this concept, three types of instruction are designed to teach the TOEIC® listening and reading test (1): bottom-up instruction, 2) interactive instruction, and 3) test-strategic instruction. Bottom-up instruction refers to those activities that can enrich students’ declarative (Johnson, 1996; Ellis, 1994) or prior

knowledge (Anderson, 1980; Sun., et al, 2001) in order to facilitate the occurrence of their procedural knowledge (Johnson, 1996) that underlies spontaneous L2 use. Sun et al. (2001) summarize the benefits of declarative knowledge by reviewing the related literature. According to them, declarative knowledge: 1) speeds up the learning process, 2) facilitates the transfer of skills, and 3) helps in the communication of knowledge and skills to others (p. 206). In view of these benefits, the aim of bottom-up instruction is to aid students in familiarizing themselves with the fundamental knowledge (e.g. vocabulary, grammar rules, pronunciation rules) they should know in order to participate in future interactive activities.

Interactive instruction helps students to make use of their declarative or prior knowledge and then turn that into procedural knowledge. According to Ellis (2003), learners with only declarative knowledge are not able to perform language tasks successfully because they focus merely on rule memorization and fail to communicate in the real world. In other words, interactive activities help students to become “more familiar with, and confident about, the test if they have actually used the language from the test” (Forster & Karn, 1998, p. 46).

Test strategy instruction enriches students’ conditional knowledge so that they know when and how to employ the skills (including declarative and procedural knowledge) teachers instruct and why to do so when taking the TOEIC® listening and reading test (Woolflok, 1995).

Figure 1 shows the metacognitively-based approach to eliciting beneficial washback from the TOEIC test preparation class.

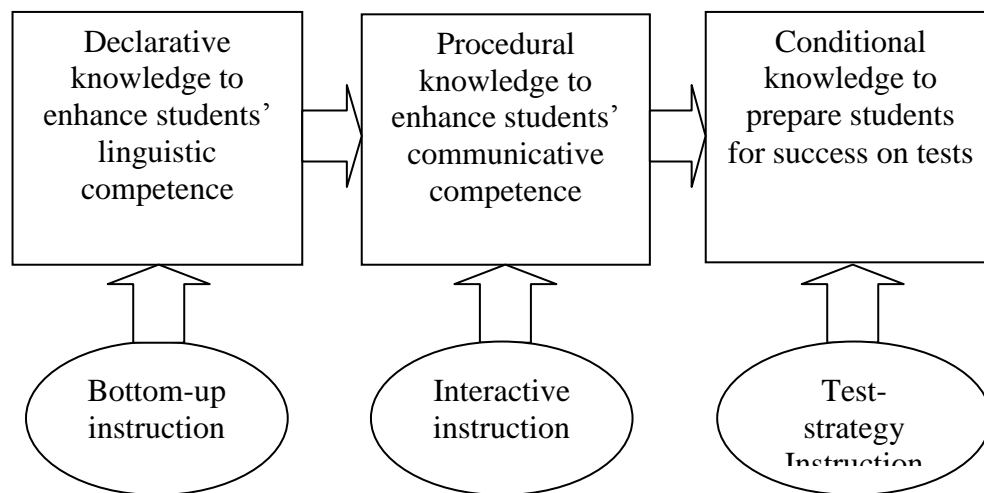


Figure 1. Metacognitively-based Approach to Teaching the TOEIC Test (adapted from Ellis, 2003)

Bottom-up Activities for Enhancing Linguistic Competence in Listening and Reading Skills Related to the TOEIC® Test

Nation (2007, cited in Hue, 2010) suggests that students will not be able to perform a given task if they do not know enough. Before they practice the listening

and reading questions on the TOEIC preparatory material, students should be provided with worksheets that contain sufficient vocabulary, phrases, and sentence patterns related to the listening and reading tasks, as shown in Table 1 and Table 2. These activities are recommended by the researcher's teaching experience, and Cheng (2009) in New TOEIC.

Table 1

Bottom-up Activities for Enhancing Students' Linguistic Competence in Listening Skills Related to the TOEIC® Test

Bottom-up activities for practice on listening skills
1. Distinguish minimal pairs/homophones/synonyms/antonyms/words with similar pronunciation. Ex. teething/teasing, mail/male, guarantee/promise, exit/entrance, oppose/propose/dispose/suppose
2. Identify sentences in difference tenses. Ex. The door has been painted by the man./The man is painting a door./ The door is open.
3. Identify people, things, actions, and places in the photos given and describe them. Ex. The woman is at a supermarket. The woman is raising her hand. The woman is looking at the shelf. The woman is wearing a T-shirt and a skirt.
4. Identify questions in different forms such as wh- questions, yes/no questions, and tag questions. Ex. Why didn't you call me this morning? What are you serving for dinner? When's the car going to be ready? How long was your flight? This year went fast, didn't it? The bicycle is broken, isn't it? Would you call this number and ask what their hours are? Would you mind packing the luggage?
5. Identify words, phrases, expressions often used in different work settings such as general business contracts, finance, accounting, conferences, hiring, purchasing shopping, housing, entertainment, and visiting doctors.

Table 2

Bottom-up Activities for Enhancing Linguistic Competence in Reading Skills Related to the TOEIC® Test

Bottom-up activities for practice on reading skills
1. Identify word families including their parts of speech, suffixes, and affixes.
2. Enhance students' vocabulary banks by providing them with categories of words based on various topics such as School & Education, Food & Shopping, Health & Sports, Entertainment, and General Business.
3. Enhance students' grammatical knowledge by providing them with fundamental grammatical rules such as tenses, auxiliaries, gerund, infinite, passive voice, and subjunctives.
4. Enhance students' systematic knowledge of prepositional phrases such as for the sake of, at least, change in, demand for, alert to, apply for, and end up, and conjunctions such as because, although, and even though.

Interactive Activities for Enhancing Communicative Competence in Listening and Reading Skills on the TOEIC® Test

After the students familiarize themselves with the words and phrases related to the listening tasks, the teacher then asks them to do communicative activities, as in Table 3. The interactive activities are listed from simple ones to more complicated ones in order to improve students' confidence. These activities are recommended by the researcher's teaching experience, Cheng (2009) in *New TOIEC*, Trew (2008) in *Tactics for TOEIC listening and Reading test* and Razenberg (2003) *Reading Strategies for the TOEIC® Test*.

Table 3
Interactive Activities for Enhancing Communicative Competence in Listening Tasks on the TOEIC® Test

TOEIC Listening Tasks	Interactive Activities
Part I Photographs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students to answer yes/no questions related to the photographs to check their listening comprehension. 2. Ask students to answer wh- questions related to the photograph to help them make a list of predictions of possible statements that they might hear. 3. Ask students to form pairs of two to practice both yes/no and wh- questions that they have practiced to reinforce their listening/speaking skills.
Part II Question/Response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students to read the responses to check their understanding of these answers. 2. Ask students to answer your questions choosing from the four statements. These questions can be yes/no questions, wh- questions, or statements. 3. Ask students to form pairs of two to practice the questions you have given. 4. Ask students to make possible questions for the statements they will be choosing from.
Part III Conversations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher revises the conversation first and then reads it to the class. If students do not understand it the first time, the teacher can repeat it. 2. The teacher asks students yes/no and wh- questions related to the revised conversation to check their comprehension. 3. Ask students for form groups of five. Two students act out the revised conversation, one student asks questions, and another two answer them.

Cont. Table 3	1. The teacher revises the short talk or lecture first and then reads it to the class. If students do not understand it the first time, the teacher can repeat it.
Part IV Short Talks	2. The teacher asks questions about the revised short talk/lecture related to main idea/subject, facts, conditions, purposes, prediction, and exclusion (i.e. Which of the following was not the reason for the late shipment?). 3. Pass out the revised short talk/lecture and ask students to read it. Then ask several students to read it in front of the class and the other students to make their own questions for the students in the front.

Table 4

Interactive Activities for Enhancing Communicative Competence in Reading Tasks on the TOEIC® Test

TOEIC Reading Tasks	Interactive Activities
Part V Incomplete Sentences	Ask students to form groups of five and give them a list of 50 words. Then ask them to arrange every four words in the same category based on their parts of speech, meanings, prefixes, suffixes, and so on. The group that completes this task first is the winner.
Part VI Text Completion	1. Ask students to form a group of five and ask them to write a short paragraph that uses the phrases the teacher has provided. 2. The teacher corrects the short paragraph, passes it out to the group and asks them questions about it.
Part VII Reading Comprehension	1. Ask students to read the articles in the preparatory material and then ask them the following questions: (Adapted from Razenberg, 2003) a. What is the text-type? b. Where is the text used? c. What is the purpose of the text? d. What are the main points? e. Who is the audience? f. What are the meanings of new vocabulary, phrases, and expressions guessed from the context?

Test Strategy Instruction to Prepare Students for Success on the TOEIC® Test

Test-strategy instruction is offered after students practice bottom-up activities for building up fundamental knowledge and interactive activities for using the language from the test. Students are asked to do TOEIC practice tests, utilizing what they have learned from bottom-up activities and interactive activities, to

familiarize themselves with the format and content of the test. In order for them to feel confident when doing the test, Table 5 presents test-strategy instruction teachers can offer for the listening and reading test. These activities are recommended by the researcher's teaching experience, Cheng (2009) in New TOIEC, and Trew (2008) in Tactics for TOEIC listening and Reading test.

Table 5

Test-strategy Instruction for the TOEIC® Listening and Reading Test

Test-strategy instruction
<p>Before the test</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the format of the listening and reading section so that students can save time on reading directions and therefore have more time to look at the questions for each section. 2. Ask students not to feel worried if they do not understand each word/phrase they hear because the test does not test them on the details. <p>During the test</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Ask students to practice each section in the timed condition so that they know time management techniques when taking the real test. 4. Ask students to look at the photos and answer items before they hear the questions so that they will have some ideas about what to hear/predict. 5. Ask students to look at the question and answer items in the Reading Section before they read the text so that they will have some ideas about what to focus on. 6. Ask students to guess the words/phrases from the context and do not get stuck on them, wasting too much test time. 7. Ask students to delete the answer items they find most impossible when they hear the questions they don't understand so that there are fewer items left for them to choose from. <p>After the test</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Ask students to practice doing the listening/reading questions on the TOEIC more than one time so that they can get used to speakers' speed and learn more new words/phrases/expressions from the test. Ask students to write a short sentence/paragraph/conversation using these new words/phrases/expressions. 9. Ask students to finish the learning log as shown in Appendix 1 when practicing the test questions so that teachers can diagnose what difficulties students are experiencing with a particular section of one of the tests.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The goal of this paper, which has a foundation in the metacognitively-based approach, is to offer teachers a variety of activities dealing with how to both teach the TOEIC® listening and reading test interactively and to prepare their students for success at the same time. Using test preparatory materials does not necessarily imply that instructors are teaching to the test; indeed, if their instructors utilize appropriate activities designed specifically for lessons, students can both learn the language from the test and improve their test scores. Students can truly benefit from TOEIC classes.

However, students possess a vast array of differing levels of English proficiency, and their learning styles and learning strategies exhibit a similar variety. Because of these differences, teachers must utilize three essentials in metacognitive regulation: planning, monitoring, and evaluation (Cross and Paris, 1988). In regard to planning, teachers should select appropriate instruction to suit their students. Vandergrift (2007) recommends that “listening instruction should not be a stand-alone activity” (p. 197). For example, Brown (1990) proposed an approach that facilitates the enrichment of students’ knowledge of phonological rules, as suggested in the bottom-up activities presented in Table 1, and then uses those contexts to make predictions, as suggested in test-strategy instruction in Table 5. As for monitoring, teachers should always check students’ awareness of comprehension and task performance (Paulsen & Zimmerman, 1995). The interactive instruction suggested in Tables 3 and 4 can assist teachers in assessing students’ comprehension and difficulties through a variety of communicative activities. Regarding evaluation, test-strategies instruction can help teachers understand their students’ learning outcomes. In addition, the learning log (see Appendix 1), as suggested in Table 5, can help teachers diagnose what difficulties students are experiencing with a particular section of one of the tests. Field (1998) and Goh (2000) propose an approach that scrutinizes learners’ difficulties and then uses appropriate exercises to help them practice those skills they must improve. As Goh (2000) states, “By concentrating on only those areas that affect their [students’] comprehension most, we [teachers] can use limited teaching time more profitably” (p.69).

The implementation of the metacognitively-based approach to teaching the TOEIC listening and reading test in test-preparation classes can generate beneficial washback on learning and teaching.

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Appendix

Student No.: _____ Name: _____

Time	9/20, 9:10- 9:30pm	
Test content	TOEIC Practice Test Listening 1, Q 1- Q10	
Score	5/10	
Reflections	Questions that I answered right	Q1, Q3: Because I guessed right Q4, Q5, Q7: Because I understood most of the words/phrases/expressions
	Questions that I answered wrong	Q2, Q8: Because the speakers spoke too fast Q6, Q9: Because most of the words/phrases/expressions were too hard for me Q10: Because I got stuck at Q9 so I did not concentrate on Q10, and chose a wrong answer.
Suggestions	To myself	1. I should memorize the new words/phrases/expressions that I learned from the test. 2. I should listen to the 10 questions 3 more times.
	To the teacher	1. The teacher should explain the questions and answers in class. 2. The teacher should have us practice additional similar questions in class.
Teacher's comments	I will focus on improving students' vocabulary banks to facilitate listening.	

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The Effect of Scaffolding on Children's Reading Speed, Reading Anxiety, and Reading Proficiency

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Abstract

The present experiment assessed the effect of scaffolding as a reading intervention. Scaffolding was done by a teacher providing feedback while the child is orally reading. Feedback was given in terms of the decoding (meaning of words), fluency (which involves correct pronunciation, proper rhythm, and speed), and modeling (pre practice procedure) while the child is orally reading an unfamiliar story. There were 60 first grade pupils who participated in the study. Reading speed and anxiety was measured before and after the scaffolding. Reading speed was measured by the rate of reading by seconds while reading anxiety was assessed by asking the pupils to respond in the Child Reading Anxiety Scale. The results indicate a significant increased the children's reading speed [$t(60) = 7.96, p < .05$], reading proficiency [$t(60) = 8.77, p < .05$], and significant decrease in the their reading anxiety [$t(60) = 15.76, p < .05$] from pre to post test. The study provides implications for reading instruction in the form of scaffolding.

Keywords: Reading speed, reading anxiety, scaffolding in reading

Introduction

The supervision of an adult is important in a child's ability to read. In the United States, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act targets the literacy rate of the children which focuses on two main subjects that the government thinks the children needs improvement on: Reading and Mathematics. This research focused on testing an intervention on reading through adult supervision. Adult supervision in terms of assisting a child how to read is termed as scaffolding (Palmer, Zhang, Taylor, & Leclere, 2010). Scaffolding refers to the way the adult guides the child's learning via focused questions and positive interactions (Balaban, 1995). Scaffolding is the provision of support in reading skills when new and difficult terms are read by beginning readers (Cazden, 1983).

Knowledge on how to read words and being able to say them correctly are ways to determine how advanced, or delayed, a child in reading is. Decoding is one of the processes that need to be fulfilled in order for a student to fully comprehend what is being read. Decoding consists of different aspects; among them are word-recognition and fluency. Under this primary step in reading comprehension, it is mentioned by LaBerge and Samuels (1974) that "being able to sound out a word does not guarantee that the word will be understood as the child reads" (p. 125). It should follow that it takes a lot of effort from the student to be able to recognize the word and at the same time, understand its meaning. On the other hand, fluency in reading is also a mark of reading proficiency. Scholars and

teachers have found it difficult to define “fluency” because to arrive at a common ground is not as simple as one would think. The researchers have found different materials that could help in reducing the problem in defining “fluency” (Clay, 2005). Apparently, some materials say that fluency depends on the kind of text a reader comprehends, and that it is actually based on the familiarity of the reader towards the words used in the text. There is some agreement that it consists of rate, accuracy, and automaticity of word recognition, as well as smoothness, phrasing, and expressiveness (Worthy & Broaddus, 2001, Skinner & Carol, 1995). LaBerge and Samuel (1974) added that word recognition also plays an important role in a child’s oral reading performance.

Schools in the Philippines are implementing different reading interventions targeting oral reading performance through decoding, fluency, and word recognition. Although majority of the empirical evidences supporting such modes in reading intervention (see Reinking & Watkins, 2000) is not evident in local literature. Some of the reading interventions or reading initiatives in the Philippines that involves decoding, fluency, and word recognition are Round Robin Reading (RRR) and Drop Everything and Read (DEAR).

Modeling is also a teaching strategy that can be utilized in teaching reading to children. In this particular method, it is assumed that children could definitely learn faster if there was guidance from an adult. Modeling is also a means of scaffolding. To improve oral reading performance, pre practice procedures or modeling have been shown to improve oral reading accuracy. In this method, the teacher reads a passage aloud and the student is instructed to “follow along” silently in the text. After listening to the teacher read, the student reads the same passage aloud. The student will have a higher rate of words read correctly than without the listening procedure (Rose, 1984; Smith, 1979; Vadasy & Sanders, 2008).

Aside from facilitating reading through scaffolding, there are also instances when the child refuses to demonstrate reading because they feel anxiety (Pichette, 2009). Reading anxiety is defined as a specific fear towards the act of Reading (Zbornik, 2001). Zbornik (2001) also mentioned that not showing interest in reading could greatly affect the child’s academic achievement. This would pose as a concern for both teachers and parents alike. In this experiment it would be investigated if scaffolding could be used to decrease a child’s reading anxiety.

The use of scaffolding supported by an adult who can use decoding, fluency, word recognition, and modeling is explained in Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). A child can further improve his/her reading speed, and overcome anxiety with the help of an intervention from a guardian, teacher or a parent. The help given by the adult is called scaffolding. In Vygotskiy’s theory of Zone of Proximal Development, it is stated that a child can achieve their potential level of development if scaffolding is given or applied to the child. As time progresses, the child develop the skill and can read independently later on. Vygotsky saw development as social origin and reliant tools and signs for the mediation of mental processes (Smagorinsky, 1995). The Zone of Proximal Development explains that the consciousness has a social origin and claims that mental processes are mediated by tools and signs (Wertsch, 1985). The theme points out that mental process, one of which is reading, can be directly affected by external factors, such as the supervision of an adult.

Other studies have applied Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) through scaffolding. Scaffolding was used to describe the presence of an aid or a guardian in assisting a child in reading (Kamps, Barbetta, Leonard, & Delquadri, 1994). Modeling is

used where the teacher or an adult guides the child the pronunciation of the words as a form of scaffold. In this experiment, modeling is used as a form of scaffolding for the participants.

The present study hypothesize that scaffolding in the form of adult supervision giving feedback on decoding, fluency, word recognition, decoding, and modeling reading increases beginning readers rate of reading and oral reading performance and decrease reading anxiety.

Method

Research Design

This experiment utilized a pre-test and post-test design. It is assumed in this design that there are two events in an experiment where one can clearly point out if there has been an improvement in the experiment conducted; these two events would be the beginning of the experiment, and after the introduction of scaffolding. In this kind of design, the rate of the child to read will be measured before scaffolding is given, and later on, after scaffolding is applied.

Participants

The participants are 60 randomly selected first grade students coming from a private school with age ranging from 6 - 7 years old. As a requirement, these students know the basics of how to read and write, and are expected to be able to read short stories. It was ensured that the participants do not possess any reading disabilities to prevent the pronunciation difficult words.

Materials

Two short stories were used, namely, "The Lion with Bad Breath" and "The Lion and the Mouse." This is the text that is preferred because these types of text that is at par with the reading skills of young children. The words that make up the two short stories are simple enough to be known to children and also, these short stories are useful to children because of the moral lessons that are implied by the story. The participants indicated that they are not familiar with the story and it is their first time reading it. There are several words that are similar in the two stories.

A stopwatch was used to measure the reading speed of the participants. The timer started when the experimenter hears the child utter the first word of the story, and consequently, the timer halts when the child says the last word of the story. The unit of minutes' was used to measure the child's reading speed.

The Reading Anxiety by Mills, Pajares, and Herron (2006) was adapted for children to measure reading anxiety. The scale is composed of 18 items and each is responded using a five point Lickert scale. Example of items would be "Listening to English speakers makes me feel uneasy and confused" and "I get an uneasy feeling when I think of trying to read a difficult English passage." The items were read to each child and

then each scale is represented by five faces. The child points to happiest face if they strongly agree and the most sad face for strongly disagree. Internal consistency of the 18 items resulted to a Cronbach's alpha value of .92. A principal components analysis was conducted and all items loaded highly under one factor.

The Gray Oral Reading Diagnostic (GORT-D) was used to measure the oral reading performance of the child (Merz, 1992). This rubric for paragraph reading was only used to measure the child's ability in pronunciation, intonation, and clarity in reading. The OPT consists of five ratings, zero being the lowest and four being the highest. Reliability of the GORT-D is measured by correlating alternate forms and by examining internal consistency. Alphas range from .96 (Decoding) to .72 (Morphemic Analysis).

Procedure

The participants were first informed what they will undergo in the experiment. All selected students agreed to participate. They were asked to enter the room one at a time. Each child was first asked to read a story "The Lion with Bad Breath" and their rate of reading was measured. While reading, they were rated using the GORT-D. Then they were requested to respond to the Child Reading Anxiety Scale. Each child was again asked to read the same story and this time a newly introduced teacher provided the scaffolding. In the scaffolding, some meaning of the words found in the story was given (decoding) with their correct pronunciation (fluency). Then the teacher read the story to the participants (modeling). Each child is then asked to read again the story. Each mispronounced word was corrected while reading and if a child stops the teacher gives the sound of the next initial letter. The correct expression is also called for while the child is reading (fluency). After these scaffolding activities with each child, the child is asked to read the next story "The Lion and the Mouse" with some equivalent words from the first story. Their reading proficiency was rated by a judge on the other side of a one-way mirror. The researcher timed the rate of reading of each child. After reading, the child is once again asked to respond in the anxiety scale.

Results

The t-test for repeated measures was used to compute for the difference between the pre and post measurement of the reading speed and reading anxiety. A decrease in the amount of time the stories were read means faster rate of reading. By comparing the means of the reading speed of the students before ($M=6.13$, $SD=1.08$) and after ($M=4.13$, $SD=.85$), significant differences were attained, $t(60) = 7.96$, $p < .05$, with an large effect size of $d=1.93$. There was significant improvement in reading speed after scaffolding is applied.

The same result was obtained for reading anxiety using the t-test. Using the reading anxiety rating scale, there was a significant decrease in the students reading anxiety from $M=5.94$ to $M=4.91$ when the scaffolding was applied, $t(60) = 15.76$, $p < .05$, with a large effect size of $d=3.92$.

Lastly, the oral reading proficiency test also yielded significant difference between the pre and post test. There was a significant increase from the oral reading ratings from the pre ($M=1.35$, $SD=0.78$) to the post test ($M=3.2$, $SD=0.60$), $t(60)=8.77$, $p < .05$, with a large effect size of $d=2.12$.

Discussion

The present study hypothesized that reading intervention through scaffolding improves reading proficiency, increased rate of reading, and reduce reading anxiety. This hypothesis is confirmed by the results in the present study with large effect sizes for each dependent variable. Results show clearly that students benefitted from scaffolding in terms of improving oral reading, faster reading, and reduced reading anxiety. It has been mentioned in several studies that the supervision of an adult, a teacher or a parent, who provides the scaffold by providing feedback and modeling can improve students reading ability. This present study provides a new exertion in reading improvement because several reading outcomes were assessed that includes reading anxiety, reading speed, and oral reading performance.

The present study reiterates that there is an increase in the reading speed and the oral reading performance of the children after scaffolding was initiated. Regarding the reading anxiety of the children, it is clear that it has decreased after the introduction of scaffolding. It strengthens the points raised by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development where the intervention of an adult facilitates in the learning process of a child especially in different reading measures.

The present study's objective is to provide teachers some possible intervention to improve a child in reading better and faster. After the experiment, it has become clear that the kind of intervention to improve reading performance can be effective by working with an adult and more expert type of learners.

The intervention which is scaffolding had yield a large effect size considering the varied type of scaffolding it contains. The scaffold contains not only modeling but decoding and fluency strategies through feedback were implemented. The intervention undertaken was more like instruction and feedback was provided every time a child needs help in the process which ensured improvement through post test gains. Instruction for young children in reading should contain the necessary scaffold to help them improve such reading skills. Teachers should consider conducting the scaffolding while the child is reading the text.

The scaffolding given to the child showed large gains on speed reading. When the respondents were given the meaning of words which enhanced their recognition and proper pronunciation are areas that increased the rate of reading. The respondents did not struggle through the difficult words in the post test that improved the speed. The thorough comprehension of the words used also contributed to the reading speed. The intervention also facilitated a context where the respondents do not only read for themselves but for a specific audience.

The scaffolding provided also showed gains in the reduction of reading anxiety. The scaffolding reduced the unpleasant emotional reaction towards reading because of the guide provided. The teacher who served as a model, decoder, and feedback provider provided the necessary support to reduce their anxiety in reading.

Finally, the scaffolding also showed significant gains of reading proficiency. There was improvement in the degree of facility in speaking with good control of pronunciation, stress, rhythm, intonation patterns, and speed.

The present study contributes to existing literature on reading interventions by looking at the specific compositions of scaffolding that can be used in instruction. Not only proper instruction is recommended, the effectiveness of the scaffolding is marked to be useful in improving reading speed, proficiency and the reduction of anxiety.

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What goes on in an English Classroom: A Look at How Grammar is Taught

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Abstract

This paper aims to discover what is taught in the high school grammar classes in one of the girls' exclusive schools in the Philippines. Specifically, this study also wants to know whether grammar is taught in a prescriptive or descriptive way. There is a strong evidence that discrete-point analysis is used in the teaching of grammar and that in this particular English class and school, the prescriptive approach or the traditional way is still employed.

Keywords: Grammar, language teaching, grammar lessons, English classroom

Introduction

The question what needs to be learned by language acquirers always solicits an easy answer: they need to learn the grammar of the target language. This, in turn, raises another question: how is grammar taught? Language teaching across the years have seen the coming and going of language-teaching trends from the rise of 'scientific' oral approaches at the beginning of the 20th century (Brown, 2006) to the elaboration of what has come to be called communicative language teaching or CLT (Savignon, 2006). Albert Marckwardt (1972 in Brown, 2006) aptly saw these "changing winds and shifting sands as a cyclical pattern in which a new method emerged about every quarter of a century" (p.1). In a sense, the approaches as well as the methodologies of language teaching across cultures and boundaries undergo changes, re-inventing, and rehashing.

Language teaching in the Philippine secondary education is synonymous to grammar and the teaching of literature of various countries/continents. It is a common observation that in the elementary and secondary levels of the Philippine educational system, the teaching of grammar is the bulk of the instruction, if not the focus. English teachers from both the private and public educational systems would unanimously answer 'grammar' when asked what they teach in their English classes. "Grammar," according to Kaplan (1995), "means the rules governing how a language is supposed to be used" (p.1). This view, as Kaplan (1995) expounded, is prescriptive in a sense because grammar is viewed as "a set of rigid prescriptions focusing on error correction" (p. xi). Prescriptive grammatical rules are phrased as prohibitions which have to do with sentence structure: Do not split an infinitive, as in *to honestly admit*; and Do not begin nor end a sentence with a preposition, as in *Who did she speak with?* Other prescriptive rules deal with uses of particular types of words: Do not use a plural pronoun with a singular antecedent, as in *Anybody who has failing marks may find themselves not given priority slots during enrollment*; and do not use double negatives, as in *I don't see no more his errors*. Kaplan (1995) found it interesting that the prescriptivists would be alarmed over the changes happening in language and how it is used in the modern times (p. 2). He posited that this prescriptive concern stemmed from a false assumption that change often means change for the worse.

Radford (2004) defined grammar according to its traditional subdivisions: morphology (the study of how words are formed out of smaller units called morphemes) and syntax (the study of the way in which phrases and sentences are structured out of words). He seemed to agree with Kaplan (1995) when he stated that the teaching of syntax in the traditional sense is "described in terms of

taxonomy (i.e., classificatory lists) of the range of different types of syntactic structures found in the language” (p.1). Viewed from this perspective, Radford (2004) argued that each syntactic unit in a sentence belongs to a grammatical category and has a specific grammatical function. Hence, the role now of the learner as well as the teacher is to “identify each of the constituents in the sentence, and (for each constituent) to say what category it belongs to and what function it serves” (p. 1). The traditional approach to grammar, according to Radford (2004) would only *describe* the specific grammatical categories to which words/phrases/clauses are assigned to and not *explain* why certain constituents behave or mean the way they do given a different context. Like Kaplan (1995), Radford (2004) saw the inadequacy of this approach in learning a language for it failed to provide an explanation why a sentence is grammatical or ungrammatical.

The inadequacy of the prescriptive or traditional approach to grammar gave way to the descriptive or cognitive approach to studying a language (Kaplan, 1995; Radford, 2004) the aim of which, according to Kaplan, is “to describe the grammatical system of a language, that is, what speakers of the language unconsciously know, which enables them to speak and understand the language” (p. 3) and for Radford, adapting Chomsky’s cognitive approach to the study of grammar is “to determine what it is that native speakers *know* about their native language which enables them to speak and understand the language” (p. 6). Ultimately, Kaplan (1995) believes that:

the analysis of a language lies not in what prescriptivists prohibit but in what is: the language that people use all the time, the whole range of different varieties they use in their normal everyday lives, including the varieties they use in their most casual or intimate moments, as well as the varieties they use in their formal, careful speech and writing (p. 4).

Radford, likewise, posited that Chomsky’s Universal Grammar/UG theory is a theory which is universal, explanatory and constrained, and which provides *descriptively* adequate grammars which are minimally complex and hence learnable; thus, the birthing of the minimalist syntax (p. 25).

Given the two approaches in the teaching of grammar, this study aims to discover what is taught in the high school grammar classes. Specifically, this study also wants to know whether grammar is taught in a prescriptive or descriptive way.

Method

Data

This study employed a one-time audio recording of one of the four meetings of an English class in high school.

An examination of the course syllabus used for this class was likewise undertaken for validation purposes.

Participants

A 30-year old female teacher who has been teaching English in the secondary level for the past ten years and is currently pursuing a master’s degree in Teaching English as a Second Language in one of the prestigious schools in Manila and her 40 female freshman high school students participated in this study. Most of these students were in their early teens (12-13 years old) and except for five students who were transferees from parochial schools, all graduated from the elementary department of the said school. It was presumed that most of them belong to the upper-middle to middle-class socio-economic brackets of the society and some would have English as their first language with Filipino as their second

language. All live within Metro Manila. The class usually meets four times a week for an hour to discuss grammar, particularly focused on verb tenses and conjunctions, Philippine Literature, writing of the various kinds of essays like expository and descriptive. Practice exercises on grammar, reading and writing are routinely done by the students.

Procedure

The researcher solicited the help of one of her former colleagues who teaches English in an exclusive high school in Pasig, Philippines. The researcher requested her to audio tape one of her English classes particularly the session where grammar would be the topic/lesson for the day. The informed consent of the students was solicited prior to the recording. The teacher brought the cassette recorder to her class and placed it on her table beside her instructional materials. After 30 minutes, the recording was stopped. It was then given to the researcher who transcribed the proceedings. The first five minutes of the session was not transcribed to let the students “warm up” to the idea of being recorded and would eventually get accustomed to it and not be conscious of being recorded. No transcription notations were used.

Results and Discussion

This study is not conclusive and does not intend to make or formulate any generalization nor assumptions about teaching of grammar in the secondary level. To get an accurate and complete picture of the way English is taught, particularly the teaching of grammar in Philippine contexts, more observation and intensive study must be done.

The data gathered and analyzed would seem to point to a particular approach used in the discussion or teaching of grammar. (See Appendix A for the complete transcription of the recording). The answers to the research questions posed at the beginning of this study are found in the following discussion:

Audio-Recording

Based on Radford’s (2004) analysis/discussion about traditional grammar and its taxonomic characteristics, there seems to be strong evidence that grammar is taught using the prescriptive approach or traditional way in this particular English class. Consider the following exchange between the teacher and the student from [1 - 15]:

- 1 T: We talked about this already right We are just going to continue
Alright so in your notes
- 2 Are notes that you have two kinds of conjunctions namely coordinating and
- 3 subordinating Right
- 4 S: Yes...
- 5 T: So, we had the definition of conjunctions already.
- 6 S: No.
- 7 T: I mean we have transitional devices.
- 8 S: Yes
- 9 T: So, conjunctions is a kind of a transitional device
- 10 Okay, so here’s the definition
- 11 A conjunction is a word used to connect other words or groups of
words
- 12 That is the main purpose, okay
- 13 So the first kind, you have is already the coordinating conjunctions
and the basic
- 14 examples are and for or yet but nor so
- 15 There you go...

It looks like the class learned about transitional devices prior to the discussion about conjunctions [7 and 9]. This affirms Radford's (2004) argument that "traditionally, one syntactic constituent belongs to a specific grammatical category and serves a specific grammatical function" (p. 1). In other words, the students' knowledge about conjunctions is anchored on their knowledge about transitional devices and that conjunctions are classified as grammatical categories under *transitional devices which serve to connect other words or groups of words* [9 - 12]. Notice too how the teacher quickly enumerates the different examples of conjunctions [14] without really *explaining* what these syntactic constituents do or how they behave in a given sentence/context. Take the case of the constituent *for* [22-29]:

- 22 T: Claudine, please use *for*
 23 S: The pen is...
 24 T: Com'on, complete it
 25 S: The pen is *for*
 26 T: picking your nose
 27 Ss: (giggles)
 28 T: Of course not Com'on What, I'm sorry? Louder, com'on
 29 S: The thimble is used *for* protecting your middle finger

As argued by Radford (2004), little attention or discussion is given to explain that the constituent *for* behaves differently in different occasions (see Radford's discussion on *for* as a complementizer, 2004, pp. 54-55) and what was emphasized is simply the function of *for*; "known in more traditional work as a particular type of subordinating conjunctions" (p. 53).

In the succeeding segments, the same pattern is used—the teacher defines the type/kind of conjunction [44-47] by enumerating its examples:

- 44 T: So they always work in pairs
 45 So examples
 46 Both and, either or, neither nor, not only, but also,
 47 There...

Then she asks the students to use each example in a sentence [32-40]:

- 32 T: Right or wrong I'll cooperate with Class number 20..Yet.. Ayun ~
 33 S: She's weird yet she is funny.
 34 T: 12 But
 35 S: She wants to have high grades but she doesn't want to study.
 36 T: Class number 28 Nor Anybody Ina nor ___ wants to go to school
 Number 11
 37 S: Zaila was hungry so she went to the canteen.
 38 T: Alright..
 39 Very Good
 40 So these are the examples what you already gave them.

—without asking why or how they arrive at that answer confirming Radford's claim that "the primary goal of traditional grammar is *description* rather than *explanation*" (p. 6).

Course Syllabus

An examination of the syllabus (see appendix B for the complete document) for this course revealed its over-all goal:

To develop the communicative competence of the First year students by striking a balance between fluency and accuracy. It is anchored on the latest developments in the field of language teaching, specifically linguistics and pedagogy. The prevailing theory concerning language as a means of communication and a service course to facilitate learning in other disciplines serves as the framework of this course. As such, the macro-language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are covered with grammatical structures, coming in to suit the language functions where these structures are needed (“Syllabus”, 2008).

As such, it is quite evident that grammar notions/structures are not merely to be learned as a separate body of knowledge but as a “means of communication and a service course to facilitate learning in other disciplines...where these structures are needed.”

A closer look at the contents of the syllabus further revealed the various grammar points to be discussed in this class (see Extract 1-4 below). The discussion of these grammar points is set against one of the course’s specific objectives: “To use the English language accurately, efficiently and effectively” (“Syllabus”, 2008).

Table 1
Extract 1: First Quarter

Lesson No.	Topics	Duration (In Hours)
1	Orientation	2
2	Diagnostic Test	2
3	Overview of Parts of Speech	2
4	What is Literature? Division of Literature Development of Phil. Literature	2
5	<i>Selections</i> : “Lam-ang” & “Bernardio Carpio”	2
6	Writing essays: Compare - Contrast Writing titles	2
7	Elements of Fiction	2
8	<i>Selection</i> : “Footnote to Youth” by J.G. Villa	2
9	Project Orientation and Mechanics Narration: Writing a Short Story	2
10	Noun	2
11	Pronoun	2
12	Simple Tense of Verb	2
13	Listening	2
14	Communication	2
15	Phonemes (vowels and consonants)	2

As can be seen from the four extracts, each quarter would include grammar points such as nouns, pronouns, simple tense of verb, prepositions, among others. When the teacher was asked how these lessons are taught, she pointed out that what was contained in the examined recording is typically how the grammatical lessons are presented or taught: defining the grammatical category and asking the students to use it in various sentences. Just how adequate the grammar instruction presented in her classes is remains a question.

Table 2
Extract 2: Second Quarter

Lesson No.	Topics	Duration (In Hours)
16	Listening to a Poem: "To the Filipino Youth" by J.P.Rizal	2
17	Adjectives	2
18	Descriptive Essay Writing	3
19	Figures of Speech	2
20	Selection: "Sonnet 1" (writing rhyming poem)	3
21	Selection: "I Teach My Child" (writing a figure/shape poem)	3
22	Prepositions	2
23	Subject, Direct and Indirect Object	2
24	Active and Passive Voice of Verbs	2
25	Subject - Verb Agreement	2
26	Stress	1

Table 3
Extract 3: Third Quarter

Lesson No.	Topics	Duration (In Hours)
16	Listening to a Poem: "To the Filipino Youth" by J.P.Rizal	2
17	Adjectives	2
18	Descriptive Essay Writing	3
19	Figures of Speech	2
20	Selection: "Sonnet 1" (writing rhyming poem)	3
21	Selection: "I Teach My Child" (writing a figure/shape poem)	3
22	Prepositions	2
23	Subject, Direct and Indirect Object	2
24	Active and Passive Voice of Verbs	2
25	Subject - Verb Agreement	2
26	Stress	1

Table 4
Extract 4: Fourth Quarter

Lesson No.	Topics	Duration (In Hours)
27	Letter of Request	1
28	Graphic Organizer	2
29	Survey writing	2
30	Mass Media, Propaganda Devices Article on Propaganda/Advertisement	2
31	Adverbs	2
32	Appositives	2
33	Complements	2
34	Conjunctions and Transitional words	2
35	Transcription of Words	2

Discussion

Although Krashen (1985) argued against the explicit grammar teaching in the classroom, there are those who claimed that “some grammatical forms cannot be acquired merely on the basis of comprehensible input and that formal instruction is necessary for learners to acquire those forms” (Collins & Lee, 2005, p. 37). This debate has been put to rest in light of the distinct contexts in which language is learned or taught: first language is learned in natural contexts; hence formal instruction is not really necessary; in a second/foreign language learning environment, formal instruction is essential to acquiring the language (Collins & Lee, 2005). How is grammar taught is now the issue.

Criticisms regarding the traditional approach have been posed in various studies (see Byrd, 1994; Petrovits, 1997; Nunan, 1998). English language teaching experts have argued for the discussion of not only the structure but the meaning and use of the grammar as well (Collins & Lee, 2005). These experts claim that by contextualizing grammar, learners are not just expected to know the *what* (rules) but also the *how, when, why* (contexts) of language so much so that they (learners) can make appropriate grammatical choices in using the language given a particular situation/need/context.

The traditional approach employed in the teaching of grammar as seen in the recording would point to the fact that the students either listen to or provide a definition for the grammatical point being discussed (see e.g., Line 11-14: *So, conjunctions is a kind of a transitional device Okay, so here's the definition A conjunction is a word used to connect other words or groups of words*) and ends with the students (with the teacher's prompt) using it in various sentences (Line #s 22-25: Claudine, please use for The pen is...C'mon, complete it The pen is for). Collins and Lee (2005) argued that mere definitions of the categories may not include members of other part-of-speech categories and further claimed that

The danger here is that as the inaccuracy of such rules becomes apparent to learners they will need to unlearn much of what they have been taught at the elementary stage. Unless formal descriptions too are introduced early learners may fail to appreciate the crucial role of formal considerations in enabling all the members of the class to be satisfactorily identified (p. 40).

Conclusion and Implications

Based on the foregoing discussion, the recorded segment of an English class in the first year high school classes and the examination of its course syllabus show that grammar is part of the teaching of English. Absence of a deeper explanation of how and why certain constituents behave the way they do on certain occasions and why or how they can assume another grammatical category and or function in another situation is very much evident. Notice though that the teacher attempted to bring into the discussion the students' understanding or interpretation of the sentence [53-57]; however, she failed to delve deeper into the analysis and simply contented herself by saying *Okay, both of them will not play* [56] which is reminiscent of the prescriptive and/or traditional approach of teaching grammar.

The teaching of grammar must be viewed from the perspective of the learners. Perhaps this is why Julian Edge at the TESOL convention in Tampa Florida in March 2006 (in Nunan 2007), “reminded us that if anyone asks ‘What do you teach?’ the first response should be ‘Learners!’ (‘Language’ can come later)” (p. 10). It is a good thing that the teacher was able to inject humor into her instruction [22 - 27]; otherwise, this whole session would have proved to be repetitive, boring, and meaningless. The teacher's need to call out a student's number [17, 18, 22, 26] and to cajole [24 -28] her students to answer or use the

examples of conjunctions in sentences may be an indicator of the students' attitude towards grammar and how it is taught.

Thus the challenge to reflect the changing philosophies about language learning and teaching in the way grammar is taught in the classrooms could never have been more pressing than today. Jarvis and Atsilarat (2004) echoed what other language teaching experts asserted in the early 80s as criticisms to the traditional approach to teaching grammar: "Language was no longer seen as abstract grammatical rules, but of having applications in social contexts and as such it is not just about 'grammar' but also about functions and notions and that nowadays, it is difficult to imagine any practitioner, anywhere, arguing against this" (p. 2). Rote memorization of the grammar rules Kaplan (1994) argued that "in contrast to the normative rules enshrined in prescriptive prohibitions, descriptive grammar embodies constitutive rules which state how some system is structured or defined" (p. 3) which enables speakers of the language to speak and understand the language. Rather than solely focus on the rules governing the proper use of a syntactical constituent, the need to explain what determine the ways in which grammatical operations work should be given more importance. Finally, language teachers may pick a trick or two from what Lindblom and Dunn (May, 2006) who suggested that analysis of grammar rants can be a good alternative to grammar teaching because:

Once students see for themselves how important careful and deliberate choice of language is for their success, they may be more judicious in their language use. In the best instances, students will continue to study, learn, and remain open-minded and even fascinated with issues of language, developing as what we have called "savvy writers. We hope colleagues will find our suggestions to be a productive alternative to the traditional grammar instruction that has preoccupied the profession for years without providing any positive results for student writing" (p. 76).

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Appendix A
The Transcript

- 1 T: We talked about this already right We are just going to continue Alright so in
your notes
- 2 Are notes that you have two kinds of conjunctions namely coordinating and
subordinating
- 3 Right
- 4 S: Yes...
- 5 T: So, we had the definition of conjunctions already.
- 6 S: No.
- 7 T: I mean we have transitional devices.
- 8 S: Yes
- 9 T: So, conjunctions is a kind of a transitional device
- 10 Okay, so here's the definition
- 11 A conjunction is a word used to connect other words or groups of words
- 12 That is the main purpose, okay
- 13 So the first kind, you have is already the coordinating conjunctions and the basic
- 14 examples are and for or yet but nor so
- 15 There you go...
- 16 Anybody?
- 17 Ah lets call on a class numbers..
- 18 Class number 25.
- 19 Please use and
- 20 S: Kristine and Harry are seated at the same room.
- 21 T: Very good. Number 2. Class Number 2
- 22 Claudine, please use for
- 23 The pen is...
- 24 Com'on, complete it
- 25 The pen is for
- 26 picking your nose
- 27 S: (giggles)
- 28 T: Of course not Com'on What, I'm sorry? Louder, com'on
- 29 S: The thimble is used for protecting your middle finger
- 30 T: Number 3 or class number 33.
- 31 S: Uhhh.. You love me or you hate me
- 32 T: Right or wrong I'll cooperate with Class number 20..Yet.. Ayun ~
- 33 S: She's weird yet she is funny.
- 34 T: 12 But
- 35 S: She wants to have high grades but she doesn't want to study.
- 36 T: Class number 28 Nor Anybody Ina nor ___ wants to go to school Number 11
- 37 S: Zaila was hungry so she went to the canteen.
- 38 T: Alright...
- 39 Very Good
- 40 So these are the examples what you already gave them.
- 41 So we have nouns and pronouns with verbs, adjectives and prepositional phrases
with complete ideas
- 42 Okay
- 43 The next kind are correlated conjunctions
- 44 So they always work in pairs
- 45 So examples
- 46 Both and ,either or, neither nor, not only, but also,
- 47 There...
- 48 Game.
- 49 So these are the examples
- 50 I'll give you a copy
- 51 Ahh.....
- 52 Neither ____ nor Boyet will perform in the play.
- 53 What does it mean?
- 54 Yes Bettina?
- 55 Okay, both of them will not play.
- 56 Neither, okay
- 57 I do not know whether Al or I won.
- 58 What are the nouns and pronouns there?
- 59 S: I (inaudible)
- 60 T: How about with adjectives
- 61 Yogurt is not only nutritious but also tasty.
- 62 So what are the adjectives there?

- 63 Bettina
64 S: Nutritious and tasty
65 T: Correct
66 In prepositional phrases
67 S: We saw pelicans both near the pier and along the beach
68 T: So, what are the prepositional phrases there Isabel
69 S: inaudible
70 T: And the last
71 With complete ideas..
72 Either I go shopping or I can study
73 So there are two ideas there
74 Okay
75 So those are correlative conjunctions
76 They go into pairs
77 Then we have subordinate conjunctions
78 Join two complete ideas by making one of the ideas subordinate that is dependent on the other
79 Okay so these are the kinds of subordinating
80 Okay
81 So the example
82 I play soccer is the main cause
83 And usually it starts with a subordinating clause
84 So whenever I get the chance
85 Now that our cousin's is here this

Appendix B

Syllabus in Communication Arts in English I (Philippine Literature), June 2008

Subject Description

The overall goal of this course is to develop the communicative competence of the First year students by striking a balance between fluency and accuracy. It is anchored on the latest developments in the field of language teaching, specifically linguistics and pedagogy. The prevailing theory concerning language as a means of communication and a service course to facilitate learning in other disciplines serves as the framework of this course. As such, the macro-language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are covered with grammatical structures, coming in to suit the language functions where these structures are needed.

What is unique in this offering is that it caters to the needs and goals of the Filipino female adolescents starting out in the high school. Thus, the functions and domains include focus on the skills and topics that will enable them to cope with the demands of high school life. The integrated approach to learning and teaching ensures non-negligence of any of the four basic modes of communication. Inclusion of literary materials, particularly Philippine Literature in English, and authentic texts (local and foreign), heightens their cultural awareness and appreciation, which is ultimately geared towards values formation.

General Objectives

1. Read with competence and value texts in the fields of arts and literature particularly Philippine Literature in English, science and technology, business and computer, and social sciences.
2. Use proficiently the four-macro skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing in meaningful English communications.
3. Use conveniently the English language in learning other disciplines.
4. Make generalizations and significant abstractions from different reading materials designed for information, pleasure and appreciation,
5. Integrate acquired knowledge and skills in the formation of one's value system.

First Quarter

Specific Objectives

At the end of the quarter, the students should be able to:

1. Use library skills in gathering data for oral and written reports.
2. Identify the different functions of the library and its contents.
3. Listen carefully and critically to different events and situations.
4. Use study skills proficiently in learning other disciplines.
5. Acquire knowledge and skills in vocabulary building.
6. Read with comprehension and appreciation various types of texts.
7. Interact with the writer by responding to statements made in the text and using this as basis for predictions.
8. Ask questions to clarify confusion.
9. Appreciate the importance of English language and the development of Filipino Literature particularly in English.
10. Write a coherent short story using the elements of fiction.
11. Write a comparison and contrast essay based on the techniques in developing an essay.
12. Use the English language accurately, efficiently and effectively.
13. Produce vowel and consonant sounds in words accurately.

Values

1. Optimism towards work Motivation to finish a task
2. Preparation to learn
3. Open-mindedness towards new environment and work
4. Confidence to face challenges
5. Courage to ask when confused
6. Generosity to share oneself
7. Humility to accept limitations
8. Perseverance in attaining one's goal
9. Respect for authority and peers
10. Sharing of resources

Subject Contents

Specific Content

Lesson No.	Topics	Duration (In Hours)
1	Orientation	2
2	Diagnostic Test	2
3	Overview of Parts of Speech	2
4	What is Literature? Division of Literature Development of Phil. Literature	2
5	<i>Selections</i> : "Lam-ang" & "Bernardio Carpio"	2
6	Writing essays: Compare - Contrast Writing titles	2
7	Elements of Fiction	2
8	<i>Selection</i> : "Footnote to Youth" by J.G. Villa	2
9	Project Orientation and Mechanics Narration: Writing a Short Story	2
10	Noun	2
11	Pronoun	2
12	Simple Tense of Verb	2
13	Listening	2
14	Communication	2
15	Phonemes (vowels and consonants)	2

Instructional Procedures

1. Group dynamics
2. Collaborative Learning
3. Research work
4. Oral presentations
5. Writing activities
6. Portfolio/Project-making
7. Poetry reading
8. Film Viewing

Performance Assessment

1. Quizzes/Long tests
2. Individual/Group work
3. Recitation
4. Class Participation
5. Written outputs
6. Portfolio
7. Periodical exams
8. Seatwork/Homework

Provisions

Fast Learners	Slow Learners
1. Facilitate a group in short story analysis and interpretation.	1. Introduce the elements of fiction by analyzing a legend. (Class sharing)
2. Head the English campaign.	2. Make posters to promote the English campaign and the Reading Development Program which is the "SparkLit"
3. Write a formal/business letter following grammar concepts.	

Projects / Requirements

- Shadow Play July 21 - 25, 2008

Required Textbooks

Writing and Grammar Bronze Edition. J.A. Carroll et.al. Prentice Hall. 2001.
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 Second Quarter

Specific Objectives

- At the end of the quarter, the students should be able to:
- Map out the ideas of a text using graphical presentations.
 - Predict and anticipate outcomes culled from certain texts.
 - Make generalizations and significant conclusions from varied materials.
 - Distinguish fact from opinion; fantasy from reality.
 - Identify and create various types of figures of speech.
 - Review the various elements, sounds, and classes of poetry.
 - Distinguish between the literal and figurative meaning of various poetic forms.
 - Write different forms of poetry based on the different classes.
 - Write a descriptive essay based on the techniques in developing an essay.
 - Use the English language accurately, efficiently and effectively.
 - Speak the language with emphasis on stress.

Values

- Respect for school personnel and properties
- Awareness of current issues
- Determination to finish a task
- Resourcefulness
- Creativity
- Inquisitiveness
- Courage to question
- Critical thinking

Subject Contents

Specific Content

Lesson No.	Topics	Duration (In Hours)
16	Listening to a Poem: "To the Filipino Youth" by J.P.Rizal	2
17	Adjectives	2
18	Descriptive Essay Writing	3
19	Figures of Speech	2
20	Selection: "Sonnet 1" (writing rhyming poem)	3
21	Selection: "I Teach My Child" (writing a figure/shape poem)	3
22	Prepositions	2
23	Subject, Direct and Indirect Object	2
24	Active and Passive Voice of Verbs	2
25	Subject - Verb Agreement	2
26	Stress	1

Instructional Procedures

1. Group dynamics
2. Collaborative Learning
3. Research work
4. Oral presentations
5. Writing activities
6. Portfolio/Project-making
7. Short Story reading
8. Film Viewing

Performance Assessment

1. Quizzes/Long tests
2. Individual/Group work
3. Recitation
4. Class Participation
5. Written outputs
6. Portfolio
7. Periodical exams
8. Seatwork/Homework
9. Poetry reading

Provisions

Fast Learners	Slow Learners
1. Use their poems as models for class analysis.	1. Do additional reporting on poetry.
2. Facilitate a group in poem analysis and interpretation.	2. Attend special classes for enrichment.
3. Organize poetry reading sessions.	

Projects / Requirements

1. Figure Poem September 22 - 26, 2008

Required Textbooks

Writing and Grammar Bronze Edition. J.A. Carroll et.al. Prentice Hall. 2001.
Echoes I. Cecilia Rigos Delos Reyes. JO-ES Publishing House, Inc. Valenzuela City. 2004

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- Baritugo, M. R. et. al. Philippine Literature: An Introduction to Poetry, Fiction & Drama (Revised Edition). 2004.
- Borich, Gary D. Effective Teaching Methods. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992.
- Cruz, Carmen A. Expanding our Horizons. Manila: De La Salle University Press. 2001.
- Flores, Magelende M., de la Cruz, Edna M. et. al. Dimensions in Learning English: A Series for Philippine Secondary Schools. (Book I). Quezon City: Rex Printing Co., Inc., 1999.
- Forlini, Gary et. al. Grammar and Composition (4th ed) Prentice Hall, 1990.
- Kiewra, Kenneth A., Durois, Nelson. Learning to Learn: Making the Transition from Student to Life-Long Learner. Boston: Allyn and Bacon Publishing Co., 1997.
- Owen, Nicholas, Chee Kee, Esperanza, et. al. Communicate Effectively in English. Makati: Basic Media Systems, Inc., 1990.
- Tayao, Ma. Lourdes G., Santos, Isabelita, et. al. English in Use (First Year). Quezon City: Rex Publishing Co., Inc., 1991.

 Third Quarter

Specific Objectives

1. Get main ideas, supporting details from an oral or written text.
2. Define terms with multiple meanings.
3. Use expressions to show classification, definitions, comparison & contrast, cause & effect relationships.
4. State equalities and inequalities of objects, ideas, people, etc. in written forms.
5. Ask questions to clarify a point or to clear up confusion.
6. Interact with the author or speaker using one's world knowledge.
7. Integrate values or insights gained from texts to one's value system.
8. Communicate ideas proficiently and appropriately.
9. Use the socio-linguistic rules in communication in coming up with detailed and relevant position papers.
10. Write several essays based on the techniques in developing an essay.
12. Trans-code orally and in writing data presented in graphs, charts and other forms of graphic organizers.
13. Transform written texts into graphical presentations and vice versa.

Values

1. Integrity
2. Propriety
3. Courage
4. Teamwork
5. Leadership/Followership
6. Servitude
7. Openness
8. Discernmen

Subject Contents

Specific Content

Lesson No.	Topics	Duration (In Hours)
27	Letter of Request	1
28	Graphic Organizer	2
29	Survey writing	2
30	Mass Media, Propaganda Devices Article on Propaganda/Advertisement	2
31	Adverbs	2
32	Appositives	2
33	Complements	2
34	Conjunctions and Transitional words	2
35	Transcription of Words	2

Instructional Procedure

1. Collaborative learning
2. Individual work
3. Research work
4. Lectures
5. Writing activities
6. Peer editing
7. Speaking activities
8. Listening activities

Performance Assessment

1. Graded recitation
2. Group presentation
3. Individual reporting
4. Quizzes, long tests
5. Periodical examinations
6. Speeches

Provisions

Fast Learners	Slow Learners
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write an analysis of media text or a non-print advertisement which reflects elements of fiction. 2. Organize a mock debate / moot on any issue regarding media. 3. Demonstrate do's and don'ts in public speaking. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recite and discuss articles about the effects of media. 2. Attend special classes for enrichment.

Projects/Requirements

1. Product / Ad Presentation November 24 -28, 2008

Required Textbooks

Writing and Grammar Bronze Edition. J.A. Carroll et.al. Prentice Hall. 2001.
 Echoes I. Cecilia Rigos Delos Reyes. JO-ES Publishing House, Inc. Valenzuela City. 2004

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Baritugo, M. R. et. al. Philippine Literature: An Introduction to Poetry, Fiction & Drama (Revised Edition). 2004.

Borich, Gary D. Effective Teaching Methods. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992.

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Lauengco, Aurea A., Navarro, Fe M., et.al. English CV I and II. Makati: Bookmark, Inc., 1988.

Meñez, Annie R. Literature in Focus I and II. Quezon City: SIBS Publishing House, Inc.: 1999.

Owen, Nicholas, Chee Kee, Esperanza, et. al. Communicate Effectively in English. Makati: Basic Media Systems, Inc., 1990.

Pangilinan, Estelita C. and Dilig, Myrna J. Speech and Drama. National Bookstore Inc. 1991

Roldan, Aurora H. Reading Beyond (Two). San Juan : Reading Dynamics, Inc.1989

Tayao, Ma. Lourdes G., Santos, Isabelita, et. al. English in Use (First and Second Years). Quezon City: Rex Publishing Co., Inc., 1991

Fourth Quarter

Specific Objectives

1. Determine the tone, attitude, feelings expressed in oral or written texts.
2. Classify items.
3. Write short papers on any current issues.
4. Use appropriate rhetorical functions and techniques to express one's ideas, needs, feelings and attitudes.
5. Apply one's personal value system in critiquing texts.
6. Single out events that form the plot of a drama/play.
7. Use key idea sentences, support sentences, transition devices and restatements in texts.

Values

1. Faith in God
2. Social awareness
3. Pride in one's work and those of others
4. Respect for school personnel and properties
5. Humor
6. Teamwork
7. Cooperation
8. Courage
9. Cooperation
10. Creative self-expression
11. Confidence

Subject Contents

Specific Content

LESSON NO.	TOPICS	DURATION (In Hours)
1	"Philippine Literature Today" by H.O. Santos	2
2	Essay: Response to Literature	3
3	Sentences vs Phrases and Clauses	3
4	Sentence Analysis	3
5	Biography: Corazon Aquino	2
6	"The World is an Apple" by A. S. Florentino	2
7	Transcription of Words with Stress	2

Instructional Procedure

1. Group discussions
2. Collaborative learning
3. Lectures
4. Individual/Group presentations
5. Research
6. Consultative learning
7. Portfolio-making
8. Project-making
9. Essay writing

Performance Assessment

1. Quizzes, long tests
2. Graded recitation
3. Class participation
4. Seat-/Homework
5. Projects
6. Portfolio
7. Periodical examinations

Projects/Requirements

1. Reader's Presentation February 23 -27, 2008

Required Textbooks

Writing and Grammar Bronze Edition. J.A. Carroll et.al. Prentice Hall. 2001.

Echoes I. Cecilia Rigos Delos Reyes. JO-ES Publishing House, Inc. Valenzuela City. 2004

Provisions

Fast Learners	Slow Learners
1. Act as group facilitators or organizers in group activities.	1. Report on other examples of biography.
2. Write a critical essay.	2. Attend special classes for enrichment.

Bibliography

- Baritugo, M. R. et. al. Philippine Literature: An Introduction to Poetry, Fiction & Drama (Revised Edition). 2004.
- Borich, Gary D. Effective Teaching Methods. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992.
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- Flores, Magelende M., de la Cruz, Edna M. et. al. Dimensions in Learning English: A Series for Philippine Secondary Schools. (Books I and II). Quezon City: Rex Printing Co., Inc., 1999.
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- Lauengco, Aurea A., Navarro, Fe M., et.al. English CV I and II. Makati: Bookmark, Inc., 1988.
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Author Notes

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