The 38th Thailand TESOL International Conference Proceedings 2018

Digital Literacy in English Language Learning and Teaching

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ChiangMai, Thailand
Welcoming Message

This year, Thailand TESOL is pleased to offer the ThaiTESOL Proceedings with the selection of papers from its 2018 international conference. The 2018 ThaiTESOL Proceedings includes articles from the conference, which took place on January 26 and 27, 2018 at the Empress Hotel in Chiang Mai, Thailand. There are articles by authors from Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, and Malaysia. The articles share research results within the field of English language teaching.

In the first article titled, “Adopting EIL Teaching Principles into the English Language Classroom: Voice from Vietnam”, Hang Thi Nhu Mai explored Vietnamese EFL lecturers’ perspectives towards the implementation of EIL teaching principles in their classrooms. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents had a positive view towards EIL teaching. The study revealed an implication for EL practitioners to raise their learners’ intercultural awareness and behaviours through EIL teaching.

The article titled, “Connecting the Dots. Moving Cooperative Writing from the Classroom to Digital Space Moving Cooperative Writing into the ESL Classroom”, by Seok Hoon Quah and Hee Hee Yeoh examined the use of cooperative writing to enhance the writing skills of a class of young learners. It shared the preliminary findings of a classroom improvement project implemented at a primary ESL classroom in Malaysia.

Saeko Ozawa Ujiie offers an article titled, “English as Common Business Language: The Current Situations and Issues in Japanese Corporations”, which explored the status of English use in businesses in Japan, using an inductive approach to find out how English is being used in corporations in Japan. The study also investigated the impacts and implications of the use of English for international communication in Japan in much broader perspectives.

In addition, the article titled, “Extensive Reading for Increased Reading Speed and Comprehension”, by York Weatherford and Jodie Campbell reported a two-semester study on the relationship between ER and student reading speed and comprehension. The findings
showed that ER leads to significantly improved reading speed over the course of one academic year with a slight improvement in reading comprehension.

**Chalermsup Karanjakwut** in the article titled, “Implementing Teaching Intercultural Communication in Classes as Crucial Part of Learning in the 21st Century”, discussed about the importance of intercultural communication in class. His article aimed at proposing and applying some practical activities into a classroom with steps of teaching.

**Donald Patterson**, in the article titled, “The Flipped EFL Classroom: A Teaching Approach for the Information Age”, examined what it means to flip a class; considered the advantages and disadvantages; and discussed its use in teaching English as a foreign language. It provided several suggested activities for teachers and concluded by noting flipped learning’s potential in aiding in the transition to an education model that is more fitting for the 21st century.

**Saifon Songsiengchai**, the author of, “The Pedagogical Mantra of the 21st Century Teachers”, presented the notions for EGL high school teachers to foster the students’ competence in learning English and improving the way English is taught using the “I L O V E E N G L I S H” Mantra.

**Panisa Kurakan and Fonhip Rajchawiang**, in the article titled, “Using Smart Phones to Reduce Students’ Fear in Public Speaking RMUTL Chiang Mai”, studied the causes of students’ fear of speaking English in a Public Speaking course at Rajamangala University of Technology, Chiang Mai, and measured the students’ speaking skills after using smartphone rehearsal to reduce their fear.

Next, the article titled, “Vietnamese Students’ Internet Use Habit and Implications for English Language Teaching”, by **Yen H. Phuong and Quyen P. Vo** explored the internet use habits of Vietnamese English majored students. Findings of the study provided English teachers in Vietnam with helpful bases to optimize the use of internet for their English teaching.

The final article, “Washback of a University English Proficiency Test from Graduate Students’ and Lecturers’ Perceptions”, is written by **Papkicha Sriwilaijaroen and Chatraporn Piamsai**.
This article aimed to explore the students’ and lecturers’ perceptions towards the University English Proficiency Test in terms of their washback reflected through their behaviors and perceptions, the challenges they experienced from taking the test, and the types of support they gained. The results revealed the positive and negative perceptions of both parties in various aspects.

Lastly, we would like to thank all the reviewers for their valuable time in evaluating and editing those articles with commitment and dedication.

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# Table of Contents

Adopting EIL Teaching Principles into the English Language Classroom: 1
Voice from Vietnam  
*Hang Thi Nhu Mai*

Connecting the Dots...Moving Cooperative Writing from The Classroom to Digital Space Moving Cooperative Writing into the ESL Classroom 18  
*Seok Hoon Quah & Hee Hee Yeoh*

English as Common Business Language: 37
The Current Situations and Issues in Japanese Corporations  
*Saeko Ozawa Ujiie*

Extensive Reading for Increased Reading Speed and Comprehension 48  
*York Weatherford & Jodie Campbell*

Implementing Teaching Intercultural Communication in Classes as Crucial Part of Learning in the 21st Century 58  
*Chalermsup Karanjakwut*

The Flipped EFL Classroom: A Teaching Approach for the Information Age 74  
*Donald Patterson*

The Pedagogical Mantra of the 21st Century Teachers 86  
*Saifon Songsiengchai*

Using Smart Phones to Reduce Students’ Fear in Public Speaking 102  
*Panisa Kurakan & Fonthip Rajchawiang*

Vietnamese Students’ Internet Use Habit and Implications for English Language Teaching 117  
*Yen H. Phuong & Quyen P. Vo*

Washback of a University English Proficiency Test from Graduate Students’ and Lecturers’ Perceptions 142  
*Papkicha Sriwilaijaroen & Chatraporn Piamsai*
Adopting EIL Teaching Principles into the English Language Classroom: 

Voice from Vietnam

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**Abstract**

The diffusion and diversification of English have led to the increasing number of Englishes and multilingual speakers of the language. This changing sociolinguistic reality of English suggests that the pedagogy which privileges native-speaker norms as the only standards in English language education is no longer adequate. Teaching English as an International Language (EIL) which promotes a pluricentric view of English, has been adopted by language educators as an effective alternative to the above pedagogy and notably to enhance learners' cross-cultural communication competence. This qualitative study explored Vietnamese EFL lecturers' perspectives towards the implementation of EIL teaching principles in their classrooms. The open-ended questionnaires with 57 Vietnamese lecturers were employed to collect data. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents had a positive view towards EIL teaching. However, they also expressed concerns about its implementation in actual classrooms due to learners' favour of Standard English (SE), teachers' belief in the target language culture, limited classroom time, and examination pressure. The study draws an implication for EL practitioners to raise their learners' intercultural awareness and behaviours through EIL teaching so that their students can be better prepared for intercultural communication in English.

**Keywords:** English as an International Language (EIL), intercultural communication competence, teachers' perspectives, Vietnam
1. Introduction

As the language of communications, information technology, science, business, entertainment and diplomacy, English is widely regarded as the dominant international language of the 21st century (British Council, 2013). The number of bilingual speakers of English nowadays substantially surpasses that of the native speakers. In fact, the English language has been used as a common language among bi-/multi-lingual speakers and has increasingly become the operating system for the global conversation. This changing socio-linguistic reality of English has posed a crucial need for learners to develop their intercultural communication competence to be successful in intercultural encounters.

To meet the irreversible demand of learners in the mobilized world, English as an International Language (EIL) teaching has been employed in various English language teaching contexts. According to Sharifian (2009), EIL rejects the single norms of English in intercultural communication and emphasizes that, with many varieties or with the status of pluricentricity, English is a language of international and hereby intercultural communication. Similarly, Marlina (2014) emphasized that EIL “recognizes the international functions of English and its use in a variety of cultural and economic arenas by speakers of English from diverse lingual-cultural backgrounds who do not speak each other’s mother tongues” (p. 4).

Many scholars (e.g., Matsuda, 2005; McKay, 2000, 2002; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008) have asserted the need for a shift in English language teaching (ELT) to teaching EIL. Meanwhile, the existing approaches to ELT in Vietnam which tend to conceptualize English as a static language of the native English speakers have not met Vietnamese learners’ needs for intercultural communications in the globalized world (Hoang, 2011; Le, 2011). It is, therefore, argued that ELT in Vietnam should prioritise to foster learners’ intercultural communication competence through EIL teaching principles.

2. Literature Review

2.1 English as an international language

The first definition of an international language was made by Smith (1976), stating that an international language “is used by people of different nations to communicate with one another” (p.17). In this sense, English is not the property of any peoples or any nations, but it belongs to
those who speak it. Widdowson (1994) shared the same idea when discussing the ownership of an international language. He claimed that “the very fact that English is an international language means that no country can have custody over it” (p. 385). In fact, the development of English is the result of the communication process, and obviously we cannot deny the contribution and the creation of the non-natives to make English more complete. Seidlhofer (2011) refers EIL as a term that can be used interchangeably with others, such as English as a Lingua Franca, English as a global language, English as a World English and English as a medium of intercultural communication. She also argues that in the 21st century, English is not just “an” but “the” international language. EIL emphasizes that English, with many varieties, is a language of international communication, and therefore is intercultural as well (Sharifian, 2009).

From these interpretations on EIL, Marlina (2014) elaborates the concept of EIL pedagogy which is composed of three main points, including (1) assisting learners across contexts to gain knowledge and be aware of the pluricentricity of English, (2) encouraging learners to have an equal recognition and behavior towards all varieties of English, (3) and developing their ability to negotiate and communicate effectively in intercultural encounters. It is argued that the shift to EIL teaching in both EFL and ESL contexts is essential.

2.2 Research on Teachers’ Beliefs regarding EIL Teaching in Outer and Expanding Circle Countries

By conducting a closed- and open-ended questionnaire survey on 421 Greek secondary teachers, Sifakis and Sougari (2005) explored their beliefs concerning pronunciation instruction in EIL teaching and its relation to their teaching practices. The finding showed that due to international intelligibility, native speaker norms were dominant in Greek teachers’ beliefs, and there were some significant differences in practices between teaching contexts (primary, lower and upper secondary levels). In this regard, Ali (2014) carried out seven mini-focus interviews to investigate Malaysian tertiary English language educators’ attitudes towards the potential implementation of EIL teaching principles in English language (EL) classrooms. In contrast to Sifakis and Sougari’s finding, just a few teachers in Ali’s study hesitated to use only the native
norms as the teaching model. The majority of the informants were favourable to adopting EIL principles in EL classrooms. The prominent reasons given by the participants included the increasing non-native English speakers today, the influence of globalization, and the need of identity preservation in the globalized world.

Similarly, to explore tertiary teachers’ perceptions of EIL principles through their classroom practice in Qatar, Aymen (2015) adopted a small scale exploratory study based on an open-ended questionnaire. Data were collected from three native- and four nonnative-English-speaking teachers. The finding indicated that most participants were positive about introducing multi-cultures in EL classrooms. This result confirms McKay (2002) that international culture, which is cultures of English- and non-English-speaking countries should be the goal. However, the result challenges Wang’s (2011) claim that language and culture are twined and inseparable. The study also found that all participants used Standard English, which is either British or American English to teach students’ pronunciation and grammar. However, while non-native English speaking teachers found it important to make learners aware of different varieties of English, native teachers did not put emphasis on raising students' awareness of that due to limited classroom time and the fixed syllabus.

Research has showed a mixed result regarding the implementation of EIL teaching in the EFL context, which makes it problematic for Vietnamese practitioners and educators to adopt its principles without analysis and evaluation. Hence, encouraging teachers’ voices about its suitability to the local context is imperative. However, the number of empirical studies on teachers’ perspectives is still scarce; particularly no research conducted about Vietnamese tertiary teachers’ beliefs has been found. Given this gap, the study adopted a qualitative approach to explore Vietnamese tertiary teachers’ perspectives towards the EIL teaching implementation in the Vietnamese context. The research question of the study is: What are Vietnamese tertiary teacher’s perspectives towards the adoption of EIL teaching principles in the English language classroom?
3. Methodology

3.1 The Instrument

With the ability to collect data on a large scale and benefits in time, effort and finance saving (Brown, 2000; Dörnyei, 2003), an open-ended questionnaire was utilized to collect data in the study.

The questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part helped to collect the biodata of the participants regarding their age, gender, teaching experience and overseas learning experience. It was followed by eight statements regarding the EIL teaching principles, participants will be asked to express their opinions as to what extent they agree or disagree with each statement and then explain their views.

3.2 Participants

Sixty Vietnamese tertiary teachers of English who were teaching in different universities around Vietnam responded the survey. However, since the number of novice teachers was merely three people, their responses were deleted, leaving 57 responses. The age of the participants ranges from 28 to 50. Among them, there are 47 female participants and 10 males, accounting for 82.45% and 17.5%, respectively. As the aim of the study is to explore teachers’ perspectives concerning the EIL implementation in EFL classrooms, the different number between male and female participants does not affect the result (Mai, 2018). Regarding teaching experience, the proportion of junior teachers (57.89%) surpasses that of senior teachers (42.10%). Among the participants, thirty-two teachers have studied overseas while the other thirty-five have pursued their higher study in Vietnam.

3.3 Data Analysis

The study adopted an inductive approach to analyze the qualitative data. The inductive method involves using the actual data to obtain the structure of analysis. It is a comprehensive approach which is the most suitable where little or nothing is known about the study phenomenon (Burnard, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). This approach is the most common for qualitative data analysis, thereby the focus of this paper.
**Coding.** The following is the process of inductive coding adapted from Thomas (2006) to be used in the study.

a. Preparation of raw data files. Raw data of participants' responses were converted into an Excel file. Each sheet was used to present responses to each EIL teaching principle, including (a) respect for the pluricentricity of English (responses of statements 1 and 2), (b) exposure to varieties of English (statement 3), (c) development of negotiation skills of varieties of English (statement 4), (d) appreciation of multiculturalism (statement 5), (e) exposure to diverse cultures (statements 6 and 7), and (f) development of negotiation skills of cultural diversities (statement 8). Then they were grouped into three categories, including agreement, neutral, and disagreement for later analysis.

b. A close reading of texts. The researcher read the responses in detail and for many times to be familiar with the content and gained an understanding of the themes.

c. Creation of categories. The researcher identified and defined themes or categories. Categories were created from meaning units or actual phrases in specific text segments. Marked text segments were copied and pasted into each category.

d. Overlapping coding and uncoded text. One segment of text might be coded into more than one category. The texts that were not relevant to the research objective was not coded.

e. Continuing revision and refinement of category system. The subtopics were searched for each category, including contrasting points of view and new insights. Then appropriate quotes that conveyed the core theme or essence of a category were selected.

4. Results

4.1. Respect for the pluricentricity of English

The majority of respondents (42 out of 57) expressed a positive view of the statement that the target of teaching EIL is not the native-like, and a bit higher number (45 out of 57) agreed that learners should be encouraged to respect other varieties of English and its users as bilinguals or multilinguals. Seventeen teachers noted the impossibility for an adult to articulate English sounds like a native speaker without being born and growing up in the English-speaking
countries. Six of them emphasized that the influence of the mother tongue on the acquisition of a second language was a natural process, and, hence, the attitude of acceptance of and respect for heterogeneity of English as an international language today should be emphasized in ELT. One respondent wrote,

I am strongly against using the native speaker model to measure L2 English learners’ proficiency. It is a far-fetched and unrealistic goal and may make learners feel unmotivated to learn English, knowing that it would be tough for them to have native-like proficiency. The curriculum should make learners aware of and respect for all English varieties.

A large number of teachers also considered mutual intelligibility as a paramount element in intercultural communication. One of the respondents shared her experience that she could mostly understand other partners from Vietnam, and some other Asian speakers of English; however, she noted that she needed a high-level concentration to listen to the native but mostly she failed to understand her partners for the first time. Similarly, another teacher commented that she changed her mind after learning in an international environment where she communicated with many different first-language interlocutors. She realized that being like a native did not make sense to communicate successfully in that context. Noted one teacher,

For me, I changed my view now. Previously, I thought that it had to be native-like, but since I learned in an international class and communicated with people of different countries, I have realized that it doesn’t need to be. The key thing is that you can understand others and can be understood by them.

A few of the respondents expressed a contrasting view and commented that the original variety, which is either British or American English, is the best to teach for Vietnamese learners. Five teachers mentioned it as a ‘perfect English’ while referring other varieties to ‘bad English,’ and they felt embarrassed if evaluated as not native-like.
4.2. Exposure of learners to different varieties of English

Knowledge of different varieties: Forty-seven respondents expressed a positive view towards exposing learners to different varieties of English. Many of them (21 out of 47) identified the vital role of understanding variants in English spoken by different first-language speakers. It was explained that it would develop learners’ capacity to deal with misunderstandings or conflicts during the cross-cultural interactions. A respondent commented,

Learners should have a chance to be exposed to other varieties of English besides standard ones, so they can improve their ability to solve problems while communicating with other multilinguals. The more learners know about variations of English, the better they can communicate.

Additionally, many teachers said that exposure to varieties of English could make learners aware of the pluricentric nature of English today. Fourteen teachers emphasized that knowledge of English varieties was practical and authentic to students’ real-life communication needs. More precisely, nine of them shared that learners had more opportunities to communicate in English with fellow multilinguals from Asian countries than the Westerners. Five other respondents also noted that the development of the Internet enhanced the cross-cultural communication, and the spread of information network in the global era allowed learners to have quick access to various resources and topics in whatever varieties of English. Furthermore, the demands of learners’ future working life in the global village were also taken into consideration of six respondents. One of them noted,

It is essential for learners of English to communicate with non-native speakers. For example, if you are working in an Indian company, it’s better if you know some Indian English so that you can understand what your boss says.

It was suggested by the respondents that learners would be able to address international communication problems better if they were well-prepared for those situations with the knowledge of different English varieties in the world.

An established native variety as curriculum core: Interestingly, 27 out of 47 advocates of this principle maintained that knowledge of various varieties of English is crucial; however,
the standard varieties should be still the priority to guide them, especially for pronunciation and grammar. They explained that there should be a common rule for learners to follow so that they would avoid confusion as well as ensure universal intelligibility. Furthermore, the assessment of learners’ English proficiency should be based on intelligibility rather than nativelikeness.

Similarly, five teachers showed their concerns about the constraints of the local education such as teachers’ proficiency and examinations, which might prevent practitioners from teaching nativized varieties of English. In particular, teachers were not trained for other varieties of English. Thus, they might not have confidence to instruct them. Other three respondents also gave consideration to exam pressure. One respondent commented,

I don’t think we have time to teach all types of English. Students want to learn English for many academic exams, so teachers should focus more on a Standard English. Furthermore, I think it unlikely that Vietnamese teacher will know about, or understand Indian English or Singlish. However, it is necessary to introduce those varieties of English to make students aware of them and explore them outside the classroom.

It was noted that many learners were motivated to learn English due to the national exam or high-stake exams like IELTS and TOEFL that were bound with native norms. Thus, if teachers focused on other varieties of English, there was not enough time to help learners with preparation for their exams, and hence, might demotivate them in the classroom.

4.2.3 Development of negotiation skills in different varieties of English

The vast majority of respondents (55 out of 57) were in favour of developing the ability to negotiate across varieties in intercultural communication. The overwhelming explanation found in the data was related to the purpose of communication, that is, to exchange information. It was repeated by many informants (29 out of 55) that speakers from different regions or countries would have a range of first-language backgrounds, thereby having different speech patterns, pronunciations, and some of the vocabulary. Thus, negotiation skills of meanings would need
to be trained and developed in the context of multilingual and multicultural communication. As one teacher noted,

The people to whom they speak will have a variety of backgrounds and different ways of articulating a sound, accents and might use some different sets of vocabulary to suit their cultures, e.g., English spoken by Swedish, Chinese or Indian; Australian or New Zealand accents; Northern or Southern Vietnamese accents. So, it is important to practice skills to negotiate these differences.

Additionally, twelve participants emphasized the crucial need of equipping learners with necessary competencies to function as global citizens in the integration time of the country and the era of globalization. They identified the meaning negotiation skills as the key factor to successfully communicate in multilingual contexts. One teacher commented that the negotiation skill to cope with different varieties is of central importance to help learners become active interactants in international communications.

In the preceding part, many teachers emphasized the need of developing the negotiation skills of meanings in the cross-cultural encounters. In contrast, the minority of the respondents (2 out of 57) asserted that it was unnecessary and time-consuming to teach communication skills since learners could learn them through real interactions.

4.2.4 Appreciation of cultural diversity

A large number of participants (52 out of 57) approved of the statement that learners should be encouraged to appreciate cultural diversity in English communication. It was repeated by many teachers that each person has his or her beliefs, customs and cultural values that we need to respect in intercultural communication.

Interestingly, many participants (46 out of 57) expressed their agreement with the statement that not only the target culture but also their home cultures that learners should learn to communicate in English. It was explained that the purpose of our communication is to share our ideas, beliefs, and cultural values to other interlocutors. In this regard, many teachers considered the preservation of one’s identity or individuality as a crucial element in multicultural communication. One teacher shared her experience as follows.
When I talked with friends from other countries such as China, Thailand, Korea in English, I showed my identity naturally as a Vietnamese. I also observed the same thing of other friends. When sharing ideas about an issue, I think our cultures affect our thoughts and behaviors. I think they are properties of one person and we should respect it as we expect others to respect ours.

Additionally, nine teachers shared a view that it was “integration but not assimilation” should be the goal of communication in the global village. They also emphasized that when we wished to retain our identity and expected others to appreciate it in intercultural communication, we also needed to respect other cultures.

The minority of the respondents, contrastingly, believed that language and culture could not be separated, and, hence, the target language culture should be the primary focus of the curricula.

4.2.5 Exposure to diverse cultures

The majority of informants (49 out of 57) shared the same perspective on exposing learners to different cultures. The data revealed that most of the respondents recognized the need to make learners cognizant of the cultural diversities of English speakers. Nine teachers commented that today learners have access to a vast resource through the Internet. Thus, if they were aware of the diversity of cultures in English-speaking communities around the world, they would be able to explore it by themselves outside the classroom.

Interestingly, many respondents (13 out of 49) shared the same view that being exposed to different cultures would broaden learner’s knowledge of the world. It was explained that at the same time as acquiring knowledge about other cultures, learners would be involved in comparing and contrasting with their own. In other words, learners could reflect their cultural values to others’, and hence, they would also have a greater understanding of their cultures. One teacher commented,

I strongly agree because learners can develop more knowledge through learning English. The more knowledge they gain, the better outlook they have to the world as they can compare and contrast with their cultures. I think it is absorbing and significant to learners.
In contrast to the above responses, a few of the respondents repeated the inseparable relationship between language and culture, and argued that English-speaking countries' cultures should be mainly introduced in the language classroom.

4.2.6 Development of the ability to negotiate cross cultures

The data showed that a high number of teachers (53 out of 57) had a positive attitude towards developing negotiation skills of cultural diversities. The prominent reason was that as an international language spoken by many cultural groups in different parts of the world, English conversations became more complicated than any languages. Fifteen teachers commented that there were different interpretations among speakers from different first-language backgrounds about a cultural issue or phenomenon due to their various cultural conceptualisations. Thus, it is also crucial for them to develop a negotiation skill for the cultural diversity to avoid putting an imposition on other cultures and keep a rapport in cross-cultural communication. Noted one participant,

This is what learners have to deal with after learning a language. Cultural differences can be negotiated. In reality of communication, misunderstanding or communication breakdowns rarely happen as people use different strategies to negotiate and facilitate their communication.

Twelve respondents commented that negotiation skills of the cultural differences would help learners deal with any communication breakdowns they might encounter. They said that it would be helpful to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence.

Although the majority of the teachers approved of this principle, two teachers disagreed and showed their concern about the time constraint in the classroom. Two other respondents noted no understanding of the question.

5. Discussion

Firstly, the findings suggest that all varieties of English as well as its users should be respected in intercultural communications. It is argued that a native-English speaker model is mostly unreachable for second language (L2) learners. It is consistent with Cook’s (1999) claim that it
is impossible for L2 learners to attain a first language speaker's competence without being reborn in English-speaking countries. In addition, as Kachru (1992) argues, bilingual creativity naturally occurs as a result of the contact of English with other languages in lingual and cultural contexts, it would be problematic to devalue variations of English and consider them inferior or failed to meet the qualities of the Standard English varieties (Hamid & Baldauf, 2013; Lick & Alsagoff, 1998; McKay, 2002).

Interestingly, the findings show a paradox in teachers' views. On the one hand, it is believed that being like the mother tongue speakers does not guarantee a mutual intelligibility as also argued in Kirkpatrick and Sussex (2012). On the other hand, it is argued that the Standard varieties of English, either British or American English – which is the most popular, should be used to guide learners in the classroom, especially for pronunciation and grammar rules. It is consistent with the findings of Aymen (2015) and Sifakis and Sougari (2005) that the native's pronunciation should be used to teach learners to ensure international intelligibility.

The results, therefore, propose that mutual intelligibility in multilingual and multicultural communication should be interpreted in two aspects, that is, to be understood and to understand other interlocutors. For the former, it is argued that the Standard variety should be used to teach learners regarding pronunciation and grammar. It confirms Jenkins' s (1998) claim that native speakers can provide a model as “a point of reference” for “preventing non-native varieties far removed from mutual intelligibility” (p. 124). As Melchers and Shaw (2003) assert, although intelligibility at a local level may not be a problem, it can be problematic on a global scale. However, for the latter, learners also need to understand variants of the language and different language pragmatics in particular communication contexts (Gee, 2004). This could not be obtained from learning only the traditional varieties but also the nativized varieties (Hamid, Zhu, & Baldauf, 2014).

Regarding culture in EIL teaching, the findings suggest that learners should appreciate other cultures, enrich knowledge of diverse cultures to achieve successful cross-cultural communication. In this sense, Byram (1997) argues that in teaching and learning EIL, interculturalism, that is, knowledge of another culture should be the goal. This is in contrast with biculturalism, that is, adoption of another culture. It is consistent with McKay's (2002)
argument that international culture rather than only the target language culture should be exposed to the learners.

Like some teachers in Aymen (2015), a few of the participants also expressed a negative attitude to EIL teaching. Some reasons are related to the teachers themselves, such as lack of confidence in their language proficiency and their belief in the inseparable relationship between the language and the target language culture in ELT. Other reasons are the constraints of educational institutions such as limited classroom time and examination pressure. Lastly, learners’ favor of Standard English also explains for one of the challenges that Vietnamese EFL teachers have encountered when adopting a new teaching perspective.

6. Conclusion and Implications

Due to the changing face of English, that is, English is now used more frequently for cross-cultural communication, a change in the existing curriculum is crucial for catering the needs of Vietnamese learners of English in the globalized era which is aligned with the role of English as an international language. It should also be noted that the EIL curriculum should be culturally sensitive (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008).

The Standard varieties of English should be mainly used in the materials to guide learners for pronunciation and grammar; nevertheless, at the same time, the curriculum should make learners aware of the plurality of English by providing lessons on World Englishes and the changing face of English as an international language.

Mutual intelligibility also comes from understanding different cultures. Materials for teaching English as an international language should be designed to suit the changing role of the English language, especially intercultural communication materials. In addition, due to the different cultural conceptualizations, a particular cultural norm can be accepted in this culture but might be interpreted differently in other cultures. Thus, teachers should make students aware of the cultural diversities in cross-cultural communication and encourage them to appreciate it (Marlina, 2014; Nakane, 2006).

Finally, this paper reports insights from a small group of participants from several Vietnamese contexts. The findings, thus, are not intended for generalizable purposes.
References


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Abstract

This paper examines the use of cooperative writing to enhance the writing skills of a class of 11-year old learners. It shares the preliminary findings of a classroom improvement project implemented at a primary ESL classroom in Malaysia. Employing an action research design and cooperative learning strategies, the project comprises two phases; Phase I involves learning to write cooperatively in a face-to-face environment while Phase II moves the cooperative writing to a digital platform. This paper reports on Phase I which studied cooperative writing in the non-digital classroom. Data was collected from pupils' writing, interviews and reflective journals. The findings indicated that cooperative writing, employed with the principle of diminishing control can help the learners to enhance their writing skills by providing the necessary scaffolding for them to produce longer pieces of writing. This is achieved by improving learner focus during lessons and motivating them to write through a variety of interesting cooperative writing activities. This paper also discusses the implications for the action to be undertaken in Phase II when learners move from writing cooperatively in a face-to-face environment to a digital platform.

Keywords: cooperative learning, cooperative writing, online teaching and learning, teaching writing

1. Introduction

The teenage learners of this era are digital natives; they grew up with digital technologies such as tablets, mobile phones and social media. To many of them, writing essays in school is a chore and a bore. They prefer to type short truncated text messages on mobile phones than write paragraphs. Many are reluctant and often unenthusiastic writers. This is not surprising as writing is a complex skill that has to be learnt and composing a good piece of writing is not an easy task for both native and non-native speakers.
And, for teachers of primary school children whose English proficiency level is low, teaching their pupils to write paragraphs in the classroom is a reality that many have to grapple with.

2. **Background of the study**

The importance of the writing skill is emphasised in the aims and objectives of the English Language Curriculum for Malaysian Primary Schools whereby “by the end of Year 6, pupils should be able to...write a range of texts using appropriate language, style and form through a variety of media” as well as “…use correct and appropriate rules of grammar in speech and writing” (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015, p.5). In other words, teachers are expected to employ various effective writing strategies and techniques to ensure that their learners acquire these desired outcomes by the end of their primary education.

Furthermore, with greater emphasis on the 21st century skills in the Malaysian education system today, cooperative learning has been foregrounded as an effective strategy to foster cooperation and collaboration among learners. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (2008) define cooperative learning as a structured form of learning in small groups where group members work towards a common goal. According to these scholars, if implemented appropriately, cooperative learning can enhance learning and develop social and communication skills. Besides active learning, children also benefit from peer teaching, and greater opportunities for shared success.

Most classroom seating arrangements in Malaysian primary schools are in groups. However, sitting in groups does not automatically lead to cooperative learning. As indicated in findings of cooperative learning classrooms, the learning benefits of cooperative learning can be only reaped if the principles of cooperative learning are put into practice (Ahmad & Umi Kalthom, 2015; Effandi, Chin & Md. Yusoff, 2010 and Ho & Boo, 2007). In recent years, there have been quite a number of studies conducted to examine cooperative learning in Malaysia such as Ahmad & Umi Kalthom (2015) and Effandi, Chin and Md. Yusoff (2010) who studied cooperative learning in Mathematics and Science classes. However, studies on cooperative writing in the Malaysian primary ESL classroom have been scarce. Only a few such could be found such as Sigau (2007) who surveyed cooperative learning techniques employed by
secondary school teachers in their literature classes and Abdul Rashid Mohamed, Nair, Kaur, & Fletcher (2005) who studied use of cooperative learning to enhance writing skills of pre-university students while Mahbib, Esa, Mohamad, and Mohd Salleh (2017) examined the perception of primary school teachers towards the use of cooperative learning in teaching English. In short, this study on cooperative writing in the primary ESL classroom can contribute to addressing the lack of research in this area on the Malaysian education scene.

To this end, the authors embarked on a classroom improvement project and lecturer attachment scheme also known by the acronym ‘CLIPLAS’ initiated by the teacher education institute where they work. The main purpose of this project was to examine if the writing skills of 11-year old ESL pupils in a small town in Malaysia can be enhanced using cooperative writing as a teaching and learning strategy. It comprises two phases; an offline and an online phase. This paper shares the findings of Phase I which studied cooperative writing in the classroom. It will also discuss the implications for Phase II when learners move from face-to-face interaction to writing cooperatively in a digital environment.

3. Research context and sample

The research context of this study was a national-type primary school in a small town in the northern state of Kedah. The research participants comprised a class of 35 Year Five pupils. These 11-year olds’ English language proficiency was generally low and lacked both oral and written skills although there were a few who could communicate in English and were relatively fluent in their spoken skills. According to the English language teacher, the five Year 5 classes in the school were streamed according to ability and this was the fourth class, an indication that the pupils were not high performing learners. In terms of English language ability, this teacher said that it was a mixed ability class, in that a few, who came from English speaking home backgrounds were able to speak in English while a large number often conversed in Malay and had limited skills in English. Based on their past written examination results, it could be said that two pupils had upper intermediate English ability obtaining Grade B, 12 lower intermediate (Grade C and D) and the remaining 21 could be deemed weak as they only managed a Grade E, the lowest grade in the examination.
3.1 Issue of concern

The issue of concern in the sample of this study was the learners' writing problems. A preliminary survey was undertaken to investigate the actual problems faced by the pupils of this class with regard to their writing ability. Initial discussions with the teacher concerned revealed that the pupils' weaknesses range from inadequate vocabulary to inability to string words to form grammatical sentences. The teacher had also lamented that some pupils were so weak that they ended up copying the stimulus making their sentences fragmented and minimal writing was produced at the end of the lesson. Looking through some pupils' work, some evidence of their weaknesses in writing were found. Figure 1 illustrates a sample of the pupil's weakness. Although it was a note expansion task, it is evident that there were multiple problems at word, phrase and sentence levels.

![Figure 1. Pupil writing sample](image)

To gain a better understanding of these issues, an observation of the class was arranged with the class teacher. The observation revealed some insights into how the teaching and learning process was facilitated. It was found that although the seating arrangement was in groups, the learners mainly worked on their own and the general activity involved the teacher discussing how or what should be written and she gave them the sentence and later, the students copied these sentences into their exercise books. We noticed that there was an absence of group activities to promote cooperative writing among pupils.

In summary, the initial survey highlighted a few key issues related to their writing problem. Firstly, learners lacked focus on the lesson resulting in them not learning what is taught. Second, the pupils were attending to their writing tasks individually. Thirdly, their lack of sentence construction skills resulted in many not producing the desired piece of writing. Analysing these
issues, it was decided that an action research design incorporating cooperative writing would be implemented in an attempt to enhance the learners’ writing ability in note expansion tasks.

4. Research question
The objective of this study was to examine how cooperative writing can help to enhance the writing ability of pupils with poorer writing skills and seeks to answer the following research question in the context of face-to-face classroom interaction:

- In what ways can cooperative writing enhance Year 5 pupils’ writing skills in note-expansion tasks?

5. Literature review
Cooperative writing is a teaching method whereby learners work together in small groups to complete a writing task which is usually teacher-structured (Jacobs & Seah-Tay, 2004). It is more than simply seating learners together, but rather, there are certain principles that guide its implementation. It draws from the cooperative learning principles of key proponents such as Kagan (2001) and Johnson & Johnson (1999) as cited in Johnson, Johnson & Holubec (2008). Two key cooperative learning principles emphasised in cooperative writing are positive interdependence and individual accountability (Jacobs & Seah-Tay, 2004). With positive interdependence, learners perceive that better individual performance will lead to better group performance. According to Storch (2011), when learners co-construct texts together, either in collaborative or cooperative writing tasks, they play roles not available in solitary writing. The roles of tutors, co-authors, sounding boards and critical readers all bring benefits to the learner in enhancing their own writing skills as well as helping their peers develop theirs. When learners engage in performing group writing tasks cooperatively or collaboratively, they learn about language and discuss collectively about how best to present an idea in writing (Swain, 2010 as cited in Storch, 2011).

From the learner’s perspective, the writing process can be less tedious and boring as the generation of ideas phase is generally more lively than when done individually. The end product of writing is also more successful as more heads are reviewing and evaluating the co-
constructed text. Furthermore, according to Harmer (2015, p. 329) “writing in groups, whether as a part of a long process or a short game-like communicative activity, can be greatly motivating for students”. The idea generation stage is often more lively with more than one person involved.

The benefits of cooperative writing have been reported in various studies such as Jacobs and Seah-Tay (2004), Johnson et al (2008) in the American and European contexts and in the Malaysian context, Abdul Rashid et al (2008), Ahmad and Umi Kalthom (2015) and Effandi et al (2010). The findings of these studies indicated positive writing development in the secondary and pre-university students. The students generally improved not just their overall achievement in writing but also content, organisation, vocabulary, mechanics and grammar. Additionally, these studies also highlight better communication and interpersonal skills. Mahbib et al (2017) examined the perception of Malaysian primary school teachers towards cooperative learning as a method of improving their students’ English proficiency and found that the teachers’ knowledge of cooperative learning shaped their perception of and implementation of this teaching method. They argue that in order to implement cooperative learning effectively, teachers need the relevant knowledge and skill in planning cooperative learning tasks, class and activity management. This finding concurs with Gillies and Boyle’s (2010) study on teachers’ perception of cooperative learning of a group of primary school teachers in Australia which also highlighted problems with implementation, task construction, group composition, student preparation and assessment.

In summary, cooperative writing draws upon cooperative learning principles. Despite evidence from research indicating its advantageous contributions to teaching and learning, its successful implementation still depends on the practitioner who needs to equip himself/herself with the necessary knowledge and skills.

6. Conceptual framework

In conceptualising this study, it was taken into consideration that majority of the research participants were poor writers and had mostly attempted their writing tasks alone. To address these issues, we drew on the social constructivism theory and the concept of the zone of
proximal development (ZPD) of Vygotsky (1978 as cited in Brown, 2007) which focussed on the importance of interaction with a more knowledgeable other and cooperative learning. According to Vygotsky, the ZPD is the distance between what the learners know and what he/she has the potential to learn from a more knowledgeable peer or teacher (Kaufman, 2004). In this aspect, it also describes tasks that the learner “cannot yet do independently but can accomplish with the help of more competent peers or adults” (Brown, 2007, p. 13). The implication of this constructivist view of learning is that teachers should design writing tasks that enable learners to work cooperatively in mixed-ability groups. In addition, their knowledge of their learners’ ability and potential should guide them to decide the amount and type of “scaffolding” that needs to be provided to complete the tasks (Kaufman, 2004).

To translate this social constructivist theory into practice, Kagan (2001)’s cooperative learning strategies were employed in the design of the writing activities in order to provide the necessary scaffolding which will assist these struggling young writers to construct sentences with the help of their peers. Typical cooperative learning environments have learners seated in small heterogenous groups and working as a team towards achieving a common goal set by the teacher. Studies such as Quinn (2006) has found that cooperative learning can enhance learner motivation and positively impact learning outcome. Therefore, the decision to incorporate cooperative learning is appropriate as boredom and disinterest was a cause for the pupils’ lack of focus in class. In addition, scaffolding is also to be incorporated into the writing activities to provide the necessary linguistic support for these research participants.
7. **Methodology**

This research adopted an action research design (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988 as cited in Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2014) which goes through the phases of planning, acting, reflecting and replanning. Since this paper reports only the Phase I findings of a two-phase project, the implications of the preliminary findings discussed here will serve as input for Phase II which takes learners to writing cooperatively in a digital platform.

7.1 **Implementation of cooperative writing**

This section focuses on the implementation stage of the research whereby our action of cooperative writing was implemented following the principle of diminishing control.

The implementation phase involved conducting three lessons focussing on note expansion writing activities over a period of one month. Following the Malaysian Year Five curriculum, the narrative writing took the form of note-expansion with pictorial stimulus. One of us taught the lessons while the other played the role of teaching assistant. The cooperative learning principles emphasised in cooperative writing are positive interdependence and individual accountability (Jacobs & Seah-Tay, 2004). Hence, several steps were taken to prepare the learners. Firstly, pupil roles were assigned for each group - group captain, materials manager,
time keeper and spell checker. This ensured that every learner had a role to play in completing the given group tasks. Secondly, traffic light cards were introduced to aid the management of the class.

Finally, to provide the necessary scaffolding for writing, group tasks were structured from controlled to partially controlled, from teacher-lead to peer-led in each session of implementing the action following the principle of diminishing control. Each lesson progressed from controlled practice to partially controlled writing practice as shown in Figure 3. Due to pupils’ low proficiency level and the limited time for this action, we were not able to provide free writing practice as the scaffolding for writing was still needed by these learners.

![Figure 3 Implementation of cooperative writing lessons](image)

**Figure 3** Implementation of cooperative writing lessons

**Scaffolding:** Adapting the scaffolded writing instruction of Read (2010), we implemented a “vocabulary practice – teacher modelling - shared writing - independent writing” sequence for each lesson. The pre-writing stage of each lesson would be a group activity focussing on making sense of the pictorial stimulus with the aim of practising vocabulary or generating ideas. This is followed by the teacher demonstrating to the class how to expand the notes provided in the task. Next, the pupils worked cooperatively in their groups to construct sentences by expanding on the notes provided with the pictorial stimulus. They share their writing with the class and
are given the necessary feedback to help them improve their writing. Considering that these learners were reluctant as well as poor writers, effort was taken to provide scaffolding that would interest them. Vocabulary and sentence construction games and game-like activities e.g. “human unscrambling of sentences”, puzzles and a variety of other writing activities using mini whiteboards and word cards were used to engage the learners. Finally, in order to provide the authors with a means of monitoring the learners’ progress, the pupils would work on similar note-expansion exercise individually.

In the first writing lesson, we provided a substantial amount of scaffolding in terms vocabulary to indirectly motivate all the pupils to write especially the reluctant ones. We thought that we need to boost their confidence i.e. by getting them to complete the writing task successfully. When they are able to feel a sense of accomplishment, it will indirectly boost the less abled pupils’ motivation and confidence to write. Therefore, the cooperative controlled writing tasks such as labelling, matching and unscrambling words to form correct sentences based on the stimulus/pictures given.

In the second lesson which involved writing a narrative, the teacher started off by providing some scaffolding in terms understanding the sequence of events of the story as well as key vocabulary. The next stage followed with getting the pupils to engage in another cooperative writing task whereby they discussed in their own groups in writing out the story based on the words and phrases given. This task was a partially controlled practice with some teacher guidance.

As for the third lesson, the same procedure of scaffolding was given as was done in the second lesson. Another cooperative writing task was assigned to the respective group of pupils. Again, each pupil has a specific role to see to. For this particular task, peer guidance was emphasised. This means that the better ones would lead and guide the other members in the group to complete the writing task together.
7.2 Data collection
There were three sources of data for this study: pupils’ written work, interviews with pupils and the English language teacher and reflective journals. The focus of each lesson was a note expansion writing task and the product of independent writing was collected at the end of the lessons to provide the necessary data for monitoring the learners’ progress. Meanwhile, one of us, that is the one who taught the cooperative writing lessons, wrote four reflective journals – one after the initial survey stage and one after each lesson. Finally, semi-scripted interviews were conducted with six pupils; two from each level of proficiency: upper-intermediate, lower-intermediate and elementary. The class English teacher who had observed all the three lessons was also interviewed. In order to assist the 11-year olds and the teacher remember better what had happened during the lessons, several photographs of the class activities were shown to the interviewees at several points during the interview. Each pupil interview lasted approximately 15 minutes while the teacher interview lasted 20 minutes. Since these pupils were not proficient in English, the interviews were conducted in a mixture of English and Malay.

8. Analysis and Findings
In data analysis, it needs to be noted that only those pupils who were present for all the three cooperative writing lessons were taken into account. Since five were absent during one of the
lessons, they were excluded. Therefore, only 30 pupils’ writing was analysed. Analysis of the data collected from the pupils’ written work, interviews and reflective journals yielded the following findings:

i. Increased focus on lesson

Data analysis of the interview with the class English language teacher indicated that the pupils generally had better focus on the lessons compared to previously. According to the teacher who observed all the intervention sessions, before the intervention, the pupils could stay focused for two periods “but three periods already they start to do their own work, play talk” (line 3). However, she noticed that “they are more focused now during group work…but when you ask them to write individually, they can’t yet...” (line 8).

Asked if they could focus better on the lesson, three pupils, P2, P3 and P4, interviewed replied as follows:

P2: “yes...sebab kalau semua tumpu perhatian boleh jawab” [because if all pay attention can answer]

P3: “boleh tumpu perhatian, semua boleh tumpu perhatian...sebab kalau semua tumpu perhatian boleh jawab...can pay attention, all can pay attention...because if all pay attention can answer]...Now writing time they give some isi point...”

P4: “yes, I listen more to teacher, yes”

Further triangulation was provided by the findings from the reflective journal analysis. In the first journal that was written after the initial observation of the class, “Many pupils appear disengaged, some not looking at the board, but at their textbooks with a listless look” (J1:10-11). After the second intervention, it was noted in the journal that “pupils (were) on-task but I had the help of my colleague & the teacher to keep them working...” and after the last intervention, “All could be deemed on task with the better students in the group helping the weaker ones... The weaker ones were also eager to be a part of the activity.” (J4:17-19)

ii. Improvement in writing length

Analysis of the pupils’ note expansion writing tasks indicated that there was generally some improvement in the length of the pupils’ writing. Comparing the pupils’ writing across the three lessons, 19 (63.3%) of the learners were writing slightly longer texts with each lesson. Of these 19, 12 (40%) were from the weakest learners whose writing skills were still elementary despite
being in Year 5. Figure 5 shows the comparison of the length of their writing between Lessons 1, 2 and 3. It can be seen that at the end of Lesson 1, there were four pupils who wrote less than 10 words based on the note expansion exercise. However, at the end of Lesson 2, the pupils were able to write more than 10 words and by Lesson 3, they managed to produce at least 21 – 30 words independently. In fact, more than half the class was able to write above 50 words with one upper intermediate pupil reaching 97 words in Lesson 3. Considering that the majority of the class were reluctant and poor writers and as, the teacher said, often handed in blank sheets of paper, this was an encouraging sign.

Analysis of the teacher interview indicated that the pupils were attempting to produce longer pieces of writing. According to the teacher, the weaker pupils who used to leave sections of writing tests unattempted, were trying harder to write resulting in longer pieces of writing. “Now they try, if not they leave blank, that day they didn’t write..... ya they want to try, at least they try if not they leave blank” (lines 31 - 34).
iii. Peer support and motivation

When asked if writing cooperatively could enhance their writing ability, all the pupils interviewed indicated that it was possible as they could seek their friend’s help when needed. Words and phrases such as “senang faham” [easy to understand], “senang” [easy], “mudah” [easy], “bincang sama-sama” [discuss together], “bagus” [good], “ada kawan” [got friends], “all help” and “friends help” appeared quite often in the data and indicated their positive responses. Two intermediate pupils stated in their respective interviews:

P2: “boleh tambah baik sebab david itu kalau tak faham, boleh tanya kat dia..boleh”
(can improve, because that david if don’t understand, can ask him…can)

P3: “group means they all can help, alone means they cannot help. alone. means a lot of idea i cannot remember. we remember little bit, they all remember little bit.”

Meanwhile a weak learner concurred by saying:

P5: “buat dua orang..senang nak tulis nak..cepat siap”
[two people do. easy to write...finish fast]

In addition, the pupils also seemed more motivated to write and used words such as “suka” [like], “seronok” [happy], “like” and “happy” to describe their positive feelings about cooperative writing. Peer support can be a motivating factor that encouraged the learners to want to write.

iv. Group membership concerns

Despite generally positive opinions, there were also certain issues about group membership that two more able writers highlighted in the interviews. They wanted friends in their groups, a sense of wanting people they are comfortable with. One pupil (P6) said, “I don’t like my group. they are the worse kids in the class...the ones in my group are not my friends. sometimes they bully me.” This pupil indicated that he would be interested in future cooperative writing lessons only if his group members are his friends.

To sum up the findings, it can be said that generally, the pupils found the cooperative writing experience a positive one. Some average and slow learners showed slight improvements in terms of the length of their writing. Additionally, all the pupils interviewed felt that they can
enhance their writing ability through cooperative writing tasks as they have the support of their peers and in a way, gain confidence in writing.

9. Discussion

This study set out to investigate if cooperative writing can enhance the writing skills of a group of 11 year-old learners. To this end, it can be said that the findings indicated that such a method of teaching writing can contribute to enhancing the pupils’ writing ability by, firstly, motivating them to focus better on what is being taught, and secondly, encouraging them to write more through structured, scaffolded tasks and peer support. In this way, learners gain confidence and are more motivated to write. This finding supports Harmer’s (2015) opinion that cooperative writing can be fun and more lively than writing alone. These preliminary findings also concur with several studies conducted in other educational contexts in Malaysia such as Ahmad and Umi Kalthom (2015) and Effandi, Chin and Md. Yusoff (2010). However, it also needs to be noted that these are only preliminary findings of Phase 1 of a two-phase project.

Reflecting on the action taken, what we now know is that cooperative writing can help these 11-year old learners enhance their writing skills. What we have learnt is there are also some issues that could prevent learners from benefiting from writing cooperatively. Issues such as poor group dynamics where some learners felt unhappy with their group members and how to sustain motivation to write need to be addressed in the subsequent cycle or phase.

Consequently, what we would like to learn is whether moving cooperative writing to a digital platform, such as Padlet, will further motivate the learners and enhance their writing ability. As educators, we are aware that motivation is an essential element in learning and this is definitely true with the young research participants of this study.

9.1 Implications for teaching and learning on a digital platform

The 21st century calls for teachers to integrate technology into their classrooms. According to Kolb (2008, p.1), there is a “digital disconnect” between the ways students use technology in their daily lives and in their classrooms. If the learners of this study are to be further motivated to write, the next phase of this project needs to take writing a step further and engage them by
moving the platform for writing to a digital domain. In addition, cooperative writing tasks can be very fruitful on a computer. “If the screen is big enough, the group members can clearly see what is being created and changes made... co-construction of the text happens in front of their eyes” (Harmer, 2011, p.328-329).

Based on the preliminary findings and also the issues highlighted by Gillies and Boyle (2009), several implications can be deduced for the next digital phase of writing cooperatively and also generally, for teaching writing in a digital platform. Firstly, writing tasks should be carefully structured to ensure sufficient scaffolding is provided offline before learners move to writing online. Secondly, certain rules for writing in the digital platform should be established e.g. write only in complete sentences. This could be teacher-led or decided by the group. Thirdly, learners could be introduced to the online dictionary and thesaurus to assist their writing. Next, they should be taught certain social skills or appropriate language for giving peer feedback. Finally, the assignment of member roles and group membership may need to be reviewed as each group should include a more technology savvy pupil so that writing time is not wasted. Although these learners grew up with technology, their familiarity is mainly with social media applications, hence the more techno-savvy could assist in trouble-shooting.

10. Conclusion
Learning to write need not be a solitary process. Cooperative writing can provide disinterested novice writers with the much needed motivation and opportunity to practise writing with carefully scaffolded tasks in the company of supportive peers. It would be interesting to discover how tapping into the learners’ “digital playground” can help them to further enhance their writing skills and whether the preliminary findings of the study can be further consolidated.
References


English as Common Business Language:
The Current Situations and Issues in Japanese Corporations

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Abstract
The study explores the status of English use in businesses in Japan using an inductive approach to find out how English is being used in corporations in Japan. Many multinational corporations are using English as their official or common language. Non-Anglophone companies in Europe, as well as companies in Japan such as Rakuten, UNIQLO, and Nissan, are reported to be using English as their corporate official or common language. To find out the impacts and implications of the use of English for international communication in Japan in much broader perspectives, I interviewed Japanese bilingual professionals who use English for their daily business. Interviews were conducted on twelve Japanese bilingual professionals who use English for their daily business, searching for potential patterns or characteristics, with the aim of inducing and generating a hypothesis (or hypotheses) in the end. The interviews revealed that English is now required in various types of corporations in Japan, across many different industries, regardless of sizes of organizations, and country of origin. The Japanese companies that try to implement English as their official language policy tend to be unaware of the bilingual aspects of the language policy in practice, overly emphasizing on improving the proficiency of English.

Keywords: English as Corporate Language, Language Issues in Multinational Corporations

Background and Issues

Language barrier in international business

The language barrier is becoming a major issue in international business. There have been studies reporting intercultural communication problems between employees from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005; Harzing & Feely, 2008; Peltokorpi & Vaara, 2014) and difficulties in trust building among employees from
diverse cultural backgrounds (Jarvenpaa et al. 1999; Tenzer et al. 2013). Using English as a common corporate language is considered to be the best solution for the problem, and multinational corporations are mandating English as their official language (Rogerson-Revell 2007). Non-Anglophone companies such as Philips, Nokia, SAP in Europe, as well as Rakuten, UNIQLO, Nissan, Honda and in Japan, are reported to be using English as their corporate official or common language. (Neeley 2012)

Language issues in Business and English as a Business Lingua Franca

The language-related issues in international business were thought to be 'forgotten' when Marschan, Welch, and Welch published a paper titled 'Language: The forgotten factor in multinational management' in 1997. Since then, the language-related business issues have been analyzed from many different angles, and many interesting research papers have been published. Language in business is researched by increasing numbers of researchers in the field of international business and management as well as (socio) linguistics for last decades (e.g. Marschan-Piekkari, Welch, & Welch 1999a, b; Feely and Harzing 2003; Harzing and Feely 2008; Brannen, Pikari, & Tietze 2014, Bellak 2014, Sanden 2015).

English as a business lingua franca (BELF) is the new study field launched by Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005) examining the role of English in the global business spheres.

According to Kankaanranta (2017);

BELF is ‘the English business professionals use with speakers of different mother tongues, native speakers included, to get the job done and create rapport. Because the speakers have different mother tongues, it is important to be tolerant, listen carefully, be prepared to make questions and ask for clarifications, and of course be prepared to provide such clarifications. Negotiation is the key with this hybrid, fluid and dynamic resource, which only comes into being in particular situations: it doesn't reside in grammar books or dictionaries. (p.7)

BELF is a branch of the study field of ELF (English as a lingua franca), where English is considered as a contact language (Seidhofer 2005). The ELF researchers define ELF (English as a lingua franca) as used among ‘speakers from different first languages’, often when it is ‘the only
There are more ELF speakers than native speakers of English in the world now. The findings in the studies by the ELF researchers have provided interesting insights to the English used in the global business environments.

**Issues surrounding the use of English in non-Anglophone environments**

Using English as a common or official corporate language is not a panacea for language related issues in Business. Several adverse effects of using English as corporate common language have also been noted recently. Above all, there is an issue of status loss and gain. Studies such as Neely (2013) and Sliwa and Johansson (2014) have found a sense of loss of status and competitive advantage among non-native speakers of the dominant language within the company. They may resent the language policy, fearing that they will never be as sophisticated, as influential, or as articulate as they are in their native language.

Further, the studies found difficulties in trust building among employees from diverse cultural backgrounds (Jarvenpaa et al. 1999; Tenzer et al. 2013). Tenzer et al. (2013) systematically investigate how language problems influence trust formation in multinational teams (MNTs). On the basis of 90 interviews with team members, team leaders and senior managers in 15 MNTs in 3 German automotive corporations, the authors show how MNT members' cognitive and emotional reactions to language barriers influence their perceived trustworthiness and intention to trust, which in turn affect trust formation.

In addition, communication by small-talk and chatting may pose a challenge to non-native speakers of English, although it is very natural and no trouble for native speakers. Native speakers verbal expressions could be challenging for non-native speakers to understand (e.g., Charles & Marschan-Piekkari, 2002). Informal oral communication such as chat and small talk plays essential roles in corporate communication. The study indicated that employees communicate with each other through small talks and chats much more than formal oral communication situations such as company meetings, presentation, and teleconferencing.
Importance of English in business in Japan

Japanese companies consider the ability to communicate in English is one of the most valuable skills for their employees to possess. According to the survey conducted by The Institute for International Business Communication in 2013, 75% of 305 Tokyo Stock Exchange-listed Japanese companies that responded to the survey said they are using English in their work. 15. 8% of those companies consider the TOEIC scores as the indicators of employees' English proficiency and use or plan to use, the scores for promotion. Also, increasing numbers of Japanese companies are setting certain levels of TOEIC scores for recruiting new employees, and the required scores have risen compared to the previous survey in 2011. The expected TOEIC scores are 565 on average for new graduates, and 710 on average for mid-career hires, rising from 550 points, 600 points in the 2011 survey.

English in Japan

Japan belongs to the expanding circle of the Kachruvian three circles of English. English in Japan has the typical expanding circle characteristics as well as its uniqueness. First of all, in Japan, English has no official status, not being used for an intra-national communication, and any particular fluency is not required in it for everyday lives (Yano, 2008). Japan is an island nation located at the edge of the Asian region. The nation has the history of being isolated for thousands of years, not colonized by the western power and therefore has never been forced to use any other languages than Japanese. Japan is generally perceived as a monolingual country, despite the fact that diversity in language and ethnicity is increasing in recent years (Azuma 2010, Gottlieb 2008).

However, in recent years, English has gained the important position in Japan, functioning as the de-facto second official language (Hashimoto 2002), or can be said as the first foreign language. For example, Japanese official documents issued by the government for international use such as passport are written in both Japanese and English. Also, English is omnipresent in Japan, being used and seen in street signs, in signs of almost every storefront, and heard in pop-songs, and announcements in trains and airplanes as well as at railway stations, airports, and so on. Nevertheless, “one of the most frequently voiced opinions about English in Japan is that the high profile of, and immense interest in, the language is not matched by an equally high level of communicative proficiency among the population” (Seargeant 2009)
Purpose

There has been little empirical research conducted to find out impacts and implication of using English as a common or official language for business purposes in Japan. As a beginning of such a study, the present study aims to explore the current situations and issues surrounding the use of English for international business communication in Japan, a country in the expanding circle, in a broader perspective.

Research Questions

1. How pervasive has become the use of English in the business world in Japan? How and where is English used in the workplaces in Japan?
2. Are there any disadvantages or negative feelings Japanese employees feel about being non-native speakers of English?

Methodology and Participants

The present study is based on interviews with 12 Japanese bilingual professionals who use English for their daily business. They work in various working environments: a global consulting firm, a subsidiary of a large US company initially founded as a joint venture with a Japanese company, a major Japanese pharmaceutical company, a Japanese mid-sized law firm, the venture capital arm of a Japanese technology company, a Japanese real estate investment fund, a national medical research institute, a subsidiary of a Spanish re-insurance firm, and a Japanese e-commerce company. The levels and degrees of English use vary among the organizations.

Findings

English is now required in various types of corporations, across many different industries, regardless of the size of organization and country of origin. The case described by Participant 3 indicates that even the employees of a Japanese company where English is not used for daily business are now required to use English to provide services to their Japanese clients who have close ties to medical communities overseas. Participant 4, a lawyer, who provides legal services to Japanese corporations, must negotiate and prepare documents in English, using legal expertise he acquired in the law school in the US. Finally, it was indicated by the interview findings that as an employee progresses in his/her career path, English becomes more critical. Increasing
As for research question 2, some of the respondents working in the US firms said that they do not feel disadvantages as non-native speakers of English in their business, except for small talk: not being able to participate in the high pace of casual conversations. They fear that they may be missing out on valuable information or opportunities to build a stronger relationship with the management because they feel excluded from the “small talking” corporate insider network.

In the US companies in Japan, native-like English proficiency is often required, and the top of the operation is often either a native-speaker or a near-native speaker of English. However, from the perspective of Japanese employees, they are not necessarily equipped with high levels of expertise and knowledge of business expected for the position. There are cases where dissatisfaction and frustrations were felt in the narratives of the participants who work in such an environment. They expressed that they are not appreciated by the effort and the business performance they had achieved. They indicated the feeling that being non-native speakers of English is disadvantageous for their promotion.

**Conclusion and Further Studies**

The purpose of this study is to uncover and analyze the ways in which English is used for business purposes in Japan. Although the common perception that the society is monolingual and English is used mostly in the areas of international business, the results showed that English is now used in much broader areas in various situations of domestic and international business. The insights from the findings can be incorporated into the management of the corporations in Japan as well as reflected in the teaching of English in the business context.

However, although the study provides interesting insights as to how English is used as a common business language, it is not possible to present conclusions through generalization due to the limited data collected at this stage. The study is ongoing and has not been completed yet. Presently more data is being collected through interviews and questionnaires.
References


## Tables

Table 1: English use in business (n=30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>There are departments/divisions that use English</th>
<th>45.7%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No specific departments or divisions, but use English for conducting business</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not use English at all.</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
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</table>

Source: 国際ビジネスコミュニケーション協会 IIBC（The Institute for International Business Communication）2013年 IIBC 『上場企業における英語活用実態調査』報告書
Table 2: Participants

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participant 1</th>
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<th>Participant 3</th>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Pharmaceutical</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical</td>
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<td>3</td>
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Table 3: Findings

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<th>US Firms in Japan</th>
<th>European &amp; Asian Firms in Japan</th>
<th>Japanese Firms</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>• Native-like fluency desired.</td>
<td>• English is not required for day-to-day business</td>
<td>• TOEIC requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frustrated in small talks</td>
<td>• Mostly remote communication via E-mail &amp; Tele-conf.</td>
<td>• Non-Japanese board members require meetings in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-native speakers feel disadvantage</td>
<td>• Being non-native is not disadvantage</td>
<td>• Use English to communicate with foreign subsidiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment management firm</td>
<td>Investment fund owned by Chinese European Insurance company</td>
<td>• English is required in not only international dept but also factories because of global manufacturing network.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management Consulting Pharmaceutical</td>
<td></td>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage Pharmaceutical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law firm</td>
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</tbody>
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Extensive Reading for Increased Reading Speed and Comprehension

York Weatherford & Jodie Campbell

Kyoto Notre Dame University, Japan

Abstract

Extensive reading (ER) is an approach to language learning where learners read a lot of easy books for enjoyment and to develop a variety of language skills. ER is also a very effective way to provide learners with large amounts of comprehensible input. However, many administrators and teachers are still not convinced of its benefits, particularly in regard to reading speed and reading comprehension, mainly because there is a lack of quality research to support the claims of its benefits. This paper reports on a two-semester (30 weeks) study on the relationship between ER and student reading speed and comprehension. The participants, 19 first-year Japanese university students, took part in an extensive reading program, and their reading progress was measured by the MReader online quiz system. The subjects also completed reading rate tests at the beginning and end of the school year. The findings show that ER leads to significantly improved reading speed over the course of one academic year with a slight improvement in reading comprehension. Participants gained an average of 20 words per minute and increased comprehension by nearly 10%. Regression analysis reveals that these gains are strongly correlated with the amount of words read through ER.

Introduction

There are both pedagogical and practical reasons why teachers should aim for reading fluency improvement in the reading class; however, teachers may be surprised to hear that they should actually teach their students to read faster (Mikulecky, 1990). Firstly, improving reading rate shows that a student can understand a reading passage without reading every word, one word at a time. This is a difficult habit to break, and a lot of students cannot understand this at first. Waring (2000) calls this ‘word-by-word' reading, where word identification is slow and labored making comprehension poor and leaving learners discouraged. He argues that learners need to read things smoothly, so they can understand better. Secondly, improving reading rate allows students to complete their reading assignments quicker, thus allowing them to think about the ideas that they have learned in their reading. Most importantly, improving reading rate affects
comprehension. Research has shown that “A reader is unlikely to comprehend while reading more slowly than 200 words a minute, because a lesser rate would imply that words were being read as isolated units rather than as meaningful sentences” (Smith, 2004, p. 87). Thus, learning to read faster will result in improved comprehension. However, it is important to keep in mind that learning to read faster without comprehension is worthless (Nuttall, 2005). Thus, the main purpose of this paper is to show that there is indeed a strong correlation between ER and reading speed and a stable level of comprehension across one academic year. We also argue that increases in reading speed alongside moderately higher levels of reading comprehension will result in higher reading fluency.

Previous Research

Extensive Reading and Reading Speed Gains

Beglar and Hunt (2014), in one of the most recent studies involving ER and reading speed rate gains, argue that “extensive reading has a consistently beneficial effect on reading rate development and that this effect can occur in less than one academic year” (p. 30). Light (1970, p. 122) contends that extensive reading “would not only raise reading speeds, but importantly would reduce the negative affective consequences of slow, text-based, intensive approaches” (as cited in Bell, 2001, p. 2). It is important for any researcher interested in any correlation between ER and increased reading speed and comprehension to keep in mind that there have been many studies on the benefits of extensive reading in increasing reading comprehension ability; however, “there have been surprisingly few well-designed empirical studies which measure and report reading rate changes as an indicator of fluency development (Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012; Grabe, 2009)” (as cited in Huffman, 2014, pp. 18-19). On the other hand, as of 2017, “[t]he benefits of ER on reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing performance, and grammatical competence have been well-documented in both EFL and ESL contexts” (Keith, 2015, p.512. It is obvious that more studies involving ER and reading speed and comprehension are needed as “the relationship between reading speed and comprehension is complex, but they are certainly closely linked. A slow reader is likely to read with poor understanding” (Nuttall, 2005, p. 54). Previous research has found significant reading rate gains in words per minute (WPM) via pre-reading and post-reading tests ranging from 7 to 96 WPM, with an average of 38.6 wpm across one academic year (Robb & Susser, 1989; Lai, 1993; Lao & Krashen, 2000; Bell, 2001; Iwahori, 2008; Beglar & Hunt, 2014; Huffman, 2014; Shiki, 2011; & Keith, 2015).
A study by Beglar, Hunt, and Kite (2012) measuring the effects of extensive versus-intensive reading on reading rates found that all extensive reading groups performed better than the intensive readers. In a follow-up study, Beglar and Hunt (2014) found the greatest fluency gains from ER (which they call pleasure reading) occur when learners read 200,000 or more standard words annually (a standard word is six characters spaces including letters, punctuation, and spaces) via reading simplified texts up to a 1600-word level (approximately a Level 4 or 5 in the Oxford Bookworms Series). It should be noted that the conversion of running words to standard words in these graded readers could be estimated by reducing the number of running words by 15%. In order to assess fluency, Beglar and Hunt administered timed reading rate tests with comprehension questions. Participants had to exceed 75% correct on the comprehension questions to be included in the study. They divided their participants into groups according to the number of words they read and found that the group who had read an average of 208,607 standard words gained 32.99 WPM over the course of a year. In contrast, the group with the lowest average (162,138 standard words) only gained 4.51 WPM.

Method

Subjects

This study involved nineteen first-year university students (female; 18-19 years old) majoring in English in the Department of English Language and Literature at a private 4-year university in Japan. They had formally studied English approximately 5–6 hours per week in an EFL environment during their six years of secondary education (three in junior high school & three in high school). After conducting an in-house placement test, we concluded they were at an elementary to pre-intermediate English level. The average placement test score of the participants was approximately 59 out of 100. In addition, as of November 2017, the students’ TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) scores ranged from 305 to 630, with an average of 490.

All of the participants were enrolled in an independent-study course called Reading Lab. The requirements of this course included ER and vocabulary study. The ER component was evaluated via the MReader online quiz system (mreader.org), and the students studied vocabulary on the WordEngine website (wordengine.jp). MReader is an online database of approximately 6000 quizzes covering graded readers from major publishers. Students take timed (15 minutes) multiple-choice quizzes with 10 questions that are designed to determine
whether they had read the books. The system keeps track of the number of words students have read, and teachers have access to these word counts for assessment purposes. The required word-count goals for the participants in this study were 80,000 or 100,000 words per semester (depending on the students’ placement level).

At the end of the academic year, participants had read an average of 186,948 words (SD=25,341), with a minimum of 141,440 words and a maximum of 235,533 words. Converted to standard words, participants read an average of 158,906 standard words, which is close to the average of the bottom group in Beglar and Hunt’s (2014) study.

Research Questions

The main goal of this study is to determine whether ER has a positive effect on reading speed and comprehension over the course of an academic year. Following Keith (2015), we investigated the answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there a correlation between the amount students read extensively and their reading rates?

2. How much will the reading rates of students increase during an academic year?

3. As students read faster, will their comprehension be adversely affected by their speed?

Instrumentation

Following a procedure similar to the one described in Beglar and Hunt (2014), the students’ reading speed and comprehension were measured via a pre-test at the beginning of the academic year in April and a post-test in January at the end of the year. Each test consisted of one approximately 400-word passage selected from Reading Power 2 (4th ed.) (Mikulecky & Jeffries, 2009). This textbook is from the same series used in Beglar and Hunt’s study, and it was chosen because previous classroom experience with students of a similar level indicated that the level of the reading passages would be appropriate for the experimental subjects. In addition, the Flesch-Kincaid scores of the test passages demonstrated a suitable reading level. Furthermore, the test passages were determined to be relatively equal in difficulty according to the Flesch-Kincaid scale. The Flesch Reading Ease score is measured on a scale of 0-100, with a higher score indicating the greater readability of the text, while the Flesch-Kincaid grade level represents the first language (L1) grade level of the passage. For the pre-test passage, the Flesch Reading Ease estimate was 80.1, and the Flesch-Kincaid grade level was 4.8. The post-
test passage was only slightly more difficult with a Flesch Reading Ease score of 76.5 and a Flesch-Kincaid grade level of 5.0.

In order to familiarize the students with the test format, participants completed a practice test before both the pre-test and the post-test. The paper-based tests each comprised a double-sided sheet of A4 paper with the reading passage on the front and six multiple-choice comprehension questions on the back. This made it easy to observe whether the students attempted to look back at the reading passage while answering the questions, which they were instructed not to do.

The reading passage for the pre-test was a partial biography of the author J.K. Rowling called “School Years.” The post-test passage entitled “A Good Night’s Sleep” was about the causes of insomnia. Thus, the pre- and post-tests covered a range of topics and genres. The multiple-choice comprehension questions were taken directly from the Reading Power 2 (4th ed.) textbook. There were four options (a-d) for each of the questions. The first question on both tests was a sentence-completion task beginning with the phrase “This passage is about...” The other questions concerned specific details from the reading passage. Some questions were sentence-completion tasks beginning with stems such as, “In high school, Rowling...” Each test included one question with the form, “Which sentence is NOT true about...,” while others were direct questions like, “Who was important to Rowling in high school?”

**Procedure**

For the timed reading tests, students were gathered in a university classroom with a projector screen at the front of the room. A smartphone stopwatch was displayed on the screen through a VGA connection in order to provide optimum clarity. The test papers were distributed to the students, who were told not to begin reading until instructed by the examiner. The students were directed to look up at the screen when finished to determine their reading time, which they were instructed to note at the bottom of the page. The students then turned over the page to answer the comprehension questions, and the examiner collected the papers when all of the participants had finished answering the questions (approximately five minutes). If the examiner noticed any students attempting to look back at the passage while answering the questions during the practice session, he quietly reminded them that they should not turn over the page. No students were observed turning over the page during the actual test.
Results

For the comprehension questions, the participants correctly scored an average of 58.3% (M = 3.5, SD = 1.43) on the pre-test at the beginning of the school year and 66.7% (M = 4.0, SD = 1.5) on the post-test at the end of the year. In other words, the students’ comprehension scores increased from the beginning of the study by approximately 9%.

As for reading rate, participants averaged 105 WPM (SD=16.7) on the pre-test and 125 WPM (SD=19.3) on the post-test, for a gain of approximately 20 WPM over the course of the academic year. A simple linear regression was calculated to predict students’ WPM gain based on their MReader total. A significant regression equation was found (F(1,17) = 3.8, p < .10), with an R2 of .183. Participants’ predicted WPM is equal to -55.585+4.041 (MReader Total) words per minute when MReader total is measured in units of 10,000 words. In other words, participants’ average WPM increased 4.041 words for every 10,000 words read.

Additional regressions were performed to check for the effect of the students’ initial English proficiencies (based on the placement test) on WPM gain and the total number of words read. No significant effect for English proficiency was found (p=.273). See Table 1 for descriptive statistics.

Moreover, the reading rate gain observed after one academic year was not obtained after only one fifteen-week semester. The same pre-test results were compared with a similar post-test administered at the end of the first semester in July, and the average reading rate gain was a meager 3 WPM. Furthermore, the gain was not significantly correlated with the number of words read (F(1,24)= 0.0, p =.824).

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, correlations with confidence intervals and P-values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>P-value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WPM Gain</td>
<td>19.953</td>
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<tr>
<td>M-Reader Total/10,000</td>
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<td>2.434</td>
<td>4.041</td>
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<td>PT Score</td>
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<td>9.119</td>
<td>.693</td>
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</table>

Note: Dependent variable is WPM gain

Abbreviations: M-mean; SD-standard deviation; β-standardized coefficient; CI-confidence interval; WPM-words per minute, PT-placement test

Moreover, the reading rate gain observed after one academic year was not obtained after only one fifteen-week semester. The same pre-test results were compared with a similar post-test administered at the end of the first semester in July, and the average reading rate gain was a meager 3 WPM. Furthermore, the gain was not significantly correlated with the number of words read (F(1,24)= 0.0, p =.824).
Discussion

As the results show, participants’ reading rates increased significantly over the course of the academic year as a result of doing extensive reading. The gain of 20 WPM compares favorably with the gains observed by Belgar and Hunt (2014). Although our students did not reach the gain of 32.99 WPM achieved by Beglar and Hunt’s top group, they performed somewhat better than their lowest group with a similar number of average words read, who achieved an average gain of only 4.51 WPM. However, our study did not set a 75% threshold for comprehension of the reading passage, so the results are not precisely comparable. It is important to note, nevertheless, that the comprehension percentages did not go down, while the WPM scores went up. In addition, we believe that an increase of approximately 9% on the comprehension scores is a significant improvement for a single academic year.

Another interesting finding is an estimate of the number of WPM that can be gained for each stage of number of words read. The regression analysis suggested that learners can expect to gain approximately 4 WPM for every 10,000 words read, which is roughly equivalent to two books from Oxford Bookworms Stage 1.

In addition, the reading rate gains were achieved only after a full academic year. There was only a small and not statistically significant gain in words per minute after one 15-week semester. This demonstrates that students should be engaged in extensive reading for more than one semester in order to improve their reading speed and comprehension. However, Keith (2015) found much more dramatic WPM gains of up to 92% after only one semester. One key difference in that study involved the inclusion of weekly timed-reading practice.

Finally, learners in our study improved their reading speed with an average of 186,948 words read over the course of the school year, suggesting that word count goals of 100,000 words per semester may be sufficient to produce modest reading rate gains.

Limitations

The passages for the reading rate tests may have been slightly too difficult for this group of participants, despite efforts to employ level-appropriate texts. Nation (2005) states that students should demonstrate 70%-80% comprehension of a reading passage; otherwise, a text may be too difficult. The participants averaged 58.3% on the pre-test and 66.7% on the post-test, suggesting the passages may have been above their level. Still, reading rate tests based on
easier passages might have yielded better comprehension scores and a more accurate demonstration of reading rate gains.

In addition, the reading rate test passages of only 400 words may have been too short. Keith (2015) points out that reading speed has been shown to decrease considerably when students read longer passages and suggests that readings of around 3,000 words may yield more accurate results. However, as Keith also makes clear, such an approach may be impractical.

Lastly, the lack of a control group is a serious limitation that this study shares with others like it. Ideally, the study should include a group of participants who are not engaged in ER. However, in many educational contexts it is very difficult to arrange experimental and control groups with comparable attributes. Moreover, as strong proponents of ER, we believe that denying ER to a segment of the student population would be a move that borders on the unethical.

Conclusion

The present study adds to the growing amount of evidence that extensive reading can help students improve their reading speed and comprehension. While our results indicate that students need to practice extensive reading for at least one academic year before reading rate gains emerge, it remains to be seen how their fluency might improve over a longer period of time. Future studies are needed to determine whether students continue to develop their reading fluency through ER over the long term. Beglar and Hunt (2014) argue that studies “spanning three or more years are needed to gain an understanding of reading rate growth curves” (p. 44). We believe that further research will continue to demonstrate that ER is an important tool for improving language learners' reading speed and comprehension.
References


Implementing Teaching Intercultural Communication in Classes 
as Crucial Part of Learning in the 21st Century

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Abstract

Education is not about conveying knowledge to students, testing and evaluating students' performance only, it is equally important to teach them to be better citizens in society and live with diverse people collaboratively and peacefully. Therefore, intercultural communication (IC) comes and plays a vital role in education in enhancing students' attitudes, values and beliefs. Moreover, understanding intercultural communication is a crucial component of learning in the 21st century (Panich, 2013: 16). Consequently, teachers who are role models have to implement teaching IC in their classes in order to prepare them to be better, well-thought citizens in a society, the nation, or even the world. This paper is aiming at proposing and applying some practical activities into a classroom with steps of teaching. Some practical activities are: 1) Human Value Continuum, 2) Jigsaw Learning, 3) Personal, Cultural, Universal Activities, 4) Sunglass Analogy, 5) Barnga Game, and 6) Minute Paper.

Keywords: Intercultural communication activities, teaching intercultural communication, intercultural communication in the 21st century, cross-cultural communication in the 21st century

Introduction

Background

Learning in the 21st century comes into play in Thailand's learning management and is a talk-of-the-town issue these days. Upper Secondary Education Bureau (2016) is concerned about its importance and launched a handbook called “Guidelines for Learning Management in the 21st Century” so that teachers can use it as a manual to manage and organise their classes more effectively. There are many skills that are important to learn and implement in the 21st century classes, but there is one aspect, which is quite new for Thai teachers, and they normally don't feel familiar with this, which is Social and Cross-Cultural Skills (Upper Secondary
Education Bureau, 2016: 14). This kind of skill is necessary in terms of how to live and work with different people and environment peacefully and successfully. Therefore, to achieve this goal, ones have to realise and respect the differences of cultures. Panich (2013) supported that intercultural skills are demanding for learners as it is the way to develop their understanding, accept the differences, and recognise the nature of similarities and differences of individuals.

Intercultural Communication (IC), therefore, plays an important role in education. However, it has not been found much in the classrooms even though it is not a new phenomenon (Grein, 2007 as cited in Parra, 2016), and as it is revealed in Cushner and Mahon (2009) that there are still lacks of the intercultural education movement of the early 20th century for an international worldview, and unfortunately, in the 21st century it is still in anticipation that intercultural communication will be implemented somewhere in terms of its process and content dimensions. Cushner and Mahon (2009) concluded that “broadening teachers’ understanding and ability to think, communicate, and interact in culturally different ways and from multiple perspectives will be no easy task, especially given what we know both about culture learning as well as personal and institutional resistance to change. Nevertheless, this is an aspect of all people’s education which can no longer be ignored.”

In Thailand’s situations, intercultural communication is quite silent. It is found in some curricula for Master's or Doctoral students in some universities; however, it is hardly found in schools where the curriculum and teachers fail to take intercultural communication into consideration (Laopongharn & Sercombe, 2009). This might be because teachers themselves lack knowledge or good ways to teach intercultural communication. With these significant gaps, I realise that implementing teaching intercultural communication in a class is important as a crucial part of learning in the 21st century, as well as elevating the human-being that is inside of all students to be more concerned of other people and to live with the diverse people together peacefully and understandably. Consequently, I have gathered some practical activities that will help endorse teaching intercultural communication in a class more lively and gaining knowledge simultaneously. The intercultural communication activities provided in this article are: 1) Human Value Continuum, 2) Jigsaw Learning, 3) Personal, Cultural, Universal Activities, 4) Sunglass Analogy, 5) Barnga Game, and 6) Minute Paper.
**Objectives**

1. To examine the undergraduate English major students’ satisfaction and attitudes towards learning intercultural communication through activities.

2. To investigate the effectiveness of intercultural communication activities in building cultural competence.

**Research Questions**

1. To what extent the undergraduate English major students satisfy towards learning intercultural communication through activities?

2. How effective are these activities in building cultural competence?

**Literature Review**

**Human Value Continuum**

This activity developed by Deardorff (2000) is interesting as a lot of students can participate in the activity. Students will move in the room based on their response to statements read by the facilitator. This activity get students physically involved in thinking about their responses to value statements and generates discussion among students. This is a good way to introduce the cultural values framework (Hofstede, 1980 as cited in Deardorff, 2000). It is also a good way to gain a profile of the group.

**Process**

Explain to students that you will read a series of statements and ask them to move to the appropriate side of the room based on how they feel about the statement. Example: “Life is what happens to me. If you resonate with this statement, please move to the left side of the room. Life is what I make it. If you resonate more with this statement, please move to the right side of the room. You may also find yourself somewhere in between.” Once persons have moved to their positions, ask them to discuss their thoughts on these statements with their neighbour. Debrief briefly as a group and then continue with the next pair of statements. Generally, 4-5 pairs of statements are adequate.
**Material**

A set of cultural value statements

**Cautions**

Be sensitive to participants who may not be physically able to move about the room.

**Examples of Continuum Statements**

- Life is what happen to me. Life is what I make it.
- Competition brings out the best. Cooperation is the way to get things done.
- Change is good. Stick with tradition.
- People should “tell it like it is” even if it means not telling the complete truth.
- Group membership is (not) essential for my success.

**Jigsaw Learning**

Thinking of tons of knowledge in a particular topic that students are supposed to read is so horrible that how students individually read everything by their own. This activity helps students learn as a team more successfully and be responsible for just a piece of a particular topic to read by researching basic information about that topic (Moeller & Nugent, 2014) and share their knowledge with their friend. The principle of this activity is that reducing work and time, gaining more knowledge, practising communicative skill, and collaborative sharing information with the others.

**Process**

Teacher prepares the handout for students first. It is suggested that each handout should be the same topic but different sets of information. Then, divide students into groups (the number of groups is the number of handouts). The teacher passes on the handouts to each group, and each group has 10-15 minutes to read (individually) and make understanding about the information they receive. Then, the group starts talking and discussing to the information they have in order to make sure that each has the same understanding. After that, the teacher asks students to choose the leader of the group. When getting the leader of each group, the
leader will sit (not move to any group) in their group, and the teacher tells the other members of the group to move to another group (any group). When they arrive the other group, the leader of each group will have 5-10 minutes to wrap up the information that they have already digested with the group member to the newcomers. In vice versa, the newcomers can also present their information to the leader of that group and question to the leader when they are not clear. After 5-10 minutes, the teacher asks the students to change the group. (The activity will rotate like this until they all gain the information from every group. Finally, in the debriefing activity the teacher questions on what the topic of the handouts is about, what it is going on, etc.

**Material**

Handouts prepared by the teacher and the lists of questions

**Examples of Discussing Statements after the Activity**

- What information or story have you heard from your friend?
- Has anyone heard something different from the others?
- What is the story about?
- Why is this story important?
- What have you learnt from the activity?

**Personal, Cultural, Universal**

This game helps students to know them and other people in terms of personal, cultural, and universal issues and differences. They will use a lot of critical thinking to analyse their ideas towards the issues or differences. It aims to establish an open and active group norm for discussing difference, to familiarise students at ethnocentric stages of intercultural development (denial – minimising) with cultural difference, to introduce participants to the reality that personal behaviours/values vary within a cultural group, to demonstrate and gently challenge assumed universality of culturally founded behaviours, and to highlight culturally based differences in a group of diverse people. (Robin Craggs (n.d.) as cited in Storti, 1990)

**Process**

Gather the group around the mysterious pattern taped on the floor. Then each of us may be like everybody else in some ways (universal human truth), like the people in our culture in some ways (cultural patterning), and like no one else all in still other ways (personal choice).
After that, the teacher will read different statements. When students hear the item, they need to decide whether it is a matter of personal choice, cultural patterning, or universal human truth, and so and stand in the section of the room indicating their opinion. Be prepared to explain why they have chosen that section.

**Materials**

Three papers that contain the word “Personal” for one paper, “Cultural” for one paper, and “Universal” for the last paper.

**Examples of Discussing Statements**

- Running from a dangerous animal
- Always smile without reason
- Eating regularly
- Speaking French
- Men opening doors for women
- Considering snakes to be “evil”

**Sunglass Analogy**

Sunglass Analogy developed by Berardo and Deardorff (2012) is interesting as it helps students explore their own cultural self-awareness while getting to know each other better. Students will be asked a lot of questions about themselves and others to examine their attitudes in terms of identities and cultural self-awareness. After playing this activity, students will increase their cultural self-awareness, reflect on their own culturally conditioned identities, and get to know each other better.

**Process**

Students write their name in large letters in the middle of the sheet. Then tell the students to answer the questions: Who are you? They have to write their answer around their name and make sure that those answers are their identities. Then, once they have written their name and identities, ask them to stand up, and holding their paper in front of them so others can read it, walk around the room and read the papers of the others. They should feel free to discuss with each other what they see on others’ identity papers. For example, if someone wrote “athlete,” then the other person could ask, “What sport do you play?” Encourage participants to try to see as many other participants’ papers as possible, so caution them about spending too
long talking with any one person. After about 15 minutes (depending on group size), begin to bring the group back together for the debriefing.

**Material**

A sheet of blank paper per person is given to student with a marker.

**Examples of Debriefing the Activity**

- How did it feel to define yourself in this way?
- How many of you wrote down family roles? Hobbies? Job titles?
- What other patterns did you notice? Any surprises?
- How many identities are readily visible without the identity paper?
- How well do these identities say who you are? What is it like to try to capture your identities in words and phrases?
- Which parts of the activity were more challenging and why?

**Barnga Game**

In Barnga, students experience the shock of realising that despite many similarities, people of differing cultures perceive things differently or play by different rules. Students learn that they must understand and reconcile these differences if they want to function effectively in a cross-cultural group. Students play a simple card game in small groups, where conflicts begin to occur as students move from group to group. This simulates real cross-cultural encounters, where people initially believe they share the same understanding of the basic rules. In discovering that the rules are different, players undergo a mini culture shock similar to actual experience when entering a different culture. They then must struggle to understand and reconcile these differences to play the game effectively in their "cross-cultural" groups. Difficulties are magnified by the fact that players may not speak to each other but can communicate only through gestures or pictures. Students are not forewarned that each is playing by different rules; in struggling to understand why other players don’t seem to be playing correctly, they gain insight into the dynamics of cross-cultural encounters. (Ruscoe, 2014)
**Process**

Set up (approximately) 6 tables (about 4 people per table), depending on the number of people participating. On each table there should be a copy of the rules for that table per player plus a deck of cards (use only A-7, no other cards). To start, let the participants play a few rounds with the rules and with talking allowed. Next, EVERYTHING is removed from the playing tables. Play continues with everyone at his own table. From now, talking is prohibited. Winners will receive one Popsicle stick (see below for how to win). After allowing a few rounds without talking at the home table, participants must switch tables—the person who won the most tricks moves clockwise to the next table, the person who loses the most tricks moves counter-clockwise to the next table. What the players do not know is that each table has learned a different set of rules depending on the number of players; rule sheets can be altered or discarded for the number of tables being used. Each table shares the following rules:

- Players are dealt 5 cards each
- Whoever wins the most tricks will move clockwise to the next table
- Whoever loses the most tricks will move counter clockwise to the next table
- Everyone else stays at the same table
- Ties are resolved by paper rock scissors
- Each round will be about 5 minutes long (longer if time allows (and each round will consist any number of games that the time allows).
- After the initial round, players will not be allowed to see the rules or speak to each other. Gestures and pictures are allowed, but players are not allowed to use words.
- The game “winner” will be the person who has won the most tricks in total. Of course, once game play starts, winning will likely take a back seat to trying to figure out what everyone else is doing, as they are playing by different rules.
- Players can keep track of scores with popsicle sticks (one stick per trick won).
- The dealer can be anyone at the table, the person who plays first will be to the right of the dealer.
- The first player for each trick may play ANY suit. All other players must follow suit (play a card of the same suit). (For each round, each player plays one card.
- If a player does not have that suit, a card of any suit must be played. The trick is won by the person with the HIGHEST card of the ORIGINAL suit. Players will begin to become confused when some players believe their card is trump, and others disagree or contradict this.
After playing a number of rounds—either use a set time limit, or allow the number of rotations according to the number of tables in play (6 rounds for 6 tables). Students should be aware that they were playing by different rules, and the following questions should be discussed. Students can stay in the last group they were in, or return to their home groups at the teacher’s discretion. Then, the teacher asks some questions about the attitudes about the game.

**Material**

A sheet of blank paper for everyone  
Five tricks

**Examples of Questions to be asked**

- If you could describe the game in one word, what would it be?  
- What did you expect at the beginning of the game?  
- When did you realize that something was wrong?  
- How did you deal with it?  
- How did not being able to speak contribute to what you were feeling?

**Minute Paper**

The Minute Paper is a very commonly used classroom assessment technique. It really does take about a minute and, while usually used at the end of class, it can be used at the end of any topic discussion. Its major advantage is that it provides rapid feedback on whether the professor's main idea and what the students perceived as the main idea are the same. Additionally, by asking students to add a question at the end, this assessment becomes an integrative task. Students must first organize their thinking to rank the major points and then decide upon a significant question. Sometimes, instead of asking for the main point, a professor may wish to probe for the most disturbing or most surprising item. It is thus a very adaptable tool. (Angelo & Cross, 1993)

**Process**

The Minute Paper is usually used at the end of each topic or lesson learnt in each class, therefore, when it is about to finish the class, the teacher will give a piece of paper to all students
to write what they have learnt on the day, and what else they want to know more, what else that think that they are still doubted. The students are supposed to write these issues down.

**Material**

A sheet of blank paper for everyone

**Examples of Question Statements Containing in the paper**

- What are the two most significant things you have learnt during this session?
- What question(s) remain uppermost in your mind?
- Is there anything you did not understand?

**Methodology**

**Instruments**

This study was carried out with the fourth-year English major students who enrolled the course entitled “English and International Cultures for Language Teachers” at Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University in 2016. A mixed method was employed to the study with a questionnaire to explore the students’ satisfaction and attitudes towards learning intercultural communication through activities. In addition to the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview was also used to collect qualitative data by asking 10 volunteers from 5 male students and 5 female students to ask in detail about their feelings and experiences to investigate the effectiveness of intercultural communication activities in building cultural competence. The semi-structured interview stage was occurred immediately after the end of the semester so that students still felt in touch with the activities.

**Data Analysis**

The research of the study was mixed method with quantitative data from questionnaire and qualitative data from semi-structured interview. Therefore, there were two research instruments: questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The questions in the questionnaire aimed to explore the students’ satisfaction and attitudes towards learning intercultural communication through activities. The data gained from the questionnaire was analysed with SPSS to figure out the frequency, mean, and standard deviation. For the semi-structured
interview, it was created to investigate the students’ feelings and experiences to investigate the effectiveness of intercultural communication activities in building cultural competence. Each student was interviewed for about 5 – 10 minutes about the activities and the effectiveness of the activities in building intercultural communication competence. The semi-structured interview stage was conducted immediately after the end of the semester so that students still felt in touch with the activities. The qualitative method was used to analyse the data obtained from the interview.

**Research Procedure**

The study was investigated throughout three classes, and each class contained two activities except class 3 there was only one activity, i.e. 1) Human Value Continuum and Sunglasses Analogy activities 2) Jigsaw Learning and Personal, Cultural, Universal activities, and 3) Barnga Game and Minute Paper activities. The students together with the researcher did all the activities. The researcher acted as a facilitator and guided for each activity. After ending of each class, students had to do one activity, Minute Paper, to write down their opinions, reflect their thought, or question the topic they had learnt right away. After doing all the activities or at the end of class 3, students completed the questionnaire immediately, and the 10 volunteer students were selected with simple sampling method to take part in the semi-structured interview. The research procedures were as follows:

![Figure 1: Research Procedure](image_url)
This study, Implementing Teaching Intercultural Communication in Classes as Crucial Part of Learning in the 21st Century, examines the undergraduate English major students’ satisfaction and attitudes towards learning intercultural communication through activities and investigates the effectiveness of intercultural communication activities in building cultural competence. The results answer the following questions:

**Question 1:** To what extent the undergraduate English major students satisfy towards learning intercultural communication through activities?

In order to answer this question, the questionnaire was used to collect the data and analyse with SPSS. There are three parts in the questionnaire, and the results reveal as follows:

Part 1: Demographic information

The data were gathered from the undergraduate English major students who enrolled the course entitled “English and International Cultures for Language Teachers” at Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University in 2016. There were in total 82 students comprised of 18 male students and 64 female students (21.95% and 78.05% respectively).

Part 2: The opinions and satisfactions towards learning intercultural communication through activities

The findings point out that the students were satisfied with the activities as shown in the table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Satisfaction Activities</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Human Value Continuum</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>highly satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sunglasses Analogy</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.634</td>
<td>satisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jigsaw Learning</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>satisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Personal, Cultural, Universal.</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>.612</td>
<td>satisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Barnga Game</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>.679</td>
<td>satisfied</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Minute Paper</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.701</td>
<td>satisfied</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall satisfaction</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.44</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.641</strong></td>
<td><strong>satisfied</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Questionnaire results of items evaluated by teachers (N = 82)
From Table 1, the results reveal that the teachers’ overall satisfaction is satisfied ($X = 4.44$). When considering each activity, it found that most students are highly satisfied towards the Human Value Continuum activity ($X = 4.56$), whereas the least satisfied activity is Minute Paper ($X = 4.32$).

Part 3: Suggestions

From the synthesis of the questionnaire data, it was suggested that all the activities could help students learn more happily and fun. Simultaneously, they have learnt some points of view in cultural awareness because of their differences in individuals. They also recommended that teachers should provide opportunity for all students to join the activities because for some activities the teacher asked only some volunteers to join the game. However, they said that they understood because of the time-constraint.

**Question 2:** How effective are these activities in building cultural competence?

The research question number 2 makes use of the semi-structured interview to gather the key information from 10 volunteer students, and the results revealed that male students seemed to like to do the activities rather than the female did. One of the female students claimed that some activities, like Barnga Game were hard for her since she cannot communicate non-verbally with their friends in her group. In fact, she felt uncomfortable about no talking in communication. When questioning about what their favourite activity is (they have to choose only one), nine out of ten replied “Human Value Continuum”, and their reasons are quite similar in terms of collaboration with their friends, critical thinking skills, and freedom to choose where they should be in the continuum. The game also allowed them to talk and discuss with their friends about the statements that the teacher said. In contrast, the other one thought that their favourite activity is Personal, Cultural, Universal game which led him to think so much about the statements because he thought that some phrases or statements can be existed in two or three areas. However, eventually he found that this game gave him a big lesson that he must be aware of doing or speaking something as his words may be important for a person’s mind, he also found that there were many things involving each other that we cannot separate them. The research also continued asking about whether they agree or disagreed that most of them did not like Minute Paper (from the result in Table 1). All of them said that they had no problem about this activity. However, they assumed that the two main reasons why most of their friends did like the Minute Paper activity was 1) it is quite immediate for them to
summarise, evaluate, or ask questions about the topic and activities they had learnt in only five minutes, and 2) their friends’ English proficiency in writing skills was in the low level and they couldn’t think of the vocabulary at once. There was one interesting answer that was not from the list of questions about their perspectives towards learning cultures. All of them said that at the earlier of the class they thought that this course was very boring because it is about culture; they knew everything and they didn’t want to know more, but just after these three classes they felt that they understood and realised more about culture and the intercultural difference. In fact, they had learnt something that it was not the same as what they had learnt in the past.

**Conclusion, Limitation and Recommendation**

The study on Implementing Teaching Intercultural Communication in Classes as Crucial Part of Learning in the 21st Century aimed to examine the undergraduate English major students’ satisfaction and attitudes towards learning intercultural communication through activities and investigate the effectiveness of intercultural communication activities in building cultural competence. The study was conducted with 82 students who enrolled the course entitled “English and International Cultures for Language Teachers” at Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University in 2016. The instruments were the questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The results showed that the students’ overall satisfaction towards learning with activities was satisfied. They, also, agreed that the ICC activities could help increase awareness and understanding of similarities and differences of people. Limitation of the study is about the content and knowledge of each activity was from the other researchers without adaptation. Therefore, it sometimes found that some contents were not suitable for Thai context. As a teacher and researcher of the study, it is strongly recommended for further research that the formal pre-test and post-test should be put into the process of the research to investigate their progress of learning in this course, and the duration of time should be expended for one activity one class so that all students can participate in the activities. In addition to testing, the minute papers, which collected from the students after finishing each class, were not used to be analysed what the students summarised what they had experienced and reflected what they had done. For further research, the minute paper activity which I consider it as a voice from a student should be analysed as part of research in order to examine a holistic view of learning, language, culture and activity they will have experienced.
References


The Flipped EFL Classroom: A Teaching Approach for the Information Age

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Abstract

The Information Age has created the need for a new approach to education. One possible approach that makes use of technology and encourages active learning is the flipped classroom, in which instructional content is assigned as online homework freeing class time for guided group activities. This paper examines what it means to flip a class; considers the advantages and disadvantages; and discusses its use in teaching English as a foreign language. It provides several suggested activities for teachers and concludes by noting flipped learning’s potential in aiding in the transition to an education model that is more fitting for the 21st century.

Keywords: flipped learning, flipped classroom, technology, active learning

Introduction

With the emergence of the Industrial Revolution in the latter half of the 18th century arose the need for a new way of teaching. The Industrial Age model of education was designed to produce people who could keep the factories and expanding bureaucratic system running smoothly (Mitra, 2013). It was typified by traditional disciplinary knowledge and the sorting of people according to their vocation in a mass-produced, standardized manner (Gilbert, 2007; NZCER, n.d.). Owing to the rapid advances in computer technology in the 20th and 21st centuries, the industrialized world has now entered a new era variously referred to as the Digital Age, the Computer Age, the Knowledge Age, or the Information Age. Each label would seem to have a slightly different nuance, but for the sake of continuity, this new age will hereafter be referred to as the Information Age with the understanding that it is being used synonymously with the other labels.

Whatever one calls the present era, the shift in the economy that it represents has once again brought the need for a new approach to education in order to prepare the younger generation for the challenges and careers their future will bring (NZCER, n.d.). Where the Industrial Age emphasized the learning of facts, the Information Age requires the knowledge
of how to apply information and to create new information. Moreover, where knowledge in the Industrial Age was comparatively static, it is ever-changing in the Information Age. Today’s students, who are the workers of tomorrow, need to learn to think for themselves so that they can understand what needs to be done on their own.

Gilbert (2007) of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research argued that despite advances in ICTs (information and communication technologies), schools today are still following the Industrial Age education model. She said that ICTs have not yet revolutionized teaching, but instead are mostly being used to carry out “digital busywork” (Gilbert, 2007). To move education into the Information Age, ICTs need to be used differently. Currently they are largely used to search (e.g. Google) and present (e.g. PowerPoint) old forms of knowledge. Education in this new era requires: real research; multiliteracy; an understanding of the relationships and connections between disciplines; greater diversity; and understanding that knowledge is a process and not a product. Schools need to become producers and not just consumers of knowledge; provide students with research tools; and allow students to play and learn with multimedia (Gilbert, 2007).

Discussion

What is the flipped classroom?

The question then is what sort of approach or methods could help bring the education system into the 21st century? One possible approach is the flipped classroom. Roehl, Reddy and Shannon (2013, p. 44) explained that flipping a class means using “easy-to-use, readily accessible technology in order to free class time from lecture.” Teachers typically assign the instructional content as an online video to be viewed as homework. Students then come to class prepared to participate in interactive activities under the teacher’s guidance. As Herreid and Schiller (2013) noted, the “guiding principle of the flipped classroom is that work typically done as homework…is better undertaken in class with the guidance of the instructor” and conversely, the content typically presented in class, is better consumed by the student outside of class before interaction with the instructor and peers.

As Herreid and Schiller (2013) pointed out, in some ways, the concept of the flipped classroom is not new; Teachers have long been able to assign reading, writing, or research tasks to be done in preparation for in-class discussions. However, what is new is the increased
viability of the approach in the present century owing to the plethora of Internet resources available and students’ expectations about how technology and class time ought to be used.

**Advantages of the flipped classroom**

Fulton (as cited in Herreid & Schiller, 2013) listed the many advantages of the flipped classroom both for the teachers and the students:

- It allows students to move at their own pace.
- It gives teachers better insight into students’ abilities.
- It is easier for the teacher to customize and update the curriculum.
- It allows for a more effective use of classroom time.
- It increases levels of student interest and achievement.
- It supports new approaches to teaching.
- Its use of technology is appropriate to the 21st century.
- There is more time to spend with the students on research.
- It encourages more active involvement in class.
- It is good for students who miss class.
- It promotes thinking outside of class.
- Many students like it.

Roehl, Reddy, and Shannon (2013) noted several other benefits:

- The students are “free to interact with the material according to their own learning-style.”
- There is greater in-class interaction between the teacher and student and between the students themselves than normally possible in a lecture-based class.
- Absent students are able to follow along with the content of the course.
- The teacher gets and quicker sense of student comprehension of the material than in a lecture class, which depends on summative assessment in the form of tests.

In addition, research indicates that students benefit more from active-learning environments than traditional lectures at the university level. For example, Paul (2015) noted a study by researchers at Yale University and the University of Amherst that compared the
results from two physical chemistry classes, one a traditional lecture-style class and the other a flipped class. The result was that the flipped class scored 12% higher on the course exam (Paul, 2015).

**Disadvantages of the flipped classroom**

There are several drawbacks or points of caution in adopting a flipped classroom. There is:

- the potential for misuse or misapplication by the teacher;
- the need to ensure students understand the approach and complete the pre-class assignments;
- uncertainty about the impact of increased screen time on students; and
- limited research on the pedagogical impact.

Perhaps the biggest danger is the potential for misapplication. There are examples of teachers moving the content of their courses online and then not utilizing the open class time. For instance, Parry (2012) recounted how an undergraduate student at Stanford University had criticized a computer science class he was attending, that was advertised as a flipped class. Among other aspects, the student, Ben Rudolph, disliked: the lack of challenge; the substitution of real lectures with videos; and the feeling of isolation and reduced opportunities to interact with other students while learning the new material (Parry, 2012). The course professor, Andrew Y. Ng, defended the structure of the class explaining that most students preferred to watch lectures online at home than attend live lectures in the classroom (Parry, 2012). While Ng may have a point, by merely moving his lectures from the classroom onto the Internet without filling the classroom space with any interactive follow-up activities, he had not truly flipped his class. Instead, the situation at Stanford would better be described as a weak form of online learning.

Another point related to the proper application of the flipped classroom approach is the importance of selecting high quality online materials. This means that the online resources (e.g. videos) that the teacher assigns as homework must be level appropriate, so that the student can comprehend them without assistance; and they must be engaging and of an appropriate length, so that the student will be motivated to complete the necessary preparatory work. As Professor Charles Pascal from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education noted, there is no benefit in simply filming traditional lectures for online consumption as this provides no extra value to the
student (Dechamps, 2015). Indeed, requiring students to watch videos of an hour or more would likely be counterproductive, as few students would likely complete such a task on regular basis.

Paterson (2014) wrote that ensuring that students actually do the homework is another key element for a successful flipped class. In addition to assigning engaging materials, as a teacher, he checks that students have done the work by asking comprehension questions at the beginning of each class. When comprehension issues arise he then attends to individuals or the class as a whole as need be.

Lyddon (2015) cautioned that, despite the increased attention flipped learning has received in recent years, there have been few empirical studies completed on its effectiveness and most reports have been anecdotal in nature. Donnelly (2015) also raised the question of whether the high use of technology in Australian classrooms is having the desired effect. He cited an Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2015) report, Students, Computers and Learning: Making the Connection, which concluded: "Countries that have invested heavily in information and communication technologies (ICT) for education have seen no noticeable improvement in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results for reading, mathematics or science." The OECD (2015) report also suggested that overexposure to ICTs can lead to: information overload, difficulties with concentration, lower self-esteem, and the potential for online bullying.

Furthermore, there are some indications that educators should be concerned about the effects of increased screen time on students. Kelland (2015) reported that a study by Cambridge University of 800 students in the UK, aged 14 and 15 years, found that those who spent an extra hour of screen time (i.e. watching TV, playing computer games, Internet surfing) scored two grades lower on exams than peers. The study also found that, unsurprisingly, those students who did one hour extra of homework performed better (Kelland, 2015). This raises the question of whether the positive effects of doing extra homework on a digital device outweigh the negative effectives of increased screen time.

Students largely seem to embrace the flipped classroom (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Herreid & Schiller, 2013), but it is still important to remember that not all will perceive the approach the same way. As Spino and Trego (2015) rightly pointed out, flipping the order of the activities also flips the responsibility for learning the content onto the students. In a flipped classroom, information is not seen as flowing directly from a lecturer but is openly available
for students to acquire. This shift can be difficult for some students, and some teachers, to adjust to.

Donna Green, a Canadian high school teacher spoke about her experience with the flipped classroom with Toronto Star reporter Deschamps (2015); Green said that her students were “excited” about using the flipped classroom model because they did not have to sit through lectures but could do what would normally be their homework in class instead (Deschamps, 2015). Green noted that by the end of a semester most students said they liked the approach, but still about one-third said they preferred the traditional classroom; As a result, she now employs a mixed-methods approach (Deschamps, 2015).

The flipped TEFL classroom in higher education

Flipped learning is commonly associated with science and mathematics classes (Spino & Trego, 2015), however, it also has applications in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), as it provides language learners with greater opportunities to use the target language in the presence of the instructor. Furthermore, the flipped classroom supports active learning, which is beneficial at the university level. As Roehl, Reddy, and Shannon (2013, p. 44) argued, active learning strategies are necessary because the Millennial Generation (born between 1982 and 2002), who have grown up surrounded by computer technology, "demonstrate(s) decreased tolerance for lecture-style dissemination of course information."

This is not to say that simply introducing computer technology into a course solves everything. Hockly (2011) pointed out that while the younger generation has grown up with technology and may be comfortable with it, one cannot simply assume that they are effective users of it. Despite the younger generation being so-called "digital natives" and many teachers being "digital immigrants", there is still a role for teachers: "New technologies give rise to a host of new digital literacies, which educators need to help their learners develop" (Hockly, 2011, p. 324).

Brabazon (2006) echoed this by arguing that students require instruction in how to evaluate the information that they acquire with the new technology, specifically from the Internet. She discussed how the open contribution model of the Internet, particularly sites such as Wikipedia, where anyone can contribute or edit, has led to an increase in the volume of mediocre and banal information and to the erosion of quality, peer-reviewed information (Brabazon, 2006). She also criticized search engines such as Google because they provide
search results not based on the quality of the information or credentials of the author but on the basis of popularity (Brabazon, 2006). She noted the search results may appear objective to students but actually place opinion-filled blogs, which are designed to attract hits, on a higher level than carefully researched and written peer-reviewed work (Brabazon, 2006). For the most part though, the Internet, including Google, has been a great boon to education. Because information is easier to access, the teacher is freed from concentrating on the Industrial Age goal of helping students accumulate facts.

**Suggestions for EFL teachers**

For many EFL teachers who use communicative language teaching (CLT) methods, the classroom is already student-centred and focused on activities rather than lectures (Stannard, 2015). In this scenario, the key questions for the EFL classroom become:

- How do we best prepare students for activities best done in class?
- What tasks can students perform independently outside of class?
- How can technology help with the above two questions?

Below are a variety of suggested activities for students to complete prior to class, to ensure that they come to class already engaged. Students can:

- watch videos created by or sourced by the teacher from existing media (e.g. news reports, movies, YouTube videos, TEDTalks) for information related to language, basic skills, or other content.
- practice pronunciation using websites such as English Central (https://www.englishcentral.com) or Sounds of Speech (http://soundsofspeech.uiowa.edu/index.html#english).
- read online reading materials such as news stories or graded readers (http://english-e-books.net).
- write online journals or media blogs (using Blogger, WordPress) to discuss or present in class.
- strengthen listening skills by using online audio or videos and questions uploaded to a learning management system (LMS) such as Google Classroom or Moodle.
- discuss online discussion questions set by the teacher, using an LMS, closed social networking service (SNS) groups, or web applications, such as Padlet (https://padlet.com/).
• research information on topics set by the teacher to be shared or presented online or in class.
• make presentations for peers by recording videos, recording audio to PowerPoint, or using a web application such as VoiceThread (https://voicethread.com/).
• make and share quiz questions on sites such as Google Docs, Google Classroom, or Padlet. The teacher can select the best questions from students’ contributions for use in online or in-class quizzes.
• pre-view key learning points from the teacher before class in PowerPoint or Google Slides.
• review grammar and vocabulary using a textbook publishers’ LMS, Moodle, PowerPoint, Google Slides, Google Forms, or Google Classroom.
• conduct peer review by providing constructive comments on classmates’ work. Useful sites include VoiceThread, Padlet, and Google Docs.

Conclusion

The Internet has made information easier to access and has begun to transform the economy. A full transformation has not yet occurred in education, but with the increasing normalization of ICTs, this is more and more likely to occur. There is tremendous potential in using technology in the service of education and the flipped classroom is one approach that allows for a balance between technology and human interaction.

What is needed for the 21st century classroom is not the use of technology for the sake of using technology (Bergman & Sams, 2012). Rather, students need to be given the chance to develop the ability to handle information with a full range of cognitive processes across different dimensions of knowledge (Here, n.d.). A shift from the one-size-fits-all, passive lecture model of the Industrial Age, to a more customized, active workshop-style of class that flipped learning supports is a step in this direction. As discussed in this paper, there are both benefits and drawbacks to the flipped learning approach and further research looking at its efficacy is still necessary. However, for the modern EFL teacher and student, flipped learning represents an opportunity to utilize a growing range of supportive online learning tools; give more control to the students over their language learning experience; extend language learning beyond the classroom; and make better use of their limited in-class time together.
References


The Pedagogical Mantra of the 21st Century Teachers

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Abstract

This academic article studies the students’ problems and solutions in teaching English as a Global Language (EGL) for high-school teachers. Geringer (2003) and Songsiengchai (2001) attest that teachers play a crucial factor in the learning progress of the students. Hence, this article presents the notions for EGL high school teachers to foster the students’ competence in learning English and improving the way English is taught using the “I L-O-V-E E-N-G-L-I-S-H” Mantra. I is Intrapersonal teachers, L for Limited C for Control in the classroom, O for Observation and feedback to students, V for Varieties of technique usage, E for E-literacy usage, another E for Encyclopedic teachers, N for Negotiation for supporting and giving solution to the students, G for Gear up students with positive motivation, L for Liveliness of teachers, I for Interpersonal teachers, S for Self-regulation teachers, and H for Harmony teachers.

Keywords: 21st Century teacher’s roles, Student competence, “I LOVE ENGLISH” Mantra

Introduction

The education system in Thailand has failed to equip its students with important skills for the 21st century job market such as critical thinking, problem-solving and foreign language proficiency due to its educational culture (Mala, 2017). Therefore, the 21st century competency in English as a global language focuses on preparing students to acquire necessary skills in learning such as collaboration and teamwork, creativity and imagination, critical thinking, problem solving, social responsibility and ethics, and technology literacy (Envision, 2017). The students are motivated by solving real-world problems expressing their preference for doing rather than just passively listening. In fact, many educators consider learning-by-doing the most effective way of learning in 21st century (Lombardi, 2007). This leads high-school teachers to something that they must zero in, who is the most important person to motivate the students in the real world problem solving in a formal teaching context? It is a very important
question that needs to be answered as things are being planned and implemented in order to
cultivate the competency among the students in the 21st century. Clarke (2014) also figured
out that teachers are strongly motivated to change when they believe that the changes they
perceive will directly benefit the students in the classroom specially when positive
reinforcement is being given to them by the leadership. Needless to say, the teacher provides
influential factors in the learning process of the students like the teachers’ personality, the
manner by which they handle the students, the way they respond to the seemingly never ending
arising needs of the student which reflects their creativity and resourcefulness, and of course
to top it all, their teaching skills. In fact, it has been said in one write up that teachers are the
builders of the nation and that a teacher has a crucial role in communicating knowledge in
specific subjects and help students grow more, develop suitable attitudes and unfold their
personality (Ramana, 2013). Because of this timeless truth, the need to prepare the students to
face the ever growing challenges the 21st century offers particularly when it comes to acquiring
necessary skills to learn from the classroom to the outside real-world is becoming weightier
knowing that our world in all facets of professional endeavors is becoming more competitive
in nature as the days go by. “I L-O-V-E-N-G-L-I-S-H” Mantra positively envisions a learning
environment wherein the high-school teachers and their students work hand-in-hand in
fostering creative relevant means to learn English in the most possible effective way. This
educational mantra also encompasses a holistic approach in learning which intentionally builds
a solid form of camaraderie and solidarity between the high-school teachers and their students
addressing not just the need to acquire skills in learning English language but likewise other
essential areas that shape the dynamics of teaching and learning which results to quality
creative educational process like this mantra that I am confidently proposing:

(1) Intrapersonal teaching,
(2) Limited Control in the classroom,
(3) Observation and feedback to students,
(4) Varieties of technique usage,
(5) E-literacy usage,
(6) Encyclopedic teaching,
(7) Negotiation for supporting and giving solution to the students,
(8) Gearing up students with positive motivation,
(9) Liveliness of teacher,
(10) Interpersonal teaching,
(11) Self-regulation teachers,

(12) Harmony teachers

Let me expound each of these to provide the high-school teachers a vivid understanding of what this “I-L-O-V-E-N-E-G-L-I-S-H” mantra means and what it can offer to our language education journey.

**Intrapersonal teacher** – Obviously, learning goes beyond the borders of intellectual exercise. In fact, true learning includes the realm of emotion for it to stick to the head of the students and be able to put it into action with passion and confidence. Traditionally, knowledge is seen as something that only operates in the realm of our cognizance; something that only takes place within the boundary of the mind. However, knowledge cannot stay in our minds without it reaching the very core of our heart. The heart plays a very important role as to how one’s understanding in being believed and practiced. In fact, one cannot be as passionate as possible about what he knows without him valuing it with all his heart. Having said this, it is so obvious that the Teacher’s emotion or personality is a very important factor in learning particularly learning a language such as English. In English Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Richards (2006) summarized in one of his six principles that teacher should be tolerant of students’ errors and shortcomings understanding that students are still on the process of building up their communicative competence. When a teacher showcases this kind of patience, it results to students having positive attitude and responses in learning English building their good attitudes, self—confidence realizing that their teacher will patiently guide them whenever the communication breaks down. Positive emotion and welcoming aura of teacher’s personality affect the way the students respond to all the challenges of learning a new language. It is hard to establish a learning environment if students are threatened by their own teacher. High-school teachers should provide an encouraging atmosphere in teaching by being caring most specially in times when students find it hard to understand and exhibit the proficiency expected of them. Ferguson, Philips, Rowley, & Friedlander (2015) together with the colleagues in their book introduced personal support they called “Care” that fosters emotional safety for the students. They said caring teachers are approachable, empathetic, and genuinely interested in the well being for their students. What they do is offering listening ears to their student’s concerns, providing the emotional support students need to face the challenges they find so stressful. By doing so, students will be inclined to feel safe and think that “My teacher seems to know if something is bothering me,” and “My teacher in this class makes me feel that s/he really cares about me. All of these cannot be provided by a teacher who is also emotionally weak. As the
saying goes, you cannot give what you do not have. So it is an utmost need for teachers to
develop this intrapersonal skill where they themselves are responsible enough to self-evaluate
or self-examine toward their students and as to how emotionally healthy they are in dealing
with their students and their needs. This is such a crucial thing to do knowing that their emotion
affects the way they teach and the way they communicate themselves to their students. The
teacher’s emotional tank plays a very essential part as to how students develop the value to
learn and respond to the challenges with positive outlook.

Menten (2015) reported that students’ competency in 21st century is shaped by having good
attitudes and self - confident that influence including having a matured mindset in learning
English successfully. No doubt, emotion plays a very consequential factor in the learning
process. It can encourage or discourage the students to learn to depend on how positive the
outlook of the teacher is and how s/he responds to the challenges students unwittingly present
along the learning process. The teacher should be able to handle his or her emotion whenever
students seem to be slow or intellectually weak in learning what is needed to be learned. I
would even humbly argue that at times the issue in poor ability of the students to learn lies not
upon the content of what is being taught but on the way the teacher relays the lesson to the
students which takes root from the kind of emotional baggage that stands between teaching and
learning. Understanding this is such a crucial element specially both the teachers and students
share experiences in the learning process which involves emotional intelligence or the ability
to understand one’s emotion and other’s in relation to improvement both in coherence and
competence. Ramana (2013) emphasized this need by saying that to have a meaningful
education the aim should not only be focused on physical and mental growth of individual, but
also on the needs and the aspirations of a developing society. Emotion of teachers are vital in
this regard. He even added that negative emotions have effect in our everyday life and
emotional decisions would lack fairness of judgment and affect others. This attestation shows
us that indeed emotion is such a big factor in influencing others specially when it comes to
teaching as teachers help their students learn. There is no teaching devoid of emotion whether
it is good or bad the fact remains that emotion is such a powerful force in encouraging or
discouraging the learners to acquire knowledge and skills. In line with this, high-school
teachers should be keen enough as to how they can capitalize on their emotion to help their
students consciously build the needs to learn more and develop the skills along the process.
Limited Control in the classroom – It is supposed that any seasoned high-school teachers can attest to the fact that the students’ span of attention today is becoming less and less. This challenging status quo in teaching as I observe is a by the product of the ever increasing busyness of the environment we are all in today. There are so many students who come to the class who are physically present and yet mentally absent. Their minds are somewhere else or worse clouded with so many disturbances that impede them to stay focus and learn more. It is really a big challenge to help the students retain their focus and attention to what teachers are trying to teach all throughout the teaching period. What makes it even more challenging is the fact that the burden to make the class more fun and meaningful lies upon the shoulder of the teacher. In today’s educational system particularly in teaching methodology, paradigm shifts have been taking place. Noticeably, some have shifted from purely lecture type of teaching to facilitation kind of teaching approach. Richard (2006) claims that the role of a language teacher in a classroom is to provide a kind of facilitation suitable to create a classroom climate conducive to language learning which also provides opportunities for the students to use and practice the language and to reflect on the language use in language learning. The role is to facilitate and monitor instead of simply being a lecturer. This process demands teacher’s patience in developing different views of learner’s errors and his/her in facilitating the process of language learning. High-school teachers need to realize this and be able to be willing to acquire necessary knowledge and skills all in the name of quality education. Traditional ways of teaching can still be exhibited depending on a given teaching context and the need of the target students. However, teachers should learn how to flex themselves and be willing to adjust their teaching approaches specially in times when it is needed. In todays education, teaching approaches are shaped by the target learners and their responses to learning. High school teachers should be ready to go out of their comfort zones and meet their students where they learn best.

Observation and feedback to students – It is so interesting to note that the current political environment under the No Child Left Behind Act has focused assessment on the core content with multiple-choice tests, not evaluating the 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, innovation, and information and skills (Ellis,2012). Obviously, this long-held traditional way of evaluating students’ learnings does not necessarily reflect the actual state of the students’ competency in learning a language. No wonder why a truthful observation and objective evaluation is needed to know and understand the need and be able to surface and implement possible solutions within the given context of teaching. Therefore, high-school
teachers should be able to exhibit a classroom observation which aims to basically get more insights into what is happening in a specific classroom and to provide information for them to take action to improve their own teaching and their students’ skills in learning. So Classroom observation is a very essential part of assessment and reflection strategies high-school teachers need to execute as part of the entire process of teaching and learning. It also highlights the importance of ensuring that adequate evidence is collected in order to support the need for verification and accountability of assessment judgments (Maxwell, 2001). With the assessment and reflection, the high-school teachers will give feedback to the students to guide them how to improve their English skills and the way they learn it. Feedbacks that are constructive in nature. Pointing out their weak points with the intention to bring it to their consciousness to do something about it without necessarily discouraging them. A feedback is extremely helpful if it is said in a context of trust between the teacher and students. In fact, trust makes all the difference. It prepares the way both for the teacher and students to be willing to explores areas of weaknesses not to discourage but to be able to do something about it so it can be overcome in a manner by which quality learning is achieved. High school teachers should learn how to provide necessary feedback in a context of mutual trust between them and their beloved students.

**Varieties of technique usage** – Regarding variety in terms of teaching methodologies, “Adapt and Adopt” are the key words. In fact, it is the teacher’s responsibility to be resourceful and humble enough to accept what is needed to be done and changed to achieve the desired results in teaching. Embracing variety of teaching techniques aids the teacher to address the ever-growing problems his/her students might face along the process of language education. It provides different angles as to how different needs can be appropriately addressed given the differing contexts of challenges. As Menten would put it, “You can’t develop the 21st century competencies with the 20th century teaching and assessment” (Menten, 2015). So high-school teachers should use a wide range variety of teaching techniques in teaching English to serve the 21st century competencies such as Technology as do new teaching strategies, testing techniques, and the way we are able to learn and communicate with others. An effective teacher living the 21st century has the ability to adapt and adopt to anything and everything as well as embrace it (Cox, 2009). Versatility is such a crucial factor in responding to today’s challenges in education particularly in learning a language.

Versatility is the very word that encompasses both adapt and adopt and indeed it is a call every 21th century high-school English teachers today cannot afford to refuse. With all the fast-phase
transitions and changing happening to us today particularly in education system, high-school English teachers should be the very first people who should be brave enough to go out of their comfort zones to learn new things and be able to have that sense of creativity and resourcefulness to cope up with the time and its ever increasing demands. As the saying goes, teachers cannot give what they don’t have. Plain and simple, any teacher who refuses to be versatile in his/her teaching methodologies is as worse as an empty library. Nothing to read, nothing to discover, nothing to explore. Everything seems to be scripted and students get more bored and bored. As a result, students get stagnated and their longing to learn more drastically dies down. Methods are like bridges with different length and width depending on how high and wide the body of water under it. Teachers should be able to provide these bridges of learning to meet the differing needs of the students and be courageous enough to put down all the barriers that might get in the way of students to learn more and effectively.

**E-literacy usage** – Professional development in the area of technology is most helpful when it is continuous, reliable and immediately applicable to their practice. Moreover, high-school teachers need for up to date and reliable technology and more time allocated for them to plan instructional technology integration (Hamilton & West, 2013). Technology and education today are so intertwined that one cannot be effective without the other. Teachers are to learn how to integrate these two to make the teaching and learning process relevant, creative, and effective. Part of being versatile and flexible is learning new things that could be instrumental to the effectiveness of the teaching process resulting to quality learning. We have to keep in mind that the 21st century students are so connected to technology, and in fact, dependent on it as to how they expose themselves on things they think they must learn and acquire in this life. Since entertainment is inherent element of technology, in today’s education system we have been introduced to so many things that have something to do with technology and all it offers “Edutainment”. A coined word by the educators to describe the importance of integrating entertainment in education which has undeniable effects in the learnings of the students. In today’s formal and informal teaching, education and technology are not just supplementary to each other, but in many cases, are inseparably connected from each other in terms of values and functions in relation to learning. Edutainment is just but one of so many expressions of the relationship between education and technology. Obviously, technology plays a major role in education today particularly in learning a language. No one can put it to question that just by being in social media one can be educated and get entertained at the same time whether intentionally or unintentionally. Many students today are making the social media as an avenue
of informal education where they can learn a language in a communicative way just by mere conversing. Not only there are an increasing numbers of professionals who are taking formal studies via on-line education. This is concrete evident how instrumental technology could be when it comes to education. Because of this, teachers need to maximize it by capitalizing on it to help the students learn or otherwise they will be left behind along with their students in this fast-phase transitioning educational environment that we are all in today. High-school teachers should not treat technology as antithetical to what seems to be traditionally accepted values and approaches in teaching. Instead, they should maximize it and learn how to use it to better their skills in teaching and helping their students learn more. Technology is such a great complementary force in today’s education.

Encyclopedic teachers – Obviously, if teachers are going to teach a subject, then they should really know a lot about the subject. Certainly in high schools, where teachers often specialize into one or two subject areas, there is a real emphasis on the subject matter knowledge of the teacher - which is why, the claim goes, that if you want to teach history, you should first learn a lot about history, and if you want to teach mathematics, then you should get a degree in mathematics” (Heggart, 2016). This notion emphasizes the inescapable truth that teachers should be responsible enough to learn and master what they are going to teach to their students. It is coherently consistent to think that one cannot teach something he doesn’t know and understand. Teachers should be willing to improve themselves and acquire necessary knowledge and skills to foster the kind of learning s/he wants the students to possess.

In other words, if students know a sentence, the teacher should know a paragraph. If the students know a paragraph, the teacher should know a page in the book. If the students know a page in the book, the teacher should know the entire book. If the students know the entire book, the teacher should own a library. By doing so, students will be willing to be coached and mentored by their teacher. This establishes the kind of confident students can have about their teacher. Like any student who is in his normal mind, he/she wants to be taught by a well-learned teacher whose mind has knowledge that is dependable and still possesses enough spaces to keep on learning. Learning will always be the foundation of teaching. The way we learn determines the way we teach. In view of this, high-school teachers are to be learners whose desire is to keep on learning and learning to be more effective in their teaching and to be of help to their students as to how they acquire knowledge, passion, and skills.
**Negotiation for supporting and giving solution to the students** – Learning a language requires the need to interact, communicate, and discuss with teachers and students or students and students. In a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), negotiation is an inevitable element of teaching process which has a tremendous effect in the learning process of the students. Negotiation takes place even before finding solutions to the problems, and in fact, at times it is the starting point of a solution. Negotiation involves being able to discuss and reach a mutually satisfactory agreement. A negotiation is a communication process in which multiple parties discuss problems and attempt to solve them via dialogue in order to reach a resolution (Long & Clerk, 2013). Teachers use this method in teaching English to transfer in daily life for negotiation in supporting and giving solution to the students. This kind of support does not only require giving feedbacks to the students but receiving feedback from the students as well. Since students are the object of teaching, it is but fitting and logically rightful for teachers to listen to what students might say as their contribution to better the teaching and learning approach. As Ferguson, Philips, Rowley, & Friedlander (2015) also attests that teachers should also know how to confer with their students. To confer means to welcome and value students’ viewpoint. The teachers should be effective in insisting on student participation by using such techniques as strategic question and discussion based lessons. This strategy also values student’s unique perspectives seeing their teacher values their views which results to positive reinforcement that makes the students more active responding to the teacher but also to one another. I would also add that I honestly think this strategy creates a learning environment where every learner feels free to express thoughts and feelings as the learning process is on going without hesitating fearfully thinking that they will be laughed at or ridiculed if they make mistakes. Hopefully, this might end up in a result beneficial both to high-school teachers and their students as they synergize their effort in discovering ways and means to solve problems.

**Gearing up students with positive motivation** – Anyone who is inspired and motivated will always conquer all challenges s/he might face along the way. In the world of education motivation serves as the very fuel that pushes one to achieve whatever goals he has set. Learning a foreign language such as English has never been an easy thing to do and it’s not an easy job. Sometimes it gets boring and dull and it is very normal for the students to get disinterested. Motivation is critical in English learning, thus, how to effectively motivate students in English learning is a challenge worth addressing. Motivation is not only an intensive desire for learning and acquiring knowledge of English, but also an inner force that pushes students forward in learning English with enthusiasm and willingness (Kong, 2009). This kind
of motivation should be initiated by the teacher. It is something that s/he must pass on to the students. High-school teachers have to keep in mind that motivation is contagious in nature and once it captures their students to learn more, inspiration will always be the fruit resulting to acquisition of a vast array of learnings and to practical skills. Motivation captivates the entirety of a person and it provides enlightenment through vision that serves as a visual target to hit a goal to achieve. No one learns without the motivation to learn. Motivation precedes learning and for the students to learn the way high-school teachers want them to learn, they have to foster the kind of motivation student need to have.

Interestingly, the key points previously stated above about “I LOVE ENGLISH” mantra are just but some of the elements that constitute this kind of motivation. If teachers know and understand how to address the need to build coherence, character, and competence of the students, that itself is a great motivation for the students to learn more. These three important domains in the life of students are something to consider if high-school teachers desire to have a holistic approach in motivating their students to learn English. The teacher’s intellect, emotion influences, and in fact, determines the outcome of the teaching process and the development of the students’ learning skills. Certainly, one may argue that these essential domains are all part of the teacher’s personality, and they are part of who the teacher really is and what s/he can accomplish as a professional individual who is in the field of education.

Having said this, one thing is being surfaced here. The teacher’s personality can be considered as one important aspect of motivation. In fact, Eggleton (n.d.) said in his article that he dearly considers motivation as a key to effective teaching by quoting the considered the best teacher in America, Jaime Escalante- “The teacher has to have the energy of the hottest volcano, the memory of an elephant, and the diplomacy of an ambassador”. All of these encompass not just the teacher’s ability to teach but primarily his/her personality. Obviously, not all teachers have the same personality having the same intensity of energy, creativity, and resourcefulness when it comes to teaching. This refers back to the need to be versatile not just as to how teachers teach but ultimately the way they conduct themselves all for the sake of their student’s learning. Versatility is all about flexibility. For instance, high-school teachers might find themselves less energetic as a person compared to others but if being more energetic is what it takes to help their students to learn more, then they cannot afford to be so defensive about their personality rather they must make that challenge to adjust as their jump off point to better themselves in helping their students possess the kind of motivation they can give out to them in order for them to have quality learning.
Liveliness of teachers – It has been said that teaching a language is such a challenging task more so in learning it. But this does not mean that teaching and learning a language should be burdensome. One well-quoted cliché says that there are many ways to skin the cat. It means that there are so many ways to get the job done. Being lively in teaching a language provides the sense of interest among students. It also creates creativity and resourcefulness the way students learn a particular foreign language. In fact, Aquino (1997) claimed that teacher liveliness basically consists of changing the pattern of stimulation of the learners so that their attention is gained and held. Non-verbal and extra-verbal cues are the main constituents of teacher liveliness such as gestures, eye-movement, facial expression, head and body movement, tone and voice are effected to the students learning English in the classroom. Teacher liveliness positively affects students’ involvement and learning English. It is really hard to develop in our students a sense of learning if we teachers fail to exhibit a dynamic and positive attitude in learning. The desire to learn should always be shown and foster by the teacher that the students would view as worth-emulating.

Interpersonal teachers – English High-school teachers are required to share their experience with the students which demands interaction. The more interactions take place, the more successful the communication would be. The teacher is not a complete teacher without best interpersonal skills including communication skills. So, every teacher is required to have interpersonal skills because of the following: 1. To communicate the message, teachers must know how to communicate with the students in a class well; 2. To understand the students individually, teachers understand the student individually because some students are very fast, some students are very slow; 3. To make the concept clear, teachers have to make use of both verbal and nonverbal communication For making a concept clear, the teacher has to make use of both verbal and nonverbal communication. The verbal communication includes the use of words which the non-verbal refers to the use of hands and gestures. Both the verbal and nonverbal communication needs to be parallel to each other; 4. Listening skills are also important: high-school teachers should be patient enough to listen what the students say if the teacher does not give anyone a chance to speak, then the possibility of misunderstanding arises and it leads to more issues and problems. To learn a foreign language one must be placed in an environment of communication and interaction, or at least, in a community where the language being learnt is used. In many years of my teaching experience, I seldom discover campuses here in Thailand where English is a required medium for communication. Conspicuously,
language necessitates environment for it to flourish and for the people to use it with full sense of awareness and intentionality.

What is remarkable however is the fact that the students’ competency in 21st century needs to relate to other people, including communication, collaboration, leadership, global awareness (Menten, 2015). Hence, teachers use the nature of the communication in teaching English by providing the opportunity for students to have the interaction, exchange the ideas, transfer information, and link the different skills in the real society (Richards, 2006). Develop higher order and interpersonal skills will surely help the students to have that level of competency in 21st century (Menten, 2015).

**Self-regulation teachers** – A long the process of learning a foreign language, one must intentionally initiate the sense of independence. This kind of independence creates the sense of being responsible to keep on learning by continuously connecting to others and maximizing all possible available means to honest self-guided learning. To clarify more, as the teacher does the facilitation in the class s/he must be keen enough to help the student develop their coping mechanism in learning through interaction, communication, conversation, and discussion. In order to foster self-regulated learning (SRL) by self-regulation teachers, teachers should provide students with learning strategies, as well as with constructivist learning environments that allow them to self-regulate their learning and how to support students’ self-regulation effectively (Ewijk, & Werf, 2012). The teacher can usher the students for autonomy learners when the teacher has self-regulated and guiding principles which the students can adopt later on. As what we can observe, learning doesn’t only exist and end within the four corners of a classroom in a formal education. In fact, it extends to all corners of our society as long one is passionate in learning things. This is the very reason why High-school teachers should be aware of this truth to be able to figure out how they are going to foster to their students to learn independently.

**Harmony teachers** – Since learning a foreign language effectively always necessitates an environment, harmony of teaching is an inherent essential of teaching and learning process. Harmony is an integrated approach to curriculum making that puts creativity and sustainability at the center, exploring the world from a local to the global scale through the process of enquiry and engagement with the natural world (Crittall, 2018). So teacher can help students with inspiration and address curiosity about the earth and our responsibility to look after it. Students will learn a range of approaches and resources for exploration and they are encouraged to share
discoveries with their respective teacher. “In the classroom, harmony teachers who have harmonious teaching aims to develop skills, attitudes and knowledge with co-operative and participatory learning methods in an environment of tolerance, care and respect. Through dialogue and exploration, teachers and students engage in a journey of shared learning. Students are nurtured and empowered to take responsibility for their own growth and achievement while teachers take care of the well-being of all students (UNESCO, 2009).

**Conclusion**

While it is true that true learning takes place when the teacher and students are all in the same page of desires and values, the responsibility to foster the necessary environment where students are well-provided of their needs always falls upon the shoulders of the teacher. Needless to say, teachers are the most influential persons when it comes to failures and/or success of the students, more so, in their endeavor to achieve whatever goals they have as individuals. The motivation for the students to get out of their comfort zones to face their fears, overcome apprehension, set aside hesitations and learn things as they face head-on all sorts of challenges should be bestowed upon them by their teacher. High-school teachers should always take the initiative to provide and if necessary create ways and means to address the needs of their students in learning a language. To be inspired is to be motivated in what one does and tries to accomplish. This is a source that comes from the very person who wishes to influence others. Teachers are influencers in many ways, and truthfully, success or failures to learn by the students are based upon how they were taught, trained, and dealt with by their teachers. In view of this truth, high-school teachers must motivate the students to learn in the real world problem solving in 21st century. “I L-O-V-E E-N-G-L-I-S-H” Mantra is an honest suggested effective approach in addressing this need. This mantra is based not upon an unwarranted theoretical idea but on my personal and shared common experiences I had among well-seasoned teachers accumulated throughout years of teaching experiences handling students from one generation to another. It is a relevant idea to prepare the high-school teachers in Thailand to run on the mantra and develop the 21st century competency of students who are trying to learn English and make it a part of their daily life professionally or even just a normal individual person who is passionate to use English language as his or her medium of communication.
References


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Using Smart Phones to Reduce Students' Fear in Public Speaking

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study the causes of students’ fear of speaking English in a Public Speaking course at Rajamangala University of Technology, Chiang Mai, and to measure the students’ speaking skills after using smartphone rehearsal to reduce their fear. The target group was 20 Bachelor degree students who enrolled in the Public Speaking subject. The research instruments consisted of the evaluation of students’ speaking skills on the part of Public Speaking, a checklist and a questionnaire. The data were then statistically analyzed. The results of this study found that “Smart Phones” could enable more effective communication and better understanding of the subject matter. When the students could use smart phones more practically, they could develop their public speaking skills to achieve better communication. Moreover, students were very satisfied with using smartphones to have their speeches recorded and to receive peer-feedback in the classroom. The smartphones were also used to encourage improvement of student’s on-camera personality.

Keywords: smart phones, students' fear, public speaking

BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH

Presentation is a means of communication which can be adapted to various speaking situations, such as talking to a group, addressing meetings, or briefing a team (Wikipedia). Currently, oral presentation is a very common course provided in universities. Professionals and students in all fields want to share their knowledge with the public. Thus, public speaking presentation can be considered a discourse community for international communication. Public speaking is also a powerful tool used to inform, persuade, motivate, and so on. Gillis (2013) stated that the importance of speaking skills and how to speak well has many advantages and promotes self-confidence. However, being a good presenter is not enough. One must have other abilities as well, such as a desire to speak other languages, specifically English. In this current modern globalized era, the majority of the world’s population have had some exposure and awareness of English language, and its importance in the world community. The English language is an
intermediary for dispersing information. Therefore, every country in the world (including Thailand) has a need to develop their English language speaking skills. Thai Prime Minister, Prayuth Chan-O-Cha stated on 8th March, 2016 that “I want Thai people to practice speaking English because Thailand is going to be a part of the ASEAN community.” According to the ASEAN charter, chapter 10; administration and procedure, article 34 prescribes that “The working language of ASEAN shall be English.” For that reason, educational institutions have recognized the importance of teaching English at both school and university level. Rajamagala University of Technology Lanna realizes the significance of learning English. There are English majors that encourage students to learn English such as English for International Communication. The students are required to take speaking courses as a major part of the subject. One of these courses for improving speaking skills is English for public speaking.

In the 21st century, English is prevalent in the age of technology through the digital world for instance; smartphones, laptops, websites, etc. Since the arrival of the Smart phone, many students in the English classroom ask to use it for several purposes, such as translating, searching information and listening to the correct pronunciation. Gutgold and Grodziak (2013) stated that today’s public speaking classroom is missing a key teaching imperative for the digital age if it fails to include how to speak effectively on video. In the age of Skype and video conferencing, today’s students need to navigate the ways to speak professionally while being recorded. While there has been a noticeable shift in student’s perceptions of being recorded, and the more receptive nature toward recording to produce better communicators, instructors of public speaking need to direct students to take steps to professionalize their recorded presentation. By using smart phones and peer coaching of self-recorded speeches, students can improve their public speaking and other presentation skills, including on-camera speaking. The purpose of the research is to study the causes of students’ fear of speaking English in the context of public speaking and to promote the students’ speaking skills with the use of smart phones. In addition, Students can see themselves through the video camera recording before doing the real public speaking test with peer feedback from both teacher and their classmates after sharing the recorded video clip via the Facebook page (Public Speaking EIC Chiang Mai). During this process, students practice and learn to develop their personalities in front of the camera including improving their speaking performances each time.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Having more confidence can greatly reduce fear of public speaking. In order to present effectively, the speaker has to choose appropriate subject matter and give a good impression to the audience. According to Hamm and Dunbar (2005), the speakers have to assess an audience and decide how best to reach them both nonverbally and verbally. Nonverbal communication can be divided into three parts – appearance, attitude and gesture. Simultaneously, verbal communication has been split into two major categories which are persuasive and informative speeches. Therefore, a presenter can be considered successful when the audience enjoys the presentation. Moreover, Khoury (2017) noted that self-confidence is the key of a successful presenter. Similarly, Sander (2012) has identified good presenters as being confident. “Good presenters can be determined by good eye contact, clear loud voice, and use body language that involve their audiences. However, Tunwatthanapong and Zhangsirikul (2013) stated that fear is the barrier in speaking English, students normally get nervous and shy.

During this digital age, smartphones are used globally and their use will considerably increase further. Students in this century have a great deal of exposure to digital media and it is perhaps logical that smartphone use as a study aid should be encouraged. According to Gutgold and Grodziak (2013), during the past twenty years, most students in public speaking class would react to the presence of a video camera during their speeches with nervousness and trepidation. Professors of the basic speech course who recorded their students’ speeches offered each student a valuable practice tool: their own-recorded image. By recording the speeches, instructors provide evidence of each presentation in the form of a recording that students view and critique. The thinking is that “seeing themselves as others do” would cause their performance to improve. Also, when students understand that communication they see on reality television programs is different from the communication they need to gain success in today’s competitive world, they will begin to realize that just because they can record themselves, perhaps they should not record themselves until they have something thoughtful to say and a professional way to say it. Thus, the solution to building students confidence and lessen fear is using a gadget like a smartphone to encourage students to achieve better public speaking skills.

RELATED WORK

The researchers discuss some relevant work that supports; (1) reducing students’ fear in speaking English and (2) using smartphones to improve public speaking.
Plailek (2011) studied the level of English speaking ability and the factors effecting English speaking ability of second year English major students in the faculty of Education, Rajabhat universities in the Bangkok metropolitan area. The results of the study were utilized to develop teaching and the learning processes of speaking English and the factors effecting English speaking. The study used a sample of 161 second year English major students, faculty of Education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University. The instruments applied in data collecting were a questionnaire and interview. The data obtained was analyzed by the application of frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, F-test and multiple regression. The study findings revealed the following: 1. Seventy-six percent of the target students have fair English speaking ability. Fifteen percent of them have excellent English speaking ability and eight percent of them have poor English speaking ability. 2. The factors that affected the student’s English speaking ability were English learning strategies, habits in learning English language and their grade averages at the 0.05 level.

It is similar to Tunwattanapong and Zhangsirikul (2013) study about the fear levels nursing students encounter while studying English at Ratchatani University. The sample in this study consisted of 158 nursing students who had been studying English 1 in the first semester of the academic year in 2013. The researcher used quantitative research methodology in the form of a questionnaire. The results show that the greatest cause of fear amongst students speaking English was “Lack of sufficient amount of vocabulary to start an English conversation” (75.79%). The study also found the highest rated improvement activity to be “Practice English with foreigners often and continuous” (67.09%). Additionally, the effective lesson plan technique which rated the highest was “Listen for the main idea” (79.75%). Moreover, the researcher found that efficient teaching methods include inspiring the students to understand what they heard, encouraging them to recognize the necessity of English communication skills. Educators must also be aware that students will develop their English communication skills when under the lowest degree of fear, so they must provide an accommodating learning environment.

Moreover, Gutgold and Grodziak (2013) studied about making smart use of smart phones to improve public speaking. One of the best ways to improve speaking skills is to practice. Recording speeches and having students review their performances has been a method employed for decades by public speaking instructors in order to allow students to see themselves in action as public speakers. However, arranging for the presence of recording equipment and the technology to play back speeches has required considerable effort on the part of the instructor. The researchers argue that in the age of Facebook and Skype, students need to master skills to improve their on-
camera speaking skills and smart phones provide a ubiquitous, effective way for public speaking students to have their speeches recorded and peer-critiqued repeatedly in one semester. And since practice is the key to improvement, the use of smartphones may boost student performance and improve their increasingly important on-camera personas.

**METHODOLOGY**

1. Research design

   This research is mixed-method. The researcher used the public speaking assessment to evaluate students’ speaking performances from time to time using smartphones to record their speeches and a checklist including a satisfaction questionnaire to collect data. The checklist was selected to investigate the causes of students’ fear of speaking English in public speaking. And, the satisfaction questionnaire was used to study how satisfied students were with using smart phones to record their speeches in the rehearsal process.

2. Research participant

   There were 20 participants, all of which were second year students, from the English for International Communication (EIC) major at Rajamagala University of Technology Lanna, Chiang Mai, who enrolled in the “Public Speaking” course in the second semester of 2016. The reason why the researchers selected EIC second year students was because their performance will be improved and their speaking skills will be practiced for their final project and internship.

3. Research instrument

   The instruments used in this study were divided into three parts; a checklist about causes of students’ fear of speaking English, the public speaking assessment, and students’ satisfaction questionnaire towards using smart phones recording their speeches in the rehearsal process.

   The first instrument studied the causes of students’ fear of speaking English in Public Speaking. There were six statements to check. The checklist was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of students' fear of speaking English in Public Speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I don’t understand and don’t know how to reply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel shy when I have to compose the sentence to communicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I lack vocabulary (word choice), so I don’t know how to create sentences to match what I want to say.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. I'm not sure what sentence structures and grammar should be used to communicate.

5. I'm worried when nobody understands what I want to say.

6. I feel nervous if I use the wrong vocabulary and pronounce an incorrect sound.

The second instrument was used to evaluate students’ speaking performances. There were five criteria of assessment; content, organization, delivery, visual aids and contact with audience. The scoring rubric was composed of criteria and level of scores; Excellent (5), Good (4), Fair (3), Poor (2) and Needs improvement (1). The speaking performances were assessed three times during the semester to observe the improvement. The scoring rubric was as follows:

**Content**

Purpose clearly stated, good overview, clarity of argument, well-sourced, credible conclusion.

**Organization**

Good structure, effectively sequenced, interesting introduction, well developed main section, clear conclusion (or take-home message).

**Delivery**

Delivered in appropriate amount of time, not pure reading from a script, speed of delivery, good use of pauses, reacting to feedback from audience, loudness, pitch, varied tone, and good pronunciation.

**Visual Aids**

Appropriate to talk, confident in use, well designed.

**Contact with audience**

Good posture, eye contact, rapport, relaxed, moves about, engaged, appears confident, is honest when doesn’t know answer, friendly, remains in control.

Apart from these, the third instrument aimed to study students’ satisfaction towards using smart phones to record their speeches in the rehearsal process. There were 10 statements to rate students’ satisfaction which were as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Level of satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Using a smartphone to practice speaking helps to ensure confidence in speaking English.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Using a smartphone to record video clips before speaking in front of the real situation can actually improve the speech.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Smartphone is easy to use to practice speaking.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The smartphone is a device that helps to see the gesture and expression while speaking English.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Smartphone helps to improve the characteristics in speaking English before doing the real speech.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Smartphone makes it possible to practice through electronic media.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I can improve my speaking skills through the use of smartphones.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I had developed a better speech after receiving the peer feedback of my friends and teachers when posting video clips on Facebook.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I intend to use a smartphone to practice before speaking.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I have no worries or fear of speaking English to public anymore.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The levels of the satisfaction were defined as follows:

5 = strongly satisfied
4 = somewhat satisfied
3 = neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
2 = somewhat unsatisfied
1 = strongly unsatisfied

The number of participants was calculated to find out their rating for each item and each rating scale by researchers.
4. Procedures

4.1 Data collection

The data were collected during the course of public speaking and after participants finished their speeches. Firstly, the participants were asked to check the causes of what made them feel fear when doing public speaking. Secondly, the researcher collected and analyzed the data of the first instrument, then the researcher explained about the criteria of the second instrument. Thirdly, the participants were assessed from time to time using the smartphones recording and sharing their speeches via the Facebook page (Public Speaking EIC). Fourthly, classmates and teacher posted the peer feedback for each speaker. After that students improved their speeches and adjusted their personality before speaking in front of the real public speaking test. Finally, the questionnaire of satisfaction was distributed to the participants and the data were collected.

4.2 Data analysis

The data analysis was divided into three categories; the causes of students’ fear of speaking English in public speaking, students’ speaking performances and students’ satisfaction towards using smart phones to record their speeches in the rehearsal process.

1. In order to study the causes of students’ fear of speaking English in Public Speaking, the checklist was analyzed for percentage.

2. In order to evaluate students’ speaking performances, public speaking presentations were scored using the scoring rubric.

3. In order to study students’ satisfaction towards using smart phones to record their speeches in the rehearsal process, the data was analyzed for percentage.

In addition, the comments were analyzed by categorizing analysis.

RESULT AND DATA ANALYSIS

The instruments are questionnaires for measuring:

1. Ability of speaking English in public.

2. Cause of fear in speaking English.
3. Satisfaction of students using smart phones to reduce fear of speak English in public. The target group was 20 Bachelor’s degree students who enrolled in the Public Speaking subject.

Which can show data analysis as follows;

Table 1 shows the score for ability of speaking English in public of 20 students in class; 10 scores each time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>1stTime (10 scores)</th>
<th>2ndTime (10 scores)</th>
<th>3rdTime (10 scores)</th>
<th>Total (30 scores)</th>
<th>100 percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>83.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>86.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>8.85</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>80.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table shows that all of the students passed 50 percent, with most of them having ability in the excellent criteria (upper 80 percent) and they got higher scores on average of 3 tests respectively.

Table 2 Causes of students' fear of speaking English in Public Speaking in 20 students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of students' fear of speaking English in Public Speaking</th>
<th>amount</th>
<th>percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I don't understand and don't know how to reply.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel shy when I have to compose the sentence to communicate.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I lack vocabulary (word choice), so I don't know how to create sentences to match what I want to say.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I'm not sure what sentence structures and grammar should be used to communicate.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I'm worried when nobody understands what I want to say.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel nervous if I use the wrong vocabulary and pronounce incorrect sounds.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows that 90 percent of students have a lack of word choice and feel confused creating sentences to match what they want to say. There were 80 percent of students who feel worried when nobody understands what they want to say. At about 70 percent of students feel shy when they have to compose the sentence to communicate.

Table 3 students’ satisfaction towards using smart phones to record their speeches in the rehearsal process in 20 students.
This table shows that approximately 45 percent of students are satisfied that using smartphones is an easy way to practice speaking. Also, there were 35 percent of students who feel that using a smartphone to practice speaking helps to ensure confidence in speaking English and helps to improve the characteristics in speaking English before doing the real speech.

Moreover, about 30 percent of students feel that using a smartphone to record video clips before speaking in front of the real situation can actually improve the speech.
CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Conclusion

Section 1: The abilities of all students were in excellent criteria (80.33 percent) after learning by using a smartphone to reduce their fear.

Using a smartphone as an assistant device in public speaking class can make a good atmosphere in class which has a positive effect on their learning abilities. Moreover, learners can practice by themselves because a smartphone is easy to use and helps to improve the characteristics in speaking English before doing the real speech. Similarly, Gutgold and Grodziak (2013) found that learners could practice by themselves for public speaking by recording their speech on a smartphone. They looked at themselves in the recording and improved their speech and personalities.

The results of this study found that “Smart Phones” could express the communication and make the students understand the subject matter better. “Smart Phones” helped develop English Speaking abilities effectively. When the students could use the smart phones more practically, they could develop their public speaking skills to achieve better communication.

Section 2: From answering of questionnaire, students were very satisfied with using smartphones to have their speeches recorded and peer-feedback in the classroom. The smartphones were also used to encourage student’s on-camera personality improvement.

Discussion of the results

A smart phone is an electronic device which is easy to use for practicing speaking English. It was used to encourage students on camera personality improvement. In addition, Gutgold and Grodziak (2013) stated that in the facebook and skype era, students need to have skills for using smartphones to improve their abilities in speaking using all of many functions the device has such as recording video clips and posting to get feedback and comments from others.

As with the development of any skill, ‘practice makes perfect’, thus students have been encouraged to access their smartphone devices during the semester. However, in public speaking, students need more practice and feedback as well as using this kind of device wisely which corresponds with Gutgold and Grodziak (2013) that practice seems obvious, today’s
students can be so comfortable in front of the camera that they think they are better than they are. Furthermore, Gutgold and Grodziak (2013) also noted that with the ease of self – recording on mobile devices, students of public speaking have a ready mechanism to assess their skills. Where once they needed to go to a recording studio and have equipment set up for self-assessment, today they can be both the subject and the recorder at the press of the button.

**Suggestion**

From this study, the researcher would like to give the following suggestions;

1. The suggestions in teaching
   1.1. Teachers should try other equipment to help reduce the fear and anxiety of learners.
   1.2. Teachers should create a needs survey for students and try to make a learning management system matching with students' demand for students' achievement, confidence and positive attitude.

2. The suggestions for expansion research
   2.1. It should try out other electronic devices for reducing students' fear in public speaking.
   2.2. It should analyze other course syllabuses which are related with public speaking courses for creating an effective modern curriculum.
References


Vietnamese Students’ Internet Use Habit and Implications for English Language Teaching

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Abstract

The internet has become increasingly popular and eventually plays an integral part in everyday activities of people all over the world. In 2017, Vietnam is ranked 13th in the top 20 countries with the highest number of internet users by Internet World Stats. Among various groups of users, students account for a large proportion. They use the internet for various purposes such as for updating information, for entertaining, for communicating with others, and especially for learning. In such the context, detailed information about Vietnamese students’ internet use habits is expected to provide their teachers with useful pedagogical implications for internet-assisted language teaching. In the current study, the internet use habits of 357 Vietnamese English-majored students were explored using an online questionnaire. Findings of the students’ internet use frequency, length, time of day, most frequently-visited websites, and so on provide English teachers in Vietnam with helpful bases to optimize the use of internet for their English teaching.

Keywords: internet-based language teaching, internet use habits, Vietnamese students, teaching implications

1. INTRODUCTION

The internet has been growing in both popularity and availability. According to Internet World Stats, by December 2017 there were totally more than four billion internet users worldwide, which accounts for more than half of the world population. Among the seven geographic regions namely North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Middle East and Oceana/Australia, Asia is the one with the largest number of internet users with nearly 2 billion users. With such a tremendous popularity, the internet has been reshaping many aspects of the society namely on-line education, advertising, marketing and sales (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni, 2000). In addition, the Internet is a powerful tool for finding information from educational organizations, governmental organizations, business companies and individuals.
across the world (Shetzer & Warschauer, 2000). In fact, the use of technology in the classroom has attracted the attention of various researchers since the late of the twentieth century (Dooley, 1999; Holcombe, 2000; Means et al., 1993; Sherry, Billig, Tavalin, & Gibson, 2000). At the same time, the impact of instructional technology has also been recognized in foreign language teaching (Frizler, 1995; Stoller, 1994). Although computers have been used for language teaching since the 1960s (Grauss, 1999; Warschauer & Healey, 1998; Windeatt, Hardisty, & Eastment, 2000), with the rise of the Internet, their use for language learning has been reshaped (Grauss, 1999), and their function in the classroom has evolved from being instruments for repetitive language drills to becoming multimedia tools (Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

In Vietnam, the government has had a great emphasis of integrating information and communication technology (ICT) into education in the nation’s educational policy (Peeraer & Van Petegem, 2015; Pelgrum, 2001). Regarding higher education, the Ministry of Education and Training issued Directive No. 9772/2008/CT-BGDDT dated 20 October 2008 to strengthen ICT use in teaching and training in the educational system for the period 28-2012. It is argued that with the global impetus towards increased technology and learning in the digital environment, the integration of ICT in Vietnamese higher education is following an ‘inevitable’ trend (James & Hopkinson, 2009, p.22). Within that trend, “introducing a diversity of learning styles, interactive teaching modes and application of ICT to learning and teaching” is promoted by educational and political leaders in Vietnam (Harman & Bich, 2010. P. 67).

The involvement of ICT in the classroom has changed the roles of both language teachers and learners. Learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) are the ones who control their own learning in a technology-enhanced learning environment (Brown, 1991) and teachers have to be prepared to meet new demands of integrating new technologies into their classrooms (Nim Park and Son, 2009). In addition, the role of teachers in the new era of technology is not only to transmit new knowledge, but to give students tools to acquire knowledge and recognize the value of the knowledge from various sources including the internet (Bancheri. 2006). That new role is indeed more crucial than ever before because EFL teachers should be able to motivate learners and create web-based language learning environments which are non-threatening, meaningful and affectively supportive (Jeong, 2006). Various requirements have been proposed for EFL teachers including teachers’ adequate preparedness to work in Web-based environments (Rilling, Dahlman, Dodson, Boyles & Pazvant, 2005); teachers’ familiarity with Web technology and technical competence to accommodate computer-assisted language learning (CALL) applications and use various functions of these applications for
educational purposes (Cunningham, 2000); teachers’ positive attitudes toward internet-assisted language teaching (Shin and Shon, 2007); and teachers’ need for teacher development programs to help them deal with issues of using computers (Jung, 2001; Lee & Son, 2006; Son, 2002, 2004; Suh, 2004) and gain competent skills in managing computer-based tasks and activities in the classroom (Johnson, 2002; Oh & French, 2007). Despite various studies on the use of the internet in EFL teaching, little is mentioned about teachers’ knowledge and understanding of learners’ internet use habits. Meanwhile, such knowledge is useful to help teachers better prepare and implement internet-assisted language teaching in their own contexts. The current study was conducted to fill such a gap in the literature.

Two research questions will be answered in the current paper:

1. What are Vietnamese students’ internet use habits?
2. What are the implications for English teachers in Vietnam?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Internet-assisted language teaching

Internet-assisted language teaching has its history in the experience of schools and teachers from computer-assisted language learning (CALL) (Martins, Steil & Todesco, 2004) which originated in the 1960s (Grauss, 1999; Levy, 1997; Warschauer & Healey, 1998). The use of the internet for language teaching can be divided into two broad categories namely teacher-centered resources and student-centered resources (Finnemann, 1996). Teacher-centred resources are those that support language teachers in planning their classes and in their own development (Ames, 2001; Teeler & Gray, 2000). More specifically, the internet provides teachers with resources including foreign language magazines and newspapers, reference books, grammar books, journals, newsletters, research projects, theses and dissertations, mailing lists, newsgroups, language-oriented chat rooms, culturally relevant video and graphics, virtual conferences regularly organized by various groups, specific sites for professionals of the area, maps, on-line literature, courses, and a wide range of authentic materials (Ames, 2001; Dang, 2011; Dudeney, 2000; Eastment, 1999; Teeler & Gray, 2000; Windeatt et al., 2000).
Learner-centered resources are also diverse (Ames, 2001; Dudeney, 2000; Finnemann, 1996; Windeatt et al., 2000). These resources can be discussions lists or chat rooms where they can participate to practice their skills of the target language; a variety of web sites where they can search for almost anything from culture and customs of the countries that speak the target language to songs, games, recipes, online dictionaries of the target language (Martins et al, 2004; Kelson, 2009); online videoconferences where they can interact with native speakers; or projects in which they can participate with students from countries of the target language (Ames, 2001; Finnemann, 1996; Leloup & Ponterio, 1995). The amount of input students can find in the Internet tends to be unlimited (Perez, 1999).

The internet provides a variety of benefits when it is incorporated in EFL classrooms. These benefits include increasing both teachers’ and students’ motivation (Carrier, 1997; Frizler, 1995; Gitsaki & Taylor, 1999; Kasper, 1999; Kuo, 2009; Osuna & Meskill, 1998; Parra, 2000; Pellettieri, 2000; Warschauer & Whittaker, 1997); enhancing students’ participation (Ames, 2001; Ortega, 1997; Singhal, 1997; Warschauer, 1996; Warschauer & Healey, 1998); improving interactions between teachers and students as well as among students (Felix, 1998, 1999; Singhal, 1997; Szendeffy, 1998); enlarging students’ knowledge of the culture of the target language (Carrier, 1997; Felix 1999; Gitsaki & Taylor, 1999; Leloup & Ponterio, 1995; Osuna & Meskill, 1998; Perez, 1999); and promoting student autonomy (Broncano & Ribeiro, 1999; Darasawang & Reinders, 2010; Hanson-Smith, 1997; Kasper, 1999).

2.2 Common implementations of the internet in EFL teaching

The internet can be implemented in EFL classrooms in a number of ways. First and foremost, teachers and students can use the internet to acquire information from a large number of language resources for a variety of purposes (Daugherty & Funke, 1998; Gonglewski, Meloni & Brant, 2001; Moore, 1996; Pennington, 1996; Ryder & Graves, 1997; Singhal, 1997; Smith, 1997; Warschauer, 2000). In addition, teachers can also supply their own materials, knowledge and ideas for other teachers via the Internet (Warschauer, Shetzer & Meloni, 2000) by creating homepages for the purpose of their lessons and putting their materials on-line (Meagher, 1995). In the meantime, students can access information and resources which are usually presented in meaningful contexts to them (Martins et al, 2004).

Secondly, thanks to the internet, language teachers can make their classes individualised and personalised, which in turn, results in students’ self-empowerment and
autonomy in learning (Warschauer et al, 1996). This is because each learner is allowed and encouraged “to manage the learning process independently and to explore linked pieces of information non-sequentially on the basis of their personal preferences and needs” (Son, 1998, p. 121). This form of delivering individualized but comprehensive content in real time via the Internet provides an effective means for creating appropriate learning environments that meet personal needs (Zhang & Zhou, 2003).

Thirdly, the internet is also an important medium that provides the potential for purposeful and powerful use of online communication (Warschauer, 2000). Kern and Warschauer (2000) reveal that language learners can communicate with one another or with native speakers of English all over the world either on a one-to-one or a many-to-many basis. In other words, the internet can be considered a useful tool for collaboration among EFL learners locally, nationally or globally. In addition, through e-mail, conferencing tools and newsgroups, a virtual community of learners can exchange knowledge, ideas and perspectives on certain issues or topics (Rico & Vinagre, 2000). Moreover, it is recently claimed that novel Internet-based applications may enhance face-to-face communication and even replace it in EFL settings (Cabaroglu, Basaran & Roberts, 2010; Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2007; Hampel & Hauck, 2009; Miwa & Wang, 2011; Ware & O’Dowd, 2008; Warschauer & Kern, 2000).

Fourthly, the internet offers EFL teachers and learners with authentic learning resources without having to travel to English-speaking countries (Gonglewski, Meloni, & Brant, 2001; Singhal, 1997; Smith, 1997). Since approximately 85% of electronically stored information in the world is in English (Crystal, 1997), this authentic resource is huge. In addition, internet learning can expose students to rich input of English used in real life situation (Gitsaki and Taylor, 2001). Therefore, EFL teachers can reinforce students to use the target language in an authentic setting with their internet-assisted language teaching (Daugherty & Funke, 1998; Moore, 1996; Mosquera, 2001).

Finally, the internet has a great potential to promote e-learning. According to Hedberg and Lim (2004), educators have adopted e-learning-related technologies to extend conventional methods and to develop new skills and tools for learning and instruction. With new technologies and the internet, EFL teachers nowadays have new possibilities and choices to overcome persisting problems stemming from lack of resources and time constraints. Some electronic learning activities that EFL teachers may consider using for their students include
online collaboration, online peer feedback, flipped classroom, and blended teaching (Ames, 2001; Felix, 1998; Means et al., 1993; Miwa & Wang, 2011; Ware & O’Dowd, 2008).

3. THE STUDY

3.1 Participants

Three hundred fifty-seven English-majored students in a large university in Vietnam were invited to participate in the current study. At the time of the study, these English-majored students were following one of the three fields namely English Teacher Education, English Language Studies, and English Translation and Interpretation with 88, 227 and 42 students respectively. Two-third of the participants are females (276 students, accounting for 77.3%). These students were from all cohorts with 26.6% freshmen, 9% sophomores, 38.1% juniors and 26.3% seniors.

3.2 The questionnaire

A questionnaire with 16 questions was designed to investigate English-majored students’ internet use habits (see Appendix). Question 1 to Question 14 explore students’ internet use habits such as the frequency, time, and length they access to the internet, where they get such an access and their favorite websites. The last three questions ask some basic demographic information of the participants including their gender, their major and their year at university. After being designed, the questionnaire was piloted with a group of twenty students that had similar characteristics with the target participants. Some modifications were made to make sure that the questionnaire is clear and concise to the participants.

3.3 The procedure

After being modified, the questionnaire was transferred to an online survey in the Google Forms. The link was sent to the email list of all English-majored students of the university. After three weeks (from 6 to 26 of November, 2017), data was downloaded from Google Forms, and the survey link was not accessible to participants any longer to make sure that no new answer would be made. Then, data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.
4. FINDINGS

4.1 Vietnamese students’ internet use habits

The survey data revealed that English-majored students in Vietnam use the internet extensively. More specifically, 345 students (96.6%) use the internet daily. A very small number of participants reported that they used the internet weekly, one every two weeks or less often with 5, 4 and 3 students respectively. Regarding the internet use length, 39.8% of student participants use the internet for 1 to 2 hours every time they get access while 35.6% use it from 3 to 4 hours. It is worth noticing that 16.8% of participants reported that they used the internet for more than 5 hours every time they got access. Only 7.8% claimed that they used the internet for less than one hour.

When being asked about the part of the day they usually use the internet, more than half of the participants (55.5%) reported that they did it late at night. The second popular time that these students used the internet is the evening with 36.7% of respondents’ answers. Equal percentages of 3% of participants reported that they used the internet in the morning, afternoon and whenever they had access to the internet. This finding suggests that if Vietnamese teachers want to assign tasks for students to do on the internet, they should do that at night when more students are online.

The most popular place where these respondents get access to the internet is their living place (91.6%). Other much less popular places to access to the internet include school library (2%), net services (2.5%), and coffee shops or restaurants (3.9%). This finding is opposite with the claim made by Flor (2001) that Vietnamese people had limited access to technology. The reason for this may result from the fact that enormous changes in technology in Vietnam have taken place since the year 2001 of that claim.

Regarding the internet use purposes, the respondents reported that they used the internet mostly for entertaining and communicating with others with 93.3% and 88.2% respectively (see Table 1). In addition, students also use the internet for learning online (78.4%) and updating information (71.1%). These findings are in line with the study by Dalton (2011) and Cheng (2012).
Table 1. Students’ internet use purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you usually use the internet for?</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entertaining (watching films, listening to music, reading books ...)</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with others (sending emails, making phone/video calls, chatting ...)</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updating information (reading e-newspapers, watching podcasts ...)</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning online (doing online assignments, checking up new words ...)</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When being asked how they entertained with the internet, most students reported that they checked new feeds on their social accounts (79.6%) and listen to English music (78.4%) (see Table 2). In addition, about 63% of respondents claimed that they watched American or English speaking films or watch funny clips on the internet. Only 23.8% reported that they read books online.

Table 2. Students’ internet use for entertaining

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When you use the internet for entertaining, you ...</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen to English music</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch American/English-speaking films</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch funny clips</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read books</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check new feeds on your social accounts (Facebook, Zalo, Instagram ...)</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to watching clips or movies online, 88% of respondents reported that they watched them with subtitles and 60.2% reported that they watched with English subtitles.
### Table 3. Students’ internet use for updating information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you do for updating information on the internet?</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read Vietnamese electronic newspapers</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV online</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read updates from Facebook Page of some newspapers</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read viral posts on social networks such as Facebook and Zalo</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read English electronic newspapers</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 reveals that two popular ways that the respondents updated information were reading viral posts on social networks such as Facebook and Zalo (65.8%) and reading Vietnamese electronic newspapers (62.2%). Meanwhile, 49.3% of respondents read English electronic newspapers to update information. The somewhat similar numbers of respondents updated information by watching TV online (36.1%) and reading updates from Facebook Page of some newspapers (37.5%).

With respect to English-majored students’ favorite websites, Youtube.com was the most popular one for entertaining among the respondents with 59.9%. Other websites include those of online newspapers such as BBC, VOA, New York Times (8.4%), movie websites (6.7%), fun websites (5.9%), and so on. In addition, Facebook Messenger was the most popular application for communication among the respondents (59.9%). Other ones include Instagram (8.4%), Facetime (6.7%), Zalo (5.9%) and so on. Meanwhile, English learning websites such as VOA learning English, BBC learning English, Duolingo, Langmaster were the favorite ones for many respondents (124 students, 34.7%). The second popular website where the respondents did their online learning was Youtube.com with 98 respondents, accounting for 27.5%. The third popular websites for students’ learning were online newspapers such as BBC and VOA. Other websites include TED (6.4%), online dictionaries (5.3%), and social network (2.8%).

With such an extensive use of the internet, many respondents reported that their biggest problems with the internet use were slow connection (65.8%) and taking time (49%). Cost,
personal device and lacking of time for the internet were problems for much smaller groups of participants with 15.1%, 18.2% and 18.8% respectively.

In summary, the survey reveals that almost all student respondents use the internet in a daily basis for at least one hour to more than five hours every time they get access; the two major purposes for using the internet are entertaining and communicating with other while updating information and learning are also two important purposes for more than two thirds of the participants. It is worth noticing that social networks play an important role in students’ internet use habits when students use them as the main means to update information and communicate with others. The findings of this study are in line with previous studies on students’ internet use habit among Chinese university students (Jung, 2006; Liu, 2009), American students (Caruso, Kvavik & Morgan, 2004), Swedish students (Kullberg, 2010) and Vietnamese students (Dang & Nguyen, 2014).

4.2 Implications for teachers

With such an extensive use of the internet among English-majored students in Vietnam, some following implications can be withdrawn for the teachers.

First and foremost, teachers should use social networks as a means to send students not only class announcements but also useful links where students can access and learn new knowledge and skills. Teachers can work together to create online learning communities on a social network such as Facebook where both teachers and students can share useful resources. These uses of the internet would extend the idea of Martins et al (2004), Meagher (1995), and Warschauer et al. (2000) about teachers supply materials, knowledge and ideas to other teachers because students will also benefit from it.

In addition, some forms of incorporating social network to teaching activities can be useful and effective for Vietnamese students’ language improvement. One of such forms is asking students to post their writing and speaking assignments on social network and requiring them to give peer assessment. Thanks to this, students can learn from one another and help each other to improve their language skills. This idea is in line with the idea of researchers such as Cabaroğlu, Başaran & Roberts (2010), Cabaroglu & Roberts (2007), Hampel & Hauck (2009), Miwa & Wang (2011), Ware & O’Dowd (2008), and Warschauer & Kern (2000) who claim that the internet may enhance face-to-face communication and even replace it in EFL settings.
Besides taking advantages of social network, English teachers in Vietnam should notice that the internet has a great potential to enhance their teaching practices. Since Vietnamese students use the internet mainly for entertaining and communicating with others, teachers can guide them how to learn the target language while entertaining and communicating. For example, teachers can assign tasks in which English-majored students are free to choose a video clip or a movie they like to watch and then write reflections on it. A simpler version of this for lower level students is asking them to write down 5 new words they learn from the clip and try to use them in new sentences or contexts. Students can be encouraged to work together online or to exchange ideas about the tasks. All these activities can be used in a form of blended teaching or flipped classrooms where students are asked to do something online before coming to class. The benefits from this are plenty. Because students’ learning is individualized in the task, both weak students and good students have an opportunity to learn. This, in turn, will increase students’ motivation (Gitsaki & Taylor, 1999; Kasper, 1999; Osuna & Meskill, 1998; Parra, 2000; Pellettieri, 2000); incentive to participation (Ames, 2001; Ortega, 1997; Warschauer & Healey, 1998) and autonomy in the educational process (Broncano & Ribeiro, 1999; Hanson-Smith, 1997; Kasper, 1999).

Finally, English teachers in Vietnam should notice students’ favorite websites for entertaining, communicating and learning to improve their understanding of students’ interests. This will be useful when teachers choose materials and design classroom activities for their lessons. Once the activities and teaching materials are closely linked to students’ interests, the lessons will be more effective. As a result, the Internet can increase EFL learners’ motivation to learn the English language (Rico & Vinagre, 2000) and create new ways of learning and teaching ESL/EFL. With students’ favorite websites in mind, the teachers can use the Internet as an ideal learning and teaching tool because it offers authentic learning resources (Gonglewski, Meloni, & Brant, 2001; Singhal, 1997; Smith, 1997).

In short, English-majored students’ internet use habits in Vietnam imply many things that teachers can do to optimize their teaching practices. Therefore, teachers need to learn how to use Internet tools with support and encouragement from their teaching situations as suggested by Shetzer and Warschauer (2000).
5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, English-majored students in Vietnam use the internet frequently and extensively for different purposes. Therefore, teachers should be aware of the trend and make use of their knowledge about students’ internet use habits to apply various implementations to optimize their teaching practice. Further studies should be conducted to explore the extent Vietnamese teachers are aware of the issue and whether they are being prepared or willing to implement internet-based internet teaching in their contexts.
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APPENDIX

SURVEY ON STUDENTS’ INTERNET USE HABITS

This survey is aimed to explore your current internet use habits. Your responses are of importance to our research in terms of providing useful pedagogical implications to English language teaching and learning. Your information is completely anonymous. Thanks for your participation!

1. How often do you use the internet? (Please tick ONE option that is the most appropriate to you.)

☐ Daily
☐ Weekly
☐ Once every two weeks
☐ Other: ______________________

2. On average, how long do you use internet every time? (Please tick ONE option that is the most appropriate to you.)

☐ Less than one hour
☐ From 1 to 2 hours
☐ From 3 to 5 hours
☐ More than 5 hours
☐ Other: ______________________

3. When do you usually use the internet? (Please tick ONE option that is the most appropriate to you.)

☐ In the morning
☐ In the afternoon
☐ In the evening
☐ Late at night (after 11 p.m.)
☐ Whenever I have access to the internet
☐ Other: ______________________
4. Where do you mostly have access to the internet? *(Please tick ONE option that is the most appropriate to you.)*

☐ From school library
☐ From my living place
☐ From coffee shops/restaurants ...
☐ Other: ____________________

5. What do you usually use the internet for? *(Please tick all the options applicable to you.)*

☐ Entertaining (watching films, listening to music, reading books ...)
☐ Communicating with others (sending emails, making phone/video calls, chatting ...)
☐ Updating information (reading e-newspapers, watching podcasts ...)
☐ Learning online (doing online assignments, checking up new words ...)
☐ Other: ____________________

6. When you use the internet for entertaining, you... *(Please tick your 3 most common activities)*

☐ Listen to English music
☐ Watch American/English-speaking films
☐ Watch funny clips on Youtube
☐ Read books
☐ Check new feeds on your social accounts (Facebook, Zalo, Instagram ...)
☐ Other: ____________________

7. Do you usually watch movies or clips online with subtitles?

☐ Yes
☐ No

8. If you watch them with subtitles, they are usually in...

☐ English
☐ Vietnamese
9. What's your favourite website for entertaining?

__________________________

10. What is your favourite application for communicating online? (Please tick ONE option that is the most appropriate to you.)

☐ Facebook Messenger
☐ Viber
☐ Facetime
☐ Zalo
☐ Instagram
☐ Other: ______________________

11. What do you do for updating information on the internet? (Please tick all the options applicable to you!)

☐ Read Vietnamese electronic newspapers
☐ Read English electronic newspapers
☐ Watch TV online
☐ Read updates from Facebook Page of some newspapers
☐ Read viral posts on social networks such as Facebook and Zalo
☐ Other: ______________________

12. What’s your favourite website for learning online?

__________________________

13. What challenges have you encountered when using the internet?

☐ Slow connection speed
☐ Having no personal devices (computer, laptop, tablet, smart phones) for accessing the internet
☐ High cost for internet use
☐ Lack of time for surfing the internet
☐ Taking a lot of time
☐ Other: ______________________
14. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female

15. Your major is...
   - English Language
   - English Translation and Interpretation
   - English Language Teacher Education

16. What school year are you in? (Please tick ONE option that is the most appropriate to you.)
   - Year 1
   - Year 2
   - Year 3
   - Year 4
Washback of a University English Proficiency Test from Graduate Students' and Lecturers' Perceptions

Pakpicha Sriwilaijaroen & Chatraporn Piamsai
Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

The evidence of washback is typically demonstrated in the change of behavior and perception of lecturers and students who are associated with the teaching, learning, and the tests (Alderson and Wall, 1993), but little attention has been paid to the voice of test takers, especially in the Thai context, which indicates how students perceive a particular test, and which reveals the problems they face from taking the test. Thus, this study aims to explore the students’ and lecturers’ perceptions towards the University English Proficiency Test in terms of their washback reflected through their behaviors and perceptions, the challenges they experienced from taking the test, and the types of support they gained. This article is part of the research investigated the perceptions of 134 graduate students and four lecturers from the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University. Explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used in this study to collect the data by using a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The results revealed the positive and negative perceptions of both parties in various aspects. Eight challenges were found together with four possible solutions, and six types of supports. It could be concluded that there is an emergence of washback from studying the perceptions of the “low-proficiency” participants.

Keywords: Perceptions, Washback, the University English Proficiency Test

Introduction

As English plays an integral part in postgraduate studies in universities in Thailand, most postgraduate programs require applicants to take an English language proficiency tests. Generally, applicants of postgraduate programs can choose to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or a university-developed English proficiency test (Prapphal, 2008). Previous studies (e.g., Shih, 2006; Allen, 2016; Al-Issa, Al-Bulushi, & Al-Zadjali, 2016; Srikraiwat & Parnichparinchai, 2016) revealed that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students encountered several challenges, with varying degrees, in taking an English language proficiency test. In order to better understand how EFL students deal with the test, researchers have examined the issue by
linking it to the specific context where the test is administered. Although students’ experiences in taking the test and how they prepared themselves for the test have been investigated to a certain extent, it is interesting that this issue has been less explored in the Thai educational context, particularly at the postgraduate level. This study, therefore, primarily aims to investigate the perceptions of postgraduate students from the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts in a public university in Thailand in regard to their perceptions of taking the University English Proficiency Test developed by the university.

**Significance of the study**

Exploring the perceptions of test takers is crucial. It is important to note that only a few empirical studies about (e.g. Jianrattanapong, 2011; Sanonguthai, 2011; Lunrasri, 2014) have been conducted in the Thai educational settings. The findings of this study will benefit the faculty members, especially thesis/dissertation advisors, in terms of planning, designing, and delivering relevant support programs for their students as well as encourage the faculty members from the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts and English language teachers to critically reflect on their possible cooperation in providing effective language support to the students in a systematic way, and in the long run. As it is important to have test takers’ voices in mind, the findings will also provide the test developers with insightful information which can be used as a guideline in improving the test where necessary.

**Research context**

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts in Chulalongkorn University. This faculty has prepared artistic leaders in the areas of music, dance, creative arts, and visual arts for over 30 years. The motto of the faculty is to develop artistic leaders who are able to cope with bureaucratic, state enterprise and private sector admirably. This study focused on graduate programs only. The graduate programs are composed of master’s and doctoral degree programs. The master’s program offers two degrees: Master of Arts and Master of Fine and Applied Arts. Master of Arts includes Thai traditional music and Thai theater dance majors, while Master of Fine and Applied Arts offers majors in creative arts and western music. As for doctoral program, there are Doctor of Fine and Applied Arts and Doctor of Philosophy. The former includes music, dance, visual arts and creative arts majors, while the latter offers major in Thai theater dance only. The medium of instruction in the graduate programs is Thai. This faculty is staffed with 42 lecturers. All of them are native speakers of Thai. As for the
numbers of students, according to the faculty information in 2017, there are more than 70 graduate students a year to study in this faculty.

**Research questions**

This study was aimed to investigate the perceptions of the graduate students and the faculty members from the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts towards the University English Proficiency Test. The research questions of this study were as follows:

1. What are the perceptions of the graduate students and lecturers from the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts towards the University English Proficiency Test?
2. What are the challenges that the graduate students from the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts encounter from taking the University English Proficiency Test?
3. What types of support do the graduate students receive regarding taking the University English Proficiency Test?

**Definition of terms**

Washback refers to consequences of the test towards teachers and students. There are various areas of washback studies, but it could be categorized into two major types based on its influence on the teaching and learning: positive and negative. It is related to traditional multiple-choice large-scale test which are perceived to have mainly negative consequences, and the studies which a specific test has been improved upon some kind of assessment, e.g. criterion-based assessment, in order to exert positive consequences (Alderson and Wall, 1993; Shohamy et al., 1996). In this study, the washback of the test is the consequences of the perceptions that the participants have towards the University English Proficiency Test, and it leads to certain behaviors of the test takers after taking the test, and their self-preparation methods for the test.

**Literature Review**

This chapter reviews the relevant concepts underlying the study, including washback and the University English Proficiency Test (see appendix A). The chapter ends with related studies in EFL context explored from test-takers’ perceptions.

The studies of washback in language testing contexts began to appear in the early 1990s. Studies have been investigated the ongoing effects of established testing programs and how educational practice has been affected from the changes in systems of assessment. Washback effects could be highly variable and intimately dependent on context. There are various areas
of washback studies, but it could be categorized into two major types that are considered influencing the teaching and learning: (1) those relating to traditional, multiple-choice, large-scale tests which are perceived to have mainly negative influences, and (2) those relating to a specific test which has been improved for specific purposes, such as criterion-based assessment, or proficiency test in order to exert a positive influence. Thus, it could be said that washback tends to result in either positive or negative effects. As Andrew (2010) noted that “washback can be either positive or negative and reflects the influence tests and test practices on teaching and learning processes” (p.49).

As mentioned previously, it could be said that washback or test impact tends to affect students’ actions and/or their perceptions, and such perceptions may lead to wide-ranging consequences of the test. In this study, washback will be thoroughly explored to understand how the University English Proficiency Test influences the postgraduate students by “…length of exposure to the target language that are greater determinants of learning outcomes…” (Pan, 2016).

Additionally, the washback is a complicated phenomenon that consists of several factors including extrinsic factors, intrinsic factors, and test factors that motivate learning process and enhance learning outcome (Shih, 2007), and several washback models and hypotheses do not focus only on students, washback, and learning. Shih (2007), then, combined Alderson and Wall’s 15 Hypotheses (1993) and Bailey Model (1996) to propose a new washback model of students’ learning (see appendix B). The model includes five areas of learning that can be affected by test including (1) content of learning, (2) total time of learning, (3) learning strategies, (4) learning motivation, and (5) test anxiety. All factors are interrelated with one another and have influence on students’ learning and test results. The arrow lines showed the possible impacts that are likely to happen. This present study will adapt five areas of learning from Shih’s washback model of learning (2007) to investigate the washback effects. However, although there are five areas in the model, the study will explore students’ perceptions on the test that they have taken. The total time of learning and the learning strategies may not be explored because the students might not be able to recall their experiences in these areas when the test was already taken for a certain period of time.

Even though there are several previous studies (e.g., Shih, 2007 & 2009; Phanchalaem, 2010; Sanonguthai, 2011; Pan & Newfields, 2012; Lunrasri, 2014) revealed a great number of both positive and negative impacts from tests, only a few of them focused on participants’,
particularly students’, perspective when investigating washback of the test. As Wall (2000) noted that little we know about students’ perceptions on the tests as opposed to teacher’s perceptions. In fact, studies investigating test takers’ experiences are important because the quality of the test can be improved if viewpoints and concerns from students are taken (Gardiner&Howlett, 2016).

Therefore, it is worthwhile to conduct research in which test takers’ voices or ‘perceptions’ towards the test will be explored, as it will give illuminating and valuable insights into the challenges that test takers encountered when taking the test and how washback could be emerged from studying the perceptions of the “low-proficiency” participants.

**Overview of research methodology**

**Participants**

The participants of this study was divided into two groups: 200 graduate students, from the academic year of 2013-2017, and 4 lecturers from the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts in Chulalongkorn University. The sample size for the survey was 134 graduate students chosen by adopting a 95% confidence level (Yamane, 1967). Regarding the sample sizes for an interview session, it was selected by the range score of the University English Proficiency Test using a 27% technique, and there were as follows: (1) three master’s degree participants who received the highest score, (2) three master’s degree participants who received the lowest scores, (3) three doctoral degree participants who received the highest score, and (4) three doctoral degree participants who received the lowest score.

In addition, in order to gain more data regarding their perceptions towards the University English Proficiency Test to augment those provided by the student participants, lecturers who teach in the master’s and doctoral degree programs in the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts will serve as the second group of research participants. Two lecturers from master’s degree and another two from doctoral program were selected as research participants.

**Research instruments**

This study employed two types of research instruments: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview.

**Questionnaire**

The survey questionnaire items were adapted from the research framework from Shih’s washback model of students’ learning (2007), and from Lunrasri’s structure of the
questionnaire asking the students’ opinion (2014). The questionnaire was divided into four parts: (1) background information of the participants, (2) the perceptions towards the University English Proficiency Test and their views on the University English Proficiency Test as a part of admission and graduation language requirements, (3) the challenges encountered by graduate students regarding taking the University English Proficiency Test, and (4) types of support the students received from the faculty, advisor, and course coordinator regarding taking the University English Proficiency Test.

Regarding the questions about the perceptions of the participants, five areas were involved, and the washback of the students’ learning were also examined from rating their level of agreement of each item. The five-area in the questionnaire part 2 including 1) content of the University English Proficiency Test, 2) purpose of the University English Proficiency Test, 3) impact of the University English Proficiency Test, 4) language requirement and graduate requirement, and 5) test arrangement.

The survey questionnaire was comprised of both closed-ended and open-ended items. The closed-ended part was used because the data can be objectively quantified and analyzed. With regards to the open-ended part, since the data collected are expected to be comprehensive, the open-ended part should be applied in order to complement the data acquired from the close-ended part.

**Semi-structured interview**

There are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, each of which has its own distinct characteristics. In this study, a semi-structured interview procedure was used because it was more flexible when compared to the structured one.

In this study, two sets of semi-structured interview questions containing a list of topics and general questions were prepared. The first set was used with graduate students, and the second one was for the lecturers who participate in. The students were selected based on their University English Proficiency Test scores would be representatives of high and low score groups in the interview. There were three main aspects in the students’ interview which were 1) the perceptions of the University English Proficiency Test and the university language requirement, 2) the washback and the challenges from taking the University English Proficiency Test, and 3) usefulness of the University English Proficiency Test. As for the lecturers’ interview, the questions included two aspects which were 1) the perceptions of the
University English Proficiency Test and 2) the type of support from the faculty (i.e. the advisers, and the course coordinators).

**Data collection**

The data collection procedures were corresponded with two instruments: a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire survey was conducted with graduate students from the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts in Chulalongkorn University after the permission from the Dean of the faculty to collect the data from graduate students was granted. The questionnaire, with a cover letter giving necessary background information about the research project, was administered to the first-year graduate student after the midterm exam of 1/2017 academic year because they could be more familiar to the university system (i.e. the students knew more about academic announcement, or they could talk to their advisors at least once), so the data collected from these participants could be reliable. The other levels (i.e. second-year graduate student, third-year graduate student, fourth-year graduate student, and fifth-year graduate student), as they were familiar with the university system, the questionnaire was administered to them around the second week of 1/2017 academic year. It is important to note that the students would have one week to return the questionnaire.

As for the interview session, it was conducted individually with both students and lecturers who were in accordance with the criteria as discussed in Research Instruments Section. They were informed that their participation was on a voluntary basis. In so doing, before the interview session started, they were given a consent form which provided them with information about their rights as participants and the ways in which the researcher ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of their participation. The time, date and place of the interview were arranged for the participants at their convenience. All interviews were audio-recorded with the participants’ permission.

**Findings**

**Results for the research question number 1** about the perceptions of the graduate students and lecturers from the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts toward the University English Proficiency Test

Regarding the level of the difficulty of the University English Proficiency Test, the graduate students and lecturers agreed that the level of the difficulty in the listening, reading, and writing part of the test matched with the English proficiency of the graduate students.
However, the agreement came with some recommendations, such as the academic terms used in the writing part were too difficult, or the numbers of the reading passages as well as the time given needed to be reconsidered. Or, from their view (51.5%, n=69), the variety of the content in the reading passages was acceptable, but the number of the reading passages should be adjusted. More specifically, the master’s degree female students displayed more agreeable perceptions than the males from the same degree. As for the aspect of the test scores, and their self-report about the English proficiency, those students who had average scores from 42 to 58 supported the appropriateness of the level of the difficulty more than those who had the score in other ranges.

Concerning the appropriateness of the University English Proficiency Test, the participants believed that the test is able to reveal their level of English proficiency, and the test is beneficial for the study in the faculty. It could also be said that taking the test makes the graduate students become more active leaners in English language and pay more attention in studying English. As for the language requirement, both graduate students and lecturers expressed a very similar point of view that is the requirement criteria should not be as high as those set for the medical or English major students. This is because the English requirement can be one of the hindrances for the students who are better at the content knowledge but not the language knowledge to enter and/or graduate from the faculty. However, they agreed that the language requirement criteria are necessary tool to select qualified graduate students who are eligible to study at Chulalongkorn University. They also perceived that the admission and graduation language requirements can enhance the language standard of the graduate students from non-English major such as the Fine and Applied Arts field.

Last but not least, the perceptions of the University English Proficiency Test on the test arrangement and the multiple-choice test format were positive. The numbers of the test items or the time given for the test were also acceptable for most of the graduate students to finish the test in time. In addition, the process to apply for the test on the website, the examination hall, and the sound system were satisfied. Even the proctors were helpful in the test room, and the time for results announcement were quite fast.

Results for the research question number 2 about the challenges that the graduate students from the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts encounter from taking the University English Proficiency Test. The study found eight challenges from taking the University English Proficiency Test
(see Table 1) along with four possible solutions and the rate of the difficulty of the test were relatively high.

**Table 1**

The percentage of the students' perceptions on challenges from taking the University English Proficiency Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(in short)</td>
<td>(Percentage)</td>
<td>(Percentage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient vocabulary</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack good fundamental</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot follow the listening (listening part)</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not understand the reading passage</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar with the reading passage</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack grammatical knowledge (writing part)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient test-preparation time</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot finish the test in time</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remark: it is not the perception which needs the 4-point Likert scale to measure, the questionnaires, then, were designed to answer whether the participants were facing these challenges from taking the test by answering ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

From the table, 62.7% of the participants were having insufficient knowledge about vocabulary, whereas only 28.4% of all had insufficient test-preparation time. The study also revealed that both master’s and doctoral degree students were having the challenges from taking the University English Proficiency Test no matter how high the scores they received, and whether or not they could meet the university language requirement. However, it turned out that not all the majors were having the problems from taking the test; for example, master’s
degree female students from Visual Art and Western Music majors rarely had problems with the listening part, and they reported that the listening part was quite easy.

Not only the challenges from taking the test was reported in this study, the possible solutions to prepare the participants when retaking the University English Proficiency Test for the next round were also included. Those solutions were 1) self-study, 2) group study, 3) course enrollment at a tutoring school, and 4) English sessions with a private tutor. The participants perceived that self-study was the preferred solution, and only some of the graduate students suggested studying at tutoring schools.

**Results for the research question number 3** about the types of support which the graduate students received regarding taking the University English Proficiency Test

There are six types of support provided from the faculty that were 1) the existence of the Chulalongkorn University Language Institute, 2) the existence of the Self-Access Language Center, 3) general information about the University English Proficiency Test, 4) test-preparation advice, 5) alternative courses provided by the university language institute, and 6) workshops and special English sessions, provided by the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts. Most answers from the questionnaire did not mention whether the graduate students were satisfied or had any viewpoints about all those supports.

Rather, the questionnaire provided the information about whether the participants received those types of support or not, and the information about the various sources where the participants received the support, e.g. 30% of the participants viewed that course coordinators were the most informative sources. In order to help graduate students to pass the English language requirement, many supporting measures were provided by the university, such as self-study center (Chulalongkorn University Language Institute and Self-Access Learning Center), test preparation advice, alternative courses, and special English sessions on how to improve English language skills provided by the faculty. The Fine and Applied Arts students’ interviews expressed various points of view about the effectiveness of these supports mentioned above. To illustrate, graduate students both with high and low English proficiency, as well as some lecturers, held quite positive perceptions towards the alternative courses, while they had some negative perceptions towards the sessions on how to improve English language from the faculty.

The top three sources of support from which the graduate students received were advisors, course coordinators, and the internet, e.g., Google search engine. They also reported
that they did not receive a lot of supports on the University English Proficiency Test website, Facebook, web board (such as general web board e.g. Pantip and Dek-D), friends, acquaintances, tutors, or English teachers. Surprisingly, from the findings, around one-third of the participants rarely noticed that these kinds of support existed.

Discussion

There are 9 points further discussed in the study which were 1) characteristics and perceptions towards the test, 2) level of English proficiency and perceptions towards the test, 3) level of difficulty of the test and adjusting the test content, 4) challenges from taking the test, 5) useful supports from the faculty and other sources, 6) teaching to the test, test preparation and motivation to study English, 7) The contradict of quantitative and qualitative data, 8) Alderson and Wall’s 15 Hypotheses and this study, and 9) the stakes of the test and the 4th category (Alderson and Wall’s).

The various characteristics of the participants led to different perceptions towards the test, and it was in line with the previous study from Chen and Squires (2010) which found that gender difference is one factor affecting participants’ perceptions. In their study, female participants from different faculties agreed with the usefulness of the test in terms of the benefit for their future career more than male participants.

Regarding the level of English proficiency and the perceptions towards the test, 14.9% (n=20) of the participants did not receive good the University English Proficiency Test scores, but they were able to study abroad for both a short and a long period of time. They also had positive agreement with the appropriateness of the University English Proficiency Test and the university language requirement. This means that low English proficiency students do not always have negative perceptions towards high-stakes testing or university language requirement (Roderick & Engel, 2001).

As for adjusting the content of the test due to the difficulty of the test, the participants did not suggest that the test should be adjusted completely. They suggested the testing center add some contents, such as the reading passages related to their field. When content of a test or a test format is based on a narrow definition of language ability, there will be negative washback (Liauh, 2011). However, as the University English Proficiency Test is a high-stakes test, careful consideration must be made based on solid research findings and with a larger group of test takers, and the purpose of the test has to be remained as the academic not ESP purpose.
With regards to the challenges from taking the University English Proficiency Test, the graduate students seemed to face similar challenges, for example, insufficient vocabulary knowledge, lack of good fundamental English knowledge, inability to understand the reading passages, unfamiliarity with the reading passages, and lack of sufficient grammatical knowledge in the writing part. The cause of these challenges tended to come from being forcefully taken the test while they were not ready. This is supported by the findings from Shih (2006) whose Taiwanese students were coerced to take the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) when the test takers were not ready in terms of not having sufficient English knowledge for the test. It prevented those students from gaining insights into their strengths and weaknesses in English language.

The support from the faculty as well as the other sources, especially the informative advice and the alternative courses provided by CULI, in the participants’ views, seemed not to be quite useful for the graduate students. In fact, it was not appropriate to say that as Bailey (1996) stated that teachers have tremendous power to lead students to learn, to teach them language, and to show them how to work with tests and test results. This means that the information received from the teachers, advisors, or even course coordinators from the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts as well as the alternative courses should be useful for the graduate students.

Concerning the teaching to the test, the study found that teaching to the test was useful for the graduate students because it helped point out what to be prepared for the test, and how to do the test well. There were various viewpoints to support the results. For example, Shohamy et al. (1996) noted that teachers were motivated to implement activities to teach students for the test. While, Pan’s (2011) study revealed that teachers should also help students build a solid foundation, increase their interest and motivation, and help them to become autonomous learners, rather than, teaching only the strategies to do the test which may or may not help in the test room.

The contradictions between quantitative and qualitative data were found under the topic of “time given to the reading part in the test”. The conclusion of this contradiction was inconclusive as it needs more data to help support and decide the conclusion. It could be implied to the future research that more instruments, such as observation or interview protocol with more participants, can be conducted.
With regard to Alderson and Wall’s 15 hypotheses about the washback (see Appendix C), this present study could fit in three out of five categories (3rd, 4th, and 5th). It was found that washback in terms of behaviors or consequences resulting from the study related to the perceptions of students and teachers (lecturers) toward the content of the University English Proficiency Test, the stake of the test (see more in the next paragraph), and the washback on students and teachers (lecturers) occurred during and after taking the test were both positively and negatively.

As for the stakes of the University English Proficiency Test, from the findings, it turned out that the University English Proficiency Test tends to be limited to high-stakes tests in that the stakes of the test are varied depending on university policies and contexts. This means that the stakes of the test can be considered “high” when considering the university policy and the contexts as “80% of the graduate students who took the University English Proficiency Test were because of the mandatory requirement from the university. In fact, only 20% of them need to use English language for their professional improvement” (excerpt 100). However, the stakes of the test can be considered “low” because the university provides the alternative courses as the option for those who cannot pass the university language requirement in order for them to graduate from the faculty easier without retaking the test.

**Conclusion, Suggestions and Limitations**

In summary, this research studied about the perceptions which lead to a better understanding about the washback of the University English Proficiency Test in the direction of test takers’ perceptions, the challenges from taking the test, and the types of support the test takers received from the faculty and variety of sources. The findings revealed both positive and negative washback in various aspects through the perceptions which were varied from the characteristics, educational background and the level of English proficiency (self-evaluation).

However, the present study has two limitations that need to be addressed for the future research. Firstly, with the time constraint and the small scope of the study, the current study was conducted with a small number of participants from only one faculty of Chulalongkorn University. The results, then, were limited to the groups of participants from the Fine and Applied Arts field. Consequently, the results might lead to a certain degree of bias in the analysis and findings. Secondly, the findings drawn from the present study are not expected to be generalized to other universities or colleges of higher education in Thailand. As the findings indicated the perceptions, the challenges, and the useful suggestions from the faculty and
various sources only towards the University English Proficiency Test in Chulalongkorn University. This means that the results of the study may not be applicable to other kinds of high-stakes tests.

Last but not least, the study could leave some pedagogical suggestions to the graduate students, the University Academic Testing Center, and to the university itself. Suggestions for the graduate students, the findings of the study implied that the test-taking strategies as well as the studying about the specific language content, such as exception rules, were important for Fine and Applied Arts graduate students to be able to have higher scores from taking the University English Proficiency Test. This could be suggested that only self-preparation about English grammar or vocabulary are not sufficient to perform well in the University English Proficiency Test. The test-taking strategies for those who are not major in English language is also needed.

As for the suggestions for the academic testing center and the university, the findings suggested that specific academic terms included in the writing part (Error identification) and in the reading passages should be carefully selected. In addition, it seems to be unable to say that English language is not necessary for master’s and doctoral degree students. Thus, it is so significant that most universities should include the language requirement in the higher education policy. However, since the nature of each faculty in one university is different, and it could imply that the level of English proficiency of the students is varied as well, it might not be feasible to apply one language requirement criteria to graduate students from every faculty. This led to a suggestion from the study that before issuing the university language requirement, the stakeholders from various faculties in the University should discuss the language requirement criteria in order to make it appropriate for each faculty.

Acknowledgement

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References


Appendices

Appendix A

The University English Proficiency Test

The University English Proficiency Test has been developed by a university language institute since 1992. It is a language proficiency test which covers listening, reading, and writing (see table 1). The objectives of the test are: (1) to assess test takers’ ability in using English for academic purposes, (2) to use as language requirement for admission in international and postgraduate programs, (3) to use as language requirement for graduation from postgraduate programs, and (4) to use as self-assessment to evaluate test takers’ strengths and weaknesses in language abilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills tested</th>
<th>Specific features</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Time allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Short Dialogs</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long Dialogs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monologs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Cloze reading</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short texts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long texts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Error detection</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120 points</td>
<td>130 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Adapted Washback model of students' learning (Shih, 2007, p.151)
Appendix C

Alderson and Wall's 15 Washback Hypotheses

15 hypotheses under 5 categories were proposed by Alderson and Wall (1993, pp. 120-121) to describe how the washback works, and to refine the washback construct in empirical studies. The information is as follows:

Category 1: Hypothesis about washback effects on teaching

It was said that a test will influence teaching focusing on what teachers teach, how they teach, and a test will influence the rate and sequence of teaching as well as the degree and depth of teaching.

Category 2: Hypothesis about washback effects on learning

It was described that a test will influence learning on what and how learners learn. Not only that, a test will influence the rate, the sequence, the degree, and the depth of learning as well.

Category 3: Hypothesis about washback effects on teaching and learning

The influence of the test on the attitudes too the content, method, etc. of teaching and learning was included in this category.

Category 4: Hypothesis about washback effects on stakes of the test

It was emphasized that tests that have important consequences will have washback; and conversely, tests that do not have important consequences will have no washback.

Category 5: Hypothesis about washback effects on teachers and students

Tests will have washback on all students and teachers, that is tests will have washback effects on some students and some teachers, but not on other stakeholders.