Table of Contents

Editors’ Note
The emergence of Cultural Learning Shift in English Language Pedagogy and Teacher Education
Subhan Zein 1

Research
Paraphrasing in Academic Writing: a Case Study of Vietnamese Learners of English
Chi Do Na & Nguyen Xuan Nhat Chi Mai 9

Changing Trainee Teachers’ Perceptions of School-Based Assessment in Malaysia: an Exploratory Study
Mark Smith & Juwairiyah Ahmadun 26

Investigating the Influence of Webinar Participation on Professional Development of English Language Teachers in Rural Vietnam
Tien Mai & Michelle Oriciano 48

Assessing the Efficacy of Dictation Exercises to Improve SLA Listening in Japan
Christopher Edelman, Robert McClung & Peter Ferguson 67

Does Dictogloss Improve Non-English Major Students’ Motivation and Grammatical Competence?
Hang Nguyen 84

Teaching Practice
Using Extensive Reading Oral Reports to Enhance Spoken Fluency
Brian Wojtowicz 109

About Language Education in Asia
Background Information 133
Advisory Board 133
Editorial Board 134
Disclaimer 138
Notes to Prospective Contributors 138
Copyright and Permission to Print 138
Editor’s Note

The Emergence of Cultural Learning Shift in English Language Pedagogy and Teacher Education

Subhan Zein
Editor-in-Chief
School of Education, The University of Queensland, Australia
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3787-3211

Education does not occur in a vacuum – it is the product of the context in which it takes place. Language education is of no exception. In the context of Asia, a common discourse relating to English language education is its presumed relationship with Asian learning culture. As a general term, Asian learning culture has come to mean the pervasive traditional view on the importance of literary education and the little value placed on knowledge acquisition for practical purposes. The authority of teachers as the purveyor of knowledge is usually unquestioned, as is the role of students as the mere recipients of knowledge. Corollaries of this perspective are the focus on literacy and the prevalence of teacher-centred learning. Rote learning, repetition and focus on the instruction given by the teacher are by way of implications important features of this allegedly established Asian cultural learning perspective.

Nonetheless, this cultural value-based explanation has been widely challenged for its oversimplification of cultures and ignorance of cultural diversity (McKay, 2002) as well as the considerable differences observed between language classrooms at different levels (Kubota, 1999; Savignon & Wang, 2003). The stereotypical view of Asian students as being passive, less vocal and opting for more direct, authoritative lecture-style of instruction is not always an accurate description. Zhang (2012) argued that the repetitive learning, unquestioning attitude towards reflections and more conforming thinking styles associated with Asian learners are not necessarily a reflection of students’ inherent cultural dispositions; rather, they are more likely to be the result of varying educational contexts. In fact, in contexts such as Taiwan (Chung & Huang, 2009), Vietnam (Ha, 2004) and Japan (Kubota, 1999), more communicative and student-centred approaches have become increasingly common. The fast-pace expansion of international commerce, technology and communication resulting from globalisation has created concerns among governments of various Asian countries about the inadequate communicative competence of their citizens. The urgent need to prepare the citizens in order to be able to compete globally has become the rationale for the fast recognition of more
communicative approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and their inclusion in national curricula and syllabi (Butler, 2011; Littlewood, 2007).

Butler (2011) argued that although CLT and TBLT have enjoyed significant popularity in language education policies in many Asian countries, constraints are aplenty. These constraints, according to Butler (2011), can be categorised into three types: 1) conceptual constraints; 2) classroom-level constraints; 3) societal-institutional level constraints. First, Western-imported approaches such as CLT and TBLT appear to be ethnocentric in the employment of their features (e.g. oral-focused activities, the importance of pair- and group-work, and the role of teachers as communication facilitator), and rigid implementation of the approaches means lacking sensitivity to local cultural norms and beliefs that may value the so-called “good communication” in different ways. Another misconception lies at the prevalent belief among teachers in the use of communication approaches that solely focus on the oral language without sufficient attention being paid to the language structures and accuracy, when in fact CLT, for example, does not exclusively mean oral interaction or preclusion of grammar instruction (see Savignon, 2005). Classroom-level constraint has also become an issue enmeshing the implementation of communicative approaches, since problems such as lack of teaching materials, large class size and limited hours of instruction are commonplace. There are also doubts among the non-native speaking English teachers who feel their language proficiency is inadequate to fully implement communicative activities in the classroom. This results in their resorting to what they think as a communicative method but appears to be a mix with more traditional methods such as audio-lingual or grammar translation methods (Littlewood, 2007; Prapaisit de Segovia & Hardison, 2008). Societal-institutional level constraints, in addition, could occur when educational policies, assessment-oriented education systems and limited exposure to the language outside of the classroom adversely affect the implementation of communication approaches.

Thus, what appears to be happening is that Asian countries are confronted with the challenge to implement communicative approaches in conjunction with the local traditions and educational norms. Butler (2011, p. 44) identified that “…there have been a growing number of case studies that have tried to identify how best to adapt TBLT in various contexts, as opposed to solely addressing the difficulties with its implementation.” Singapore, for example, implements CLT with emphasis on integration of reading/writing and oral communication while setting its own variety of English as a target model (Zhang, 2006). In Hong Kong, the adaptation takes place through the inclusion of more explicit grammar instruction in TBLT and stronger attention paid to students’ examination requirements (Carless, 2007). Watson Todd (2006) reported that major changes were implemented at a university in Thailand where greater emphasis on focus on forms and summative examinations means the curriculum it adopts seems to be mixed rather than purely TBLT. In Indonesia, grassroot performativity means that the teaching practice of English for communicative use has seen the rise of the production of low-stake linguistic materials laden with cultural, religious and local wisdom of the Indonesian communities (Sugiharto, 2015).
The aforementioned adaptations are not solely methodological adaptations; rather, they signify some sort of cultural learning shift where the importations of certain teaching approaches or methodologies coming from one educational context are modified, reshaped and refined to meet the needs in another context. This occurs in the form of adaptations to cultural values, educational norms, religious beliefs and societal expectations. Sometimes the outcomes are completely new, as the language (English) is merely used as the tool – it is used as a Lingua Franca. As a Lingua Franca, English is a tool for the dissemination of local values and cultures. This is the case of the spread of teaching materials containing Islamic teachings in Malaysia and Indonesia, for example (Kirkpatrick, 2010, 2012).

But this cultural learning shift is not only occurring at the methodological level. Two domains in which cultural learning shift have probably gone unnoticed are classroom pedagogy and teacher education. It appears that a silent revolution is currently taking place in these two domains. This is what the articles in this Language Education in Asia (LEiA) Volume 8 No.1 2017 are trying to capture. All the articles in this Issue demonstrate a cultural learning shift occurring in the domains of pedagogy and teacher education. The six present LEiA articles demonstrating this cultural learning shift are:

1) Paraphrasing in Academic Writing: A Case Study of Vietnamese Learners of English (written by Chi Do Na and Nguyen Xuan Nhat Chi Mai);
2) Using Extensive Reading Oral Reports to Enhance Spoken Fluency (written by Brian Wojtowicz);
3) Assessing the Efficacy of Dictation Exercises to Improve SLA Listening in Japan (written by Christopher Edelman, Robert McClung and Peter Ferguson);
4) Does Dictogloss Improve Non-English Major Students’ Motivation and Grammatical Competence? (written by Nguyen Hang);
5) Changing Trainee Teachers’ Perceptions of School-Based Assessment in Malaysia: An Exploratory Study (written by Mark Benjamin Smith);
6) Investigating the Influence of Webinar Participation on Professional Development of English Language Teachers in Rural Vietnam (written by Tien Minh Mai and Michelle Ocriciano).

Dictogloss, paraphrasing academic texts, extensive reading and learning dictation have often been associated with the traditional view of literary education that places great importance on repetition, teacher-centred learning and strong emphasis on grammar. These pedagogies have occupied the English language education classroom worldwide for quite a long time; for example, Dictogloss was first invented about three decades ago (Wajnryb, 1990). But with the advent of technology notably evidenced by the occurrence of many language learning applications (Apps) (e.g Kahoot, Quizlet) and the rapid dissemination of the Internet websites on teaching methods and strategies, new pedagogical techniques are probably created every other day. Their increasing popularity might see Dictogloss, paraphrasing academic texts, extensive reading and learning dictation struggle to retain the important place they once occupied in the language classroom, hence their value being questioned. One could therefore easily dismiss the importance of the aforementioned pedagogies. However, the present six LEiA articles provide contrary evidence. With various modifications to tailor to the specific needs of
the students and to meet the demands of the local social and cultural contexts, Dictogloss, paraphrasing academic texts, extensive reading and learning dictation not only strive - they thrive. In each of the articles devoted to these pedagogical techniques, the authors successfully demonstrate the efficacy of their pedagogy given suitable adaptations to the local context.

First, Chi Do Na and Nguyen Xuan Nhat Chi Mai’s study was based on the premise of the importance of paraphrasing in academic writing. Collecting data from ten undergraduate students through paraphrased texts and individual interviews, the authors found synonym employment as the most preferred paraphrasing strategy, as opposed to syntactical alterations - something that appears to have reflected their cultural learning dispositions. Second, the minimal focus on oral fluency development in Asia was the starting point for Brian Wojtowicz to develop Oral Book Reports that were inherent to Extensive Reading, a pedagogy that had mainly been highly individualised and literacy-based. Wojtowicz’s study suggests that the integration of oral component into what has been widely used as a literacy-based pedagogy could increase reading enjoyment while fostering students’ speaking confidence, oral fluency and overall output performance. Third, Christopher Edelman, Robert McClung and Peter Ferguson challenge the predominant conception that places dictation as a grueling pedagogy through their research. Their study suggests that spaced dictation, when appropriately designed and modified to cater for the needs of local learners, is proven effective in diminishing cognitive burden. This results in the increased student decoding and linguistic feature identification abilities as well as greater aural input processing. Fourth, Nguyen Hang highlights the important role of Dictogloss. Her study demonstrates the benefits that Dictogloss could create in increasing learners’ grammatical competence and learning engagement, underscoring the importance of topics that suit students’ interests and local context.

Cultural learning shift seems to also occur in language teacher education. Mark Benjamin Smith’s article focuses on the implementation of School-Based Assessment, which is clearly a Western-imported method, in the Malaysian context. The findings of his study demonstrate the paradigm shift experienced by the teacher trainees once being exposed to SBA; the teachers developed more positive attitudes towards a student-centred learning approach and formative assessment being integrated in SBA. Smith’s study clearly indicates the element of Malay culture of confrontation avoidance, which means that the implementation of SBA needs to integrate tasks that emphasise harmony, cooperation and engaging interaction. Similarly, Tien Minh Mai and Michelle Ocriciano’s article on Webinars is in parallel line of reasoning. For the teachers in the study, Webinars were not only a practical response to the growing concerns about the lack of resources and professional development opportunities in rural Vietnam but also a precursor to cultural learning shift. It is reported in the study that the teachers voiced shifts in their pedagogical perceptions in terms of resource-awareness in challenging classrooms, the promotion of gender equality and consideration on alternative assessments.

Our present day era of language education has been defined as the “post-method” era (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). This is the era when full adherence to a specific method in the language classroom is probably irrelevant. The fact is that various types of methods and pedagogical techniques have been enacted, challenged and revitalised across time and regions
(Fotos, 2005), and this indicates the more inseparable and complex relationship between teaching/learning and educational contexts (Butler, 2011).

The implementation of the pedagogical techniques and strategies in teacher education in the articles in this LEiA Issue not only demonstrates the inseparable and complex relationship between teaching/learning and educational contexts but also how educational learning shift is currently taking place. What the articles in this Issue suggest is the abilities of teachers to adopt the Western-imported pedagogies to meet the needs of the students (and teacher trainees) and to suit the local educational context. For example, where culture is the dominant local context at play, the pedagogy is adjusted to meet the local culture. This implies that there are always different practices in different contexts, even though the pedagogy that is implemented is the same. This further reiterates Prabhu’s (1990) assertion nearly three decades ago that there is no best method – there is no one particular method that works well with everybody in any teaching situation, in any context. Methodological and pedagogical modifications to cater for the needs of the students and the local educational context are therefore imperative. Thus, it is evident that there is currently a shift in educational culture in Asia in which English language education takes place. The shift is a timely response to the rapid changes of teaching/learning environments and the diverse needs of learners, appropriated within the local educational context.
References


https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218533.n179
About the Author
Subhan Zein received his PhD from the Australian National University (ANU). He is Lecturer in TESOL at School of Education, the University of Queensland, Australia. He has trained teachers in the Indonesian and Australian contexts. He has published in *Applied Linguistics Review, Professional Development in Education, Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy, English Today*, among others.

Subhan Zein
Editor-in-Chief
Language Education in Asia (LEiA)
School of Education, The University of Queensland, Australia / m.zein@uq.edu.au
Paraphrasing is an important skill in academic writing – it is a cognitive skill that requires higher order thinking and high proficiency in both reading and writing. This research explored the paraphrasing ability of EFL learners at a tertiary institution in Vietnam and examined the challenges they face when paraphrasing. Data were collected from ten second-year English major students through (i) paraphrasing a given text and (ii) individual interviews. The findings revealed that participants frequently paraphrased using synonyms, but rarely changed syntactic structures. The interviews showed that the learners encountered several language-related difficulties when attempting to paraphrase, such as inadequate understanding of the source text and the lack of vocabulary to use when paraphrasing. This paper provides insights into EFL learners’ paraphrasing abilities and suggests some implications as to what EFL teachers should focus on to help less experienced student writers improve their paraphrasing skills.

Keywords: paraphrasing, academic writing, EFL, Vietnamese learners

In English courses at Vietnamese universities and colleges, writing plays an important role as a majority of course assignments are done in the form of essays and written reports. This frequent use of text-based assessments leads to a concern among language educators, namely that their learners might resort to plagiarism, or copying source texts without proper citation. One technique to prevent plagiarism and improve students’ academic writing skills is paraphrasing (Gardner, 1999).

However, paraphrasing in a second or foreign language is generally considered more difficult than in a mother tongue (Keck, 2006, 2014), especially for language learners who are
inexperienced in the academic world. Studies conducted with L2 English learners’ paraphrasing practices have reported on their failure to paraphrase effectively due to two main reasons: the lack of awareness of the importance of paraphrasing and techniques for doing it (Hirvela & Du, 2013; Khairunnisa, Sutapa, & Surmiyati, 2014), and insufficient language proficiency (Keck, 2006, 2014; Liao & Tseng, 2010; Milicevic & Tsedryk, 2011; Shi, 2004). In addition, several scholars (e.g., Chien, 2014; Keck, 2014; Shi, 2004) have discussed L2 learners’ paraphrasing problems in terms of their cultural attitudes toward texts. Specifically, in some cultures knowledge is seen as a property of the society; everyone has the right to use that knowledge for their own purposes, so copying chunks from original texts is considered preferable (Chien, 2014).

These previous studies, however, have focused on identifying L2 learners’ linguistic difficulties when attempting to paraphrase and paid less attention to learners’ voices and perspectives about paraphrasing. The present study therefore was conducted to not only investigate the paraphrasing ability of Vietnamese college-level EFL learners, but also explore the challenges they face when attempting to paraphrase in academic writing. The paper starts by looking at previous studies on the issue of paraphrasing, followed by descriptions of the methodology used to obtain data for the research. It then presents the research findings and discussion in relation to relevant research on L2 learners’ paraphrasing skills. The paper concludes with pedagogical implications for helping less experienced student writers improve their paraphrasing ability.

**Literature Review**

**Paraphrasing and Its Techniques**

Most researchers, when clarifying the meaning of paraphrasing, focus on changes in word use and syntactic structures and the similarity of meaning between the original and paraphrased texts. For example, Richards and Schmidt (2010) defined “paraphrase” as “an expression of the meaning of a word or phrase using other words or phrases, often in an attempt to make the meaning easier to understand” (p. 420). In addition, Bailey (2006) put forward the idea that paraphrasing involves changing a text while still retaining its meaning. As these definitions show, a paraphrased text contains different lexical and syntactic items from the source, but retains the meaning. One further point is that paraphrasing does not shorten the length of text, which distinguishes paraphrasing from summarizing (Hirvela & Du, 2013).

In order to successfully paraphrase, L2 learners need to utilize complex cognitive and linguistic skills. First, they have to understand the meaning of the text properly, which activates their reading ability (Wette, 2010). The next step is to select important points of the source text so as to transform and integrate them into their writing in a meaningful and accurate way (Shi, 2004). This transformation can be done by using appropriate lexical items to replace those in the original text. Specifically, Bailey (2006) suggested using synonyms (e.g., *studies* in place of *research*), changing word class (e.g., *in the mountains* for *mountainous regions*), changing word order (e.g., *the collapse of Egyptian society began* for *Ancient Egypt collapsed*), or a combination of all of the above-mentioned techniques. Additionally, Rogers (2007) recommended changing sentence structures (e.g., from active to passive, direct speech to indirect speech), or using other structures appropriately and correctly while paraphrasing.
These two techniques have also been reported to be frequently used by L2 English learners in their attempts to paraphrase (see Keck, 2006, 2014).

**The Importance of Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing is an important skill in second language academic writing. First, it prevents learners from plagiarizing as experienced L2 writers who are familiar with paraphrasing techniques have been found to rely less on source texts than their novice peers (see Keck, 2014). Second, paraphrasing can also show learners’ understanding of the source text (Keck, 206; Wette, 2010) and demonstrates how well they can read and write in their second language. It is therefore a beneficial indicator for L2 teachers to gain insight into their learners’ reading and writing ability (Li & Casanave, 2012). Moreover, according to Hirvela and Du (2013), paraphrasing is not only a useful linguistic tool for L2 learners to manipulate the language of existing literature to integrate into their writing (knowledge telling), but it is also a meaning-making process that contributes to developing the content of their writing (knowledge transformation). This means that good paraphrases can enhance the persuasiveness and thus the rhetorical power of a piece of writing.

**The Reality of Paraphrasing in Second Language Education**

Numerous studies have reported on L2 learners’ unsuccessful attempts at paraphrasing. In particular, Keck (2006) compared paraphrasing strategies used by L1 and L2 English writers at a US university, and found that more L2 writers’ papers could be categorized as “Near Copies”, while more L1 writers’ paraphrased text fell under the categories of “Moderate revision” and “Substantial revision”. These types of paraphrase, as explained by Keck, are based on the calculation of the number of word uses that are similar between the source and the paraphrased text. Similarly, L2 learners in other studies (e.g., Khairunnisa et al 2014; Liao & Tseng, 2010; Milicevic & Tsedryk, 2011; Pecorari, 2003; Shi, 2004) were reported to copy large chunks of words or phrases from source texts without proper references.

Most of the above-cited studies examined problems with L2 learners’ paraphrasing based entirely on analyzing their written work. While this provides useful evidence about learners’ paraphrasing abilities, it does not shed light on their perspectives and thought processes as learners paraphrased. The smaller number of studies that did this through surveys and interviews with student writers were able to provide valuable insights into students’ perception of paraphrasing as well as reveal difficulties that they faced while paraphrasing. Hirvela and Du (2013) is one of the few studies that qualitatively examined paraphrasing from L2 learners’ perspectives and found that their participants were well aware of the importance of paraphrasing. Nevertheless, they considered paraphrasing more as linguistic manipulation to prevent them from plagiarism, rather than a significant tool for language learning and knowledge transforming. These scholars then argue against limiting the teaching of paraphrasing to mainly linguistic-oriented techniques, as this fails to enable L2 writers to see the rhetorical power of paraphrasing in enriching the content of their written work.

In terms of difficulty in paraphrasing, Khairunnisa et al (2014) reported that the reasons why Thai university learners in their study were not able to paraphrase well were their unawareness of the method of paraphrasing and their lack of understanding of what constitutes good
paraphrases. Other researchers, however, have argued that even when L2 learners are highly aware of different paraphrasing techniques, they might fail to produce good paraphrased texts in practice due to their limited language proficiency. For example, Liao and Tseng (2010) found that their Chinese participants did not appropriately paraphrase despite having been taught in their English classes about how to use synonymous vocabulary to reconstruct source texts. This study revealed that this was due to learners’ lack of vocabulary to change the words in the original texts. This finding resonates with Milicevic and Tsedryk (2011) and Hirvela and Du (2013), in which L2 earners admitted their difficulties in utilizing lexical resources for paraphrasing.

Most existing studies have focused on identifying L2 learners’ linguistic difficulties when attempting to paraphrase. However, those studies have paid less attention to learners’ voices and perspectives about paraphrasing (Hirvela & Du, 2013). Also, despite a growing body of research on the paraphrasing ability of L2 English learners, little research of this kind has been conducted with Vietnamese learners in the context of English teaching and learning in Vietnam. Against this background, this research was conducted to explore Vietnamese EFL learners’ paraphrasing ability and to uncover both linguistic and non-linguistic factors (e.g., awareness of paraphrasing) that hinder the effectiveness of their paraphrasing.

**Methodology**

**Research Questions**

This study aims to address the following questions:

1) How do Vietnamese EFL learners paraphrase?
2) What are their perceptions of paraphrasing? Specifically,
   2.1. To what extent are they aware of the importance of paraphrasing?
   2.2. What are their difficulties in paraphrasing?

**Context and Participants**

The participants were ten English major learners (five males and five females) in their second year of study at a public university in Vietnam. All participants speak Vietnamese as their first language. Prior to taking part in the study, they had had eight years of English instruction at school level and one year of intensive English training at university. At schools these participants had two to three hours of English instruction per week and their English classes were focused on grammar and vocabulary acquisition. As English major learners at university, they had intensive practice in all the four skills, including writing. The learners’ English proficiency was estimated to be at B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as they had passed final tests designed in accordance with CEFR at B1 level at the end of their first year of study.

These participants were randomly selected from a class of 24 learners. At the time the research was conducted, they were in the process of learning to write academic essays and had been taught about the importance of paraphrasing. They had also had the opportunity to practice paraphrasing in their academic writing class.
Data Collection Instruments

Paraphrasing practice. The participants were required to paraphrase a text of 288 words provided by the researchers (see Appendix A). The participants were first shown the text and asked to read through it to gain an understanding. Then, they were required to rewrite the ideas of the original text. The text was about homework and its pressure on young learners, which is one of the common topics in education. Its level of difficulty was measured using the Vocabulary Profile (VP) tool available at www.lextutor.ca (Savier, 2004). The VP conducts word frequency analyses based on Laufer and Nation’s (1995) Lexical Frequency Profile (LFP) index, which represents the proportion of frequent versus non-frequent vocabulary in a text. According to this measurement, 80% of the words in the original text used for this paraphrasing practice belong to the most frequent 1000 word families in English, 4.4% to the second 1000 words, 4.4% in the Academic Word List (see Coxhead, 2000), and only 11.2% do not belong to any of these lists (less frequent words). This indicated that the language of the text was aligned to the participants’ reading proficiency level.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with all ten participants. Each interview lasted between 15 to 20 minutes and focused on eliciting the challenges participants experienced while doing the paraphrasing exercise, as well as their reasons for using particular paraphrasing techniques (see Appendix B). The interviews were conducted a day after the paraphrasing activity to allow the researchers time to evaluate the participants’ paraphrased texts and have an idea of their paraphrasing abilities before interviewing them. Vietnamese was used in all interviews as it was the shared language between the participants and the researchers.

Data Analysis

After the participants finished their paraphrasing practice, their paragraphs with paraphrased parts were collected and compared with the original text. When comparing the texts, the researchers paid attention to similarities and differences in word use, structures, and meaning of the two texts. Based on this, participants’ paraphrased texts were categorised as either “successfully paraphrased” or “unsuccessfully paraphrased”. The former contained substantial modification in word use and structures, while still retaining the meaning of the original text; and the latter either copied large chunks from the original text with little or no modification, or attempted to change word use and structures but the original meaning was either changed or obscured. Additionally, paraphrasing techniques used by the participants were identified following Bailey’s (2006) and Rogers’ (2007) categorisation of techniques for paraphrasing (see Literature Review section for descriptions of these techniques).

The ten interviews were transcribed and coded by the first author according to three phases of qualitative content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Dörnyei, 2007). In the first phase, relevant data segments were located. Specifically, the whole data set was first read through and segments containing the students’ explanations of their paraphrasing techniques and the difficulties they faced while paraphrasing were highlighted. Next was generating initial codes. All highlighted segments were read again and initial codes were given to the segments based on keywords and phrases in the segments that directly referred to difficulties in paraphrasing. Finally, existing codes were examined and grouped into potential themes and clear names.
were then generated for each theme (see Appendix C for a coding example). The coding process was done with the Vietnamese transcription. Interview excerpts that were included in this report were translated into English by the first author and cross-checked by the second author. To ensure the reliability of the coding, the second author coded 30 percent of the interview data and confirmed the individual codes and emerging themes.

While findings from the paraphrasing practice demonstrated learners’ paraphrasing abilities, hence addressing the first research questions, the interview findings revealed participants’ strategies and preferences when paraphrasing, as well as their perception of paraphrasing (research question 2).

**Findings**

**Participants’ Paraphrasing Abilities**

The first research question sought to examine Vietnamese EFL learners’ paraphrasing ability. Analyses of the ten participants’ paraphrased texts revealed that student performance differed markedly, and could be categorized into two groups. The first group contained four participants who were able to paraphrase the text well. The other group were those who had problems in their paraphrasing and did not make successful changes in their texts.

For the group who were able to paraphrase well, synonyms were employed the most in their paraphrased texts. Specifically, each piece of paraphrased work contained from 20 to 25 words and phrases that were replaced by their synonyms. Table 1 summarizes some common replaced words and phrases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original text</th>
<th>Paraphrased texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td>Recent days/Nowadays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Too much/A lot of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps them from</td>
<td>Prevent them from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having fun</td>
<td>Entertain/Relax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protesting</td>
<td>Objecting/Refusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give up</td>
<td>Forgot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loaded down</td>
<td>Tired of/Tired to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded favorably</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>Rejected/Don’t accept</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another frequently used technique for paraphrasing by this group was changing word forms (e.g., nouns to verbs). From 5 to 7 instances of word form changes were found in each paraphrased text. Table 2 contains some examples of word transformation.
Table 2

Examples of Word Transformation in Successfully Paraphrased Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original text</th>
<th>Paraphrased text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[homework they] Get</td>
<td>Getting [homework]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[keeps them from] Playing</td>
<td>[make them unable to] Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[make] Boring [kids]</td>
<td>[make] Bored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Children] Need</td>
<td>[Children are in] Need of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[need] To play</td>
<td>[in need of] Playing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure [for children]</td>
<td>[children are] pressured</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Examples of Syntactic Transformation in Successfully Paraphrased Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original text</th>
<th>Paraphrased texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A recent study …reports that….</td>
<td>- In a recent study …, it is reported that…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- According to a recent study …, we can see that…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The question is whether</td>
<td>- He wonders whether/He said that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure for students to perform well on standardized tests has led schools to pile on at-home assignments</td>
<td>- Kids must be at home to finish their exercises and can’t go out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noticeably, although using different structures had been taught as one of the paraphrasing techniques, the participants did not apply it in their writing as frequently. To illustrate, only 5 to 7 instances were related to syntactic modification. Table 3 shows some examples of syntactic transformation.

Meanwhile, the second group of learners who did not paraphrase well either copied the original sentences or changed some words which obscured the meaning of the text. An example of this is shown below (replaced words that obscure or change the meaning of the original text are underlined).

Now, kids find out that the amount of homework they get keeps them from playing sports, taking music lessons or just having fun after school. Recently, a research by the University of Michigan reports that more than past 16 years, the amount of time the average 3 to 11-year-old kid spends on homework has developed by 50 percent. More and more parents are protesting against so much homework. (Participant 5)

As seen in the paraphrased excerpt above, the participant changed only a few words in the original text. She also misunderstood the meaning of the phrase “over the past 16 years” in the source text, and replaced “over” with “more than”, which completely changed the original meaning.

Another example of inappropriate paraphrasing from this group is due to irrelevant word use and copied vocabulary from the source text:
Nowadays, children find out the amount of homework they mix them with sports, music or just daily game. A recent research by the University of Michigan reports that more than past 16 years ago, the amount of time the average 3 to 11-year-old kid spends on homework has developed 50 percent. (Participant 6)

The interviews shed light on the participants’ strategies and preferences when paraphrasing. The first group of participants who were able to paraphrase were well aware of paraphrasing strategies. All four participants indicated that they used synonyms the most in paraphrasing because they found it simpler than altering sentence structures. For example, Participant 1 elaborated, “I think it is easier for me to change the words because if I have to change the whole sentence, I am not sure that I will use correct structures”.

These participants also explained their preference for using different word forms in paraphrasing. The most cited reason (by all four participants) was because this was an easier technique than having to think of synonyms. Participant 1 said that “I feel that it is easy to use different word forms because I do not need to think much about what words to use”. Similarly, Participant 4 stated, “I think that changing word form is a safe way because the meaning of the sentence does not change”.

Finally, using a completely new structure was thought to be useful but not preferred by the participants. Three of them reported that they were not confident that the original meaning would be retained if they changed the syntactic structure of the text. Participant 2’s response illustrates this point:

I was told by my teacher that it is very good to use a different structure to make impressions to the examiners, but sometimes I do not know what structures to use. I am afraid that I will not use correct structures or will change the meaning of the sentence.

Participants’ Perceptions of Paraphrasing
The second research question addressed participants’ perceptions of paraphrasing, particularly their awareness of and difficulties in paraphrasing.

Awareness of paraphrasing in academic writing. All interviewed participants indicated that they had been aware of the term paraphrasing and were given opportunities to practice paraphrasing in the form of sentences and paragraphs in their writing courses. In addition, seven participants claimed to be highly aware of the importance of paraphrasing in academic writing. They either considered paraphrasing as a useful technique to help them avoid copying ideas from original texts (participants 1, 2, 4, 5) or a demonstration of their language ability (participants 6, 7, and 10).

Difficulties in paraphrasing. The common difficulty that the participants shared was language-related problems. The group who paraphrased well reported that they could understand the given text well, but lacked vocabulary to use for paraphrasing. Therefore, occasionally they
had to use the same words as those in the original text. Table 4 contains examples of participants’ reusing words from the original text.

Table 4
Examples of Unchanged Language Patterns in Paraphrased Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original text</th>
<th>Paraphrased text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A recent study by the University of Michigan reports that over the past 16 years, the amount of time the average 3 to 11-year-old kid spends on homework has increased by 50 percent.</td>
<td>According to a recent study of University of Michigan, the average time a child from 3 to 19 years old spends on doing homework is increasing by 50 percent over the past 16 years. (Participant 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research confirms that doing homework is better than not doing homework.</td>
<td>Doing homework was better than not doing homework. (Participant 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, the group who were not able to paraphrase well attributed their unsuccessful paraphrasing attempts to their difficulties in understanding the given text. They thought paraphrasing was problematic or even impossible because they were not able to comprehend the original text or interpret it appropriately. Participant 7 commented: “I found the text difficult to understand so I am not sure that I had used correct words to replace those in the original texts”.

Additionally, even in instances where they were able to comprehend the original message, another difficulty that this group of participants had was also related to limited lexical and syntactic knowledge. Six participants who were not able to paraphrase well recognized that they needed to use almost the same words since they had no other words to replace them. For example, Participant 5 stated, “I know that I should change the words that they use in the text but because I do not know other words, I did not change.” Notably, eight participants admitted they were not confident that the words they were going to use could retain the meaning of the text; therefore, the best way for them was to keep the words in the text as a more secure solution. Similarly, these participants commented that even when they could understand the text, they did not always change syntactic structures unless they were sure of the accuracy of those changes. As Participant 6 remarked, “I am afraid that I will make mistakes if I try to change words or structures. It is better to copy than to write wrong sentences”.

Discussion and Implications
Findings of the present study provide insights into Vietnamese EFL learners’ paraphrasing ability. In this section, these findings will be discussed in light of previous research on L2 learners’ paraphrasing skills. We will also suggest pedagogical implications for teachers working to improve L2 learners’ paraphrasing abilities.

Learners’ Perceptions of Paraphrasing
Participants of the current research showed an awareness of the importance of paraphrasing. They considered paraphrasing to be an important skill to use when writing academically as it helped them to avoid plagiarism and thus obtain better study results. However, like the participants of Hirvela and Du (2013), their attitudes toward paraphrasing seemed to be mainly
at the linguistic level. The participants did not see paraphrasing as a tool for them to engage meaningfully with authors of source texts and assist them in better conveying their own thoughts or opinions on a writing topic. This attitude might have influenced their selection of techniques to use when paraphrasing, which will be discussed in the section that follows.

**Learners’ Preferences toward Paraphrasing Techniques**

In the present study, the group of participants who were able to paraphrase successfully were seen to make more changes in vocabulary than in sentence structures. Particularly, using synonyms was a popular technique among the participants. These results resonate with previous research on L2 learners’ paraphrasing practice (see Keck, 2006, 2014; Khairunnisa et al, 2014; Liao & Tseng, 2010), which also found that L2 learners often relied substantially on their lexical resources when attempting to paraphrase. Importantly, the current study also uncovered that the participants preferred using synonyms than changing sentence structures because they were afraid that their transformation might change its meaning. One possible explanation for this could be traced back to these learners’ attitude toward academic texts. In fact, research has shown that inexperienced L2 writers often felt inferior to authors of source texts and therefore did not feel confident enough to engage with them at a deeper level (Hirvela & Du, 2013; Macbeth, 2010). Another reason could be because in Vietnamese writing, direct quotations, or statements from well-known figures or authors (Phan, 2006), are more frequently employed and often considered more effective in strengthening an author’s argument than paraphrasing. Since the use of direct quotes requires no changes of lexis or syntactic structures, this might explain why Vietnamese learners of English might not think it is necessary to change the source text dramatically by altering its words or sentence structures.

**The Relationship between L2 Learners’ Language Proficiency and Their Paraphrasing Abilities**

For the group of participants who did not do well in the paraphrasing exercise, their most common problem was limited ability to comprehend the text. Consequently, most of their paraphrased works were still very similar to the original text in terms of word use and sentence structures. There were even instances in which participants misunderstood the given text and used expressions that changed or obscured meaning in their paraphrased texts. This finding confirms the close link between L2 learners’ reading competence and their paraphrasing ability, as has been pointed out by existing research (Keck, 2006; Li & Casanave, 2012; Shi, 2004; Wette, 2010). On the other hand, other research (e.g., Keck, 2014) has shown that learners’ use of copying or minimal revision of source texts cannot always be associated with their limited paraphrasing skills or language proficiency. L2 writers in Keck (2014) were found to mainly use paraphrases when doing a summary task, and only copy in instances where they thought it was important to retain the main points of the source text. This difference in findings could be because Keck’s study made use of summary writing in which learners were required to selectively decide what to include in a much shorter summary paragraph than the source text, whereas in the present study participants were straightforwardly asked to paraphrase all of the source text, not summarise it. Another difference is that all participants of the present study who did not properly paraphrase the source text explicitly acknowledged that their limited language proficiency was a hindrance to their paraphrasing practice. This supports the
argument that L2 learners’ language proficiency might negatively influence their paraphrasing abilities.

Another language-related difficulty commonly cited by participants of the present study is the lack of vocabulary to use when paraphrasing. They stated that it was not easy for them to find other words to restate the original ideas. This finding resonates with other studies which reported that many L2 learners were faced with language-related problems when attempting to paraphrase (e.g., Khairunnisa et al., 2014; Liao & Tseng, 2010; Milicevic & Tsedryk, 2011).

**Implications for Teaching**

It has been reported that participants of the present study tended to avoid making changes to the sentence structures of the original text when paraphrasing. Avoidance behaviour is not uncommon in second language acquisition, especially with adult learners (Kleinmann, 1977), and could be considered as a demonstration of learners’ language development. However, in the case of paraphrasing, this avoidance strategy might lower the quality of learners’ paraphrased texts and deprive them of the opportunity to practice their writing skills while paraphrasing. Understanding this learner preference could therefore be helpful for teachers working with EFL learners who are still relatively new to paraphrasing. That is, while employing a wide range of paraphrasing tasks in writing courses to help these learners practice their paraphrasing skills, teachers should place more emphasis on tasks that specifically require learners to make syntactic transformation, a technique that many of them might avoid.

The participants’ failure to understand the text, which then led to their unsuccessful attempt at paraphrasing it, points us to a suggestion that when teaching paraphrasing to less experienced L2 student writers, the teacher should pay close attention to the difficulty level of the source texts that he/she asks students to paraphrase. It might be more effective if the teacher starts with texts that are one or two levels below their students’ levels before moving to more advanced ones. This is to ensure that students are able to comprehend the source texts well before learning to paraphrase them, hence helping to build students’ confidence to start paraphrasing. Another useful strategy suggested by Wette (2010) to assist with students’ comprehension of a source text is to add an “in-between stage” (p. 170) when teaching paraphrasing. This means that instead of paraphrasing directly from a source text, students first work in pairs or groups to orally summarize the text or make a graphic map of it to demonstrate their understanding of the text. They are then asked to paraphrase from these oral summaries or reading maps. Including this transitional phase between reading and paraphrasing gives students the opportunity to unpack the content of the original text before paraphrasing it. Additionally, in this collaborative working process they can recruit help from their peers. Thus, this technique will potentially be helpful for learners who struggle to understand source texts while paraphrasing like some participants of the present study.

With regard to learners’ lack of vocabulary for effective paraphrasing, it is suggested that EFL teachers should focus some sessions of their paraphrasing instruction on synonyms. For example, Wette (2010) recommended directing learners’ attention to learning a variety of superordinate terms, or nouns that can be used to refer to a class or category of things, to increase their vocabulary size as well as their chance of recalling and using correct synonyms.
Research

when paraphrasing. Additionally, nominalization, the process of removing the human agent by changing a verb or adjective into a noun (Baratta, 2010), could be usefully taught to L2 learners. Nominalization can help to increase learners’ vocabulary, especially their knowledge of collocations, and also familiarise them with a commonly used technique to remain objective in academic writing.

Limitations and Conclusion

The study has some limitations. It was conducted with a small number of participants, which does not allow for generalization of the research findings. In addition, that only one text was employed might not reveal a variety of difficulties that EFL learners might have when encountering various texts of different levels of difficulty. To increase the breadth and depth of the inquiry on EFL learners’ paraphrasing skills, future research could recruit a larger number of participants and employ different source texts. Also, given that the current study provides a number of suggestions for L2 teachers to address learners’ paraphrasing problems, action research that employs one or more of these strategies could be conducted to explore their effectiveness in paraphrasing instruction.

Author Note

Chi Do Na, Faculty of Foreign Languages, An Giang University, Vietnam

Chi Do Na is a lecturer of English at An Giang University, Vietnam. He teaches Writing and Speaking courses to college students and teachers of English at secondary schools in An Giang province. His research interests are EFL teachers' and students' voices in education, curriculum development, and EFL teacher-student interactions.

Nguyễn Xuân Nhật Chi Mai, Hue University, College of Foreign Languages, Vietnam

Nguyễn Xuân Nhật Chi Mai is a lecturer in English at Hue University, College of Foreign Languages, Vietnam. Her research interests are English language teaching methodology, second language teacher education, and teacher professional development.

Contact information: Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Chi Do Na, Faculty of Foreign Languages, An Giang University – 118 Ung Van Khiem, Long Xuyên City, An Giang province, Vietnam. E-mail: chidona.ag@gmail.com
References


Appendix A

Original Text for Paraphrasing Practice

More homework or not more homework!

Today, kids find that the amount of homework they get keeps them from playing sports, taking music lessons or just having fun after school. A recent study by the University of Michigan reports that over the past 16 years, the amount of time the average 3 to 11-year-old kid spends on homework has increased by 50 percent. More and more parents are protesting against so much homework.

“The question is whether schools are holding our children captives with homework,” said Ken Kiewra, professor of educational psychology. He realized one day last year that his sixth-grade son had given up music lessons, the football team and his favourite hobby because he was loaded down with homework. "I'm home reading the paper and relaxing and this kid who left in the morning before I did is doing two to three hours of work," remembered Kiewra.

In response, Kiewra wrote an article for the Lincoln newspaper. Although parents responded favourably to his article, the school refused to change their homework policies. Kiewra explained that, from the school’s point of view, “Research confirms that doing homework is better than not doing homework.” He added that pressure for students to perform well on standardized tests has led schools to pile on at-home assignments. All work and no play can make boring kids. “Kids need to play outside and exercise or take art or music classes if they want to,” said Ken Kiewra. “At the very least, they need fresh air”.

This text is retrieved from perso.menara.ma/mhassim/ReadCompTests.pdf
Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. What do you know about paraphrasing?
2. How did you paraphrase the given text?
3. What were your difficulties in paraphrasing that text?
Appendix C

Thematic Analysis Based on Braun & Clarke (2006):
An Example for ‘Language-related Difficulties in Paraphrasing’ Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Data Analysis Activities</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locating relevant data segments</td>
<td>The whole data set was read through and segments containing the participants’ difficulties while paraphrasing were highlighted. Two of these segments are provided in the examples.</td>
<td>Sometimes I couldn’t find other words and structures to replace the words in the text so I just reused them. (Participant 1) The text is difficult so it is better to make few and small changes. I was afraid of changing the meaning of the text if I changed its syntactic structures. (Participant 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating initial codes</td>
<td>All highlighted segments were read again and initial codes were generated based on keywords and phrases in the segments that directly referred to difficulties in paraphrasing. In the examples the codes are underlined.</td>
<td>Sometimes I couldn’t find other words and structures to replace the words in the text so I just reused them. (Participant 1) The text is difficult so it is better to make few and small changes. I was afraid of changing the meaning of the text if I changed its syntactic structures. (Participant 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying themes</td>
<td>Similar codes that could potentially make a theme were grouped together.</td>
<td>The above underlined keywords/phrases demonstrated that the participants had difficulties with linguistic aspects of paraphrasing (e.g., words, sentence structures, meaning of the text). Based on this a theme was developed: “Language-related difficulties in paraphrasing”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changing Trainee Teachers’ Perceptions of School-Based Assessment in Malaysia: an Exploratory Study

Mark Smith
University of Brunei Darussalam
Jalan Tungku Link, Gadong BE 1410, Brunei Darussalam
Orchid: 0000-0002-7807-1779

Juwairiyah Ahmadun
IPG Gaya Campus
Kota Kinabalu

School-based assessment, while quite established in many Western countries, is still relatively new in the Asian education context. Consequently, operational problems such as time constraints, lack of teacher skills and inadequate computer management systems have hampered implementation efforts. While studies have been conducted which examined these issues, few if any have examined how trainee teachers feel. The following paper addresses this issue through an exploratory study on 25 first year bachelor of education students from a Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education. Findings showed that the majority of students were more positive towards a student-centred and formative learning approach after the students had experienced a teaching unit based on formative assessment principles. The findings also indicated that cultural influence may play a considerable part in the success or otherwise of school-based assessment endeavours. Results of this study may serve as a useful starting point for researchers interested in more classroom-based explorations of school-based assessment in Asia.

Keywords: school-based assessment, classroom-based explorations, Malaysia, teacher education

School-based assessment (SBA), with emphasis on task-based student-focused learning, formative assessment and critical thinking skills has been an established practice in many Western countries from as early as the 1970’s (e.g., Allen, 2012; Brown & Harris, 2009; Brown & Hattie, 2009; Cumming & Maxwell, 2004; Hutchinson & Hayward, 2005). In contrast, SBA is a relatively recent addition to Asian pedagogy (Chong, 2009; Davison, 2007). SBA in Malaysia, for instance, commenced in 2011 as part of the Ministry of Education’s plan to transform the national education system by encouraging teachers to increase their repertoire of

Language Education in Asia, 2017, 8(1), 26-47. http://dx.doi.org/10.5746/LEiA/17/V8/I1/A03/Smith_Ahmadun
assessment tasks which are authentic, contextualized and able to enhance higher-order thinking skills necessary for the 21st century. Like Western education systems, the move to SBA reflected a paradigm shift from Assessment of Learning (AoL) to Assessment for Learning (AfL) (Brookhart, 2007; Darling-Hammond & McCloskey, 2008). Traditionally, AoL is used in tests and exams to report the final or overall achievement of students (Vlachou, 2015) while the purpose of AfL is to enhance both teaching and learning (Black, Harrison & Lee, 2003; Earl, 2012; Heritage, 2013; Wiliam, 2011).

Despite the many benefits of SBA (e.g., Clarke, Timperley & Hattie, 2001; Klute, Apthorp, Harlacher & Reale, 2017; Marsh, 2007; McManus, 2008) success to date in Malaysia has been hampered by a number of issues, including insufficient guidelines, lack of teachers’ knowledge and time constraints (e.g., Abas, Rasali & Rahmat, 2013; Fook & Sidhu, 2006; Majid, 2011; Malakolunthu & Hoon, 2010; Mansor, Leng, Rasul, Raof & Yusoff, 2013; Omar & Sinnasamy, 2017; Rashid & Jaidin, 2014; Sardareh, 2016; Veloo, Krishnasamy & Md-Ali, 2015). As a consequence, Abdullah, Idris, Hamzah & Sembak (2015) believe that only moderate levels of SBA implementation are presently occurring.

While studies which document implementation problems dominate the literature, few studies have explored the cultural effect on school-based assessment and even fewer on how prospective teachers feel about school-based assessment. Students’ perceptions of educational innovations are important as they may motivate students to engage with the reform, and, therefore, impact upon the benefits that they might derive from it (Tong, 2016). While Kamarulzaman (2014) examined critical thinking skills of pre-service teachers, it was small in nature and did not address the issue of culture. This study attempts to address this imbalance by exploring the perceptions of 25 first-year trainee teachers to school-based assessment. Using the website http://www.assessmentforlearning.edu.au/default.asp as a model for intervention, this study hopes to expose the students to the value of quality formative assessment in the belief that students would use formative assessment more readily in their future teaching careers. The study begins with an outline of the relevant literature followed by a description of methodology and procedures, followed by an analysis of results and discussion.

**Literature Review**

There is considerable research concerning school-based assessment in developed Western countries such as Australia, USA, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Canada (e.g., Hattie & Brown, 2007; Kingston & Nash, 2011; Klute, et al, 2017; Tomlinson, 1996). More recently school-based assessment has begun to make inroads into Asia (e.g., Butler, 2011; Chong, 2009; Davison, 2007). However, studies to date in Malaysia have primarily focused on implementation issues of SBA. Consequently, the following review will concentrate more on the nature of school-based assessment, particularly in relation to Asia. It will also focus on the less explored area of culture and SBA implementation.

**Types of Assessment**

Assessment serves a variety of purposes including to: track progress, make comparisons, monitor achievement, identify misconceptions and identify strengths and weaknesses (Glazer, 2014). Ultimately, in the form of a grade, it can have a profound influence on peoples’ lives by
determining academic and career opportunities of students. In Hong Kong, for instance, high stakes external exams are the key to social mobility through access to greater employment opportunities (Berry, 2011). Consequently, Glazer (2014) recommends that educators ensure that assessment practice is meaningful but also fair and consistent. There are generally two forms of assessment available to educators: summative and formative. The latter form is more traditional in nature, largely concerned with the final or summative grade at the end of a unit, semester, grade or programme, and is usually represented by a numerical or letter grade score (Glazer, 2014; Isaacs, Zara, Herbert, Coombs & Smith, 2013). On the other hand, formative assessment is less formal, takes in a variety of forms rather than just test or examination and most importantly provides feedback to both students and teachers during the learning process (Glazer, 2014). This contrasts greatly with summative assessment, which stops at the judgement level, leaving the students with a grade but little idea of what they did well or how they could improve. A further important difference in formative assessment is the greater engagement levels as teachers and students gather, interpret, and use evidence about what and how students learn in order to facilitate further student learning (Klute et al, 2017).

**Nature of SBA**

School-based assessment is a form of assessment which is embedded in the teaching and learning process. According to the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA; n.d.), SBA is aligned within the educational philosophy of “assessment for learning” and has the following characteristics.

- Involves sharing learning goals with students
- Aims to help pupils to know and recognise the standards they are aiming for
- Involves students in self-assessment
- Involves both teachers and students reviewing and reflecting on assessment data
- Provides feedback which leads to students recognizing the next steps in their learning
- It complements other forms of assessment, including external examinations

School-based assessment arose due to the shift in paradigm from Assessment of Learning (AoL) to Assessment for Learning (AfL) (Reyneke, 2016). While SBA has existed in Western educational systems such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada much longer than in Asia, external testing still dominates the curricula in most world countries (Darling-Hammond & McCloskey, 2008; Long, 2006; Mak & Lee, 2014; McCollow, 2006). Reyneke (2016) suggests that the reason for this dominance lay in the traditional practice of setting standards to evaluate performance and ensuring reliability and validity. The assumption here, of course, is that SBA may not have sufficient reliability and validity. This is contradicted, however, by the HKEAA (n.d.), who claim that both reliability and validity levels are in fact increased through greater opportunities for reflection and standardization.

Given the traditional bifurcation between the two forms of assessment, Carless (2007) prefers to use the term Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA). With this term, learning comes first, both in formal and informal assessments. Consequently, all assessments, whether they are high-stakes exams or school-based assessment, should contribute to effective learning and reliable outcomes. Despite what terminology is used for SBA, all labels represent a shift away from traditional norm-referenced assessments to greater assessment emphasis at the school and
classroom level. This view is supported by Allen (2012) who suggests that a quality assessment programme combines both formative (for learning) and summative (of learning) approaches.

**SBA in Malaysia**

As mentioned, there is no shortage of research pertaining to the problems faced by teachers in implementing SBA in Malaysia. A qualitative study by Malakolunthu & Hoon (2010) on form 2 secondary teachers unearthed a lack of teachers’ knowledge, lack of monitoring, and insufficient guidelines. A survey study by Majid (2011), examined the concerns of 40 English teachers and found that teachers had high levels of concern in all the five *Stages of Concern Model*. Of particular concern for the participants were: how to modify SBA on students’ learning experiences and how to use feedback from students to change SBA. The issue of time constraints is supported in a survey study by (Abas, Rasali & Rahmat 2013) which found that most respondents believed that SBA was consuming too much time. Similar results were found in Omar & Sinnasamy’s (2017) study of oral school-based assessment in rural schools in Sabah. Technology concerns were identified by Abas et al, (2013) whose study revealed a lack of training awareness by teachers in using the SPBBS online system to record SBA results. Similarly, Fook & Sidhu (2006) revealed that the respondents in their survey study did not have sufficient knowledge to implement SBA effectively. In a more recent study, Veloo, Krishnasamy & Md-Ali (2015) found that, although the 155 teachers in their survey study claimed to be knowledgeable about SBA, they lacked sufficient knowledge to implement it. Concerns in carrying out SBA are also evident in other Asian countries. In Hong Kong for instance, Berry (2010) argued that, while Hong Kong has accepted AfL for some time, the country has yet to implement it effectively. Similarly, a case study in China by Berry & Gao (2009) revealed that teachers lacked understanding of assessment and consequently were unable to fulfil the assessment reform standards. Finally, a Bruneian study by Rashid & Jaidin (2014) involving 15 primary teachers indicated that the participants’ use of feedback in SBA was very limited. While the above problems are indeed serious, underlining them, however, are far deeper problems embedded in the social structure of Malaysian and the wider Asian society.

**Culture and School-Based Assessment**

In implementing any educational reform, culture, at the societal, school, and classroom level, plays a significant role in a programme’s success. Despite this, studies focusing on the role of culture and school-based assessment are rare. Sharkey & Murnane (2006) believe that successful implementation of formative assessment systems (such as SBA) require a school culture that embraces the idea that achievement of students is the responsibility of all teaching staff and the success of such programmes are dependent on continued learning. However, if the wider society values high stakes external exam results over formative means, such as SBA, the transition to continuous assessment becomes that more challenging (Rashid & Jaidin, 2014). The mixed success of SBA in Asian countries, including Malaysia, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore is a result of prevailing beliefs and practices that favour high pressure tests for summative purposes (Berry, 2011). In Hong Kong, for example, Kennedy (2013) notes that structured exams in Hong Kong are seen as part of the social structure of society. This is reflected in practices such as private tutoring, mock exams, drilling of students and teaching to the exam. Of course, emphasis on high stakes exams is not limited to Hong Kong. In Malaysia, levels of private tutoring have been growing for decades. Arshad
Research

(2004) refers to it as the *tuition syndrome* and believes that the strong emphasis on examinations in Malaysia gave rise to, and sustain this industry. Similar practices are also evident in other Asian countries such as Brunei (Rashid & Jaidin, 2014) and China (Jing, Hang & Zhang, 2007). It is as if parents from these countries expect and trust external examinations because of the social mobility that success in standardized tests can provide for their children, rather than the alternative of school-based assessment, which introduces elements of uncertainty in relation to aspects such as fairness and transparency (Kennedy, 2013). Naturally, these traditional views on assessment affect trainee teachers as well. The trainee teachers, in the present study, for instance, are products of older ways of thinking. They finished their schooling before the implementation of SBA in 2011 and hence are unfamiliar with more student-centred approaches to education such as task-based learning and peer and self-assessments. Consequently, for these trainees, their past assessment experiences throughout their schooling may strongly influence their present and future practices in assessment (Xu & Liu, 2009).

Given this context and, on the basis of research that suggests teachers are not prepared for SBA, it was expected that the students would have negative perceptions of SBA. Our research task, therefore, was: How could we change the perceptions of our students to formative school-based assessment, given the strong cultural propensity towards summative assessment? Chong (2009) believes that the challenge is to change the mind-set of the stakeholders by helping students to understand SBA. Chong's emphasis on exposure is supported in the findings of Omar & Sinnasamy (2017), which inferred that teachers’ inability to implement SBA may have been caused by a lack of exposure to formative techniques and strategies. One such strategy which exposes students to formative assessment through greater involvement and transparency is assessment for learning (AfL). The Assessment Reform Group (1999, p.7) AfL encourages teachers to employ the following characteristics in their assessment:

- Learning goals should be shared with students
- Students need help to understand the standards they are aiming for
- Students should be involved in self (and peer assessment)
- Students require feedback to help them recognise their next steps

**Methods**

The AfL model was used in this study as it encompasses vital aspects such as shared assessment and feedback, recommended by by (the HKEAA, n.d.) as essential components of SBA. Given our students’ apparent cultural propensity towards teacher-centred approaches, our research considered the following questions:

1. How do our students perceive school-based assessment and why?
2. Will students’ perceptions of school-based assessment change after being exposed to more formative assessment techniques such as AfL?

**Participants**

Twenty-five students (21 female, 4 male) undertaking the first-year Bachelor of Teacher Education programme at a teacher education institute in East Malaysia took part in the study. The students were aged between 18 and 22. A convenience sample was chosen because the participants finished their secondary schooling prior to 2011. Consequently, they were
relatively unfamiliar with the new curriculum, which focuses on formative assessment and higher-order thinking skills.

**Instruments and Procedure**

A three-step descriptive analysis methodology was utilised to conduct the study. Descriptive analysis provides a knowledge base which can provide the basis for further study (Travers, 1978). The first step involved a discussion and brief survey of students to ascertain their preconceived views of SBA. Students were given fifteen minutes to record their thoughts on the use of SBA in schools. (See Appendix A). The second, or experimental stage, involved exposing the participants to a more formative assessment environment, reflective of school-based assessment. To achieve this, students were introduced to a formative assessment task based on resources provided by the Australian website www.assessmentforlearning.edu.au. The website provides web-based professional learning resources that enable teachers to plan task-based lessons that incorporate self, peer, and teacher feedback through the use of rubrics. The instrument was chosen as its structure closely aligns with the principles of effective assessment for learning as recommended by The Assessment Reform group (1999) as well as the (HKEAA, n.d.). Finally, to gauge the perceptions of the participants towards the task-based formative approach versus a traditional approach, two structured surveys were distributed to the students (see Appendices B & C). Whilst surveys are often criticised for reflecting reported views only, they can provide valuable feedback to teachers to improve learning and teaching (Hsieh & Chu, 2006). Before distribution, the questionnaires were checked by two teacher colleagues for validity.

**Analysis**

Both initial survey and questionnaire results were analysed through descriptive analysis. Participants were coded according to sex (M or F) and given a number according to how the students appeared on the class register. Responses were recorded and tallied in an endeavour to reveal significant trends.

**The Task**

Based on the principles of assessment for learning, the researchers chose a lesson on measurement called *Capacity Sculpture* from the Queensland task matrix in www.assessmentforlearning.com.au In the lesson, students (in groups of four) were required to build a sculpture from a number of junk objects. Success criteria involved ability to measure accurately and to use problem-solving strategies. To highlight the differences between a formative and summative approach, researchers conducted the lesson using both student-centred and teacher-centred approaches. In the first session, a teacher-centred approach was used, covering exactly the same content but not giving students any opportunities for peer or self-assessment. No rubrics were used and all feedback came from the teachers. When the lesson was taught a second time, students received not only a task-based rubric but also feedback from their fellow group members and from other groups (peer evaluation).

In order to share learning goals with the students, explicit task instructions were given out as well as student rubrics based on 3 levels of performance: high, medium and low (see
Appendices D & E). Access to these documents enabled our students to firstly understand what was required and secondly, to take a more active role in the learning process (Marsh, 2007). Using the rubrics not only for their own groups but also to assess their peers, enabled students to be more involved in the assessment process and receive valuable feedback from a number of their classmates. Individual feedback came in the form of a completed teacher rubric for each student. Finally, as the researchers wanted to portray formative assessment as an ongoing cyclical process, (Heredia, Furtak, Morrison & Renga, 2016), diagnostic grids were given to the students to indicate how a teacher utilises the rubric results to determine future needs (see Appendix F).

**Main Findings**

Initial feedback from the participants before intervention (see Appendix A) provided mostly negative feedback towards school-based assessment, with some considering SBA a burden to teachers. Student F2 wrote:

> It takes a lot of time to prepare the activities, and at the same time, it would be unfair to the student.

Similarly, M5 wrote:

> Teachers do not have time to prepare so many activities as they have lots of administrative tasks to complete.

It is interesting that such views are similar to results of teacher studies conducted by Majid (2011), Abas, et al, (2013) and Omar & Sinnasamy (2017). However, after intervention utilising a formative, student-centred approach, participants’ attitudes changed markedly. These are reflected by the results from both surveys shown below.

**Feelings towards the Activity-Based Approach**

The first question asked the participants to explain their feelings while undertaking the formative, task-based activities found in the unit *Capacity Sculpture*. The vast majority of the students (88%) reported feelings of happiness while carrying out the activities. To support their responses, 28% of participants claimed that it was because of the co-operation or interaction involved in the group activities. Other main supporting reasons included the involvement or physical movement of the activities (16%) and that the activities were new or different (16%).

**Future Intentions**

When asked if they would conduct formative, task-based activities with their own students in their future schools, a resounding 92% of respondents affirmed in the positive. Justifying the use of formative task-based activities in school, more than half of the respondents (52%) indicated that it was because of the fun element associated with task-based activities. Other strong motives included attracting student interest (12%) and co-operative skills (8%).

Smith and Ahmadun - Page 32
Preferred Strategy

Item one in questionnaire B asked the participants to decide which strategy (teacher-centred or student-centred) they preferred. Seventeen students (68%) indicated a preference for the student-centred approach. The main reasons for choosing the student-centred approach included greater involvement in the activity (35%), (to) give experience (34%) and better understanding (24%). Significantly, however, almost a third of the students stated that they preferred the teacher-centred approach. Main justifications were: increased understanding (12%), need for guidance (12%) and learning alone (6%). The responses from these eight students may well infer a belief that a teacher-centred approach leads to greater understanding and provides more guidance, something that they may perceive as somewhat lacking under a student-centred approach.

Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of Each Approach

Items 3 and 4 required participants to name the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the teacher centred and student centred approaches (Table 1).

Table 1
Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of Each Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Student-centred approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-centred approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater classroom control</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-guided</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater student understanding</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater student involvement</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-centred approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of student focus</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of teacher focus</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-centred approach</td>
<td>Lack of focus/attention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In relation to strengths, it is evident that greater classroom control (27.9%) was considered to be the main strength of a teacher-centred approach, whilst greater understanding (36.8%) and greater student involvement (28.9%) were deemed to be the main strengths of the student-centred approach. Interestingly, fun learning was only reported as a strength by 10.5% of the respondents. The low response perhaps implies that students realize that there is more to student-centred approaches than simply having fun.

The main weakness of the teacher-centred approach, according to the participants was that it was boring (38.2%). Other perceived weaknesses included: lack of student and teacher focus (both 17.6%). On the other hand, given the strong emphasis on greater classroom control in the teacher-centred approach mentioned earlier, it is not surprising that most students felt that the greatest weakness of the formative approach was a lack of focus/attention (25%).

Approach That Participants Intend to Use When Teaching

Despite almost 70% of participants in the first questionnaire favouring a student-centred approach, less than half (44%) indicated an intention to use the approach in their future teaching. The remaining 14 participants (56%) indicated an intention to use both approaches, i.e. teacher centred and student centred approaches. Given that the possible responses to the
question did not provide the participants with a both option, the result was surprising. However, despite 56% of the participants intending to use both approaches, their reasons place little credence in the teacher-centred approach. For instance, of the twelve reasons, it seems that only one, balance/variety types of approaches (14%) provides real evidence of a desire for a balanced approach. The other main reasons given: student involvement (29%), effective learning (29%), an active class (14%), creativity (7%), lively class (7%), co-operation (7%) and thinking skills (7%), may all well be construed as supporting a student-centred, rather than teacher-centred approach.

**Discussion**

This research introduced AfL principles to a group of pre-service teachers, in the hope of instilling positive perceptions towards school-based assessment. Initially, it was found that the students in the study were products of their own traditional learning backgrounds. Consequently, like their practising peers, SBA was initially perceived to be a considerable burden on teachers. However, after participating in an intervention wherein they experienced a task-based formative approach, the students' views shifted significantly in favour of the formative assessment approach. Through active involvement in the assessment process using real tasks, students became more empowered in AfL concepts (Berry, 2011). Overall, the research intervention was successful in changing the mind-set of our stakeholders by helping them to understand the formative nature of school-based assessment (Chong, 2009).

Feedback from the participants showed that the notions of co-operation and interaction were important by-products of the formative approach. In fact, out of the ten questions in the two questionnaires, the notions of co-operation and interaction were reported as favourable in eight of the questions. This positive response is encouraging, given the crucial importance of the ability to learn, collaborate and solve problems in today’s society (Griffin, McGaw & Care, 2014). Further, a recent study by (Jacobson-Lundeberg, 2016) on the role of communication and collaboration, found that the teaching of these skills empowers students to learn other 21st century skills of critical thinking and creativity.

Also significant was the fun element of task-based learning. The notion of fun arose to a significant degree in two of the questions. The strong emphasis on fun and co-operation may well be attributed to the cultural values of a high-context culture such as Malaysia. Slacks et al.’s “turn-taking framework” in Wolfartsberger (2011) indicates that high-context cultures such as those found in South East Asia place high emphasis on a collectivist, harmonious and non-confrontational approach. The ASEAN organisation itself, consisting of ten countries in South East Asia, was set up to harmonize its ten member countries and bring greater benefits to all. While harmonious accord may be helpful in developing the soft skill of communication, it does very little in developing higher level thinking skills such as critical thinking which requires students to provide constructive feedback. However, in terms of strengths, it was quite significant that greater understanding was considered the major strength of a student-centred approach. In other words, fun was considered important, but not nearly as important as the need for greater understanding. While this is a pleasing result, the fact that almost a third of respondents indicated an intention to use both approaches in the future is also highly significant and worthy of further explanation. Their response may well be reflective of the very
strong cultural impact mentioned earlier in the study. The study sample was brought up in a culture whereby teachers are in control in a predominantly teacher-centred learning environment. Students were familiar with quiet, teacher-controlled classrooms, which was strongly reflected in their responses. Perhaps their own teachers felt more comfortable with more traditional methods of teaching. This notion mirrors the work of Marsh (2007), who states that many teachers encourage more traditional methods because they are well-known and these forms of teaching do not require the use of potentially threatening open-ended, student-centred activities. The apparent avoidance of confrontation is a cultural aspect which educational authorities will need to examine closely if more student-empowering formative methods are going to be successful. On the other hand, it was interesting in that, it was the collectivist Malay values such as co-operation, interaction, and fun that most appealed to the students in our study. In this respect, therefore, cultural traits of co-operation and teamwork can provide a positive contribution to greater acceptance of SBA and these values should be embraced by teachers. However, as co-operative skills make up only some of the 21st century skills, efforts are still needed to ensure greater use of problem solving and critical thinking skills.

The study is not without limitations. Firstly, the students chosen were from a traditional school background and had no previous exposure to SBA, and hence would be expected to be wary of or negative towards new formative approaches. However, the fact that two-thirds of the respondents were actually positive towards SBA (after intervention) is perhaps testament to the potential of SBA. A second limitation relates to the use of a convenience sampling procedure. Whilst the convenience sample in this study facilitated accomplishment of the task, it is acknowledged that reflecting reported views only, lacks external validity. To obtain greater external validity it is recommended that similar studies be conducted in the future on a larger scale, incorporating students who have been exposed to SBA as school students.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

This study has extended the current literature by demonstrating that, given the right tools and support, students (and teachers) can be informed and confident in implementing formative SBA. The findings suggest that trainee teachers are similar to practising teachers, in that they lack the strategies to implement SBA effectively. The study also reinforces previous findings regarding the positive effects of formative assessment (Kingston & Nash, 2011; Klute et al, 2017). Whilst the study was conducted in Malaysia, cultural similarities mean that it has wide application for other Asian countries grappling with SBA applications. In particular, given the common Malay culture which values co-operation, Brunei may well benefit in greater use of collaborative task-based assessment, such as those found in the assessmentforlearning website. Further, given the research evidence that suggests that many teachers are lacking assessment literacy, this approach may also be beneficial to other Asian countries such as Hong Kong and China, by showing students and teachers how to apply SBA using real task based activities. To increase levels of assessment literacy, especially in Malaysia, it is recommended that educational bodies consider the implementation of systematic in-service programmes on formative assessment, especially for those teachers who completed their schooling prior to 2011. It is proposed that these programmes be aligned to Afl principles and thus cover areas such as feedback, assessment criterion, peer and self-assessment and transparency. It is
acknowledged that these initiatives will take time, especially given the strong cultural preference for summative assessment which currently exists in the community. A community approach, therefore, in which whole schools and their communities explore AfL, is posited as the best way to counteract longstanding preferences for high stakes testing, which presently provide little in the way of 21st century skills, ironically, the same skills sought by many educational authorities in the first place.

**Author Note**

Mark Smith is a teacher educator with over twenty years’ experience at the primary and tertiary levels. He currently works as an educational officer at the Centre For Lifelong Learning, University Brunei where he teaches communication and language proficiency.

Juwairiyah Ahmadun has had more than twenty years of teaching experience in the secondary and tertiary levels in Malaysia. Juwairiyah joined the teachers’ training institute in 2000. She has supervised first degree students on action research in pedagogy since 2010.
References


Appendix A

B.A. Teacher Education: Class (October 3, 2012) Students’ feelings towards school-based assessment

What do you think about the new school-based assessment (SBA) in schools? Why?

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B

Perceptions of students after implementation of the formative group activities

1. How do you feel while doing the activities? Elaborate.
(Apakah perasaan anda semasa menjalankan aktiviti pada hari ini? Jelaskan.)

2. What do you learn from the activities?
(Apakah yang anda pelajari daripada aktiviti yang dijalankan?)

3. Would you do the activities with your students in school? Why?
(Adakah anda akan jalankan aktiviti tersebut dengan murid-murid anda di sekolah? Mengapa?)

4. What are the strengths in the activities?
(Apakah kekuatan dalam aktiviti yang dijalankan?)

5. If you are given the chance to do the activities, what are the improvement(s) that you would do?
(Jika anda diberi peluang untuk menghasilkan aktiviti pada hari ini, apakah penambahbaikan yang akan anda lakukan?)
Appendix C

Students’ overall perceptions of teacher-centred versus student-centred approaches

1. Which strategy do you prefer, the teacher-centred approach or the student-centred approach? Why?
( Strategi manakah yang anda gemari, pendekatan berpusatkan guru atau pendekatan berpusatkan murid? Mengapa?)

2. When do you think it is more suitable to use:
(Pada pendapat anda, bilakah paling sesuai untuk menggunakan:)
a. Teacher-centred approach
(pendekatan berpusatkan guru)
b. Student-centred approach
(pendekatan berpusatkan murid)

3. What are the strengths for:
(Apakah kekuatan:)
a. Teacher-centred approach
(pendekatan berpusatkan guru)
b. Student-centred approach
(pendekatan berpusatkan murid)

4. What are the weaknesses for:
(Apakah kelemahan:)
a. Teacher-centred approach
(pendekatan berpusatkan guru)
b. Student-centred approach
(pendekatan berpusatkan murid)
c. Which approach do you intend to use when you are teaching? Why?
Pendekatan manakah yang anda akan gunakan dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran? Mengapa?
Appendix D

Task instructions: Capacity sculpture

Your task is to make a structure or ‘sculpture’ out of empty containers, so that when you add up the combined capacity of all the containers it is 4.35 litres in total. The structure should be designed so that all the pieces are fixed together, and it can either stand or hang in the classroom.

Things You Need to Know:

1. Every container must be a different capacity.
2. The completed sculpture must contain at least four containers. There is no upper limit. Containers can be bottles, boxes, tubes – anything that has capacity.
3. The structure must hold together so that bits do not fall off in the classroom.
4. You must fill in the recording sheet that comes with these instructions.
5. Assessment – your sculpture will be assessed by your teacher for:
   • accuracy – how close to the target it comes
   • how carefully you have measured the containers
   • how well you have solved the problems that will arise
   • how accurately you have recorded and checked the sizes.

However, the sculpture is also a work of mathematical art, so think about the final appearance!

Source: www.assessmentforlearning.com.au
Appendix E

Student rubric for capacity sculpture task

Name: ____________________________ Date: __________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success criteria</th>
<th>Indicators of student performance</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to measure accurately in millilitres and litres using a range of appropriate measuring instruments</td>
<td>I showed I was able to measure capacity very accurately.</td>
<td>I showed I was able to measure capacity accurately most of the time.</td>
<td>I showed that I was able occasionally to measure capacity accurately, especially with some help.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I used suitable measuring instruments.</td>
<td>I showed I was able to measure capacity accurately most of the time.</td>
<td>I showed that I was able occasionally to measure capacity accurately, especially with some help.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I showed I was able to read any scales showing millilitres or litres or both.</td>
<td>Most of the measuring instruments I used were suitable.</td>
<td>I showed that I was able occasionally to measure capacity accurately, especially with some help.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of the relationship between millilitres and litres, and between millilitres and fractions of a litre</td>
<td>I showed I was able to accurately interchange metric capacity units, millilitres and litres.</td>
<td>I showed I was able to measure litres accurately and some of the time I could interchange litres with millilitres without making errors.</td>
<td>I showed I was able to measure litres.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I showed I was able to accurately interchange fractions of a litre with millilitres.</td>
<td>I could interchange between millilitres and fractions of litres with assistance from the teacher.</td>
<td>I showed I was able to measure litres.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success criteria</td>
<td>Indicators of student performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use problem solving strategies for measuring and solving the task</td>
<td>I organised the tasks logically.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use problem solving strategies for measuring and solving the task</td>
<td>I organised my work and I worked out some mostly effective ways of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use problem solving strategies for measuring and solving the task</td>
<td>measuring unknowns.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use problem solving strategies for measuring and solving the task</td>
<td>I sometimes organised my tasks and I worked out a way to measure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use problem solving strategies for measuring and solving the task</td>
<td>unknowns.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Source: www.assessmentforlearning.com.au
### Appendix F

#### Diagnostic grid for capacity sculpture assessment task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of student</th>
<th>Evidence of accurate measuring in litres and millilitres using a range of appropriate measuring instruments</th>
<th>Understanding the relationship between millilitres and litres, and between millilitres and fractions of a litre</th>
<th>Ability to use problem solving strategies for measuring and solving the task with accuracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.assessmentforlearning.com.au
Inoculating the Influence of Webinar Participation on Professional Development of English Language Teachers in Rural Vietnam

Tien Mai
Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Michelle Oriciano
University of New South Wales Institute of Languages, Sydney, Australia

Professional development plays a central role in fostering teaching quality. As teaching and learning in Vietnam have embraced a digital mode, the emergence of webinars has been noted. However, little is known about its impact on primary and secondary English language teachers, especially in rural areas. This multi-perspective case study aimed to explore the beliefs and practices of a small group of mid-career teachers working at different schools in a southwestern province in Vietnam as they experienced digital professional development. After having reflected on their participation in both synchronous and asynchronous webinars, the teachers were encouraged to implement selected techniques to engage learners in their teaching contexts. Qualitative findings from teachers’ interviews and observations demonstrate how this digital modality influenced their pedagogical and social cognition, impacting their classroom practices.

Keywords: professional development, webinar, rural contexts, teaching techniques, teacher learning

Among various forms and modes of continuous professional development (PD), attending workshops or conferences is an important activity (Borg, 2014; Wyatt & Ager, 2017). Borg (2014) verified the multifold benefits for attendees: expanding repertoires of English Language Teaching (ELT) techniques, participating in a network of professionals, and promoting professionalism. Nevertheless, the cost of attending conferences has left communities in some regions marginalized (Canagarajah, 2012), which urges PD decision makers to look for alternatives to face-to-face conferences. In particular, the affordances of web 2.0 have enabled conference organizers to hold webinars (defined as seminars on the Internet by Hockly (2012). Moore, Fisher, and Baber (2016) reported that the IATEFL web conference in 2015 attracted teachers from more than 41 countries. Cost-effectiveness, great convenience, and rich content are factors that appeal to virtual attendees (Harmer, 2015; Peachey, 2012).
The lack of PD opportunities in rural Vietnam is well-documented (Nguyen et al., 2014; Nguyen & Phung, 2015) but the quality of available teacher training projects is under scrutiny (Nguyen, 2011; Nguyen & Bui, 2016). Given the emergence of free webinars, this research project was carried out to investigate the benefits and challenges of school teachers when they were invited to train in a virtual learning environment. The study also explored the impact of the participants’ implementation of techniques acquired from webinar participation. The project presented qualitative data from interviews and observations of a multi-perspective case study of teachers working in Ben Tre, a rural province of Vietnam.

The paper starts with a literature survey that sheds light on features of effective PD program, affordances that results in the emergence of PD via webinars, and variables that map the PD landscapes in Vietnam. This is followed by a description of the contexts and participants in the multiple-case study as well as methods of data collection and procedures. What the participants learned from the digital training environment and how they implemented new techniques will be revealed in the findings section. Finally, implications of this study at local and other diverse contexts are elaborated.

**Literature Review**

**Decoding an Effective PD Program**

Concerns over poor quality of in-service teacher training courses were raised in the literature (e.g., Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Prince & Barrett, 2014; Stannard & Matharu, 2014), with Borko (2004) acknowledging that more often than not, PD programs can be “fragmented, [and/or] intellectually superficial” (p. 3). The underlying causes of unsatisfactory training outcomes vary; however, in developing countries, even teacher trainers were not able to set their own effective training agenda owing to the presence of centralized administration (Zein, 2016). Conflicts of interests could not be resolved when PD organizers did not address the needs of local training contexts, asserting their power in both the training curriculum and program implementation to gain financial incentives.

When it comes to effective PD program designs, researchers agree on the substantial variables: content, interaction, collaboration and sustainability. Firstly, the training content and materials should be relevant, situated and school-based with the presence of external expertise (Desimone, 2009; Sahin & Yildirim, 2015; Stannard & Matharu, 2014; Walter & Briggs, 2012; Zein, 2017). Accordingly, instead of a top-down approach in which policy makers inflict a rigid training scheme, participants should have a choice of training materials and modes of participation (Wyatt & Ager, 2017; Xerri & Campbell, 2016). In addition, participants are expected to play an active role in discussing and sharing experiences rather than just receiving knowledge from experts (Bates, Phalen & Moran, 2016; Desimone, 2009; Prince & Barrett, 2014; Walter & Briggs, 2012). The program should allow opportunities for on-going support with regards to trainees’ implementation of new techniques (Bates et al., 2016; Desimone, 2009; Sahin & Yildirim, 2015; Walter & Briggs, 2012). The complicated process of implementation demands constant support to result in teachers’ successful uptake (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Beyond skills acquisition, participants should be empowered to embark on their self-directed PD journey (Kennedy, 2014). In other words, teachers’ personalized development tracks do matter, and the one-size-fits-all PD approach could be neglected.
Gearing Towards Digital PD

Concerning the growing popularity of digital PD, Bates et al. (2016) identified elements in which the digital experience benefits participants: immediate solutions to pedagogic problems, external expertise, availability of digital resources and cheaper access but equivalent quality. Additionally, two modes of digital PD were classified: synchronous (real-time interaction) and asynchronous (delayed interactions, happening in different times for different participants) (Bates et al., 2016). Various digital platforms have been utilized across settings: a mobile-based web what showed virtual class tour in Korea (Lee & Kim, 2016), low-cost mobile phones whose memory cards are copied with class classroom videos in Bangladesh (Woodward, Griffiths, & Solly, 2014), or screen-casting technology for teachers learning about technology for any digital users (Stannard & Matharu, 2014). Users’ feedback indicated that the videos were “a gold mine” for PD owing to their instructional design and multimodality (Stannard & Matharu, p. 168). Although the usefulness of digital learning is reported, the sustainability of such platforms are questioned when post-teaching interaction is not sustained (Lee & Kim, 2016), and when teachers have not achieved mastery level (Woodward et al., 2014).

As regards replacing or supplementing traditional workshops and conferences, webinars can be viewed as a strong contender because they are integrated with digital interaction tools (Harmer, 2015; Hockly, 2012; Peachey, 2012). From the perspective of webinar organizers, careful planning, engaging topics, appropriate interaction, varied tasks, and technical support will increase attendees’ participation and motivation (Hockly, 2012). Results of a survey conducted on 122 online participants revealed that 84% of respondents felt the presentations were successful for their PD (Moore et al., 2016). Noticeably, according to Moore et al., the online conference attendees positively adopted the affordance of synchronous text-based interactions in the digital training environment: “Text chat discourse is at once complex and multifunctional, yet highly cohesive and meaningful” (p. 202). On the other hand, the participants’ behavior beyond webinar participation was not reported in Moore et al.’s quantitative study.

Contextualizing Vietnamese Teachers’ PD

Although PD has received attention as a key factor to boost Vietnamese learners’ English proficiency in the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project (Nguyen & Phung, 2015), the quality and availability of top-down PD programs in Vietnam are still in question. School teachers complained that the in-service trainings lacked both relevant content and careful planning (Nguyen, 2011). In disadvantaged areas, few training workshops for English language teachers are accessible, resulting in English teachers’ participation in the programs held for those of other subjects (Nguyen et al., 2014). Elsewhere, the training goals were not realistic. Some teachers were dissatisfied since trainers urged them to employ a communicative teaching model regardless of their contexts where the minority students were struggling with learning Vietnamese – their second language (Nguyen & Bui, 2016).

Several training models have been researched, affirming the value of bottom-up programs in which teachers were the active agents in the changing process. Teachers formed a peer group to provide constructive feedback on each other’s works through observations and interviews (Vo & Nguyen, 2010). Having realized that their working contexts were not conducive to
quality PD, teachers joined various professional development groups (Nguyen & Bui, 2016). Most noticeably, teachers in a remote area were able to enact educational innovations by modifying the prescribed curriculum and transforming their practices (Nguyen & Bui, 2016). However, no studies have been conducted to examine teachers’ learning experience via webinars. This study, therefore, aims to fill the gap by reporting on rural teachers’ participation in virtual environments. It investigates teachers’ attitudes and classroom practices after attending both synchronous and asynchronous webinars.

**Methodology**

**Contexts and Participants**

In accordance with the sampling method that exploited “personal relationships” suggested by Le (2012), participants were selected purposively from a cohort of 164 teachers in Ben Tre province in an intensive teacher training project for school English language teachers (consisted of 52 hours of instruction, covering teaching methodologies and technology integration) in which the first researcher was among the five co-trainers in late 2015. After a call for participation was sent to 10 active teachers who maintained frequent post-training communications with the author, four teachers volunteered to participate. These were experienced practitioners who had at least 5 years of teaching experience, working at different primary and secondary state schools in 3 rural districts. All the Vietnamese participants had permanent teaching positions, and achieved the level B2 in The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Although all participants are working in a specific province, they provide necessary insights representing Vietnamese school teachers in rural areas on the premise that the centralization of educational policies in Vietnam has been noted (e.g. Nguyen, 2011).

**Table 1**

Participants’ Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names (Pseudonyms)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years teaching</th>
<th>Learners’ age/grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linh</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Primary Teacher</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Primary Teacher</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tam</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Primary Teacher</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nhan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Secondary Head Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12/7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection**

Adopting an ethnographic case study design, the main instruments for the project relied on interviews and observation. A few strategies were taken to extract quality data from semi-structured interviews, including maintaining an interviewee-centered schedule due to participants’ heavy academic workload, making small talk, and using Vietnamese - the interviewees’ first language (Le, 2012; Nguyen & Bui, 2016). The transcription and translation into English was conducted by the first researcher, edited for brevity by the second researcher, and confirmed by the four participants. The second instrument was observation when the
teachers, acting as the gatekeepers who provided approval and access for the research purpose (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016), agreed on the researcher’s visits to their classes with their written consent. The aim of the observation, which was to study implementation of new techniques learned from webinar participation, was made explicit to the participants. Two weeks before their demonstrations, individual observation schedule had been carefully planned at the teachers’ convenience. In total, data was drawn from:

- 12 online, individual interviews, reaching approximately 8 hours of recording. The transcription well-exceeded 20000 words.
- 4 observation field notes of 4 classroom teaching lessons. Each lesson lasted 45 minutes.

**Procedures**

Three phases were implemented in the research (See Figure 1 and Appendix A). Phase 1 involved introduction to webinars (via email messages), and a tentative schedule to attend the first synchronous webinars in which teachers ticked their preferences from a list of webinars they would like to attend. This ensured that teachers had ownership of their participation, reflecting a bottom-up approach. Drawing on teachers’ feedback in Phase 1, the researchers in Phase 2 invited them to view asynchronous webinars (recorded on YouTube) that focused on their identified problematic teaching areas. Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 ended with individual interviews. The final phase entailed teachers’ demonstration of new teaching techniques in their contexts, followed by post-teaching interviews in which teachers reflected on their lessons. The final reflection was executed according to Wallace and Woolger (1991)’s post-observation framework:

- procedures: What happened?
- aims: What was achieved?
- alternatives: What could be done differently?
- self-evaluation: What have you learned?

**Figure 1: A Summary of Research Procedure**

- **Synchronous webinars**: live attendance, followed by interviews.
- **Asynchronous webinars**: access to recorded webinars on Youtube, followed by interviews.
- **Implementation**: experimentation of new techniques, followed by classroom observation and final interviews.
Each phase is followed by data analysis in which transcriptions of participants’ interviews were analyzed, with recurring words being reflected on, coded, and categorized (Saldanã, 2016). Themes were then identified, compared and contrasted among the four participants in all three phases to present an interweaving picture of their digital learning experience. The first researcher maintained a flexible position in the research process, switching between an outsider and a facilitator. As an outsider, he took a non-participant role when observing the teachers in phase 3. As a facilitator, he was involved in guiding teachers’ reflections in phase 3. One clear advantage of having the researcher as an insider (facilitator) is that vivid data would be collected (Berger, 2015). The practitioners’ reflections on their implementation phase were co-constructed by the first author who drew on his field notes to provide them with multiple perspectives of their classroom practices.

What follows is an account of the key findings, which present emerging themes relating to participants’ views on the two modes of webinar participation and their implementation of new techniques.

**Findings**

**Teachers’ Attitudes towards Live and Recorded Webinar Participation**

**Access.** The four participants did not encounter critical issues with regard to the registration process or webinars log-in. Nonetheless, connectivity and other unexpected incidents might affect participation. As a first-time webinar participant, although Tam could understand the online presentations via following the captions, he suffered a slow connection since his house was far from any signal hotspots. Also, home viewing was disrupted if viewers had external duties, as Ha experienced: “My baby was crying so I had to lull her to sleep. I was trying to focus but unable to grasp everything.”

**Content.** Apart from novel techniques that could be applied in their own teaching contexts, three teachers identified specific aspects of teaching that they had not taken into account prior to webinar attendance: gender equality, low-resource classrooms, and alternative assessment. This is evident in the following quotes:

> I haven’t paid much attention to gender equality in education (Tam).

> The reality is that there are many resources which we’re unaware of. Another thing is that teachers and learners are resources themselves, so from this perspective, I need to change my viewpoint (Linh).

> After viewing the webinars, I’m aware that I need to develop different assessment forms that do not entirely rely on discrete-item testing (Nhan).

Nevertheless, not every aspect of knowledge the teachers gained from webinars could be effortlessly mastered. In fact, when teachers faced uncertainties, they would link it to their cognitive deficit in the statements below:
When they use jargon, it’s a bit challenging because I’m not often exposed to such language. It’s also due to my weak listening ability [laugh] (Ha).

The definition of creativity is unfathomable (Linh).

The recorded webinars on YouTube enabled me to view many times, but still I was unable to internalize them because I don’t often practice listening skills (Linh in Phase 2).

On learning about their challenges, the first researcher extended his role in the project: becoming a collaborator who further explained the difficult realms that the participants faced. In particular, the researcher clarified the webinars’ challenging content, discussing each slide which teachers referred to.

**Interactivity.** The teachers provided contradictory views when comparing and contrasting webinars with traditional training sessions they had attended. Although Ha encountered an unexpected technical experience when using her tablet to view the webinar (“I keyed in a short response, but I forgot to send it.”), she felt positive about the chat box function, enthusiastically referring to its social functions: “Some texted content-related messages. Others were like chatting. It’s an interesting experience!” As she once had a negative experience attending traditional training sessions (“not daring to stand up or directly asking the teacher”), she preferred the digital mode because “the number of opinions even surpass that of the classroom.” On the other hand, Nhan clearly highlighted the advantage of face-to-face interaction: “We interact more in the classroom, joining more teacher-initiated activities, for instance, discussing, pair or group work game. Speaking of webinar interaction, it’s more about audio-visual but we haven’t really interacted much.” He later explained that reviewing the webinar materials is important to internalize the content.

**Speakers.** The four teachers, having reflected on their roles as digital trainees undertaking serious PD sessions, highly evaluated the training skills of the speakers in Phase 1. Positive comments were salient, ranging from addressing speakers with polite, professional titles such as “the teacher” (Tam) or “the expert” (Nhan) to enjoying their audibility and clarity of expression (Linh). Most importantly, the speaker’s training skills in virtual settings received acclaim:

Her pace of delivery was very good. She allowed time for everyone in the group to discuss and then she waited for responses. There was good interaction. When the speaker asked a question, she also observed the responses in the chat box, and then she shared her opinions. She also replied…like a real classroom! (Linh)

**Collaboration.** Other participants in the webinar community received a wide range of compliments owing to their quick, relevant responses in the chat box: “The way they answered was very professional.” (Tam), “They knew the topic very well while it sounded distant to me.” (Nhan), and “Other participants worked very fast.” (Linh). Beyond such admiration, Ha was
more practical when she expressed a wish for future collaborative opportunities, stating that she would love to share lesson plans with international teachers. From the perspective of a first-time webinar attendee, Tam described his feeling: “I experienced a little “stage fright”. I felt a bit less confident.”

The Influence of Webinar Participation on Teaching Practices

This section reports findings drawn from teachers’ reflection in the post-teaching interviews together with the non-participant observation field notes of the first researcher, who continued to act as a collaborator. The researcher’s presence in the teachers’ classrooms was likely to have caused the observer’s paradox despite his non-participant mode, affecting teachers and learners’ performance, as Linh admitted: “Class was quiet that day, not as exciting as they used to be.” However, it is imperative to note that when such negative impact was raised in the interviews, the first researcher would not facilitate further discussions. The final interviews, therefore, were less directed at guiding teachers to craft a perfectly revised, full-length lesson plan in the future, but more focused on teachers’ reflections on their instructional decisions stemmed from the application of new teaching techniques.

In retrospect, the four teachers were satisfied with their application, yet they agreed that major adjustments were to be made to master the new pedagogical techniques. Reflecting on the stage when students took turns asking each other from given question prompts to practice the usage of the modal verb can in an interview activity, Linh felt that “I should have added extra questions in the list because the students finished the interview activity faster than I had planned.” The first author suggested that she might have added verbs from previous lessons to recycle the input, and replaced the terminology “ability” written on the board with “can” because a learner had misspelled ablility (sic) when copying the word in his notebook. Her remarks showed that the teacher manual affected her word choice: “If I had written “can”, it would have been much easier for students to copy. My mistake was due to the influence of the teacher book in which the author wrote “ability” to explain the usage.”

Meanwhile, in Ha’s classroom, students formed two large groups to re-order mixed word cards to create meaningful sentences (a word bricks activity). She believed that her classroom management skills could have been refined when there was not shared participation among learners: “To improve it, I think we should form small groups. The groups were quite big, so learners tended to be grabbing their peers’ word bricks.”

Tam was content with his implementation of gender equality practices, reporting that he had selected students equally to answer his questions. Nevertheless, for subsequent classes, learning from the observation field note (See Appendix B), he agreed that arranging a more gender-mixed seating plan would be effective. In addition, the post-teaching interview enabled him to realize that gender depiction represented in the textbook was not completely fair:

As the picture shows a girl cleaning, it tends to be stereotypical. If it is replaced with a picture showing a boy cleaning, it’ll make more sense. They [textbook writers] showed a bit favoritism. In this context, girls often do gentle activities while boys play harder (Tam).
Nhan’s teaching of reading skills involved students’ forming groups first, then each member was assigned a specific role including predictor, questioner, clarifier and summarizer (reciprocal teaching). He reflected that the lesson sequence demanded modifications:

Firstly, there should have been instructions regarding components of reciprocal teaching, helping learners to question, clarify, predict and summarize. Therefore, they could have worked better if I had helped them see their roles better while I might have been playing the instructor or assistant’s role (Nhan).

Nhan benefited from the observation field note (See Appendix C) and the post-teaching discussion, revealing how he could have implemented the technique of KWL (What I Know (K), What I Want to Know (W) and What I’ve Learned (L)) differently in his future lessons when the instructional sequence required a more logical sequence: the vocabulary elicited was written in the two columns K and W indistinguishably on the board while the L column had not been exploited when the lesson ended.

**Discussion**

**Free Webinars as an Effective Source of PD**

Teachers’ remarks appear to show that attending webinars is an effective source for their learning in rural areas because they can expand their repertoires of pedagogical skills at nearly zero cost, which resonates with Moore et al.’s (2016) benefits of attending virtual conferences. When concerns about the lack of resources in rural public schools have been voiced (Nguyen, 2011; Nguyen et al., 2014; Nguyen & Phung, 2015; Zein, 2016), the general consensus among the participants about the relevance of the webinars’ content and the speakers’ engaging virtual training skills might offer a practical solution.

Qualitative findings in the study present specific techniques that the participants have acquired, revealing that teachers’ ownership of PD should be valued as they have the freedom to select the webinars they would like to attend and the gaps in their teaching they would like to fill. Consistent with teachers in Stannard and Matharu (2014)’s study, who were using free screen casting videos to “develop at their own pace and privately” (p. 167), the recorded webinars in Phase 2 (See Figure 1) encouraged Linh and Ha to adopt multiple viewings while uploaded handouts and slides provided Nhan with further learning opportunities.

As the change of teachers’ perceptions in traditional PD programs has been examined (e.g., Borg, 2011), the findings from the teachers mentioned above expand the scope of such changes. Beyond gaining specific techniques from webinar attendance, the rural practitioners articulated the change of their pedagogical perceptions: being aware of resources in difficult classrooms (Linh), promoting gender equality (Tam), and considering alternative assessment (Nhan).

**The Role of Facilitated Reflection on the Mastery of New Techniques**

In phases 1 and 2, despite the interesting content, the participants experienced various problems in terms of cognitive and social challenges in the digital community. The rural attendees’ learning experience was hindered when it came to certain aspects of pedagogical
knowledge, leading to further clarification sessions with the first researcher in the post-webinar viewing phases. These findings echoed Prince and Barrett (2014) as they put a heavy emphasis on the alignment of content with teachers’ pedagogical competence. Secondly, the interactive features, which form a crucial part of webinars, were not utilized, contrasting with participants of Moore et al. (2016) who regarded interacting digital as a valuable function. Tam, more specifically, found virtual interactivity an unpleasant experience, distancing himself from the community.

The teachers’ changes in Phase 3 (See Figure 1) showed that techniques learned from the webinars were actually “implementable” (Prince & Barrett, 2014, p. 39). Nevertheless, the success of implementation varied among the four teachers possibly due to their struggling efforts to master the content in previous phases. On the other hand, while the four participants were experimenting with the new techniques, the researcher’s observation field notes and post-teaching interviews provided more insights into the four participants’ performance. The collaboration helps better their teaching practices: adding recycled vocabulary to enrich input in the speaking activity (Linh), considering more effective classroom management techniques of the word bricks game (Ha), realizing less salient features of gender inequality depicted in teaching materials (Tam), and carrying out the logical sequence of the KWL technique (Nhan). Webinar viewing alone might not immediately warrant a successful implementation of new approaches. To address the challenges, Nhan stated:

My application did not match the speaker’s intentions. I didn’t follow the right procedure of the technique KWL. I understand the technique from the webinar but at times it depends on my listening abilities to learn online and to review materials, which is neither deep nor comprehensive.

Nhan’s comment in the final discussion re-affirmed the cognitive challenges teachers faced learning in webinars. In light of Wallace (1991)’s reflective model, reflection specified the complexity of “experimental knowledge” – the knowledge that the four participants’ gained from their classroom practices regardless of their years of teaching experience. Given that “teaching experience does not automatically translate into teacher expertise” (Farrell, 2013, p. 1080), the post-teaching dialogue with the first author has engaged the participants in an active and conscious reflection activity. Hence, post-webinar viewing acknowledges the presence of facilitators or collaborators when teachers “need just-in-time, job-embedded assistance as they struggle to adapt new curricula and new instructional practices to their unique classroom contexts” (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 498).

**Implications for Other Educational Contexts**

With respect to free resources for personal PD, the project can further inform other teachers or teacher educators of the availability and the relevance of live and recorded webinars. Attendance in this digital training mode could add dimensions to their pedagogical repertoires once they are familiar with webinar components such as registration and log-in procedures, chat box and presentation handouts for post-webinar implementation and reflection.
PD providers for teachers in rural areas should be aware of the efficacy of this emerging training platform. Webinar participation should be integrated into or might even replace the traditional track of taking face-to-face training sessions when it comes to cost-saving factors, flexible schedule and individualized content. Modes of participation are synchronous and/or asynchronous, which can best fit the participants’ working schedule and identified areas for development. Inviting in-service teachers to participate in free webinars, in other words, can be the very first step to prepare them for “professional autonomy” (Kennedy, 2014, p. 349). If implemented, the approach tends to downplay the centralized and bureaucratic policies of PD programs observed in developing contexts (e.g. Zein, 2016). Likewise, conference organizers should consider posting conference talks online, activating digital views of teachers, especially those in remote or rural regions who are unable to attend the conferences in person due to constraints such as finance and distance to the meeting venue (Nguyen, 2011). From a practical perspective, when Internet access is not reliable or available, recorded webinars or conference talks can be copied to participants’ USB drives or their mobile phones’ memory cards for home or mobile-based viewing - the practice of which has been found useful according to Woodward et al. (2014).

In light of the complicated process of the application of new techniques, it is crucial that offline support is given when teachers are learning online, including technical assistance and content clarification. This can be achieved by involving collaborators - who could be colleagues at the same school to facilitate teachers’ “emergent mastery” (Nguyen & Bui, 2016, p. 97). Similarly, moving beyond the finite hours of one-off conferences, it underscores the need to have locally made webinars hosted by presenters who share the first language with participants to facilitate in-depth discussions relating to new knowledge acquisition, and are capable of providing continuing support to sustain trainees’ development. This emphasizes the establishment of local communities of practice of webinar goers to encourage active webinar participation and reflection on the implementation of novel techniques.

**Limitation and Future Direction**

The project limitations should be noted regarding the sustainability of webinar participation and learners’ outcome. Firstly, as the project was conducted on a four-month period, the overgeneralization of the research findings should be carefully reviewed, requiring a long-term investigation into the impact of webinar attendance. The second consideration is linked to learners’ outcome, which has not been measured apart from teachers’ self-reported data in conjunction with the researcher’s observation field notes. We are uncertain whether learners have really benefited from teacher change after their teachers’ webinar attendance. That said, future studies might be conducted to analyze the effect of webinar attendance with a longitudinal focus, integrated with a reliable assessment tool to evaluate the impact of teacher digital PD on learners’ progress.

**Conclusion**

The experience of four school teachers’ participating in free webinars has appeared to be beneficial for their informal PD. Simultaneously, it depicts the complex processes that teachers have undergone in virtual environments, which question their theoretical knowledge and professionalism within the webinar community. Secondly, the digital participation has enabled
them to trial new techniques in their own teaching contexts, albeit at varying degrees of success. The follow-up implementation reflections were facilitated by the first researcher’s collaboration, which provides another perspective into their practices. When local facilitators are involved, attending webinars should be considered as an acceptable alternative to costly traditional face-to-face conferences for teachers working in rural areas, especially those who are equipped with basic technological devices. PD decision-makers in the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project (Nguyen & Phung, 2015) and in other large-scale PD initiatives, as a result, are advised to integrate the affordances of the webinar platform with local facilitators’ expertise to design effective PD programs that best serve the needs and contexts of rural participants.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Dr. Subhan Zein and 3 other anonymous reviewers for their invaluable comments that greatly improved our manuscript.

Author Note

Tien Mai, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Michelle Ocriciano, University of New South Wales Institute of Languages, Sydney, Australia.

Tien Mai is a lecturer of English at HCMC Open University and a teacher trainer at IEI, VNU-HCMC. He holds an M.A in applied linguistics from Curtin University. He has achieved PD awards from American English State, Cambridge English and The Consultants-E. His research interests include CALL and Teacher PD.

Michelle Ocriciano is an EAP teacher and teacher trainer at UNSW Institute of Languages. She has been teaching for 18 years in Brazil, the United States and Australia. She holds an MA in Technology in Language Teaching. Her fields of interest are Technology in Language Teaching and Teacher PD.

Acknowledgements: The research is sponsored by CamTESOL Regional ELT Research Grants 2016.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Tien Mai, Faculty of Foreign Languages, HCMC Open University, Room 503, 35-37 Ho Hao Hon St., District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. E-mail: tienmaiminh@yahoo.com
References


Canagarajah, A. S. (2012). Teacher development in a global profession: An autoethnography. TESOL Quarterly, 46(2), 258-279. [https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.18](https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.18)


Peachey, N. (2012, November). Teacher development online. *English Teaching Professional, 83*, pp. 4-6


https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2015.1005243

https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2016.1156013
Appendix A

A Description of Webinars Attended in Phase 1-2, and Techniques Implemented in Phase 3

**Phase 1: Synchronous viewing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organizers</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
<th>Access Links</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Teenagers Creatively</td>
<td>Oxford University Press (OUP)</td>
<td>Maria Byrne</td>
<td>Access with an Oxford Premium Account at tinyurl.com/h7pnv5</td>
<td>Linh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Framework for Communicative Speaking</td>
<td>OUP</td>
<td>Tony Prince</td>
<td>Access with an Oxford Premium Account at tinyurl.com/h7pnv5</td>
<td>Nhan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management with Five Adaptable Forms</td>
<td>American English (AE)</td>
<td>Catherine Thomas</td>
<td>tinyurl.com/hx9zc4r</td>
<td>Linh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Gender Equality in the English Language Classroom</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Philip Dierking</td>
<td>tinyurl.com/glvzxyx</td>
<td>Tam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating and Sustaining English Language Clubs to Enhance EL</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Kathleen Malu and Bryce Smedley</td>
<td>tinyurl.com/ju5roth</td>
<td>Ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Phase 2: Asynchronous viewing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organizers</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
<th>Access Links</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocal Teaching Reading Strategies</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Dr. Rob Danin</td>
<td>tinyurl.com/gssx2rz</td>
<td>Nhan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy Reading Activities to Engage Students</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Serena Chu-Mraz</td>
<td>tinyurl.com/hmkfz6l</td>
<td>Nhan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games for Learning AE</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Jennifer Hodgson and Kevin McCaughey</td>
<td>tinyurl.com/hs3o2hs</td>
<td>Ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maker Space: The Low Resource Classroom</td>
<td>Dr. Nellie Deutsch</td>
<td>Kirsten Waechter and Julie Pratten</td>
<td>tinyurl.com/hjwcz5</td>
<td>Linh Tam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They talk too fast! Helping students with listening</td>
<td>Cambridge University Press</td>
<td>Chris Redston</td>
<td>tinyurl.com/hszhqpk</td>
<td>Tam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase 3: Techniques implemented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Linh     | **Interview**: a speaking, class mingling activity. Students take turns asking each other based on given prompts.  
(From *Classroom Management with Five Adaptable Forms* webinar) |
| Ha       | **Word Bricks**: teachers need to prepare word cards, which then are jumbled. Students form groups to put the words in the correct order to create meaningful sentences.  
(From *Games for Learning American English* webinar) |
| Tam      | **Gender Equality**: creating a gender-neutral classroom by designing activities that do not favor any gender and investigating course books to see if there is gender quality.  
(From *Promoting Gender Equality in the English Language Classroom* webinar) |
| Nhan     | **Reciprocal Teaching**: students form groups, then members are assigned a role: predictor (guess the content of the reading based on prompts such as titles, headings, etc.; questioner (ask questions relating to the content); clarifier (provide answers with evidence from the text); and summarizer (give a synopsis of the reading text or group discussion).  
(From *Reciprocal Teaching Reading Strategies* webinar)  
**KWL Chart**: a graphic organizer consisting of 3 columns to help students’ reflections:  
*What I Know* (K), *What I Want to Know* (W), and *What I Learn* (L)  
(From *Easy Reading Activities to Engage Students* webinar) |
Appendix B

An Excerpt from the Observation Field Note of Teacher Tam: Class Seating Plan

Visitor and report writer: Tien MAI

Teacher: Tam
No. of Learners: 24
Place: Ba Tri, Ben Tre

Course book: English 3
Unit 5: Are they your friends
Page: 30
Time: 8:30-9h10
Date: Thursday, 29/09/2016

Note:
- F: Female
- M: Male
- An empty block indicates an empty seat.
Appendix C

An Excerpt from the Observation Field Note of Teacher Nhan: Lesson Stages

Visitor and report writer: Tien MAI

Teacher: Nhan
Course book: English 7
Unit 4: At School (Part 6: Read)
Pages: 44,45

No. of Learners: 35
Time: 1:35-2:15

Place: Mo Cay Bac, Ben Tre
Date: Thursday, 29/09/2016

T: Teacher
SS: Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time/Stage Aim</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1:43 Lead-in   | T says “Today we learn about school in the USA. Cung cấp thông tin về trường ở Mỹ.” (Today we’re learning about schools in the USA. We’ll be provided with information about American schools)
T gives instructions: “Chúng ta kế làm 3 cột.” (We’re drawing a three-column table) |
| 1:44 Activating prior knowledge | T writes on the board: KWL (What I know/What I want to know/What I have learned)
T gives instructions “Đọc luôn qua đoạn văn những cum từ nào em đã từng biết.” (Skim the text, what words have you learned?)
T asks “School in the US có gì?” (What do U.S schools have?)
• Ss answer “They wear uniform.”
T writes uniform on the board.
T asks “Học sinh nước ngoài có ra chơi không?” (Do foreign students have break time?)
T writes “break” on the board.
T gives instructions “Các bạn đọc luôn tiếp, xem các bạn đã biết gì?” (Please continue skimming, what have you know?)
• Ss answered “cafeteria”
T asks “đó là gì?”(What is it?) and then answers “càng tin” (cafeteria)
T writes “cafeteria” on the What I want to know column |
| 1:51 Close reading | T moves around to monitor
• Ss ask questions about the meanings of “popular, baseball, snacks”.
Teacher asks some students to translate and then writes “baseball” on What I Know column and “snacks” on What I want to know |
Assessing the Efficacy of Dictation Exercises to Improve SLA Listening in Japan

Christopher Edelman
Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0177-2059

Robert McClung
Kansai University, Osaka, Japan
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0930-3695

Peter Ferguson
Nara Prefectural University of Education, Nara, Japan
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6635-6331

Although dictation is seen as being a useful exercise for assessment and progress in language learning, there has been little research into the use of spaced dictation. The focus of this research was assessing the effect of limiting cognitive burden with spaced dictation exercises as classroom activities. Participants attended pre- and post-tests to evaluate gains in listening ability from a four-week intervention activity of spaced dictation exercises. Results were measured by using the number of content words, function words, and affective state of participants at the beginning and end of the intervention. The results demonstrated that spaced dictation was efficacious for improving listening ability, motivation, and participant feeling of achievement. The authors concluded that spaced dictation was effective in increasing student ability to decode and identify linguistic features due to the decrease of cognitive burden, which allowed greater processing of aural input. Contrary to the perception of dictation activities as a grueling task for learners, a large majority of participants reported being greatly satisfied with the tasks that were conducted. These findings aid educators and researchers interested in the efficacy and results of dictation exercises in second language acquisition (SLA).

Keywords: Cognition, Comprehension, Segmentation, Suprasegmentals

Some of the difficulty of learning a second language lies in the inability to decode, segment, differentiate, and identify lexical items in natural spoken language. This is apparent in Japan, where many students study English for a minimum of six years before entering the higher education system but are only able to understand simple greetings or phrases when spoken at a very slow pace. Listening is built upon a series of interconnected cognitive processes that are created and reinforced through exposure and practice.
Attention and training of suprasegmentals is often neglected in language classrooms (Gilakjani, 2011). One reason might be the highly intrinsic development of the listening system, and the impracticality of teaching prosodic features of every word combination possible. Listening ability occurs with the development of linguistic knowledge and reinforcement from repeated exposure - with the acquisition apparatus itself being intrinsic - it is a skill that cannot be forced, but it can be aided.

Audio recordings used in English language classrooms can be viewed as slow, simplified, stilted, and unnatural. While this may aid in creating a simple phonetic representation, lexis in naturally spoken speech is quite different. In the context of naturally spoken English, learners may suddenly find themselves unable to comprehend a never-ending stream of connected sounds, or identify and segment it into chunks of comprehensive input. Thus, the rationale for this study was to investigate whether spaced dictation can be a positive aid in listening comprehension. By decreasing the cognitive burden in listening by providing more time for processing, spaced dictation would aid learner recognition and acquisition of suprasegmentals and other prosodic information, thereby increasing overall listening comprehension and identification of lexis.

**Literature Review**

The definition of dictation is typically summarized as “a technique where the learners receive some spoken input, hold this in their memory for a short time, and then write what they heard” (Nation, 1991, p.12). Dictation has been used in the classroom as a learning activity viewed as efficacious in developing listener comprehension while making a connection with the target language in its written form (Pappas, 1977; Whitaker, 1976). In addition, it has been viewed as an all-purpose tool that is accurate in not only teaching but also testing language learners (Morris, 1983). In a recent study by Wong and Leeming (2014), the authors reported strong correlation between a measure of dictation and standardized tests, which highlights the parsimonious advantage offered by using dictation to measure learner proficiency.

The smallest units of sound are phonemes, then morphemes, and then words, which are then grouped into lexical chunks and connected through prosodic features, suprasegmentals, intonation, and inflection (Rost, 2011). Activities that incorporate focused attention while listening have been found to raise learner awareness and ability to identify suprasegmental features (Gorsuch, 2001). Suprasegmentals are vocal effects that occur within a combination of more than one sound and characterize the way words blur and blend together (Lindfield, Wingfield, & Goodglass, 1999). Whether words are accurately retrieved from these sounds depends on the phonetic representation retained within the listener’s lexis. Allophonic variations due to co-articulation, assimilation, reduction, and elision occur naturally for native speakers, and make listening easier due to the decreased processing demands; however, they are problems for non-natives, particularly if they have only acquired the form by learning it detached from natural discourse (Rost, 2011).

Some studies (e.g. Martin & Ellis, 2012) have been conducted that focus on the connection between the cognitive burden placed upon working memory and phonological loop. However, there is still a gap in the research concerning the longitudinal results of dictation exercises that
are broken into lexical units to reduce cognitive load. With his Cognition Hypothesis, Robinson (2005) asserts that increasing complexity is essential to activate maximum cognitive involvement in order to achieve linguistic gains; on the other hand, this same input must be within the range of ability for learner linguistic processing if there is to be comprehension of the input received. In summary, if language learners are overwhelmed with incomprehensible input, there is no opportunity for reflection, identification, or understanding to occur. Limited capacity and selective attention are two important factors that influence listening (Rost, 2011). Selective attention describes the ability to focus on only one source of information at any given time. Listeners are limited to how much information they are able to maintain in their phonological loop, which acts as a temporary storage area for new audio input (Baddeley, 1986). If learners are overwhelmed with incomprehensible input and unable to focus their attention on features of the language, they will be unable to acquire them. It is important for working memory not to be overloaded if learning is to occur (Just & Carpenter, 1992). The studies cited above have examined varied styles of implementing dictation (e.g., group listening, communicative, multiple listenings of the same recording). However, to the best knowledge of the three researchers involved in this study, spaced dictation, which is based on psycholinguistic theory, has not been examined. With this in mind, the current study sought to test the efficacy of spaced-dictation exercises for improving listener ability to identify and comprehend suprasegmentals in spoken messages. We defined spaced dictation exercises as dictation exercises that include intervals between lexical chunks by breaking up the sentences into noun, verb, and adverbial phrases. By not over-loading the working memory capacity, it was assumed that listeners would be able to attend the features of the input, primarily the suprasegmentals.

This study was guided by four main hypotheses:

1. Increased ability to identify suprasegmentals will result in an increased written function word count.
2. Overall comprehension will increase parallel to an increase in more accurate decoding of audio input.
3. Working memory will positively correlate with increased comprehension and word count.
4. The difference in confidence on the affective scores will show systematic positive improvement.

In addition, there was the overall question of which measure would be the greatest predictor of future outcomes.

**Method**

**Participants**

A single intact class at a private university in Kansai, Japan in the second semester of a one-year English course participated in the study. There were 32 students included in the data at the beginning of the study, although seven were later discontinued from the study due to absence. Gender was equally divided with 15 females and 17 males. Data from seven students were dropped because they had missed two or more interventions, post-test, or pre-test leaving
a total of 25 (females = 12, males = 13). While individual student Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) scores were unavailable, participants were assigned to classes according to TOEIC results before the start of the school year. Placement within this class indicated a TOEIC score of less than 400. Learners were not involved in any other English classes, and previous interviews indicated that none were involved in any extracurricular events or study groups that would influence linguistic development in any way.

**Procedure and Materials**

A pre-test was administered during the first week of instruction at the beginning of class. Immediately after the dictation exercises, students completed comprehension questions related to the listening, then filled out the affective measurement survey (see Appendix A). The three activities took no longer than ten minutes. The class was given The Vocabulary Level Listening test (LVLT) within the last 15 minutes of the same class period.

Spaced dictation activities were carried out at the beginning of each class from Week 2 to Week 5 (four sessions), with administration of the digit span test at the end of class in Week 2. In the spaced dictation sessions, students were given a handout with blank lines on the front. They were then instructed to listen to the recording and write down as much as possible. After students finished the spaced dictation task they turned the paper over and completed the comprehension questions on the back (see Appendices). The transcript was then displayed in large font on the overhead projector and answers to the comprehension questions were reviewed with the first author of this paper. Students were also given a few minutes to compare their notation with the transcript. During the review time, students were instructed not to write anything down or change their answers. After the exercise, all papers were collected by the instructor. Suprasegmental and phonological speech features were not explicitly taught so as not to influence learner development. The total time for the activity was roughly 15 minutes each week.

In the last session in week six, the post-test and extended affective measurement surveys were administered within the first fifteen minutes (See Appendix B). All tests and surveys were retrieved and scored separately by two teachers.

**LVLT**

The LVLT is a vocabulary level listening test, created by McLean, Kramer, and Beglar (2015) based on word frequency. This was used as a benchmark for learner knowledge of the vocabulary incorporated into activities and tests. This listening test was used as opposed to a written vocabulary test to make sure an accurate representation of what learners were able to comprehend only through auditory input.

The LVLT consists of six different levels ranging from the first one thousand most frequent words to the sixth one thousand most frequent according to the Academic Word List (AWL) (McLean et al., 2015). Within each level are 24 test items, each with four multiple-choice answers. For this study, the Japanese version was used; learners had to match the item heard in English to its Japanese equivalent. The test component was played over the classroom audio
system during administration. The recording consisted of an item word spoken once, then repeated in a context that would not define its meaning (e.g., shoe, he has a shoe).

For the purpose of this study, only the first two levels were administered because finding participant maximum vocabulary ability was not the main interest. Rather, it was used to evaluate the assumption that listeners had sufficient knowledge of the first one thousand most frequent words to alleviate the issue of vocabulary knowledge confounding the test scores. The total administration time was roughly eight minutes, four minutes for each level.

Japanese Digit Span Test

The digit span test is made up of multiple lists ranging from two digits long to ten. For each subset, six lists of similar length are read separately with a one-second interval in between. The listener must repeat back or write down the digits in the order they were heard after the last digit in the list is read. Successfully repeating back five or more of the lists for one subset receives a passing score. The longest subset successfully completed indicates a corresponding digit span score. If a listener is able to accurately repeat back five 6-digit lists, then their digit-span score is six. In order not to confound proficiency with working memory, the Japanese language version was administered. The test was administered as a measurement of the capacity of the phonological loop, which underlies one of the verbal measures of working memory (Baddeley & Hitch, 1974). This measure was included to test the hypothesis of the study that learners with a higher working memory would be able to maintain and reflect upon a larger section of information, achieving greater long-term gains. It was also chosen because measuring constructs involved in cognition can be difficult, and the measurement tool must account for other influencing variables, such as language, in order to achieve a pure score (Declerck, Philipp, & Koch, 2013). Total time for the test was roughly ten minutes.

Dictation Activities and Tests

All tests and activities were created using the same guidelines to maintain equivalency. Only lexical items within the first one thousand most frequent words were utilized. The reasons for this were a) for measurement purposes, it was important that unknown vocabulary was not a confounding variable, and b) struggling with new unknown words would further burden listeners’ cognitive faculties, pulling attention away from focusing on suprasegmentals and depressing the ability to integrate awareness of new sounds. In addition, no relative clauses or perfect aspect verbs were used. Every dictation script was similar in length: around 105 words including function and content words.

Tests were reviewed separately by two different English professors to confirm equivalency before being administered. On the pre- and post-tests, there were 15-second intervals after every full stop. Listeners were allowed to write during any point of the exercise, though not allowed to speak to each other or work with another person. Dictation audio recordings were made using average speaking speed (120 wpm). This is less than the average speaking speed of 165 to 180 wpm (Rubin, 1994); however, the speed was deemed appropriate by the researchers for the target audience.
The dictation activities were made with the same parameters as the tests in terms of lexis, syntactic complexity, and word count. However, they differed in the length of interval and speech. All sentences were broken into lexical phrases, with a 5- to 7-second interval between them. A concern was that the pauses mid-sentence would break up the natural rhythm during reading, altering the type of onsets and stressed words in the sentence. To account for this concern, all scripts were recorded using full-length sentences. Stresses, intonation, and accents were marked and used as a point of reference when recording the spaced phrase version. Both recordings were later compared for equivalence by a rater before being administered in class. Every session consisted of five multiple choice comprehension questions given on the back of the dictation handout. All questions were information style questions with distractors that were plausible but incorrect only according to content.

Both the pre- and post-tests had surveys measuring the affective state of the listener after they completed the dictation and questions sessions. These surveys used 4-point Likert scales to measure listener a) perceived difficulty of activity, b) confidence, c) anxiety, and d) effort. In addition, the post-test included two additional items; one related to the level of enjoyment the participant received from doing the task, and the other to their perceived value of the dictation exercises for improving their English language ability.

Tests were constructed using a similar theme: relating a time of activity in the recent past. The pre-test, Week 1, was based around how the instructor spent time over the summer (keeping in mind this class was in the fall semester), while the post-test, Week 6, was centered on how the instructor spent the previous weekend. Many of the basic sentence structures were kept the same, while changing most content words. In the pre-test, the final sentence is “I’m looking forward to spring break already, because I want to travel more if I have the chance.” This is highly similar in structure and length of the last sentence of the post-test “I’m looking forward to winter break already, because I want to rest more if I have the chance.” This was done to mitigate any possibility of grammatical difficulty creating a confound in learner ability between the two different tests. This also helped ensure that the pre- and post-tests were equivalent in terms of difficulty.

The four dictation exercises used as the intervention were built around a continuing story line, a narration of Tom and Susan Smith and their lives in a small town. Exercises were not dependent upon having fully comprehended the previous one. If students were unable to completely grasp the information in an exercise, were absent, or simply forgot, it would not affect their ability to comprehend succeeding exercises (cite research supporting this concept). In order for listeners to direct their attention mainly on listening and decoding word forms, the storyline was kept simple for each exercise, with the only linear theme being the fact that Tom and Susan live in a small town.

**Results**

**Digit Span and LVLT**

Descriptive statistics for the vocabulary measure were conducted. For the first one-thousand word level, the mean was 22.68 ($SD = 1.02$) demonstrating coverage of 94.5% of the items. The second one thousand words level, the mean was 19.92 ($SD = 2.38$). Because the listening
activities were created using only lexis from the first one thousand words level, the large
coverage of the first one-thousand word level ensured knowledge of the vocabulary contained
in the tasks. On the measure of working memory represented by the digit span test, an average
length of 4.2 digits was observed ($SD = .87$).

**Dictation**

The analysis of dictation notation on both tests was conducted by counting the number of
content words, function words, and morphological deviations in each test. Content words were
defined as being any noun, adjective, adverb, or verb (excluding auxiliary verbs, e.g., *do*, *is*,
*have*). Function words were anything that lay outside of these parameters, e.g., pronouns,
prepositions, and articles. Because orthographic accuracy was not a consideration, words that
were misspelled were not counted as deviant. If a word was written in a way that its phonetic
representation could be understood it was included in the data set as long as it was properly
placed. Morphological mistakes were counted separately, and not included with the number of
accurately scored function or content groups. Only words that were spoken in the dictation in
roughly the same linear order they occurred were included. All data was entered into a
Microsoft Excel file then transferred to SPSS (version 23).

Paired samples *t* tests were used to compare the relationship for the measures of the number of
function words, content words, morphological deviations, and comprehension. The results for
this can be found in Table 1. For function words, there was a decrease from the pre-test that
was significantly less than the post-test, *p* < .001. While there was no hypothesis regarding the
content words, there was a significant increase between the pre-test and the post-test counts, *p* < .000. Looking at the word count averages, the relationship of the two scores was almost
completely inverse between the two tests. There was also a significant decrease in the number
of morphological errors as well, *p* < .021. Finally, the comprehension scores on the pre-test
were significantly lower than the post-test, *p* < .000.

**Table 1**

Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre <em>M</em></th>
<th>Pre <em>SD</em></th>
<th>Post <em>M</em></th>
<th>Post <em>SD</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Errors</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Words</td>
<td>12.28</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function Words</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>5.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # of Words</td>
<td>27.44</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>8.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct Answers</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though there was a decrease in the mean for function words and an increase on content
words on the post-test compared to the pre-test scores, this change did not sacrifice one for the
other. The total word count, including content and function words, was significantly higher on
the post-test compared to the pre-test, *p* < .009.

A comparison of the scores from the comprehensive listening questions attached to each test
was done using paired sample *t* tests. Compared to listener ability to comprehend the narration
on the pre-test \((M = 1.08, SD = .91)\) large significant improvement was shown on the post-test \((M = 2.84, SD = .99), t(25) = -7.33, p < .000.\)

**Affective Tests**

Paired samples \(t\) tests were also used to compare the affective state of the listeners at the beginning and end of the intervention. It was hypothesized that confidence would be significantly improved at the end of the intervention, and that learners’ perceived difficulty of the task would significantly decrease as they became more familiar with it.

In measures of learner confidence, there was a significant increase between the pre-test \((M = 3.6, SD = .65)\) and the post-test \((M = 2.92, SD = .91), t(25) = 4.654, p < .000.\) Although there was a decrease in the mean score for confidence, the scoring for this measure was reversed, with a score of 1 indicating higher confidence, and a score of 4 indicating low confidence. This was done to keep all Likert items moving in similar relation, with a higher number indicating a higher negative affective score.

This change in confidence was an expected result, particularly when compared to the change in perceived difficulty on the pre-test \((M = 3.56, SD = .58)\) that was significantly less than the post-test \((M = 3.12, SD = .73), t(25) = 2.86, p < .009.\) On the measure of learner anxiety, results from the pre-test \((M = 3.0, SD = .65)\) were significantly lower than the post-test \((M = 2.48, SD = .82), t(25) = 2.59, p < .016.\) However, when comparing the measure of effort on the pre-test \((M = 2.52, SD = .82)\) to the post-test \((M = 2.64, SD = .70), there was no significant difference, \(t(25) = -.55, p < .588.\)

Descriptive statistics were used to look at the last two items on the post-test survey: learner enjoyment of the activity and perceived usefulness of the activity for improving skills in English. On the measure of enjoyment, there was a mean score of 2.20 \((SD = .76)\). The stem for this item was “I enjoy this type of practice,” with answers of “1 = Yes, a lot, 2 = Yes, a little, 3 = No, 4 = I don’t like it.” Table 2 gives a more accurate representation of the frequency of scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean score of 2.20 places participant opinion just over the divide from not enjoying the exercise, to enjoying it to a small degree. Looking at the frequencies provides a more detailed view. Only one student chose a score of 4, indicating dislike of the task, and seven chose a score of 3, indicating they did not like it. However, because they did not choose the option of dislike, this score might be considered a neutral point as far as interest is concerned. Overall,
17 students out of 25 ranked scores indicating a measure of enjoyment, with four choosing the highest score of enjoyment.

All students reported positive scores regarding their perception of the usefulness of the task ($M = 1.56$, $SD = .50$). The stem for this item was “This type of practice is good to improve my English skill,” with answers of “1 = Yes, 2 = A little, 3 = Not really, 4 = Not helpful at all.” Frequencies for these results are shown in Table 3, showing the class roughly divided between perceiving the tasks having a small degree of usefulness and a large degree of usefulness.

**Table 3**

Usefulness of the Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Linear Model**

In order to assess which variables would be the best predictors for future ability, a multivariate general linear model was used. The results are displayed in Table 4. Word count averages for content words and function words, the vocabulary listening test score (LVLT), working memory measure (digit-span), and the four affective measures were used as covariates; the dependent variables were word counts on the post-test.
Table 4  
Relation Between Pre-Test Variables and Writing Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>DV</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial E2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>PostCon 40.74</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PostFun 58.69</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>PostCon 14.08</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PostFun 0.18</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.903</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Words</td>
<td>PostCon 3.18</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.482</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PostFun 1.36</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.736</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function Words</td>
<td>PostCon 56.82</td>
<td>9.27</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PostFun 160.23</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digit-span</td>
<td>PostCon 6.85</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PostFun 11.93</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.324</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LVLT</td>
<td>PostCon 50.95</td>
<td>8.31</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PostFun 4.39</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.546</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty</td>
<td>PostCon 0.26</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PostFun 18.27</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>0.226</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>PostCon 5.59</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.354</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PostFun 0.04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.955</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>PostCon 6.49</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PostFun 14.99</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.271</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>PostCon 4.21</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PostFun 27.17</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a $R^2 = .769$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .653$)
b $R^2 = .718$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .577$)

PostCon = Post-test content words.
PostFun = Post-test function words.
Partial E2 = Partial Eta Square.

None of the affective variables shared any systematic relationship with either outcome. This lack of positive correlation can be seen with the measure of working memory as well, looking at outcomes for content words $F(1,25) = 8.31, p = .306$, partial eta square = .07, as well as function words $F(1,25) = 1.04, p = .324$, partial eta square = .06. This was counterintuitive and ran against the third hypothesis of the study. One possibility is that the sample was not large enough, limiting the variance of the score, or that there were problems in administration of the test.

The LVLT was seen to share a significantly positive relationship with content words $F(1,25) = 1.12, p = .011$, with a robust effect size (partial eta square = .34). There was no strong correlation between it and function words $F(1,25) = .38, p = .546$, partial eta square = .02;
however, this is not surprising, as the words measured in the LVLT are primarily content words (nouns, adjectives, adverbs).

Pre-test count average of function words was the greatest predictor for either dependent variable: content words $F(1,25) = 9.27, \ p = .008$, partial eta square = .37, and function words $F(1,25) = 13.90, \ p = .002$, partial eta square = .47. While it might seem obvious that function words would at least be an excellent predictor of future outcomes of itself, the same was not true with the measure of content words, which has no systematic relationship with either dependent variable. Out of all pre-test variables, learner ability to recognize and notate function words was the greatest predictor of future ability to accurately notate the dictation activity.

**Discussion**

The findings of the study were in line with our hypothesis that dictation practice incorporating the segmentation of full sentences would decrease the cognitive burden and allow time for reflection and analysis by participants. Over time, this practice resulted in an increase in positive gains of lexical recognition by the participants in the post-test, which did not employ segmentation but used full sentences. The results of this study show spaced dictation to be a highly efficacious activity for increasing language learner ability to process and comprehend spoken messages of English aural input received at a natural speaking speed, with normal intonation.

Concerning the hypothesis that comprehension would increase with listener ability to process suprasegmentals, the data appears to point towards the null hypothesis. Although listener comprehension increased, the number of written function words in the post-test decreased. However, this decrease does not necessarily show a similar decrease in ability to process suprasegmental features. Notation is not a pure representation of cognitive functions; it is volitional, with the writer choosing what information to write down. Complex cognitive functions, such as the decoding of prosodic information are non-volitional, being carried out automatically as soon as input is received. Although listeners were not recording the function words in their notation on the post-test, it is entirely possible they heard the words but did not write them down.

With this in mind, it is possible that even though learners were decoding more information, they were prioritizing words with the most value: content words. The previous dictation exercises were reviewed, showing that participants were not prioritizing in this same manner during the tasks, rather writing down full phrases of information. These tasks were conducted differently, and had a 5- to 7-second interval between lexical phrases. When listeners encountered the longer streams of text in the post-test, it is likely that they changed their tactic, and prioritized content words because these words were the most vital to understanding the meaning of the text. This was also found to be true in a study by Field (2008), which investigated prioritization of function words versus content words by L2 listeners; the study concluded that function words, although highly frequent, were given much less focus by listeners because of their lack of meaning. In the current study, because of the sudden increase of complexity and cognitive burden imposed, listeners prioritized meaning over form.
The lack of any relationship between working memory with either of the writing measures was unexpected, but could be an issue with the lack of variance within the working memory measure. Digit span scores had a range of 3 (Min = 3, Max = 6), were content words had a range of 14 (Min = 12, Max = 26), and function words a range of 23 (Min = 2, Max = 25). Another additional issue could be the small size of this sample for running parametric tests. This leads to the largest limitation of this study: the small sample size. Conducting the treatment with a larger number of participants across a wider range of language abilities would add strength to the results and give greater variance to the subsets of measures.

The hypothesis that learner confidence would increase proved to be true. The affective scores indicated that there was a systematic increase in learner confidence on the post-test, while learner perception of task difficulty and feelings of anxiety decreased. This implies that although learners perceived their overall affective state to be more positive and the difficulty of the task to be lower, they did not perceive any change in their own effort when completing the task.

The high level of achievement as well as an increased listening ability most likely contributed to the positive trend of the scores on the affective survey. Slightly surprising was the level of enjoyment students reported receiving from the exercise. It is also possible that this is a culture specific issue as well. Japanese language students are often resistant to speak English in the classroom, or engage in communicative tasks. In a study by King (2013) of nine different universities, nearly 48 English language classes, and almost 1,000 students, student initiated speech accounted for less than one percent of total class time in each class – approximately 54 seconds. Part of this hesitance to speak may be due to cultural expectations in Japan of a teacher-centered class and reluctance to make mistakes in front of peers (Cutrone, 2009). Because of this apprehension to communicate, participants in our study might have enjoyed the solitary nature of the activity and the structure of the lesson because it was not dependent on interaction. All students reported the task as being beneficial for their improvement, indicating a level of satisfaction in its own.

As shown in the general linear model in Table 3, the function word count from the pre-test proved to be the strongest significant predictor for outcomes on both dependent variables. At first glance this appears an oddity, but retrospectively viewing the aims of the research make the reason quite clear: greater ability to accurately decode suprasegmental features applies to function words, because they are the least salient auditory input. They are unstressed, altered by the prosodic features by the words around them, and often elided with increased speed of speech (Rost, 2011). Properly identifying function words on the pre-test could be interpreted as a proxy of listening ability for suprasegmental features. The ability to decipher this input is indicative of a higher capability to decode phonological input resulting in greater listening ability overall.

**Conclusion**

This study found spaced dictation exercises to have great utility in the language classroom. Even though dictation activities may carry with them negative connotations among language educators, this study found spaced dictation to be effective in improving learner ability to
recognize lexis, comprehend naturally spoken input, and build learner confidence. Future research comparing the outcome of spaced dictation with other dictation techniques is necessary to provide an understanding of the differences between in order to improve student outcomes.

Author note

Chris Edelman
Chris Edelman is currently a lecturer at Ritsumeikan University in the department of Science and Engineering. His research interests include psycholinguistics, L1 influence on language acquisition, phonological representation creation and retrieval, content-based instruction, and using rhythm in the language classroom.

Peter Ferguson
Peter Ferguson teaches second language teacher education at Nara University of Education, focusing on elementary and junior high school English. His research interests cover elementary school EFL curriculum and pedagogy, pre- and in-service teacher education, language policy, sociolinguistics, early literacy, and comparative education.

Robert McClung
Robert McClung is a full-time contract teacher at Kansai University. He has taught for over 10 years in Japan. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in education with a specialization in college teaching and learning. He is focused on increasing student positivity and intrinsic motivation in technology-based, student-centered classrooms.
References
Rost, M. (2011). Teaching and researching listening (2nd ed.). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.
https://doi.org/10.5746/LEiA/14/V5/I1/A13/Wong_Leeming
Appendix A

Week 1 Pre-Test Transcript, Comprehension Questions, and Affective Survey

This summer, I stayed at home most days. Usually, I prepared for my classes this fall. It takes a lot of time, but it's very important. I need to prepare lots of things for my students because I'm the teacher.

Of course, I didn't stay in my house for all of summer. I went to the park with my friends, but the weather was too hot. I also went to a party a couple weeks ago. The weather was cooler that day, so I had a good time. I'm looking forward to spring break already, because I want to travel more if I have the chance.

1. This summer, your teacher:
A) Travelled a lot  
B) Travelled sometimes  
C) Never travelled  
D) Felt cold in the party

4. Which activity matches the weather?
A) Park - hot  
B) Party - hot  
C) Park - hot | Party - hot  
D) Park - hot | Party – a little too hot

2. Your teacher:
A) Always stayed home  
B) Usually was scared of work  
C) Did some work  
D) Didn't do any work

5. During the next break, your teacher wants to:
A) Go to the park again  
B) Take a trip if possible  
C) Travel to an exciting place  
D) Travel to a cool place because they don’t like hot weather

3. Your teacher feels:
A) Their job is important  
B) Happy when students get high scores  
C) Sorry to work again  
D) The weather was hot at work

Please answer honestly.

1. The difficulty was...
   1 – Not difficult  
   2 – A little difficult  
   3 – Difficult  
   4 – Very Difficult

3. My anxiety was...
   1 – No anxiety  
   2 – A little anxiety  
   3 – Anxious  
   4 – Very anxious

2. My confidence was...
   1 – Very confident  
   2 – Confident  
   3 – A little confidence  
   4 – No confidence

4. My effort was...
   1 – Very high  
   2 – High  
   3 – Low  
   4 – Very low
Appendix B
Week 6 Post-Test Transcript, Comprehension Questions, and Affective Survey

Last weekend, I enjoyed time with my family. Friday, I cooked a nice dinner at home. It takes a little time, but it’s not difficult. I went to the store and bought the food I needed before I went home to cook.

On Saturday, the weather was really nice. I went with my family and some friends to a park near the lake for lunch. We also went to the lake on Sunday. The weather was cooler that day, so we dressed in warm clothes. I’m looking forward to winter break already, because I want to rest more if I have the chance.

1. Last weekend, your teacher:
   A) Went to the city
   B) Stayed home and relaxed
   C) Spent time with his family
   D) Doesn’t like cold weather

2. Your teacher:
   A) Always stayed home
   B) Didn’t enjoy the weekend
   C) Cooked for his family
   D) Worked on tests

3. Your teacher:
   A) Cooks every Friday
   B) Bought food before going home
   C) Always buys food on Friday
   D) Is a good cook

4. Which day matches the weather?
   A) Saturday – Warmer than Friday
   B) Friday and Saturday – Warm
   C) Friday – Warm | Sunday – A little warm
   D) Saturday - Warm | Sunday – Cool

5. During the next break, your teacher wants to:
   A) Go to the lake again
   B) Not do anything exciting
   C) Travel to an exciting place
   D) Travel to a warm place

Please answer honestly.

1. The difficulty was…
   1 – Not difficult
   2 – A little difficult
   3 – Difficult
   4 – Very difficult

2. My confidence was…
   1 – Very confident
   2 – Confident
   3 – A little confidence
   4 – No confidence

3. My anxiety was…
   1 – No anxiety
   2 – A little anxiety
   3 – Anxious
   4 – Very anxious

4. My effort was…
   1 – Very high
   2 – High
   3 – Low
   4 – Very low

5. I enjoy this type of practice
   1 – Yes, a lot
   2 – Yes, a little
   3 – No
   4 – I don’t like it

6. This type of practice is good to improve my English skill.
   1 – Yes
   2 – A little
   3 – Not really
   4 – Not helpful at all
Does Dictogloss Improve Non-English Major Students’ Motivation and Grammatical Competence?

Hang Nguyen
Thuyloi University, Hanoi, Vietnam

This 12-week research examined the effects of dictogloss on the students’ grammatical competence and motivation. Data were collected through tests, questionnaires, and observation involving twenty eight students in a maths class at a higher education institution in Vietnam. The initial data indicated that students had low grammatical competence and motivation in learning grammar. By analyzing the textbook, the researcher found out it was structured in a way where dictogloss could be applicable and then an action plan was made to better the situation. The findings demonstrated the positive impacts of using dictogloss in the class where English was taught as an EFL (English as a foreign language). Learners could not only make improvements in their grammatical competence but also express greater interest in the English class. The discussion supports the use of dictogloss as an alternative method for grammar teaching and provides some implications for better dictogloss practice in EFL context.

Keywords: Dictogloss, grammatical competence, grammar, motivation

Teaching grammar in an interesting and communicative way has been always given some concern by the practitioners of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Due to theoretical and empirical developments in the fields, many attempts have been given to this task and a number of approaches have been proposed, including grammar-based approaches, communication-based approaches, and communicative focus on form (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). Recent research points out that form-focused instruction benefits learners of English in modifying their interlanguage grammar, which leads to the improvement of linguistic accuracy (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Ellis, 2002).

One of such focus-on-form techniques is dictogloss which was first introduced by (Wajnryb, 1990) as an alternative technique of teaching grammar (Vasiljevic, 2010). It is claimed to encourage learners to concentrate on the form of language on basis of communication (Ellis, 2003). Dictogloss is a task-based procedure to help language learners better understand how grammar works on a text basis (Wajnryb, 1990). It requires a text with recurrences of target grammar structures.

Language Education in Asia, 2017, 8(1), 84-108. http://dx.doi.org/10.5746/LEiA/17/V8/I1/A06/Nguyen
At Non-English Major Division, at Hanoi College of Education (HCE)\(^1\), where English is one of the mandatory subjects and all students irrespective of their majors are required to follow three compulsory English courses. After the course, learners are expected to be at the pre-intermediate level. Unfortunately, the teaching practice in the classroom did not reflect on the appropriate approaches in the English language Teaching (ELT) theory. After long courses, many non-English major students remained unconfident to naturally produce the grammatically correct sentences as well as expressed low interest in grammar lessons. After analyzing the textbook and the situation, the researcher found out that dictogloss might be utilizable in her context.

The study aimed to investigate the impacts of using dictogloss in teaching grammar integrately. This paper starts by looking at literature review on grammar instruction, dictogloss and its relations with grammar teaching, and motivation, which is followed by methodology section. The study then presents the findings and discusses them in light of relevant literature. Lastly, the conclusion emphasizes the findings and gives suggestions for further study.

### Literature Review

#### Grammatical Competence

Historically, approaches to grammar teaching have undergone many changes due to a number of theoretical and empirical developments in the fields (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). Apart from traditional approaches, currently, the rise of Communicative focus on form, which refers to grammar instruction that takes place in communicative contexts, has been widely advocated by a great number of scholars (Long, 1991; Skehan, 1996; Savignon, 2001; Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). Many authors have developed frameworks for grammar teaching that emphasize the incorporation of a focus on grammar into meaningful communication to help learners improve learners' grammatical competence.

Grammatical competence is developed by Canale and Swain (1980) on the basis of Chomsky's introduction of the term “competence” which “refers to knowledge of grammar and of other aspects of language” (Chomsky, 1965) and notions of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Campbell and Wales, 1970). According to Canale and Swain (1980), grammatical competence is associated with the mastery of the linguistic codes which enables the speakers to use necessary knowledge and skills to understand and express the literal meaning of utterances. It is aimed at acquiring knowledge of, and ability to use, forms of expression that are grammatically correct and accurate (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010; Gao, 2001). Orwig (1999) also defined grammatical competence as the ability to recognize and produce grammatical structures of a language and to use them effectively in communication. Larsen-Freeman (2001) claimed that teachers needed pay attention to the three dimensions of grammar including form (structure), meaning (semantics) and use (pragmatics). Teaching grammar rules and/or having student memorize verb conjugations would not help students acquire grammatical competence. Hence, a number of researchers insisted on the inclusion of focus on form in grammar pedagogy which refers to the learners’ attention on particular linguistic forms in the

---

\(^1\)Hanoi College of Education: has changed its name to Hanoi Metropolitan University since 2014
context of meaningful communication. It is “an instructional option that calls for an integration of grammar and communication in second language teaching” (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011, p.1).

**Motivation**

According to Martin (2003), motivation is learners’ energy and drives to study, a stimulant for achieving a specific target (Johnstone, 1999). It is the efforts which learners make for learning a language because of “their need or desire to learn it” (Ellis, 1994, p.715). It is closely associated with “arousal, attention, anxiety, and feedback of reinforcement” (Franken, 1994).

Ryan & Deci (2000) categorised motivation into two types. *Intrinsic motivation* refers to the inner eagerness and interest to do and participate in a particular activity as they find these activities enjoyable. On the other hand, *extrinsic motivation* comes from outside of the performers. Extrinsically motivated students study for the sake of outside influences such as getting teacher and peer praise, acquiring a good grade or some other type of reinforcement that a teacher or peer might offer. According to Fisher (1990) there are three major sources of motivation in learning including: (1) the learner’s natural interest: intrinsic satisfaction, (2) the teacher institution employment: extrinsic reward, and (3) success in the task: combining satisfaction and reward.

Johansson (2010) showed that learners easily lose their motivation in traditional grammar classes. This approach was considered as a deductive and linear presentation of these rules and learners were exposed to too much mother tongue and rules, there was little chance for them to practice the target language. Hence, this kind of instruction failed to satisfy the communicative needs of language learners (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011).

**Dictogloss as an Educational Intervention**

Dictation has made its long history in language teaching and obtained a number of pedagogical claims for its value from methodologists. Due to some criticisms, several variations of dictation were made to make dictation more interesting and learner-centered. One of them is Dictogloss, also called Grammar dictation, developed by Wajnryb (1990). It is “a task-based procedure designed to help language-learning students towards a better understanding of how grammar works on a text basis.” (Wajnryb, 1990, p.6). Its procedure involves four steps.

Step 1 – Preparation – This step informs students of the aim of the task. It equips learners with subject matter and vocabulary and makes them more “receptive” to listening in the next stage.

Step 2 – Dictation - The text should be dictated at normal speed twice or three times. In the first time of listening, students just listen to the general idea of the text. The second time, they take notes of the key words from which sentences and text will be constructed.

Step 3 – Reconstruction – Students are involved in reconstructing the text as accurately as possible by working in small groups.
Step 4 - Correction - With the teacher’s help, learners are required to analyze the similarities and differences with the original version, and then correct their texts.

Variations of Dictogloss

Beside the standard procedure, Jacobs and Small (2003) suggested 8 variations of dictogloss.

Dictogloss negotiation. Students discuss after each part of the text. The teachers pause the audios after one sentence or a short paragraph.

Student-controlled Dictation. Students work directly with the teacher as they use a tape recorder. They can request the teacher to stop, rewind, and fast-forward.

Student-student Dictation. Instead of the teacher reading the text, it is students that take turns to dictate the text. It can also be done by students bringing in the own texts.

Dictogloss summaries. Students concentrate on the main ideas of the original text and work with a partner to summarize the key points of the text.

Scrambled sentence dictogloss. It is employed to draw students’ attention on how texts fit together. The teacher jumbles the sentences of the text before delivering it to students and learners first have to produce what they heard and then put it into a logical order.

Elaboration dictogloss. Students not only recreate a text but also to improve it. After taking notes, students reconstruct the text and then add elaborations.

Dictogloss opinion. Students give their personal opinions on the writers’ ideas after reconstructing the text.

Picture dictation. Dictation can be done by completing a graphic organizer or drawing. After doing a drawing, students compare their drawings with their partners and with the original.

Teaching grammar in a motivating way has been always given some concerns by language educators and teachers. Dictogloss was taken notice of in the focus-on-form literature review, a development in the theory of grammar instruction, as one of the teaching strategies that helps to address the problems of traditional approaches since its introduction (Wajnryb, 1990). The purpose of dictogloss is to improve students' knowledge of text structure and grammar within an authentic context (VanPatten et al., 2009), and to effectively address grammatical errors in writing that may be the result of erroneous aural perception of English." (Frodesen, 1991, p. 268). Dictogloss is not only the useful for literary English, but also encourages the students to appreciate the way of choosing words and phrasing, which familiarizes them with authentic English (Ghaderpanahi, 2012). Wajnryb (1990) claims dictogloss helps to encourage learners’ motivation because its procedure allows them to raise their voice and teachers teach the students in response to their need. “Dictogloss procedure can capitalize on learners’ willingness to learn and allow the teacher to maintain learner motivation at a high and effective level” (p.15). This was also supported by AlSibai (2017), Harwood (2008), and Gopal...
Hence, dictogloss embraces the potential to address the traditional concerns of grammar instruction (AlSibai, 2017), to serve as a form-focused technique (Jacobs & Small, 2003) accommodating learners’ interests (Stewart et al., 2014).

In fact, the efficacy of dictogloss in promoting grammar knowledge has been empirically examined in many contexts; however, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, there have been very few studies that had assessed the value of this procedure in grammar teaching in the Southeast Asia. Furthermore, all research did only explore the impacts of standard dictogloss procedure while there were eight variations of dictogloss (Jacobs and Small, 2003). It inspired the researcher’s attempt to address the gaps.

Research Aims
This study aimed to empirically measure the influences of using dictogloss on students’ grammatical competence and their motivation in grammar lessons. To fulfill this aim, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How did dictogloss influence the students’ grammatical competence?
2. How did it motivate students in the lessons?

Methodology
Participants
The research was carried out in 12 weeks during the second semester in the academic year 2012-2013. Participants in this study were 28 second-year students majoring in Maths at HCE. They were in a mixed-level class as they did not take any official placement tests up on the enrollment. Typically, those participants had been studying English for about ten years as a subject prior to entering university and had already experienced the two first parts of the course (English 1 and 2) in the previous semesters. Therefore, these participants might acquire some basic listening and speaking skills as well as certain knowledge of grammatical points. However, all of them had not been equipped with note-taking skills before, so it was necessary for the researcher to gradually familiarize them with note-taking so that they could participate in dictogloss procedure. After the target course, their English was expected to be at the pre-intermediate level.

Pedagogical Design
New English file is a textbook for a grammar-based comprehensive course with all skills and components. In other words, target grammatical items of each lesson appear repeatedly in other skill tasks, namely reading and listening. This is really suitable for using dictogloss as a technique in the class.

For English 3, students were equipped with some popular topics from File 7 to file 9. Each week, there are 3 forty-five-minute periods. Teachers are encouraged to use as much English in the class as possible. After this course, students are expected to (1) improve their grammatical competence with a deeper understanding of its usages in real context, (2) develop their language skills such as listening, note-taking, speaking, writing, (3) develop their interaction
with others by kinds of grouping (group work, pair work), and (4) increase greater motivation in the grammar-based class.

**Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection in this study included (a) the delivery of a pre- and post-test to all participants and analysis of the responses; (b) the delivery of a pre- and post- questionnaire and analysis of responses; and (c) the analysis of observation data.

**A pre- and post-test.** The pre-test (see Appendix A) and the post-test (see Appendix B) were designed to test learners’ achievement before and after the intervention in order to find out the results of the whole treatment. To ensure the reliability and validity, the pre-test and the post-test are the same in structure, test items, target grammar, and level of difficulty. The two tests covered all grammatical components in the target files. They comprised of four parts which required students to recognize grammar items and utilize them to produce their own written works.

**A pre- and post-questionnaire.** Pre-questionnaire (see Appendix C) and post-questionnaire (see Appendix D) were a combination of multiple choice questions, open questions and likert scale questions collecting participants’ background and their responses towards traditional grammar class and dictogloss procedure. To avoid the misunderstanding and gather the most reliable responses, both questionnaires were originally written in Vietnamese.

**Observation.** It was implemented during the whole period noting teachers’ familiarity with dictogloss and the problems they encountered when implementing it. This helped the researcher know whether the activities were properly carried out to make some prompt adjustments.

**Procedure**

The action research was conducted during 12 weeks in the second semester of the academic year 2012-2013, following 7 primary steps proposed by Mc Bride & Schostak model (1989).
After administering a pre-test and pre-questionnaire at the first research week, data were statistically interpreted and a hypothesis “Applying dictogloss could raise the students’ interest and grammatical competence.” was formed. Then, a training session (week 2) was held to familiarize students with note-taking and dictogloss. The action plan was done between week 3 and week 10; the action might be slightly adjusted based on data from observation. Post data (from a post-test and a post-questionnaire) were collected and analyzed in the two following weeks.

**Findings**

This section presents the detailed findings for the two research questions based on the analysis of three data collection tools including tests, questionnaires, and observation.

**Students’ Grammatical Competence**

The changes in students’ grammatical competence after the intervention could be first revealed by analyzing and comparing the findings of the two tests. The overall results showed that the use of dictogloss in grammar lessons could improve their grammatical performance.
Table 1

Student’s results of pre-test and post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test performance</th>
<th>Pre/Post</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Pre/Post Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak (mark under 5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>-14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (mark 5 – 6.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>-7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair (mark 7 – 7.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good (Mark 8 - 8.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent (mark 9 – 10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Pre= Pre-test, Post = Post-test

It was clearly seen that from the pre-test data, nearly half of the students received a mark in the range from 5 to 6.9 while the total number of fair, good, and excellent marks accounted for slightly over 32%. This result showed an unsatisfactory level of grammatical competence. In contrast, from the Pre/Post Difference data, a fall in the percentage of weak and average marks, and an increase in that of fair, good, and excellent marks indicated that there was an improvement in students’ grammar test performance (see Table 1).

Looking into students’ performance on separate tasks in both tests (see table 2a and 2b), it is obviously seen that multiple choice exercises were constantly done the best by the participants with the highest percentage of score group A (80%-100% correct ) in pre-test and post-test (89.3% and 92.9%, correspondingly) while sentence transformation tasks took up the highest portions of score group C (<50% correct) in both tests.

Table 2a

Comparison the students’ performance in pre-test tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks / score groups</th>
<th>A 80%-100% correct</th>
<th>B 50%-79% correct</th>
<th>C &lt;50% correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple choice</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistake correction</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building full sentences</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence transformation</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph writing</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2b

Comparison the students’ performance in post-test tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks / score groups</th>
<th>A 80%-100% correct</th>
<th>B 50%-79% correct</th>
<th>C &lt;50% correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple choice</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistake correction</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building full sentences</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence transformation</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph writing</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Score groups, including A, B, and C, are named by the researcher to facilitate the analysis. They are the percentage of correct answers in each task.
Upon closer inspection the data on students’ performance in different tasks in pre-test and post-test revealed there was an overall positive change. The percentage of score group A (80%-100% correct) in the post-test was on the rise in all types of tasks except the task 5 and that of score group C (50% correct) saw a downward trend in comparison with the pre-test.

When analyzing Question 6 in the prequestionnaire, the researcher understood the students’ exact troubles when doing the grammar tests. Compared with only 4.5% of the responses “I have no problems with the grammar test”, the biggest problem recorded was students’ failure in applying long units such as building sentences even though they knew the rules (accounting for 54.6%), followed by their inability to recognize and remember the grammar points in the quiz (up to 40.9%).

However, an inspection into tests results revealed that there is an improvement in the participants’ knowledge of grammar when doing grammar exercise. Moreover, for the tasks (such as task 4 and 5) which required deep understanding and master of grammatical rules to be able to use them effectively in communicating a message, students demonstrated increased performance after the intervention. This indicated that to some extents students did improve their grammatical competence.

To be more reliable, the author analyzed the post-questionnaire (see Appendix D) data, which revealed that a large percentage of students (82.5%) could recognize their improvement in grammatical competence and about 17.5% were not satisfied with what they gained from the course.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ evaluation on their grammatical competence improvement after the intervention</th>
<th>Students’ evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I see no improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have experienced a little improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel excited as I have made progress in doing grammar exercises</td>
<td></td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can apply the target rules into building sentences with few mistakes.</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can apply the target rules in communicating some common messages</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from observation showed that after each dictogloss procedure, students were required to take part in some practice exercises and then apply the rules in communication. Overall, the completion of the tasks was good except several students with very poor performance. They still misunderstood between a few and a little and made mistakes because they could not distinguish some uncountable and countable nouns; or between adjectives (ing) and (ed); This could also strengthened by data from post-questionnaire.

Now I am less confused with some grammatical points. For example, “a little” and “a few”. Sometimes, I remember it right, but sometimes I use it wrong as I am confused between the two. (Reflection 1 for question 1)
I found that I did make some progress. However, in several cases, I couldn’t identify which was the characteristic and which was just the emotion. Hence, I was unable to give the right answers. (Reflection 2 for question 1)

**Students’ Motivation in the Classroom**

A majority of students did not respond positively to the traditional method, which was shown in the pre-questionnaire’s results. A large number of participants agreed that they felt discouraged due to the uninteresting methods and their inability in applying the rules into doing exercises and communication.

However, data from observations demonstrate that dictogloss contributed to the exciting atmosphere in the classroom. Through observation, the researcher found the class atmosphere quite exciting. In the class, most students actively took part in activities; the grouping of mixed-level students had some advantages. Because the whole lesson was often held to be a competition, all the teams wanted to win the game to receive a certain kind of rewards or merely satisfy themselves. Therefore, the group members tried to be engaged in the procedure. When the tasks (week 3- “used to”) were delivered, a group leader encouraged her members “Come on, guys!” or any groups who were the fastest or were the only group to give the correct answers, they shouted and clapped their hands.

Regarding the topics, “Rebel at school” and “Useful inventions by women” turned out to be of their interest. The former made the learners amused as it reminded them of their time at school; and the latter awoke their curiosity. The topic “Weekends” was reported to be the most unexciting and uninformative.

Overall, this result matched with data from the post-questionnaire (see table 4). The participants, after the intervention, expressed clear interest to the new technique. A majority did not feel sleepy during the lesson, and they were involved in the different activities of dictogloss procedure. Group work during dictogloss procedure seemed to have great impacts on the students as up to 53.6% agreed that group work made them more confident and they liked to discuss what they learnt as they could remember the rules longer (accounting for 60.7%).
Table 4

**Students’ attitudes to dictogloss**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Scale 1</th>
<th>Scale 2</th>
<th>Scale 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sleepy, as I do not understand anything.</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sleepy, as some dictation texts are really boring.</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Even though I have to struggle in the first steps of dictogloss, its</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last steps still help me to understand the target grammar.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Group work helps me feel more confident.</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Great as I have more chance to discuss about what we’ve learnt. This</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhance our memory.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It is great that the teacher immediately correct the mistakes in our</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reconstructions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Encouraged as I could remember and apply the target grammar in real</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>situations because it is used in context.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I felt motivated because I made an obvious improvement.</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dictogloss was advocated because the way the teacher corrected the mistakes attracted them (75%). Half of the learners felt encouraged as they could remember and apply the target grammar in real situations because it was used in context.

Data from post-questionnaire reported that nearly half of the responses indicated that students felt quite inspired in learning grammar and doing grammar tasks as they could understand and do the tasks, in comparison to a small percentage of opinions (about 13.2%) which complained that learning grammar was still a huge challenge. Here are some extra reflections from participants.

To me, grammar is not a nightmare as it used to be. Formerly, I learnt the rules mechanically and did the exercises based on the signs in the sentences without really understanding its usage. It was problematic as it only worked well in multiple choice exercises. Therefore, I often failed in other exercises such as sentence tranformation. (Reflection 1 for question 5)

In dictogloss procedure, I had to reconstruct a paragraph on basis of the key words from the text. This task helped me be more confident with “Building full sentences” exercise. (Reflection 2 for question 5)

Noticeably, the use of dictogloss helped to lessen the fear of learning grammar and nearly 30% students increased their autonomy in doing extra grammar exercises at home to improve their grammatical competence. This was very promising and it could be seen as the target of language education.

The students’ expectations and recommendations for the use of dictogloss were also collected. They said that teacher should pay more attention to grouping because some weaker students could not keep up with the stronger ones. Finally, many participants noted that they wanted
their group to be marked at the end of the discussion. This would make the discussion a competitive game.

**Discussion**

The findings of the study demonstrate that language teachers should be aware that dictogloss is feasible and appropriate for teaching grammar through the design and implementation of meaningful tasks (Akbari, 2012). Jibir Daura (2013) recommended that teachers try to use dictogloss in the classroom so that learners could benefit from cooperative activities. The reported findings, to some extent, were in line with the results of previous studies (Kidd, 1992; Harwood, 2008; Qin, 2008; Gopal, 2012; Abbasi & Minagar, 2012; AlSibai, 2017) advocating the applying dictogloss to direct learners’ attention to grammatical form (Akbari, 2012; Khoii & Pourhassan, 2015; Lindstromberg et al., 2016) while engaged in meaningful tasks (Basterrechea & García Mayo, 2014) and to fuel learners’ motivation in the class (Abbasi & Mohammadi, 2013; Dista, 2017). Students made a progress in producing grammatical structures of a language and expressing the literal meaning of utterances (Canale & Swain, 1980; Akbari, 2012). After the intervention, they were naturally involved in order to work out the grammar rules and see its real usage in the context and they were also given chances to practice the language. They could do some types of exercises that they had not performed well before such as rewriting the sentences and building sentences (Uludag & VanPatten, 2012). Furthermore, by working in groups after listening, while the weaker students stood a better chance of learning from the others to complete the tasks which was still very challenging when they had to deal individually, the stronger could actively engage in completing the tasks and support the others.

Given the positive responses of the learners, there have been several things for further discussion. First, it is clear from the findings that dictogloss did contribute to the exciting atmosphere in the classroom. However, it is hard to claim that students have intrinsic motivation (Littlejohn, 2001) because English is only one of their minor subject at college. In response to question 2 (post-questionnaire) on the reasons for little improvement, they said “Because English is just a subject like other minor subjects we have to study at college, I cannot allocate much time for it though I might have some fun in the class.” According to three major sources of motivation in learning suggested by Fisher (1990), although it may not help much in terms of their natural interest, dictogloss could improve learners’ extrinsic motivation by means of their success in the task, rewards and enjoyable activities in dictogloss procedure. In fact, having language learners make a shift in their mood from low to higher level of encouragement is of a great significance. Secondly, students’ motivation depended much on how interest the topics were. For example, with “Weekends” or “Morning life”, reported tedious topics, teachers would find harder to raise learners’ mood because they were able to predict the content. Furthermore, the content of the topic was also about trite routines at the weekends of some people, which made it difficult to warm up the class atmosphere. A remedy for this is that teachers should give room for students to make their own decisions on what topics need replacing before the course. This is what Wajnryb (1990) called “teachers teach the students in response to their need” to “maintain learner motivation at a high and effective level.” (p.15)
In a discussion on how to implement FonF tasks in the classroom, Ellis (2002) pointed out two factors that might affect its success: (1) target structure choices and (2) the extent of the instruction. Therefore, it would be more likely to be successful if teachers only delivered extensive instruction on simple noticeable structures. Furthermore, skill preparation also acts as a catalyst for dictogloss implementation in the class because Dictogloss includes a combination of multiple skills (Wajnryb, 1990). Yang Xue-qian (2007) claimed that if the students were unfamiliar with involved skills in dictogloss, they might face big troubles in understanding the text. For this study, the researcher had to set up a training session on dictogloss procedure and practice of note-taking skill before the treatment. However, students still took time to be familiar with it at the beginning of research period. Hence, it is essential that learners are well-equipped with important skills in advance.

After all, in spite of receiving positive feedbacks from the students, dictogloss is still recommended not to be used exclusively in the whole course. Hornby Uribe (2010) claimed that dictogloss is not an effective stand-alone activity for teaching target grammar. It should be only used as an alternative technique to teach grammar. When dictogloss is utilizable depends much on the features of the courses, the textbook and available materials with the recurrences of those features within the text (Ayon & Rafael Salaberry, 2005), and learners.

The first limitation of the study relates to the participant selection. Their English level was estimated approximately. They did not take any official tests to ensure that they have the same level. This may affect the outcomes of the study. The second issue is associated with the selected kind of tests which are in the written form. The final aim of dictogloss procedure is to enable learners to produce utterances grammatically accurately in communication. This limitation, therefore, suggests the need for further studies to emphasize the impacts of dictogloss on learners’ grammatical competence by means of both written and oral tests.

**Conclusion**

Many language educators would probably agree that applying dictogloss in teaching grammar is promising in theory but challenging in practice. This study was conducted to explore the effects of using dictogloss on students’ grammatical competence and their motivation in grammar class in Vietnamese EFL context. This study has demonstrated that students undertaking a grammar course with dictogloss as part of their learning process were able to improve their overall grammatical competence in areas such as verb conjugations, adjectives ending with –ing and -ed, unidentified nouns, and quantifiers encourage. Furthermore, they also encourage positive attitudes in the English classroom.

A significant contribution of the study to the ELT is the author’s findings which help to positively advocate the use of dictogloss in the theory of language teaching. Regardless of several difficulties, using dictogloss in grammar lessons makes learning less stressful and more engaging, which helps to keep students motivated in learning grammar.
Author Note
Hang Nguyen, Division of English, the Center for International Education, Thuy Loi University, Hanoi, Vietnam.

This study is my MA thesis that I carried out at Hanoi College of Education. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Professor Ngo Huu Hoang, my supervisor, for guiding me through the whole process of research.

Hang Nguyen is a lecturer of English at Thuyloi University. She holds an M.A in ELT at University of Language and International Studies - VNU. Her fields of interest are ELT, materials development and teaching methodology.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Hang Nguyen, Division of English, the Center for International Education, Thuy Loi University. E-mail: nguyenhangsphtn@gmail.com
References


Appendix A

Pre-test
I. Use of English (20p)

1. I’m going to ________ this week.
   a. look after my neighbour’s cat
   b. look my neighbour’s cat after
   c. look at my neighbour’s cat
   d. A & B

2. He can’t reach the top shelf because he is not very tall.
   a. He is tall enough to reach the top shelf.
   b. He is too tall to reach the top shelf.
   c. He isn’t tall enough to reach the top shelf.
   d. He isn’t tall, so he can reach the top shelf.

3. She ________ really long hair but she's had it all cut off.
   a. is used to have
   b. used to have
   c. is used to having
   d. didn’t use to have

4. – I get on with my boss very well. – ________.
   a. So I do
   b. neither do I
   c. So am I
   d. So do I

5. Walking around the shopping center was quite _________. I need a rest!
   a. tire
   b. tiring
   c. tired
   d. tires

6. Before I ________ to class this morning, I ________ my homework.
   a. come / did
   b. came/had done
   c. come/ had done
   d. came/ have come

7. Can you ________? I want to watch the film.
   a. turn the TV on
   b. turn the TV in
   c. turn off the TV
   d. turn the TV off

8. I’m bored. I don’t have ________ to do.
   a. anything
   b. nothing
   c. everything
   d. anyone

9. The electric light bulb ________ by Thomas Edison in 1879.
   a. was invented
   b. invented
   c. is invented
   d. invents

10. I usually have ________ milk in my coffee. I don’t want to gain weight.
    a. too many
    b. a few
    c. little
    d. enough

II. Mistake correction (20p)

11. This coffee isn’t ________ hot for me to drink in this ________ weather.
    A   B   C   D

12. He used ________ wear a uniform when she ________ at school.
    A   B   C   D
13. Your father’s asleep. Don’t wake up him! He will be very frustrated.
A   B   C   D

14. My daughter was particularly impressing by the dancing.
A   B   C   D

15. Even though we are not twins, I look exactly the same with my sister.
A   B   C   D

III. Make full sentences with the given words (20p)

16. It is not safe enough to walk here at night.
17. He was born in Virginia.
18. This is first time I meet him.
19. Every morning I turn my computer and check my e-mail.
20. Yesterday after Kathy and Tom do exercise, they have a shower.

IV. Rewrite the sentences without changing the meaning (20p)

21. The police arrested fifteen people.
   → Fifteen ______________________________________________
22. It is tiring to study late at night.
   → Studying ______________________________________________
23. I got dressed, and then she went to work.
   → After __________________________________________________
24. He often walked to the park in the evening when he was a child, but now he doesn’t.
   → He used _______________________________________________
25. Those shoes are too small for me to wear.
   → These shoes are not _____________________________________

V. Writing (20p)

Write a short paragraph (about 50 - 60 words) to talk about what you used to do in the past. In the paragraph, you must include 10 uses of the following components (try to use different components, but you don’t have to use all of them). For each component used, please underline them.

- Phrasal verbs
- Used to
- Passive
- Quantifiers (much/many/a few/ few/ a little/ little/ too…to / enough … to)
- Similarity (similar, same, either , neither, so, too, look like)
- Adj (ing/ ed)
- Some (body /thing / where), any (body /thing / where); no (body /thing / where)
- Past perfect

The end
Appendix B

Post-test

I. Use of English (20p)

1. I was late for school this morning because my alarm clock didn’t ________.
   A. go off          B. go up          C. go away          D. go on

2. She doesn’t know much about French. She cannot read a newspaper in French.
   A. She doesn’t know enough French not to read a newspaper in French.
   B. She doesn’t know French enough to read a newspaper in French.
   C. She knows too much French to read a newspaper in French.
   D. She doesn’t know too much French to read a newspaper in French.

3. There ________ a petrol station there. When was it built?
   A. used to be       B. used being C. didn’t use to be        D. didn’t used to be

4. – A: He didn’t know that she had been married. – B: ____________.
   A. So did I        B. So I did C. Neither did I        D. Neither didn’t I

5. She supposed the trip would be very _____________.
   A. interests   B. interest   C. interesting   D. interested

6. The film ________ by the time we ________ to the cinema.
   A. had already started/ got   B. already started/ had gotten
   C. had already started/ had gotten   D. has already started/ got

7. I was late for school this morning because my alarm clock didn’t ________.
   A. go off          B. go up          C. go away          D. go on

8. I phone twice, but ________ answered.
   A. nothing          B. anything          C. somebody          D. nobody

9. English ________ in many parts of the world.
   A. is speaking   B. speaking   C. is spoken   D. speaks

10. If you can wait, we’ll be there in ________ minutes
    A. few          B. little          C. a little          D. a few

II. Mistake correction (20p)
Identify the underlined word or phrase A, B, C or D that must be changed and then correct them.

11. We __________ go sailing yesterday. There wasn’t wind enough for both of us.
    A. couldn’t go sailing   B. couldn’t go   C. didn’t sail   D. didn’t sail

Nguyen - Page 103
12. He used smoke 40 cigarettes a day but he doesn’t smoke any more now.

A  B  C  D

13. Your clothes are on the floor. Why don’t you put away it? We’re having guests.

A  B  C  D

14. It was an extremely frightened experience in my life.

A  B  C  D

15. Dr. Bouchard didn’t expect them to be so similar with each other

A  B  C  D

III. Make full sentences with the given words (20p)

16. He / was / too / old / ride / the bumper car.


18. We / not have / a good meal / for / three weeks.

19. I’ve lost / my glass. Can / you / help me/ look / for / them?

20. The man / lend / me / his newspaper / after / he / read / it.

IV. Rewrite the sentences without changing the meaning (20p)


акс We ________________________________

22. He found this book boring.

акс He was ________________________________

23. Daisy and John did some exercise. Then they had a shower.

акс After ________________________________

24. Jim was my best friend, but we aren't friends any more.

акс Jim used ________________________________

25. He was too poor to buy a bicycle

акс He was not ________________________________

V. Writing (20p)

Write a short paragraph (about 50 – 60 words) to talk about your interesting visit in the past. In the paragraph, you must include 10 uses of the following components (try to use different components, but you don’t have to use all of them). For each component used, please underline them.

✓ Phrasal verbs
✓ Used to
✓ Passive
✓ Quantifiers (much/many/a few/ few/ a little/ little/ too...to / enough ... to)
✓ Similarity (similar, same, either , neither, so, too, look like)
✓ Adj (ing/ ed)
✓ Some (body /thing / where), any (body /thing / where); no (body /thing / where)
✓ Past perfect

The end
Appendix C

Pre-questionnaire

***

1. Please describe your difficulties in learning grammar? (You may choose more than one)
   a. I find no difficulties.
   b. I can’t remember many grammatical rules.
   c. I don’t understand, so I feel demotivated.
   d. The teaching methods are uninteresting to students.
   e. I find it hard to apply grammatical rules in communication.
   f. Others: ______________________________________________________

2. How often do you get low scores in the grammar tests?
   a. Never       b. Rarely       c. Sometimes       d. often       e. always
   * Low score: = < 5/10

3. What do you find difficult when doing grammar tests?
   a. I find no difficulties
   b. I can’t identify which grammatical rules are being tested.
   c. I must struggle when applying grammar in building meaningful sentences.
   d. Others: ______________________________________________________

4. Please tick the teaching method which was most used in the grammar class
   a. Neglecting grammar
   b. Teaching grammar in isolation
   c. Teaching grammar through other skills
   d. Others: ___________________________________________________

5. What are your attitudes in traditional grammar lessons (teaching grammar in isolation).
   Please tick x in the response which corresponds with your opinion.
   1 = Strongly disagree       4 = Agree
   2 = disagree       5 = Strongly agree
   3 = Neither disagree nor agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bored as I do not understand anything</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sleepy as the teacher’s methods are boring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Disappointed as I cannot apply grammatical rules into practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interested as I could understand what the teacher presents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interested as I could do the exercises after the teacher gives the rules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Interested as the teacher presents the rules in an interesting way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Interested as I know how to use accurate grammatical rules in communication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. What are your expectations of a grammar lesson? (You can choose more than one)
   a. Teachers can give examples in popular contexts or situations, so that students could easily recognize its usage.
   b. Teachers have more interesting methods.
   c. Sometimes teachers should allow students to work out the rules by themselves.
   d. Teachers should create more chances for students to practice the rules in communication.
   e. Students should practice rules in some complex exercises such as building sentences, not limited to multiple choice exercises.
   f. Others: ____________________________________________
Appendix D

Post-questionnaire

1. Please evaluate your progress in learning grammar after the course. (You can choose more than one)
   a/ I see no improvement
   b/ I experienced a little improvement
   c/ I have made progress in doing grammar exercises
   d/ I can apply the target rules into building sentences with few mistakes.
   e/ I can apply the target rules in communicating some common messages.
   f/ Others: ____________________________________________________

2. In your opinion, what are the reasons for little improvement?
   a/ I am not familiar with dictogloss technique.
   b/ Dictogloss is quite complex, which hinders me from understanding the lessons.
   c/ Dictogloss is not engaging, so I cannot stay focused.
   d/ Others: _________________________________________________________

3. What are your responses towards grammar lessons with the use of dictogloss? Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sleepy, as I do not understand anything.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Sleepy, as some dictation texts are really boring.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Even though I have to struggle in the first steps of dictogloss, its last steps still help me to understand the target grammar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Group work helps me feel more confident.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Great as I have more chance to discuss about what we’ve learnt. This will enhance our memory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>It is great that the teacher immediately correct the mistakes in our reconstructions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Encouraged as I could remember and apply the target grammar in real situations because it is used in context.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I felt motivated because I made an obvious improvement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Neither disagree nor agree: Sometimes right sometimes wrong

Others: __________________________________________________________
4. What are your recommendations for better implementation of dictogloss?

5. What are your attitudes towards learning grammar now?
   a/ It is still very difficult for me.
   b/ I find learning grammar less difficult.
   c/ I feel quite motivated with learning grammar and doing exercises because I understand it.
   d/ I often look for extra exercises to improve my grammar.
   e/ Others: _______________________________
Teaching Practice

Using Extensive Reading Oral Reports to Enhance Spoken Fluency

Brian Wojtowicz
Kwansei Gakuin University, Hyogo, Japan

Extensive Reading (ER) is most commonly used in TEFL/TESL practices to improve a variety of specific specialized reading skills, and sometimes even writing skills; however, ER is seldom associated with enhancing speaking skills. This paper explains a classroom practice where Oral Book Reports were designed and used as an additional component to standard ER work with the intent to strengthen students’ spoken output performance, speaking confidence, and oral fluency. Discussion of mid-course and post-course student self-reflective open-ended questionnaires reveals that incorporating Oral Book Report components into ER work not only increases enjoyment and improvement of L2 reading, but also successfully enhances students’ self-identified improvements in spoken output performance, speaking confidence, and oral fluency. Adding oral components to non-speaking based ER practices can benefit L2 learners in Asia since EFL classes and courses throughout Asia often lack adequate focus on developing L2 oral fluency.

Keywords: oral fluency, communicative language teaching, EFL in Asia, classroom practice, extensive reading

Extensive Reading (ER) can result in language acquisition (Krashen, 1982) and much of the literature supporting the benefits of ER focuses on vocabulary and grammar development (Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008; Lee & Mallinder, 2017), reading comprehension and speed (Chang & Millett, 2017; Huffman, 2014), and even writing skill improvements (Mermelstein, 2015; Salehi, Asgari, & Amini, 2015); however, using ER to strengthen oral fluency and increase spoken output quality and quantity has been mostly neglected in ER research. This could possibly be because the logical standard aim of ER is to primarily improve reading fluency (Day & Bamford, 1998; Day & Bamford, 2002; Suk, 2017; Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass, & Gorsuch, 2004).

In numerous EFL classes and courses, oral fluency is the most underdeveloped of the four categories of fluency, in comparison to reading, writing, and listening fluency (Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013; Gan, 2012; Onoda, 2014; Rossiter et al, 2010; Wang, 2014; Wojtowicz, 2017;
Zhang, S., 2009; Zhang, Y., 2009). Therefore, the Oral Book Report activity, which is the classroom practice addressed in this paper, prioritized a focus on oral fluency development instead of reading fluency improvement by including in-class oral report and group discussion components that integrated aspects of five oral fluency tasks identified by Rossiter et al. (2010). These fluency task ideas will be explained at the end of the Literature Review section.

This paper explains how ER work, in an integrated four skills EFL university course in Japan, was augmented to focus on improving students’ oral fluency rather than reading fluency. Firstly, the problem of there being a lack of practical focus on L2 oral fluency in various Asian countries’ EFL classes and courses is addressed, followed by an examination of oral fluency tasks and their relation to ER Oral Book Reports, and then Oral Book Reports are explained as a teaching practice. Finally, student questionnaire feedback results about ER work are discussed to show that Oral Book Reports successfully improved L2 oral fluency, spoken output performance, and speaking confidence.

**Literature Review**

**Concerns with Communicative Language Teaching and L2 Oral Fluency in Asia**

L2 acquisition research has extensively reiterated the relevance of communicative language teaching (CLT) procedures ever since the concept of communicative competence was first presented by Hymes (1972). Recently throughout Asia, there has been a fastidious importance being placed on L2 communicative competence curriculum design with an emphasis on CLT practices (Butler, 2011; Hu & McKay, 2012; Littlewood, 2007). Even though the incorporation and implementation of CLT practices in EFL classrooms across Asia has steadily improved over the past few decades, there are still some considerable restraints and restrictive factors preventing more widespread implementation throughout all education levels (Butler, 2011; Kelch, 2011).

Unfortunately, in some Asian EFL teaching environments from middle or junior high school through to even tertiary level institutions, there is a concerning lack of prioritizing oral fluency development due to departmental restrictions or lack of non-native English teacher confidence. Butler (2011) provides an in-depth exploration of how conceptual constraints, classroom-level constraints, and societal-institutional level constraints have hindered and affected the growth and development of CLT in EFL classes throughout Asia.

In Japan, CLT was incorporated into the national curriculum at the secondary school level a couple decades ago (Butler & Iino, 2005), however, “despite promotion of communicative language teaching techniques, oral fluency development has virtually been ignored in Japanese secondary and university-level English education” (Onoda, 2014, p. 121). A lack of proper teacher training regarding CLT methodology and implementation guidance, along with a need to satisfy the national curriculum’s focus on entrance examination preparation were some common reasons “promotion of language use for communication was not pursued in the classroom” (Taguchi, 2005, p.10) when CLT was initially introduced in Japan (Sakui, 2004). Kavanagh (2012) further argues that these reasons are still commonplace in more recent times. Another possible reason CLT is still not affectively administered nationwide, is that many Japanese English teachers lack confidence in their own ability to adequately teach
communicative English due to a self-identified deficiency in English communication skills, and oral fluency ability (Fennelly & Luxton, 2011; Nishino & Watanabe, 2008).

Nhung (2017) explains that in Vietnam the majority of students studying English at university graduate without being able to communicate successfully in English even though they have a knowledgeable understanding of English grammar and vocabulary. One underlying problem is that English teachers in Vietnam often do not possess the ability to speak fluently or teach fluency based curriculums and many training programs that promote English teacher language proficiency fail “to help teachers develop effective communication for English language teaching” (Burns, 2017, p. 87). Students themselves can also contribute to the problem of in-class oral disfluency, which can be defined as “the oral outputs which make oral productions disfluent or unnatural” (Gao & Du, 2013, p. 77), since traditional learning styles in Vietnam emphasize passivity, silence, memorization techniques, and a preference for reading and writing activities as opposed to oral production skills and group work activities (Nguyen, 2002).

As with the situation in Vietnam, South Korea also tries to focus on teaching English in English to improve students’ English proficiency abilities (Park, 2009). Even though some teachers admit to not fully complying to the English teaching policy requiring English to be taught in English (Choi & Lee, 2008), CLT approaches to improving English proficiency levels has remained the primary pedagogical method of instruction in Korean English curriculums with a focus on oral communication and listening (Flattery, 2007; Li, 1998). Flattery (2007) explains that even though the educational emphasis has moved towards CLT, teachers are reluctant to fully embrace this pedagogical approach to teaching since it is in contrast to more traditional and comfortable rote and translation style pedagogical practices in South Korea.

China began focusing on communicative and task based learning curriculums in the 1990s; however, the communicative pedagogical teaching practices conflicted with traditional rote style translation and memorization techniques that are more historically common in China (Hu & McKay, 2012). Consequently, the success of CLT proved to be limited (Nunan, 2003) and eventually lead to a Chinese-English bilingual teaching system that quasi-combined traditional translation pedagogical practices with Western style English instruction methodologies (Hu & Alsagoff, 2010; Hu & McKay, 2012) which has ultimately led to oral fluency and speaking being “the most difficult skill for English learners in China to master” (Zhang, S., 2009, p. 93). Zhang, Y. (2009) further explains that another part of the reason why “college graduates in China are often incapable of effectively communicating with foreigners in English” (p. 32) is because sometimes “speaking classes do not provide chances for oral interaction, as most of the teachers talk on and on throughout the lesson without giving students the opportunity to speak” (p. 32).

Even though the “TESOL field has evolved from using traditional grammar translation methods to communicative language teaching approaches where the focus of language teaching is on meaningful language use in a broad context” (Sun, 2014, p. 8), some Asian EFL course curricula have not been able to successfully replace traditional teaching methods with CLT pedagogical instruction for numerous genuine reasons (Nunan, 2003). This paper does not
address possible solutions to this somewhat volatile topic, but rather attempts to propose that Asian EFL classes and courses should focus more extensively on oral fluency development, “because the primary goal of most communicative L2 programs is to foster communicative competence” (Rossiter et al., 2010, p. 599) and this can be optimally achieved with self-designed tasks focusing on L2 oral fluency development (Bamford & Day, 2003; Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013; Helgesen, 2008; Nation, 1989; Ogura, 2008; Rossiter et al., 2010; Zhang, Y., 2009).

Oral Fluency Tasks in Relation to the Oral Book Reports

The term oral fluency used throughout this paper refers to definitions by Hasselgreen (2004) and Schmidt (1992). Hasselgreen (2004) defines L2 oral fluency as the “ability to contribute to what a listener, proficient in the language, would normally perceive as coherent speech, which can be understood without undue strain, and is carried out at a comfortable pace, not being disjointed or disrupted by excessive hesitation” (p. 184). Similarly, Schmidt explains that “nonfluent speech is effortful and requires a great deal of attention, so that nonfluent speakers exhibit many hesitations and other manifestations of groping for words and attempting to combine them into utterances” (p. 358). Rossiter et al. (2010) identified consciousness-raising tasks, rehearsal or repetition tasks, formulaic sequences, use of discourse markers, and communicative free-production activities as five main activity tasks that enhance oral fluency. Their research found that integrating aspects of these five tasks into instruction and activities can improve oral fluency. How the Oral Book Reports included all five of these oral fluency tasks is explained in the following paragraphs prior to a detailed Oral Book Report explanation.

Consciousness-raising tasks. Students were taught Hasselgreen’s (2004) oral fluency definition, identified in the previous paragraph, so they understood the concept of oral fluency as a language learner. Students were also repeatedly reminded that the Oral Book Reports were created to specifically help them with oral fluency improvement. Consciousness-raising tasks were also used to teach students about understanding and using discourse markers to strengthen oral fluency.

Rehearsal or repetition. It was explained to the students that oral fluency improvement requires repetitious rehearsals; therefore, before each Oral Book Report they needed to repeatedly practice so the spoken output would not sound like a memorized speech. Repetition practices were further supported by having students complete six similarly structured oral reports and subsequently perform them twice each in class for all six oral reports.

Formulaic sequences. Students were taught standard patterns of Book Report introduction material, body content, and conclusion techniques along with ways to structure a brief summary of events, main character information, and personal opinions about the characters, scenes, and overall story details (see Appendix A).

Use of discourse markers. Students were taught about discourse markers because underuse, misusage, or omission of discourse markers can signal disfluency, communicative
misunderstandings, and even communication failure (Polat, 2011). Therefore, discourse marker usage was required for the final Oral Book Report (see Appendix B for full instructions).

**Communicative free-production.** Even though the Oral Book Report material was prepared outside class time, the spoken output performances produced in class were mainly non-memorized, interactive, and freely communicative. Students were required to engage in free speaking conversation rather than give a memorized report.

Helping L2 learners enhance their oral fluency can be challenging for teachers in Asia because there is a significant lack of exposure to the L2 outside of school (Bohlke, 2014; Derwing, Munro, & Thomson, 2008; Tang, Chiou, & Jarsaillon, 2015; Zhang, Y., 2009). Therefore, in Asia, where EFL students commonly lack daily opportunities to speak English, “the only way to improve oral expression is to make the most of the situations available for speaking” (Zhang, S., 2009, p. 98), which predominantly occur in the EFL classroom. Asakereh & Dehghannezhad (2015) further explain that in EFL learning environments “where students have limited access to real and authentic contexts, speaking classes play a significant role in the development of the EFL students’ speaking skills” (p. 345). This lack of opportunity to practice English out of class influenced the author of this paper’s decision to prioritize oral fluency development and focus on oral fluency tasks during ER work by creating Oral Book Reports. The Oral Book Reports discussed throughout this paper incorporated all five of the above mentioned oral fluency tasks identified by Rossiter et al (2010); however, regular class work was also strategically designed to further develop these tasks.

**Objectives and Method**

**Aim**
The aim of this study was to explore how ER tasks could be successfully augmented to focus on and improve L2 oral fluency.

**Course Details and Participants**
The Oral Book Reports were designed for an integrated four skills course at a private university in Hyogo Japan where the students enrolled were Japanese (L1) native speakers studying English (L2) as a foreign language. Classes met for three ninety-minute lessons per week, for a total of twenty-eight weeks over two semesters. The two 2016 academic year classes (23 students per class) were streamed according to the results of TOEIC proficiency tests and the TOEIC score range was between 600 and 675 (about CEFR Mid-High B1 to Low B2 levels). The Oral Book Reports were one of the three main in-class speaking assessment projects, along with individual presentations and group presentations.

**Classroom Practice: Oral Book Reports**
A typical ER Book Report commonly focuses solely on reading and writing fluency improvement and often functions simply as proof of book reading completion (Iwahori, 2008; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Yamashita, 2013); however, the additional Oral Book Report components attempted to improve speaking and listening fluency along with reading and writing fluency. The two Oral Book Report components implemented and analyzed were: individual interactive spoken reports and interactive question based group discussions.
Graded readers were self-selected by students and book levels corresponded to the class proficiency level to coincide with ER guidelines (Day & Bamford, 1998; 2002; Day, 2015). Six books were read in the first semester and four were read in the second semester, but only six of the ten books read had the Oral Book Report components. Four individual students presented their oral reports simultaneously to small audiences of four or five classmates. Students were randomly placed into groups and usually hadn’t read the presenter’s book. Each presenter gave their oral report and discussion twice. Since four speakers gave reports simultaneously, the teacher also assessed four reports at once.

Before the first report, Oral Book Report content guidelines and formulaic expression suggestions (see Appendix A) were taught, however there was no detailed script example for them to copy or simply replicate. For the first and second reports, students were permitted to use self-written notes to assist them while speaking, but a full transcript was not permissible. For the third report the notes were reduced to brief point form only style. Notes were not permitted for the fourth report. Since the report speaking time was extended from five minutes to eight minutes for reports seven and eight, point form notes were allowed again.

Since task repetition has a profound effect on spoken output performance (Skehan, Bei, Li, & Wang, 2012); students can better improve their oral fluency by performing their speaking tasks several times, therefore, the students subsequently gave their oral reports twice and completed the oral report task six times over the duration of the course. Rather than simply repeat the exact same task each time, the Oral Book Report tasks occasionally changed throughout the academic year in order to more specifically focus on oral fluency enhancement. Skehan et al. (2012) explained that the initial implementation of an activity “seems to prime later use, to sensitize it, and thereby to enable the speaker to exploit the greater accessibility of the language and avoid errors that were made the first time around” (p. 181). Table 1 below shows the required repetitious tasks for each Book Report and the progressive augmentations made throughout the course.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Report Task Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Report 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Report 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Report 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Report 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Report 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Report 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Report 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Report 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Report 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Report 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were required to complete an online comprehension quiz (M-Reader) for each of the ten books they chose to read. They also hand wrote answers to a general short answer questions hand-out for each book (See Appendix C). The first two individual spoken reports were five minutes followed by a two minute audience Question and Answer session where audience members asked clarification questions to the presenter. For reports three and four, the audience Q & A session changed to a group discussion. The presenter had to prepare questions about themes from the book for the audience members to discuss (see Appendices D and E for full instructions). For the final two Oral Book Reports, spoken reports increased to eight minutes and group lead discussions extended to five minutes. Prior to these reports, students were taught discussion question writing skills and had several in-class practice sessions since rehearsal and repetition are essential for improving oral fluency (Rossiter et al., 2010). The final change to the last Oral Book Report was including a mandatory discourse marker use assessment criteria since discourse marker use is an integral aspect of oral fluency (Rossiter et al., 2010). Students were not only taught about the importance of discourse.
markers for oral fluency but they also participated in regular discourse marker focused in-class speaking activities.

**Teacher Feedback Reports**

After each of the Oral Book Reports, students received detailed individual feedback reports commenting on both positive and negative aspects of their oral performance, and improvement advice was also suggested. Using teacher feedback reports to promote oral fluency was also found to be successful in Boonkit’s (2010) research which found that feedback comments from both peers and the course instructor of an EFL university course in Thailand “played an important role in raising awareness, which eventually led to English speaking improvement” (p. 1308).

Students were informed that their Oral Book Report feedback reports would be used as a beginning template for the following Oral Book Report’s performance grading and corresponding feedback reports. This allowed the teacher to focus on each student’s oral performance individually and help them improve their oral fluency over the duration of the six Oral Book Reports conducted throughout the academic year. By documenting each students’ Oral Book Report performance six times, the teacher was able to monitor and notice continuous improvement. More importantly, the students also had continuous support and encouragement to improve their oral fluency. The following three end of the course ER Book Report Questionnaire open-response question answers show that students used the feedback reports to assist them with improving their oral fluency and speaking confidence: “I was looking forward to your feedback comment. It was written in detail and I know how to improve my next speech. You know what I said in Oral Reports and you commented about it. It is very interesting and cheers me up”, “I think that the personal teacher feedback for each book report is very helpful. Thank to it, I came to think I would do my best next Book Report, and I could push myself”, and “Each time you gave us very careful comments, and it was so useful and helpful for me to improve my presentation”.

Furthermore, one of the ER Book Report Questionnaire’s question, which used a Likert Scale from 1 to 10, asked “How important was the personal teacher feedback for each book report in helping you improve with your spoken and written book reports?”, had an average score for the 46 students who completed the questionnaire, of 9.22; thereby, suggesting that the feedback reports enabled the teacher to successfully monitor each students’ progression through the Oral Book Reports and assist the students with understanding how to improve their oral fluency more with each subsequent Oral Book Report.

**Analysis**

Overall research results were tabulated according to three qualitative student questionnaires administered by the teacher at the end of the first and second semesters. Specifics of all three questionnaires are outlined in the following Results and Discussion section of this paper. All three questionnaires consisted of both closed-response items and open-response items. Since researching the effects of using ER to improve L2 oral fluency is a virtually unexplored area, the data analysis only focused on one open-response question on each of the three questionnaires because “open-response items are especially good for exploring issues and contexts which
have not been previously investigated” (Brown, 2009, p. 205). The three questions analyzed herein were broad open questions, because they “allow for a deeper exploration of one issue, and they…prompt the respondent to write a succinct answer of more than a phrase and up to a paragraph” (Brown, 2009, p. 203). Even though “open-response items are relatively difficult to analyze and interpret” (Brown, 2009, p. 211), focusing on broad open-response question answers allowed for the researcher to analyze the data for content specifically relating to students self-identifying the Oral Book Reports as being responsible for strengthening their spoken output performance, speaking confidence, and oral fluency.

Results and Discussion

Questionnaires
At the conclusion of the course students completed a questionnaire (End of the Course ER Book Report Questionnaire) about the importance of the ER Book Reports in relation to their L2 improvement. Students also completed two other questionnaires (End of 1st and 2nd Semester Questionnaires) at the end of the first and second semesters that asked them to identify enjoyable course activities and activities they felt were important for improving their English ability. Although the two end of semester questionnaires were not administered specifically to gather analytical data about the effects Oral Book Reports had on students’ oral fluency, some of the data collected could be analyzed to support the researcher’s claims that ER can be used to successfully improve L2 oral fluency.

End of the Course ER Book Report Questionnaire
Results of the following open-response question is discussed: “Write any comments you had regarding any aspect of the Book Report assignments or explain any of your answers from the previous questions in more explicit details”. 41 of the 46 students completed this question. All 41 responses indicated that at least one component of the Book Reports (reading, short answer writing, vocabulary acquisition, oral reports, group discussions, comprehension testing, question writing, and discourse marker use) was a factor in improving their English ability to some extent. Even though numerous responses included a combination of various improvement areas such as reading, vocabulary, listening, grammar, comprehension, and reading enjoyment, the fact that 80.5% of the 41 respondents identified an improvement in speaking ability and speaking confidence as a noticeable result of an ER Book Report assignment, reveals that including oral components in ER work positively affects L2 learners’ spoken output performance and oral fluency. The following seven student comments are just a few examples of how the Oral Book Reports were perceived by some students as being responsible for improving their English speaking ability and speaking confidence: “Thanks to this experience I can speak more freely in public”, “Oral Group Reports was the most important for improving our ability of English”, “Doing oral group reports was very helpful for me to improve my English and I could have confidence to speak English”, “I liked the Oral Group Report because it was very helpful for me to improve English and speaking ability in front of audience. I think it gave me a confidence to speak”, “I think that Book Report improves our English ability, such as explaining, listening and understanding, and talking skills”, “To use discourse markers fluently in conversation was also little difficult, but this semester, I could use them a little, and I felt it improved my conversation very good”, and “While giving the book
Shumei Zhang’s (2009) research into input, interaction and output in developing EFL oral fluency of Chinese young learners suggests that “reading for information and reading to talk about it should be one of the aims sought by learners to practice their English in a foreign language setting” (p. 98). Helgesen (2008) commented that teachers using ER should want to get “students to report on the books they are reading” (p. 3) because it allows for “students to share what they are reading – what they think about the stories and what they do and don’t enjoy” (Helgesen, 2008, p. 3). Zhang, S. (2009) also reiterates the importance of including communication tasks with ER because they give “the opportunity to improve speaking by telling others orally what they have read” (p. 98). The fact that the majority of the Japanese tertiary EFL students who participated in the Oral Book Reports found that Oral Book Report discussions were beneficial to their English speaking ability and speaking confidence shows that being capable of confidently talking about what they have read as part of an ER EFL assignment is an important aim for EFL students to have. Boonkit’s (2010) research into EFL learner speaking skills also used qualitative data to conclude that “building confidence in speaking to an audience was mainly reported as a factor that strengthened speaking performance” (p. 1308).

End of 1st and 2nd Semester Questionnaires

Results of the following open-response question is discussed: “A) Write any comments you had about the class. B) What did you enjoy doing the most? C) What did you not like doing in this class? D) What did you do that you think was best for improving your English ability in this class?” Attention is given to comments made about the Oral Book Reports in relation to improvements in speaking performance.

Even though the end of semester questionnaires were not specifically designed to collect data about Oral Book Reports, there is noticeable evidence that numerous students thought the Oral Book Reports were important for improving their oral fluency, spoken output performance, and speaking confidence, as is evident from numerous student comments: “I think book report was best for improving my English ability. It improves not only speaking ability but also reading ability and conversational ability. It improves many areas”, “Thanks for the book reports, I could have confidence to speak English, so I could have good learning”, “Book Report assignment is the best for improving my English ability because reading gave me a lot of words that I had not known and, speaking about book in a class made my ability much better”, “I think Book Report was the best thing to improve my English ability. By telling about the books and how I feel to everyone I could improve my speaking ability the most”, “Book Report’s preparation was so tough, but after finishing book report, I was happy when the audience could understand my English”, “Book report was very hard for me. However, thanks to this, I improved my speaking ability”, “Book Report made me grow up. I could improve writing skill, speaking skill, and confident. At the first time of my Book Report presentation, I couldn’t speak English with confident. But at last, I could speak without the reminder”, “After my Book Report, classmates said it was so excited! Or fantastic! to me. And I got confidence on my speaking”, “In book reports I could learn how to tell things that I want to speak, so it’s very important for
me to have those skills because I will be able to use this skills in not only English but also Japanese”, “Book Reports and Discussion Activities improved my speaking English ability”, “I think the Book Reports assignments and activities are the most effective for improvement of my English abilities. The Book Reports is certainly difficult and a little troublesome for me, however, it made my every English skills better, for example reading, writing, and speaking ad-lib. So I am sure that the Book Reports assignments and activities are great experiences in this class for me”, “I think the Book Reports was the best activities to improve not only English skills but also the ability of presenting what you think to other people. Most of lesson in Japan, we have little opportunity to express our opinion to the audiences so we couldn’t improve the skills. So I think Book Reports is good for us to develop our faculties”.

This multitude of positive student open-responses to the Oral Book Reports being responsible for oral fluency improvement reflects Tang, Chiou, & Jarsaillon’s (2015) comment that “From a communicative perspective, language is best learned when used, especially orally, which better allows learners to retain the language” (p. 173). In their study, a student made a comment similar to some of the comments mentioned above, saying “With more oral practice with my group members, I feel more comfortable about speaking English” (Tang, Chiou, & Jarsaillon’s, 2015, p. 173).

Considering students could choose from a wide assortment of classroom tasks and assignments from the 42 lesson first semester, the fact that 22 of 46 students identified the Book Report activity as being the best for improving their English is impressive. Moreover, after isolating specific areas of their English they thought they had improved, it is considerably interesting that for an ER Book Report assignment, speaking ability and speaking confidence improvements were mentioned the most often, at sixteen times. This result is even more copacetic since the questionnaire did not specifically use the terms speaking, confidence, or oral fluency in the question, and there was no list of activities for students to choose from on the questionnaire either. Some students noted multiple areas of improvement, therefore the totals displayed in Table 2 below surpass 22 for the first semester figures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Improved Speaking / Speaking Confidence</th>
<th>Improved Non-Specified English Ability</th>
<th>Improved Reading / Reading Confidence</th>
<th>Improved Writing Skills</th>
<th>Improved Vocabulary</th>
<th>Improved Listening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A similar pattern occurred in the second semester questionnaire answers, but the amounts were lower. Only 9 of the 46 students referred to the Book Reports as being the best method for improving their English in the second semester. This was possibly due to less Book Reports
being assigned during the second semester, and giving students more in-class attention to free-speaking activities which also focused on oral fluency tasks. Micán & Medina’s (2017) study on L2 vocabulary competence and oral fluency, which found that “student’s reflective practice supported them in acknowledging their own difficulties and strengths regarding their language learning process” (p. 411), is similar to how the students who answered the end of semester self-reflective questionnaires acknowledged the Oral Book Reports as being a noticeably effective means to strengthening their oral fluency and overall language learning process.

**Conclusion**

Since “oral fluency is one of the most salient markers of proficiency in a second language” (Rossiter et al., 2010, pp. 584-5), dedicating a majority of class time to L2 oral fluency needs to be prioritized by teachers. Zhang, Y.’s (2009) research found that EFL learners in China did not receive enough speaking practice in class and he proposed that a viable solution to this problem was to make sure “speaking is added to reading and writing lessons to ensure that students receive essential practice in oral communication” (p. 33). Even though L2 learners should ideally develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking fluency skills, a distinctive focus on primarily improving oral fluency could better benefit EFL students throughout Asia since oral fluency seems to be the least focused on area of fluency during class time and the most difficult aspect of fluency to practice outside of class due to a lack of opportunity to use the L2 in Asia.

There seems to be little to no research exploring how ER work can be successfully augmented to increase oral fluency; however, Bamford and Day (2003), and Helgesen (2008) explain how to include speaking tasks and oral fluency components in ER practices. Using Oral Book Reports as a component of ER work shows that augmenting a generally non-speaking focused activity can result in self-noticeable learner L2 oral fluency and L2 speaking confidence improvement. Even though the student questionnaire responses discussed in this paper do not provide statistically proven empirical evidence that oral fluency improved solely due to the Oral Book Report activities, the qualitative information received from the questionnaires clearly shows, just as Tang, Chiou, & Jarsaillon’s (2015) study concluded that “language was better learned when orally used” (p. 174), that many students not only enjoyed reading more because of ER practices, but also felt they improved their overall English abilities with a distinct improvement regarding speaking ability and speaking confidence due to the Oral Book Report components of the ER work. The overwhelmingly positive responses written to all the open-response questions could also be interpreted as proof that some students found that their speaking became more automatic, required less strain and effort, and reduced unnecessary hesitations, and thus became more fluent English speakers.
Author Note

Brian Wojtowicz, Kwansei Gakuin University, Hyogo, Japan.

Brian has been teaching English in Japan for over 15 years. About seven years after graduating with a Master’s degree (MA) in English Literature from Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, he then successfully completed a Master’s degree (MA) in TEFL/TESL with Birmingham University, England.

Contact information: Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Brian Wojtowicz, Kwansei Gakuin University, Language Center, 1-155 Uegahara Ichiban-Cho, Nishinomiya, Hyogo, 662-8501, Japan. E-mail: b_wojo@hotmail.com
References


Wang, Z. (2014). Developing accuracy and fluency in spoken English of Chinese EFL learners. English Language Teaching, 7(2), 110-118. [https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n2p110]


Appendix A

Initial Book Report Discussion Guidelines

**Eye contact:** Try to look at people while you are talking, don’t look away or down.

**Be prepared:** Having a piece of paper with point form notes with names & main point information is good to help you, but don’t write many sentences, you should not be reading a report!

**Introduction:** I read ________________, by ________________. Do you know this story? It’s a story about… / It’s a _____________ story. (action, scary, funny, romance, etc.)

**Tell about the main characters:** There are many / a few / not many characters in this story. The main character is __________ and he / she is strong, about 25, and a generous person. (Tell about the person, describe the person with appearance and personality adjectives).

**Tell about the main events in sequence:** At the beginning of the story…Then…After that…Next… (You don’t have to tell about everything, just the main or important pieces of information.

**OR:**

**Tell about the main events by chapter:** In chapter 1…

Don’t go through the book page by page because it takes up too much time!

**Give a conclusion:** Tell about how the story ended. At the end of the story… / Finally…

**Make sure to give your opinion:** Tell about events and characters you liked and didn’t like. You can do this during your discussion or after you tell about the story details. My favorite scene was… / My favorite character was… / I didn’t like when… / The character I didn’t like was…

**Practice:** Be sure to practice talking about the book before the lesson. You should practice with a family member, friend, or by yourself. Try a real practice – that means speaking out loud, not just thinking silently in your head!

**As an Audience Member:** There will be a 2 minute Q&A session after the 5 minute oral reports so audience members can ask content or clarification questions to presenters. You are expected to be an active listener so try to think of a question to ask the presenters about their books.
Appendix B

Final Book Report Instructions

Your final reports will be more severely graded than before. Grading will continue to be based on individual abilities. You must read and understand your individual Feedback reports from your previous Book Report and follow the teacher’s advice. You must also try to follow the information explained on this page. Heavy emphasis will be on use of Discourse Marking and overall effort. Keep up the great work everyone, you are all progressing and improving very well.

8 Minute Reports:

- Use of Discourse Markers will be evaluated and be an important part of the final grade. In your timed practices, try to use them when you are thinking, but most especially after any short stop or long pause. Here is a list of the most common and easy to use:

  Anyway…
  It’s like…
  Okay…
  You know…
  I mean…
  Now…
  Well…
  Like…
  So…
  Non-Lexical (ah, uhm, uhh, hhmmm, etc.)

  Of course combinations of both words and non-lexical discourse markers are good to use too.

- Don’t just summarize the story or book during the 8 minutes. You need to mix in some of your own opinion and personal comments too. Tell about favorite or least favorite characters or scenes. Tell what events, occurrences, or characters you liked or didn’t like.

- Your timed practices should prepare you for the entire 8 minutes, but if you finish early be prepared to continue speaking. Have back-up information ready. You can use your phones as timers so you can know how you are doing for time. Be prepared!

5 Minute Discussion:

- Practice Discussion Questions for clarity. Ask some people the questions to see if they are understandable. Edit & revise them (Don’t wait until the start of class to do this though!).

- Try to avoid simple questions or questions with obvious answers. For example:

  Bad Question: This story was also a movie, do you like movies?

  Good Question: This story is from a famous mystery movie. I like mysteries because I enjoy trying to solve the problem. The harder the problem, the better the story, I think. Anyway, this book was great, but my favorite mystery movie is…because… Do you like mystery movies or books? What is your favorite? What do you recommend?
Sometimes, but not always, you should answer your own question especially if the audience is slow to answer, or if a question requires the audience time to think before answering. Giving your own personal answer reduces and fills silence. Also, your answer provides an example so if there is confusion or misunderstanding about the question meaning, the audience can better understand after hearing your own personal answer. If you cannot answer your own question then perhaps it isn’t a good question to ask.

Refer to the book content (events, scenes, character situations, etc.) to introduce the question. Be careful not to over explain or spend too much time talking about the story details again. Even if you already told about the event in your 8 minute report, you need to say it again so the audience can understand the relationship between the book and your question, even if it is obvious.

During your discussion you are the leader so you are like the boss/teacher! So, if someone in your group answers in Japanese, asks a question in Japanese, or speaks any Japanese to you or other members of your group, YOU, the group leader, are responsible for telling them not to speak Japanese! It is very important that you do not respond in Japanese either.

Try to use discourse markers during your discussion. Especially between questions. This is a control device used while speaking to signal the end of a topic and the beginning of a new topic (in this situation, discourse markers are to be used to end answer sessions and also to ask new questions).

Examples: Okay, so we had some great answers to that last question. Well, now I’d like to ask you my next interesting question…

Great, that was a good discussion. Now, for my 2nd question let me ask you all this…

Try to give encouraging comments to people after they answer.

Examples: Interesting answer, I like what you said about…

You should have 4 questions; however, if you only have 3 very detailed, lengthy and high level multi section questions, then only having 3 is acceptable.
Appendix C

Extensive Reading Short Answer Questions

Book Title: ______________________________________________________
Author: _________________________________________________________

BEFORE READING:
Why did you choose this book? _________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Make a prediction. What do you think will happen in this book?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

WHILE READING:
Write about a section (one or two sentences only) that you think is intriguing, surprising, or interesting. Write the sentence(s) and why you think it is intriguing, surprising, or interesting.
What page: __________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

WHILE READING: Write a question about why something in the story is happening that you don’t completely understand. Write your own answer (speculation) as to why it is happening. If an answer is given later in the book, write that as well.
Example: Q: Why does Draco Malfoy not like Harry Potter?
Q. __________
_____________________________________________________________________
A. ___________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

AFTER READING:
What was something that surprised you about this story?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

If you could change something that happened in the book, what would you change and why?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Appendix D

Oral Book Report #3 Augmentations

After finishing your 5 minute book presentation, be prepared to lead a short discussion with your group for 2 minutes. If any audience members have any questions about the content of the book, answer them first, then it is your responsibility to keep the discussion active, there shouldn’t be any silence afterwards. Don’t use the 2 minutes to finish explaining about your book or give your opinion, which should be concluded in the first 5 minutes of timed speaking. During your 2 minute discussion after the 5 minute report you should ask “what if” style questions related to your story. For example: What would you have done in this situation (a situation from the story)? How would you feel if this (a situation from the book) happened to you? You should prepare 3 or 4 “What if” style questions beforehand so you are ready to lead your group mini-discussion.

If you used notes, you can still use notes to help you, but try to reduce the amount of information in your notes. Do not use full sentences or extensive detailed information. Try to use only a few main points written on paper to help you organize your discussion. Use the notes as a guide to help you through the information. Plan it well and practice it thoroughly. For the 3rd report, the Notes page has less lines so try to have less information on the page. You should be trying to push yourself to improve each report. For your 4th and final 1st semester report, you won’t be permitted to use any notes, so for your next report (the 3rd one) try to condense the amount of notes if you used long detailed notes for the 1st and 2nd reports.

Note Page Criteria:

1st Report: Long notes acceptable (not submitted afterwards)

2nd Report: Long notes acceptable (not submitted afterwards)

3rd Report: Short Point Form Notes Only (Submitted & Graded Afterwards*)

4th Report: NO NOTES!!!!! (Grading will be more lenient so don’t panic)

* For the 3rd Report your M-Reader will be worth 5 marks and the Notes Page will be worth 5 marks. If you don’t use notes you will get a full 5 marks depending on your speaking effort. ONLY use No notes for Report #3 if you are confident in your free speaking.
Appendix E

Fourth Oral Book Report Information

*You cannot use any notes for your final report.* Preparation is essential and attention to the 5 minutes is also crucial. When the timer goes off after 5 minutes you must stop speaking about the book information. You cannot continue into the next 2 minute section explaining about your book more.

After the 5 minutes, you will need to lead a 2 minute discussion about your book. The audience will NOT ask you any questions, but rather, you will need to prepare at least 2 or 3 discussion questions for your audience. You will need to submit a copy of these 3 questions at the beginning of the class along with your Short Answer questions page. You will also keep a copy of the questions for yourself (on the back of this paper) to use in the lesson. Therefore, the questions you write on the back of this page should be the exact same as the questions you write on the other page that is handed in with the Short Answer Questions. The questions should engage your audience into some critical thinking about the main ideas or themes from your book as well as any main situations, scenes, or events that occur in the story. Ask “what if” questions related to your story. For example: What would you have done in this situation (a situation from the story)? How would you feel if this (a situation from the book) happened to you? Be creative, original, and witty to make the discussion more interesting.

Audience members are expected to answer and discuss their ideas, if for some reason they remain quiet, it is your responsibility to make them speak and contribute answers since you are the leader. Also, don’t just accept “yes” or “no” answers, make people explain or expand on their answers with detailed reasons or explanations.

**Examples:**

*Dracula: Question #1:* Vampires are immortal, they can live forever. Would you like to live forever? What would be the benefits and drawbacks of having this power?

*Anne of Green Gables: Anne didn’t like her freckles and red hair so she tried dyeing her hair a different color, but it accidently turned green.*

**Question #1:** What would you do if you accidently turned your hair green?

**Question #2:** Have you ever dyed your hair? Why did you do it? Did it make a difference?

**Question #3:** If you could change any part of your physical appearance, what would you change and why?
About *Language Education in Asia*

**Background Information**

*Language Education in Asia* (LEiA) presents well-researched aspects of language education and learning, innovative, practical approaches to classroom practice, discussion on language education issues, and reviews of books on research, practice, or issues in language education relevant to Asia, particularly the ASEAN region. Papers can be submitted by researchers, educators, educational leaders, and other language education professionals. All papers are blind-reviewed by members of the Editorial Board. Accepted papers are published on a biannual basis. From March 2017, each volume is online for public viewing and downloading at [http://www.leia.org](http://www.leia.org)

**The Language Education in Asia Advisory Board**

Since 2011, a number of eminent ELT professionals, including several recent CamTESOL plenary speakers, have been invited to join the LEiA Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will offer advice as the publication is developed and expanded.

- **Professor Anne Burns**  
  University of New South Wales  
  Australia

- **Associate Professor Seamus Fagan**  
  University of Newcastle  
  Australia

- **Dr M. Obaid Hamid**  
  The University of Queensland  
  Australia

- **Professor Andy Kirkpatrick**  
  Griffith University  
  Australia

- **Mr Om Soryong**  
  Royal University of Phnom Penh  
  Cambodia

- **Professor Ryuko Kubota**  
  University of British Columbia  
  Canada

- **Dr Yilin Sun**  
  University of Macau  
  China

- **Dr Sisilia S. Halimi**  
  Universitas Indonesia  
  Indonesia

- **Professor Richmond Stroupe**  
  Soka University  
  Japan

- **Dr Suchada Nimmannit**  
  Chulalongkorn University  
  Thailand

- **Dr Ma. Milagros Laurel**  
  University of the Philippines – Diliman  
  The Philippines

- **Dr Alan Maley**  
  Leeds Metropolitan University  
  UK

- **Mr Damon Anderson**  
  International Educational Consultant  
  USA

- **Associate Professor Yuko Goto Butler**  
  The University of Pennsylvania  
  USA

- **Professor Suresh Canagarajah**  
  Pennsylvania State University  
  USA

- **Professor Jodi Crandall**  
  University of Maryland  
  USA

- **Professor Donald Freeman**  
  University of Michigan  
  USA

- **Ms. Kelly Kimura**  
  LEiA Editor-in-Chief Emerita  
  USA

- **Professor Jun Liu**  
  Stony Brook University  
  USA
The Language Education in Asia Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief

Dr Subhan Zein
The University of Queensland
Australia

Editorial Board

Associate Professor I Wayan Arka
The Australian National University
Australia

Mr Chan Narith Keuk
Royal University of Phnom Penh
Cambodia

Dr Yuefeng Ellen Zhang
Education University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

Ms Rheanne Anderson
Soka University
Japan

Ms Ann Butler
Keio University (retired)
Japan

Dr Junko Matsuzaki Carreira
Keiiai University
Japan

Dr Koji Igawa
Shitennoji University
Japan

Ms Kathryn Oghigian
Waseda University
Japan

Mr Greg Rouault
Tezukayama Gakuin University
Japan

Dr Krystyna U Golkowska
Weill Cornell Medicine
Qatar

Dr Linda M Hanington
National Institute of Education
Singapore

Mr Alexander Grevett
Korea Polytechnic University
South Korea

Dr Carol Waites
United Nations Office at Geneva
Switzerland

Associate Professor Chi-Hou Chou
National Tsing Hua University
Taiwan

Dr Saowaluck Tepsuriwong
King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi
Thailand

Ms Alice Svendson
George Mason University
USA

Editorial Assistant

Mr Panha Nov
IDP Education Cambodia
Cambodia
**Peer Reader Program Coordinators**

Mr John Middlecamp  
Educational Consultant  
Canada  

Dr Alan Klein  
University of British Columbia  
Canada

**Reviewers**

Mr William Alderton  
Central Queensland University  
Australia

Ms Brenda Billingsley  
Macquarie University  
Australia

Ms Louise FitzGerald  
University of New South Wales  
Australia

Mr Andrew Foley  
Bradford College  
The University of Adelaide  
Australia

Mr Sovannarith Lim  
The University of New South Wales  
Australia

Dr Nicholas Marshall  
Macquarie University  
Australia

Ms Helen Nankervis  
Education and Training Consultant  
Australia

Mr Andrew Pollard  
Curtin University  
Australia

Dr Huong Quynh Tran  
Monash University  
Australia

Mr Sathya Chea  
Royal University of Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

Dr Krench Heng  
Royal University of Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

Mr Bophan Khan  
Royal University of Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

Ms Channy Meng  
Phnom Penh International University  
Cambodia

Mr Nicholas Millward  
Australian Centre for Education, IDP Education Cambodia  
Cambodia

Mr. Sokwin Phon  
Mean Chey University  
Cambodia

Dr Soth Sok  
Royal University of Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

Mr Chan Sophal  
Royal University of Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

Mr Dek Sovannthea  
Royal University of Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

Ms Nary Tao  
Royal University of Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

Ms Sok Thida  
Australian Centre for Education, IDP Education Cambodia  
Cambodia

Mr Sou Visal  
Australian Centre for Education, IDP Education Cambodia  
Cambodia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Shari Duresshawar Lughmani</td>
<td>Hong Kong Polytechnic University</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Flora Debora Floris</td>
<td>Petra Christian University</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Lusia Marliana Nurani</td>
<td>Institut Teknologi Bandung</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Inggy Yuliani Pribady</td>
<td>SMPN 2 Bandung</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Didi Sukyadi</td>
<td>Indonesia University of Education</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ribut Wahyudi</td>
<td>Universitas Islam Negeri</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Natasha Qale Pourdana</td>
<td>Karaj International Azad University</td>
<td>Iran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Peter J. Collins</td>
<td>Tokai University</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr D. Malcolm Daugherty</td>
<td>Soka University</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Eri Fukuda</td>
<td>Chugoku Gakuen University</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Michael Guest</td>
<td>University of Miyazaki</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Laura Kusaka</td>
<td>Aichi University</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Maiko Katherine Nakano</td>
<td>Soka Women's College</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Evelyn Naoumi</td>
<td>Meiji University</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Geoffrey Pierce</td>
<td>Meiji Gakuin University</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Mitsuko Suzuki</td>
<td>University of Tsukuba</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ray Yasuda</td>
<td>Soka University</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Jayakaran Mukundan</td>
<td>Universiti Putra Malaysia</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Philip Owen</td>
<td>English Language Fellow, US State Department</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Zulfa Sakhiyya</td>
<td>The University of Auckland</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Tan Bee Tin</td>
<td>The University of Auckland</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Sonthida Keyuravong</td>
<td>King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Christine Manara</td>
<td>Payap University</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Alexander Nanni</td>
<td>Mahidol University International College</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Sonthida Keyuravong</td>
<td>King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Aurelio P. Vilbar</td>
<td>University of the Philippines, Cebu</td>
<td>The Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Shirley Tatton</td>
<td>De Montfort University, Leicester</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Ubon Sanpatchayapong</td>
<td>Rangsit University</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Aurelio P. Vilbar</td>
<td>University of the Philippines, Cebu</td>
<td>The Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Shirley Tatton</td>
<td>De Montfort University, Leicester</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lic Silvia Laborde</td>
<td>Alianza Pocitos, Punta Carretas</td>
<td>Uruguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Gregory Converse</td>
<td>Educational Consultant</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Alexander Jun</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Dorit Kaufman</td>
<td>Stony Brook University</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Adrienne Radcliffe</td>
<td>Oregon State University</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Brooke Treadwell</td>
<td>Educational Consultant</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Mary S. Wong</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Le Duc Manh</td>
<td>Haiphong University</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Khanh-Linh Tran-Dang</td>
<td>Khan Hoa University</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Monograph Editors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Donald Freeman</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Laura Le Drean</td>
<td>National Geographic Learning</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication Assistants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Hang Heng</td>
<td>IDP Education Cambodia</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Neil Wilford</td>
<td>IDP Education Cambodia</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Disclaimer
Every effort has been made to ensure that no misleading or inaccurate data, opinions, or statements appear in the Language Education in Asia online publication. Articles included in the publication are the sole responsibility of the contributing authors. The views expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Advisory Board, the Editorial Board, or IDP Education (Cambodia); no responsibility or liability whatsoever is accepted by these groups or institutions regarding the consequences of any information included in the authors’ articles.

Notes to Prospective Contributors
The readership of Language Education in Asia is comprised of Asian and expatriate educators as well as those from international institutions. Language Education in Asia encourages the submission of papers presenting innovative approaches of interest to both local and international audiences. The development context of Asian TESOL, particularly in the ASEAN region, should be considered; most schools have limited resources and teachers often have to contend with large numbers of students in their classrooms. The Editorial Board takes into account the regional context as well as areas of interest for international participants when selecting papers for publication.

The Language Education in Asia online publication includes four sections:

- Research highlighting ongoing projects in the Asian region that are relevant to the ASEAN region, based on a practical focus and emphasising this focus in the discussion and conclusion sections. Maximum 5,000 words.

- Teaching Practice focusing on classroom-based and action research more directly related to the realities of language teaching in the region. Maximum 3,500 words.

- Commentary focusing on well-researched, balanced reports and discussions of current or emerging issues in the region. Maximum 2,000 words.

- Book Reviews of books focusing on research, practice, or current issues relevant to Language Education in Asia. By invitation.

For more details concerning specific guidelines, formatting, and submission, please refer to www.leia.org. For any further questions, please contact us at submission@leia.org. Papers for consideration for Volume 8, Issues 2 should be submitted to submission@leia.org by 8 March 2018.

Copyright and Permission to Reprint
The individual authors, whose papers appear in Language Education in Asia, Volume 8, Issue 1, 2017, published December 2017, ISSN 1838-7365, hold the copyright for their works. You may copy, redistribute, and create derivative works from these papers for non-commercial purposes only. However, all such works must clearly show attribution to the author and Language Education in Asia.
The language learning and teaching context in the Asian region is as varied and complex as the countries encompassed in this part of the world. Each context is defined by the history and culture of each specific country and the region as a whole and the language policies and languages involved, including a myriad of local, indigenous, colonial, and "global" languages.

In 2010, in response to the ever-changing and challenging linguistic landscape in this area, IDP Education (Cambodia) established the fully peer-reviewed online journal *Language Education in Asia* as a forum to highlight and exchange research and insights into language education in this dynamic region.