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Language Proficiency, Classroom Attitudes and Linguistic Identity in Taiwanese Students: A Report from the National Taipei College of Business

David R Pendery, Dr.

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Reflections on On- and Off-Campus Activities in Elementary Seminars Using E-portfolios

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In first-year and second-year seminars, students were assigned homework requiring them to upload entries in a LP (learning portfolio) to a designated website every week. Students selected what they considered to be the most impressive lesson in a given week and reflected on ways to put the material contained in the lesson to practical use. Additionally they reflected on their experience outside the classroom in order to relate this experience to material covered in the lessons. Students had positive feelings about the LPs and recognized that the LPs helped them grow as students. But students had difficulty comprehending connections between the material presented in lessons and out-of-class experiences. Students indicated that the instructor’s comments increased their motivation to continue working on the LPs. Instructors should make time to meet with students to discuss LPs in class, and this ideally would increase reciprocal understanding between instructors and students.

Keywords: learning e-portfolio, reflection, elementary seminar, on- and off-campus activities

Introduction

There are two common kinds of portfolios in the field of education: teaching portfolios (Seldin & Miller, 2008) and LPs (learning portfolios). A portfolio almost always contains two kinds of work: a record of activities and reflections about these activities. Zubizarreta (2009) pointed out that reflection forms the heart of portfolio. Reflection can be achieved through meta-cognition, defined by Tsuchimochi (2009), which is self-recognition achieved through the ability to recognize such things as one’s own actions, thoughts, and faults from a different perspective. In other words, meta-cognition can be regarded as recognition in which people reflect on their own activities from multiple perspectives, and consider the meanings and results of these activities. These activities can be further developed in positive evaluations or in the case of critical evaluations they can be improved. This type of reflection can be seen as an effective tool for the examination of our activities in the future, and developing this reflection is a main aim of LPs.

In this study we examined LPs. Tsuchimochi (2009) pointed out that LP is important for student reflection in the following ways. A LP can elaborate on what the student has learned in lessons or on the learning process, how the student apply this learned knowledge, why he/she thinks the learning is important, and whether his/her achievement matches a desired goal. A LP can be regarded as a descriptive journal entry that combines details of information given in a lesson mixed with a student’s thoughts or opinions regarding the lessons and the
materials presented. Because each student has different ways of thinking and value systems, the contents of each LP will be different even if all the students have attended the same lessons. The instructor usually advises students on their LP work and asks questions concerning their individual LP entries; therefore the LP serves as a bridge, creating interactive communication between the instructor and the students. Zubizarreta (2009) pointed out that feedback is a key to the learning component of portfolio work. Additionally, students usually discuss their LP entries with each other, and this naturally fosters a sense of community learning. Zubizarreta (2009) pointed out that collaboration deepens individual experiences by exchanging socially constructed knowledge and alternative viewpoints with others.

Recently LPs have been introduced in many Japanese universities, probably because in Japan it is felt that the university bears a responsibility for progress in the abilities of its students and that there should be evidence of this after a student’s graduation. Sekiuchi, Uno, Kuzu, Kitahara, and Itabashi (2008) also insisted the importance of evaluation system to measure what students wanted to learn and they mastered in their university systematically. Firstly, regarding the progress of the students’ ability, it is natural that even if instructors provide a high level of education in their lessons, this education is only truly valuable if the students fully comprehend the material presented in class. More attention should be paid to the progress of students as they attend the classes than to the quality and content of the lessons themselves. In order to support progress in student ability, the students should be encouraged to engage in active learning in all of their subjects. The LP is certainly an effective tool in that it encourages students to actively use the knowledge they gain in class individually in order to develop their learning abilities. Secondly, concerning the LPs used as evidence of students’ abilities, examination results are obviously regarded as evidence of student abilities. Also, it is certainly useful to confirm student progress through frequent assessments such as finals, midterms, and weekly quizzes. However, a teacher can only evaluate isolated knowledge from these types of assessments, and cannot easily evaluate student ability concerning the overall learning process. By using LPs, students can carefully reflect on the process of what and how they learned, and their own growth in this process. Therefore, LPs can be seen as evidence of a student’s total learning, and could also be used in resumes and by employment services.

A practice in current use at Stanford University in the United States is a good example of research in other countries on LPs. CHEN et al. (2005) employed the LP in a course in which students wrote LPs both individually on a blog and together using wiki in project-based lessons for first-year students. They hypothesized that the combination of LPs with blogs or wiki would increase awareness regarding classroom learning and also help articulate connections between learning and the practice. Students received feedback from their instructor, and discussed their LPs with each other. This enhanced their motivation to write the LPs. The results of student evaluations revealed that two-thirds of the students viewed the lessons as positive owing to greater motivation, understanding, and self-confidence. Through these practices, the following three points were pointed out as important for helping students to write a successful LP. Firstly, an instructor should establish the use of LPs as a central task for the course. Secondly, the instructor should give regular assignments requiring reflection about specific experiences, along with examples of good reflective writing. Finally, the instructor should engage the students in conversations about their experiences outside of the classroom, give students instruction on how to use generalization in writing LPs, and give feedback to the class and to individual students.
As an example of Japanese research on LPs, we introduce a practice used at KIT (Kanazawa Institute of Technology). According to the KIT website, “learning portfolios” were used at KIT during three periods in the “learning basis” course, which was a required course for first-year students designed to help them learn mainly life skills and partially study skills. Students should record their activity for the week and a self-evaluation of what they have learned during each weekly period. The results of student evaluations for the lessons revealed that percentage of positive evaluations was extremely high. Specifically, students gave positive responses of 80% and 90% respectively to these two questions: Firstly, students were asked if the LPs helped form their learning habits and ability to understand material covered in classes by themselves. Secondly, they were asked if they found it useful to reflect on the learning they engaged in during these classes.

We reported our practice of online LP in elementary seminars for first-year and second-year students. The main purpose of the present study was: (1) to examine if students could connect on- and off-campus activities successfully in online LPs; and (2) to propose improved methods of LP use for elementary seminars. Recently courses involving elementary seminars have become widespread in many first-year courses at universities in Japan (KIT, 2010; Sekiuchi et al., 2008). These types of elementary seminars usually take the form of discussions, presentations, group work, and projects in small classes. These seminars are comprised of various subjects, for example mastering basic academic skills, adapting to campus life, or beginning career design. Elementary seminars could be regarded as the primary courses aimed at increasing student motivation toward learning, developing a positive learning attitude, and creating a mindset geared toward active participation in society. Traditionally during their college years, students learn many things not only on-campus but also off-campus. So it would be better that students reflect on both on- and off-campus activities in their LPs. Hoshi and Hirose (2007) insisted that experience itself was not important and that students should reflect their experience to connect with their learned materials, futures, and daily life. They should also be encouraged to exchange LP entries with other students in the same seminars. As a result, students could reflect their overall activities and connect these activities with their academic and personal growth, and this learning would coincide with the purpose of their elementary seminars.

Considering the above research by CHEN et al. (2005) and the KIT portfolio, we asked students to write LPs based on the following four ideas: (1) learner-centered learning: Students had an obligation to write in their LP every week, and the instructor also had to read these LP entries and give feedback to students; (2) reflection on multiple courses: Students wrote LPs incorporating reflection on all of their courses; (3) Connection between learning and experience: Students reflected on their lessons, and thought about how to put the knowledge learned in the lessons to practical use, and conversely they also reflected on out-of-classroom experiences in order to relate them to the content of their courses; and (4) sharing wisdom with learners: Students could discuss their LPs with each other, and share information and ideas from their LP during conversations in the seminars.

Method

Network System

An “e-portfolio” function was created on an online portal site “Koka Navi”, which was constructed using the “Universal Passport EX” from Japan System Techniques Co., Ltd.. Students used this e-portfolio to create
and upload their LPs. While the LPs were being created they could be saved temporarily and only be accessed by the respective student authors. The LPs could not be edited once they had been uploaded, and then both the instructor and the individual students could refer their LPs, but the individual LPs were still not available to be viewed by other students. Students had already used Koka Navi for various purposes such as referring to the syllabus, confirming their attendance, and submitting homework. Therefore the students were comfortable with the use of Koka Navi.

Course

We employed LPs in required seminars for both first-year and second-year students in second semester in 2009. Each seminar lasted 90 minutes. The author conducted both seminars, and all the participating students were majors in the same specialized field, Media Informatics. The 19 students participated in the first-year seminar and nine students participated in the second-year seminar. The instructor for the seminars served concurrently as a class advisor, therefore the seminars also took part in homeroom classes. Students had already learned how to write critical reports in a required course, “Academic Writing”. The seminars were conducted mainly for the purpose of developing the following abilities in each grade. For the first-year students, the seminar was aimed at promotion of cooperative work, mastering basic academic skills, and increasing motivation to work in society. For the second-year students, the seminar was aimed at reading specific publications, developing group-work skills, and forming a desire to work in society.

Items for Reflection

We set items for reflection in LPs in advance. This was done as we surmised that students would write more descriptive entries in their LPs and spend less time on reflection if items for reflection were not set. Students were required to write LPs every week as homework, and this was calculated as part of their overall homework load. To avoid students giving up on writing their LPs, we decided that four items would be the proper number for section “Items for Reflection”, and these items should not be too difficult.

We separated items concerning on- and off-campus issues so that students could reflect on their lessons and think about how to put the knowledge learned in these lessons to practical use, and they could reflect on out-of-class experiences and think how to relate them to their coursework. The students were tasked to upload an LP entry of at least 600 words covering on- and off-campus topics every week.

Activity in class. Students should reflect their activities and write LP entries about the following four items:

(1) What did you learn?
(2) How could you relate this learning to your growth?
(3) How could you put this learning to practical use?
(4) What do you want to pursue further in your learning and how do you want to learn this?

Activity out of class. Students should reflect on their activities and write LP entries about the following four items:

(1) What did you experience, and what did you learn from your experience?
(2) How could you relate this experience to your growth?
(3) How could you relate your experience to any lessons in order to make this experience more meaningful?
(4) What activities do you want to pursue further?
Plan for Lessons in the Second Semester

We conducted 15 lessons with the same content for first-year and second-year students during the second semester as follows. We also conducted ordinary lessons separately for the students in each grade.

The 1st lesson. The instructor gave students a handout and explained the purpose of the LP. He carefully presented an example of the type of reflection mentioned in section “Items for Reflection”. This was done as it was surmised that students might not understand how to write an LP, because this was the first time they had been given this type of assignment. He announced to the students that the LPs were required homework and the completion of them would count toward the students’ overall grades.

Students uploaded LP entries every week, and the instructor gave a few comments about on these entries each week. Students also took a printout of their LPs to the seminar every week.

The 2nd and 3rd lessons. In the seminars, during the first 20 minutes, students worked in groups as follows:

(1) Students formed groups of threes and fours, and discussed the printouts of the LP entries with one another;

(2) Each group presented a particularly impressive LP to the whole class.

From the 4th to 13th lessons. Similar to the 2nd and 3rd lessons, students would exchange their LP entries only when the instructor could schedule time in class. The time spent on LPs had to be balanced with the progress of the ordinary lesson each week.

The 14th lesson. Teacher assigned four items for LP entries in an order so that students could reflect on the overall work contained in their LPs during the second semester. Three out of the four items will be introduced in Section “Qualitative Evaluation by Students”.

The 15th lesson. Students presented a booklet containing all their LP entries during the second semester to their instructor. The 23 students anonymously answered a quantitative questionnaire about their LP activity.

Comments by the Instructor

The instructor announced to the students that he would give a simple comment on their LP online every week. The comments on their LPs regarding activities in class and out of class were one or two sentences respectively, about 100 words overall.

Results

Data on Uploading LP

The following data show how students worked on their LPs in the second semester.

The number of words uploaded. Students wrote in their LPs every week, and these entries were obviously lower than the 600 words entries that the students were asked to write as homework, though this varied from student to student.

The number of uploads. Twenty-six students out of 28, who had at least a 50% attendance rate, uploaded their LP entries an average of 12.8 times. Two students who uploaded their LP entries less than four times were omitted. This was only slightly less than the 14 uploads that were asked of the students for homework.

The deadline for upload. Most of students uploaded LP entries within the weekly deadlines. But a few students uploaded a number of late entries near the end of the second semester.
The contents of the L.P. Concerning the activity in class, students had an average of 13.8 classes in the second semester, in which they selected on average 5.7 classes (maximum: 11; minimum: 3) on which to write LPs. This means that students wrote LPs on average on 40.4% of their registered courses. Concerning out-of-classroom activity, the high percentages were among for the following various activities: outdoor activities such as sports; indoor activities such as reading and listening to music, study, part-time work, and participation in school or social events.

Quantitative Evaluation by Students

We separated the evaluations between selected and graded data analyzed these in Tables 1-2, respectively. Table 2 shows a 5-point scale as follows: (5) extremely positive; (4) positive; (3) neutral; (2) negative; and (1) extremely negative.

Table 1
Quantitative Evaluation on Selected Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time for LP every week</td>
<td>41 minutes on average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper number of words every week</td>
<td>441 words on average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper frequency on upload</td>
<td>A few times per week: 4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Every week: 30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once per two weeks: 56.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Every month: 8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether items should be set in advance</td>
<td>Yes: 56.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No: 43.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which were easier subjects for LP entries, in-class activities or out-of-class activities?</td>
<td>In class: 34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out of class: 65.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others in addition to the teacher can view your LP online</td>
<td>Approval: 47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disapprove: 52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students continue to use LPs in seminars in the future</td>
<td>Approval: 47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disapprove: 52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students continue to upload LP on a voluntary basis</td>
<td>Approval: 39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disapprove: 60.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
Quantitative Evaluation on Graded Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eager to write LP entries</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to write about items on activities in class</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to write about items on activities out of class</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow through writing LP</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect leaning in class and experience out of class</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of instructor comments on your LP</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having the LP viewed as helpful for your future</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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Qualitative Evaluation by Students

As homework in the 14th lesson, students were asked to write LP entries on four items set by the instructor in order to consider the overall effect of the LP in the second semester. Here we present three out of the four items as follows. We amended only the expressions in the student sentences:
In what ways did you feel that you grew through writing LP entries on your activities in class?

I could remember what I had learned when referring to my notebook and the handouts from the lessons.
I had a hard time writing the LP at first, but I gradually go used to doing it.
It was my habit to listen to the lessons carefully.
I could recognize the importance of lessons when writing my reflections on them.
I could summarize what I had learned, and apply this to the next topic in my class.
I could put what I had learned to practical use through reflection. (personal communication, Jan., 21, 2010)

In what ways did you feel that you grew through writing LP entries on your activities outside of class?

It was my habit to write my LP entries considering how best to express my impressions.
I had a habit to visit museums/libraries etc., in order to gain experience to write in their LP entries.
I could recognize what I had experienced and how I had felt, and could understand what I would want to do in the future.
I had many opportunities to think about society.
I gradually began to desire to become more connected to society at large. (personal communication, Jan., 21, 2010)

What efforts did you make and how did you develop your ideas for your entries?

I was hesitant to write LP entries, because I worried that the things I wrote every week would be relatively similar.
I always had trouble selecting the course on which I would write LP.
I could find the importance of various lessons, though it was slightly difficult for me to do so at times.
I usually took memos on my notebook in order to write LP entries on my activities out of class.
I usually reflected on the plans in my schedule in order to write LP entries on the most impressive activity during the week. (personal communication, Jan., 21, 2010)

Students wrote their opinions on exchanging and discussing their LP entries in the seminar as follows:

Listening to my classmates’ LP entries, I found that I could really learn and experience many things that I was not conscious of in daily life.
My classmates’ LPs were instructive for me, because I could understand what I had not recognized before.
I enjoyed learning about the lives of my classmates. I also wanted to experience a wider variety of things.
I had new ideas when listening to my classmates’ thoughts.
I realized I should exert more effort in my learning when reading my classmates’ LPs.
I decided on the courses that I wanted to take next year, when listening the course materials that my classmates had studied in their other lessons. (personal communication, Jan., 21, 2010)

Discussion

The frequency of upload by students was 12.8 in average. This was relatively close to the 14 times that the students were asked to upload LP entries as homework. Twenty-six students continued to upload LP entries during the second semester, though two students uploaded LP entries less than four times. The reason that most students readily completed their LPs was that the instructor introduced the following two points in the first lesson. Firstly, the instructor explained that the aim of the LP was to help students connect the activities in class with activities and experiences outside of the classroom, and that the LP could serve as evidence of this type of learning process during their university studies. Secondly, the instructor gave students a handout featuring an example of an LP that he had created. These explanations helped to increase student motivation regarding the LPs and also helped students understand how to properly write their LPs.
The Effect of LPs on Learning

Tendency of on- and off-campus activities. If students wrote their LP on a particular course, students could easily write LP entries when the materials in the course are changed every week, but they might not do this when the course material are similar week after week. And students certainly would not reflect on their learning overall, but only in a single course. In the present study, the students selected a course from all of courses they were taking, and wrote LP entries concerning the contents of this selected course. Therefore, students had a chance to reflect on the materials that they had learned in a given week. Students took up 5.7 courses in average in order to create their LP. The 5.7 courses occupied 40.4% of all of the registered courses in the second semester. It can be interpreted that many students reflect on various courses when they write their LP entries. The qualitative evaluation results showed an effect of LP on learning as follows. Students attended courses taking the LP into consideration, reviewed their lessons through writing LP entries, and consequently felt they gained new insight into the coursework and found ways to make the best use of the contents of their lessons. Thus, students were able to write freely, but in the evaluation they stated it was not easy to write about items regarding classroom activities. This result would suggest difficulty in writing about connections between class contents and the students’ social lives.

On the other hand, students indicated in the evaluation that they could write LP entries on out-of-class activities a little more easily than on those that took place in class. It could be surmised that students could write about these activities and their impressions of them in the manner of a diary. The contents were varied and covered such things as outdoor activities, indoor leisure activities, and their studies. The qualitative evaluation showed students formed a habit of examining their experiences with sense of purpose and reflecting on the meanings of these experiences. This increased their motivation to take part in society. It could be interpreted that reflection on the activities outside of the classroom would help raise the consciousness of the students concerning the society around them. However, students strongly indicated that it was not very easy to write about items concerning out-of-class activities. It might be a little difficult for students to use what they had learned in their lessons to increase the value of out-of-classroom experiences.

Connecting on- and off-campus activities. Probably students were not fully able to make the connection between the activities in class and out of class. It would be difficult for students to apply the contents in class to social experiences autonomously through the LP, because the contents of these would not strongly be correlated to the daily lives of most of the students. Items in the present LP would certainly be more appropriate for students who work at a job that is related to the material presented in class. Unless this is the case, it would be appropriate that we should connect two correlated activities such as career design in class and internships outside of class. Otherwise, it would also appropriate that we connect regular courses such as principles of education and student teaching out of class. Sakai (2009) discussed the importance for connecting on-campus learning with experiential learning in regular courses; for example, internship and project-based learning. Our evaluation is that students were able to reflect successfully on activities both in and out of the classroom, but could not fully connect these two areas.

Fixed and free forms in LPs. The instructor set the items on LP in advance, and a little more than half of the students approved of this system. If students were allowed to freely write LP entries without set items, they might become confused about what they were supposed to write. Consequently, they might simply describe the
materials in a lesson or their experiences outside of class without engaging in critical reflection on their activities. However, by setting items in advance, the instructor was able to help students approach their activities with the goal of thinking about the set items, and therefore, ideally, they could more easily shape their ideas. Perhaps in addition to the present items, such items as questions about lessons and reasons for the students’ experiences might be effective topics for reflection in LPs. Also a free space in which students can write on any topic should be included in LPs, because students often have highly important experiences that might not be strictly related to the set items.

**The Effect of LPs on Human Relationship**

**Sharing e-portfolios among instructor and students.** The e-portfolio system was set so that only instructor in charge of the seminar could view the students’ LPs online. Student LPs could be very instructive for classmatess or other instructors. According to the instructor, there were only three matters in the student LPs that should not be open to the public, partially because students reflected not on the speech and actions of others but on their own activities in this study. It would not be a problem even if the uploaded matters would be open to the public in a manner similar to a blog. In a study done by CHEN et al. (2005), students had access to each other’s LPs and this increased motivation to regularly upload LP entries. However in the present evaluations, about half of the students approved of the fact that only the instructor could view their LPs. There might be students who feel it would be easier to open up and reflect on their true feelings with confidence if only the instructor could view the LP entries. Another idea might be that students could change the settings on their e-portfolio systems and allow different people or groups of people to view their LPs.

The instructor scheduled five or six lessons out of 15 during the seminar for students to discuss their LPs in class. The qualitative evaluations indicated the following: Students became aware of new viewpoints, and felt increased motivation as a result of reading and listening to their classmates LP entries. For example, students were sometimes surprised by the unexpected viewpoints they encountered from other students in the same class, or they could consult the reflections of other students when thinking about selecting courses for the following year, as some these classmates were attending courses that these students had not yet taken. Additionally, students could get to know their classmates better by learning about experiences that were important or enjoyable for them. Similar to the proposal of CHEN et al. (2005), an instructor could take even as little as 10 minutes in a seminar for the students to read and discuss their LP entries with one another. Also in research of Nagata, Moriyama, Morihiro, and Kakegawa (2009), graduate students, teacher, staff, and mentor could access the contents in e-portfolio system though the functions with access permissions were different between these members. When classmates are able to form different groups every week, students are able to increase chances to promote mutual friendship and this could increase a trend to work collaboratively.

**Relationship between an instructor and students.** The instructor conducted ordinary lessons every week in both first-year and second-year seminars while concurrently managing the online LP. It is common that there is less psychological distance between an instructor and students in these types of seminars, because of the small class size. But it is actually difficult for the instructor to take enough time to frequently talk with his students. Even if an instructor could not meet his students, he could consult with them individually by referring to their LPs and commenting on the entries. Through referring to LPs, the instructor could understand the materials that students understood in lessons and what their interests were. If a number of students would write
LP entries about the same lessons, an instructor could understand differences in how various students see the lessons. Through referring to LP entries, an instructor could more fully understand the feelings and motivations of his/her students and this would help the instructor manage classes and seminars. It is natural that online LPs are an effective tool for increasing reciprocal understanding and a sense of solidarity between instructors and students, or between the students themselves.

**Effects of instructor's comments.** The instructor’s comments usually consisted of such things as giving related information, impressions, advice, sympathy, and encouragement. The contents of these comments invariably depend on the contents of the LP entries and the instructor’s personality. Students indicated that the instructor comments were instrumental in helping them to continue writing LP entries, and therefore this type of feedback is needed in an LP program. Zubizarreta (2009) pointed out that students will respond positively to the portfolio if feedback on their portfolio is frequent, focused, and friendly no matter whether brief or lengthy. Similarly Sasaki and Sato (2008) discussed that through objective evaluation from their instructor, students can summarize and reconstruct what they learned and can get universal knowledge. The instructor took about two hours each week to give comments on 28 students’ LP entries. Therefore the workload was not prohibitive. Essentially it was ideal for the instructor to give students good samples for reflection, questions, or evaluation so that they could reflect on their activities more deeply in their LPs. This concurs with the findings of CHEN et al. (2005). The students in the present study probably did not engage in superior reflection, because the instructor gave a simple comment such as one or two sentences concerning each in-class and out-of-class activity. However, to give all the students detailed comments each week would be impractical and overload the instructor. A similar problem occurs when there are too many students in a seminar. In research at KIT, one instructor gave feedback on LPs to 40 to 60 students each week, and the instructor’s increased workload was pointed out as a problem. How an instructor should effectively comment on student LPs, taking into account both instructor workload and the quality of learning needs to be examined.

**Summary**

We propose a method for implementing online LP in elementary seminar as follows:

- Students upload LP entries online every week, concurrently with ordinary lessons.
- Students reflect on both in-class and out-of-class activities in their LPs.
- Students upload LP entries not on a particular course, but on any course in which they were interested during a particular week.
- Students can set the access to be able to view their LPs: instructor only, classmates only, or all persons connected with the university.
- Instructor sets LP items in advance, and also sets free space in which students can write on any topic.
- Instructor makes time for students to listen to and discuss LP entries in class.
- Instructor comments on the students’ LP entries every week, taking into account the time this will entail, because these comments increase student motivation to continue writing LP entries.
- In the first lesson, the instructor explains the aims and the value of the LP, and distributes an example of a reflective LP entry.
- In the final lesson, students reflect on the overall effect of the LPs during the second semester.
References


Bar in SILL Questionnaire for Multiple Results Processing: 
Users’ Frequency and Confidence

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One hundred and fifteen first-year students of Greek took the SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) questionnaire in an attempt to reveal and activate potential a successful and widely used questionnaire like SILL might have but not identified and investigated so far. The first original point to be investigated, tackled in a previous experiment (Kambakis-Vougiouklis, 2012), concerns users’ confidence whether their choice of a specific strategy is effective while the second point concerns the use of the bar as an alternative statistical tool. More specifically, in this particular experiment the bar is not divided only into five equal length spaces as in the first experiment but also into five equal area spaces according to Gauss distribution, giving the researcher the chance to investigate possible differences between two ways of data processing—an advantage only the use of the bar could provide in the analysis stage. Additionally, there are advantages concerning results collection, as subjects and researcher will have a completely free choice among infinite points on a line rather than a limited 3, 4, 5, and 6 of a Likert scale, avoiding at the same time fine verbal differences between different subdivisions. Although the two different methods of processing performed homogeneous behaviour with not statistically considerable differences, it needs further applications in order to reach safe conclusions.

Keywords: SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning), bar, confidence, Gauss distribution

Introduction

Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) were the first to introduce the concept of language learning strategies into the second language literature, followed closely by Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978). All those early researchers mainly focused on identifying lists of strategies; however, the “golden period” of research on language learning strategies is concerned to be the 1980s and early 1990s, during which focus was completely on the good learner’s choice of language learning strategy and the factors that affect that choice, moving in this way emphasis to classification. It is then that Rubin (1981) classified strategies according to whether they are direct or indirect, and O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner, Kupper, and Rocco (1985) divided them into cognitive, metacognitive, or social categories. In 1990, Oxford published her landmark book Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know which included the “Strategy Inventory for Language Learning” or “SILL”, a questionnaire which has been used continually ever since. Then towards the end of the 1990s, Cohen (1998) produced his book on strategies for learning and using a second language. Nevertheless, not much strategy
instruction was introduced leaving this important issue suspended and in the discretion of individual teachers, or, even worse, of individual learners.

In recent years, however, quite a few researchers have shown interest in the issue of learning strategies, with a prolific teaching orientation.

**Research Background**

**Definitions of Learning Strategies**

O’Malley and Chamot (1990) defined learning strategies as “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information” (p. 1), while Oxford (1999) as “specific actions, behaviours, steps or techniques that students use to improve their own progress in developing skills in a second or foreign language. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language” (p. 518). Cohen (1998) maintained that:

> Language learning and language use strategies can be defined as those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language. (p. 4)

More recently, Chamot (2005) claimed that “strategies are most often conscious and goal-driven especially in the beginning stages of tackling an unfamiliar language task. Once a learning strategy becomes familiar through repeated use, it may be used with some automaticity” (p. 112).

The development of those definitions reveals researchers’ attitudes towards strategy use instruction and the necessity of its incorporation in school curriculum.

**Methods for Identifying Learning Strategies**

Chamot (2005) and O’Malley and Chamot (1990) gave an exhaustive review on methods and research, including self-report procedures such as interviews, questionnaires, diaries, and journals, or think-aloud protocols, as well as advantages and drawbacks of each method. Such methods include interviews, diaries, and journals where learners write personal observations about experiences they have had during the learning procedure, problems they have encountered and the way(s) they have solved them, or think-aloud protocols where learners are asked to perform a language task and then describe the way they completed it. However, the most frequently used method of data collection is through questionnaires, that is, by asking students to reflect and report on how they approach certain tasks on how they complete them. Making full use of all previous research and observations, Oxford (1990) has developed her famous Strategy Inventory of Language Learning which has ever since been widely used in relevant research worldwide.

Of course all of the above mentioned methods have their limitations, since learners do not always report truthfully either, because they cannot recall their thinking or they cannot describe it in detail. It is, therefore, advisable to use more than one of the above methods when collecting data for strategy research.

**Factors Affecting Choice of Language Learning Strategies**

Such factors include the language being learned (Chamot & O’Malley, 1987a; Politzer, 1983), the relation of language proficiency with the selection of strategies and frequency of use (Griffiths, 2003; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Kantaridou, 2004; Kazamia, 2003), age (Peacock & Ho, 2003), and motivation (Gardner, 1985; Kantaridou,
There are also other factors such as learning style, culture, language teaching methods, field of study/career orientation, beliefs, and task requirements in instructional settings (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Rubin, 1975; Psaltou-Joycey, 2008; Gavriilidou & Papanis, 2010; Gavriilidou & Psaltou-Joycey, 2010).

**Gender.** Concerning gender, research evidence shows a superiority of females who seem to use more strategies than males (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989). Few studies (Tercanlioglu, 2004; Tran, 1988) have reported opposite results, while no significant differences in strategy use between the two genders is reported by Griffiths (2003) and Psaltou-Joycey (2008), when examining multinational and multicultural groups.

### Language Learning Strategy Instruction

As for the language of strategy instruction, only recently Chamot and Keatley (2003), Grenfell and Harris (1999) opted for a combination of the native and targeted language for strategy instruction. As for integration of strategy instruction, Derry and Murphy (1986), and GU (1996), among others, are in favour of developing strategic skills rather than trying to learn content at the same time. There are also some including Chamot and O’Malley (1987), and Oxford and Leaver (1996) who are strongly in favour of integrated strategy instruction. Finally, concerning direct or embedded instruction Wenden (1986), pointed out that direct instruction programmes raise students’ metacognitive awareness and thus guarantee the transfer of learnt strategies to other similar tasks.

### Data Collecting and Processing

Collecting and processing data are rather tedious however extremely important stage of every scientific research. Questionnaires are widely and often used nowadays in every piece of research; however, qualities such as versatility, responsibility, and simplicity of a questionnaire are crucial. Moreover, it is important to consider how the second important stage following that of collecting, namely that of data processing is dealt with. *Strategy Inventory of Language Learning* as introduced by Oxford in 1990 has kept its reliability, validity, utility, and consequently, popularity among researchers for more than two decades. What the SILL questionnaire measures is the frequency with which a learner uses memory, cognitive, comprehension, metacognitive, affective, and social language learning strategies, as described by Oxford (1990). More specifically, SILL is used to identify the level of strategy use (low, medium, and high) for each strategy class and the statistical tool used to measure this frequency is the 5-point Likert scale. Over the years almost every research all over the world uses this process in order to achieve comparable results. Nevertheless, the author has the feeling that SILL has a lot more potential not yet investigated and identified, and the same feeling must have other researchers, too, such as Bull and Ma (2001). The two researchers introduced the Learning Style—Learning Strategies to raise learner awareness of language learning strategies and they suggest that learners will find many of the strategy recommendations useful. With present research the author would like to introduce some new issues in the author’s try to reveal some of the hidden potential SILL has.

### Purpose and Rationale of Present Study

**Confidence**

In SILL what the learners are asked to indicate is how often they use a strategy, i.e., frequency. However, the author has the feeling that there is another important issue, that of the learners’ attitudes towards the specific
strategy they claim they use, namely their confidence about the effectiveness of each specific strategy. This parameter might prove to be very important in the language learning process as confidence is a basic ingredient of learners’ strategic competence.

Confidence in association with communication strategies has been investigated, among others by Kambakis-Vougiouklis (1990, 1992a, 1992b) where the subjects are asked not only to guess pseudowords of Latin and/or Greek origin but also to specify how confident they are they have guessed right. She claimed that successful reading does not simply involve use of processing strategies (in reading) but it might need to be reinforced by readers’ confidence in the results of their strategy use. The results showed a lot of inconsistencies between accuracy and confidence as well as differences concerning gender, with males overconfident and females more balanced in most cases, yet not in every case. She concluded that learners cannot make the best out of their guessing and continue to learn from guessing, because they simply have not been trained to trust their guessing; as strategies are not normally taught. Similar results are obtained (Kambakis-Vougiouklis, 2001) with young learners of Greek from the ex-USSR and muslim learners of Greek (Intze & Kambakis-Vougiouklis, 2009). Finally, Muti (2011) preferred to associate confidence with self-assessment and self-monitoring, while Mathioudakis (2009) and Mathioudakis and Kambakis-Vougiouklis (2010) investigated the correlation of accuracy and confidence in guessing words from Kazantzakis’ “Odyssey”, a very interesting approach of the difficult process of reading literature.

Now, concerning confidence in SILL questionnaire, as well as many other questionnaires, there develop some questions, normally not tackled, at least to the author’s knowledge. How familiar are the subjects of any research with certain strategies mentioned in the questionnaire? Are they sure they really employ the strategies they claim they do or they think they do, because they have heard the teacher or the peers mentioning it? Although one would assume that when they claim they use a strategy, they most possibly consider it effective, the author has many reasons to believe, after a series of application at different levels, that claiming they use a strategy does not necessarily imply that they also consider it effective.

The issue of subjects’ confidence concerning strategy effectiveness was tackled by Kambakis-Vougiouklis (2012) and results seem to justify her original hypothesis that frequency is not enough in strategy use evaluation. More specifically the correlation between frequency and confidence/effectiveness, for all males and females, and with memory strategies is statistically significant, \( p = 0.043 \) (the Frequency Mean is 2.02 and the Confidence Mean is 2.16). This could be interpreted as a tendency among subjects to consider this strategy effective and feel confident with it; nevertheless their use of it is less frequent than their confidence in absolute numbers. Moreover, as this result occurs in every strategy, it needs further investigation as it might imply that learners cannot make the best out of each strategy. The only inconsistency is identified with the compensation strategies, as expected from the Cronbach alpha. Furthermore, as this is only a pilot study, it will take some more applications to reach clearer conclusions.

**The Bar** [01]

The second issue introduced in this piece of research is anew statistical tool, that is the bar [01], inspired from the fuzzy theory, instead of Likert scales normally and almost catholically used in questionnaires, and certainly in SILL.
More specifically, a bar [01] is suggested, where 0 represents the completely negative answer/attitude and 1 the completely positive answer/attitude. The length of the bar is kept 6.2 cm according to the Gold section (Vougiouklis & Kambakis-Vougiouklis, 2011).

The issue of the bar has been investigated in a monograph by Kambakis-Vougiouklis (2009, in Greek) as well as in a number of papers (Kambakis-Vougiouklis & Vougiouklis, 2008; Kambakis-Vougiouklis, Karakos, Lygeros, & Vougiouklis, 2011; Vougiouklis & Kambakis-Vougiouklis, 2011) in association with both the main stages identified in every piece of research, namely the filling in of a questionnaire and the results processing.

The filling in process. It concerns both the researcher(s) and the subjects; the former has to be as precise and expressive in what he/she expects from the subjects and the latter have to be able to come up to the researchers’ expectations.

In order to elaborate our point let us take the following example from SILL questionnaire using the Likert scale.

How often do you use dictionaries? Possible answers may be: (1) 0 = never; (2) 1 = almost never; (3) 2 = sometimes; (4) 3 = often; and (5) 4 = always.

The steps to be taken by every subject, consciously or unconsciously, while filling in the questionnaire using the above mentioned Likert scale could be as follows:

(1) Make sure he/she understands the usually fine difference between grades; this process becomes really difficult in a foreign/second language environment, where the researcher could be encountered with the issue of insufficient linguistic knowledge, especially with the least sophisticated subjects.

(2) Make up his/her mind which choice to go for. Not an easy job at all! If the scale has a medium the majority of the subjects will probably go for it. Let alone the fact that quite a few possible choices such as “quite often” are not included in this specific scale.

Now, let us take the bar [01] suggested

This time the subject can cut the bar at any point—actually infinite—he/she thinks expresses his/her attitude towards any item, at the specific moment without spending valuable time as to what each different rating means in order to decide.

At this point it is important to clarify that the length of the bar should be kept standard for comparisons. After a lot of applications and a lot of thought, we decided to replace the 10 cm long line we had initially chosen and applied quite a few times, with the Golden Ratio of 10, i.e., 6.2. This was done completely consciously as we found out that subjects are not familiar with this length as they were with 10 and consequently their responses were more spontaneous.

Advantages of the bar as compared to Likert scales in the filling in stage. The main advantage of the bar as compared to the classic scale on the part of the subjects is that they do not need to try and make distinction between different subdivisions, not always clear such as good, quite good, and good enough, removing in this
way a burden from the researchers who will not spend time and effort to explain fine linguistic differences to their subjects, especially the less sophisticated ones. Even more so such explanations are not necessarily objective and widely accepted. Moreover, the subject is given the initiative to make a completely free choice rather than the pre-decided ones. Actually his/her choices are infinite as any point on the continuum may represent his/her option the specific moment.

**Results processing.** The processing of the data stage mainly concerns the researcher(s). It is very important for them to have the ability to derive as much information as possible. Collecting data is a demanding process and sometimes it is wasted in only one processing. The author strongly believes that there is more valuable information hidden and should be revealed and fully exploited rather left aside.

**Advantages of the bar as compared to Likert scales in the results processing.** The use of the bar might release some of hidden abilities/possibilities not yet being identified in SILL. More specifically, when using a Likert scale, you must decide in advance how many divisions you will use. By contrast, when using the bar, you do not have to decide from the beginning. Moreover, the same data can be processed using different subdivisions, for a number of reasons including that of comparability with different researches.

To recap, versatility of the bar gives the researchers the initiative to decide how many subdivisions will be finally used rather than the non-flexible pre-decided ones: three, four, five etc., of the usual Likert scales. Subsequently, a questionnaire filled-in using a bar could be processed more than once in case the researcher may wish to make it comparable with some other researcher’s work where different subdivisions have been used saving in this way time and effort.

**Research Questions**

This research is further investigating issues introduced in Kambakis-Vougiouklis (2012), i.e., how frequently our subjects use learning strategies and how confident they feel with each choice/how effective they consider each strategy, what is the correlation between frequency and confidence/effectiveness. It is also investigated whether the inconsistency concerning the compensation strategies exists in this sample, too.

However, what the author would really like to emphasize with this research is the potential of the bar in many more applications and probable exploitation of parameters never tackled before. The author suspects that some additional processions using the Gauss distribution in dividing the bar might reveal and exhibit some of this potential. More specifically, the bar is not divided into five equal length areas as in Kambakis-Vougiouklis (2012) but into five equal area spaces according to Gauss distribution and this is the major concern of present paper.

**Method**

**Subjects**

One hundred and fifteen first-year students of the Department of Greek in Komotini participated. They were all volunteers but they were offered a snack for participating and filling in the questionnaire carefully and consciously.

**Task(s)/Procedure**

The subjects were explained the process which they did not find difficult at all and they continued to fill in the questionnaires using the bar. Their attention was drawn to the fact that not only did they have to indicate how
often they use a strategy but also how confident they feel with each of them, or, in other words, how effective they considered each strategy. It was this specific moment that students reacted claiming that often use implies effectiveness, too. They were told that this might be true or not true as there are cases we may use a strategy, and although we are not very confident about its actual effectiveness, we go on using it either, because we are used to it or, because there is not another alternative at our disposal that specific moment. On the other hand, there might be cases when we wish we knew how to make a better use of a specific strategy we somehow consider effective under specific circumstances but we do not know how, because we have never been explained or given some practice on its use in class.

All subjects filled in the complete questionnaires.

**Analysis**

As explained above, the purpose of this study is to supply the researcher with more than one way of data analysis.

Analysis (1): After the test was completed the bar indications were converted into the 5-grade Likert scale normally used in SILL for all those years all over the world. However, one should keep in mind that a lot of more analyses with different degradation can be and will be done in order to observe differences occurring from different conventions.

Analysis (2): The bar indications were converted into five equal area spaces according to Gauss distribution.

The statistical analysis was on the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) computing package by a professional statistician.

**Results—Discussion**

All the research questions are addressed in both analyses, i.e., in 5-point Likert scale and in 5-point Gauss distribution, and they are discussed separately.

**5-Point Likert Transformation**

A preliminary descriptive analysis of the 50 SILL items is presented in Table 1. A mean in the range of 3.5-5.0 is thought to reflect high use of that strategy, 2.5-3.4 medium use, and 1.0-2.4 low use (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). The mean values of the 50 items range from 1.1 to 4.39 with standard deviations in the range 0.48-1.59, indicating that the original values are grouped closely around the mean. Social and metacognitive strategies are the ones that are used most often (M = 3.53 and 3.48, medium to high range), whereas affective and compensation are the least often used strategies (M = 2.97 and 2.96, medium range). Similarly, answer confidence ranges from medium to high. The participants appear most confident in their answers for social and metacognitive strategies (M = 4.04 and 3.86), and least confident in their answers for affective and compensation strategies (3.19 and 2.94).

As for the reliability of the test, the internal consistency of the whole scale was calculated and found as 0.916 for language learning strategy use and 0.872 for answer confidence. Both values indicate very high reliability (see Table 2). The reliability coefficients for the six SILL subscales or factors are shown in Table 2. Cronbach’s alpha was found to be in the 0.527 to 0.783 range for strategy use and in the 0.653 to 0.866 range for confidence. The coefficient for the compensation subscale for strategy use was found to be below acceptable levels ( < 0.6). All of the remaining subscales were observed to have from acceptable to quite high reliability coefficients.
Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations for Strategy Use and Answer Confidence, $n = 115$ (5-Point Likert Transformation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Strategy Use</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Std. deviation</td>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>2.94</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.08</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL34</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL36</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2.92</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1.18</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong> (n = 115)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Table 1 continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Strategy use</th>
<th>Confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL40</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL41</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.47</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SILL45</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>3.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>SILL48</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n = 115)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

*Internal Consistency of the SILL Subscales (5-Point Likert Transformation)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Strategy use</th>
<th>Confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subscale</td>
<td>Cronbach’s a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Memory (9)</td>
<td>0.603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive (14)</td>
<td>0.701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compensation (6)</td>
<td>0.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metacognitive (9)</td>
<td>0.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affective (6)</td>
<td>0.591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social (6)</td>
<td>0.783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (50 items)</td>
<td>0.916</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pattern of correlations between the six subscales for strategy use and answer confidence appear in Tables 3-4. The most apparent correlation is between the metacognitive and social subscales ($r = 0.664$) and between the cognitive and metacognitive subscales ($r = 0.548$).

Table 3

*Correlation Between SILL Subscales (Strategy Use)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive (2)</td>
<td>0.427**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation (3)</td>
<td>0.218*</td>
<td>0.332**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive (4)</td>
<td>0.263**</td>
<td>0.548**</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective (5)</td>
<td>0.326**</td>
<td>0.367**</td>
<td>0.260**</td>
<td>0.353**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (6)</td>
<td>0.314**</td>
<td>0.396**</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td>0.664**</td>
<td>0.478**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$. 
Table 4

Correlation Between SILL Subscales (Answer Confidence)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>0.545**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>0.323**</td>
<td>0.426**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>0.437**</td>
<td>0.509**</td>
<td>0.135</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>0.330**</td>
<td>0.371**</td>
<td>0.355**</td>
<td>0.297**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>0.359**</td>
<td>0.357**</td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>0.550**</td>
<td>0.440**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes.  *p < 0.05; **p < 0.001.

5-Point Gauss Transformation

In the case of the Gauss transformation of the original scores, the mean values range from 1.7 to 4.58 and standard deviation from 0.47 to 1.86. Thus, in some cases, data values are spread quite far around the mean. A descriptive analysis reveals (see Table 5) that participants mostly use social and metacognitive strategies (M = 3.60 and 3.55, medium to high range), while affective and memory are the least used strategies (3.08 and 3.05, medium range). In addition, participants appear most confident in their answers for social and metacognitive strategies (4.18 and 3.99), whereas they appear least confident in their answers for affective and compensation strategies (2.98 and 3.31).

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for Strategy Use and Answer Confidence, n = 115, (5-Point Gauss Transformation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy use</th>
<th>Confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n = 115)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cognitive

| SILL10 | 1 | 5 | 4.29 | 1.23 | 4.52 | 1.09 |
| SILL11 | 1 | 5 | 2.96 | 1.82 | 3.11 | 1.76 |
| SILL12 | 1 | 5 | 2.03 | 1.56 | 2.40 | 1.70 |
| SILL13 | 1 | 5 | 2.56 | 1.71 | 2.78 | 1.70 |
| SILL14 | 1 | 5 | 3.28 | 1.86 | 3.99 | 1.57 |
| SILL15 | 1 | 5 | 4.31 | 1.30 | 4.68 | 0.82 |
| SILL16 | 1 | 5 | 2.83 | 1.80 | 3.79 | 1.69 |
| SILL17 | 1 | 5 | 2.94 | 1.82 | 3.56 | 1.71 |
| SILL18 | 1 | 5 | 4.03 | 1.62 | 3.98 | 1.62 |
| SILL19 | 1 | 5 | 3.42 | 1.73 | 3.54 | 1.70 |
| SILL20 | 1 | 5 | 2.72 | 1.77 | 2.97 | 1.80 |
| SILL21 | 1 | 5 | 3.71 | 1.68 | 4.00 | 1.57 |
| SILL22 | 1 | 5 | 3.06 | 1.71 | 3.23 | 1.72 |
| SILL23 | 1 | 5 | 2.39 | 1.73 | 2.83 | 1.76 |

Total (n = 115) | 3.17 | 0.70 | 3.50 | 0.68 |
As for the reliability of the test, the internal consistency of the whole scale was calculated and found as 0.851 for language learning strategy use and 0.868 for answer confidence. Both values indicate very high reliability (see Table 6). The reliability coefficients for the six SILL subscales or factors are shown in Table 6. Cronbach’s alpha was found to be in the 0.516 to 0.834 range for strategy use and in the 0.571 to 0.812 range for confidence. The coefficients for the memory and compensation subscales were found to be below acceptable levels (< 0.6). All of the remaining subscales were observed to have from acceptable to quite high reliability coefficients.

The pattern of correlations between the six subscales for strategy use and answer confidence appear in Tables 3-4. The most apparent correlation is between the metacognitive and social subscales ($r = 0.664$) and between the cognitive and metacognitive subscales ($r = 0.548$).

The pattern and magnitude of correlations between the six subscales (Tables 7-8) are similar to those described in Tables 3-4, in the case of the Likert transformation.
Table 6

*Internal Consistency of the SILL Subscales (5-Point Gauss Transformation)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory (9)</td>
<td>0.516</td>
<td>Memory (9)</td>
<td>0.571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive (14)</td>
<td>0.643</td>
<td>Cognitive (14)</td>
<td>0.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation (6)</td>
<td>0.490</td>
<td>Compensation (6)</td>
<td>0.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive (9)</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td>Metacognitive (9)</td>
<td>0.818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective (6)</td>
<td>0.616</td>
<td>Affective (6)</td>
<td>0.613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (6)</td>
<td>0.737</td>
<td>Social (6)</td>
<td>0.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (50 items)</td>
<td>0.851</td>
<td>Total (50 items)</td>
<td>0.868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

*Correlation Between SILL Subscales (Frequency of Use)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive (2)</td>
<td>0.456**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation (3)</td>
<td>0.188**</td>
<td>0.359**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive (4)</td>
<td>0.135**</td>
<td>0.526**</td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective (5)</td>
<td>0.226**</td>
<td>0.337**</td>
<td>0.199**</td>
<td>0.313**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (6)</td>
<td>0.311**</td>
<td>0.314**</td>
<td>0.171</td>
<td>0.694**</td>
<td>0.414**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.001.

Table 8

*Correlation Between SILL Subscales (Answer Confidence)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive (2)</td>
<td>0.564**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation (3)</td>
<td>0.231**</td>
<td>0.437**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive (4)</td>
<td>0.442**</td>
<td>0.521**</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective (5)</td>
<td>0.351**</td>
<td>0.365**</td>
<td>0.346**</td>
<td>0.232**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (6)</td>
<td>0.341**</td>
<td>0.362**</td>
<td>0.121</td>
<td>0.512**</td>
<td>0.412**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.001.

(1) A comparison between Likert and Gauss scale transformations. A series of independent samples t-tests did not indicate any statistically significant differences in mean strategy use between the Likert and Gauss transformations (see Table 9). Similarly, the analysis did not indicate any significant differences in answer confidence (see Table 10). Despite of the fact that there were not any differences identified in these specific analyses, does not necessarily imply that there will not be any in other future researches. It is as if one claims smear tests to be inefficient after a series of negative applications!

Similarly, a series of paired samples tests showed that students appear significantly more confident about effectiveness of strategies than their actual use of them, as shown in the following tables (see Tables 9-10):
Table 9

Differences in Mean Frequency of Use (5-Point Likert vs. 5-Point Gauss Transformation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Likert Mean</th>
<th>Likert Std. deviation</th>
<th>Gauss Mean</th>
<th>Gauss Std. deviation</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10

Differences in Mean Answer Confidence (5-Point Likert vs. 5-Point Gauss Transformation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Likert Mean</th>
<th>Likert Std. deviation</th>
<th>Gauss Mean</th>
<th>Gauss Std. deviation</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>&gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following last two tables (see Tables 11-12) one can clearly see that in both analyses, confidence in strategy effectiveness is higher than its actual frequency of use. Such a result occurs in all strategies but the “problematic” ones, namely those of compensation, and it might imply lack of instruction.

(2) Comparison between use and confidence/effectiveness (5-point Likert).

Table 11

Mean Differences Between Strategy Use and Answer Confidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Use Mean</th>
<th>Use Std. deviation</th>
<th>Confidence Mean</th>
<th>Confidence Std. deviation</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>t (100) = -4.904, p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>t (109) = -6.012, p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>t (113) = -6.149, p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>t (109) = -3.975, p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>t (112) = -7.547, p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ns = non-significant.
(3) Comparison between use and confidence (5-point Gauss).

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Memory</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>$t(100) = -5.145, p &lt; 0.001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>$t(109) = -3.217, p &lt; 0.001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compensation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>$ns$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metacognitive</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>$t(113) = -4.355, p &lt; 0.001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affective</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>$t(109) = -2.253, p &lt; 0.001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>$t(112) = -7.442, p &lt; 0.001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* $ns$ = non-significant.

**Teaching Implications/Further Research**

The fact that once again there was a tendency among subjects to score higher confidence than frequency (see Tables 11-12), in every single strategy of every category but compensation strategies, should make us consider including the parameter of confidence, or another suggested term, such as *usefulness* in our future applications of SILL. In this way the diachronic value of this useful instrument will be streamlined and further extended. However, if we want to apply it to younger learners, we need to produce a shorter version of it, or/and to consider oral applications. Concerning oral application, we have already applied the 50 questions version to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders (12-15 year-old) including confidence, using oral interviews and the author expects to have the results published after the completion of data processing. As for compensation strategies, considering the fact that similar observations were made in Kambakis-Vougouklis (2012) and a lot of reports from teachers who have applied the test (without publishing the results, however), we feel that it might be a shortcoming of the specific category and needs further investigation.

As a conclusion, the main teaching implication seems to be, once again, that strategies can and must be taught. At least, this is how the author personally explains the author’s subjects’ indication of higher confidence than frequency in not only memory and cognitive strategies, as in our previous research, but in every single category but compensation strategies in present research. In order to consolidate the author’s view, the author has already planned a series of oral interviews with all 115 students and discuss with them the reasons that made them score such high levels of confidence, and anyway why they do not use certain strategies if they consider them so effective.

**References**


Promotion of Process-Based Metacognitive Instruction
in College L2 Listening Course*

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China University of Geosciences, Wuhan, China

Metacognition has been quite a buzzword in recent research on language learning, in particular second language learning. As a concept originally coined in the field of psychology, metacognition has been extensively discussed in second language acquisition field, because increasingly more researchers point to the significant role learners’ metacognition plays in their language learning. However, as a psychological concept, many teachers feel metacognition is a rather elusive concept for them to concretize in everyday pedagogy. To shed light on classroom teaching, this paper deciphers this concept to our language teachers. It mainly focuses on the constructs of metacognition, the development of this concept in language learning area, and the practice of implementing metacognitive instruction in language classrooms.

Keywords: metacognition, metacognitive instruction, English reading

Introduction

MI (Metacognitive Instruction) is first introduced in Goh and Taib (2006, p. 222) in L2 (second language) listening to refer to the teaching practice that elicits and develops learners’ knowledge about listening processes. Later on, it is further expanded to include “helping learners use effective strategies for managing their comprehension and overall listening development” (Goh, 2008, p. 192). As can be seen from the definition, MI is somewhat like an umbrella term covering not only metacognitive approach to strategy instruction, but also utilizing sources of knowledge to manage the listening process. This paper will take Goh’s (2008) definition of MI as the starting point to address MI in listening development. New as it is, MI is theoretically well-supported and validated effective for second language learning with increasing research evidences.

Metacognition: Theoretical Basis for MI

Research on listening process reveals that listening is actually an interactive process in which listeners flexibly construct meaning from the listening text by engaging their prior knowledge in both bottom-up and top-down manners (Goh, 2002, p. 6). Since a myriad of factors beyond the listening texts exert influence on listening comprehension, researchers tend to claim that rather than focus learners’ attention solely on the content

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of listening, teachers should encourage learners to have better understanding of their mental and emotional processes while listening (Goh, 2002, p. 37). When learners know more about themselves as learners and the nature and demands of listening to another language, they will be in a better position to evaluate and manage their own learning (Goh & Taib, 2006, p. 222).

Metacognition, or the ability to understand and regulate one’s own thinking and learning (Flavell, 1976), provides greater insights into the learning process, and thus, is recently encouraged by researchers in second language acquisition (Chamot, 2005; Rubin, 2001). Metacognition, according to Flavell (1976, p. 232), is composed of two dimensions: metacognitive knowledge (or awareness) and metacognitive regulation (or control). As regards listening, both have important impacts on learners. Metacognitive knowledge on person, task and strategy is useful in helping listeners know more about various external and internal factors influencing their listening comprehension. Metacognitive regulation allows learners to have a conscious control of their listening process with active planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating. To enhance learners’ listening comprehension ability, there is increasing promotion of MI recently (Cross, 2010a, p. 2).

Goh (2008, pp. 199-200) categorized two types of MI activities. The first type of activities is *Guided Reflections on Listening* in which Goh listed listening diaries, process-based discussions, and self-report checklists as major activities to raise learners’ awareness of their metacognitive knowledge. The second type is *Integrated Experiential Listening Tasks*. As can be seen from the name, this type of activities aims at helping learners systematically experience the listening process. The most frequently mentioned activity of this kind is metacognitive listening sequence, similar to what Vandergrift initially called pedagogical cycle (Vandergrift, 2004). Other activities of this type consist of self-directed listening, listening buddies, and peer-designed listening programs. All these activities are designed to either raise listeners’ metacognitive awareness or to improve their ability to appraise and regulate their own listening processes (Goh, 2008, p. 200).

**MI: Gaining Support from Empirical Studies**

Theoretically sound though, MI in listening is relatively new and is in urgent need of support from empirical research. In fact, only within the very recent few years, accumulating research in L2 listening comprehension has begun to emerge and verify its effectiveness.

The very earliest investigation in L2 listening was conducted by Goh (1997). She tended to discover adult ESL (English as a Second Language) learners’ metacognitive awareness through learners’ written diaries in a listening program. In the end, Goh (1997, p. 367) extended her findings to argue for the writing of learning diaries as an effective learning tool for raising learners’ metacognitive awareness.

Besides Goh’s pioneer study, the other few MI studies all took metacognitive listening sequence (or pedagogical cycle) as the major approach to MI. The core of this approach was to guide learners in a cycle of prediction, monitoring, evaluating, and problem-solving in concrete listening tasks. Among all the studies using pedagogical cycles, three reported raising the metacognitive awareness of adult leaners (Vandergrift, 2003; Cross, 2010b; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010) and two of young primary-level learners (Vandergrift, 2002; Goh & Taib, 2006). There was also mentioning of stimulating learners’ motivation (Vandergrift, 2003; Goh & Taib, 2006) and boosting confidence (Goh & Taib, 2006). Three of these studies, in particular, explicitly pointed out that the less-skilled listeners had benefited more than their comparatively more-skilled peers (Cross, 2010a; Goh...
& Taib, 2006; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010). However, only one of these investigations showed direct link between MI and better listening outcome (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010).

**MI: Critical Appraisal**

MI actually evolves from bottom-up skills instruction and strategy instruction. Skills instruction overemphasizes the development of bottom-up skills like word segmentation (Vandergrift, 2007, p. 193). Strategy instruction is thus promoted with the intention to encourage learners to process information with a combination of bottom-up and top-down skills. With more and more research on strategy instruction, recurring studies found that learners’ metacognition had direct impact on the orchestration of strategy use (Chamot, 2005, p. 124; Carrell, Gajdusek, & Wise, 1998, p. 100). In addition, a serial of cognitive and social/societal factors like task knowledge, learning contexts and individual differences were found to influence language learning as well (Chamot, 2004; Cohen, 2003). Listening instruction should raise learners’ metacognition so that they could take all of these factors into consideration and construct meaning dynamically through continual interaction between text information and personal knowledge. It is with this gradual recognition of the shortcomings of previous instructions, MI has emerged. In this sense, MI should be superior to the other two approaches previously used in listening instruction.

However, of all the studies, only two (Cross, 2010a; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010) made the effort to connect MI with learners’ final listening achievements. Given the ultimate goal of any pedagogical intervention is to improve learners’ learning outcome, more positive evidence in improved listening achievements is needed to justify the usefulness of MI in teaching L2 listening. In addition, there is only one-sided report of raising learners’ metacognitive awareness in the existed research pool. Metacognitive regulation, that is, learners’ knowledge about listening is important but their ability to selectively engages the knowledge available to them in active management of their own learning, is even more important. There seems no report involving improving learners’ self-regulation ability.

**Implementation of MI: Promissing Yet Demanding**

MI meets the current demands of our university level college English learning quite well. Since our students are university non-English majors who have already learned English for at least six years, they have acquired the basic English skills before coming to the university. It is inappropriate to focus solely on bottom-up skills any more. In fact, one of the objectives of classroom English listening teaching in Chinese universities is to move students gradually from classroom learning to more independent and individualized learning in the self-access center. MI, which provides explicit guidance on how to listen, may prepare learners in a better position to self-direct their own learning. Listening diaries, for example, can encourage listeners to reflect on their own listening processes, to detect their own listening problems and to consider their own ways of improving listening. The constant practice of these awareness-raising activities is quite possible for each individual learner to develop a greater sense of responsibility for his or her own learning.

Vandergrift’s (2004) pedagogical cycle is also useful and easy for us teachers to apply in our own teaching context. The cycle has clear indication of activities to be carried out before, during, and after listening. Teachers will find no problem in following these pedagogical processes. What is more, this cycle not only claims for process-oriented teaching of listening, but also eloaborates on how to put this principle into application. It has
great potential to change our teacher’s conventional way of teaching listening as testing listening and really focus both teachers’ and learners’ attention on the listening process.

However, the implementation of MI imposes heavy demands on both teachers and students too. MI requires teachers to have not only expertise knowledge in subject area but also brand-new perspective on how to teach listening. Without particular in-service training on why and how to organize systematic MI in language classrooms, teachers may not be qualified for this instruction. Students may feel demanding too. MI involves constant reflection and control of one’s own learning on the learner side. This practice requires learners to change their conventional way of teacher-centered passive way of learning. It is a great challenge for our Chinese students.

Conclusions

In conclusion, MI has the potential to meet college English requirements and benefit students in the long run. But implementing it into language classrooms is still challenging for teachers and students as well. It requires teachers to have wide and in-depth knowledge of cognition and metacognition about language learning. It also requires teachers to have effective pedagogical design to involve learners in reflective learning processes. For students, MI might go against the conventional way of English learning. They need to keep on challenging their traditional mindset to adapt themselves to this new way of learning.

References

Vandergrift, L. (2002). “It was nice to see that our predictions were right”: Developing metacognition in L2 listening comprehension. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 58*(4), 555-575.
This paper examines Taiwanese students’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in learning English, their language proficiency, cultural factors impacting communicative praxis, and responses toward the use of Chinese and English in daily life. In association with these aims, the author seeks to understand more about how student attitudes, convictions, and performance in foreign language learning and usage are impacted by the culture in which they live and their cultural self-identification. Questions asked in terms of this research include: “What are the principal challenges students face in learning English?”; “How do students’ personalities and cultures of learning transact with these challenges?”; “How do students view their own cultural and linguistic identities in terms of English (and Chinese)?”; and “Overall, what do students need and want from teachers to strengthen their own language skills and learning behaviors?”. This study began by submitting three questionnaires to students in two “Language and Culture” classes at National Taipei College of Business in Taipei, Taiwan. There were a total of 76 students, and note that these are not English majors—they are majoring in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages. Although the sample is admittedly small, it is sufficient, and we can reach adequate conclusions about language usage, learning attitudes, and identity expectations in Taiwanese students.

Keywords: linguistic identity, language proficiency, cultures of learning

Introduction

To begin, consider the title to this paper: “Language Proficiency, Classroom Attitudes, and Linguistic Identity in Taiwanese Students”. These topics, comprising at once sociolinguistics, socio-anthropology, and ethnology have attracted a great deal of attention from researchers in recent decades (Fishman, 1973; Kamwangamalu, 1992; TONG, HONG, Lee, & Chiu, 1999; Lee & Littlewood, 2002; Fought, 2006). We might first ask about exact relationships among these topics—and the author will endeavor to do exactly this in this introduction and in the rest of this paper.

To turn to one of the two principal writers to be referred to in this paper, Jackson (2002), Chinese University of Hong Kong, wrote how “cultural identity and language choice” (p. 37) in sociolinguistic communities are
important factors in choices about language usage. To be sure these communities and the communicative interaction within them are complex, emotionally charged sites of development framed in contexts of struggle, disparity, negotiation, cooperation, and conciliation (we will see this in many of the student comments below). For Jackson, as students are choosing among languages to communicate with in their daily lives, they often consider notions of shame, cultural uniqueness, nationalism, selfhood, alienation, self-confidence, and pride (these views will be commented on below). For CHENG (2002), from Beijing Normal University, “it is indisputable that students’ home culture has strong, persistent and deeply rooted influence on foreign language learning” (p. 104). And so we see an admixture of the cultural, the personal, and the linguistic, as students negotiate language usage in their daily lives (The conception of “code switching” across languages is important here and will be examined in more detail below). Needless to say, student interaction with others comes into play, which further introduces the impact of their own identities—personal, familial, and national. To penetrate a bit deeper, the very notion of cultures of learning and/or a given nation’s educational patterns and policies, are deeply integrated with student identity at the above-noted levels. Teachers in Taiwan are well aware of the perceived differences between “Western” and “Asian” teaching approaches, and now briefly consider these two methods. We have found that Asian education methods, often dependent on rote learning and memorization, emphasizing strict knowledge and mechanics, and passive acceptance of subject matter, which can suppress student innovation, creativity, and independence. These methods have come under fire in recent years. These ways have more often than not been criticized by Western teachers, and more and more by Asian teachers. The idea is that rote learning and memorization may be useful for passing tests (which is certainly valued in Taiwan and other Asian cultures), but they do not cultivate student independence, creativity, innovation, and autonomous thinking. The eminent physicist Richard Feynman was known to oppose rote learning, and he once wrote:

You can know the name of a bird in all the languages of the world, but when you’re finished, you’ll know absolutely nothing whatever about the bird… So let’s look at the bird and see what it’s doing, that’s what counts. I learned very early the difference between knowing the name of something and knowing something (Retrieved from http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/26933.html).

Note here that in spite of the above opinions, in this scholar’s view the so-called differences between the Western and Asian models are often much less than commonly understood (CHENG, 2002), and cooperation across these cultural lines may be possible.

To continue, CHENG (2002) wrote in no uncertain terms that “Chinese ways of learning in the language classrooms have their roots in Chinese culture and society” (p. 105). In this respect, this teacher has often seen how students struggle to balance the two learning approaches, and the conflicts that often rage between them.¹ So here we also see the transaction across cultural and personal identity and learning behaviors and outcomes—sometimes cooperative, sometimes antagonistic—that conditions these linguistic, educational, and cultural factors.²

¹ Note that although CHENG at times states that a “culture of learning” can be somewhat different and/or removed from a general national culture of a country, he also writes, as we just saw above, that wider cultural values and practices do indeed impact learning and language usage. The author will examine these differences and transactions in more detail below.

² Let the author define the important term “transact”, which the author has been employing. The designation is from John Dewey (1859-1952) and Arthur F. Bentley (1870-1957) in their Knowing and the Known (1949). Transactional analysis for Dewey and
In spite of what has been indicated here, and an overall concord among the topics referred to in the title to this paper, the note that our topics will branch from each other, each yielding its own particular outcomes, which can be independent of the overall context that has been sketched. This does not however indicate any given “weakness” to the overall analytical approach, simply that this topic is varied and heterogeneous, at times contingent. In the end we can still view the findings are related and complementary.

This paper was started as a response to two academic analyses in the book *Culture, Communication and Language Pedagogy* (2002). These two researchers—Jackson and her “Cultural Identity and Language Choice: English Majors in Hong Kong” (2002), and CHENG and his “Chinese EFL Students’ Cultures of Learning” (2002), were noted above. These papers examined student attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in learning and using English (their “cultures of learning”), cultural factors that impact language learning and perceptions, responses toward people using Chinese and English in daily life, and difficulties encountered in learning and using English—problems, attitudes, and conduct being examined in this paper. These subjects are roughly similar to these two researchers, though as noted not entirely the same. Obviously, this paper’s subjects are Taiwanese students, while Jackson’s and CHENG’s were Chinese. Both Jackson and CHENG both studied English majors, while the author’s subjects are students in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages. Note however that the methodologies of both Jackson and CHENG are being followed, in that questionnaires examining the various issues were distributed and collated. As well (exactly as both of these researchers did), interviews were conducted with students (which Jackson primarily did; Jackson also collected essays written by students, while series of short answers to questions were collected in this research).

CHENG’s (2002) paper stated that “Inevitably, students’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour in foreign language learning are intricately affected by the culture in which they live” (p. 104). The author repeats that he has been directly connected with Taiwanese students “attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour” within their culture for many years, engaged with their feelings about their own national and personal identities, and the ways that the various languages they use to impact them. Not only has he seen the hard work that many Taiwanese students put into their language studies, he has also delved deeply into this issue on a personal level, as he has uprooted himself from his home country and, after more than ten years, gone far in putting down roots in Taiwan, and yes, in learning Chinese. Indeed, the author’s own identity and his feelings of nation, and study habits and attitudes have been altered significantly since his arrival in Taiwan—but this is another story.

**Literature Review**

All of the literature and/or works that will be referred to in this paper will not be reviewed here. Many of them have been referred to only briefly, and thus a thorough review is not workable. In the following three works (actually four) will be reviewed—two of which have been “reviewed” already:

Bentley allows for “the seeing together, when research requires it, of what before had been seen in separations and held severally apart” (p. 112). The two philosophers wrote that “The transactional is in fact that point of view which systematically proceeds upon the ground that knowing is co-operative and as such is integral with communication…” (p. vi). In terms of the communicative praxis and language usage we are discussing, some might be inclined to equate “transaction” with “interaction”, but Dewey and Bentley wrote that “the interactional presentation is not adequate, and […] broader statements must be obtained in full transactional form in order to secure that wider conveyance of information which is required” (p. 126). In sum, this analytical term is useful for the polyvalent correspondence and communicative praxis we are studying.
(1) As noted, Jackson’s and CHENG’s analyses employed the methods already discussed. As indicated, both of these authors wrote that the scale of their studies is limited (Jackson, 2002; CHENG, 2002), and thus the applicability of their findings may be limited. It has been noted that his own simple is relatively small. However, he believes that even a small study can have wider ramifications, and provide useful data.

Both writers, appropriately enough, begin with a few questions that guide their research, as well as background matter and discussions of methodology (exactly as done in this paper). They then proceed into their findings. In their discussion of their findings, they occasionally comment on and/or analyze the data. Neither writer provides theoretical background to their research, and so we may view both of these projects as pragmatic studies yielding practical results. Their analysis is effective enough, although it is not terribly probing in either piece—the brevity of both pieces may account for this (and it is the author’s hope that in certain respects his own analysis and comment will go further). As noted, both writers expressed what they felt were probably limitations in their work, and again as noted the author does not feel that this is entirely true. Ultimately, Jackson’s results have a given focus on Hong Kong students (Cantonese speakers), and this seems to be a certain restriction in his research, although this may be no more limited than the group of particularly Taiwanese students in this study. As Mandarin speakers, the students in this study are part of a larger overall population than the Cantonese speakers, but this point is not essential. Jackson’s findings seem somewhat narrow, and she focuses on certain personal preferences and choices that her subjects make in choosing languages to speak. This research will employ a wider cultural analysis with socio-cultural ramifications, in part in reference to Del Hymes’s SPEAKING model, to be examined below. The same could be said of CHENG’s findings. Though his studies of cultures of learning is useful, his conclusion is mostly a summary and his final recommendations are quite brief (albeit useful). This is a failing that the author hopes to correct in the conclusion to this study of cultures of learning (by making more concrete recommendations).

The entire work from which these two pieces are taken, Culture, Communication and Language Pedagogy is comprised of nine research articles covering topics, in addition to Jackson’s and CHENG’s, including various speech act studies (communicative competence, misunderstandings, refusals), negotiation of meaning, advertising and identity, writing instruction and the development of independent learning principles. These papers were presented at the International Conference on Culture, Communication, and Language Pedagogy at Hong Kong Baptist University in 2001. Contributors came from a number of Asian nations, as well as the United States, the UK, and Taiwan. Overall thematic thrusts included culture and globalization, intercultural communication, and teaching and pedagogy. The works are brief and, like Jackson’s and CHENG’s, mostly non-theoretical, pragmatic studies.

(2) Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach (1974), by Hymes. Hymes conceived of sociolinguistics as an essential critical perspective on the entire study of language. The scientific problems within linguistics, Hymes contended, combined with social problems, a fact which compels linguists to search for the wider ethnographic foundations of linguistic practices and identity within communities. In this respect, his linguistic studies are always “concerned with social life” and “social phenomenon”. Hymes at the highest level seeks to discover “the place of language in human life”. Working out the implications of these principles requires a new mode of description of linguistic features and relationships, a mode which addresses the communicative
praxis of a community. Hymes argued that these implications and modes of description include “the organization of communicative conduct in a community”, a necessarily multidisciplinary approach in linguistics (including sociology, psychology, ethnology, social anthropology, education, folklore, and poetics), and a reconsideration of “the base of linguistics itself”. This methodology posits, perhaps most importantly, that language is organized not only in terms of its grammar, but within the entire communicative praxis of societies. In sum, Hymes’s models indeed create a fully-developed “ethnography of communication”, and provide the “necessary scope” and “patterned complexity” needed in sociolinguistics.

In one important development, Hymes introduced his SPEAKING model, which reorganized and analyzed communicative praxis and human speech acts. For Hymes, speech act theory had been too narrow, and an expansion was in order. His provision of eight elements in his SPEAKING theory (in fact his initial description provides 16 elements) did this. This theory will be examined below and elsewhere in this work.

Further Background and Theoretical Underpinnings

This study began with the submission of three questionnaires in the fall semester 2011 to students in two “Language and Culture” classes taught at NTCB (National Taipei College of Business). The three questionnaires included an “English Language Proficiency Survey”, a “Language and Identity Survey”, and a questionnaire on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students classroom attitudes, behavior and learning cultures. The author’s “English Language Proficiency Survey” is a revised version of an “Online Questionnaire for Language Class Placement” created by the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies. The school claims to be an “innovative leader in continuing education” that provides “close, collaborative engagement with students”. The university also states its goal to “reach deeper into the community” and “match the pace of social change” which can be seen as aligning with the views of Hymes (Retrieved from the University of Toronto website at http://learn.utoronto.ca/). A “Language and Identity Survey” was created, which included eight questions about English and Chinese usage in students’ lives, and personal, cultural, and national identification. The learning attitudes survey was a modified version of that used by Professor CHENG, and the form’s content and modifications that were made will be discussed below.

Most of these students are majoring in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages in the school. There were a total of 76 students. Class 1 had 28 students, and Class 2 had 48 students. These are not English majors, per se, but they study 10-16 hours a week in English-taught classes, and use numerous English texts. In this respect they are ensconced in the study of English (not much different from English majors), and it is without question a principal part of their education programs.

In Class 2 there were two exchange students, one from the United States, and one from Canada. These students spoke English fluently, and the author has not included their results in his data. In addition to these questionnaires, interviews with various students, and short written answers were obtained, as discussed. As well the author relied on his own observations in class. As discussed, this is probably not a truly large sample of students, but, also as noted, it is believed that this sample is sufficient to reach conclusions about language usage, learning attitudes, and identity expectations in Taiwanese students.

In terms of the actual research in this study, note that in the following that the number of questionnaires
returned will occasionally differ, primarily depending on absent students. Note also that although the sex breakdown and ages of the students in this study are known, these factors will not be applied, and all students will be treated equally, without regard to age or sex. Students will not be separated into different categories, classes, grades, etc. (almost all students are in their late teens or early 20s; the majority are female). In the quotes from students occasional corrections of grammar will be made, with bracketed corrections or additions, but essential meaning will in no way be changed. In terms of the emic, or “insider’s” perspective in this study Professor Jackson called this approach one of the “a basic tenets of ethnographic research” (2002, p. 39), and as noted the author believes that student responses and self-evaluations are credible and revealing. Note that in this respect this paper is a combination of numerical analysis and the comments and compiled survey data referred to—both the qualitative and the quantitative. It is hoped that this combination is useful. Readers will see that numerical data are used throughout this analysis, while the subjective “insider view” with student comments is mostly imparted in the section “Language and Identity”.

Note that much of the approach in the following will be based on the work of linguist/anthropologist Hymes, who designed the valuable “SPEAKING” paradigm. The data in this study will be examined with the elements of this model in mind: (1) setting; (2) participants; (3) ends; (4) act sequences; (5) keys; (6) instrumentalities; (7) norms; and (8) genres.

The details of Hymes’s theory will not be examined here, and will simply note that in the author’s experience, he recognizes his Setting as the college classroom; Participants as teachers and multi-lingual students studying English, of varying levels and sometimes of different nationalities (additionally, fellows and others who students interact with, including foreigners in Taiwan, can be seen as participants); Ends as the learning and teaching goals of students and teachers; Act Sequences as in-class behaviors and classroom processes as defined by the teacher and to some extent students; Keys as the communicative contextualization cues transacting between students and teachers, which establish the tone, manner, or spirit of communicative praxis in class; Instrumentalities as the teaching methods used by the teacher; Norms as the various cultural and educational norms adhered to in class; and Genres as the various kinds of speech acts or events that take place in class (such as storytelling, questions, and answers, classroom presentations, discussion, and debate, etc.). While this examination of Hymes theory is only a sketch, the author will refer to it again, and we will see how it bears on his research.

The Present Study: English Language Proficiency

The author will first comment on the “English Language Proficiency Survey”. This survey asked students to rank their proficiency levels in 15 common speaking situations. After compiling their scores, they were placed in one of five speaking levels, from Level 1 (total 0-20, lowest) to Level 5 (total 51-60, highest). The five speaking levels read: (0) I cannot do this; (1) I can do this poorly; (2) I can do this, but with difficulty; (3) I can do this reasonably well; and (4) I can do this very well.

Naturally students had to be depended on to give honest evaluations of their own speaking and communication abilities—admittedly not always a crystal clear process, and probably subject to certain errors or mis-reporting. Nevertheless, student answers accepted without alteration. The results of this survey indicated that both classes averaged into “Level III” speaking, with Class 1 achieving an average score of 33, and Class 2
with a somewhat higher average of 37.3 (again, the two foreigners, who scored maximum scores in all areas, were not included in this average). To be sure these scores are reasonably good, and we can see that the English skills of these students are appreciable. This is not to say that these students do not feel the usual discomfort and difficulty in learning and using English. Most of them expressed that they do. We will find that this is not so much from “embarrassment”, or “shame” about speaking the language as the pragmatic difficulty of actually communicating in a foreign language. Thus, any “reluctance” to speak on the part of these students is natural, and it has been found that although the students experience the usual difficulties in speaking the second language, the majority are perfectly willing to try when necessary. One student in each class reached Level 5, which is near fluency. To continue, following is the breakdown of the levels of each class. Each class, at about 50%, is firmly in Level III, but Class 2 does rise a bit higher with a greater number of Level IV speakers\(^3\) (see Tables 1-2).

**Table 1**

**Language Level, Class 1, 26 Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language level</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2**

**Language Level, Class 2, 41 Students (Two Students Not Counted)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language level</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following examination of skills in specific communication areas and practices is related to the above data. The two classes had better skills in various areas, and below the author will relate the most common areas which they said they could perform “fairly well” in each class. The actual number of students reporting these data in not included, simply which areas were most common (see Tables 3-4).

**Table 3**

**Language Proficiency, Class 1: “Can Do Fairly Well”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can tell date and time</th>
<th>Can describe weekend plans</th>
<th>Can refuse an invitation and give reasons</th>
<th>Can say what they did as a child</th>
<th>Can introduce self and say what job is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\(^3\) The author’s comparison of the two classes here is not done for any theoretical reason, but simply to provide some clarity and indications of difference in our overall understanding of English proficiency among these students.
Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Proficiency, Class 2: “Can Do Fairly Well”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can tell date and time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can describe weekend plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can refuse an invitation and give reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can say what they did as a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can introduce self and say what job is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can initiate a conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can give directions to a museum or store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can ask a question after a presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We observe the first four areas common to both classes, which indicate areas of communicative competence that are likely more common among students aged 18-22 in Taiwan. These include telling the date and time, describing weekend plans, refusing an invitation and giving reasons, and saying what they did as a child. Telling the date and time is quite simple, but describing plans and being able to refuse an invitation and give reasons indicates higher-level competence, and the ability to convey data and shape meaning in relatively sophisticated ways. Describing what they did as a child is a very important skill, indicating the ability to convey past experience, and likely, compare and contrast that with the present. Class 2 clearly shows a greater range of competency, which is not surprising given the generally higher ability in this group.

The Present Study: Language and Identity

Now the author will examine the findings in the “Language and Identity” survey, which will complement the above data. It is hoped that readers can perceive exactly what this term means, such that “language use is a recognized and recognizable reflection of one’s social identity” (Bonvillain, 2002, p. 23). As a language develops in response to the particular needs and communicative practices of a people who live in a community, in various relationships steeped in multiple situational contexts, it transacts in intricate ways with self and community, and becomes strongly intertwined with personal identity and self-value. As bilingual speakers, the author’s students have yet more complex interactions, as they are able to alter the speech codes they employ on a daily basis, as well as the content and register of their speech acts, depending on various communicative situations. In a word, the use of language is the ultimate personal decision about how to “frame” oneself in one’s interaction with others, and these many different “sites” of communication engage everyone in a constant process of identity construction and negotiation. We will probe in the results of this survey student attitudes and perceptions as they fashion links between language use and personal and cultural identity.

In the following we will also often see transaction across the elements of Hymes’s (1974) SPEAKING model—and as such we will be dealing with “ideas, more than with data” (p. x). We will see the rich ethnographic and socio-linguistic patterning emphasized by Hymes in their true colors, and how it is “not language, but communication which must provide the frame of reference within which the place of language in culture and society is to be assessed” (p. 4, emphasis added). We will examine some of the true “human realities” of communicative praxis and speech acts, with setting, participants, speech sequences, and keys often significantly conditioning student English usage and communicative praxis of students with different people;

4 Note that a few responses were not counted in this survey, for various reasons.
ends the goals that students have as they learn and use English in their daily lives; norms the real-life cultural and linguistic expectations and mores that students must take into account as they communicate with their fellows, families and foreigners in Taiwan; and genres the various speech acts they employ when they are communicating in both formal and informal environments.

In this survey the author will present many actual comments of students, which will give us a fascinating window onto their use of language in their lives. Two questions about how, why, and when students use Mandarin Chinese in their daily lives produced what are probably predictable answers. Most of them noted that: as their mother tongue, they regularly speak the language throughout their daily life with friends, classmates, colleagues, and family members. “We use Mandarin Chinese to communicate every day, just like eating.” as one student put it. In terms of their use of English, the students noted that they use the language often in the classroom, when communicating with the foreigners in Taiwan (including exchange student classmates), on the job and in looking for employment, and when they travel in foreign countries. This is similar to Jackson’s findings, and while she wrote that her study “revealed a complex mix of emotions and social sanctions” (p. 47) in terms of language usage (and we will see this in the findings below), ultimately “For most, their ethnic language (Cantonese) affirms their affiliation with their cultural identity” (p. 47), and they use the language to “maintain the ‘richness’ and uniqueness of their culture” (p. 47). To be sure the same can be said for these students use of Mandarin.

To broaden our view, students now recognize that English is the principal world language, and using and mastering it are essential. As one succinctly wrote, “English is an international language. If I want to talk to foreigners, he has to speak English”. Another wrote that “Maybe many years [from now], I will work in a trade company. If I do not know [how] to speak, write, listen, and read English, my boss will fire me”. Another student reported that:

> English has become very important in the world. If I don’t know English, my opportunities [for a] job will be less. Now English is part of my life. We can see English signs everywhere and [I have needed] to learn English since I was a kid. English ability [has] become a necessary skill.

In terms of education, one student wrote that “My home teacher is a foreigner. We must use English to speak with him”, and another that “I usually use English to communicate when I am in school, and also I have many English public presentations in class”. In terms of the practical value of learning English, one student simply wrote that “When foreigners ask me something on the roads in Taiwan, for example, directions, or [to] take a pictures, I use English to communicate”, while another, more colorfully, wrote that English “is just like a good pair of running shoes that we need when we have to run far away”. Another student reflected on how the use of English can expand her own world perspective: “Nowadays, the world has become a global village. By learning English, I can see the world by different views”. And finally, one student summed up all we have discussed, and the value of learning English by writing, “English is the public language in the world. If we learn and speak English in a right way and manner, we can realize the different cultures compared with ourselves. It can broaden our mind and make our life splendid”. To be sure there are challenges when learning and using English, and students often feel uncomfortable and lack self-assurance. Proficiency makes all the

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5 All quotes from students were gathered during this research in various papers collected from October-December 2011.
difference here, and more proficient speakers are ever more confident and capable. However, the author rarely found, as Jackson (2002), that English played a “limited, clearly defined role” (p. 44) in students’ lives. With Taiwanese students, though they do see the language as a pragmatic “tool” (as Jackson reports), it seems that English is much more prevalent overall in their lives, and they do not feel somehow like “foreigners” (outside their own culture) when they use the language. It seems that at a high level, and unlike Jackson, the students in this study do indeed feel a “special attachment” to English, and that the language is, broadly, “integral to [their] personal lives”. In a word, there was no evidence of embarrassment, shame or “inner turmoil” about combining the two languages (though again there is some discomfort), nor that students view each other as “showing off” when they use English. In the end, most of the students seemed to be perfectly comfortable with speaking English, challenging as it may be.

These opinions show that indeed English enjoys a fairly high status among these students (and as well quite a few students genuinely enjoy and love the sound, semantics and syntax of the language), but at the same time they expressed pride in the value of Chinese. At times a researcher can sense a bit of turbulence here, with the two languages “competing” for prominence, and a certain under-current of resentment that English has achieved the status that it has worldwide. But in sum this is fairly rare view, and does not seem to appreciably impact student opinions about the two languages (certainly no student referred to English as a “barbarian” or “low” language, as reported by Jackson, pp. 41-42). And similarly it seems to the author that students are pragmatic about how and why they use either Chinese or English, and there is no requirement to speak English, because one “has to” in daily life. As noted, most of the day the students will speak Chinese (and the occasional mixture of Chinese and English) simply, because that is the thing they have to do, in their predominantly Chinese-speaking environment. Thus it is no surprise that most of the time they prefer to communicate in Chinese. If they find themselves communicating with foreigners, then they will almost always switch to English, simply because it is the necessary thing to do. In English classes, they often speak Chinese with one another (teachers must come to grips with this), but in the interaction with the teacher or in classroom exercises, they will switch to English, because they are asked to or it is required. The author has long found this behavior to be common in his Taiwanese students.

Additionally, students often combine the two languages in casual daily conversation. The author has found that this mixture of Chinese and English has become a very common attribute of language use in Taiwan. One aspect of this “code-switching”—switches that students make between languages in conversation, combining vocabulary and grammar structures across Chinese and English—is that students commonly use various brand names, as well as the English words for a few common items and expressions in their everyday conversation—Coke, Mercedes-Benz, Apple, software, great, computer, Internet, hamburger, English class, super, coffee, chocolate, okay, and McDonald’s, etc.. Some students say that when they have trouble expressing themselves in Chinese (even as native speakers), they sometimes turn to simple English words. Students also report that they most commonly code-switch in Internet communication, such as in e-mail and online chatting. Other students report that it has become natural to combine the two languages and that they seem to be developing a complementary, somewhat coextensive relationship (probably a surprise to anyone who has wrestled with the difficulties and seeming inconsonance of both languages). And one student reports of the creative impact of this that “English has affected our life and culture. We combine English and Chinese and then form a new culture”. Such a finding differs from Jackson, who often talks of the significance of “natural” (native)
speech within “in groups” in which they can reveal their “true emotions”, and even that English is seen as a “threat to… Chinese identity”.


Below are the results of this question. There were a total of 63 responses (some students made more than one selection) (see Table 5).

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-ethnic/lingual, world citizen</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese-Taiwanese</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English speaking Taiwanese</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although these figures clearly indicate a fairly strong Taiwanese consciousness in these students, they do suggest other parameters of this question. That 12 students identify themselves as “Chinese” is significant in its own right. Many of the students have recognized and pondered that Chinese culture has a strong and even dominant influence on Taiwanese language and culture, and the fact that they speak Chinese, but do not speak a Taiwanese language. This reality creates certain tensions for students. These students find that in using Mandarin, they feel the pressure of speaking a “foreign” language, and that this impacts their cultural identity, creating a strong pull toward Chinese culture—for it is after all the language of a people and a nation that most notably effects and conditions the overall cultural identification of the people in that culture. Taiwanese students cannot ignore the fact that they speak a language which is not immediately identified with the country they live in (of course this is not exactly true, for Mandarin is indeed strongly identified with Taiwan as a nation, and most people living here would not be too concerned about the fact that they speak a “foreign” language in their daily lives). In one respect this impels some students to identify themselves as either “Chinese” or “Chinese-Taiwanese”. Students who identify themselves as “Chinese-Taiwanese” seem to be coming to grips with a dual reality in their lives, acknowledging that they have strong elements of both cultures in their experience, and seeing their own identity as something of a balance of Chinese and Taiwanese. What we see here and will see more of below is how “individuals assume several collective identities that are likely not only to change over time in dialogue with others, but are liable to be in conflict with one another” (Kramsch, 1998, p. 67). One student wrote in this respect that “I will say I am Taiwanese, but what we speak is Chinese. We share the same culture”. Recognizing similarities across the two cultures, another student also noted linguistic differences: “The difference between Chinese culture and Taiwanese culture is the way we use the language. Some words have different meanings”.

Note that the author did not include a selection “ROC Citizen”, which was errant of the author. The author later asked the students in class if they would classify themselves with this cultural/national identity, and none chose to.
These cultural values—whatever values or combination of values a student may identify with—are important to students on several planes. As one student put it, “I think Chinese is important [to] maintain Taiwanese culture, because most people communicate in Chinese”. Another wrote, “A lot of ancient culture is related to Chinese, so it’s important [to use] Chinese to maintain Chinese culture”. And one student wrote that Chinese is important, because “every language represents its own culture and logic; that’s the way people think.” In spite of these views, it seems to the author that most students do not place a heavy cultural burden on the language they use in their daily lives, and they do not expect some sort of magic-bullet cultural power and sensibility to emerge out of their using Chinese. Probably in some respects this is due to young students being pragmatic to a fault, a bit wrapped up in popular culture at the expense of historical and/or ancient cultures, and just living their lives one day at a time. Taiwanese students simply being Taiwanese students, we might say.

Nevertheless, many students report that “English is also important to Chinese culture” and in this way students are recognizing that English is an essential (if once-removed) carrier of Chinese culture in the world today. A relative of the author’s once commented that mono-lingual cultures and nations might be a good idea. This relative was reminded that during her trip to China, had there been no English signage, menus, tourist information, etc., she would have been totally in the dark about this culture. In this vein, one of the author’s students wrote that “By using English, it can let other people know what Chinese culture is.” And another pithily wrote, “English is a tour guide in my culture”. Similarly, students see that American and Western culture simply continue to have a profound impact on Chinese life, culture, and values. And finally, students see that, as noted, the two languages are melding into a more symbiotic relationship, and this is yielding a new communicative and cultural praxis and enlarged understanding across these two (or more) cultures.

It is interesting to see the number of students identifying themselves as either “Asian” or “Multi-ethnic/lingual world citizen” (one of these World Citizens was one of the foreign exchange students). Perhaps it is not surprising seeing this rather expansive, idealistic (but not inaccurate) view among young students. Certainly this hints at a more refined global identity that is in some ways emerging in Taiwanese youth. In sum these figures are interesting in that fully half of the students do not identify themselves solely as Taiwanese. This suggests that something else is going on in these students’ personalities and personal identities, as opposed to the fairly common view that a massive Taiwanese consciousness has emerged across the nation. At the very least, these students have a more sophisticated and even eclectic view of their identities. The author would guess that in the long run this could be good for Taiwan, and the world, representing a withdrawal from jingoistic nationalism that by definition demeans other cultures—a problem in Taiwan as much as any country.

The Present Study: Student Cultures of Learning

The following examination of student attitudes, expectations, behavior, and cultures of learning is substantially based on the research of CHENG. The key phrase here is “culture of learning”, defined by CHENG (2002) as “expectations, attitudes, values, and beliefs about what to learn, how to learn, what constitutes effective learning, and above all… learning behaviour guided by all these attitudes and values” (p. 104). CHENG examined a group of 167 students at two universities in China, a somewhat larger group than the 76 students the author is studying. The author has discussed these differences above. Similar to CHENG’s English majors, the author’s students “make their own informed choice to study English”, study a “variety of language modules”,

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including speaking, reading, writing, culture, and literature, etc.

CHENG at one point in his study paused to consider some findings of Cortazzi and Jin (1996), in their *Cultures of Learning: Language Classrooms in China*. Cortazzi and Jin reached conclusions about Chinese student learning attitudes and behaviors including the following: there tends to be a focus on knowledge of vocabulary and grammar and “the results of learning rather than communicat[ion] skills” (p. 105); mastery of subject matter is important through reading, imitating and memorizing; the learning culture tends to be passive and teacher centered; and the fact that these ways of learning have roots in Chinese culture and society. While these findings are no doubt in part true, the author believes, along with CHENG, that they tend to be superficial and even based on certain stereotypes. As CHENG (2002) noted: “Chinese students are changing” (p. 105), as are the overall Chinese learning culture and educational systems. This should be kept in mind when considering Chinese students, their attitudes and behaviors.

A questionnaire essentially identical to CHENG’s was submitted to students, with 24 questions arranged in six “clusters” (CHENG included 35 questions, which have been reduced to 24 for simplicity and to reduce some repetition; CHENG’s eight “clusters” have been reduced to six). Followings are the clustered categories: (1) perceptions of best teacher qualities; (2) perceptions of best student qualities; (3) perceptions of teacher roles; (4) perceptions of student responsibilities; (5) purposes in learning English; and (6) effective learning behaviors.

For each question, students chose one answer on a scale of 1-5, from (1) “completely untrue” to (2) “basically untrue” to (3) “cannot decide” to (4) “basically true” to (5) “completely true”. Followings are the results for cluster 1, “Perceptions of best teacher qualities”. The mean score is included, and, to clarify the answers and obtain a direct view of student’s strongest feelings, also included is how many students provided a score of “5”, “This statement is completely true”. There were a total of 67 replies. The standard deviation is included (see Table 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>Total number of replies of 5</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being knowledgeable</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having diverse, flexible teaching methods</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being caring and loving students</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.879</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These numbers will probably not surprise Taiwanese teachers and foreigners teaching in Taiwan. They present a classic view of the Taiwanese student: a pupil who values and looks up to a knowledgeable teacher (in the past, in more rigid Chinese educational cultures, this score would probably have been higher), but who appreciates a measure of flexibility and spontaneity (this is one of the changing aspects of Taiwanese/Chinese educational culture and student expectations, for to be sure in the past this would not have been true; interestingly this is among the highest figure in the author’s findings), and who desires teachers to be friendly and supportive, even to the point of loving students, acting as mothers and fathers as it were (this mean is also among the highest in the author’s study). These figures are approximately equal to CHENG’s findings, and again, this researcher is

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7 This expectation of love is common enough among Taiwanese students, as any teacher here will tell you. Frankly, in the author’s 11 years of teaching in Taiwan, the author has more often adopted a “tough love” approach, but students have appreciated this.
not surprised at all.

Following is the brief examination of “Best Student Qualities”, as Taiwanese students view them (see Table 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>Total number of replies of 5</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studying hard</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking and questioning</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting the teacher</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And indeed, the finding here is significantly higher than CHENG’s mean of 3.5. For whatever reason, and probably not surprisingly, we see here the residue of according teachers great respect, so common in Chinese cultures. The other two categories measure similar to CHENG’s. “Studying Hard” almost seems to have come in with a rather low number (though not terribly low), another possible indication of changing learning attitudes in Taiwan. “Thinking and Questioning”, in changing Taiwanese classrooms, has become more and more important to students as they hope to see more Westernized teaching and classroom methods and attitudes employed in Taiwan. To be sure there is a common perception, mostly true, that Western students (Americans particularly) are open with their questions in classrooms, less passive, and less afraid to challenge teachers with penetrating queries. As noted, this is an approach that Taiwanese students strongly desire and hope that their teachers will encourage.

Below the author will examine student perceptions of teacher roles. Here is an area that Taiwanese students have become more and more aggressive with, with new expectations for improved performance from their teachers, better connection, communication, and understanding of student needs and wants, more open and innovative classroom methods, and a steadily more worldly and globalized outlook (see Table 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>Total number of replies of 5</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imparting knowledge</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students develop language skills</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing English culture</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students learn how to learn</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to CHENG, we see a strong desire in Taiwanese students to “learn how to learn” (CHENG’s mean was 4.37 in this area; the author’s figure of 4.25 is the highest mean in his research; note also that this category received the highest number of “5” scores). This is at once a pragmatic decision, but also rather idealistic, and indicative of a more sophisticated outlook on the part of students, reaching beyond “book knowledge” and rote learning toward an optimistic drive toward knowledge for it is own sake. As well it indicates that students desire for more robust interaction with their teachers in interactive ways. These are very positive signs about Taiwanese students. The slightly higher mean for developing language skills has a similarly practical aim, but is it is also enjoyable to see students genuinely interested in developing their skills. Introducing English culture is a bit less desired and this may indicate either that Taiwanese students have tired of studying English culture, or that their...
Taiwanese professors are generally unable to do this as well as most foreigners. In sum, it is clear that Taiwanese students have their eye on pragmatic aims, with a dash of learning for its own sake stirred in. And again the slightly lower opinion of teachers imparting knowledge indicates changing student attitudes, as they desire less to be automatons being fed data, and they wish to become more independent thinkers and learners.

Following we switch our view to students’ views of their own responsibilities in the classroom, and in their interaction with teachers. On the whole, a few too many Taiwanese students tend to be a bit immature in their view of their own responsibilities, and as well they are being fed a largely inappropriate view by many teachers and administrators that, as opposed to responsibilities, they (the students) possess a large body of *rights and privileges* in the classroom. As an aside, the author was once wrestling with the problem of massive abuse of cell phones by students at a university being taught at—during class time students were endlessly toying with their cell phones, sending email and text messages, playing games, listening to music, surfing the Internet, etc.. It was a huge problem that the teacher demanded action on—but he was told the school could and would do nothing, because the students “had the right” to use their cell phones whenever and however they wanted to. This is a view that this teacher wholeheartedly rejects, and instead a “tough love” approach and the idea of *responsibilities that students have in the classroom* should be valued, endorsed and developed more in Taiwan (see Table 9).

Table 9

**Perceptions of Student Responsibilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>Total number of replies of 5</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receiving knowledge from texts and teachers</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning language by self-discovery</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finishing assignments</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.833</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indeed, we see lower scores in this area. Item 11 was similar to CHENG’s research. Item 13, “Finishing assignments” is significantly higher than CHENG’s, while item 12 is significantly lower. In terms of these areas, CHENG (2002) wrote that “knowledge-based or knowledge-centered language teaching is not favoured by most English majors” (p. 109) (again, the students in this study are not English majors, but they can be seen in this light). This may indeed be true, as students branch out from older, hidebound, educational methods, and expectations, toward more innovative and inclusive classroom experiences. This may be a positive, but the findings here are also a bit worrisome in that all three scores of student responsibilities are somewhat low. Could it be that Taiwanese students are ignoring or sloughing off their educational responsibilities, by not concentrating on textbooks, not engaging in independent learning and self-discovery, not finishing their assignments? Quite frankly, in the author’s experience this is sometimes true, and these are areas that Taiwanese students need to improve in.

Following is a look at student purposes for learning English. We have seen these views at times in the text above, with students often commenting on exactly what they wanted from English, how it would help them in the future, and how they can achieve mastery of the language. The following may enlarge what we have already learned (see Table 10).
Table 10  

*Purposes in Learning English*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>Total number of replies of 5</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future work</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass examinations</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in English</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced to take English</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That many students are taking English for future work considerations is not surprising, although at the same time there is a substantial group that realizes that, in Taiwan, they may very well not have to use English much at work. This is not shown in these findings, but the author has heard this point from many students, and they are at times adopting a more relaxed and pragmatic attitude toward their English studies. It is probably good to see that the numbers for “Pass Examinations” and “Forced to Take English” are lower, and may indicate a more refined and constructive view of English study from students. With scores not too different from CHENG’s (his items 15 and 17 are somewhat lower than mine), and with no mean scores above 4, there seems to be a certain lackadaisical attitude toward future planning in this area. Fortunately, the relatively high number for “Interested in English” also indicates a more positive attitude. CHENG noted that students’ reasons for learning English vary greatly and no doubt this is true, and would account for these findings being less focused (generally, you see fewer marks of “5” in these categories than in most previous ones, except in the category “Future Work”).

We will now conclude with a look at “Effective Learning Behaviors” for students. Note that this question does not specifically refer to “Effective English Language Learning Behavior”, but it is clear how these general learning behaviors can affect student studies of English—while also providing more clarity in terms of overall student needs, which is valuable to this study and its conclusions, as will be specified below. The following questions are at times similar to prior questions, and readers can combine the data for more complete understanding (see Table 11).

Table 11  

*Effective Learning Behaviors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>Total number of replies of 5</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I participate in group activities in school</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not favor rote learning</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I do not understand, I ask the teacher</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not ask questions, in order to show respect for the teacher</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am afraid to express my opinion, even though I want to</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge-based, written exercises are important to learn English</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The best way to learn English is to use the language in real situations</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly item 24 stands out, and we see that students genuinely desire to use English in pragmatic daily situations in order to practice and master their skills (this mean is a bit lower than CHENG’s, but the other means in this section are roughly similar). Teachers should think about how they can offer students such situations in
their learning. It is interesting to see that for these students “knowledge-based written exercises are important to learn English”, which seems to contradict what was said above about a focus on “the results of learning rather than communicat[ion] skills” and that knowledge-based teaching “is not favoured”. While this may be true, Taiwanese students, ever realistic, also seem to realize that knowledge is exactly what they want from their studies, and therefore the occasional knowledge-based and knowledge-saturated learning methods may be useful. In the same light, students here have not rejected outright rote learning, and they may find value in this much-maligned approach (as discussed above). Teachers can learn from this, and endeavor toward a balanced teaching methodology.

Finally, items 20-22, and even item 18, seem to indicate a reasonably good level of student participation in the classroom and the ability to communicate with teachers, while not letting their fear of speaking undermine their classroom interaction and learning. Of course it is true that a fair number of Taiwanese students are indeed fearful in class, and refrain from speaking up and asking questions. This is a reality that every teacher in Taiwan is familiar with, and has to work hard to overcome.

We can review the data in this section at the highest level, and observe the following findings, factors, expectations, and considerations as most important to Taiwanese students in their interaction with (perhaps specifically English) teachers (the formatting below is similar to that of CHENG in the conclusion of his paper):

(1) Teachers must employ diverse, flexible teaching methods in modern ways, and be innovative in the classroom; (2) Students feel obliged to respect teachers, a classic cultural consideration in Taiwan. The author would guess as well, however, that students expect teachers to earn their respect; (3) Students want teachers to engage with them in interactive ways, and help them “learn how to learn”. Such an attitude is positive, forward-looking, and moves away from traditional expectations into a much more interactive methodology and classroom behaviors. Related to this, Taiwanese students are trying to become more active, engaged, and questioning in the classroom; (4) Students are willing to learn through processes of self-discovery, although probably they are tentative in this respect, and need yet more support, encouragement, and guidance from teachers; (5) Students are focused on their future work prospects, and understand the importance of learning English to help them achieve their goals and dreams. Here again teachers can make greater contributions; and (6) Students want to and are willing to use English in real-life situations with their classmates and strangers.

Conclusions

This paper has examined Taiwanese students’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in classrooms as they embark on the taxing tasks of learning English—their classroom “cultures of learning”. As well we have looked at cultural factors impacting communication in daily life, and student’s consideration and examination of their uses of Chinese and English in everyday experience. Related to these factors were emblematic components of cultural and national self-identification, crossing linguistic boundaries of Chinese and English usage. Perhaps most importantly, we have examined the challenges that students face in studying and learning English, and uncovered

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8 On this note, see that CHENG’s findings (as the author’s, to be presented in the conclusion to this section below) show that student’s indeed prefer flexible teaching methods, a move away from “inparting knowledge” to “developing skills”, and a focus on self-discovery and active learning.
several key desires they have for improvement in these areas, and their own suggestions for progress. In sum, the author has examined areas of sociolinguistics, socio-anthropology, and ethnology, as noted above. All of these areas are “complex, emotionally charged sites of development framed in contexts of struggle, disparity, negotiation, cooperation, and conciliation”, and our findings are thus contingent and composite, and must be considered carefully within overall frameworks of, to coin a phrase, “culture and communication”. The thoughtful, sometimes emotional responses of students in all of these research areas have indicated just how important these conceptions and topics are to students, and ultimately to teachers. It is the author’s hope that this research has revealed much about student lives, experience and expectations, and that these data can be used in fruitful ways by language teachers everywhere.

References
Discussions on Class Construction of Ethnic Minority Class in Universities*

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English as an important international language has obtained increasing attention from Chinese educational institutions of different levels over more than three decades. Currently, in the background of social informatization and economic globalization, as an internationalized language, English is of importance to all the national people. Therefore, fostering ethnic minority talents who have higher English quality is the core urgency of our high education as well. We should develop profoundly college English teaching study, summarize and explore new methods, new ideas in the realistic teaching work. However, recently, the college English teaching of ethnic minority class exists many obstacles on language teaching, textbook, examination, and so forth. This paper explores the specific reforms and connotations of ethnic minority college students’ class construction by analyzing the current situation of college English teaching of ethnic minority class. Its aim is to enhance the college English teaching quality of ethnic minority class and make teaching quality get a new step in the field of college English teaching.

Keywords: ethnic minority class, college English teaching, class construction

Introduction

Ethnic minority class students are precious resources in China. They enhance the combination of ethnic culture and the ethnic consolidation. They are the strong basis of protecting our country’s combination. Ethnic minority class is the important part of universities in China. It is the special class system of college English teaching. For the sake of satisfying the situation of society and economy in ethnic minority regions, many universities have taken the ethnic minority class in ninetieth last century, including our university, which make great contributions on economic culture and prosperous development of ethnic minority regions, and at the same time, foster well the talents in ethnic minority regions. With the all-round reforms of college English teaching under the new educational system, reforming and innovating class construction of college English teaching in ethnic minority classes will stimulate reforms and developments of other public curricula, which will cite an example of educational reform, and enhance the English teaching quality of ethnic minority class. The development of English construction and reform in ethnic minority class can promote the profound development

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DISCUSSIONS ON CLASS CONSTRUCTION OF ETHNIC MINORITY CLASS

of college English teaching reform, arouse the activity and initiative of college teachers who are absorbed in the teaching reform of ethnic minority class, and enhance the teaching quality steadily.

The teacher-learner role relationship lies at the very heart of the classroom process. Learning a language is a social activity above all, and in a classroom setting, it is subject to a unique set of social conventions. These derive in part from the deeper and less accessible social, and psychological dimensions of the teacher-learner relationship. (Richards & Nunan, 2000, p. 83)

Therefore, the relevant studies and future effects of this paper will influence deeply the college English teaching of ethnic minority class.

The Current Teaching Situations of College English Teaching of Ethnic Minority Class in Universities

Compared with Han college students in the aspects of studying basis and entrance examination achievement, ethnic minority college students have big gaps. They are in the process of translating Chinese into their own ethnic languages in their studies. Although they can grasp and use freely Chinese in the course of their middle-school stages, the big difference of their ethnic thoughts have great influence on their studies. “Because language is primarily a social mechanism, languages are learned in social contexts. Even in the learning of a first language where the biological basis is important, there is strong influence from social factors” (Spolsky, 2000, p. 131). Now, let us give a summary to some problems and obstacles during college English teaching in ethnic minority class:

(1) Merely do ethnic minority college students have english textbooks which can be applied to them. They nearly learn the same textbooks with Han college students, namely New Horizon College English (2008). The difficulties of New Horizon College English make ethnic minority college students have no interest in it. For instance, they cannot understand thoroughly the contents of textbooks, new words and grammar make them cannot finish after-class exercises by their own. The difficulties of viewing, listening, and speaking textbooks make them have fossilization phenomena during their oral English studies. They have obstacles to finishing oral tests in the computer and cannot do very well in the aspects of English comprehensive abilities as well.

(2) “Social factors have even more importance in the case of second language learning, because of the greater complexity of the second language learner’s social context and the resulting increase in its ability to cause variability” (Spolsky, 2000, p. 131). Therefore, ethnic minority class is in want of college English teaching courseware and electronic teaching plan. Teachers of ethnic minority class should make a set of new listening, speaking, and writing courseware, which should be associated with ethnic minority college students’ special characteristics. The contents in the writing courseware like sentence examples and translations should cover or mention ethnic peculiarity and cultures of ethnic minorities, which are beneficial to enhancing ethnic minority college students’ interests in their studies. In the courseware of listening and speaking, the contents should range form simple English dialogs or short passages to long passages, or essays. The dictation part should be written sentence by sentence, and the tapescript should be given to both teachers and students in order to reference or proofread. In the courseware of speaking part, the contents should be related to different regions’ cultures in ethnic minorities.
(3) Lack of text warehouse in ethnic minority class. Given the weak English basis of ethnic minority college students cannot be accustomed to the examination system of Han college students, the examination system is still the traditional one which is carried out by ethnic minority teachers’ autonomous ideas, which exists the disadvantages: ethnic minority college students cannot apply to the examination system of Han college students. However, the examination system of Han college students is balanced with college English test band four and band six, and that is the main reason why the ethnic minority college students are not confident in passing the college English test band four and band six. For the sake of statistics of passing final examination of ethnic minority college students, teachers who are charge of ethnic minority college students have to simplify and modify the difficulties of final examination, which leads to the ignorance of knowledge but pays more attention to the scores in the eyes of ethnic minority college students. Ethnic minority college students will go over examination contents by remembering keys mechanically, which is lack of the truth and spirit of college English examination as well. Lacking test warehouse source in ethnic minority class will bring a lot of difficulties of college English teaching reform and class teaching assessment.

(4) Most ethnic minority college students have obstacles in Chinese, especially the college students of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Their English bases are in the low level. They cannot understand the basic English grammar, let alone understand teachers’ teaching in English. Therefore, ethnic minority English teaching in most universities is still applying to duck-filling teaching. Ethnic Minority College students are in want of modern foreign teaching concepts, task-based teaching method, and other new teaching reform measures, and so forth, which lead to the relative faults of English listening and speaking abilities and English comprehensive applied abilities. As far as most ethnic minority college students are concerned, learning English will meet the challenge of second language acquisition, even third language acquisition.

Reform and Innovation of College English Curriculum Construction of Ethnic Minority Class

Ethnic minority students are ones who were taught in their own minority language in primary school, regard Chinese as a language course to learn, and are ones who were taught both in their minority language and Chinese in middle school. (XU, 2011, p. 57).

As we know, “all cultures have their own concepts of teaching, learning, and education” (Nunan, 2001, p. 4). Curriculum Construction is one of the key steps of enhancing teaching quality. It is the basic stone of curriculum construction in universities, it is the elementary guarantee of realizing teaching objects, and it is the important part of “Teaching Quality Engineering” in our country. Recently, curriculum construction has become a basic engineering construction that can enhance teaching quality and university level. Innovating the curriculum construction system of college English teaching in ethnic minority class is an important basic construction that can guarantee and enhance college English teaching quality in ethnic minority class, it is the key part of deepening teaching reforms of college English, and it has very important significance of constructing reasonable knowledge structure, ability structure, and ethnic innovative spirits among ethnic minority college students as well:

(1) Teacher construction. We can visit and do the questionnaire of some college English teachers who are in charge of ethnic minority class, and do the analysis and collect statistics of the questionnaire. We should foster
teachers of ethnic minority class who have abundant teaching experience, apparent teaching fruits, and have the reasonable age and knowledge structure. We should enhance teacher construction in the aspects of bilingual teaching as well. As teachers, we should be aware that “in educational contexts it is important to know as much as possible about the learners: their needs, their wants, their learning styles, their beliefs, their attitudes, and their abilities” (Garder & Miller, 2002, p. 83). So that, we can become a first-class teacher groups in the future that have reasonable structure, steady stuff, high teaching ability, and excellent teaching effects. On the other hand, in the process of teaching, the language by which the teacher can use in ethnic classroom is very important as well. From a psychological point of view, it cannot be avoided, and from a pedagogical point of view, it can facilitate learning if used wisely and deliberately. In a word, “classroom is the best place to promote learner autonomy. As a learner, one should learn to be to facilitate this. They can identify and encourage the autonomous classroom behavior of their students” (DONG & XIN, 2005, p. 101).

(2) Teaching content construction. In terms of teaching content, we should present the advanced and modern educational concepts, publish more papers concerning English teaching of ethnic minority class. Teachers can select some of the ethnic minority classes as the experimental class and do the questionnaire and its analyses. On the other hand, syllabus design is an important part in the evolution of a new approach to language learning as well. “Syllabus design has to do with selecting and sequencing content, methodology with selecting and sequencing appropriate learning experiences, and evaluation with appraising learners and determining the effectiveness of the curriculum as a whole” (Nunan, 2001, p. 72).

(3) Teaching method construction. It is being recognized that pedagogical action needs to be sensitive to the cultural and environmental contexts in which teaching takes place (Nunan, 2001, p. 4). Given some barriers on Chinese of many ethnic minority college students, we teachers should apply to some combined teaching methods, like embodied, intercommunicative, and discussing teaching methods. “Students are encouraged to use cooperation in various ways, such as practicing with other students, playing games in the language, and sharing effective strategies with each other” (O’Malley & Chamot, 2001, p. 206), and at the same time, enhance some activities like class discussions. In the course of discussions, “students are told not to be afraid to make errors, not to panic if they do not understand everything, and not to be discouraged if they do not understand everything, and not to be discouraged if they make incorrect guesses” (O’Malley & Chamot, 2001, p. 206). On the other hand, self-access learning has been the advanced and important method of learning English in college.

An essential part of the success of self-access is in having teachers well prepared to introduce it to their learners. Therefore, teachers need to be sensitized to their own beliefs and attitudes as a first step in becoming aware of any changes in their roles when working with their learners in self-access mode. (Garder & Miller, 2002, p. 43)

At the same time, the teaching syllabus, teaching materials, exercises, vocabulary practices, and courseware should be open on the Internet, so that, ethnic minority college students can share the corresponding superior teaching resources. Therefore, “class interaction involves the students in the language use practice, increases the student’s exposure to the language; the interaction itself enhances the student’s target language acquisition and communicative competence” (XU, 2005, p. 58).

(4) Textbooks construction. Much of the work into learning strategies seeks to find out not only how individuals approach their learning, but whether or not there are any cultural traits or approaches by which certain
groups of learners can be categorized. If culture does influence learners’ beliefs and attitudes the provisions of self-access learning opportunities should cater to these beliefs and attitudes (Garder & Miller, 2002, p. 42).

Therefore, we should treat different ethnic minority college students with different textbooks. We should set up a set of special textbooks that are containing ethnic peculiarity, and are suitable for ethnic minority college students.

Because all human languages make reference to the properties and objects of the physical world which is perceived in the same way by all physiologically and psychologically normal human beings, because all languages, in whatever culture they might operate, are called upon to fulfill a similar range of functions, and because all languages make use of the same physiological and psychological apparatus, there are always commonalities between languages and learning strategies at similar stages. (SU, 2005, p. 56)

In this way, both the knowledge of the mother tongue of their ethnic languages, and the experience of its study can help a lot during their English learning in ethnic classroom. On the other hand, we should combine the realistic teaching, optimize the advanced contents of the textbooks as well. Finally, we should set up a set of cubic textbooks that including books, courseware, text warehouse, and series of conference books. In addition, we teachers should attach more importance to social and affective strategies in the textbooks. From learning the specific contents of these special textbooks, “students are reminded to ask questions for clarification not only in the classroom but also when interacting with native speakers of the target language so as to keep the conversation going” (O’Malley & Chamot, 2001, p. 206).

(5) System construction. We should set up the corresponding encouraging and assessing systems in order to encourage teachers, who are in charge of ethnic minority classes, to have the construction of excellent classes.

(6) Examination method construction. We should set up scientific and reasonable examination, and assessing systems, reform the previous closed book examination way which is in charge of teachers only. We should carry out a new examination methods that are beneficial for ethnic minority college students to foster their English comprehensive applied abilities, and at the same time, the key points of examination should be the listening and speaking part.

(7) Teaching theoretical construction. Teachers are in charge of study and organize others to learn the advanced teaching theories, organize teachers to communicate and learn, and write the corresponding teaching research papers, so that we can construct Ethnic Minority class with the advanced teaching concepts.

Conclusions

The aim of accepting ethnic minority students of non-ethnic universities is to ensure the fair educational right of ethnic minority students, to strengthen the degree of fostering ethnic minority talents, promote the development of ethnic minority regions, present the important measures of ethnic equality and ethnic consolidation policies in China. (WEI, 2010, p. 55)

From the analysis and conclusion mentioned above, it is necessary to reform and explore the class construction system of ethnic minority college English class. On the basis of task-based teaching concept, we should enlarge the listening and speaking part, enhance the English comprehensive abilities of ethnic minority college students, and enhance English teaching qualities as well. The task-based teaching mode and the traditional teaching mode should be studied in ethnic minority classes for experiment. We then give the
comparative analysis of the two teaching modes, enhance the teaching qualities of ethnic minority college English comprehensively, enhance ethnic minority college students’ comprehensive English abilities like listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating.

References


The Intelligent Teaching Resource Program: 
Applications to Writing

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This paper examined the computer-assisted TRP (Teaching Resource Program), which is an intelligent writing program. Different from previous research, this study emphasized TRP’s integrative and holistic functions of intelligent analysis, intelligent scoring, and intelligent comment on writing pieces. In what follows, this paper conducted a study of intelligent essay scoring system related to intelligent analysis, intelligent scoring, and intelligent comment of the writing pieces. Also, this paper provided a literature review of existing computer-assisted essay scoring systems and analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of them. Based on these findings in our research, we can conclude that the integrative and holistic computer-assisted TRP can effectively analyze, score, and comment essays, consequently enhancing the writing performance. Some useful implications from this study include that the computer-assisted TRP should be further integrated with writing learning and instruction.

Keywords: TRP (Teaching Resource Program), intelligent analysis, intelligent scoring, intelligent comment

Introduction

With information technology and instructional technology developing rapidly, the intelligent software and programs have gained much more importance in education. On the other hand, writing has long been regarded as one of solid foundation of education. Therefore, how to enhance and evaluate the writing ability of English learners has gained much attention both in educational institutions and in language testing services. Apparently, writing has become an indispensable parameter in the evaluation of student’s learning competence. This is especially the case if we look at major changes that have been made in some internationally prestigious examination systems for the testing of English language proficiency (YANG, 2004; DING, 2008). In fact, the Western theorists and practitioners of writing have begun to conduct the studies related to instructional technology and writing since the computer was introduced into the field of writing learning and instruction in the 1970s. Up to now, the integration of the computer and writing has become a specialized field of study. In the past decades, it is commonly acknowledged that English writing is the most difficult skills to learn and instruct. To quicken the process of learning English writing, diverse intelligent software and programs have been developed and put into practice. Historically speaking, language instructors have kept a nice relation to varying products of educational technology and language instructors of English have never hesitated to try new things to enhance the
proficiency of language learning (YANG, 2006). Kepner (1991) argued that, technically speaking, English writing included complicated cognitive and psychological process and other mechanisms. Among them, effective evaluation on learners’ writing work features prominently. Hauman (2012), a section editor of Computer and Composition Online on the website, argued that composition as a discipline was constantly evolving, changing its teaching practices in keeping with innovations in theory and technology. Therefore, theory into practice strives to illuminate these evolving connections between theories, computer technologies, and pedagogical practices (Retrieved from http://www.bgsu.edu/cc online/theory.htm). In order to enhance student writers’ competence, this paper deals with how TRP (Teaching Resource Program) (YANG, 2011) provides effective evaluation to writing pieces. In the meantime, this paper concerns the teaching effect of TRP on student writers’ performance.

The Functions of TRP

The Intelligent Analyzing of TRP

The timely and effective evaluation to student writers can exert strong influence on their writing performance. On the one hand, evaluation can trigger the positive elements of complicated cognitive and psychological process and other mechanisms. On the other hand, effective evaluation provides specific suggestions, directions, and guidelines about their writing pieces for student writers. Also, evaluation extends the opportunity to improve the students’ writing performance and increases the window of opportunity for their writing success. TRP possesses the functions of providing timely and effective evaluation, and one kind of function of TRP is the intelligent analysis of students’ writing pieces. As shown in Figure 1, the intelligent analysis of the text entitled why is writing so difficult to me demonstrates the detailed analysis of the tokens and types of words, the frequency of the words, the total number of sentences and paragraphs, mean word length and mean paragraph length, and so on. At the glance of the graph, the student or the teacher can get the detailed information of any given writing pieces. The TRP’s intelligent analysis of the given writing pieces can form the qualitative result of the text. In the result of word frequency statistics, the student writers or teachers can have an clear idea of any given word used. At the same time, the chart of word length can indicate to the student writers or teachers how many long words and short words the student writers have used. Furthermore, the student writers or teachers can keep abreast of current development, such as spellings, grammar, organization, and logic in writing, for the reason that grammar, organization, and logic used in the writing pieces can positively reflect one’s writing competence. Also, in the result of text statistics, the student or the teacher can have a clear understanding of the total number of sentences, paragraphs, mean word length and mean paragraph length. By using intelligent analysis of TRP, large quantities of texts are processed directly to present objective evidences to the student or the teacher. In the traditional writing class, the quality of students’ writing pieces has been limited to what a single individual’s impression and experience, and there was no direct measurement (Sinclair, 1991). However, TRP’s intelligent analysis provides objective evidences that has not been available before. Research shows that evaluation of detailed quantitative statistics generally produces positive results, but in the past there was no direct evidences to analyze. TRP’s intelligent analysis can also generate the writing portfolios for the student writers. JIANG (2007) conducted a study and the results of the study provided strong evidence to prove that portfolio assessment does have positive effects on learners’ English proficiency and motivation.
Another function of TRP is the intelligent scoring. Here, the word “intelligent scoring” mainly refers to the aspect of intelligent grading or rating of writing pieces. Talking of the intelligent scoring, we will first review the previous achievements in the field of computer-assisted intelligent essay scoring. The first intelligent scoring system, PEG (Project Essay Grade), was developed by Page (1966) at the University of Duke. PEG, which attaches importance to form analysis, but not content, grades the writing pieces by using the techniques of statistics and natural language processing. With the rapid development of instructional technology, the second computer-assisted intelligent scoring system, which is developed by using Latent Semantic Analysis (Landauer & Dumais, 1997) in information retrieval, was made and named IEA (Intelligent Essay Assessor) (Foltz, 1996). IEA lays emphasis on content analysis exclusively without analysis of essay organization. Considering the advantages and disadvantages of previous intelligent essay scoring systems, another intelligent scoring system called E-rater was developed by Education Testing Service in the 1990s. E-rater is a hybrid system, which places great emphasis on both content and form of writing pieces. However, to some extent, it possesses the weaknesses of inadequate content analysis. The last intelligent scoring system is IntelliMetric (GE & CHEN, 2007), which was developed in 2003, by using the techniques of natural language processing and statistics. A literature review of the previous computer-assisted intelligent scoring sheds light on the strong points and weak points of them. Based on the previous studies, YANG Yong-lin, a professor at Tsinghua University, teamed up with Higher Education Press in China, developed the computer-assisted TRP possessing the function of intelligent scoring to the writing pieces. To put aside the techniques and the theory used in TRP, as shown in Figure 2, TRP’s intelligent scoring can generate the detailed constructs of the marks, the titles of the writing pieces, the dates of writing, the total number of sentences, paragraphs, mean word length, mean paragraph length, and the student writers’ positions in a ranking of names. After comparing the results of intelligent scoring of successive compositions in any given length of time, the students can form their own writing portfolios to have a better understanding of the progress they have made in writing (KUI, 2005). In the long run, the teachers or the students can conduct a formative assessment by using portfolio assessment as a tool, for portfolio assessment has positive effects on students’ writing performance and writing and motivation.
The most important function of TRP is intelligent comment which can generate faculty comment on the writing pieces automatically. Put another way, TRP’s intelligent comment can provide timely and effective feedback to student writers in the form of faculty comment. Comparably speaking, in a crowded class of 50 or 60 students, TRP’s intelligent comment plays a more important part in providing timely feedback to student writers. For the teaching staff, in order to provide faculty feedback by using the traditional methods, he/she must endure a continuously repetitive process and a time-consuming task especially when the writing class sizes are large. High staff/student ratios often mean that tutors often have great difficulty in providing students with high quality feedback, which is timely and meaningful, on their performance. This is the many advances in computer-aided assessment and technology (Barker, 2011). Through the rapid technological innovations, the computer-based platform offers the potential for high quality assessment that can closely match instructional activities and goals, make meaningful contributions to the classroom (Scalise & Giford, 2006). However, this raises other issues about the reliability and validity of assessment. Research on ways of improving the dependability of teachers assessment suggests that actions would equally support more effective use of assessment to help learning (Michael et al., 2002). Active involvement in the assessment process plays a crucial role in the acquisition of information, the incorporation of accurate information into cognitive processing mechanisms (Harlen, 2005). Further, good quality and timely feedback are key features for supporting effective learning processes and developing the student/tutor relationship (Irons, 2008). From the literature review mentioned above, we can make an obvious conclusion that good quality, meaningful, and timely feedback are vital in improving the students’ writing performance. TRP’s intelligent comment can satisfy the requirements above. More importantly, as shown in Figure 3, it can provide high quality individual feedback to the student writers rapidly. Feedback presented in the paper was immediately delivered to all the student writers just sitting before the computer without waiting for a long time. TRP’s intelligent comment can make students’ writing extend outside classroom to ensure the students to have sufficient time to think about the writing skills and search for related material for the theme. It can also strengthen the learners’ awareness which may enhance their attention to the target and purpose of writing, and the nature of writing (YU, 2004). In a word, TRP’s intelligent comment of the writing pieces can provide the students with such information as organization and development, diversity of content, vocabulary, style statistics, transitional words, punctuation, and clarity, so they can serve as guidelines for improvement of writing.
Conclusions

This paper specifies three main evaluating functions of the computer-assisted TRP, and the evaluating functions of TRP are good quality, timely, and effective, indicating the perfect integration of instructional technology with writing. The fast and effective evaluation of TRP is vital to evaluate the students’ writing pieces and enhance writing performance. The integrative and holistic intelligent computer-assisted TRP can effectively analyze, score, and comment essays, consequently enhancing the writing performance. After one-year teaching experiment on one of two classes of the same writing level by using TRP, the result showed, in the significance level test, $p \leq 0.1$. Namely, there exists statistically significant correlation between the students’ writing performance and the computer-assisted intelligent TRP. Consequently, the computer-assisted TRP proves to be an important addition to the tools or software used in writing evaluation and promoting writing performance.

References


On Autonomous Learning Strategy in Chinese Homeschooling
With a Comparison to American Homeschooling

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In applied linguistics, autonomous learning is a good way to help students accomplish innovative study. If it is properly used, the teaching effects can be strengthened to a large extent. China has a long history in home education. However, the whole world develops in a very fast pace and it is time to take a look at the world’s homeschooling trend. This paper analyses Chinese home education and American home education, takes in good points of American home education, provides some suggestions and tries to apply autonomous learning strategy to Chinese home education in a better way.

Keywords: autonomous learning, Chinese homeschooling, American homeschooling

Introduction

Autonomous learning has different titles and different definitions in different theories. In some studies, it is called learner autonomy, self-regulated learning, self-organized learning, or self-study, etc.. However, they all have one common character, which is, autonomy. In fact, autonomous learning is a school of education which sees learners as individuals who can and should be autonomous, i.e., be responsible for their own learning climate. This kind of education helps students develop their self-consciousness, vision, practicality, and freedom of discussion. Up till now, we can perceive some successful cases in which autonomous learning strategy is applied, such as classroom education, distance learning, flexible education and so on.

Since the world is growing fast, more and more students get the access to Internet, television, e-books, and all kinds of multimedia. Without a teacher, they still will be able to learn by themselves; without going to school, they are capable of studying at home. As the United States ranks the number one technology kingdom in the world, the technical advantages allow homeschooling to be better applied in its society. If we look back to China, the same trend goes on. Chinese parents pay more attention to their children’s after-school study. They hire tutors to help their kids to acquire more knowledge and get better results in examinations. However, due to different cultural backgrounds and traditions, Chinese homeschooling and American homeschooling are not the same. In American homeschooling, the autonomous learning strategy is more widely used. Hence, it is necessary to do a survey on it and tries to learn good tactics from American homeschooling so as to help promote Chinese homeschooling, especially in the aspect of autonomous learning.

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The Relationship Between Autonomous Learning and Homeschooling

Definition of Autonomous Learning

The definition of autonomous learning varies in different theories. According to Holec (1981), autonomous learning is “the ability to take charge of one’s learning”. The term autonomy has come to be used in at least five ways: (1) for situations in which learners study entirely on their own; (2) for a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning; (3) for an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education; (4) for the exercise of learners’ responsibility for their own learning; and (5) for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning. The relevant innumerable definitions of autonomy and other synonyms for it are “independence”, “self-direction”, etc. Little (1991) thought that learner autonomy is essentially a matter of the learner’s psychological relation to the process and content of learning—a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. Dam (1995) defined autonomy in terms of the learner’s willingness and capacity to control or oversee his own learning.

No matter how, the autonomous learning theory is based on the constructivism theory, which was firstly proposed by Jean Piaget and George Kelly (FAN, 2007). This theory believes that different people have different perspectives toward this world. In this sense, with autonomous learning, they will acquire different knowledge by themselves. In short, autonomous learning is a school of education which sees learners as individuals who can and should be autonomous and be responsible for their own learning climate.

Definition of Homeschooling

Homeschooling or home school is the education of children at home, typically by parents but sometimes by tutors, rather than in a formal setting of public or private school. In the modern sense, it is an alternative in developed countries to formal education. Actually, homeschooling is a legal option in many places for parents to provide their children with a learning environment as an alternative to publicly-provided schools. It is also an alternative for families living in isolated rural locations or living temporarily abroad. Homeschooling may also refer to instruction in the home under the supervision of correspondence schools or umbrella schools.

The Relationship Between Autonomous Learning and Homeschooling

It is recognized that more and more people start to accept homeschooling both in America and China. Today, homeschooling is gaining legitimacy from governments’ educational politics. The integral aspects of autonomous learning are: the ability to motivate oneself; the ability to work autonomously; the general management of one’s own work to time limits; a flexible and adaptable mind able to face new situations; and the ability to think creatively, self-critically, and independently. From this view, the purpose of autonomous learning and homeschooling are the same. They are designed to improve students’ skills and learning capabilities, and to help them form good learning habits. There is a close relationship between autonomous learning and homeschooling.

Autonomous Learning in Chinese Homeschooling

History of Chinese Homeschooling

Chinese homeschooling can be traced back to YAO and SHUN ancient times. At that time, the slaves were controlled by their masters and could not go to school. Their masters then taught them by themselves. In the early
days of homeschooling and family education, women also played an important role in it. In Han Dynasty, LIU Xiang recorded stories of “Three women in Zhou family”. The three women were empresses and imperial concubines. They were worshiped by their people, because they raised their children in the right way and helped them grow to be talents who in the later years became the countries’ contributors. In Chinese long history, many more stories happened in different days. Confucius’ mother and Mencius’ mother both are models of Chinese homeschooling as Confucius and Mencius developed their reputation in Chinese philosophy history. Besides the mother’s role in Chinese traditional homeschooling, the old people are also respected to be the teachers in families. According to the historical records, many old people in the emperor families were regarded as the ones that taught princesses and emperors. After China stepped into feudal society, the concept of family was strengthened, which further promoted Chinese homeschooling (WEI, 1995).

Current Situation of Chinese Homeschooling

After the “reform and opening” policy and “only child” policy, Chinese government and Chinese parents start to care more about the quality and capability of their children. This is the beginning of China’s modern phase in homeschooling. In the year 1980, China launched its first magazine *Parents should Read*, which talked about homeschooling. Later on, Beijing Normal University set up some homeschooling courses for students and parents. With time goes by, many other universities and colleges establish abundant homeschooling programs and projects through out China (LI, 2009).

Although Chinese people are interested in homeschooling, they still face many problems. Affected by the feudal society in Chinese history, Chinese parents tend to care too much about their children. Sometimes they might also spoil them. Secondly, Chinese parents prefer to control their children. They want their children to become the ones they want them to be. To a large extent, the originality and creativity are blocked since the children are in a young age. Thirdly, Chinese parents want their children to have good results in examinations and always be the top students in school. That is one part of the reasons why they want to hire tutors to teach their children after school and even send them to extra curriculum to study mathematics, English, dancing, etc.. Not every child is willing to take those classes, but the parents make them to. Children lose their learning motivation and autonomous learning strategy is not commonly used. These all are some existing problems in today’s Chinese homeschooling development.

Autonomous Learning in Chinese Homeschooling

After analyzing the history and current situation of Chinese homeschooling, it is not hard to find that autonomous learning strategy has not always been given enough attention in educational treatment in China. The modern style of homeschooling only appears in the recent several decades. Teachers cannot guide students to improve their own analyzing ability, nor their creative thinking ability. Teachers tend to pour all kinds of knowledge to their students and parents want the students to understand everything the teachers tell them (FENG & LI, 2002). In this view, the development of students’ self-system structures and self-system processes are not fostered; positive motivation toward the learning task and toward applying the mental effort required are not improved; the belief that effort will lead to learning success and will contribute to meaningful personal goals also is not confirmed. Students fail to positively evaluate their personal competencies and abilities to take personal control over the demands of the learning task.
All these go against the original purpose in homeschooling and autonomous learning. Homeschooling education is supposed to help with students’ learning difficulties and help them form good learning habits by giving them enough time and space to learn by themselves. However, in Chinese cases, things are so much different. If people look into America’s homeschooling, he will notice that the autonomous learning strategy is largely used and Chinese educators need to learn from it.

**Autonomous Learning in American Homeschooling**

**History of American Homeschooling**

The homeschooling education in America started in the colonial days before its independence. Due to some reasons, for example, the economy was not so good and the education was not advanced. Most parents taught their children skills in reading, calculation, writing and so on. With the establishment of public schools and the development of industrial revolution, many husbands had to leave home and work in the outside. Indoor housewives could not handle their children’s homeschooling. Hence, the homeschooling education stopped in the early eighteenth century. Until the 1960s, homeschooling came back to people’s daily life and it became popular gradually after the 1980s. According to some survey, the basic reason for adopting homeschooling is that parents want to give their children better education (TAN & LIN, 2008).

**Current Situation of American Homeschooling**

In fact, the trend of accepting homeschooling is still ongoing. In 1999 and 2003, the Ministry of Education from United States released some data on household education. It showed that in 1999, there were about 850,000 American students taking homeschooling education, which accounted for 1.7% of the total students number. However, in 2003, this figure was seen to rise up, homeschooling students increased to 1.1 million, which accounted for 2.2% of the total students number. Homeschooling becomes the fastest growing aspect in American education. At the same time, America’s homeschooling education is advocated by the government and protected by the related laws and regulations. Up till now, over 50 states in America have passed through the legal documents, clarifying that homeschooling education is legal (TAN & LIN, 2008).

On the other hand, homeschooling gets more supports from the nationwide schools, education institutes, and organizations. They provide more programs for parents and children, helping the family implement homeschooling at home. In all the states, one can find at least one homeschooling school association who endeavors in promoting and developing homeschooling tactics.

**Autonomous Learning in American Homeschooling**

Compared with Chinese homeschooling, American homeschooling is comparatively more flexible. They allow students to choose their preferential learning style, cognition style, and a suitable learning speed for themselves. During this process, students are able to form their own individuality independently. The teachers will teach their students by organizing different kinds of activities, such as religious activity, community service, and other family activities. Also, for the textbooks, American homeschooling provides more choices to the parents. They can select those textbooks which are used in private schools, or simply buy a whole set of text materials. What is more, students are allowed to take part in outdoor activities, exchange their thoughts, and study through Internet.
In all, American homeschooling takes students’ interests as its priority and tries to satisfy different expectations. In addition, teachers guide students how to study and what to learn, instead of inputting all the textbook knowledge. As for the time schedule, students can choose the time they want to learn which makes the homeschooling more friendly and suitable for them. It is not hard to find out that autonomous learning strategy is used in American homeschooling more often than Chinese one.

**Learn from American Homeschooling and Improve Chinese Homeschooling**

In here, the author does not judge about American homeschooling or Chinese homeschooling, neither to decide which one is better, because America and China have different cultural background, education system, and social development. The author simply tries to take the view of improving Chinese homeschooling by analyzing its shortages and learning from advantages of American homeschooling on autonomous learning. Surely American homeschooling style has its own shortcomings and disadvantages. Hence, here the author just looks into the good part which are suitable to be used in China so as to help improve Chinese homeschooling.

**For Teachers to Learn from American Homeschooling**

To better adopt the autonomous learning strategy, Chinese homeschooling needs to work on several aspects. For teachers, the first thing they need to do is to respect students interests and foster their own learning styles (FENG, 2010). It also concerns with helping students’ build their own personalities. The biggest problem in Chinese homeschooling, as stated in the former part, is that Chinese teachers or parents tend to pour all textbook knowledge to their students. For most of the time, they teach the content of the textbooks used in school, talk to students all the time and rarely take students feeling into concern. Surely some teachers and parents still think of intriguing students’ motivation, but with the college-entrance examination, they cannot flexibly arrange study time for their students. With the rigid education system, teachers cannot ignore students’ examination results. However, after teaching the textbooks’ content, teachers can try to recommend some other books for the students to read based on their interests. In the meantime, teachers can organize different kinds of activities for the students, for example, to do outdoor activities, to watch learning videos and to cooperate with classmates. By doing all these, students will be able to learn to take autonomous learning strategy, develop their own learning styles and learn to value their own performance.

Teachers also need to teach students in a right attitude, knowing that they are guides, not commanders (FENG & LI, 2002). They should teach students how to learn, and not just to help them solve examination problems nor raise their scores in ranking. In China, it is especially hard to do, because with over two thousand years feudal society, Chinese culture forms the authority of teachers, governments, and parents. Students are not equal with teachers and they are supposed to obey their tutors. As the Chinese verb says: “One day he is your teacher, he is your father forever”. It is not hard to see how much Chinese people respect teachers and how much they listen to them. If so, Chinese teachers may block the originality and creativity of their students. This situation will never drive students to form autonomy learning habit, while instead, it makes students lose their ability in thinking and just obey the teachers and parents. In order to prevent this, teachers need to have a good attitude while teaching, seeing themselves as someone to help but not to command.

Besides the above two points, teachers also need to improve their teaching skills, acquire more methodologies so that they can better teach their students.
For Students to Learn from American Homeschooling

For autonomous learning, one of the most popular strategy is meta-cognitive strategy. In the view of students, their learning results are greatly affected by the actual situation and various factors. Among these factors, motivation, attitude, anxiety, personality, and self-confidence can be ranked as the top ones (ZHU & HU, 2010). It is same in autonomous learning. What students need to do is firstly form the learning motivation. It is not very easy to do as human being are endorsed with laziness. In this sense, with the help of teachers, students need to find out their interests and establish self-awareness. They need to develop an understanding of their individual attitudes and motivation to enhance awareness of autonomous learning. With enough motivation, students will be more willingly to study. American students are allowed to study different subjects based on their interests. However, Chinese students usually have homeschooling teachers, because they are weak in some subjects and need higher scores. For them, it is necessary to change this thinking—they need to have interest and motivation first, and then study more about that specific subject and finally raise scores in examinations.

Students also need to have a good assessment toward their performance. They can try to compare their performances of scores in different times (FAN, 2007). If the scores get higher, they can know their performance is better. By doing the comparison and assessment, they get to know more about their pain points and weaknesses, so that in the following study, they are clear about what they want to do to defeat their weak subjects. It also will help teachers set up learning programs and agendas, if the students can tell them about what they feel and how they assess their performance. Assessment is a very important part of autonomous learning.

Autonomous learning strategy is to help students form good learning habits, improve their performance, and shape independency characters. By practicing autonomous learning, students are more aware of what they need and what they want, and they will be able to acquire knowledge faster with their own learning styles. In the long run, when students step into the society and work, they also will be very independent in learning new knowledge, which means that they are much more competitive in the job market than others. The autonomous learning habit helps them profoundly and vastly.

Conclusions

China has a long history of homeschooling. With its unique culture, Chinese homeschooling faces some problems and difficulties. By comparing American and Chinese homeschooling, it can be seen that in America, students are more used to autonomous learning and they have better ways to adopt autonomous learning strategy. Hence, the author looks into how it happens by looking back to American homeschooling history and analyzing its current situation. For teachers and students, they need to focus on different aspects of improving the application of autonomous learning strategy. For the teachers, they need to respect their students, help them develop interests and teach students in an appropriate attitude. For the students, they need to obtain motivation first and then assess their performance. Certainly, Chinese teachers and students have more to do in this field. However, by learning from American homeschooling, they still can take a glimpse of how to improve autonomous learning strategy in Chinese education, as it is needless to say autonomous learning will benefit students for a whole life.
References


The paper argues that the three women are all tragic characters and their tragedies lie in the fact that they only function as stones in Paul’s life road to art and the world of men and their suffering from the imprisonment of the patriarchal society. The alleged tragic hero, Paul, is patriarchal, self-centered, and sometimes even sadistic. This paper gives respective analysis of the Victorian morality and industrial civilization. Mrs. Morel is pitifully diagnosed with Oedipus complex, which enables her to be a powerful hermaphrodite and gains access to power. Miriam is also imprisoned by Victorian morality, but her world is not purely spiritual. Paul just cannot see the physical aspect of her, so he refuses to enter her world. Clara is the woman who makes Paul a real man, but Paul only sees the physical aspect of her. So Paul’s patriarchal character is revealed in the discussion of these three women. This paper explores the cause of these women’s struggle and points out that the problems these characters face still exist and need to be solved today.

Keywords: Paul, tragedy, stone, patriarchal

Introduction

*Sons and Lovers* (1994) is an early representative work of realistic literature style of Lawrence, because it uses a lot of psychoanalysis, and it is also a psychological realistic representative work. It has a strong autobiographic air, so it is called the best representation of Sigmund Freud’s “Oedipus Complex” theory by critics. As modern literature theory progresses, researchers have realized that the substantial content of *Sons and Lovers* cannot be summarized by “Oedipus Complex”. As a growth novel, the hero—Paul’s growth is indispensable from Mrs. Morel—his mother, Miriam,—his first lover, Clara—his second lover. These three women constitute a firm support from soul, spirit, and flesh, support Paul to pursue his so-called perfect humanity, to become a real man. Even though Daniel wrote in his *The Consciousness of D. H. Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography* (1986), “In fact, all the three women-mother, Miriam, Clara—all made Paul feel that he was imprisoned” (p. 70). When Paul ended the three relationships desperately, went to his own future, we can see a patriarchal, self-centered, and sadistic male Chauvinist. All these three women, including Mrs. Morel, become victims of the patriarchal society and the stones in Paul’s life road to success, to some extent. This paper tries to avoid the normal literature criticism to *Sons and Lovers*, analyze the three tragic women from feminist perspective. The

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author hopes that the analysis can strengthen the work of the connotation of the thought and deeper understanding of Lawrence works.

**Mrs. Morel—Paul’s Soul Support**

At first, *Sons and Lovers* described Mr. Morel’s unhappy marriage. It seemed that it had little to do with the topic, but in fact, it made good preparation for the later fight. As a matter of fact, anything related to Mrs. Morel was worth studying, because she was the most important person in Paul’s life. She was Paul’s mother. Mrs. Morel’s marriage and family life was indeed a good example for us to study, especially her relationship with her son and her husband.

Mrs. Morel had no position in the home, her name Gertrude Coppard appeared only twice in this book. Most of the time, she appeared to be her husband’s attached property—Mrs. Morel. Even if she was hit by her husband, she had to do much for her husband. Furthermore, she did not know exactly how much her husband earned. Because according to the habits, woman must go out when man counted money in the room. This was only one side of Mrs. Morel’s tragedy, like all the other women, she was the sufferer of the Victorian morality. And Mrs. Morel’s another tragedy was that she was not a pure “housewife”, “She went into the front garden, feeling too heavy to take herself out, yet unable to stay indoors. The heat suffocated her. And looking ahead, the prospect of her life made her feel as if she were buried alive” (ZHANG, 1998, p. 37). When other women were accustomed to their position in the home, even were satisfied with it, her emotion was influenced by her living environment and was depressed both inside home and outside.

Mrs. Morel, who came from a little capitalist class, aloof and cultured, was a Victorian woman who had knowledge. When she was very young, she had been struggling against patriarch, fighting for her existence and for women’s rights, longing for becoming an authoritative, independent and responsible man. “If I were a man, nothing’s gonna stop me” (Lawrence, 1994, p. 9). As the England industrial atmosphere came, in the man-centered family, her husband treated her sadistically, in order to live, Mrs. Morel naturally constituted an alliance with her sons. She taught them to change their social status and enter the Middle class through knowledge and will, so the children became Mrs. Morel’s tools to make her dream and ambition come true.

But all these just painted deep tragic color to Mrs. Morel. Because Mrs. Morel’s dream—choosing the road to set up a union with her son to become hermaphrodite—did not come true. She put her children in her bosom, cast her own dream and outlook on life on her children, hoping to fill her empty emotion. Although this abnormal maternal love helped her sons become outstanding, it also held back free growth of individuality, caused their thought variant and their personality split.

Firstly, Mrs. Morel’s existence was the only support to Paul’s life road to become an artist. We can say that without Mrs. Morel’s support, Paul’s dream could not come true. So Paul could not draw after Mrs. Morel’s death. “Everything seemed to have gone smash for the young man. He could not paint. The picture he finished on the day of his mother’s death—one that he felt the most satisfied with—was the last thing he did” (LI, 1998, p. 85).

Secondly, in this “Oedipus Complex”, perhaps Paul did not love his mother so much. He loved her only because he wanted to get some profits. In other words, Paul skillfully took advantage of his mother. Mrs. Morel knew that it was hard to be a woman, so she dreamt of becoming a man, but she could not understand man’s
position in society, she did not see through man’s ways to make use of woman. While as a man, Paul knew the rules of taking advantage of woman himself. Through loving his mother, he could get what he had been dreaming of. Once his father was sent to hospital because of industrial injury, he said to his mother with joy “I’m the host in the house now” (Lugo, 1996, p. 165). In order to be “the host in the house”, he even prayed for his father’s death. In this proud state, Paul did not take his mother’s feeling into consideration. So it was no surprising that the mother was deserted by her beloved son when she had no use to her son.

This was Mrs. Morel’s life. She put her children at arms, projected her own ideal and life view on her children, and hoped so as to fill the feelings of vaccum. Although this abnormal love helped her children stand out among their fellows, led to their mentality variation and personality split. She should be responsible for this abnormal love, no matter what position she held in her son’s growth. Mrs. Morel got only the colored utilizable repay, she did not always fulfill her emotion’s need, which was her most tragic thing.

Miriam—Paul’s Spirit Support

Paul’s first lover, Miriam, was a beautiful and shy girl. Although living in a country village which was controlled by her father and brothers who looked down upon her, she was irreconcilable to mediocrity. Miriam did not want to follow the same old disastrous road of average village girls; she looked forward to making life meaningful. But in reality there was no such room for her to exist; what she had was just the freedom of imagine. Paul’s appearing made Miriam have her own idol, but this love soon added pain to her life because of her religious zeal. Since she was very young, Miriam sincerely believed in religion which played a major role in her life. She thought “God was omnipotent, and He knew everything in the world” (Miller, 1980, p. 256). So even her love to Paul may request the permission of the God: “O’Lord, let me not love Paul Morel. Keep me from loving him, if I ought not to love him” (Drabele, 1993, p. 128). We can see that under religion’s control, Miriam’s emotion severely depressed. She was only a doll, without any her own idea. Miriam consciously built their intimate relationship on imagination, namely spirit on love, not flesh on love. We can say man-centered family atmosphere and sincerely believing in religion were just like undershirt firmly bound Miriam’s spirit world, formed her first tragedy.

But it was this tragic girl who was Paul’s bosom friend to his art natural gift and ability. Miriam herself had artist’s ability, so she could stimulate Paul’s creative inspiration. Like Mrs. Morel, Miriam kept an eye on Paul’s art creation, but the mother paid more attention to the achievement and fame that brought by art, while Miriam focused on her lover’s deeper things of nature, the great enthusiasm to art. Therefore Paul became Miriam’s soul mate, seeking spiritual solace and intuition creativity stimulation. This was different from Mrs. Morel’s love. When he was in contact with Miriam, he got insight, a more profound vision. From his mother, he got the warmth of life and the strength for creativity, but Miriam changed this warmth into art enthusiasm, just like white light. But to this spiritual confidant, Paul’s return was mean.

Paul was a pure male chauvinism, so he never took the status of women into account, even if he thought about it, it was from his own point of view. Many critics noticed that it was Miriam’s love that made Paul’s spirit tend to mature, but few mentioned Miriam’s growth and changes in this bildungsroman. Miriam felt deeply hurt when her change, the representation of the female-centered world, was rejected by Paul. This was her early figure—“a spiritual girl” who was imprisoned by Victorian morality and religious idea and got pure sensory and intelligent
exchange, but Paul sedulously neglected her change and growth, so he rejected to cooperate with her, and finally he destroyed her love. In fact, soon after falling in love with Paul, Miriam’s spirit world began to change: “Sometimes, as they were walking together, she slipped her arm timidly into his. But he always resented it, and she knew it. It caused a violent conflict in him” (Lawrence, 1994, p. 194). Paul did not seem to know that Miriam’s exist as a woman. He never entered her world, even never wanted to try. How could he know her? Miriam actively tried again and again, but Paul said: “You are a nun—you are a nun” (Lawrence, 1994, p. 297). The words went into her heart again and again. He never took her position into consideration, Paul almost capriciously took action according to his own emotional power. At last, Miriam recognized the essence of their relationship: “The personality between us has been a long battle—you struggled to leave me” (WANG, 1996, p. 63).

Paul should be responsible for their split of love.

Clara—Paul’s Flesh Support

Although in front of Mrs. Morel and Miriam, Paul was ashamed to show his yearning for flesh, but in his heart, this desire could not restrain. He needed a woman, who would be more mature and bold than Miriam, who could bring him out of hibernation. Clara was the very woman. Lawrence moulded Clara as opposite figure of Miriam. To Paul, if Miriam was a spirit symbol, then Clara was a flesh symbol. From Clara, Paul indeed got “passion of pleasant sensation”, this was “the passion of baptism of fire”, this successful attempt was “a healing to his wounded heart which was hurt because his desire was not satisfied” (Millet, 1970, p. 345). In their relationship, she was a tool of his growth and a tool to fulfill his own need. He had gotten enough reason and spirit from his mother and Miriam, but Clara gave him a new feeling as a representation of carnal desire and intense emotion, which made up for the empty of his natural growth.

Paul was conservative and arrogant, in fact he looked down upon Clara in his heart. Paul was a typical Victorian apologist. In his mind, a woman must stay at home as a housewife, must be calm and silence, never left her husband no matter how hard he treated her, otherwise she was a “sheep” (Russell, 1997, p. 175). In the whole process of love, he paid more attention to his own feeling, never recognized Clara’s exist. Patriarchal folly blinded Paul’s eyes, he could not accept Clara’s thought. When he was with Clara, his patriarchal thought appeared obviously.

But once Paul got what he needed from Clara, his rooted supremacy began to haunt. Then Clara’s tragedy started. From beginning, he fixed Clara’s position as sexual companion. Paul thought she was not profound, so she could not hold his spirit. Never like Miriam who understood him. As a conservative and self-important man, in fact, Paul looked down upon Clara in his heart. Clara also could not go to Paul’s spirit world—the typical Victorian apologist forever. Paul only looked her as a woman, and the understanding of her was completely put in her patriarchal consciousness. In the face of Paul’s rejection and coldness, Clara’s need for spirit and life of the mind was not worth mentioning. Clara gradually realized that she would never enter Paul’s spirit world.

“I feel”, she continued slowly, “as if I hadn’t got you, as if all of you weren’t there, and as if it weren’t me you were talking—” (Lawrence, 1994, p. 173).

At last, Clara was ingeniously thrown to her husband by Paul. She understood marriage and love more deep at this moment. The understanding and self-confidence was formed on the hurt that Paul brought to her, based on herself as a former feminist emotion tragedy.
Conclusions

Above all, in fact, Sons and Lovers described three types of love: Paul and his mother, Paul and Miriam, and Paul and Clara. The first type was maternal love; the second type was spirit love; and the third type was flesh love. Lawrence racked his brains to form the three types of love, to emphasize women’s strength and their great might in men’s growth.

But under the surface of this love, in the Paul-centered atmosphere, we can find three tragic women standing bitterly. We can even see the 20th century women’s self-awareness, fighting and dim the epitome of failure.

The tragedy has historical, social, and personal factors. In fact, the three women in Sons and Lovers are irreconcilable to be controlled by life. They showed initial awakenig consciousness of women, but they chose wrong directions and ways, eventually they were led to the failure of the same fate. Paul swung among the three women, and made full use of them, even damaged to them, but this achieved his own spiritual growth and the pursuit of human nature. At this point, Mrs. Morel, Miriam and Clara should be responsible for their own tragedy. In this sense, the article did critical analysis to women in political science, sociology, and literariness. By the tragedy of the Victorian era the author wants to illustrate: The women’s liberation road is still very far away.

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Viewing Yeats’s Poetic Modernization From Mask Theory*

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As “the greatest poet in the 20th century”, Yeats is always a hot topic among academic community. The question whether Yeats is the “last romantic” or the first Modernist remains controversial for a long time in academic field. Whether critics term Yeats a modernist or not, they generally agree that the poems produced in his late creative period are definitively modernist works. This paper targets Yeats’s realization of poetic modernization through his mask theory applied in “Crazy Jane” poems. It discusses the poetic movement in the beginning of the 20th century, the poetic theory Yeats proposed and instances Yeats’s mask theory as the manifestation of his poetic modernization. The author argues that with his innovation in verse writing particularly demonstrated by application of mask theory in “Crazy Jane” poems, Yeats unquestionably played a very important role in Anglo-American modernist poetry.

Keywords: W. B. Yeats, modernist, poetry modernization, mask theory, Crazy Jane

Introduction

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was honored by Ezra Pound as “the only poet worthy of serious study” (Stead, 1986, p. 15). He had a very long poetic career, stretching from the 1880s to the 1930s, and had experienced a slow and painful change in his poetic creation. Generally, his poetic career can be divided into three periods according to the contents and style of his poetry. Beginning as a late-Victorian aesthete and ending as an influential contemporary of Eliot and other modernists, Yeats ranks among the most widely admired and intensively studied writers of the twentieth century. Yeats provided myriad numbers of poetry during the long creative time and the frequent subjects were love, politics, collapse of Western civilization, philosophy of history and personality and paradoxes of time and change, of growth and identity, of love and age, of life and art, and of madness and wisdom. The question whether Yeats is the “last romantic” or the first Modernist remains controversial for a long time in academic field. Whether critics term Yeats a modernist or not, they generally agree that the poems produced in his late creative period are definitively modernist works. This paper focuses on Yeats’s great efforts to modernize his poetry. His experiment of using mask in “Crazy Jane” poems makes him as a matured modernist poet.

Poetic Transformation

The early 20th century was a time of huge industrial expansion in Western world, which faced up crucial

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historical transformation. Various philosophical theories came forth and made sharp strike to the old cultural systems. And they penetrated into cultural and artistic fields, such as painting, sculpture, music, and literature as well. The firm foundation of English poetry established for thousands years in form and language had been shaken, and huge conflict happened between the complexity of life experiences in modern society and indigence of traditional literary expression. Like other artistic form, old and new, tradition and modern had been confronted with each other of English poetry. It was difficult for poets to find expression in this scientific, self-conscious and materialistic age. A literary movement was brewing.

In this wide literary movement at the cross of new century, London became a central site in the formation of Anglophone modernism. The American poet Ezra Pound arrived there and soon ignited London’s literary avant-garde. He befriended the English philosopher poet Hulme, who led an avant-garde literary group. Like the cubists and futurists, these modernists advocated a radical break with artistic convention. “In lecture Hulme influentially denounced Romanticism as so much moaning and whining and proposed a ‘hard, dry’ literature instead—a notion Pound echoed in his call for ‘harder and saner’ verse, ‘like granite’” (Abrams & Greenblatt, 2005, p. 1997).

Pound launched a movement—imagism—to remake poetry. He christened Hilda Doolittle and Richard Aldington “Imagistes”, initiating the first “ism” of modernist poetry in English. As he said “make it new” (Eliot, 1968, p. 232), the imagist credo called for new rhythms, clear and stripped-down images, free choice of subject matter, concentrated or compressed poetic expression, and use of common speech. He took his modernist revolution in a surprising new direction, building his brief imagist poems into a jagged collage that eventually became a massive long poem, The Cantos. He believed the poet should be a citizen of the world and a contemporary of all the ages, able to learn from excellence wherever and whenever it appeared. “He influenced the late Yeats and helped him modernize his late poems” (ZHANG, 1995, p. 232).

While Pound and other modernists carried on the new literary movement, Yeats also had made immense contribution to modernism. He not only put forward his poetic theory—mask, but actively engaged with the Irish Literary Revival. He was an active participant and major orchestrator of the Irish Literary Revival, which has been regarded as prefiguring other movements within Anglo-American and European modernism. In hope of awakening self-interest and recuperation and construction of an Irish literary tradition, Yeats involved in revivalism. At the beginning of the 20th century, the temporal discontinuities, political upheavals, the ever-present quest for national self-authentication and repeated clashes between the traditional and the new predominated in Ireland. Yeats’s involvement in Irish Literary Revival was as variegated, far-reaching, and vexed as his contribution to modernism. But, crucially, his engagement with Irish cultural and political disputes shaped his evolving sense of his role as a poet and fuelled his ruminations and pronouncements about the requisite aesthetic for a burgeoning nation. Besides his engagement with this revival, Yeats also engaged with the Rhymers’ Club and the Symbolists as well. In a word, Yeats under the influence of Pound involved himself in the modernism through his engagement with Irish Literary Revival and other activities.

Besides participation in the literary movement, Yeats not only put forward his poetic theory—mask, but practiced it in “Crazy Jane” poems. The following two parts concentrate on Yeats’s mask theory and its application in “Crazy Jane” poems.
Mask Theory

In his monograph *Aspects of Modern Poetry* (1935), Sitwell claimed: “the theory of the mask is one of Yeats’s major contributions to Modernism” (p. 369). The theory could be classified into three parts—man and mask, man and daimon and unity of being. The word that began to appear constantly in Yeats’s writings during the first decade of the century was “mask”, a word which he chose deliberately because it was a creation of artifice could be filled with instinct and passion. As he once wrote:

> I think that all happiness depends on the energy to assume the mask of some other self; that all joyous or creative life is a rebirth as something not oneself, something which has a memory and is created in a moment and perpetually renewed […]. (Yeats, 1973, p. 191).

In *A Vision*, Yeats (1973) writes that our mask, our eternal self, is our “object of desire or idea of the good” and it is shaped out of our “memory of exaltation” (p. 83), out of those passionate moments in our life in which we establish our deepest convictions, in which we have seen “[e]ternal beauty wandering on her way” (Pethica, 2000, p. 12). As Yeats (1973) synthesized his aesthetic, occult, and personal interests, he came to his final and favorite definition of the Mask as “a form created by passion to unite us to ourselves” (p. 18). Although he made no specific discussion of the mask in his autobiography, Yeats (1999) made an attempt to define the mask—“what I have called ‘the Mask’ is an emotional antithesis to all that comes out of their internal nature” (p. 163).

Yeats conceived of self as a complex being. He described the self as complicated, even protean in nature. It was composed of soul and body, connected between primary and antithetic elements, and divided between a daily self and an anti-self, which Yeats earlier called the opposite, ideal self or image, and later spiritualized into the daimon. The doctrine of the mask is so complex and so central in Yeats that there are lots of poems of his mature and later years that are illuminated by an understanding of his notions about man and daimon as well as self and mask.

According to Yeats, the mask, the anti-self, and the daemon facilitated the attainment of artistic inspiration; daemon was a divine force that meant inspiration to the artist; before the artist could find the daemon, he had to wear a mask so as to become his anti-self. (PU, 2006, p. 124)

His thoughts of man and mask are first introduced by the poem “Ego Dominus Tuus”, which dramatizes the process of seeking the image or anti-self. In this poem Yeats offers his most detailed description of how a poem generates. It is a process in which a poetic image that comes from the Anima Mundi (the collective unconsciousness) materializes. Between the years 1917 and 1919, Yeats’s theory of the mask developed from the concept of poet and anti-self locked in conflict, to its complete stage—daimon. In the automatic script collaborated by Yeats and his wife, the mask becomes more than the opposition between man and anti-self. Now the mask signifies two actions. First, it marks the “knitting together” (Yeats’s own term) of poet and daimon. Second, it signifies the convergence of male poet and female daimon who is “part of me”. A poet’s passionate interactions with his daimon evoke poetry. It is the aesthetic process. Poetic inspiration is derived from the female element in man, who must render himself androgynous in order to create. The intrusion of the daimon allows him to assume a new, alien personality. Furthermore, the conflict between self and daimon is significant not only because it generates passion but also because it represents and demonstrates something fundamental to the human
condition: “It is purely instinctive and cosmic quality in man which seeks completion in its opposite” (Yeats, 1985, p. 165). The relation between man and daimon is not simply a state of being but more properly as act of being. The relation was difficult to visualize. In order to illustrate the complementarity in general and the interaction of masculine and feminine, man and daimon in particular, Yeats envisioned corresponding and interpenetrating gyres.

Unity of Being thus reveals Yeats’s vision of the complementarity of self and daimon in action. When the self attains the unity it is reborn. Yeats saw all human beings engaged in a great struggle to become united to their images of themselves. At the moment of unification the temporal and the permanent become one.

According to Holdeman (2006), “The mask is a deliberately imagined second self wrought from everything the ordinary self lacked and therefore able to complete that ordinary self by confronting it in the manner of a Blakean contrary” (p. 53). In his occult treatise Per Amica Silentia Lunae, Yeats revealed that as a mask completed a person’s individual identity it also summoned from the universal mind that person’s own special guiding spirit, a “Daemon” who enabled ascent toward the cosmic oneness. Per Amica Silentia Lunae also suggested that nations could fashion collective masks—and called up “more general” Daemons—if their cultures deliberately fostered the virtues not instinctive to their peoples, a premise that accorded well with the poet’s evolving view of the Ascendancy’s role in Ireland. The masks created in his middle and matured in later works represented Yeats’s efforts to rouse himself and others to acts of imaginative self-unification, acts empowering individuals and even entire nations to engage their lovers or guardian spirits in mutually strengthening opposition.

Yeats’s doctrine of the mask also established him as an influential proponent of the new conceptions of selfhood adopted by modernist writers. Since the late 18th century, the Romantic traditions associated with such figures as Rousseau and Wordsworth had suggested that our truest, most natural selves lay deep within us, buried by modern civilization, and must be rediscovered and expressed if we were to find real happiness. Such thinking had often been applied not only to individuals but also to nations (and would-be nations) like Britain and Ireland. When Yeats concluded that it was not enough to express the natural self of a person or a nation, he anticipated ideas soon explored by Ezra Pound, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and others. Though these writers rejected many aspects of their predecessor’s thought, all agreed that human fulfillment required the natural self to undergo deliberate re-creation. In a word, Yeats’s commitment to carefully crafted personal and national identities deserves recognition as an important contribution to one of modernism’s definitive features. Moreover, with the doctrine of mask, Yeats modernizes his own poems particularly in late creative stage.

In verse, as in prose, Yeats was searching to find adequate expression of the contest of self and anti-self, and the equilibration of the contest even at the early stage of the development of this theory.

The Application of Mask Theory

“From Responsibilities collection afterwards, Yeats’s style becomes both simple and rich, colloquial and formal, with a quality of metaphysical wit and symbolic vision, which indicates that Yeats has already been on his
way to modernist poetry” (ZHANG, 1999, p. 364). “In spite of Yeats’s efforts on poetic innovation in theme and form, his greatest contribution to modern poetry, perhaps”, as Maxwell and Bushriu (1965) claimed, “is his mask theory” (p. 214).

In his late creative period, the most successful application of mask is “Crazy Jane” sequence. In this block of poems, Yeats wears several masks by using personae to express his views on various elements of life, particularly the element of Religion. Yeats uses five personae here: Jane, the danseuse, the Bishop, the young man, and Jack; although the latter never actually speaks, his actions as described by Jane are expressive. The women defend the visceral, sexual, and emotional life while the Bishop and, to a lesser extent the young man, is a kind of rational, Deistic, and neo-Platonist being.

Jack is the Natural man who is elemental and who needs no philosophy in order to function in this life. The other two men have adopted at least the trappings of these philosophies, particularly those of the famous Deists like Locke, Voltaire, and Paine. (East, 1970, p. 34)

Their visceral nature may occasionally show through, but because they deny or distort these human impulses, they become something less than human. The young man is eventually redeemed but the Bishop is tied more closely with the Church than with Life and so is doomed.

“Crazy Jane and the Bishop” clearly establishes the madness, passion, and defiance of Yeats’s most bizarre persona. Yeats starts us off on Jane’s side in this debate between orthodox religion and sexual passion which has endured beyond the grave that “Crazy Jane” calls down curses on the Bishop who “has a skin, God knows/Wrinkled like the foot of a goose,/Nor can he hide in holy black/The heron’s hunch upon his back” (Jeffares, 1950, p. 183). The Bishop is the agent who separates Jane from her lover by killing him. He is knavish, self-serving, a hypocrite and lacks the Christian qualities of love and sympathy. Jane comments ironically on the clergy-man’s shortcomings. There can be no doubt that, to her at least, Jack is the better or more “solid” man of the two. The poet does not let the matter drop, but continues this commentary, this time allowing the Bishop to prove the point in his own words, in “Crazy Jane Reproved”. The Bishop gives the reader the casuistic philosophy which passes for Christian belief with him and with the Church. He remarks that the sailors, who may be a kind of Natural Men, have a wholly incorrect idea of the nature of the universe. The refrain “Fol de rol, fol de rol” in this poem could express the Bishop’s facetious comment on these two women Jane and Europa who do not conform with his inhuman views on God and Life as well as showing his ridicule of the sailors. It could also be Yeats’s commentary on the Bishop’s remarks, or possibly both.

In “Crazy Jane on the Day of Judgment”, Jane begins her quest for the meaning of True Love. Here she attempts to reason abstractly about Love, and her growing awareness of the connection between Love and God is demonstrated. She now realizes that love involves total, mutual commitment and in later poems she will discover even more ramifications of this discovery. At the stage she is in the middle of her search. She is not the girl of poem, who has had experiences but can only understand the immediate consequences of them. Now she is starting to see new relations and new concepts. In the next poem, “Crazy Jane and Jack the Journeyman”, Jane explores the subject fully that Jane’s growing comprehension that there is also some connection between Love and Death, although she is not certain just what it is.

At last, Jane dimly sees a connection between her love for Jack, his death, her present lonely search, and
the inevitability of her own death. Although she is learning abstract thought, she still gains knowledge primarily through eroticism. Her growing awareness, however, is more clearly demonstrated in Poem V, “Crazy Jane on God”.

In this poem, Jane has made one more step in her realization of God by beginning to appreciate, at least in part, his nature, for she sings: “All things remain in God”. Here she has formulated a tentative theory of the nature of God. Regardless of what happens, life will go on and God will rule the universe. Just as Jane is helpless to hold the men in her life, (“Though like a road/That men pass over/My body makes no moan/But sings on” (Jeffares, 1950, p. 103), so is she helpless to control her destiny; all that she can do is to try to understand it. Jane knows that, in order to communicate with God, one must do so by experiencing love, not love for an institution or for a ghost, but physical and erotic love. Love must be accepted for what it is, a vital part of life and religion, rather than being dismissed as a necessary evil in procreation, before one can be complete. To deny love is to deny God, which is to deny oneself.

In “Crazy Jane Grown Old Looks at the Dancers”, another stage of Jane’s development is described. The dancers seem like mere images, symbol of Love. The poet stresses this, when he refers to the girl as an “ivory image”, and also in Jane’s detachment from the scene. This is Jane’s last appearance, for a new cycle is about to begin and so, in this poem, Age comments on Youth. She describes the actions of the dancers, as they simulate murdering one another and comments on her inability to interfere with their actions. There is an aura of unreality in his poem, of great distance between the observer and the performer. Neither of the dancers speaks but goes through his/her part of the Love-Life-Death ritual. They are bonded by sexual attraction, and during this courtship dance, they demonstrate the motifs of Love and Death. Jane knows that both are necessary, and as she remarks she cannot, must not, interfere. She seems cynical when she says, “They had all that had their hate”, because hate seems inappropriate when describing young love. Nevertheless, it is a powerful emotion which is closely akin to and sometimes indistinguishable from love. What she is actually saying is that the dancers are real, living people despite their ethereal appearance, who are taking up the business of living and loving where she leaves off, and will carry on until yet another generation takes over.

By wearing a mask in “Crazy Jane” poems, with Jane’s mouth, Yeats articulates his idea about love that it is both spiritual and physical and an integral part of life, and leads to an awareness of and joining with God. To reject or distort this balance of life’s elements is to reject Him too. The simplicity and depth of the Jane mask reveal that Yeats ultimately took in his gendered daemon and made it an integral part of his attitudes and beliefs.

Conclusions

To summarize, with the application of mask in poems, Yeats makes audacious trials of poetic modernization in his late period. Though he makes poetic innovations in diction, language, and form, as the poet’s mask theory takes up a very important place in his creation, the paper concentrates on his late creative period, and analyzes Yeats’s mask theory and demonstrates how Yeats applied the mask, one of modernist creative techniques to illustrate his efforts to realize his poetic modernization. In the seven poems of “Crazy Jane”, Yeats created several personae, the main character is the so-called “crazy” Jane. It seems the old woman is crazy and mad, but it is the mad Jane who speaks truth ironically and sarcastically. Jane is the poet himself who wears a mask to explore deeper significance and tries to cover the veil of life and further aims to disclose the truth of love, death,
and life. Through Jane’s mouth, Yeats expresses his idea of true love, criticizes the hypocrisy of religion represented by the Bishop, and explores the secret of life and death. The collective poems—“Crazy Jane” conspicuously displays the poet’s poetic technique. Yeats finally realizes his poetic modernization and proves himself a great modernist poet.

References


On Cultural Differences and Business Etiquette

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International business is a kind of cross-national boundaries activities. It can also be defined as a series of related economic measures that individuals, factories, or enterprises take so as to fixed profits, including business management, finance, trade, etc.. Culture and intercultural communication lie in various social activities. Therefore, international business is a kind of cultural activities and of intercultural communication as well. With the frequent exchange, cultural clashes have been paid more and more attention. In the presence of different views of space, time, value, and of thinking, people who are devoted to do business should acknowledge and understand cultural differences.

Keywords: cultural differences, business, norm, negotiation

Introduction

International business is a kind of cross-national boundaries activities. It can also be defined as a series of related economic measures that individuals, factories, or enterprises take for fixed profits, including business management, finance, trade, etc.. More often than not, commercial activities seem to solely consist of buying and selling in most eyes. However, it is far from so simple. The whole process of commercial activities reflects not only traditional culture and view of the world of one country or one nation, but also the peculiar view of value and behavior criterion. Commercial activities, from business negotiation to advertisement promotion, all denote every nation’s cultural expression.

Culture and international communication lie in various social activities. Intercultural communication is a kind of exchange between persons with different cultural backgrounds. These cultural backgrounds may be similar to or against with each other. However, it is these uncertainties that pool the source of cultural differences even clashes. If both parties possess correct and thorough understanding on cross-cultural differences, it will be conducive to flat their commercial activities; yet, if both parties are ignorant of cultural differences, it tends to generate many obstacles during the whole process of business negotiation.

As the rapid development of foreign trade, cross-cultural communication has been paid more and more attention.

Cultural Differences and Business Norm

Nowadays, these words, honesty and business norm, could have been heard unconsciously in our daily lives, and these elements which are also inevitable in the course of and consistent with the tide of global
economic development. Exterior, enterprises have to be restrained by institutions and national laws; interior, ambience of honesty has overwhelmed in the management of enterprises. Therefore, though high technology brings us such a modern world, prolonged history and profound cultures have never escaped from the earth. Naturally, differences of business culture exert great influences and various understandings on the standards of honesty and business norm.

Take China for example, Chinese business culture is the epitome of combination of Confucianism and business norm.

Confucianism is a kind of the system of ideology, whose essence represents the system of political theory. Having dominated China for about 2,500 years, it constituted Chinese social order as well as norm consciousness. Therefore, traditional Chinese dealers persist in and advocate Confucian Ideology while they do business. As time goes, this Ideology has been combined with business culture. Thanks to this perfect combination, a new kind of business culture has been formed. It includes benevolence, loyalty, etiquette, intellect, as well as honesty (LIANG, 2005, p. 72).

Benevolence

_Benevolence_ is not only the core of Confucian Ideology but also the most ideal state the Confucians are thronged to pursue. Great Knowledge once said:

Merciful business men make money through legitimate and appropriate means and present their values through them they have earned while mean dealers go all out to scramble money through all kinds of despicable means, even to impair their images and self-respects. (as cited in LIANG, 2005, p. 74)

To some extent, _benevolence represents_ tolerance. In China, as a boss, no matter who he would face, from subordinates to higher levels, from closed friends to competitive opponents, he should display his embracement towards others. _Benevolence_, which is the marrow of Confucian Ideology, has affected traditional Chinese dealers for about 3,000 years. Therefore, Chinese are especially tolerant about the exotic cultural differences. They are never reluctant to coerce foreign dealers into fully obeying Chinese traditional conventions. Comparatively speaking, Americans are more demanding. In the author’s opinion, most current international etiquette standards are in accordance with Westerners’ requirements. During international business negotiation, Westerners are very sensitive to traditional conventions, which are different from them. Besides, Chinese could make their most concessions, which cannot be well understood by Westerners. They always think that there is no need to give up any rights that they are supposed to have. Back to the Second World War, notorious Japanese soldiers brought Chinese enormous calamity to China. However, on a friendly basis, amiable Chinese leaders gave up huge indemnities for the peace of the world. Of course, Westerners are not capable of understanding this king of benevolence. So it is the same with the field of business. Chinese businessmen adopt this kind of business norm to deal with everything and embrace everything.

Loyalty

As for this element, it is closely interrelated with _benevolence_. If you are lenient towards your employees, naturally, they would take pains to show their loyalty in all aspects. After all, human beings belong to the animal with emotions. Especially, Chinese attach great importance on loyalty which has also been advocated by the Confucians for thousand years. However, compared with _benevolence_, it aims at individual’s self-cultivation
which is required by all Confucian elites. In their opinions, the moral standards of *loyalty* are antagonistic to individual “benefits”. *Loyalty* is always superior to individual benefits. Therefore, one who gives up the loyalty in order to procure his private satisfaction is called *snob*. Oppositely, one who sacrifices his own benefits so as to preserve the images and the dignity for his company or his country is regarded as *gentleman*. Since the ancient time, many national heroes have been famous for their loyalty towards their nations. It is these allusions that have deeply influenced Chinese businessmen.

**Etiquette**

Compared with *benevolence* and *loyalty*, *etiquette* focuses on the layer of social codes. Meanwhile, it mainly manifests individual social status and individual identity. Since the ancient time, Chinese have paid great attention to etiquettes. From noble Kings to common people, relationships between different people have been strictly restricted by various standards. Although hierarchy has been abolished since the foundation of People’s Republic of China, current society has more or less suffered the influence of this culture. In China, politics is closely related with business. If you want to make a successful deal, you have to dredge relations in all aspects. Besides, traditional Chinese etiquette has also been influenced by Confucianism. For example, the motto that courtesy demands reciprocity, which once stemmed from Confucianism, currently, is deeply believed by most Chinese. Naturally, present business culture could never escape from it.

**Intellect**

Confucian is the model of intellect. He once thought:

> Learn extensively, inquire thoroughly, ponder prudently, discriminate clearly, and practice devotedly. Do not learn, or learn till you grasp utterly. Do not ponder, or ponder till you teach a conclusion. Do not discriminate till the discrimination is attained. Do not practice, or practice till the sincerity is offered. (MEI, 2000, p. 425)

He also believed, “It makes a moral man to ask for what he doesn’t know, to learn what he can’t do, and be restrained for what is capable of” (MEI, 2000, p. 426). They inspire us the importance of knowledge. Nowadays, knowledge-oriented economy dominates the global economic development. Therefore, knowledge plays a more and more important role on business. If Chinese dealers want to occupy the vantage point during international business negotiation, every businessman should be equipped with higher cultural quality and advanced management experience. In fact, since the reform and open policy, Chinese businessmen have been upgrading and enriching their own storage of knowledge due to the reason that they have gradually recognized the importance of knowledge. Of course, thanks to the widespread of Confucian Ideology and the perfect implementation of reform and open policy, present China are making greater strides towards the brighter tomorrow.

**Honesty**

The last but not the least element, *honesty*, is paid the same attention in Confucian Ideology. Chinese businessmen consider the reputation not only as the commercial morality, but also as the successful way of managing enterprises. Honesty could not be considered without the above four elements. To some extent, honesty represents the virtue in China. If one wants to gain others’ respects, he should firstly respect others. Similarly speaking, in the field of business, honesty is the image of a company. The company should never deceive his partners, let alone his customers.
Chinese focuses on honesty. Even, our ancients have left many famous remarks and aphorisms on honesty for us. Therefore, in China, the ambience of honesty permeates into all corners of business culture.

Therefore, Confucian Ideology exerts great influence on the formation and development of Chinese business norm. Thanks to it, Confucian dealers widespread around China. Its “benevolence, loyalty, etiquette, intellect, and honesty” represents sublime business norm of Chinese Confucian dealers.

**Presentations of Cultural Differences on International Business Negotiation**

Culture in different countries, different regions, as well as different races differentiates from each other, in history, policies, economy, and conventions, etc. Due to participants from different countries, who have been deeply influenced by political systems, customs, and conventions, religion beliefs as well as educational background, there are obvious cultural differences. People influenced by different culture background have different understandings on the same event, the same sentence, even the same behavior. Sometimes, information would be misunderstood, in the course of conversation. Thus, it exerts a great importance in doing research on cultural differences in international business negotiation.

Firstly, acknowledging culture differences, and then understanding them.

**View of Space**

Most Westerners possess the strong senses of spatial realm and individual privacy. They are inclined to separate their own offices and bedrooms with wall or door. Opened door shows a sense of invitation. At this moment, if you lightly knock at the door in order to show respect to the owner of this office, consequently you receive a welcome. However, due to historical reasons, Chinese universally tend to enjoy together. Few recognize that space is a kind of casually undividable property, which is accepted as a tacit rule in Western countries. They will never answer the telephone after 21 p.m. except for urgent call from relatives or close friends. On the other hand, distance between persons reflects social status of the two parties during conversation. In the Western countries, higher authorities always keep a certain distance with their subordinates while two parties with equal status comparatively narrow this distance. Meanwhile, when meeting old friends, it seldom occurs in China. However, Chinese never mind contacts of the same sex which is especially sensitive to Westerners.

**View of Time**

People with different cultural backgrounds would hold different views. Naturally, business negotiation is not the exception that cannot be affected. When American businessmen pay their visits to Japan, they could appreciate not only modern but also magnificent tall buildings which are similar to those in America. At the same time, even, they would heave sighs about so advanced science and technology which America has not possessed. Therefore, they have reasons to trust that there would be no differences between these two countries. However, the reality is far from their expectations. For instance, contacts could be settled down in two days in America, while they need at least two weeks in Japan. Japanese hold flatly different views of time from Americans.

**View of Value**

During negotiation, differences on view of value are more indistinct than those on language itself and non-linguistic behavior. Consequently, it would be harder to overcome them. The influence on international business caused by differences of view of value mainly embodies its objectivity.
Westerners, especially Americans, are provided with strong objectivity. In the process of business negotiation, they usually make decisions in accordance with economic reality, not swayed by personal considerations, and official business according to official principles. They consider profits and outstanding achievements as top priorities. On the opposite, in Eastern and Latin American countries where people usually make deals through petticoat influence, this viewpoint that interpersonal relations should be separated from deals themselves is always regarded as ravings. At the background of this culture development of economy is usually under control of clans. Therefore, negotiators from these countries not only represent themselves but also the whole society.

**Differences on Thinking**

During negotiation, negotiators with different cultural backgrounds are inclined to suffer the clash of thinking styles. Take the oriental culture and English-American culture for example, differences in thinking between both cultures are displayed through two aspects: Firstly, oriental culture has partiality for image thinking while English-American culture shows favoritism to abstract thinking; secondly, oriental culture has preference for comprehensive thinking while English-American culture emphasizes on antithesis. For example, in America, if half of the problem has been settled down, it means that the whole negotiation has been half-finished. However, in Japan, people never think so. As a result, American businessmen usually make unnecessary concessions before Japanese declare the agreements. In American’s opinion, commercial negotiation would be regarded as the activities if solving problems, while as for Japanese, commercial negotiation is a kind of means through which both parties could build up a long-term and mutually beneficial business relationship, only through the establishment of feasible and harmonious business relationship, particulars would be naturally solved. Therefore, American negotiators must have the knowledge of Japanese methods of comprehensively considering problems. They should make full preparation for package at the same time.

Under the background of economic globalization, enterprises and companies are in urgent need of going abroad, to do business. No matter which country you go, “Do in Rome as the Romans do”. It is necessary for us to master business etiquette which serves to make a successful deal. Above all, personal and national dignity should be well preserved.

**How to Overcome Cultural Differences in the Course of International Business Negotiation**

In general, the whole process of business negotiation consists of four stages: Initially, exchange of conventional greetings. You should talk about some topics which are irrelevant with the content of negotiation; then, exchange of information about your intentions; and then persuasion; and finally, making fixed concessions in order to reach an agreement. Of course, before the entry of the whole negotiation, dealers are inclined to embrace expectations for the results of the whole negotiation, but which usually affect the domination of negotiation and the choices of negotiation strategies. Because negotiators with different cultures get together but differentiate from each other on language, behavior, view of value, as well as thinking, which lead their expectations different. Due to them, cost time and spent energy would be so effective in respective negotiation stage. Therefore, it is rather important and meaningful to overcome these cultural differences during the course of international business.

Here are three attentions to surmount cultural differences.
Beware of Cultural Hypothesis

Because international business negotiators are often unconscious of the influence of cultural conventions, and view of value on their behaviors, they tend to make supposition that others should behave like them. Actually, this kind of “cultural nearsightedness” misleads them the most easily. Two leaves from the same tree cannot be same, let alone two persons with different cultural backgrounds.

Establishing Cross-Cultural Negotiation Consciousness

In the course of international business negotiation, cross-cultural negotiation consciousness must be strengthened. Meanwhile, negotiators must be equipped with the knowledge that opponents influenced by quite a different culture have different requirements, different motives as well as different convictions. And they have to learn how to accept and respect their counterparts’ culture. Of course, the recognition of cultural differences does not mean that these obstacles would be excluded completely. However, at least, this knowledge would serve to reduce them so that negotiators could smooth the whole negotiation. Because, under the correct guide of negotiation consciousness, negotiators could be so flexible that adapt their own negotiation styles and strategies to different types of business culture.

Overcoming Cultural Prejudices

Although people are virtually conscious of existence of cultural differences, most dealers cannot adopt rational treatments. Common cultural prejudices include standards based on their own culture and cultural inferiority caused by worshipping foreign things numbly.

The former refers that people are inured to measure others’ psychological tendency with their own views of value. Therefore, such kind of negotiators is inclined to elucidate or judge other nations’ culture in accordance with their standards, sometimes even to expunge outsiders. Bernadeur Lanciaux (as cited in LI, 1985), who has been engaged in research of trade between America and Japan for many years, thought that American native culture-centered doctrines cause so many negotiation obstacles. When Americans make deals with Japanese, they are never aware of Japanese business culture. Thus, unhappy occasions would occur in the course of negotiation. Because of them, national foreign trade has been greatly influenced.

Conclusions

With the widespread of commercial activities around the world, national sense of superiority dealers possessed has begun to flag. Andre Laurent (2001), French expert on culture, once pointed out:

Our culture has been part of ourselves so that we never feel it consciously. However, it is this invisible culture that makes us believe that others’ culture is akin to ours. When others with another cultural background adopt some behaviors that we are alien to, we often feel surprised even frustrated. What’s more, some extremists worship foreign powers without any persistence of basic principles. (as cited in Linell, 2001, p. 50)

Therefore, national culture has deeply influenced business atmosphere. We never give up the marrow of our national culture.

However, due to different views of spaces, different views of time, different views of value, different thinking styles and behaviors, and different languages and convictions, naturally, it would be more difficult for negotiators to make deals beyond the national boundaries. Only through mutual acknowledgements and mutual
understandings on cultural differences, and only through the overall analysis of the cultural influences on international business activities, theories on business negotiation just could be deepened and expanded. Besides, more and more cross-national negotiations would be undergone smoothly in accordance with them. And the author believes culture will play a more and more important role on business activities.

References