TESL Reporter

Vol. 41(1) April 2008

ARTICLES

TESL Reporter

A Forum for and by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Subscriptions are available on a complimentary basis to individuals and institutions involved in the teaching of English as a second/foreign language outside the United States. The subscription rate within the U.S. is US$10. Requests for new subscriptions and change of address notification for continuing subscriptions should be sent to: Circulation Manager/*TESL Reporter*, BYUH #1940, 55-220 Kulanui Street, Laie, HI 96762 USA, or email: campbelm@byuh.edu

TESL Reporter

A Forum for and by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Vol. 41, No. 1

April 2008

ISSN 0886-0661

A publication of the Department of English Language Teaching and Learning, Brigham Young University Hawaii.

TESL Reporter

Volume 41, Number 1 **April 2008**

Contents

Is Collocation the Way to Language Proficiency?

Sujata S. Kathpalia & Koo Swit Ling
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Many different approaches to language teaching have been in practice over the last decade in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and ESL (English as a Second language) classrooms. These approaches include the structural approach with its focus on competence or rules of grammar and the communicative approach with emphasis on performance, or the appropriate use of language in specific contexts. However, in recent years, language teachers are beginning to realize that "the goal of language teaching is not just to teach abstract rules of competence, but also to get students to utilize these rules in comprehending and producing language successfully in appropriate contexts" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, p. xiii). Widdowson (1989) cautions against excessive reliance on any one approach as this would lead to over emphasis either on grammatical knowledge, or the ability to use language in different communicative settings. It has been suggested that the problem lies in the dichotomy between the two concepts of linguistic or syntactic competence, which accounts for all the grammatical sentences of a language, versus linguistic performance, which accounts for knowledge of whether an utterance is appropriate in a particular situation and context of use (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). However, there is a large linguistic area between these two extremes that is unaccounted for and has become the focus of interest among researchers and language teachers.

To bridge this gap, perhaps what is needed is an approach that does not rely heavily on either competence or performance, but one which provides a middle ground. To build a bridge between these two approaches, teachers have been paying serious attention to language acquisition studies as these focus on the process of language development, and specifically on how rules are learnt by first, second, and foreign language learners. According to Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992, p. xv), examining the path of language acquisition "can be illuminating to language teachers, for along the way we find common patterns among all types of language acquirers." One such pattern is the way in which language learners "use a large number of unanalyzed chunks of language in certain predictable social contexts" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, p. xv). Ellis (2001) and Lewis (1993, 1997, 2000) suggest that language learners typically work with meaningful groupings of items called chunks when they segment language for reception

or production. Similarly Pawley and Syder (1983) claim that memorized clauses and clause sequences make up a large percentage of the coherent stretches of speech and writing, and that most of the language we use consists of familiar combinations, with the exception of a few new ones. A proliferation of terms are used in the literature to refer to this phenomenon of chunking, such as chunks, collocations, formulaic sequences, lexical phrases, lexico-grammatical units, multi-word units, phraseological units, prefabricated language, or prefabs. All these terms refer to word combinations that are either lexically or syntactically fixed to a certain extent (Nesselhauf, 2005), but for the sake of consistency, the term collocation will be employed in this paper to refer to such predictable phrases.

Although it is evident from research that both knowledge and the ability to use collocations are essential for language learners, there is a lack of attempt to incorporate collocations into language teaching materials and syllabi. If we accept the view that collocational knowledge is the basis of language learning and use, then we need to incorporate learning strategies that promote chunking in our language classrooms. In order to do so, this paper will provide a classification of lexical phrases and explore language-focused activities that can be used in ELT classrooms to promote chunking as a means of achieving native-like expression in academic writing.

Classification of Lexical Phrases

The term collocation has been used extensively in linguistics and language teaching to refer to relations between words in linear combinations. However, there are two specific ways of defining this word in the literature—the frequency-based approach and the phraseological approach. In the former, collocation is used to refer to frequent co-occurrences of words within a short space of each other (Sinclair, 1991) whereas in the latter, it is considered to be a combination of words that are fairly fixed with limited substitutability (Nesselhauf, 2004). In this paper, the term will be used in the second sense as combinations of two or more words that have some amount of restriction (e.g., jog someone's memory) and are syntactically related (e.g., verb + noun). A distinction will also be made between collocations and formulaic phrases like "How are you?" which are primarily pragmatic in their function.

An important point raised by Lewis (2000) in order to distinguish collocations from other types of word combinations is to classify different kinds of word combinations. In order to distinguish collocations from idioms, he suggests that collocations be considered under "the wider concept of idiomaticity" (Lewis, 2000, p. 130) and be analyzed on a cline of *variability* (ranging from fixed to variable) and semantic *transparency* (ranging from opaque to transparent). Based on these two factors, the following classification is proposed:

Table 1
Classification of Lexical Phrases

Type	Variability	Transparency	Example
Pure idioms	Fixed	Opaque—meaning cannot be derived from individual words	Hook, line, and sinker
Figurative idioms	Fairly, but not fixed	Less opaque—used in their non-literal and literal sense	In the dark
Restricted collocations	Some substitution is possible	Fairly transparent—One element used in a non-literal sense and the other in its normal meaning	Curry favour with
Free/open collocations	Variable, freely combinable	Transparent—all elements used in a literal sense	Awkward / critical / complicated / farcical situation

This classification is useful for language teachers as it enables them to decide which lexical phrases they should prioritize in their language classes given limited classroom time. For instance, some combinations such as idioms and figurative idioms are not easily guessable or fully generalisable and yet others which belong to the open category are so common that they might not be worth commenting on. On the basis of collocation strength, Hill's (2000) advice is to focus on medium-strength collocations rather than the strong or weak ones that fall at the extreme ends of the collocation spectrum. According to him, these collocations are the ones that should be the target of language learners as they "make up a large part of what we say and write" (Hill, 2000, p. 64). Therefore, working on the premise that medium-strength collocations are of prime importance in expanding language learners' collocational competency, activities suggested for classroom use will focus on restricted collocations. However, some activities that promote the use of transitional markers as well as idioms and figurative idioms will also be proposed.

Collocation in the ELT Classroom

Until recently, ELT methodology has focused on a grammar-based structural syllabus, with its obsession on grammar rules and grammatical correctness. However, it is apparent from past and present research that there needs to be a shift to a lexical approach in language learning. It is common knowledge that the writing and speech of ESL and EFL students is rife with awkward expressions or what we have termed miscollocations or deviations. Therefore, the starting point should be to build on students' knowledge of lexis and to extend it to contextualized usage.

According to some practitioners, collocation should be given the same status in language teaching as other aspects of language and should be incorporated into the syllabus right form the beginning for all levels of language learners (Hill, 2000). The activities described in this section have been used successfully with students to build on their collocational competence.

Classroom Activities

The four activities in this section involve describing advertisements, giving instructions, using transitional devises, and explaining idioms. They expose students to collocations ranging from open to fairly fixed and fixed expressions. The first two activities are particularly useful in practicing noun phrase, verb-noun, and prepositional phrase collocations, the third activity helps students to include transitional phrases at appropriate places in a text for better coherence, and the fourth activity enables them to expand the use of language from its literal sense to a higher metaphorical level of usage.

Advertisements

In this activity, collocation problems related to various noun phrase deviations can be handled all at once, simply because the net is cast wide to capture all the possible vocabulary inspired by the advertisement. The typical deviations in the noun phrase category range from those related to the number of the noun, use of determiners, choice of nouns, compound nouns and noun complementation, and prepositional phrases.

The first type of deviation is related to the number of the collocating nouns. Most of these mis-collocations are due to a lack of concord between the determiners and the head nouns of the phrases (e.g., *every members of our family* instead of *every member of our family*), and in frozen expressions (e.g., *one of the most important festival* instead of *one of the most important festivals*). Other mistakes related to determiners include those instances when an article or a pronoun is either superfluous or missing (e.g., *in modern world* instead of *in the modern world*). The second category of deviations concern the use of non-existent noun forms in the case of nouns functioning as head nouns and modifiers (e.g., *every ethnic has its own culture* instead of *every race has its*

own culture; some men secretaries instead of *some male secretaries*). As for compound nouns, students either concoct incorrect noun compounds to replace simple nouns (e.g., *Chinese old data* instead of *Chinese calendar*), or use a simple noun in a context where a compound would have been more appropriate (e.g., *in the social* instead of *in the social arena*). In the category of noun complementation, the errors could be due to the the post-modification (e.g., *I proud* of *I am Chinese* instead of *I am proud that I am a Chinese*). In addition, errors also result due to an inappropriate or missing preposition or subordinator in the prepositional phrases and clauses respectively (e.g., *the most important meaning for mid-autumn festival* instead of *the most important meaning of the mid-autumn festival*). Finally, the order of words in noun phrases and prepositional phrases could also lead to some awkward collocations (e.g., *the most important two values* instead of *the two most important values*).

In this activity, the immediate aims are for the learner to be introduced to new vocabulary, experiment with newly acquired vocabulary, and practice the use of old as well as new vocabulary in appropriate lexical phrases. The activity begins with the teacher showing an advertisement to the class. All students are asked to note down as many descriptive words and phrases as possible on a piece of paper, in about three minutes. At the end of the three minutes, the teacher moves on to another advertisement. The students are then asked to choose one of the advertisements from which to make a presentation using the descriptive words and phrases which they and their classmates have generated.

The description of advertisements lends itself best to noun phrase collocations with pre-modifiers and noun complementation (e.g., *A unique wine funnel with a soft pour spout that allows wine to gently flow down the sides of the decanter*). Students are encouraged to come up with their own unique descriptions of the visuals in advertisements. For instance, they are shown an advertisement of a watch with the caption "*a philosophy of life*" as an example and then encouraged to come up with similar noun phrases such as "*a timeless masterpiece*," "*a thing of beauty*," "*a beautifully crafted timepiece*," and others. Another advertisement that works well in the classroom is a picture-caption advertisement of a sports car with the captions "*Sets you wild with passion*," "*Brings you high on exhilaration*," and "*Captivates your heart*." Students are asked to tag on different phrases to the verbs "*Sets you . . .* , *Brings you . . .* , and *Captivates your . . .*" The other advantage of advertisements is that the text tends to be repetitive in terms of grammatical structures. This repetition provides alternative ways of putting words together in different noun phrase collocations, highlighting the notion of creativity and structure in language use. For instance, in an advertisement on yoga, students are exposed to different combinations of the phrase *Yoga classes—remedial*

classes, *prenatal classes*, and *teenage classes*. Using these phrases as a springboard, students are usually able to produce similar ones without much difficulty.

Advertisements are a good resource for language games and especially useful for generating collocations. They not only provide the right visual input but also a wide range of lexical phrases that students can use as a basis for experimenting with their own versions.

Giving Instructions

The most common errors related to verb-noun collocations involve the use of inappropriate verbs, incorrect phrasal verbs, incorrect prepositions in phrasal verbs, and incorrect forms in multi-word verbs. The most common verb-noun mis-collocations involve delexicalized or grammaticalized verbs such as *have*, *make*, *take*, *give*, *get,* and *do*. As the usage of these verbs is wide and sometimes vague, they are known to be a source of confusion, especially among new and intermediate ESL and EFL learners. They are either used interchangeably or used in place of another verb (e.g., *get knowledge* instead of *gain knowledge*). Students also encounter difficulties with lexical verbs, often making inappropriate verb choices (e.g., *meet problems* instead of *encounter* problems). As for phrasal verbs, the deviations are usually due to the use of an incorrect phrasal verb (e.g., *grow up early* instead of *get up early*), the use of a phrasal verb in place of a simple verb (e.g., *heroines showed up in the world*, instead of *heroines surfaced/appeared in the world of*) and/or the use of an incorrect particle or lexical verb (e.g., *put your respect to* instead of *pay your respect to*). Another common error related to verbs happens in multi-word verb phrases (with adjectives and adverbs) where the elements are either deleted completely (e.g., *can clever* instead of *can be clever*) or the form of one of the elements is incorrect (e.g., *should be treat kindly* instead of *should be treated kindly*).

The students in this activity are asked to give verbal instructions to the class on how to find a particular destination on campus. The topic requires many expressions of location (e.g., *turn into the door adjacent to the main entrance*), spatial relationships (e.g., *walk through the covered car park*), and direction (e.g., *take the second right turn*). Hence, the students practice the use of verb-noun phrases, prepositional phrases, and phrasal verbs that are specifically related to their pragmatic needs.

Transitional Markers

Although the students conscientiously use transitional markers to link clauses/sentences within paragraphs as well as beyond paragraphs in their essays and presentations, these markers are often deviant in nature. This is not surprising as transitional markers are relatively fixed and allow little or no change. Along the cline of collocational strength, these word combinations are considered to be unique or strong

collocations. Due to their fixedness and/or nonliteralness, any tampering with transitional markers leads to unidiomatic expressions.

A task to practice the use of transitional markers that works well is to ask students to share recipes of their favorite dishes with their classmates. They are given some time to write up the recipes paying particular attention to the procedure involved. They are then asked to share the procedure in chronological sequence with their classmates who are in turn instructed to note down the steps involved. In their description of the steps, students spontaneously use transitional markers like "After chopping the vegetables, rinse them in cold water." Another alternative task is to ask students to describe the process involved in registering for subjects using the university registration system. As this involves many steps that have to be followed in a particular sequence to successfully enroll for subjects, students have to use transitional/sequence markers correctly to convey the steps in the right order (e.g., *The first step involves accessing the registration system by entering your user name and pin code. In the next step, you have to select the course that you would like to enroll into. After this, you are required to indicate your priority for the course whether first, second, or third. Finally, . . .*).

The activity can be altered to include other procedures and processes that students are familiar with. These activities could range from describing the working of familiar objects to carrying out simple everyday tasks.

Idioms

Idioms and clichés include the use of awkward expressions such as metaphors that seem awkward when rendered in English. While some of these expressions are clearly forms of existing expressions in English, others seem to be inventions or literal translations from students' native languages. Yet others are circumlocutions as students do not have at their disposal ready-made expressions that would be more appropriate in those contexts of use. In contrast to the above activities that encourage different combinations of restricted lexical phrases, this activity focuses on actual idiomatic expressions, (e.g., *to have one's back against the wall*). Each student is given one expression and asked to explain it to the class or at least attempt to guess its meaning. Through this process of explaining or guessing, the degree of the semantic transparency of the idiom becomes obvious to the learner. This highlights the need for the language user to observe the idiosyncratic behavior of idioms in that some are pure idioms, which means they cannot vary in their structure and meaning, while others are figurative idioms whose form and meaning can be slightly varied depending on the context. After the meaning of the idiom has been established, the student is asked to give a personal example to illustrate it. The focus of the activity now broadens to include other expressions, thus expanding the learning experience.

Although fixed phrases like idioms, clichés, and transitional markers form a small part of the lexicon, they are still worth exploring in language classes, especially with intermediate and advanced learners of the language. While idioms and clichés are at the higher end of the idiomaticity scale, other collocations also exhibit some degree of idiomaticity and operate on the same principle (Fernando, 1996; Sinclair, 1991).

It is apparent that collocations, whether strong, medium, or weak in terms of collocational strength, should be learnt in chunks rather than as single items. From the learner's point of view, it is easier to split a collocation into its separate parts rather than to put words together to form a natural collocation. Therefore, the message to language teachers should be to reassess their teaching methodology and to shift from a grammar-based approach to a lexical-based one with focus on collocational competence. With this aim in mind, this sections practical activities to incorporate the teaching of collocation into language courses so that students are able to progress from the intermediate plateau to higher levels of language proficiency.

Classroom Processes

Although classroom activities can vary from describing advertisements, giving directions, sharing recipes and telling stories to expand on idioms, there are some processes that are common to all these activities. The processes involved include identifying key phrases, brainstorming for different collocational phrases, and recording collocations in lexical notebooks for independent learning outside the classroom.

1. Identifying: The first step in any collocational approach should be to teach students to consciously look for collocations in speech or writing, making nouns their pivotal search clues. In our experience, most foreign students are already aware of the basic grammar categories of noun, verb, adjective, and adverb so they should not have a problem identifying nouns. The next step would be for them to select verb, adjective, and adverb collocates of the nouns in texts and to simultaneously make a list of collocations according to whether they are *verb* + *noun*, *adjective* + *noun* or *adverb* + *noun* collocations.
2. Brainstorming: Once the list is ready, the students should be encouraged to come up with their own collocations. Filming classroom sessions would be useful as additional learning benefits can be derived through replaying the activities and commenting on the use of phrases. The learning of new words can be reinforced, collocational mistakes can be highlighted and students can experiment with different collocational combinations. Through teacher feedback, the use of collocations can be extended and the different collocation

problems can be categorized and corrected accordingly. Another benefit is that the teacher can draw on the context of use as it is available on record. This context is usually of great interest to the learner because the learner has generated the vocabulary with the help of classmates, making the learning more relevant.

3. Recording: To promote independent learning outside the classroom, students can also be encouraged to keep lexical notebooks to record the meanings of words, examples of usage, examples of verb and adjective collocates, significant grammatical patterns, and their favorite expressions. Woolward (2000) recommends the following pattern for lexical entries.

CRITICISM

- **Pronunciation** + **translation:**
- **Definition:** To express disapproval of something or somebody
- **Contextual Usage:** The government has received a lot of criticism for increasing taxes.
- **Verbs:** receive, come in for . . .
- **Adjectives:** heavy, severe, fierce . . .
- **Grammatical Patterns:** criticism for raising taxes, criticism for its plan, criticism over the decision (to spend . . .)
- **Favourite Expressions:** come under heavy criticism for not providing . . . , the same criticism has been leveled at . . . .

Another alternative suggested by Hill, Lewis, and Lewis (2000) for lexical entries is to use a 5-1 box of the kind reproduced below.

apply for a be out of a find a hunt for a resign from a	job

These entries are meant to enable students to build on their repertoire of phrases and also provide them with alternatives when engaged in conversations. Having a data bank of such entries will not only speed up their communication but also boost their level of confidence.

Through these processes, much learning can take place because language learners are encouraged to use the vocabulary they have learnt while still acquiring more vocabulary from their classmates. These are opportunities to experiment with lexical expressions that they have come across. At the same time provides more examples of phrases that collocate with a particular word.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper has been to propose useful classroom activities and processes that help ESL and EFL students improve their collocational competency. From past research, it is evident that the size of our mental lexicon is enormous and a large extent of what we say, hear, read, or write can be found in some form of fixed expression. If we accept that native speakers are able to speak, listen, and write at the speed they do because of the vast repertoire of ready-made language in their mental lexicon, then we need to incorporate chunking in our ELT classrooms. To achieve native-like proficiency, it is not enough for students to learn more words but to learn more collocations of these words. A student who has a rich vocabulary will only be able to function in a limited way, but one who is able to use these words in different combinations will be able to function more competently in different communicative situations.

References

Ellis, N. C. (2001). Memory for language. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Cognition and second language instruction* (pp. 33-68). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fernando, C. (1996). *Idioms and idiomaticity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hill, J. (2000). Revising priorities: From grammatical failure to collocational success. In M. Lewis (Ed.), *Teaching collocation*: *Further developments in the lexical approach* (pp. 47-69). Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.

Hill, J., Lewis, M., & Lewis, M. (2000). Classroom strategies, activities and exercises. In M. Lewis (Ed.), *Teaching collocation: Further developments in the lexical approach* (pp. 88-117). Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.

Hunston. S., & Francis, G. (2000). *Pattern grammar: A corpus-driven approach to the lexical grammar of English*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Lewis, M. (1993). *The lexical approach: The state of ELT and a way forward.* Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.

Lewis, M. (1997). *Implementing the lexical approach. Putting theory into practice*. Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.

Lewis, M. (2000). *Teaching collocation: Further developments in the lexical approach.* Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.

Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nattinger, J. R., & DeCarrico, J. S. (1992). *Lexical phrases and language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nesselhauf, N. (2004). What are collocations? In D. Allerton, N. Nesselhauf, & P. Skandera (Eds.), *How to use corpora in language teaching* (pp. 125-152). Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Nesselhauf, N. (2005). *Collocation in a learner corpus*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Pawley, A., & Syder, F. H. (1983). Two puzzles for linguistic theory: Nativelike selection and nativelike fluency. In J. Richards & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 191-226). London: Longman.

Sinclair, J. (1991). *Corpus, concordance, collocation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Widdowson, H. G. (1989). Knowledge of language and ability use. *Applied Linguistics, 10*(2), 128-137.

Woolard, G. (2000). Collocation—encouraging learner independence. In M. Lewis (Ed.), *Teaching collocation: Further developments in the lexical approach* (pp. 28-46). Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.

About the Authors

Dr Sujata Kathpalia is the Deputy Director of the Language and Communication Centre in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nanyang Technological University. She teaches courses in communication skills such as technical communication and professional communication as well as academic writing. Her research interest is in the areas of discourse analysis, composition theory, and second language teaching.

Dr Koo Swit Ling is the Deputy Director of the Language and Communication Centre in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nanyang Technological University. She teaches courses in communication skills such as technical communication and professional communication as well as English proficiency. Her research interest is in the areas of second language teaching and classroom management.

Inside the Classroom: Teacher and Student Questions in a Foreign Language Literature Class

Dogan Yuksel
Kocaeli University, Turkey
Miao Yu
Florida State University, USA

The significance of questioning practices in classroom interaction has been acknowledged for some time (Long & Sato, 1983; Mehan, 1979; White & Lightbown, 1984). Questioning exchanges dominate classroom interactions in many settings (Nystrand, 2004; Wilhelm, 2005). However, most of the previous studies that focus on questions refer only to the different characteristics of teacher questions (e.g., their types and number). The contextual factors and social aspects of teacher questions and the different characteristics of student questions have not been addressed adequately in previous studies. To fill this gap in the literature, in this study, we examined the nature of teacher and student questions in a foreign language literature class in a Turkish university. We address both pedagogical and social implications of questioning practices in a foreign language classroom from a Bakhtinian/Vygotskyan sociocultural theory (SCT) perspective.

Sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of participation to language acquisition (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Sfard, 1998; Wells, 1999), has been advanced as an alternative to the psycholinguistic perspective in classroom discourse studies (Platt & Brooks, 1994, 2002; Ohta, 2000) in the field of second and foreign language learning. Ellis (1987) states that research from a *psycholinguistic perspective* reduces second language constructs (e.g., recasts, questions) into codeable, isolated and distinct items, and examines these constructs without considering the effects of contextual factors. In other words, a psycholinguistic perspective justifies the study of learner utterances in isolation from their social context.

On the other hand, studies that follow an SCT approach examine language as a developmental process within a social context (Van der Aalsvoort & Harinck, 2000). SCT prioritizes a qualitative research methodology by paying "close attention to the settings and participants in interactions" (Foster & Ohta, 2005, p. 403). More specifically, research from an SCT perspective examines second language development

by giving special attention to contextual factors. It highlights the importance of the social environment in the analysis of human behavior to reflect human experiences as comprehensively as possible (Foster & Ohta, 2005).

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that teachers dominate the talk in literature classrooms and ask almost all of the questions (Donato & Brooks, 2004; Mantero, 2001). Nystrand (1997) argues that by asking some specific types of questions, teachers might impede or take control of classroom discussions. Therefore, research on types and frequency of teacher questions may provide insights about the direction of discussions, the type of discourse teachers envision in their minds, and how classroom discourse can be administered.

For this study, teacher questions were categorized into three groups, namely, authentic, test, and non-classified. Authentic questions are asked to get indeterminate answers from students, not to check whether they know or do not know particular content (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1997). By their nature, authentic questions are open for multiple interpretations and they allow a range of possible responses. Socially, they imply a teacher's interest in what students think or know (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1997). On the other hand, test questions allow only one possible answer, which is probably already known by the asker. They also help teachers (a) check if students did their assigned homework, and (b) reinforce key points. Socially, as Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, and Long (2003) argue, test questions "concentrate control of classroom discourse in one actor—the teacher" (p. 145), and leave no room for student voices in the classroom discourse. Non-classified questions, which emerged during data coding for this study, were ones that did not specifically inquire about the texts being studied.

Compared with the extensive research on teacher questions, student questions have not received much attention (Hsu, 2001; McGrew, 2005; Pearson & West, 1991). This may be due to the fact that the default inquirers in many classroom settings are teachers (Cazden, 2001), and the main role of students in questioning processes is to answer teacher questions. According to Nystrand et al. (2003), student questions signal engagement and affect the teacher's control of classroom discourse positively. Students may assume power and control over classroom discourse while asking questions. Therefore, a shift of roles in the questioning sequence may imply an important change of the social dynamics in the classroom.

In one of the few studies that focus on categories of student questions, McGrew (2005) examined student questions in a low-intermediate level modern Hebrew class. He analyzed the discourse patterns of the questions and identified four categories of student questions: lexical, grammatical, meta-pedagogical, and substantive. He concluded that student questions were signs of conscious attempts at language learning.

Based on the data we collected and previous literature concerning teacher (Boyd & Rubin, 2002; Brock, 1986; Cintorino, 1994; Nystrand et al., 2003) and student questions (McGrew, 2005; Skilton & Meyer, 1993), we grouped student questions into five categories: lexical, procedural, hypothesis testing, referential, and challenge questions. *Lexical questions* inquire about a specific word or information that students do not know in the target language. *Procedural questions* are used for the management of classroom routines. *Hypothesis testing* questions signal attempts of students to reconcile new information with their existing knowledge about the texts they read. *Referential questions* focus on some unclear issues in the target readings and ask for some more clarification and/or advancement of the understandings of the readings. *Challenge questions* are posed when the students disagree with the instructor's personal comments beyond the target readings.

Setting and Participants

We employed a purposeful sampling method. The participants were advanced level English education majors attending a Turkish public university. We were particularly interested in advanced level learners because they had adequate English proficiency and the necessary background in literature to carry out classroom discussions in the target language. The course chosen for the study was sixth semester drama analysis and teaching. The instructor was a native speaker of Turkish who held a PhD in English literature from a prestigious Turkish university. She had been teaching this course for more than 10 years, and she is one of the most academically active members of the faculty. She has a strong academic background in language teaching and learning theories. Although the teacher's speech excerpts illustrated in the findings are sometimes non-target-like, we believe that this may have stemmed from the spontaneity of the classroom context rather than a lack of English proficiency of the teacher.

The number of participants varied from 25-32 during nine weeks of recordings. This was because some students who could not attend other sections were allowed to attend the one being observed even though they were not enrolled in that specific section. During the first week of the course, 26 students signed the consent forms and filled out student background questionnaires. Out of these 26 students, 3 of them were male, and 23 were female. The background survey indicated that the participants ranged in age from 20 to 22, and they had been studying English for 5 to 12 years. This demographic information, according to our previous experiences, reflected the typical situation of English education programs in Turkish universities.

The purposeful selection of the setting and participants was based on the following reasons: (a) convenient and efficient access to the research site, (b) the instructor and

other participants were willing to participate in the study, and (c) the frequency of classroom discussions in this particular instructor's literature class was high.

Methodology

By employing qualitative data collection and qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods, this case study examined the nature of teacher and student questions in a literature class. The main aim of the study was to understand the nature of questioning processes during literature discussions. Therefore, all class sessions in one semester were video-recorded, and the data were transcribed verbatim using a discourse analysis method. Video recordings enabled us to observe the subtle intricacies of academic and social dynamics during classroom discussions in a systematic, comprehensive, and thorough way. We also took fieldnotes during our observations and conducted interviews with the instructor and students to augment and triangulate the data. Moreover, quantitative analysis of the findings were provided to (a) make the findings more reader friendly, (b) explain why we have drawn particular inferences from the data (Mackey & Gass, 2005), and (c) help us identify the trends extracted from the data analysis.

Data Coding

Following procedures outlined by Forman, McCormick, and Donato (1993), we marked utterances as questions using the following criteria: (a) rising intonation, (b) syntax, (c) the occurrence of WH-words, and/or (d) whether the utterance signaled that a reply was assumed. After we determined the questions, we grouped them as teacher or student questions depending on who asked them. We further classified teacher questions into three categories, namely test questions {TQ-T}, authentic questions {TQ-A}, and non-classified questions {TQ-N}. Student questions were grouped under five categories: hypothesis testing questions, procedural questions, referential questions, lexical questions, and challenge questions.

Reliability of the Coding

The first author coded each question based on the definitions explained earlier and examples of the question types. To ensure the reliability of our coding, we numbered all of our transcripts and randomly selected 20% of them through a random number generator provided at http://random.org. Based on the random numbers provided, the second author coded teacher questions in 10% of the data and an external rater coded the other 10%. We also prepared a training manual that included the definitions of each type of question with at least two examples. After the external rater read the training manual, we went over some portions of the transcripts together. There was 96%

consistency in the coding of the teacher questions between the first and second authors, and 90% consistency between the first author and the external rater. Regarding the student questions, the first and second authors coded and categorized all of them together.

Emergence of Non-Classified Questions

For this study, we focused on the discussions in an American literature class in Turkey. Both authentic and test questions were asked by the teacher during literary discussions while participants were talking about the texts they read. Both types of questions inquired about the texts specifically. While coding teacher questions, we came across some other questions that did not specifically inquire about the texts. These questions involved (a) questions about classroom management, (b) rhetorical questions, (c) questions in which the teacher did not wait for an answer, but answered them herself, and (d) confirmation checks. We grouped these questions under the category of non-classified teacher questions because they were not directly related to the content of the texts read. We did not analyze non-classified questions in detail.

Findings

Teacher Questions

In the classes observed, the instructor asked 1,607 questions during nine weeks of recordings. On average, she asked a question every 26.4 seconds during literature discussions. The numbers of questions changed from week to week. On average, the instructor asked 178 questions each week. In Week Three, she asked only 96 questions; however, in Week Five she asked 235 questions during three hours of class sessions. We did not observe any specific patterns in the delivery of the questions throughout the semester. When non-classified questions were excluded, percentages of authentic (48%) and test (52%) questions were quite close. Table 1 demonstrates the numbers of types of teacher questions and their frequency in each week.

Table 1

Numbers of Types of Teacher Questions in Each Week

Week	TQ-A	TQ-T	TQ-N	Total	Seconds/ Question
1	80	78	67	225	26
2	56	71	55	182	35
3	31	40	24	95	21

Table 1 (continued).

Numbers of Types of Teacher Questions in Each Week

Week	TQ-A	TQ-T	TQ-N	Total	Seconds/ Question
4	72	70	51	193	26
5	100	76	59	235	23
6	63	50	54	167	33
7	69	63	59	191	25
8	28	67	37	132	21
9	51	81	55	187	28
TOTAL	550	596	389	1607	

Authentic Questions

Nystrand and Gamoran (1997) define an authentic question as "a question for which the asker has not pre-specified an answer" (p. 38). Open-ended questions with indeterminate answers were included in this category as well. A question was coded {TQ-A} when (a) it had more than one possible answer, (b) it asked about something unknown by the teacher, (c) it asked about students' opinions. Excerpt 1 in Table 3 illustrates the examples of authentic teacher questions. We also provide the key for the transcription conventions used in this study in Table 2.

Table 2

Key to Reading the Transcripts

Symbol	Meaning
T	Teacher turns
S1, S2, S3, S4	Student turns
[ ]	Extra information
(+)	Pause ("+" indicates the number of seconds)
[	Overlapping speech
]	
[Tr.]	Utterances in Turkish
Luke, Clan, Yank, Mary, John, etc.	Character names in the plays
[?]	Unclear or unidentified transcription

Table 3

Excerpt 1: Examples of Authentic Questions

01	T	In your daily life (+) suppose you are teenagers and you are in secondary high school (+) and you wake up. **Could you please tell me your daily life (+) in a Turkish culture? (++) You wake up and then what do you do?** {TQ-A}
02	SS	Breakfast
03	T	Yes, you have breakfast. **Who prepares breakfast? You? Your mother?** {TQ-A}
04	S1	My mother
05	T	Wonderful, what else? {TQ-A} **Your mother prepares and does she say you something while you are eating?** {TQ-A}

In this excerpt, there were four teacher questions and all of them were coded as authentic questions. All of these questions asked about students' activities in their daily lives and had potentially different answers based on each student. Also, the questions inquired about students' daily activities that were unknown to the teacher. Another interesting feature of this excerpt is the context in which it occurred. This excerpt took place at the beginning of the first lesson in Week Five, and we inferred that the instructor was trying to relate the text to the real-world lives of the students by asking this type of question. Some other functions of the authentic teacher questions were to (a) ask students to make global connections between and within the texts, (b) elicit more frequent and multifaceted student responses, and (c) help students develop new thoughts based on the readings. Authentic questions also served social functions such as opening the floor to different student ideas, empowering their voices, and encouraging more student contribution during classroom discussions.

Test Questions

Nystrand and Gamoran (1997) offer the following definition of test questions: "Test questions are asked to review basic information which has generally only one correct answer" (p. 38). A question was coded as a {TQ-T} when it (a) had one pre-specified (fixed) answer, (b) asked about something already known by the teacher, (c) asked about something clearly stated in the text, (d) was asked to check if the students correctly remembered what they read. Excerpt 2 in Table 4 illustrates examples of test questions.

Table 4

Excerpt 2: Examples of Test Questions

01	T	After Luke and Clan, this time we are at home, now from the street we entered the homes. **We have a married couple, Mary and John, what's the problem here?** {TQ-T}
02	S1	Baby is crying.
03	T	Yes, baby is crying but?
04	S1	Mother cannot do (+) cannot stop the baby.
05	T	Why not? {TQ-A}
06	S1	Because she does not know the (++) her own baby always (+) the maid (+) a black woman helps.
07	T	**Who is she?** {TQ-T}
08	S1	She is babysitter.
09	T	Not babysitter
10	S2	Nanny

In this excerpt, in Turn 1, the teacher was inquiring about specific information which had been clearly stated in the text and which was, most probably, already known by her. Based on classroom observations, we interpreted that this question was asked to check whether the students had read the texts and come to class well prepared. Therefore, the teacher question in Turn 1 was coded as a test question, as was the second question in this excerpt (Turn 7). Most of the time, in the classes we observed, test questions aimed to (a) establish background information about the literary texts, (b) check if the students had read their assigned texts, and (c) review the essential information about the texts to initiate higher-level discussions. Besides these academic functions, we interpreted the test questions as tools that helped the teacher strictly control the discourse of the classroom. When test questions were abundant, the students' voices were silenced. Their opinions were not valued and they were asked to parrot either what the teacher said previously or information from the assigned reading. In other words, they were not given the opportunity to express their individual thoughts. .

Importance of the Context

One significant feature of coding teacher questions was the identification of context. As Foster and Ohta (2005) argue, inclusion of contextual analysis is a necessary component of studies that follow an SCT perspective. Skilton and Meyer (1993) suggest that close attention should be paid to the context in which each question is asked because form does not always imply function. In other words, utterances worded as questions might function as expressives, or questions that have the same form may be placed in

different categories depending on the context in which they were asked. Therefore, we identified the major class activities to provide a context to each question, and referred to the major class activity when we had problems determining the type of teacher question. There were five activities during teacher-fronted, whole group literary discussions. Of these five activities, the instructor asked more authentic questions during background information and post-review activities. On the other hand, character analysis, literary movements, and theme analysis activities involved more test questions. In Table 5, we provide the numbers and percentages of test and authentic questions during each of these activities.

Table 5

Numbers and Percentages of Teacher Questions in Each Major Classroom Activity

Type of Activity	Authentic Questions		Test Questions		Total
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Background Information	188	43%	135	31%	433
Character Analysis	158	27%	265	45%	581
Literary Movements	40	34%	46	39%	119
Post-review Activities	72	39%	55	29%	187
Theme Analysis	123	31%	142	36%	395

The instructor frequently asked, “What else?” This question was coded differently in different contexts. There were 100 instances of the question during nine weeks of recordings. In other words, more than 6% of all teacher questions consisted of this question. Our interpretation of the *what else* questions was similar to that of McGrew (2005) who argued that these questions were used to elicit more information or more in-depth responses from students. In determining the type of *what else*? questions, the context and the preceding question were considered. In Excerpts 3 (see Table 6) and 4 (see Table 7), we illustrate how contextual clues helped us classify these questions.

Table 6

Excerpt 3: "What Else?" as a Test Question

The main question in the previous episode		
	T	Here Tom (+) let's come to Tom (+++) Tom has a lot of problems. What are they? Let's discuss (+++) and Tom's main problem is manliness so I want you to give me some examples. Which err (+) which code does Tom violate? (+) so that he is isolated.
"What else?" questions in the following episode		
01	T	So Tom and Tom's problems (+) **what else?** (+) About Tom's problems (++) ok (+) Tom's problems? (++)
02	S1	A lot of problems.
03	T	Yes, he has a lot of problems.
04	S1	He has no friends.
05	T	He has no friends, good! **What else?**
06	S2	He has a friend but he is (++)

The *what else* questions in Excerpt 3 were taken from the second hour of Week Six, but they were closely related to the last episode of the first hour in the same week. In the previous episode, the main topic was the problems of the main character in the play. These problems were also listed in the book. To answer this question, all the students needed to do was to identify the answer and say it. This question, by its nature, did not have any room for further interpretation or students' original contributions; therefore, we coded it as a test question. Similarly, the *what else* questions in the following episode were all coded as test questions.

Table 7

Excerpt 4: "What Else?" as an Authentic Question

04	T	It doesn't change so we would condemn boys like Tom (++) we would condemn, what would happen if we change the (++) let's change the setting (+) the setting isn't American one, but Turkish culture.
05	S1	Maybe it's[
06	T	]the same
07	S1	It is more, it is stronger.

Table 7 (continued).

Excerpt 4: "What Else?" as an Authentic Question

18	T	Yes, good! **What else?**
19	S1	Or he would be taken advantage of[
20	T	]He would be taken advantage? How?
21	S1	If he were in Turkey.
38	T	The students would not hang out with the teachers (+) you see (+) this is one cultural discrepancy (+) **what else?**
39	S1	I don't know now, but later.
40	T	Think about it. Yes, please
41	S2	I think the father would interfere (++) wouldn't let his son stay in the school but take him away (+) to prevent some (++)
42	T	Very good! Herb always pushes him. But Herb has a reason to push him.

In Excerpt 4, *what else* questions were related to the leading question that inquired about the possible effects of a setting change in the play. The instructor's first question, which was a broad authentic question, asked the students to think about a hypothetical setting change in the play. This authentic question opened the floor to the students' ideas because it did not have a fixed answer. One of the students gave an answer to the question, and the instructor directed the same question to other students by using the *what else* structure to extend the discussion. This structure helped the instructor get more in-depth responses from the students. The other students took turns, and the episode from which Except 4 is taken lasted 66 turns. Both *what else* questions in this excerpt were coded as authentic questions because of the initial main question.

Student Questions

Questioning is an integral part of teaching and the default inquirers in many classroom settings are teachers. We would not be mistaken, as Tharp and Gallimore (1988) argued, if we defined a school as "a place where teachers ask questions" (p. 58) and the main role of students in the questioning process is to answer teacher questions. Therefore, a change of roles in the questioning sequence implies important changes of the social dynamics in the classroom. Students assume power and control while asking questions about what they read. According to Nystrand et al. (2003), student questions (a) signal student engagement, (b) affect teacher's control of the classroom discourse positively, and (c) are one of the most important dialogic bids (i.e., teachers' acts that transform monologic classroom discourse into dialogic).

We analyzed the occurrences and types of student questions during teacher-fronted whole group text-based discussions. Table 8 demonstrates how many questions students asked each week of the semester during our observations.

Table 8

Weekly Distribution of Student Questions

Weeks	Number of Student Questions
1	3
2	9
3	5
4	7
5	7
6	5
7	2
8	5
9	11
Total	54

Table 8 was constructed to see if there was a pattern of student questions that evolved over the course of the weeks. However, our analysis revealed that there was no specific pattern of student questions. The number of questions asked by students was very low (around 3%) compared to questions asked by the instructor. However, we were not interested in the quantity, but rather the categories and specific features of student questions. We interpreted some student questions as important signs of engagement and contribution to classroom discourse. After we identified the occurrences of student questions, we examined the types of questions. Our categorization of student questions was based on the data we collected and previous literature (Boyd & Rubin, 2002; Brock, 1986; Cintorino, 1994; McGrew, 2005; Nystrand et al., 2003).

Table 9

Types of Student Questions

Type of Question	Frequency
Procedural	17
Hypothesis-testing	15
Referential	13
Challenge	5
Lexical	4
Total	54

Based on our analysis, among the five categories, only referential and hypothesis-testing questions signaled student engagement because students were inquiring about the texts they read and trying to advance their understanding by employing questions. However, other questions demonstrated some important implications about the academic and social texture (i.e., power relations, turn-taking, distributions of roles, etc.) of the classroom discourse. We will examine each of these categories and provide examples.

Procedural Questions

Sometimes, the students used questions for the management of classroom routines. We called this type of question *procedural* following Boyd and Rubin (2002). In some cases, these were requests to take a turn (e.g., *May I read*?), and in other cases, to inquire about specific information related to the mechanics of the classroom (e.g., *Which page is it*?).

Hypothesis Testing Questions

The students in the literature class we observed sometimes used questions to test their hypotheses about new information that seemed unclear or contradictory. This type of question could be seen as an attempt to reconcile new information with students' existing ideas and experiences. It was also used when students were struggling to match what they knew with the information that emerged during the discussions (e.g., see Cintorino, 1994). Hypothesis testing is an important sign of student engagement as it illustrates the cognitive process of understanding a text. In Excerpt 5, after the teacher's comment in Turn 22, one of the students advanced an idea about the text in the form of

a question. With his question, he attempted to synthesize new information with his previous ideas or information.

Table 10

Excerpt 5: An Example of a Hypothesis Testing Question

21	S1	Salvation
22	T	Yes, wonderful! The emblem of salvation (+) so Christ saved the other people and he is going to save people like Dorothy.
23	S2	**Can we say err (+) there is something related to folk tales?**
24	T	Wonderful! Yes. Because in the folk tales, a hero, it is always a prince charming who saves the young girls. That's why I don't like the fairy tales. Women in life, in reality who saves who? Yes, don't say man! Students laugh]
25	S3	Woman saves man.
26	T	Prove it, prove your thesis.

Referential Questions

Referring to Long and Sato (1983), Brock (1986) defined referential questions as ones that "request information that are not known by the asker" (p. 48). However, almost all student questions, by their nature, may belong to this category as they are usually asking for new information. For this study, referential questions referred to those that focused on unclear issues in the target readings. In this sense they were authentic questions (Nystrand et al., 2003), asking for clarification and understanding of the readings. By asking these questions, students voluntarily joined the meaningful discussion of the readings. They also revealed students' efforts to understand the issues in the texts. For example, in Excerpt 6 (see Table 11), one of the students (S1) explained her intent before asking her question: "I want to ask to know clearly." Then she asked a question about a character wearing a white dress, and wondered if it was symbolic of something she was unaware of. Instead of answering the question directly, the instructor re-uttered the question, and it became a question open to all students.

Table 11

Excerpt 6: An Example of Referential Questions

138	T	It is a tragicomedy [teacher refers to the play, Hairy Ape] (++) err (+) this is what Eugene O'Neil says. Because it is an allusion to Shakespeare (+) life is a tragedy for those who live but it is a comedy for those who watch. So he presents it as a kind of comedy for those who watch but it is a tragedy of (++) a modern tragedy of Yank. Yes please.
139	S1	**I want to ask to know clearly. What is the aim of (++) Mildred wearing white dress?**
140	T	Ok! Why is Mildred wearing?[
141	S2	]to show his class
142	S3	Class consciousness
143	S1	I thought that
144	T	Because you know (+) white (+) white is not a suitable color for the stoke hole [?]. Because, because of the coal dust (++) and coal dust is black (++) black is associated with the workers, and white (+) the opposite. It is to show the class distinction. You see, the gap is so big here (++) white and black.

Lexical Questions

In other cases, students asked questions to inquire about a specific word or information that they did not know in the target language. We labeled this type of question as lexical, following McGrew (2005). During the interviews some of the students mentioned that they were too shy to speak out if there was a word they were not familiar with. However, other students dared to ask for information that they did not know. In Excerpt 7, one of the students was not sure what segregation meant, and asked the instructor. Instead of offering a definition, the instructor provided information about the cultural context of the word. From the student's next comment, we understand that she had some information about the meaning of the word, but did not fully grasp it.

Table 12

Excerpt 7: An Example of Lexical Question

27	T	So segregation means? (+++) separation (+) so (+) but now White and Black people can marry (+) it is just err (++) it is just before (++) before 1960s.
28	S1	**Segregation is?**
29	T	Segregation is some kind of official law.
30	S1	Not only for marriages between them.

Challenge Questions

Sometimes the students did not agree with the teacher's comments, and they challenged the teacher openly by asking questions. In one of these instances, Excerpt 8, (see Table 13) one of the students challenged the instructor's authority with a question. In this episode, the student and the instructor were debating about the possible meanings attached to the bird in the play. At the beginning of the excerpt, the instructor stated that she could not accept the student's suggestion about the bird symbol, and the student questioned the instructor's comment, and also possibly her attitude, by asking, "You say it can't mean two things?" However, the instructor did not change her mind and insisted that she could not accept the student's interpretation. Challenge questions had social implications, as they mainly questioned the teacher's authority in the classroom.

Table 13

Excerpt 8: An Example of Challenge Question

31	T	I can't accept yours (+) I am sorry (++) I can't accept yours.
32	S1	**You say it can't mean two things?**
33	T	It can't be a child, this is certain (+) I can't accept this (+++) If the animal weren't a canary but a cat (+) ok (+) I would (+) maybe (+) But, not in these circumstances. Because, the similarities are so apparent (+) your assumption is false (+++) ungrounded.

Discussion and Implications

Motivated from an SCT perspective, the findings of this study can be interpreted in the following ways. Academically, the abundance of teacher questions might be understood as cognitive tools to scaffold learners in the discussions (McCormick, 1997;

McCormick & Donato, 2000). Socially, however, they imply tight teacher control on classroom discourse (Nystrand, 1997). In the same vein, the type of teacher question used can also be interpreted in different ways. By employing test questions, many teachers proficiently set up discussions by first reviewing basic materials as a way of establishing the topic for discussion. After building background information on the topic, authentic questions enable them to move on to a more interpretive level in which student ideas and contributions are prioritized (Gutierrez, 1994; Nystrand et al., 2003). From a social perspective, test questions give the primary classroom control to teachers, and by simply answering the test questions, students' original ideas are usually ignored. Alternatively, the great quantity of authentic questions identified in the study is an indicator of attention given to student voices and comments, and viewing learners as thinking devices (Lotman, 1988) who are capable of generating novel thoughts from the plays that they read.

Similar to many previous studies both in first language (Nystrand et al., 2003; Pearson & West, 1991) and second language learning settings (Markee, 1995; Ohta & Nakaone, 2004; Skilton & Meyer, 1993; White & Lightbown, 1984), the number of student questions in this study was few compared to the number of teacher questions. In this study, we focused on the qualitative aspects of the questioning practices, however, we did not neglect the quantitative features. We enumerated each construct (e.g., teacher and student questions) because we believed that the quantification of the findings might help us better present our findings. Enumeration also facilitated the establishment of reliability of our coding procedures.

Pedagogically, student questions demonstrate student engagement. They reveal that students are taking active roles in the establishment of classroom discourse and co-construction of knowledge. Moreover, when students begin to ask questions about the texts they are studying, the nature of the discourse takes a more symmetrical shape, which includes equal distribution of conversation rights (Brazil, 1985) compared to the usual classroom instruction dominated by teacher questions. Therefore, a subtle shift in teacher and student questions during classroom discussions may reveal significant changes in the nature of classroom discourse, both academically and socially.

In this study, we examined the nature of teacher and student questions in a foreign literature class in a Turkish EFL setting. We utilized purposeful sampling and worked in a single setting (case) that we had chosen for the reasons discussed previously. Even though we believe that the setting in which we conducted the research was a typical educational setting in the Turkish context, we do not claim the results are comprehensive and transferable to other settings. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, it is the reader's responsibility to decide whether the findings hold for similar settings or not. Based on our previous learning and teaching experiences, we believe that the use

of literature is quite common in language teaching contexts where English is taught as a foreign language, and many instructors use discussions in literature classes even though this situation is not well documented.

The teacher and students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds might have had an impact in the questioning practices in this study. As frequently reported, the Turkish education system is wavering between modern and traditional practices (Akyel & Yalcin, 1990; Bosnak, 1995; Tatar, 2003). Similarly, in this study, based on the teacher and student interviews, we inferred that the teacher and students frequently assumed their traditional roles in the classroom. The analyses of the discourse were mostly parallel with the findings of the interviews as the teacher dominated most of the discussions that involved questions and held tight classroom control on many occasions by asking too many questions. However, as we described in our study, the students also carried out active roles and were active participants in the classroom discourse from time to time.

An implication that can be drawn from this study, similar to the suggestion of Nystrand et al. (2003), is that teachers are responsible for and should assume an important role in creating a dialogical atmosphere in the classroom. Creating such an atmosphere requires the use of dialogic bids (e.g., student questions, authentic teacher questions). To create dialogic bids, teachers can ask more authentic questions which inquire about the target readings, instead of employing test questions that do not require students' creative participation. In the case of student questions, teachers can either create an instructional atmosphere where students can ask questions freely or let students participate in the flow of the classroom discourse and ask questions. In turn, this will help students initiate more topics and make the classroom discourse more symmetrical.

Finally, as Nystrand et al. (2003) pointed out, we believe that understanding how classroom discourse unfolds can assist teachers in gaining control over "how they interact with students and how they can create instructional settings that both engage students and foster learning" (p. 192). The questioning process, as we have tried to show, is an important aspect of classroom discourse that can directly affect the learning atmosphere in the classroom.

References

Akyel, A., & Yalcin, E. (1990). Literature in the EFL class: a study of goal achievement incongruence. *ELT Journal, 44*(3), 174-180.

Bosnak, A. (1995). *A case study on how an experienced Fulbright teacher of English helped her students to develop communicative competence, meaning making and cultural awareness in a TEFL literature classroom at METU High School in Ankara, Turkey*. Unpublished master's thesis, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey.

Boyd, M. P., & Rubin, D. L. (2002). Elaborated student talk in an elementary classroom. *Research in the Teaching of English, 36*(4), 495-530.

Brazil, D. (1985). *The communicative value of intonation in English*. Birmingham, UK: English Language Research—The University of Birmingham.

Brock, C. A. (1986). The effects of referential questions on ESL classroom discourse. *TESOL Quarterly, 20*(1), 47-59.

Cazden, C. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Cintorino, M.A. (1994). Discovering their voices, valuing their words. *The English Journal, 83*(6), 33-40.

Donato, R., & Brooks F. B. (2004). Literary discussions and advanced speaking functions: Researching the (dis)connection. *Foreign Language Annals, 37*(2), 183-199.

Foster, P., & Ohta, A. S. (2005). Negotiation for meaning and peer assistance in classroom language tasks. *Applied Linguistics, 26*, 402-430.

Ellis, R. (Ed.). (1987). *Second language acquisition in context*. Prentice-Hall, London.

Forman E. A., McCormick D., & Donato R. (1993). *The social and institutional context of learning mathematics: An ethnographic study of classroom discourse.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, New Orleans, LA.

Gutierrez, K. D. (1994). How talk, context, and script shape contexts for learning: A cross-case comparison of journal sharing. *Linguistics and Education, 5*, 335-365.

Hsu, W. (2001). *How classroom questioning influences second language acquisition*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Long, M. H., & Sato C. J. (1983). Classroom foreigner talk discourse: Forms and functions of teacher's questions. In H. W. Seliger & M. H. Long (Eds.), *Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition* (pp. 268-285). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Lotman, Y. M. (1988). Text within a text. *Soviet Psychology, 26*(3), 32-51.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Mantero, M. (2001). *The reasons we speak: A sociocultural discourse analysis of text-based talk in a university level foreign language classroom.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Florida State University.

Markee, N. (1995). Teachers' answers to students' questions: Problematizing the issue of meaning making. *Issues in Applied Linguistics, 6*(2), 63-92.

McCormick, D. E. (1997). *Using teacher questions to scaffold language learning in an ESL classroom: A sociocultural case study.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

McCormick, D. E., & Donato, R. (2000). Teacher questions as scaffolded assistance in an ESL classroom. In J. K. Hall & L. S. Verplaetse (Eds.), *The development of second and foreign language learning through classroom interaction* (pp.183-202). Hillsdale, NJ: LEA.

McGrew, S. (2005). Student questions in an intermediate Modern Hebrew classroom. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics, 21*(1), 61-78.

Mehan, H. (1979). *Learning lessons: social organization in the classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nystrand, M. (1997). Opening dialogue: *Understanding the dynamics of language and learning in the English classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Nystrand, M., & Gamoran, A. (1997). The big picture: The language of learning in dozens of English lessons. In M. Nystrand (Ed.), *Opening dialogue: Understanding the dynamics of language and learning in the English classroom* (pp. 30-74*).* New York: Teachers College Press.

Nystrand, M., Wu, L. L., Gamoran, A., Zeiser, S., & Long, D. A. (2003). Questions in time: Investigating the structure and dynamics of unfolding classroom discourse. *Discourse Processes, 35*(2), 135-198.

Nystrand, M. (2004). *CLASS 4.0 user's manual*. Madison, WI: The National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement.

Ohta, A. S. (2000). Rethinking recasts: A learner–centered examination of corrective feedback in the Japanese classroom. In J. K. Hall & L. S. Verplaeste (Eds.), *Second and foreign language learning through classroom interaction* (pp. 47-71). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ohta, A. S., & Nakaone, T. (2004). When students ask questions: Teacher and peer answers in the foreign language classroom. *International Review of Applied Linguistics, 42*, 217-237.

Pavlenko, A., & Lantolf. J. P. (2000). Second language learning as participation and the (re)construction of selves. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 155-178). Oxford University Press.

Pearson, J. C., & West, R. (1991). An initial investigation of the effects of gender on student questions in the classroom: Developing a descriptive base. *Communication Education, 40*, 22-32.

Platt, E. J. & Brooks, F. B. (1994). The 'acquisition-rich' environment revisited. *Modern Language Journal, 78*(4), 497-511.

Platt, E. J. & Brooks, F. B. (2002). Task engagement: A turning point in foreign language development? *Language Learning, 52*(2).

Sfard A. (1998). On two metaphors for learning and the danger of choosing just one. *Educational Researcher, 27*(2), 4-13.

Skilton, E., & Meyer, T. (1993). "So what are you talking about?": The importance of student questions in the ESL classroom. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics, 9*(2), 81-99.

Tatar, S. (2003). *Turkish graduate students' perceptions of participation in US classrooms.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Tharp, R. G., & Gallimore, R. (1988). *Rousing minds to life: Teaching and learning in context.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Van der Aalsvoort, G., & Harinck, F. (2000). Studying social interaction in instruction and learning. In H. Cowie & G. Van der Aalsvoort (Eds.), *Social interaction in learning and instruction* (pp. 5-20). New York: Pergamon.

Wells, G. (1999). *Dialogic inquiry: Toward sociocultural practice and theory of education.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

White, J., & Lightbown, P. M. (1984). Asking and answering in ESL classes. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 40*(2), 228-244.

Wilhelm, J. D. (2005). *Inquiring minds learn to read and write: Inquiry, questioning, and discussion strategies for promoting literacy and learning across the curriculum*. Retrieved February 17, 2005, from http://www.boisestate.edu/english/jwilhelm/downloads.htm

About the Authors

Dr. Dogan Yuksel is a Lecturer in the Department of Foreign Languages Education at Kocaeli University, Turkey. He received his PhD in Mutilingual and Multicultural Education at Florida State University. His research interests include use of literature in language teaching, literary discussion, and teacher and student questions. His e-mail is doganyuksel@gmail.com.

Miao Yu is currently a PhD candidate in Multilingual and Multicultural Education at Florida State University. Her research interest is individual differences in second language acquisition. Her dissertation study is on students' willingness to communicate. Her e-mail is yumiao22@hotmail.com.

Identifying Needs of EFL Learners of Academic Writing: Help from Contrastive Rhetoric

Glenn Deckert

Eastern Michigan University, USA

Irene Kuzminykh

Ion Creanga State Pedagogical University, Moldova

Learners of English as a second language who wish to gain skill in academic writing face many challenges. They need a broader range of vocabulary, additional kinds of sentence structure, skill in selecting content and ability to adhere to appropriate composition structure. Learners do not approach English academic writing with a blank slate. Rather, they come with their own conscious or subconscious notions of what constitutes acceptable written discourse. They know from exposure to myriads of texts in their first language (L1) how writers in their own culture convey ideas in academic or professional communication. Without instructional intervention, many will simply follow their L1 instincts when writing English.

ESL/EFL textbooks have emerged to help learners gain the skills that lead to acceptable English academic writing. The textbooks guide learners from various L1 backgrounds to limit their topic, select relevant content, and organize material. They also discover that organization involves formulating a thesis sentence and drafting a series of paragraphs that systematically develop the thesis. They further learn the value of editing and refining their work for a more satisfying final draft. The level of challenge in these steps varies according to learners' L1 conventions and practices. Along the way, learners often find themselves unlearning old habits as well as gaining new habits to approximate academic expectations in North America and other English-speaking environments.

Background to this Study

Recently in the country of Moldova, a former Eastern European Soviet republic, both of the present writers participated in an MA degree course in English academic writing, one as the instructor and the other as a student. Most of the students were English teachers who spoke both Romanian and English as well as Russian. It was apparent that these mature adults brought with them a style of writing that contrasted

with conventions of English academic writing as emphasized in Anglo-American universities. For example, rather than featuring direct entry into a topic and structuring text around a well formulated thesis statement, they frequently began with a wide-sweeping introduction, proceeded with gradual entry into the main topic and developed their topic without clearly recognizable organization. It was apparent that these fluent speakers of English shared a manner of writing that was entirely natural for them.

The experience with this class in Moldova led to an inquiry patterned after numerous studies in the field of contrastive rhetoric. Attention to contrastive rhetoric among language teachers began most notably with the pioneer work of Robert Kaplan who in 1966 published what he himself later referred to as his "doodle article" (1987, p. 9). Based on writing samples of ESL learners of different L1 backgrounds, Kaplan proposed contrasting thought patterns according to different L1s and represented these visually with sketched configurations, some in truly zigzag fashion. While Kaplan and others later recognized many flaws in that early study, it heightened language teachers' awareness of the contrasting cultural conditioning that learners of English bring to their academic writing. Grabe and Kaplan (1989) explain that "in research terms, contrastive rhetoric predicts that writers composing in different languages will produce rhetorically distinct texts, ..." (p. 264). Elsewhere, Kaplan and Grabe (2002) describe contrastive rhetoric as the study of "text construction across languages and cultures" (p. 194). For teachers of academic writing in English the aim of contrastive rhetoric, as Connor (1998) explains, is to help ESL/EFL teachers enable English learners to write more acceptably for native English readers. In spite of the practical intention, it seems that pedagogical applications have been few.

In an early overview of contrastive rhetoric studies, Leki (1991) pointed out that in the 1970s the focus of study was often on linking devices, especially anaphora, that is, on pronouns or other words referring back to preceding ideas. During the 1980s many studies appeared contrasting English with Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, and Spanish. Only very recently, as reported by Petrić (2005), have contrastive rhetoric studies focused on Slavic languages, such as Czech, Polish, and Ukrainian. The present writers' search for studies comparing English and Russian found only Petrić's small scale inquiry of 19 advanced level EFL students from the Russian Federation who were studying in a Central European university. As Petrić suggests, the dearth of contrastive rhetoric studies of either Russian or English written by Russian speakers may be attributed to the lack of explicit courses in writing in Russian education, the prevalence of the oral examination over the written, the dissimilar linguistic traditions between the English and Russian speaking worlds, and the relatively limited encounter of Slavic and English speakers in university settings before 1990. Now, in the twenty-first century throughout the schools and universities in the new republics of the former Soviet Union and its

satellite countries, English is being taught as an additional language on a large scale. How might the writing patterns of these European students, as well as other EFL learners, differ from the academic writing that prevails among native English speakers in Anglo-American settings?

The Nature of the Present Study

The present study investigates the natural L1 writing tendencies of two samples of writers. Specifically, it identifies ways Russian texts written by Moldovan students compare with the written texts of their counterparts in the United States whose L1 is English. The study recognizes that spontaneously generated texts, even as L1 texts, may fall short of their respective ideals of good writing. Yet, the authors assumed that the texts produced by groups of mature students would basically represent established norms of writing in their respective cultural and school settings.

In these samples of authentic writing, of special interest for EFL/ESL instruction are comparative quantity of text, complexity of sentence structure, measures of coherence, occurrence and placement of thesis statements, patterns of paragraph development, and prevailing person orientation. Accordingly, quantity of text is simply measured in terms of word count. Complexity of structure is viewed in terms of number of words per sentence, words per clause, and clauses per sentence as well as percentage of single-clause sentences (e.g., see Reid, 1990). Textual coherence, or cohesion, as elaborated by Halliday and Hasan (1976), focuses on anaphora, or the use of pronouns and substitute words referring to stated ideas, and use of discourse markers, perhaps better known as transition expressions. Attention to main idea statements follows Kubota (1998) and Hirose (2003) in noting whether or not a key sentence is included and, if present, where it is positioned. Paragraph development is viewed in terms of paragraph length measured by number of sentences per paragraph. Analysis of person orientation focuses on the prevailing orientation of clauses in terms of the first, second, and third person.

The Subjects of the Study

In the Moldovan capital city, Chisinau, a total of 37 students, consisting of 20 final-year secondary school students and 17 first-year university students, wrote in Russian as their L1. The majority of these were 18 or 19 years old with others in their early 20s. Ethnically, they were of either Ukrainian or Russian background, and Russian was the medium of their formal schooling. Their counterparts in the United States were 34 students who were all enrolled in a mid-western university. Of these, 22 were in their first or second year of university study with the other 12 in a later stage of undergraduate study. Thus, the writers of the English texts were on average slightly older than the

Russian writers. Of the 33 English writers who revealed their ethnicity, 25 were Caucasian, 7 African American, and 1 Asian. All maintained that English was their L1.

The Writing Situation

Every effort was made to equate the conditions of writing in the two contrasting cultural settings. The writing task was administered in the context of a foreign language class with the Moldovans in English language classes and the Americans in first-year Spanish classes. Students were given the same prompt in a regular class period without prior notification. In both settings the visiting researcher first stated the purpose of the activity, its voluntary nature, the anonymity of the writing, and the need for basic personal information on a separate form. Approximately 40 minutes of class time remained for writing.

The Writing Task

All were asked to take one of two positions on the given topic, namely whether their language course grade, or the knowledge gained in their foreign language class was more important. They were asked to support or elaborate on their position in any way they would choose for a designated group of intended readers. This task aimed to elicit expository writing rather than more challenging argumentative discourse although it allowed for the latter. The chosen topic was selected for its relevance to both groups of writers in the two settings. The entire prompt was translated so that all received the following in their L1.

> Some students think that the most important thing in a foreign language course is to get a good grade, but others think the advantages in learning a foreign language are more important than a good grade. Write a composition to give your viewpoint on this. Suppose you are writing your composition for students who are going to take your present foreign language class next semester. Imagine they are the people who will read your composition.
>
> You may first make notes or sketch a rough draft on separate paper, but plan to finish your final draft on the provided paper by the end of this class period. If you complete your work early, please remain seated until the end of the class hour. Thank you for your participation.

Analysis of the Compositions

All were asked to take a position on whether the grade obtained in their foreign language class or the language proficiency gained from the class was more important. Only compositions having at least 165 words were accepted. Guidelines for handling sentence fragments and irregularly punctuated writing, and rules for counting structural aspects of compositions were established. Also counted were devices for coherence,

specifically transition expressions, third-person pronouns, and pro-sentences, that is, sentences employing a pronoun to represent a stated idea in the same context, (e.g., *The result is basic proficiency. This gives the student an advantage*). Pro-verbs, a short form of a complete verb phrase, (e.g., *are studying as hard as I am*) were not counted since this grammatical pattern does not occur in Russian.

Findings on Quantity of Writing

The two sets of accepted compositions were remarkably similar in amount of writing. The Russian and English compositions averaged 273 and 275 words respectively. Average number of sentences per composition were 18.5 in the Russian texts and 14.8 in the English. Thus, sentences in English tended to be longer. In terms of number of paragraphs per composition, these were 4.2 and 3.6 in the Russian and English texts respectively while numbers of words per paragraph were 84.6 and 89.7. Initially, these raw counts did not appear to represent noteworthy differences but found more relevance later.

Findings on Sentence Complexity

Table 1 reports measures of sentence complexity in terms of number of words per sentence and per clause, and number of clauses per sentence. The Russian writers wrote less complex sentences and clauses in that on average both their sentences and their clauses consisted of fewer words, differences confirmed by the 2-tail *t* test for significance. The observed difference in clauses per sentence did not attain to statistical significance. Further, the Russian writers were more inclined to write single-clause sentences in that 39.5% of their sentences had just one clause compared to 34.3% in the English compositions. Thus, on several measures the sentences in the English texts are actually more complex than those in Russian.

Table 1

Measures of Sentence Complexity

Measure of complexity	Russian writers	English writers	2-tailed *t* test for significance
Average word count per sentence	15.55	19.06	Significant, $p \leq .005$
Average word count per clause	7.78	9.11	Significant, $p \leq .001$
Average clause count per sentence	1.78	2.13	Not significant

Findings on Discourse Coherence

Table 2 shows counts on three measures of discourse coherence: use of transition expressions, third-person pronouns, and pro-sentences. The totals of these in each set of compositions is shown and the percentage of each in respect to total word or sentence count.

Table 2

Measures of Discourse Coherence

Indicator of coherence	Russian writers	English writers	Chi-square test for significance
Number of transition expressions and their percentage of total word count	46 (0.46%)	74 (0.79%)	Significant, $p \leq .01$
Number of 3rd person pronouns and their percentage of total word count	301 (2.98%)	180 (1.93%)	Significant, $p \leq .001$
Number of pro-sentences and their percentage of total sentence count	41 (6.00%)	57 (11.35%)	Significant, $p \leq .05$

All three measures of coherence yielded significant differences, but in different directions. On two of the measures, use of transition expressions and occurrence of pro-sentences, the greater occurrence was in English. On the other indicator, use of third-person pronouns, the count in the Russian compositions was greater. Consequently, more measures of discourse coherence would be necessary to conclude confidently that overall coherence is stronger in one set of compositions than in the other. This inquiry does, however, indicate that the two groups of writers tend to favor different devices for coherence.

Findings on Key Sentences and Paragraph Development

The two sets of compositions were compared for occurrence and placement of a thesis statement, or a single sentence declaring the writer's position on the topic. The criteria for an acceptable thesis statement were that it is (a) opinion-oriented, (b) declarative, and (c) states which of the two language course outcomes given in the

prompt is more important. Sentences not mentioning both a grade and the results of knowing a foreign language were accepted only if the immediate context made it clear that a comparison of the two was in mind. (See Appendix 1 for samples of thesis sentences from each set of compositions that meet the criteria.)

There is an indisputable difference between the two sets of compositions in the presence of a thesis statement. Of the 37 Russian compositions, only 14 had such a sentence compared to 26 of the 34 English compositions. Chi-square analysis indicates that the chance occurrence of this difference is less than or equal to one in a hundred (Chi-square, $p \leq .01$). On the other hand, there was no significant finding on the placement of the observed thesis statements. In the Russian texts, 5 of the 14 theses were in the first paragraph while in the English texts 15 of the 26 had this key sentence placed in the first paragraph—in both sets of compositions one of the thesis statements occurred in a composition consisting merely of one paragraph. Concerning paragraph development, at first it was thought that the two sets of compositions represented similar development. However, when they were compared in respect to the proportion of compositions that contained two or more paragraphs made up of only one or two sentences each, 19 of the Russian compositions had one or two of these less developed paragraphs compared to only 7 in the English set, a significant difference (Chi-square, $p \leq .05$). Thus, on this one measure, the Russian writers appear more apt to have paragraphs that are less developed.

Findings on Person Orientation

To measure person orientation, every independent clause in each composition was tagged as oriented to first, second, or third person; that is, oriented to the writer, the reader(s), or anything else. Generally, first- and second-person orientation was marked by use of the first or second-person pronouns while third-person orientation was attained by the use of third-person pronouns and nouns in general. Counts of person orientation of all the independent clauses and their respective proportions were nearly identical in the two sets of compositions. The third person clauses prevailed in both sets, specifically in 69.9% of the Russian clauses and in 69.5% of the English clauses. On average, *I* (or first-person *we*) and *you* framed clauses were far fewer and of similar proportion in each set. Overall, third-person orientation was decisively the most frequent for both groups of writers.

Discussion

Differences between the two sets of compositions along with some striking similarities are noteworthy. The two groups of writers on average wrote compositions of the same length and with the same proportions of person orientations. On the other

hand, they favored different devices in attaining coherence, the Russian writers using more pronouns and the English writers more transition expressions and pro-sentences. The observed more complex sentence structure of the English compositions contrasts with Kaplan's (1966) early generalization that Russian writing is linguistically more complex than English. This reversal as well as the more frequent underdeveloped Russian paragraphs may arise from the fact that the English writers in this study were slightly older and had each taken, or were taking, a required university course in English composition. The Russian speaking Moldovan students were never offered a course explicitly in composition on either the secondary or university level, representing a curricular gap that Leki (1991) notes to be typical of education in most non-English speaking countries.

The present finding on the difference between the two sets of compositions in respect to the presence of a thesis statement is similar to Petrić's (2005) recent finding among Russian students at the startup of a course on academic writing in English. She analyzed the English writing of 19 advanced final-year university students and found 7 of 19 compositions lacked a single sentence functioning as a thesis statement. Petrić comments that "in some essays the main idea was not expressed in one sentence but was rather left to the reader to extract from the whole essay" (p. 221). She sees this tendency in earlier studies of writing in Slavic languages which in general have been found to be less linear than English in structure and more inclined to digression with delayed disclosure of the writer's purpose. That 63% of her students included a thesis statement compared to just 38% of the Russian students in the present study may well represent the former's more advanced level of study and greater exposure to English instruction in previous settings.

As for the placement of the observed thesis statements in the two sets of compositions, neither the Russian writers nor the English writers reveal a significant pattern. Kubota (1998) points out that early studies found English expository writing to be deductive with thesis statements placed early in the texts with the subsequent writing developing the main contention. While this pattern was weakly supported in the present study, it was not predominant. Only 41% of the 34 English compositions followed this pattern. Even fewer, just 16% of the 37 Russian compositions, contained this pattern.

Implications and Conclusion

In English academic writing classes, instructors do well to bear in mind that many of the features of good academic writing in English may run counter to EFL/ESL students' deeply engrained L1 writing habits. Accordingly, the challenge that both instructors and learners face is formidable. The present study suggests that enabling

EFL/ESL learners of academic writing to approximate the standard of the English writers investigated in this study would largely equip them with an acceptable level or writing skill to function at a university level. As instructors endeavor to give instruction toward that end, the following measures arising from this contrastive rhetoric study should prove helpful.

1. Introduce students at the outset to the concept of contrastive rhetoric, helping them see cultural differences in the way people communicate though writing. Many may have never considered structure beyond the sentence level and have assumed that organization in writing is a universal regardless of language or culture. Further, encourage learners to consider and write down what they think are the prevailing patterns in the writing of their own L1 compared to English. In this regard, writing instructors who have learned the L1 of their students have an advantage and can more convincingly guide students in a class-wide or group activity in making comparisons of short texts representing two or more languages Petrić (2005) reports presenting visual representations of Kaplan's early (1966) doodle sketches of thought patterns found in different linguistic families, and having students guess which diagram might characterize their own or other languages.
2. Emphasize that in English academic writing, the paragraph is the building block or package that conveys one unit of thought on the overall topic. Paragraphs in general should contain more than just two sentences and usually more than the average of 85 or 90 words that characterized the paragraphs observed in the present study. Class analysis of paragraphs in good descriptive or argumentative essays will make this clear. An observed frequent lack of paragraph indentation in the Russian compositions of this inquiry suggests that instructors cannot afford to overlook the customary way of signaling a new paragraph in written English—except when writing in block style as in a business letter—along with line spacing.
3. Impress upon learners the importance of having a thesis statement, a key sentence that summarizes concisely the writer's main idea on the topic of discussion. More challenging is helping learners formulate this summarizing sentence in the face of all the potential content one may have gathered for the composition. Learners need extensive practice in framing such sentences. Textbooks on writing offer degrees of help in this area. For example, Reid's (2000) widely used. *The Process of Composition* (3rd ed.) treats the formulation of a topic sentence or thesis statement in Chapters 1, 3, and 6. However, only a sum of 5 pages of this 342-page textbook focuses on writing this pivotal

sentence. Instructors, it appears, must design their own practice exercises and thereafter monitor closely learners' application of this learning to their own English compositions. As for placement of the thesis sentence, learners need to know the structural implications of early or later placement and the differing effects on the anticipated readers of a deductive versus inductive approach to development.

4. Give EFL/ESL learners extensive help in utilizing the many means of enhancing textual coherence. They must learn to employ transition expressions, synonyms, third-person pronouns, key word repetition, or in the words of Halliday and Hasan (1976) the whole "range of possibilities that exist for linking something with what has gone before" (p. 10). Raising awareness of the function of these devices in drafting paragraphs will likely preempt tendencies to engage in pointless repetition or to settle for disjointed and underdeveloped paragraphs. Students can learn much from analyzing the mechanisms of coherence in short sample texts and from completing exercises that require the rewriting of faulty paragraphs for better coherence.

This study has uncovered some cultural differences in the writing of two groups of student writers representing two very different writing traditions. Several of the observed differences have led to pedagogical suggestions that hold promise toward enabling learners to write more according to expectations of native-speaking English readers. Of course, many instructors, especially in ESL settings, have a mix of cultural traditions in their ESL classes and need to be alert to other tendencies not addressed in this study.

While contemplating the results of this study, instructors are cautioned about the following. First, one must not claim or suppose that the Anglo-American way of writing is superior to that of other traditions. Other traditions do exist and some have histories as long as or longer than that of present-day English. The issue is not which is best, but which is appropriate for the intended readers. Second, instructors are encouraged not to stereotype their learners, even groups of Russian EFL/ESL learners, as carbon copies of those in this or other reported investigations. Rather, instructors should be alert to the findings which are apt to characterize many learners of Slavic background while exceptions are sure to be found. Lastly, instructors are reminded that L1 writing tendencies of any one homogeneous language group can hardly be viewed as static. Instead, it is reasonable to suppose that tendencies of entire language families are in a state of flux as are so many traditions in today’s dynamic globalization. Yet, studies of L1 writing tendencies offer promising pointers for more focused and efficient

instruction on English academic writing to supplement the instruction that broadens learners' vocabulary range and improves their grammatical accuracy.

References

Connor, U. (1998). Contrastive rhetoric: Development and challenge. *Studia Anglica Posnanciensia: International Review of English Studies*, *Annual 1998*, 105-116.

Grabe, W., & Kaplan, R. B. (1989). Writing in a second language: Contrastive rhetoric. In D. M. Johnson, & D. H. Roen (Eds.), *Richness in writing: Empowering ESL students* (pp. 263-283). New York: Longman.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.

Hirose, K. (2003). Comparing L1 and L2 organizational patterns in the argumentative writing of Japanese EFL students. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 12*, 181-209.

Kaplan, R. B. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in intercultural education. *Language Learning, 16*, 1-20.

Kaplan, R. B. (1987). Cultural thought patterns revisited. In U. Connor, & R. B. Kaplan (Eds.), *Writing across languages: Analysis of L2 text* (pp. 9-20). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Kaplan, R. B., & Grabe, W. (2002). A modern history of written discourse analysis. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 11*, 191-223.

Kubota, R. (1998). An investigation of Japanese and English L1 essay organization: Differences and similarities. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 54*, 475-507.

Leki, I. (1991). Twenty-five years of contrastive rhetoric: Text analysis and writing pedagogies. *TESOL Quarterly, 25*, 123-143.

Petrić, B. (2005). Contrastive rhetoric in the writing classroom: A case study. *English for Special Purposes, 24*, 213-228.

Reid, J. (1990). Responding to different topic types: A quantitative analysis from contrastive rhetoric perspective. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 191-210). New York: Cambridge.

Reid, J. (2000). *The process of composition* (3rd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman, Pearson Education Company

About the Authors

Glenn Deckert, Associate Professor of ESL/TESOL at Eastern Michigan University, taught courses at Eastern Michigan and supervised MA candidates in their practice teaching until retiring in 2004. He has since done teacher training in Moldova and Azerbaijan. Earlier he spent 16 years teaching EFL in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong.

Irena Kuzminykh has been an instructor of English for three years at Ion Creanga State Pedagogical University in Chisinau, Moldova. She holds a Master's degree from the same university and now is Associate Director of the university's English Teaching Resource Center which serves teachers in Chisinau and beyond. She has special interest in computer applications in teaching.

Appendix 1

Sample of Acceptable Thesis Sentences

Russian Thesis Sentences (translated into English)

1. I . . . believe that learning a foreign language is more important than grades as it may be useful in one's life.
2. It seems to me that both knowledge of a foreign language and an objective assessment from the teacher are important in studying a foreign language.
3. The grade is not as important for me as the advantage of knowing a foreign language.
4. Grades in studying a language are an indicator of knowledge, but the knowledge itself is more important since teachers are not always objective in grading students.
5. If a certain student or pupil is going to get on and make good in the future, he or she should learn English for his or her own good, not learn just for a grade.

English Thesis Sentences

1. For me, I believe that learning a foreign language is more important than getting a good grade.
2. Earning a good grade is nice but the advantages of actually learning outweigh it by far.
3. A foreign language class offers many more challenges and rewards than getting good grades.
4. I believe that the advantages in learning a foreign language are more important than getting a good grade in the class.
5. I think it is very important for students to take a foreign language course for the content and practicality that it holds—not just for a grade.

Teaching Teachers: The Importance of Teaching the Target Culture to EFL Teachers

Mai A. Hassan
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA

Linguistics scholars have argued that cultural competence is an important aspect of foreign language learning (Brown, 1987; Byram & Morgan, 1994; Heusinkveld, 1997; Stern, 1983; Zaid, 1999). Understanding the culture of a language helps language learners view the world from a different perspective. In addition, it increases awareness of the diverse ideas and practices of different societies (Tseng, 2002). Although researchers have demonstrated the importance of teaching the target culture that underlies a language, few of them have addressed the need for language teachers to be knowledgeable about the target culture. Consequently, some language instructors have ignored teaching culture or have relegated it to a secondary role (Tseng, 2002).

Indeed, in spite of the appeal of the idea that one must learn the culture of the target language, familiarizing teachers with the target culture is challenging. This is particularly true in the case of EFL teachers who may not have first-hand knowledge of or experience with the culture. Additionally, language teachers' education is sometimes disconnected from the real practice of teaching (Foster, Lewis, & Onafowora, 2003) as teacher training often focuses more on theories than on gaining practical teaching experience. This results in teachers lacking an understanding of students' expectations and needs. Negative outcomes may result from EFL teachers not being trained (i.e., as sociologists or anthropologists) to teach the target culture (Sauvé, 1996). Unaware or untrained teachers are potentially a source of false information to their students. They may provide students with biases or incorrect information about the target culture.

To address the issue of lack of cultural training in EFL teacher education, first, I examine different definitions of culture and explain the relationship between language and culture. Then, I discuss the importance of teaching teachers the target culture and provide practical suggestions for doing so.

Definitions of Culture

Despite agreement about the importance of teaching culture in the language classroom, there is little consensus concerning what constitutes culture (Heusinkveld,

1997). The British-Polish anthropologist, Malinowski (1939), asserts that culture is "the most central problem of all social sciences" (p. 948). Without a proper definition of culture, however, research about teaching culture is flawed. A clear definition must not only identify what is meant by the term, but must also distinguish it from other related terms. For example, culture has sometimes been defined as the literature or civilization of a country (Brooks, 1997).

Ovando and Collier (1985) suggest that culture consists of two components: the 3Fs (facts, faces, and fiestas), and high civilization. Other scholars refer to these categories as culture with a small "c" and culture with capital "C" (e.g., see Brooks, 1997). In the first category, culture is stereotyped by replacing people with events, and concepts with terms. For instance, if a teacher asks EFL students what they know about American citizens, they may respond that Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, demonstrating familiarity with an event, but not the everyday life of the people. The second component reduces culture to knowledge of the best of a culture's civilization such as its art, music, or literature. These categories restrict culture and foster the concept of culture as static. Although both categories are important, they are incomplete. Culture is in constant change and requires a more in-depth approach.

Table 1 summarizes additional attempts to define culture. These can be categorized into two types of definitions. The first depicts culture as a set of prescribed rules of social conduct (e.g., see Brooks, 1997; Harris & Moran, 1979). This set of definitions focuses on human or social interaction as the key ingredient of culture. Culture identifies how the individual is expected to behave in various life situations. Thus, different cultures will prescribe different ways of behavior. The second type of definition focuses on culture as a filter of perception and cognition (e.g., see Frake, 1981; Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). In this sense, culture is not only a set of prescribed behaviors, but a way of perceiving and thinking. In other words, each culture has a common way of thinking and behaving.

Table 1
Definitions of Culture

Researcher	Defiintion
Brooks, 1997, p. 23	Culture "refers to the individual's role in the unending kaleidoscope of life situations of every kind and the rules and models for attitude and conduct in them. By reference to these models, every human being, from infancy onward, justifies the world to himself as best he can, associates with those around him, and relates to the social order to which he is attached."
Harris & Moran, 1979, p. 57	"Culture is the unique life style of a particular group of people."
Frake, 1981, p. 375-376	"Culture . . . provides a set of principles for map-making and navigation. Different cultures are like schools of navigation designed to cope with different terrains and seas."
Gudykunst & Kim, 1984, p. 11	"Culture refers to that relatively unified set of shared symbolic ideas associated with societal patterns of cultural ordering."

Language and Culture

The idea that language and culture are interdependent has had a substantial impact on the field of second language acquisition. Learning the syntactic and semantic rules of the language is necessary but not sufficient for communication in that language (e.g., see Brown, 1987; Heusinkveld, 1997; Sapir, 1949; Seelye, 1984; Tseng, 2002). Byram and Morgan (1994) state that "knowledge of the grammatical system of a language [grammatical competence] has to be complemented by an understanding of culture-specific meanings [communicative or cultural competence]" (p. 4). Thus, to teach (or learn) a second language, one must teach (or learn) the culture of that language. In fact, disregarding aspects such as pragmatics and sociolinguistics in teaching foreign languages can only cause misunderstanding and lead to cross-cultural miscommunication. Thus, language is not an "autonomous construct" (Fairclough,

2001, p. vi), but a set of social practices. In other words, in order for communication to be successful, language use must be associated with culturally appropriate behaviors.

On the other hand, some scholars argue that teaching culture implicitly or explicitly to EFL students may have a negative impact (e.g., see Zaid, 1999). For example, Muslim EFL students always say *Inshallah* (God willing) whenever they talk about the future, and EFL teachers may correct students when they use this expression in speaking English as it is not used in native English-speaking cultures (Zaid, 1999). This is an instance in which the student's native culture conflicts with the target culture. Hyde (1994), however, disputes the notion that teaching the target culture "undermines the students' view of their own language and culture, or leads them to adopt a defensive mechanism or to reject their own cultural values" (p. 301). Chastain (1976) notes that "affinity for and commitment to a second culture is a personal matter that should remain in the realm of the student's own prerogative" (p. 384). Indeed, proponents of teaching the target culture argue that EFL students do not need to modify their schemata to acquire the new culture.

To avoid potential negative consequences of teaching the target culture, teachers should select materials and design activities which do not conflict with students' native cultures. The role of the language teacher is to promote understanding of the target culture, not to force it upon students. Chastain (1976) states that "if the teacher attempts to indoctrinate the students with attitudes from the second culture, he/she will most likely be rejected by the majority of his/her students" (p. 383). EFL teachers should find "ways of promoting positive feelings toward the L2 culture" (Savignon, 1983, p. 113), and to minimize possible conflicts that would negatively impact language learning.

A second possible solution is to nativize the second language (Hyde, 1994). With this approach, the transplanted language becomes independent of its own culture. For example, India created its own Hollywood for the film industry and named it Bollywood. Another example of this would be to allow EFL Muslim students to use the expression "God willing" when they talk about the future in English without being corrected or made to conform to L2 cultural standards of behavior and thought.

The Importance of Teaching Culture to Teachers

Byram and Risagar (1999) affirm that language teachers should act as mediators between learners and the target culture. They state that "it is the language teacher's capacity and responsibility to help learners to understand others and otherness as a basis for the acquisition of cultural and communicative competence" (p. 58). Stern (1983) states that since "language conveys culture, so the language teacher is also a necessity

to the teacher of culture" (p. 25). Language teachers are responsible for providing the cultural information that underlies the language (Zaid, 1999).

However, in practice, many foreign language teachers focus on grammatical competence and ignore teaching the target culture, and scholars disagree about what aspects of culture should be taught. Kramsch (1991), for instance, says that language teachers often reduce their culture teaching to the "four Fs: food, fairs, folklore and statistical facts" (p. 218). Mantle-Bromley (1997) asserts that language teachers need to go beyond the traditional definition of culture, which is limited to the fine arts. Seelye (1984) provides the most all encompassing suggestions for approaching culture. He believes that teachers should focus on helping students (a) understand how culture conditions behavior, (b) learn how social variables (i.e., age, sex, social class, and place of residence) affect the way people speak and behave, (c) become familiar with the conventional behavior of people in ordinary and crisis situations, (d) develop an awareness that culturally conditioned images are associated with many common target words and phrases, (e) demonstrate the ability to evaluate statements about a society, (f) demonstrate the ability to locate and organize information about the target culture from the library, mass media, people, and personal observation, and (g) demonstrate intellectual curiosity about the target culture and empathy for its people.

Language teachers must be aware of the target culture and be trained to teach it. Otherwise, negative consequences may occur which prevent cultural competence. For example, an untrained teacher may encourage cultural stereotypes. Stereotypical explanations influence students' perceptions of and attitudes toward the new culture and language (Kramsch, 1998; Tseng, 2002). In addition, cultural stereotyping may create "cultural boundaries between [language learners] and others" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 80). Accordingly, a teacher must "avoid value judgments from without because of the danger of calling bad what is merely different, or calling good what is merely pleasing to the outside observer" (Rivers, 1981, p. 323). Chastain (1976) argues that "if the culture is presented in such a way that false impressions arise, the alternative of 'no culture' is preferable" (p. 405). In other words, teaching culture should promote tolerance, peace, and communication among cultures. Teachers need to approach teaching the target culture so as to overcome the stereotypical attitudes and negative perceptions of students.

The second negative effect of not teaching the target culture is the possibility of creating a third culture interpretation. Teachers' unawareness of the target culture may lead students to create a third culture interpretation apart from the meanings approved by the target language community (Kramsch, 1993). Students cannot rely on only their own schemata to interpret the new culture. Zaid (1999) states that "schema theory holds that a culture develops its own schemata" (p. 112). For example, asking a student of

English to read about Thanksgiving without the benefit of background information about this holiday may cause that student to misinterpret the readings.

The last negative outcome of not teaching the target culture is the probability of exposing the language learners to culture shock (Ellis, 1985). Ellis (1985) defines culture shock as the "disorientating stress and fear, which a learner experiences as a result of differences between his or her own culture and that of the target language community" (p. 252). According to Brown (1987), teachers who are unaware of the target culture will not be able to help learners "step into the shoes of members of the foreign culture" (p. 38). Therefore, language teachers need to help students compare their native culture and the target culture to identify what is similar and what is different (Edgerton, 1971; Lado, 1964). For example, the use of inconsistent body language with words or expressions that are similar in both languages may confuse the receiver and cause misinterpretation.

Incorporating Culture in Teachers' Training: Practical Considerations

The issue now is how to include culture in language teacher training to enhance awareness of the target culture. Admittedly, language teachers are themselves learners, constantly improving their own cultural competence (Byram & Risagar, 1999). Teachers must be made aware that there are no superior and inferior cultures, and that there are differences among groups within the target culture. Ellis (1992) states that teachers are "not in the classroom to confirm the prejudices of [their] students or to attack their deeply held convictions. He adds that the teachers' task is to stimulate students' interest in the target culture, and to help in establishing the foreign language classroom "not so much as a place where the language is taught, but as one where opportunities for learning of various kinds are provided through the interactions that take place between the participants" (p. 171). The following ideas can be used to elicit the fundamental aspects of the target culture. They provide teachers with opportunities to learn from their experiences, and develop flexibility in their teaching styles.

Teacher Travel

One of the suggestions that can be applied in teacher preparation programs is to provide opportunities for teachers to travel abroad for one semester or more to complete a degree or engage in further studies. This opportunity can lead to increased mutual respect and the enrichment and progress of culture teaching. Byram and Risagar (1999) report that "tolerance can only be developed if [learners] have personal contacts with people abroad, live with them, work with them, and so on" (p. 115).

Related to this travel opportunity, EFL teachers may be able conduct an ethnographic study to explore and appreciate cultural differences. The use of ethnography in second language contexts is primarily a means of learning about small 'c' culture (e.g., see Robinson-Stuart & Nocon, 1996), thereby developing intercultural competence. An ethnographic study provides an opportunity for teachers to analyze and investigate their preconceived ideas about their culture and the target culture. For instance, teachers can compare topics such as marriage, race, or religion to identify differences and similarities in the home and target cultures. To do this, teachers would investigate a concept from their home culture by retrieving information, talking about it from experience, and expressing an attitude toward it. This stage takes place in the home country. Then, they examine the same concept, but in the target culture. In this stage, they need to interview and observe people from the target culture to see the cultural nature of the beliefs and behaviors associated with the concept.

In this way, teachers learn how to be critical and analyze information that may contradict their stereotypes. Living in the target culture gives teachers an opportunity to learn the practices and behaviors of the target culture from the inside and provides "a pedagogical tool to promote positive attitudes towards speakers of the language studied" (Robinson-Stuart & Nocon, 1996, p. 431).

Online Applications

Since many EFL teachers learn the target language and its culture within their own culture and cannot travel abroad, one way to develop their awareness and knowledge is to provide an opportunity to use authentic materials and to interact with them. This can be accomplished by establishing online courses or connections in which both nonnative and native speakers are enrolled. Trainers can include electronic discussions about teaching methods, require trainees to watch videos of English language classes from different parts of the world, and discuss classroom events and materials with their online classmates. Through these discussions, teachers can challenge their assumptions and understand the underlying significance of various cultural actions. This application can be available for teachers within a methodology course or as a separate tool for self-teaching.

In addition, EFL teachers can consider using online dialogue journals. Dialogue journals are often used to have conversations in writing in language and literacy classrooms. However, they can also be used for professional development purposes in order to extend interaction time between ESL and EFL teachers who cannot meet for reasons of time or distance. This activity provides a solution to possible time conflicts that are an issue with live electronic discussions as teachers can post their comments to their colleagues whenever they want.

Furthermore, the teacher preparation program can develop a WebQuest application. This application is an inquiry-oriented activity in which most of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the internet. A WebQuest contains the following parts: 1) an *introduction* that sets the stage and provides background information, 2) a *task* that is doable and interesting, 3) a set of *information sources* needed to complete the task, 4) a description of the *process* the learners should go through in accomplishing the task, 5) *guidance* for organizing the information acquired, 6) a *conclusion* that brings closure to the quest, and 7) an *evaluation* form. WebQuest is designed to motivate and create an authentic atmosphere for the learners. It uses scaffolding or prompting which has been shown to facilitate more advanced thinking. This activity enables teachers to explore and research the culture and customs of American culture, learn information about different aspects of American culture, and develop a respect and tolerance of people from different cultures.

Another suggestion for utilizing the internet in a training program is to create a cross-cultural teacher listserv that is open to teachers around the world to share their experiences teaching the target culture to EFL students. A listserv is a mailing list program for communicating with other people who have subscribed to the same list, using e-mail. By subscribing to this online service, teachers are able to ask, post, and discuss their concerns about teaching the target culture with native and nonnative speakers. It helps them expand their vision beyond one solution or method. Through these activities, pre- and in-service teachers can expand their awareness and knowledge of the target culture.

Cross-cultural Communication Courses

Another suggestion for improving courses within a teacher training program is to consider the inclusion of a cross-cultural communication course in which sociocultural strategies are taught (e.g., see Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002). One of these strategies is the identification and interpretation of unfamiliar features of an L2 culture. Trainees need to investigate discourse patterns across cultures, analyze the assumptions underlying various language teaching methodologies, and evaluate their appropriateness for target learner groups.

Teacher Club

Another idea to promote cultural learning is for teachers in the training program to form a club and invite members of the target culture who live in their country to participate in club activities. These target culture guests could include English teachers working in the country or those employed in other sectors. The club is a place where English teachers can meet members of the target culture in a casual setting. The teachers

have the chance to ask questions about the target culture. Topics could be set for discussions, and club members can explore cross-cultural differences and similarities. In addition, they are able to make friendships with those from the target culture as they get involved in various cultural activities.

Based on the club activities, teachers can be asked to create an action log. An action log is a notebook used for written reflection on club activities. Teachers complete an entry in their log books after each meeting in which they record their discussion partners' name, the topic for their discussion, their comments about what they discussed, and what they think they achieved. At the end of the course, they can combine all their action logs to create one action log to be used as a reference for themselves and new trainees. By requiring teachers to evaluate their discussions and cultural exchanges, they can better understand and appreciate the target culture. In addition, they will be able to share what they have learned with each other.

Conclusion

Although researchers have declared the importance of teaching the target culture, few of them have addressed how language teachers can learn about it. In fact, language teachers may even encourage various problems such as cultural stereotypes, creating a third culture, and/or culture shock that hinder students from successful language learning and cultural understanding. To prevent frustrations and possible failures due to teachers' unawareness of the target culture, teacher education programs need to provide ways to familiarize future teachers with the target culture. Ideally, this can be accomplished by exposure to and direct experience in the target culture through teacher travel. However, if this is not possible, other possibilities can be used such as the internet for intercultural interactions or the inclusion of a cross-cultural communication course. Future English teachers can also learn about the target culture from native speakers who are living in the EFL environment. In these ways, teachers can gain a greater understanding of the target culture and overcome the negative outcomes that can result from a lack of awareness of the target culture.

References

Brooks, N. (1997). Teaching culture in the foreign language classroom. In P. R. Heusinkveld (Ed.), *Pathways to culture* (pp. 11-37). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Brown, H. D. (1987). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (2nd ed). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Byram, M., & Morgan, C. (1994). *Teaching-and-learning-language-and-culture*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M., & Risager, K. (1999). *Language teachers, politics, and cultures*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Chastain, K. (1976). *Developing second language skills: Theory to practice*. Boston: Holt, Houghton Mifflin.

Edgerton, M. F. (1971). A philosophy for the teaching of foreign languages. *The Modern Language Journal, 55*, 5-15.

Ellis, R. (1985). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (1992). *Second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.

Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power*. London: Longman.

Frake, C. (1981). Plying frames can be dangerous: Some reflections on methodology in cognitive anthropology. In R. Casson (Ed.), *Language, culture, and cognition: Anthropological perspectives* (pp. 366-377). New York: Macmillan.

Foster, M., Lewis, J., & Onafowora L. (2003). Anthropology, Culture, and research on Teaching and Learning: Applying what we have learned to improve practice. *Teachers College Record, 105*, 261-227.

Harris, P., & Moran, R. (1979). *Managing cultural differences*. Houston: Gulf Publishing.

Heusinkveld, P. R. (1997). *Pathways to culture*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Hyde, M. (1994). The Teaching of English in Morocco: The place of Culture. *ELT Journal, 48*, 295-304.

Gudykunst, W., & Kim, Y. (1984). *Communication with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Kramsch, C. (1991). Culture in language learning: a view from the states. In K. De Bot, R. B. Ginsberg, & C. Kramsch (Eds), *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 217-240). Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and culture*. Oxford University Press.

Lado, R. (1964). *Linguistics across cultures: Applied linguistics for language teachers.* Ann Ardor: University of Michigan Press.

Malinowski, B. (1939). The group and the individual in functional analysis. *American Journal of Sociology, 44*, 938-964.

Mantle-Bromley, C. (1997). Preparing students for meaningful culture learning. In P. R. Heusinkveld (Ed.), *Pathways to culture* (pp. 437-460). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc.

Ovando, C. J., & Collier, V. P. (1985). *Bilingual and ESL classrooms*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rivers, W. (1981). *Teaching foreign language skills* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Robinson-Stuart, G., & Nocon, H. (1996). Second culture acquisition: Ethnography in the foreign language classroom. *Modern Language Journal, 80*, 431-449.

Sapir, E. (1949). *Culture, language, and personality*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Sauvé, V. (1996). Working with the cultures of Canada in the ESL classroom: A response to Robert Courchene. *TESL Canada Journal, 13*, 17-23.

Savignon, S. (1983). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice. Texts and contexts in second language learning*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Savignon, J. S., & Sysoyev, P. S. (2002). Sociocultural strategies for a dialogue of cultures. *The Modern Language Journal, 86*, 508-524.

Seelye, H. (1984). *Teaching culture: Strategies for inter-cultural communication*, Revised edition. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Stern, H. H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Tseng, Y. H. (2002). A lesson in culture. *ELT Journal, 56*, 11-21.

Zaid, M. A. (1999). Cultural confrontation and cultural acquisition in the EFL classroom. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 37*, 111-137.

About the Author

Mai A. Hassan is a PhD candidate in Composition and TESOL at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She has over three years of ESL teaching. Her research interests include the effect of culture on SLA and EFL teacher training.

TESL Reporter 41, 1 (2008), pp. 56-66

Tips for Teachers

Using Mime in the Language Classroom.

Peggy Pek Tao Tan, University of Science, Malaysia

English language teachers generally want to plan engaging, motivating, challenging learning experiences for their students. However, many factors contribute to making this goal difficult to achieve. Hot, poorly lit, overcrowded classrooms, curricular demands, and outdated teaching materials can be de-motivating for students. Sometimes, our teaching methods may be boring, particularly when we fall back on traditional lectures about grammar rules as a means of imparting knowledge about English.

In my English classes, I look for opportunities to use games, role-play, and other fun activities as a means of brightening up my lessons and cheering up my students. When they can laugh and smile, they are more inclined to participate and to discover that language learning can be immensely pleasant. Ironically, one of the techniques that is most effective in helping my students achieve this level of enjoyment is one in which they do not have to speak—pantomime. Mime requires a person to use body language, facial expressions, and gestures to convey meaning. Mime activities can be successfully incorporated into a variety of language lessons as the examples below illustrate.

Activity 1: Using Mime to Show Sentence Meaning

Example of sentence to be mimed: *I was walking along the road when a mad dog bit my leg.*

1. A student writes these words on the board: . . . *the road* . . . *bit* . . .
2. He acts out the first action of walking.
3. A partner acts out the second action of the dog bite.
4. The class guesses what the complete sentence is.
5. Another pair of students takes a turn at miming a sentence.

This activity can be varied by having one student, rather than a pair, try to act out the sentence. In a large class, students can work with the sentences in smaller groups so that more are likely to be actively engaged at one time than if the whole class is

observing only one or two people. Other sentences that work well with this activity include the following:

- I was reading a book when the telephone rang.
- I was sewing when a mosquito bit me.
- I was cooking when my bowl fell on the floor.

Activity 2: Using Mime to Describe Objects and Their Use

1. A student stands in front of the class and holds an imaginary telephone.
2. Without speaking, she mimes using the telephone to chat with someone.
3. The rest of the class, or a pair of students working together, names the imaginary object, describes it, and explains its function in five sentences.
4. New students take turns acting and describing.

Example student answer:

It is a telephone. It is used for communication. It is found in most homes and offices. We use the telephone to call our friends. It is fun to chat with friends and relatives.

Other objects that work well for this activity include a basket, shoes, scissors, spectacles, a tennis racket, a book, a ring, a toothbrush, and a ball. The possibilities are endless.

Activity 3: Using Mime to Tell a Story

1. Students are divided into groups.
2. In each group, one student is the narrator. He reads or tells the story.
3. The other students listen carefully and mime what is happening.

An example story that works well with groups of three:

One morning John woke up, stretched, and took a shower. He turned on the tap but the water was too hot. Ouch! The water burned his shoulder. Then he wiped himself dry, put on his clothes, and combed his hair. He cooked eggs for breakfast. He put some salt and pepper on his eggs and ate his breakfast hungrily. Next he put on his shoes and went to his car. It was a very hot day, so he was perspiring. He drove to the library and read a few books. After that, he went to visit his friend. He knocked on the door. His friend was happy to see him. They drove to the discotheque. They had drinks and danced. They enjoyed themselves thoroughly.

This activity can also be done without the narrator. Students write key words and phrases on the board or on cue cards and then mime their story. The audience or class

uses the cue words to tell the story. Some additional storylines that work well include a robbery, a drowning incident, a love story, and a visit to the doctor or dentist.

Activity 4: Using Mime to Explain a Procedure

1. Make groups of three of four.
2. Depending upon the proficiency level of the students, give them, or have them create, a topic and steps to describe a familiar process such as how to bake a butter cake, how to check a book out of the library, or how to check into a hotel.
3. Students work together to determine the key words and phrases that their audience will need. For example: For the cake baking procedure, they may choose *bowl, grams, sugar, butter, flour, eggs, mix*, and so forth.
4. They decide on roles and practice their mime.
5. The groups take turns presenting their mimes.
6. They begin by writing their key words on the board.
7. Then, they act out the process.
8. The rest of the class tries to describe the process.

Closing Thoughts

In addition to the suggestions mentioned above, my students have used their creativity and imagination to come up with storylines that include a tragedy, a shopping trip, a ghost story, and even an argument about interracial marriage. Although all of these activities include an element of mime, readers will notice that only a few students are actually required to be silent at any one time. In fact, most students are engaged in guessing, making suggestions, or trying to describe. By placing the focus on the mime, rather than on speaking, students relax and find it fun to enter into the description or narration activities. Even reticent students are inspired to cooperate, mime, and often try their hand at describing as well. I typically close my miming activities with a short writing assignment in which students review the sentences or retell their stories.

About the Author

Peggy Pek Tao Tan teaches English at the University of Science in Penang, Malaysia. She has been an ESL tutor for 27 years and is particularly interested in using games and drama techniques to enliven her language classes.

Promoting Learner Autonomy Through Project Work

Azzeddine Bencherab, Stambouli Mustapha University, Algeria

In a traditional teacher-centered language classroom, the teacher was the absolute transmitter of knowledge, controlling the what, the how, and the when of every language lesson. Recently, however, with increased use of communicative language teaching methods, the teacher's role has shifted from that of controller to that of facilitator, resulting in corresponding changes in student roles as well. In particular, students have the opportunity to use the target language in communicative tasks. Teachers who are committed to creating a communicative learning environment have at their disposal a wide array of curricular options, one of which is project work. A project is a series of activities undertaken over a period of time, which focus more on content (such as solving a problem or exploring an idea) than on a particular language skill.

Teachers who have adopted projects as a means of encouraging group work and fostering target language use find that completing projects requires students to engage in purposeful communication, utilize a variety of skills, and explore alternative routes for reaching their goals. Through working together on projects, students also become actively engaged in learning, sharpen their cognitive skills, and develop a greater sense of responsibility for their own learning. In other words, they develop greater learner autonomy.

This article describes a multifaceted project undertaken at Stambouli Mustapha University that resulted in all of the benefits described above and which could serve as an example for projects in other settings. The primary aim of this project was to create a collection of proverbs from several linguistic and cultural traditions in Africa. Secondary aims included helping students explore customs, language, and values in other countries and developing an attitude of tolerance and peace toward the peoples of those countries.

Developing the Project

To help us get started, we surveyed the literature on using projects. [We found Fredricka Stoller's 1997 article in the *English Teaching Forum* to be particularly helpful. It can be found at http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol35/no4/p2.htm.] Projects are typically described as a sequence of steps. The steps that we followed in carrying out our project may be best described as follows.

1. Preparing and planning. Teachers and students worked together from the very beginning. We identified the theme of the project—proverbs—and considered our goals. We decided to compile a set of proverbs from a variety of ethnic and

inguistic traditions throughout Africa. Part of planning is considering what resources students need to carry out a project. Our students needed books, the internet, and reference materials like encyclopedias, but parents and other elders were also important sources of information.

At this stage, we also organized students into three working groups and planned a series of lessons in which each group had a particular responsibility. For example, one group was responsible for doing research on the significance of proverbs and their importance in the oral tradition. They collected a set of proverbs from several different African ethnic and linguistic groups. Students in the second group tried to find similar proverbs in English, French, and Arabic focusing on similarities in meaning. The third group compiled all the proverbs and classified them under themes or topics. They also chose one proverb and illustrated it, either with drawings or by writing a story.

2. Gathering information. At this stage, students collected proverbs from a variety of sources—online, in print, and in person.
3. Compiling. After collecting their information, students examined it, organized it, and considered various ways of sharing it with others. Two examples of how students compiled their work are shown here, one in prose format, the other in a table. A third means of displaying their findings was to draw a sequence of pictures illustrating a particular proverb or a story in which the proverb would fit.

Example 1

Proverb: *Two ants do not fail to pull one grasshopper.*
Origin: Haya, Tanzania
Explanation:

Unity is an important value in many cultures. This Western Tanzania proverb is used to teach children how one could learn morality from ordinary things like insects. The Haya people believe that collective strength is always powerful however little it may be and that when two or more people decide upon something they cannot be mistaken or go astray.

Related English proverbs:

Unity is strength. United we stand, divided we fall. One good turn deserves another.

Related French proverb:

L'union fait la force.

Example 2

African Proverb	Origin	English	French	Arabic
Two ants do not fail to pull one grasshopper.	Haya (Tanzania)	Unity is strength United we stand, divided we fall	L'union fait la force	قوة في الاتحاد في الضعف
An eye that you treat is the one that turns against you.	Luo (Kenya)			
Words are like bullets; if they escape, you can't catch them again.	Wolof (Senegal)			

4. Presenting. Students presented their work orally using PowerPoint presentations or reports supported with pictures, posters, and other forms of media. To reach a wider audience, projects could also be posted to an internet site or collected and bound as a book.
5. Reflecting and evaluating. Students reflected on their work, identifying strengths and weaknesses. Teachers assessed parameters such as individual effort, creativity sources, and delivery.

Variations and Extensions

Once begun, a project such as this can grow in many directions.

1. Proverbs are often used as the closing line in fables. Students can look for fables that illustrate the proverbs that they are collecting. For example, this fable illustrates the proverb "One good turn deserves another" mentioned above.

The Ant and the Pigeon

An ant dropped unluckily in to the water as she was drinking at the side of a brook. A wood pigeon took pity on her and threw her a little bough to lay hold on. The ant saved herself by means of that bough, thanked the pigeon and left. As she was leaving, she spied a hunter making a shot at the pigeon. Upon seeing this, she ran as fast as she could and pinched him. The hunter cried with pain and missed his shot. And away flew the pigeon.

2. Students can look for ways to use the proverbs they have collected in retelling new or familiar tales. For example:

Mariama and the Apprentice

The story goes that a Wolof man named Omar was an apprentice to a mechanic. He fell in love with Mariama and asked her to marry him, but her father refused, saying that he didn't want a "blue-collar" worker as a husband for her. He wanted someone that had gone to school like Mariama had and who at least had a diploma of some sort. Five years passed. Omar went to France during that time and came back as a fully qualified mechanic and opened a mechanic's shop. The father of Mariama, seeing that Omar's business was prospering, sent a friend to tell Omar that Mariama still loved him and that he could now marry her. Omar, quite vexed, responded that he had never gone to school and that he was still a blue-collar worker. He then added a proverb. What proverb do you think he used?

3. Students can do additional research on the ethnic and cultural traditions from which the proverbs are collected. They might examine the origin, history, social structure, and way of life of the various groups of people whose proverbs are collected. This research might be done through books, the internet, and face-to-face with oral interviews or invited guests. They can discuss ways in which proverbs from various cultures seem to illustrate similar or different values. Other topics for research include oral traditions, storytelling, and transmission of moral knowledge in various cultures.

Conclusion

The project described above was met with great enthusiasm on the part of the students. Not only did it require students of different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to work together, but it also lifted a cultural barrier that had sometimes divided them. It raised learners' awareness of similarities between cultures, especially when it comes to teaching values through proverbs.

A project can be a useful means of promoting language use and increasing learner autonomy. It takes time, commitment, careful planning, and patience on the part of the teacher who should see the change of roles and distribution of power not as a threat but as a sine qua non condition for a more secure and democratic classroom. Project work constitutes a respite from traditional instruction and helps learners try their wings even at the price of losing a few feathers for a basic characteristic of autonomy is being willing to take risks.

About the Author

Mr. Azzeddine Bencherab is an assistant English teacher at Stambouli Mustapha, Mascara, Algeria. He has been teaching English for over twenty years and is especially interested in developing his students' reading and writing skills. He wishes to thank Mr. Abdelkrim Chami, his department chair, for putting all facilities at his disposal during the project and Ms. Mervat Al Harbaly, lecturer at Damascus University, Syria, for translating the proverbs into Arabic.

Appendix

The table below may help readers develop their own multilingual proverbs project.

African Proverbs	Origin	English Equivalent
1. Slowly, slowly, porridge fills the gourd.	Kuria (Kenya, Tanzania)	Patience can cook a stone.
2 A person who doesn't cultivate well his farm always says it has been bewitched.	Shona (Zimbabee)	A bad workman blames his tools.
3. Those who walk together warn each other.	Ganda (Uganda)	Unity is strength.
4. No matter how long a log stays in water, it doesn't become a crocodile.	(Tanzania)	A leopard can't change its spots.
5. No matter how hard it may get, an eventual comfort will be provided.	Gikuya (Kenya)	Every cloud has a silver lining.
6. One who relates with the corrupt gets corrupted.	Hausa (Nigeria)	Lie down with dogs and you wake up with fleas
7. The pants of today are better than the breeches of tomorrow.	Kongo (DRC)	A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush
8. Suffering comes prior to attaining success.	Chagga (Tanzania)	There is no rose without a thorn. No pain, no gain.
9. It is the calm and silent water that drowns a man.	Ashanti (The Gambia)	The calm comes before a storm.
10. What is bad luck for one man is good luck for another.	Ashanti	One man's meat is another man's poison.

Pass and Paraphrase

Ian Willey, Kagawa University, Japan

For students entering scientific disciplines, the ability to write papers in English is no longer just an asset—it is a necessity. At the medical school where I teach in Japan, the chief requirement for tenure is the number of publications one has in esteemed journals, and publications in Japanese have little value. Young doctors are simply mad to publish, yet most have received little instruction in academic English writing.

One skill that I have found that students badly need is the ability to paraphrase. It is not unusual to read papers written by students or colleagues with whole paragraphs from other sources pasted into their own writing. Simply warning students about the dangers of plagiarism is not enough. We tend to forget how hard it is to learn how to paraphrase or summarize another writer's ideas, even in one's first language. Furthermore, the boundaries and guidelines for borrowing and documenting another writer's words or ideas are often poorly understood. Students need instruction in how to paraphrase well. The activity described below has worked well for my students and may be useful for ESL/EFL students in other university level English writing classes as well.

Preparation

In the class before the main lesson, take a few minutes to introduce the notions of plagiarism and paraphrasing. Do this briefly and simply to avoid overwhelming students. Explain that plagiarism generally means the copying of someone's words without giving that person credit and that it is considered a form of stealing. However, paraphrasing, which means to use different words (one's own words) to express what an author has written or said, is permitted, so long as we properly acknowledge the source of the information. (The internet has a wealth of information about plagiarism including this excellent site from Clemson University's graduate school: http://www.grad.clemson.edu/plagiarism.php.)

Next, write on the board a few paraphrasing tips for discussion. They may include the following:

1. Do not use more than two or three words in a row from the original text.
2. Think of synonyms for key words (for example, *frightened* for *scared*).
3. Rearrange the writing, shaping sentences differently to reflect your voice.
4. Cut information that is not important or relevant for your audience.

The list of points can be expanded or simplified as appropriate for your class.

Finally, have students practice paraphrasing some sentences that you write on the board, starting with simple ones and moving to more complex.

For homework, ask students to write a short paragraph of 5-7 sentences that will be used for the paraphrasing activity in the next class. Suggest topics that do not entail too much challenging vocabulary. For example, I often ask students to write about a process, such as how to prepare a dish or how they get to school each day. A process topic lends itself well to paraphrasing tasks, and since science majors must often describe processes in the introduction or methods parts of their academic papers, it is a realistic task. Tell students to write or type their paragraph on a sheet of regular sized paper, folded into thirds, fitting their paragraph into the space above the first fold. [They will use the other two thirds of the page in the next class.]

Paraphrase Activity Procedure

1. Be sure all students have done their homework. Those who did not finish cannot participate or must work with another student.
2. Have students form groups of three, but sitting with their backs to each other, the opposite of how they would normally sit in groups.
3. Instruct students to pass their homework paragraphs clockwise or counter-clockwise within their groups.
4. Give students ten minutes to paraphrase their partner's paragraph using the middle third of the page. Remind them to try to find new ways to express what their partner has written, using different words and shaping or combining sentences differently.
5. When ten minutes have passed, tell students to fold the papers to hide the original paragraph and then pass the paper to the next group member.
6. Then, have students try to paraphrase the second paragraph in the remaining space, without looking at the first.
7. When time is up, have students pass the papers back to the original writer. Let them unfold the top third and see how their paragraph has mutated through rewriting. Give them some time to talk to each other about the changes and to ask questions.

Caveats and Extension

1. In a subsequent class, use an overhead transparency to show students some of the best examples of paraphrase. Keep this lively and fun. Paraphrasing is tedious

work, and dwelling too much on faults will discourage students about their writing ability.

2. In lower-level classes, students may need more than ten minutes to write, and some students will always finish writing more quickly than others. I try to be as strict as possible with the time limit, however, to keep the task moving.
3. If your students are keeping a journal, they can use it to practice paraphrasing. Ask them to find passages that interest them in newspapers, magazines, or on the internet, paste them into their journals, and then try to rewrite the passages in their own words. Alternatively, they could try rewriting a journal entry that they wrote several days or weeks earlier.
4. Advanced students can be encouraged to work with multiple sources and to practice giving credit to them using phrase such as "According to . . ."
5. Depending on the level and background of the students, you may want to introduce summary writing before or after your lessons on paraphrasing. You can begin by writing a summary paragraph together. For example, you might summarize the plot of a popular movie or a familiar folktale. Ask students to try to distill their paragraph into 2-3 sentences, and then just one. This forces them to recognize the essential information in a passage, to be concise, and to see that there are many ways to express the same idea. Then, they can try their hand at summarizing a written passage.

Conclusion

Paraphrasing is a challenging but essential skill in academic writing. It takes native speakers several years or more to become skilled at paraphrasing, and there is no reason to expect that second language learners will be able to do it well with just a few words of stern advice. The key is to integrate paraphrasing into a course so that students receive as much practice as possible over time. It is my hope that the activity described here will help other teachers to do just that.

About the Author

Ian Willey has an MA in TESL from Kent State University. He has been teaching in Japan for 10 years, at universities in Hiroshima, Tokyo, and Kagawa. Presently he is a lecturer at Kagawa University. His primary professional interest is helping students become better writers.

Language Teacher Research Series

Review by Melanie McKinney

Farrell, T. S. C. (Ed.). *Language Teacher Research in Asia*. In T. S. C. Thomas (Series Ed.), *Language Teacher Research Series*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL. Pp. 208. $29.95 (member $22.45). ISBN 193-118516-6.

Borg, S. (Ed.). *Language Teacher Research in Europe*. In T. S. C. Thomas (Series Ed.), *Language Teacher Research in Europe*. Alexandra, VA: TESOL. Pp. 206. $29.95 (member $22.95). ISBN: 978-193118537-0.

McGarrell, H. (Ed.). *Language Teacher Research in the Americas*. In T. S. C. Thomas (Series Ed.), *Language Teacher Research in the Americas*. Alexandra, VA: TESOL. Pp. 203. $29.95 (member 22.95). ISBN: 978-1931185-42-4.

Coombe, C., & Barlow, L. (Eds.). *Language Teacher Research in the Middle East*. In T. S. C. Thomas (Series Ed.), *Language Teacher Research in the Middle East*. Alexandra, VA: TESOL. Pp. 208. $29.95 (member $22.95). ISBN: 978-1-931185-41-7.

Burton, J., & Burns, A. (Eds.). (in press). *Language Teacher Research in Australia and New Zealand*. In T. S. C. Thomas (Series Ed.), *Language Teacher Research Series*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Language Teacher Research in Africa. (In press). In T. S. C. Thomas (Series Ed.), Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Research is one of the five organizational goals of TESOL Inc.'s *Forward Plan* (a document finalized in 1998 containing the organization's mission statement, values, goals, and objectives). In a president's address issued August/September 1998 in TESOL Matters, Kathleen C. Bailey (1998-99 TESOL President) publicly announced the TESOL *Forward Plan* and stated,

> Different leaders expressed the view that we must take TESOL research out of the exclusive confines of university departments and make it tangible to classroom teachers. . . . Another idea was that TESOL should establish a clear mechanism by which quality action research done by non-university members would be officially recognized at the convention and in publications.

With the explosion of discourse in the field on teacher learning and development, reflective teaching/practice, evidence-based practice (EBP), and research, *The Language Teacher Research Series* seems to have emerged with intentional timing to help achieve TESOL's research goals and objectives.

This series has a volume representing every continent (minus Antarctica). The series editor, Tom Farrell, is also the editor of the first volume, *Language Teacher Research in Asia*. This book, as do all in the series, contains thirteen articles researching a variety of topics, submitted by a range of teachers (Pre- K-12 grades, private language institutions, university, and teacher educators/trainers). The chapters are listed alphabetically according to the author's family name and follow a standard pattern of headings: Issue, Background Literature, Procedures, Results, and Reflection. Although the definition and method of teacher research is debated, the series and volume editors are in agreement that these books are designed to help language teachers at all levels engage in classroom reflection and research in order to cultivate professional development and increase the quality and effectiveness of teacher teaching and student learning. It is also their hope that despite the varied contexts and cultures, readers will be inspired to duplicate, or ultimately conduct their own teacher research, and share it with others.

Farrell, in Chapter One of *Language Teacher Research in Asia*, tells of a survey conducted in 2005 by Doan Thi Kim Khanh and Nguyen Thi Hoai An among 202 Vietnamese English teachers. Among those surveyed, "60% responded that they had conducted some research. Of those who had conducted research, 53% reported that they had undertaken research only once and that in many of those cases it was a requirement of an advanced degree" (p. 2).

The top three problems listed by these teachers in doing research were

1. Lack of time (31%)
2. Lack of experience (31%)
3. Lack of theoretical knowledge (26%)

These responses are not inclusive to any region, but are quite universal in nature. In his book, *Doing Teacher Research: From Inquiry to Understanding*, Donald Freeman shares his experience as a new language teacher.

> My first five years or so of teaching were pretty much consumed with getting the job done. Gradually, though, I gained a sense of balance and control, of efficiency in what I was doing in the classroom; I began to feel that I knew what I was doing and how to do it. Because I now felt that I had the basics under control, I became less concerned with getting the job done and more interested in how I was teaching" (p. 1).

Even after a teacher has taught for years, time is still a factor as to why research is not conducted. How to allot limited time for research depends on the teacher's determination and motivation. Though this series cannot create more time for teachers,

it may increase motivation for research by showing the methods of how it can be done, and the results, thereby stimulating curiosity and reflection of practices in one's own classroom. It also demonstrates that teachers from all educational institutions, particularly non-university, can in fact conduct and publish research.

The topics of research are not categorized according to continents; rather, teachers in these separate regions researched localized issues they themselves wanted to investigate according to their classrooms and situations. Thus, articles appearing in the volume on Europe could be just as valuable to teachers in Asia. In other words, research topics presented in each area are applicable for ESOL teachers across the globe.

This series could further help teachers lacking in research experience were it to provide a glossary of terms for each volume. The majority of language teachers in EFL environments are non native English speakers. A large majority of these teachers are also novices to research and to TESOL jargon. As a native English-speaker and someone familiar with TESOL research, I had to reread some articles several times in order to fully understand what the procedures and findings were. I came across vocabulary and terms I had never seen before, and felt that if it was confusing for me to read, it would certainly be difficult for non native English speakers unfamiliar with TESOL terminology and research methods to comprehend. Some articles are definitely more reader-friendly than others. Consequently, I feel a glossary of terms would benefit the target audience, and help save time in reading and understanding the featured research. It would be simple to include, and I hope it will be considered for the second volume.

For all of the effort put into creating this series and collecting submissions for each region-specific volume, I am amazed at how limited the availability is for these books. All TESOL published books are bought almost entirely direct from TESOL either through mail, phone, or online, and are rarely available in and through outside sources and bookstores. This is true for the *Language Teacher Research Series*. It is highly unlikely that a language teacher would come across one of these books in a bookstore (specialty or general). Subsequently, unless teachers in Africa, the Middle East, and other volume areas know about TESOL, Inc. and this series, have access to the internet, a credit card/check, and know how to order these books, distribution is extremely limited. This series acclaims the convenience of having one book containing several examples of teacher research from one specific area of the world. This is true, but the books will benefit only a select few unless distribution is increased and access to buying them is mainstreamed.

The *Language Teacher Research Series* is ambitious and represents every populated area in the world. The *Asia*, *Europe*, *The Americas*, and *The Middle East* volumes are all currently available for purchase online at the TESOL, Inc. website. The

Australia and New Zealand (which I feel should more appropriately be termed *Oceania* in order to include the other nations in this geographical area) and *Africa* volumes are forthcoming. I look forward to future volumes and articles representing countries not yet featured, and particularly to increased distribution, and a glossary.

References

Freeman, D. (1998). *Doing teacher research: From inquiry to understanding*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

About the Reviewer

Melanie McKinney holds a BA in TESOL from Brigham Young University-Hawai'i, and an MA in Asian Studies from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. She has taught throughout East Asia, and most recently as an EIL lecturer at BYU-Hawai'i.

Conference Announcements

Purdue University. June 5-7, 2008. The Seventh Symposium on Second Language Writing, "Foreign Language Writing Instruction: Principles and Practices." Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. E-mail tony@purdue.edu. Web site http://www.sslw2008.org/

FEELTA/NATE. June 26-28, 2008. "Building Bridges with Languages and Cultures," Far Eastern National University, Vladivostok, Russia. E-mail feeltacon@dvgu.ru. Web site http://feelta.wl.dvgu.ru/upcoming.htm

ACTA. July 10-12, 2008. "Pedagogies of Connection," Alice Springs Convention Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia. E-mail events@apapdc.edu.au. Web site http://www.tesol.org.au/conference/

A TESOL Symposium on Keeping Language Diversity Alive. July 9, 2008. TESOL's Symposium on Keeping Language Diversity Alive, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia. Web site http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID+250&DID-1722

A TESOL Symposium on Learner Autonomy: What Does the Future Hold? November 8, 2008. A TESOL Symposium on Learner Autonomy: What Does the Future Hold? Sevilla, Spain. Web site http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=250&DID=1722

Touchstone

Review by Tadayuki Suzuki
Western Kentucky University, USA

McCarthy, M., McCarten, J., & Sandiford, H. (2004-in press). *Touchstone. Levels 1-4*. Cambridge University Press. Student's Book with Audio CD/CD-Rom, $23 (Student Books also available in split versions A and B, $11.50 each); Workbook, $12, (split versions A and B, $8.50 each); Value Pack with Student Book and Workbook, ($25.73; Teacher's Edition $43; Class Audio Cassettes/CDs (set of 3), $56; Video VHS/DVD Program, $150; Video Resource Book, $25; Whiteboard Software, $400; Teacher's Resource Book (price not yet set); TestCrafter, $100.

Adult and young adult ELLs from basic to intermediate levels of proficiency will benefit from studying *Touchstone*, a four-level series focusing on speaking, listening, vocabulary, grammar, and conversation strategies. The series is especially useful for ESL and/ or EFL learners who want to develop the English language skills utilized in North America. Some conspicuous traits of this series include the selection of authentic words and usage and the emphasis on syntactic features in English. The words of the texts are selected from 700 million words collected by the Cambridge International Corpus of North American English (CICNAE), which are used daily by native speakers of English in North America.

Although many conversation texts are available, many of them unsatisfactorily emphasize discourse themes and topics. This series assumes that learners can develop more authentic language skills pertaining to semantic and structural usage of language, collocations, and discourses. The series does not merely target a narrow audience such as educated international students in order for them to gain English for Academic Purposes (EAP) skills. Rather, a variety of conversational topics such as describing a neighborhood (Unit 6 in *Touchstone* 1), talking about how to stay healthy (Unit 3, in *Touchstone* 2), talking about events in the news, and talking about errands and solving problems (Unit 7 in *Touchstone* 4) are included. Through the corpus-informed approach, learners become confident about their use of language because the language used in the series corresponds to what they frequently encounter through regular conversations and exposure to television and radio. This approach enables many ELLs to express their more abstract thoughts in various social settings in a more authentic manner.

A self-study audio CD/CD-Rom that comes with each student book provides additional listening and vocabulary practice. A supplementary workbook is a useful tool

that provides activities for learners to reinforce their reading and writing skills for each lesson. A teacher's edition provides step-by-step instructions, homework ideas, and a testing program with answer keys. Class audio CDs/cassettes, a video program, web support, and other tools such as multimedia and test creation software are also available to help teachers facilitate their instruction and maximize student learning.

Although nonnative speakers of English often possess extensive vocabulary and syntactic knowledge, they are not always familiar with connotations implied in English words or with how to combine the words in sentences. I believe that this corpus-informed *Touchstone* series may help many ELLs make significant improvement and gain confidence in their English proficiency.

About the Reviewer

Tadayuki Suzuki is an assistant professor of Literacy Education at Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky. His academic interests include teaching ESL, multicultural and bilingual education, children's and adolescent literature, and teaching reading in content areas.

Notes to Contributors

The *TESL Reporter* is a refereed semiannual publication of the Department of English Language Teaching and Learning of Brigham Young University Hawaii, and is dedicated to the dissemination of ideas and issues of interest to teachers of English to speakers of other languages worldwide.

Articles: Manuscripts (fully refereed) should be typed and double spaced throughout, generally not exceeding twenty-five pages. Each manuscript should be accompanied by a cover sheet with the title; author's name, position, and address; and a short (less than 50 words) biodata statement. Identifying information should not appear elsewhere in the manuscript in order to insure an impartial review. Authors are encouraged to follow APA style and review past issues of the *TESL Reporter* for matters of style. Any tables, graphs, or illustrations should be sent in camera-ready form whenever possible.

It is expected that manuscripts submitted to the *TESL Reporter* are neither previously published nor being considered for publication elsewhere. Upon publication, authors will receive six complimentary copies of the issue in which their article is published. Manuscripts are generally not returned to authors. Authors should retain a personal copy.

Tips For Teachers: Manuscripts (chosen at the discretion of the editor) should be typed and double spaced throughout, generally not exceeding eight pages. Editor invites submissions in either paper or electronic format, preferably as a Word attachment to an e-mail message. Each manuscript should be accompanied by a cover sheet with the title; author's name, position, and address, and a short (less than 50 words) biodata statement. It is expected that manuscripts submitted to the *TESL Reporter* are neither previously published nor being considered for publication elsewhere. Upon publication, authors will receive three complimentary copies of the issue in which their "tip" is published. Manuscripts are generally not returned to authors. Authors should retain a personal copy. Submissions should be sent to Jean Kirschenmann, c/o Center for English Language Programs, Hawai'i Pacific University, 1188 Fort Street Mall Room 133, Honolulu, HI 96813, USA. Email: jkirschenmann@hpu.edu.

Reviews of recent textbooks, resource materials, tests, and nonprint materials (films, tapes, or computer software) are also invited. Potential reviewers who indicate a particular area of interest to the review editor will be contacted concerning recent titles in that area. Requests for review guidelines should be addressed to the review editor. Authors of published reviews will receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which the review is published.

Advertising information is available upon request from the editor.

Abstracts of articles published in the *TESL Reporter* appear in *Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts.*

Submission of manuscripts can be sent to: Editor, *TESL Reporter,* BYUH #1940, 55-220 Kulanui Street, Laie, HI 96762, USA, or by email to: andradem@byuh.edu