It's Not What We Expected! A Case Study of Adult Learner Views in ESL Pedagogy

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Patsy Lightbown's article entitled "Classroom SLA Research and Second Language Teaching" (2000) in *Applied Linguistics* demonstrates that a rift still exists between theory and practice in second language acquisition (SLA). Researchers and teachers are often at odds when it comes to how research should be integrated into pedagogical decisions. However, another rift exists that often has equally detrimental implications for adult ESL learners. This is the disconnect between teachers' and students' beliefs and expectations about language pedagogy. If teachers base their pedagogical decisions for the adult ESL classroom on theories and assumptions that run counter to the intuition of adult learners, then an unproductive learning environment may emerge. To complicate matters further, if the adult learners have studied English in their native countries, then they likely bring certain expectations in regards to pedagogy which may or may not be met. In fact, highly educated students who come to an English-speaking country and study ESL may bring a host of pedagogical expectations (some related to language learning and others related to more general pedagogical practices) that run counter to those of their teachers. Consequences such as poor attendance, high attrition, and general dissatisfaction with the course may result.

This article presents a case study of an adult ESL program where students and teachers viewed language pedagogy differently, often resulting in some general dissatisfaction and perhaps contributing to student attrition. This is not meant to be an indictment of this particular program. Many students report being quite satisfied with the program described below. However, the data in this case study, at the very least, raise the question of how to better articulate pedagogical rationale to the students in light of the various adult expectations. In the time I spent conducting this study, I never observed teachers explain the rationale behind their pedagogical decisions, and so any student who questioned certain practices was frustrated and sometimes resentful. As the study will demonstrate, these frustrations and resentments were rarely voiced and so the teachers did not know to respond nor dialogue with students about the techniques they employed.

Background

Before describing the study, it will be helpful to outline some general tendencies in adult ESL research. Several approaches and orientations in adult ESL scholarship have replaced the more traditional grammar-based approaches. Certainly Stephen Krashen's (1983) work on comprehensible input and the Natural Approach has had an enormous impact on classroom approaches. Instead of grammar drills, an emphasis on comprehensible input has resulted in methods that strive to make all classroom interaction comprehensible in the target language. Additionally, the communicative approach, based on Dell Hymes' (1972) work, has influenced classroom teachers. In the communicative approach, the necessity of considering the communicative contexts that interlocuters find themselves in is highlighted. Classroom approaches based on a communicative approach do not necessarily de-emphasize grammar, but certainly more emphasis is placed on being able to communicate in specific contexts.

Critical pedagogy (CP) has also been an orientation that has influenced classroom research and practices. Based on early work by Paulo Freire with adult literacy in Brazil, CP researchers have noted that the emphasis in the adult ESL classroom must not be solely language (Auerbach, 1993; Nunan, 1988; Thomas, 1988). Indeed, Auerbach and Burgess (1989) criticize the traditional language learning approaches in an adult ESL setting because they tend to "prepare students for subservient roles and reinforce relations within the classroom by precluding the creation of meaning and development of critical thinking skills" (p. 475). To counter a tendency to focus on these "subservient roles" and prepare students only for minimum-wage jobs, many scholars have advocated a paradigm shift in ESL pedagogy and in classroom practices. Central to this shift is an emphasis on, as Freire (1970) says, forging "a pedagogy . . . with the oppressed, not for the oppressed" (p. 30).

These new directions in adult ESL pedagogy have produced new pedagogical orientations, classroom techniques, and materials. Certainly not all classroom teachers are aware of all the different approaches, but these new approaches have led in large part to more student-centered techniques. Among the most salient of these techniques are group work, inductive approaches to grammar, and limited error correction. These techniques are in keeping with the philosophical underpinnings of the approaches because they allow students to be more in charge of their language development. Instead of the teachers always determining the curriculum, students in learner-centered classrooms are more empowered to participate in curricular decisions.

The question that prompted this study is do adult ESL students share the same enthusiasm for these techniques, or do they view such techniques as an inexplicable abdication of duty by the teacher who, by relying on these approaches, is failing to

adequately prepare for class? Skilton-Sylvester's (2002) study of Cambodian immigrants' participation in an adult ESL program, found that many learners who left the program did so because the program did not allow them to develop their true identities in the classroom activities. Klassen and Burnaby (1993) found that adult ESL students found ways to cope with English in all environments except in their ESL class where they felt most unable to cope and understand how to get along. In the case study below, some learners reveal that it was not only their identities that suffered, but they were dissatisfed with many of the student-centered techniques that were unexpected and considered marginally effective, making their ESL classes a place where they could not get along. While not all student-centered classrooms have activities that students do not like, this study indicates that many adult students are uncomfortable with new language learning techniques and prefer more traditional and grammar-driven approaches. The irony is that adult ESL teachers who use student-centered techniques to make their curricular decisions more transparent often fail to dialogue with students about why they are using certain approaches, and therein lies the disconnect and the differing expectations.

The Study

Ethnographically-oriented case studies have the benefit of allowing multiple voices to share their opinion of the same topic from different perspectives (Gillespie, 1993; Van Lier, 1988; Watson-Gegeo, 1988; Wiley, 1993). This methodology is especially useful in addressing attitudes towards pedagogical techniques and how this affects views of an ESL program's effectiveness. This research paradigm allows one not only to develop a *thick description* (Geertz, 1973), but it also is the one paradigm that most directly speaks to teachers (Van Lier, 1988) and can heal the rift between theory and practice in SLA. For these reasons, an ethnographic methodology was selected for this study.

In this semester-long study of a moderate sized (150 students) ESL program known as the Green Acres ESL School (a pseudonym), located on the campus of a large mid-western university, I examined the attitudes of the adult ESL students towards the techniques that their teachers used. Green Acres has a diverse population, but the three main ethnic groups are Latin American, Chinese, and Korean. Over 80% of the students are female.

Ethnographic studies seek to identify *encultured members* (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972); that is, group members who understand the culture of the group well. This was a challenge at Green Acres since each student comes to the school with a different agenda. Some students come to the school simply to give structure to their day because their spouse is gone all day attending graduate classes, others to learn enough English to attend an American university, and others to be able to able to watch TV and/or

participate in popular events. In the end, these three motivations became the basis for selecting three main encultured group categories: spouses, potential university students, and popular events' participants. I identified these groups of students who share some common characteristics, and I interviewed students from each of the groups. First and most important are the female spouses whose husbands are full-time graduate students. The majority of students at Green Acres are from this group. However, the other two groups are a very important component of the school and add an interesting dimension to each classroom.

I interviewed a total of ten students from different levels (beginning, intermediate, advanced) who represent the different kinds of students mentioned above. I also conducted three focus group interviews with the three major different ethnic groups: Chinese, Korean, and Latin-American. This was done primarily because some students were hesitant to discuss teaching techniques in one-on-one interviews. They were far more talkative, open, and ultimately critical in the focus groups. The focus groups also allowed a comparison of the way different ethnic groups viewed the techniques at the school. Each focus groups consisted of eight to ten participants.

I also interviewed 10 teachers who are presently or had recently taught at the school and had been at the school long enough so that they were encultured in the educational setting. The school has a part-time staff of eight teachers, one of whom serves as director. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and coded according to themes such as attitudes towards group work, classroom activities, and error correction. I asked *grand tour* questions (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972) so that students could give me a verbal tour of the educational culture, the pedagogical techniques, and their feelings about them. A representative list of questions is included in the appendix. I also examined pedagogical practices by observing and audio-recording ten classes and examining course materials.

Data Analysis

After collecting all data, I coded the 300 pages of transcripts, field notes, and documents using seven categories. During my data collecting, seven themes seemed the most revelatory in regards to the culture at the school. These seven themes are:

1. formality of school (classes)
2. L2 teaching/learning beliefs
3. teaching/learning of American culture
4. student attrition
5. testing
6. socialization
7. language learning goals

My first step in beginning an analysis was to use the data to provide an accurate description of the program (Patton, 1990). Comparing and contrasting comments from informants as well as noting actions of cultural participants in regards to these categories accomplished this part of the analysis. Patton (1990) notes that in analysis, qualitative researchers can use a case analysis or a cross-case analysis. A case analysis is used when the researcher writes a case study for each person interviewed. A cross-case analysis means "grouping together answers from different people to common questions or analyzing different perspectives on central issues" (Patton, 1990, p. 376). For this study, I deemed a cross-case analysis more appropriate because students at the school vary considerably in their backgrounds and their expectations from the program. In order to highlight the diversity in regards to the major attributes of the program, a cross-case analysis was the best choice.

To begin the analysis, I coded all the data and then grouped the comments, journal entries, and sections of documents with similar codes. This coding allowed a comparing and contrasting of the issues at hand, such as different views as to whether the teachers should use group work. By comparing quotes from teachers and students, it became clear that each group varied in its opinion regarding this area. This coding, sorting and grouping of data by themes allowed a balanced description of the school and its culture.

The interpretation of this kind of data can be subjective so triangulation is necessary to see if the same interpretation can be derived from multiple sources. For instance, the question of attrition brought different sorts of answers from teachers and students. Since this can be a controversial area, I could not rely solely on comments and interviews. I had to supplement these with observations of student attendance in a class. I analyzed enrollment and attrition patterns from morning, afternoon, and evening classes in an effort to understand the motivation for attrition.

A particularly relevant feature of the students at this school is their level of education. The students at Green Acres are all well-educated with most having a college degree from a university in their native country. Many have graduate degrees as well. This undoubtedly influences students' expectations of language learning techniques since most students have had exposure to second and foreign language classes in their home countries. This high level of education also limits the study's generalizability. Nonetheless, the data present an interesting picture of some of the kinds of differing expectations that may occur when teachers and students are not uniform in their beliefs about teaching techniques.

Findings

Group Work

One of the major differences for many students at the Green Acres ESL School and their native countries in terms of approaches to learning an L2 is the use of group work. Julia, one of the teachers at Green Acres and a strong advocate of group work, noted she has difficulty convincing students of the efficacy of group work. Many students said in interviews that they think teachers who use group work are abdicating their duties. Even in Conversation I and Conversation II, many students will not actively participate in group work. Rather, they expect the teacher to give some sort of lecture. One Chinese student put it this way: "I think some teachers would say, 'OK, you four in group talk for ten minutes or twenty minutes.' Teacher go away and the students talk for twenty minutes. . . . I prefer to listen to the teacher."

A related issue to group work is how much student participation the teacher should allow. There is a difference of opinion among the different ethnic groups on this issue. The main difference lies between those students who are Asian and those who are Latin American. Asian students expressed their opinion that the teacher should be the focus of any class, and students should participate only when asked specifically by the teacher. This attitude often conflicts with the beliefs and attitudes of the Latin American students. When I asked a group of Latin American students about their Asian classmates' participation in class, the Latin Americans expressed their dismay that the Chinese and Korean classmates would not talk in group work or other activities. One Latin American focus group participant related that having Asian members in the same classroom is good for cultural enrichment. However, due to different language backgrounds and pedagogical expectations, it can be problematic in language learning matters. She put it this way:

> Sometimes the Chinese have bad pronunciation. They write very well, but bad pronunciation. And this is the situation with the Chinese and Koreans. They think they have higher levels than they really have. And sometimes they want to go to classes which are no good for them.

Students from Latin American backgrounds voiced their frustration several times at having to listen to "bad English" from Chinese-speaking classmates in group work and in class discussion. They enjoy the cultural enrichment of learning about China and Korea from their classmates, but want them to speak less than they do.

On the other hand, the Chinese students think that Latin American students monopolize conversation in group work and in class discussion. Their view was that

students should listen to the teacher, and they were often indignant that classmates spoke more than the teacher.

Inductive Approaches to Grammar

Two extremes exist at the school among the teachers regarding grammar instruction: those who follow a natural approach that is student-centered and de-emphasizes formal grammar, and those who follow a grammar-based methodology. These competing attitudes towards the role of grammar informs and shapes behaviors of the teachers and the activities they do in class.

Those who follow a natural approach rarely prepare grammar instruction. Rather, they prepare activities designed to pique student interest. For example, on the day I observed Conversation I, the teacher designed a lesson on adjectival usage. She wrote fifteen adjectives on the board that could be used to describe people such as *cheerful*, *inquisitive*, and *happy.* The students were asked to pick out the three that described themselves the best and tell why. During the class, one student asked about the suffix *-ness* that could be used to form the noun *cheerfulness*. The teacher was somewhat unprepared for such a question as her response revealed:

> Well, you can be cheerful. Cheerful, cheerful, cheerful and that's the specific quality, but cheerfulness is like . . . the general idea and is not specific, it's more general. Someone who shows cheerfulness is someone who goes through life with politeness. You know what I mean? If you don't fully understand the *-ness* don't worry about it. As long as you understand the root word itself. The root meaning. You know because we'll be speaking about it in the general sense.

The student was noticeably and understandably frustrated by this answer, but did not pursue the issue further. However, the lesson seemed to be a success in that students did practice several unfamiliar adjectives, and by the sheer repetition of the adjectives, the students might have a good chance of remembering them and being able to use them in future communication. However, all the students interviewed expressed concern that a lack of explicit grammar instruction would hinder their acquisition of standard English. They simply could not conceive of the benefits of an inductive approach. On the other hand, the natural approach teachers were very proud of the fact that they did not burden the students with grammar explanations. The more popular teachers were those who think there is a place for explicit grammar instruction in the classroom. The teachers who did not incorporate grammar lessons were usually criticized for their lack of teaching ability.

Error Correction

All students unanimously agree that explicit error correction should be employed as a pedagogical technique. They expressed resentment about teachers not correcting them. The students reject any teaching approach that would eliminate explicit error correction by the teacher. They fear fossilization in their language development and deem constant correction as the only remedy. Students understand and appreciate that the teachers are being polite and not wanting to make them feel uncomfortable (a very Freirean notion), but this is not the main emphasis for them. "Sometimes teachers are afraid to hurt your feelings," said one student. This sentiment was echoed by another student who noted, "But we don't know if we make mistakes. If I say something, I don't know if it's right." Students related many stories about their attempts to use English in the community and felt that if the teachers had corrected them in class, then they would have had fewer embarrassing situations in the real world. I think it is fair to draw the conclusion that while no language learner likes to appear foolish, the situation is magnified at Green Acres due to the fact students are often the educated elite in their countries, and they do not want to sound uneducated. Many students related stories about local people who laughed at them or told them to "learn English before coming to this country." One student in an intermediate class related her experience when she went to buy her books for her ESL class. All the books for Green Acres are located in a special section in the university bookstore. When this student asked where she could locate the books, a salesperson responded by saying, "Oh, you're an F2. Your section is over there." F2 is her visa status. The student said the only reply she could manage was, "I'm not an F2." The students at the school want to be able to go out and interact in the community without having marked English and correction by their English teachers, they believe, is the best means to this end.

Many teachers are certainly influenced by Stephen Krashen (1983) and his view that explicit grammar instruction and correction is inferior to the Natural Method. Teachers at the school who refuse to correct or teach grammar believe they are being faithful to new research. However, this is not explained to students, and it becomes a contentious issue, especially for adult students who have had some English training that emphasizes grammar in other countries. The usual reaction of these students to methodologies that de-emphasize grammar and error correction is bewilderment and quite often attrition. In any given class the attrition rate is around 50% over the course of a 15-week semester. While students leave for many reasons, the issue of mismatching of pedagogical practices is undoubtedly, as many students noted, a contributing factor.

Interestingly, teachers who feel as though they do indeed correct, expressed frustration that it never seems to increase proficiency as quickly as they would like.

Teachers who prefer the more advanced classes do more correction than those who work with lower level learners. They believe that explicit correction does eventually assist in acquisition. Many teachers who work with lower level learners are more suspicious of correction and have an intuitive feeling that exposure to the language will result in acquisition and that correction can be a hindrance because it raises anxiety levels and does not really seem to aid in acquisition. The teachers at the higher levels think a systematic explanation of English grammar coupled with constant correction will result in error-free proficiency in English. The teachers with an emphasis on grammar reported having a lower rate of attrition in their classes.

Discussion and Implications

> We have to be honest and say it is English that brings them in the door. But it's the caring and nurturing that keeps them here. You know . . . to me . . . a lot of it is really the caring . . . I mean, by the end of the semester I feel a real bond.

This comment comes from Miriam, one of the most popular teachers at the school. It captures a prevailing sentiment among the teachers concerning their roles. They feel that in the end, while methodology is important, their role as nurturers is equally if not more important. While they are concerned with methodology, they do not view it as paramount to a successful class. For their part, students at Green Acres appreciate the care and concern of the teachers and for many students this is indeed a tremendous benefit, but overall they are more concerned with a successful English learning experience, and this starts with sound methodology.

A former director of the school, Stephanie, very succinctly noted that in her opinion, the students "just don't want the pressure of a real school." While some students report that they appreciate the nurturing environment, they primarily seek a school that will teach them English. Ironically, the very thing that intensifies their feelings of being disconnected from their new surroundings is the issue that problematizes language learning: The students are well-educated and had professional lives in their home countries. Due to their level of education, they expect classes to be a certain way and when these expectations are not met by the school or by individual teachers, they are dissatisfied with the academic life of the school even though they relish the community spirit. The problems with attrition and the debate over the role of explicit grammar instruction indicate that students and teachers have not yet found a perfect combination of traditional and new language teaching techniques.

The goals of the students determine their attitudes towards the school. Unquestionably, the teachers feel a need to help students fit into their new surroundings.

This remains crucial and essential. Yet all classes are not academic in nature and students wish they were. Consequently, attrition occurs because the class or the school itself lacks a certain air of formality.

Some students view group work as a way for the teacher to "be lazy," while the teachers view group work as a way to address the concern of students that they do not have enough opportunities to practice. If teachers continue to use group work, they need to maintain constant dialogue with students. Teachers should explain their rationale in using group work, and students must voice their desire to listen to the "expert."

Another issue that must be addressed is "free talking." Teachers view "going off on a tangent" as beneficial and interesting for the students. However, the students want to follow a more structured plan. The students grow weary of starting every Monday with half the class period taken up with impromptu discussions of what each student did over the weekend.

It should be noted that sometimes teachers do rely on these discussions as fillers on the occasions they are not adequately prepared for class. Many of the teachers admitted that on days they are not prepared, "We just talk." For those students who want a more formal and systematic approach to English, these informal discussions are frustrating. While they enjoy the discussions, they do not think the official lesson has begun and as a result think their English may not be improving. Whether or not simple exposure to the L2 is sufficient for acquisition is a question that lies outside the boundaries of this study; however, it is obvious that the students who want more formality can be frustrated because their belief about L2 learning is incongruent with the beliefs of the teachers. This frustration alone may hinder acquisition.

The most pressing issue that I noticed is the need to address the issue of "listening to bad English." Many students complained that it is a waste of their time to come to class and listen to other students dominate the class and answer every question. While group work was viewed as the answer to this, instructors need to pursue other solutions.

The school's former director captured the attitude of the students towards different teachers' approaches by noting that they "tend to gravitate to those teachers who best fit their notion of a language classroom." To a large extent this is true. Students typically self-select classes with some guidance from teachers. In observing classes and talking with students, it became apparent that students often selected a class not based on their level of proficiency, but based on the teacher and the time of day of the class.

Conclusion

Certainly, results of this ethnographic case study are not generalizable to every situation, nor does space allow for a complete description of all the incongruities between teachers and students. But there are some remarks that can be made about the nature of the adult ESL classroom and student reactions to teaching techniques.

First, a lack of understanding and appreciation of the students' perceptions causes a rift or gap between students and teachers. This problem can be resolved in several ways: attrition, more student-teacher dialogue, or the altering of classroom procedures. They are all problematic. Attrition certainly is not a good solution. Dialogue may or may not resolve issues and many teachers are unwilling (or unable) to change classroom techniques. I think it incumbent upon the teachers to decide what combination of the last two suggestions is right for their pedagogical contexts. Teachers should begin to acknowledge that perhaps students understand their own needs and learning preferences and despite their lack of familiarity with SLA research, they know what works for them as students. Well-intentioned researchers warn against "assuming that a total linguistic and cultural assimilation into the dominant group is desirable, necessary or inevitable" (Wiley, 1993, p. 428) in adult ESL when it comes to teaching culture. The same could be said for teaching methodology. Students need not be ignored when considering methodology nor must they be assimilated into current methodological practices. Teachers must guard against making the class unrecognizable, so that it becomes the one place that students feel they cannot manage (Klassen & Burnaby, 1993).

Second, every teacher knows that it is impossible to please every student in a classroom, nor should we try to. However, second language learning involves a range of emotions that other learning often does not. Language is deeply personal and all second language learners develop a "language ego" (Brown, 1994) that is often fragile. Teachers should be aware of this and work to develop trust with the students in regard to classroom techniques. The more trust that develops, the more chance of successful dialogue between students and teachers. This trust and dialogue will allow teachers to clearly articulate their rationale for classroom decisions. For those teachers who do not have clear rationale, they should develop it. To not develop it betrays the integrity of the classroom and the trust between student and teacher.

Finally, this trust also will allow frustrated students to feel more open about sharing their frustrations and their expectations with the teachers. Ultimately such dialogue, whether formal or informal, will benefit language acquisition in the adult ESL classroom. Teachers may not be able to please everyone, but at least students should be made to understand why teachers do what they do in the language classroom.

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Appendix A
Interview Questions

Questions for Students

1. Why is there a problem with attrition at the ESL School?
2. What are the methods and activities teachers use to help improve your English?
3. Describe a typical class period.
4. What are your language learning goals?
5. Do you like learning American culture in addition to English?
6. Which teacher uses an approach you like?
7. What is your best memory of the School?
8. What is your worst memory of the School?
9. What should be changed at the School?

Questions for Teachers

1. Why is attrition a problem?
2. What methods do you use in your classes?
3. How do adults best learn a second language?
4. What is an experience you have had that captures the spirit of the School?
5. What are the language learning goals of your students?
6. Do you have an English-only rule in class?
7. What direction should the School take from here?

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The Theoretical Relevance and Efficacy of Using Cooperative Learning in the ESL/EFL Classroom

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Contemporary conceptualizations of language proficiency underscore the importance of teaching and using language in the context of authentic communication (Bachman, 1990; Omaggio-Hadley, 2001). These conceptualizations suggest that while a skill-based perspective on language teaching that focuses on the linguistic skills involved in listening, speaking, reading, and writing might be useful in identifying and teaching certain syntactic and semantic elements of language proficiency, such a perspective does not encompass all the requisite competencies involved in authentic communication. For instance, the speaking skill can be thought of as an *interpersonal* skill involving two-way communication and negotiation of meaning when two or more interlocutors converse about a certain topic. Speaking can also be thought of as a *presentational* skill when a speaker addresses an audience. These two communicative situations require a variety of linguistic as well as pragmatic competencies relative to the appropriateness of utterances, naturalness of language, sensitivity to the register, awareness of cultural referents and so forth.

Similarly, listening, reading, and writing require a variety of linguistic and paralinguistic competencies that vary according to the demands of certain textual as well as contextual variables that impact communication. Specifically, a certain act of communication such as listening to an academic lecture versus carrying out a conversation, reading an expository text versus reading a short story, or drafting a memo or a business letter versus composing an argumentative essay or a research article requires a variety of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and pragmatic competencies.

Consequently, there is a need for a balanced instructional approach in teaching English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) that addresses and integrates the pedagogical implications of the sub-skills as well as the functional and interactional models of language. Such an approach would focus on developing the learner's linguistic as well as pragmatic competencies through the provision of classroom opportunities for interaction and practice that break down the stereotypes of traditional

classroom procedures and allow learners to democratically and independently interact in order to construct knowledge, negotiate meaning, and enhance comprehension (Christison & Bassano, 1981).

Recently, cooperative learning (CL) has been proposed as a framework for organizing and maximizing authentic and purposeful classroom interaction among learners in a supportive and stress-reduced environment, thereby increasing their achievement in the cognitive, affective, and social domains of schooling. The purpose of this article is to explore the theoretical relevance and possible applications of CL in ESL/EFL instruction. Specifically, it attempts to define CL from the perspective of ESL/EFL instruction by suggesting the possible primary applications of this instructional approach in targeting the organizational and pragmatic aspects of language proficiency. In addition, the article demonstrates how CL works in the context of teaching language rules and mechanics through the application of the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) cooperative method.

What is Cooperative Learning?

Cooperative learning is viewed in the context of the present article as a general term for an instructional approach that emphasizes conceptual learning and development of social skills as learners work together in small heterogeneous groups according to the principles of positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, and group processing (Johnson, Johnson & Stanne, 2000). Presently, there is more than "one flavor of cooperative learning" (Kluge, McGuire, Johnson, & Johnson, 1999, p.19) operationalized into a number of techniques and structures. These techniques and structures include Learning Together (LT) (Johnson & Johnson, 1975/1999), Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) (DeVries & Edwards, 1974), Group Investigation (GI) (Sharan & Sharan, 1976, 1992), Constructive Controversy (CC) (Johnson & Johnson, 1979), Jigsaw (Aronson, Blaney, Sikes, Stephan, & Snapp, 1978), Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) (Slavin, 1978), Complex Instruction (CI) (Cohen, 1986), Team Accelerated Instruction (TAI) (Slavin, Leavey, & Madden, 1986), Cooperative Structures (CS) (Kagan, 1985), and Curriculum Packages: Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) (Stevens, Madden, Slavin, & Farnish, 1987).

Table 1, adapted from Johnson, Johnson, and Stanne (2000), presents the various cooperative learning models, their history, developers and possible primary applications in the context of ESL/EFL instruction.

Table 1

Modern Methods of Cooperative Learning

Researcher Developer	Date	Method	ESL/EFL Primary Applications
Johnson & Johnson	Mid 1970s	Learning Together	Reading, Writing, Speaking, Culture
DeVries & Edward	Early 1970s	Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT)	Language Rules and Mechanics
Sharan & Sharan	Mid 1970s	Group Investigation (GI)	Writing, Culture
Johnson & Johnson	Late 1970s	Constructive Controversy (CC)	Culture
Aronson, Blaney, Sikes, Stephan & Snapp; Slavin	Late 1970s	Jigsaw Procedure	Reading, Literature
Slavin	Late 1970s	Student Teams - Achievement Divisions (STAD)	Language Rules and Mechanics
Cohen	Early 1980s	Complex Instruction (CI)	Social Skills, Culture, Reading, Writing, Language Rules and Mechanics
Slavin, Leavey, & Madden	Mid 1980s	Team Accelerated Instruction (TAI)	None
Kagan	Mid 1980s	Cooperative Learning Structures	Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing
Stevens, Madden, Slavinn, & Farnish	Mid 1980s	Curriculum Packages: Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC)	Reading, Writing, Spelling, Vocabulary, Literature

Learning Together

This CL model organizes instruction according to the principles of heterogeneous grouping, positive interdependence, individual accountability, social/collaborative skills, and group processing. Heterogeneous grouping is formed on the basis of mixed ability as determined by past achievement as well as based on some demographic variables such as gender, race, ethnicity, and so forth. Positive interdependence among group members is structured through setting a common goal, assuming a common identity, using the same space and resources, getting the same reward and so forth. Individual accountability is structured through individual testing, random responses to teachers' questions, and reporting on behalf of the group. Finally, learners do group processing to reflect on their achievement as a group and plan for further cooperation. In the context ESL/EFL instruction, learners may learn together in a classroom climate of academic and personal support in order to read and comprehend a certain text, write an essay, and/or prepare a group project or presentation about certain aspects of the target culture (i.e., beliefs, conventions of behavior, attitudes, values, and so forth).

Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT)

In this method, instruction is organized into the five major components of lesson planning—class presentation, team study, tournament, determining individual improvement points, and team recognition. Initially, the teacher introduces the material under study in a class presentation, following which learners work together to complete worksheets in heterogeneous groups of four members each, making sure that all team members have understood the material. A tournament is then held at the end of a week or unit during which team representatives of similar levels of ability (high, average, low) compete together to earn points for their teams. Finally, the achievement of various teams is determined by calculating the average improvements earned by the members of the teams. TGT is most appropriate for teaching spelling and the language rules and mechanics of the target language.

Group Investigation (GI)

This method divides work among group members who plan and carry out investigations, complete individual specific tasks, and then reconvene to discuss their work, coordinate the various tasks, and present a final group project. First, the teacher presents a problem to the learners who work in heterogeneous groups to scan topics, identify resources, assign primary responsibilities, individually research issues, and then reconvene to prepare and present a group project. In the ESL/EFL context, GI is particularly well-suited for completing complex tasks such as writing a research paper,

preparing a presentation about some relevant theme or issue, or developing culture capsules, mini-dramas, and clusters to learn about certain aspects of the target culture.

Constructive Controversy (CC)

Learners in Constructive Controversy (CC) are assigned to heterogeneous groups of four members each and each group is divided into two pairs. Instruction proceeds by stating an issue and assigning a position to be advocated by each pair. First, learners research and prepare the best possible case for their assigned position, present their best case to the two other members of their team, engage in open and free discussion, reverse roles to have the best case possible for the opposing position presented, and finally drop all advocacy and strive together to find a synthesis on which they can all agree by summarizing the best evidence and reasoning from both sides. CC is particularly well-suited for researching and debating certain aspects of the native language culture and the target language culture, thereby increasing ESL/EFL learners' knowledge of cross-cultural variations in the belief systems, norms, and values as well enhancing the learners' general research and communication skills.

Jigsaw Procedure

This procedure can be used whenever the material under study is in a narrative or expository form. Instruction proceeds according to the following stages of lesson planning: reading the assigned material, expert group discussion, team reporting, and finally team recognition as in TGT. Jigsaw is most appropriate for teaching literature, biography, a chapter in a book, or any other similar narrative, expository, or descriptive textual material.

Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD)

This method is very similar to the TGT method described above except that instead of the tournament in the TGT, learners in STAD take individual quizzes and tests in order to determine their mastery of the material under study. Like TGT, STAD is most appropriate for teaching the language rules and mechanics of the target language.

Complex Instruction (CI)

In Complex Instruction (CI) learners use multiple-ability curricula that are designed specifically to foster the development of higher-order thinking skills through group work activities organized around a central concept or big idea. Most importantly, the tasks require a wide array of intellectual abilities so that students from diverse backgrounds and different levels of academic proficiency can make meaningful contributions to the group task. In addition, learners are trained in using CL instructional strategies in order to acquire group work norms and management skills. CI

ensures equal access to learning through status treatments to broaden learners' perceptions of what it means to be smart, and to convince learners that they each have important intellectual contributions to make to the multiple-ability task. In the context of ESL/EFL, CI can be used to teach all the language skills in addition to language structure given that instruction is organized around certain general sociological principles and is not designed to suit any particular type of knowledge or skills apart from social interaction and group participation.

Team Accelerated Instruction (TAI)

TAI is a program specifically designed to teach mathematics to students in grade 3-6 or older. As such, it is not directly relevant to ESL/EFL instruction.

Cooperative Learning Structures

The CL structural approach is based on using a variety of generic and content-free ways of managing classroom interaction called structures. These structures can be used for team and class building, communication, mastery learning, and critical thinking. Examples of these structures are Round Robin, Mixer Review, Talking Tokens, and many other structures that are explained in Kagan (1985). Round Robin can be used to generate ideas for writing as well as a pre-reading technique to build a reader's background knowledge in ESL/EFL classes. Likewise, Mixer Review can be used to review material already studied and ensure that learners have achieved mastery of vocabulary, spelling, and language rules and mechanics. Finally, Talking Tokens can be used to organize group discussions, promote accountable talk, and ensure equal opportunities of participation and practice for all learners.

Curriculum Packages

These are specific programs for teaching mathematics and language and include the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Writing (CIRC) program. CIRC is a comprehensive program for teaching reading and writing based on reading literature and basal readers. Learners work cooperatively in pairs to read for each other, summarize stories, write responses to literature, and practice their spelling, decoding, and vocabulary development skills. Likewise, they develop comprehension and writing skills through reading and process writing workshops.

Theoretical Relevance and Efficacy of CL

The use of CL in the ESL/EFL classroom has been advocated on the assumption that it promotes classroom interaction and enhances learners' cognitive and communicative development (Kagan, 1985; Kessler, 1992; McGroarty, 1993). These

educators and researchers, among others, have claimed that CL makes it possible for learners to have maximum opportunities "for meaningful input and output in a highly interactive and supportive environment" (Ghaith, 2003, p. 451). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that the preceding modern CL models and practices incorporate the findings of research in second language acquisition, especially the need to create a motivating, psychologically suitable and relaxing learning environment (Cohen, 1994; Dornyei, 1997). In this regard, Olsen and Kagan (1992) maintain that CL promotes meaningful interaction among learners as they listen, respond, restate, elaborate, and clarify their communicative messages. It is believed that such interaction contributes to linguistic development (Long & Porter, 1985; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987) and to increased overall academic performance (Bejarano, 1987; Kagan, 1989). Moreover, comprehension and meaningful learning output are facilitated and enhanced through the opportunities that CL offers for redundancies and the use of a variety of information sources and learning tasks (Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Webb, 1989). As such, CL becomes particularly relevant to ESL/EFL learning contexts as it provides a variety of techniques for organizing instruction and incorporating language learning in various interactive and communicative contexts (Olsen, 1989). Educators have also claimed that CL promotes autonomous learning and enhances active involvement in genuine discussions and problem-solving activities in an environment of academic and social collaboration (Clifford, 1999; Thomson, 1998).

Research carried out on the effectiveness of the use of CL in ESL/EFL contexts has shown that CL is very effective in developing positive attitudes towards learning and towards other learners (Gunderson & Johnson, 1980), enhancing intrinsic motivation (Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1994; Szostek, 1994; Ushioda, 1996), and creating solidarity among team members through their working together to achieve group goals (Nichols & Miller, 1994). Research has also shown that CL decreases levels of anxiety and increases self-confidence (Deci & Ryan, 1985), increases social backing for academic achievement (Daniels, 1994), and increases the level of expectancy of completing academic tasks successfully (Douglas, 1983).

Research on the effectiveness of the various models of CL has shown that CL is a valuable instructional approach in the second/foreign language classroom and has underscored its potential for promoting meaningful learning. Ghaith and Yaghi (1998) maintained, based on empirical evidence, that the STAD cooperative method of CL helps EFL learners acquire English language rules and mechanics better than individualistic instruction. Similarly, Calderon, Hertz-Lazarowitz, and Slavin (1998) reported that a bilingual version of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) program proved to be more effective in improving the achievement of third graders during transition from Spanish to English than traditional reading methods that

relied on textbooks. Furthermore, Bejarano, Levine, Ohlstain, and Steiner (1997) reported that the use of social and modified interaction strategies by small cooperative groups helped upgrade the communicative competence of EFL learners. Similarly, Thomson (1998) showed that using CL increased opportunities for interaction and enhanced learning autonomy in a Japanese language classroom at an Australian university. In a recent study, Stevens (2003) examined the relative effectiveness of Student Team Reading and Writing (STRW) in comparison with traditional basal reading instruction. The participants in the study were predominantly minority (80%) and low income (67%) students enrolled in five schools in a large urban United States district. The results indicated that learners in the experimental group (n = 2118) who followed a middle school literacy program (STRW) that included CL and utilized high quality literature, explicit reading comprehension, and process writing instruction outperformed the comparison groups from three schools (n = 2118) on the measures of reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and language expression.

Likewise, Ghaith (2003) reported that learners using the Learning Together model of CL did better on EFL reading achievement than learners who followed a traditional approach to reading comprehension. Specifically, this researcher reported that the Learning Together CL model was more effective than traditional whole class instruction in improving the reading comprehension of Arab learners of English who were studying English as foreign language in a multilingual context characterized by competitive instruction and limited opportunities for meaningful social interaction in the target language of English. The participants in the study predominantly use the native language, Arabic, in everyday communication but value English for its vitality in the domains of science, education, and technology. The reading comprehension skills that were enhanced by the Learning Together CL model included effective generation of ideas and completion of graphic organizers, completion of various literal and higher order comprehension tasks, and understanding of the gist and summarizing written discourse.

Furthermore, in a more recent study, Ghaith and Abd El-Malak (2004) reported that the use of the CL Jigsaw II model in teaching reading comprehension proved to be more effective than traditional methods in developing the higher-order reading comprehension skills of university-bound Arab learners of English as a foreign language. These learners had satisfied all college admission requirements, but needed to improve their English proficiency in order to function effectively in an all-English curriculum at the college level. Specifically, Jigsaw II was effective in enhancing learners' interpretive reading abilities that include making inferences, identifying adverb and pronoun referents, understanding implied cause/effect relationships, determining the author's purpose, figuring out the meaning of figurative language as well as reading written discourse critically by assessing the accuracy, timeliness, and appropriateness of

information and determining the author's purpose and the propaganda techniques authors may use in order to influence the thinking and actions of their readers.

How Does Cooperative Learning Help ESL/EFL Learners Become Proficient in a Language Other Than Their Own?

It is beyond the scope of the present article to provide a comprehensive set of sample CL lesson plans that demonstrate how the various CL models enable learners to become proficient in the aspects of a language other than their own. However, an example of the STAD cooperative lesson plan presented in the Appendix may help. An analysis of the plan reveals the following aspects of interest.

Learners in this sample lesson interact together in heterogeneous groups formed on the basis of past achievement, gender, ethnicity and other relevant demographic and background variables. They may become intrinsically motivated to achieve mastery of critical concepts as they collaboratively negotiate meaning in order to solve authentic problems and achieve common goals. Furthermore, they may cultivate greater friendships across gender and racial lines, improve their psycho-social adjustment, and develop better self-concepts as learners. This is because of the personal and academic support provided for each team member and structured in the lesson through setting a common goal for each team (team recognition) and through resource interdependence (all team members complete and sign one worksheet during the stage of team study).

Learners have opportunities to frequently encounter the material under study through various venues and modes of delivery. For instance, during the first stage of the sample lesson plan (teacher presentation) learners listen to the teacher's explanation of the new material, ask questions, take notes, and assimilate new knowledge. Then, they apply what they have learned as they complete exercises and worksheets during the second stage of the plan (team study). Still they have other opportunities to review the material as they prepare for individual quizzes and when checking their own work both during the stage of team study and that of quiz correction. This frequent exposure to materials under study accommodates the learning styles of all learners, creates redundancy, and enables learners to master and retain new material.

Learners have opportunities to use authentic language in order to perform communicative and referential tasks, even when the focus of the lesson is on language rules and mechanics rather than the development of language skills. More specifically, learners experience active listening as they listen to explanations from their teachers and peers. Likewise, they practice the pragmatics of language and their oral communication skills during team study, and their writing and reading skills during the subsequent stages of the lesson (i.e., individual quizzes, correction, and team recognition).

Finally, learners in the sample lesson are in competition with their own standards of past achievement, not with their classmates. This is because the improvement points of each learner are determined on the basis of comparing his or her quiz and test scores with past achievement (base score). This leads to intrinsic motivation and individual accountability for one's learning; it also provides equal opportunities for all learners to experience success and ensures equal opportunities for participation and improvement.

This article has explored the theoretical relevance of using CL in ESL/EFL instruction. It also attempted to determine what particular CL models would be well-suited for developing ESL/EFL proficiency. Practitioners and researchers are encouraged to further explore these various applications keeping in mind that CL actually integrates language instruction although certain models might be particularly well-suited to address particular components of language proficiency.

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Appendix

Sample Lesson Plan
Student Teams-Achievement Divisions
(STAD)

Subject Area:

Language Rules and Mechanics

Lesson Summary:

Group members cooperatively learn the parts of speech in English as they practice their oral/aural skills as well as their social skills and competencies.

Instructional Objectives:

Students should be able to:

1) Define the parts of speech (i.e., identify them in context and give examples of each).
2) Stay with their group and make sure that all members learn.
3) Use the target language of English to communicate, using quiet voices and taking appropriate turns.

Materials:

1. A teaching point about language rules and mechanics: parts of speech.
2. Worksheets: one copy per team.
3. A quiz: one copy for each student.

4. An answer key: one copy per team.
5. Team recognition forms.

Procedure:

I. Form heterogeneous groups of four members each.

Step 1: Divide the total number of learners by 4. The answer is the number of teams. The remaining learners can be assigned to teams of five members instead of four. For example: 25/4=6 and the remainder equals 1. This means that the class of 25 learners will include 6 teams. Five teams will have 4 members each and one team will have 5 members.

Step 2: Fill in the participant's names in the class list marked 1 through last.

Try to rank order the participants so that number 1 is the highest achiever and so on down the list. The rank order does not have to be perfect.

Step 3: Place the highest, two middle, and the lowest achievers on team 1. Use the median of the list to identify the average achievers. Make switches among the average achievers to avoid teams whose members are all of one sex or one race. Also avoid best friends and worst enemies.

Step 4: Cross out the names of Team 1 students from the class list. Repeat Step 2 with the reduced class list to form Team 2. Repeat for each remaining team.

Step 5: Assign the remaining student to a team of five.

N.B. Teachers may also assign learners randomly by drawing names out of a hat if they so wish.

II. Assign a role for each member of the teams. The following roles may be considered:

Coordinator/Manager: Keeps the group on task.

Timekeeper: Keeps track of time allotted for assignment.

Secretary/Recorder: Writes down group responses.

Evaluator: Keeps notes on group processing and social skills.

Encourager: Makes sure all group members have their turns.

Reader: Reads directions, problems, and resource materials for all group members.

Checker: Checks for group members' comprehension of material to be learned or discussed.

Encourager: Provides positive feedback to group members.

Go-For: Leaves his or her seat to get materials for the group and runs group errands to perform tasks such as sharpening pencils and so forth.

Please note that the preceding roles should be assigned based on the nature of learning tasks and should be rotated so that all learners will a have an equal chance to practice different roles.

III. Teacher Presentation

Teach learners about the parts of speech. Define each part and give examples.

IV. Team Study

Have learners work together in their groups to complete the parts of speech worksheet. Give each team one worksheet and ask them to complete the worksheets together according the following rules:

1. Students have responsibility to make sure that their teammates have learned the material.
2. No one is finished studying until all teammates have mastered the subject.
3. Teammates should ask each other before asking the teacher.
4. Teammates may talk softly.

Have learners use the worksheet answer key to correct their work.

V. Testing

Give each participant an individual quiz.

VI. Team Recognition

Have the learners' correct their quizzes using an answer key to determine their improvement points according to the following guidelines adapted from Slavin (1995).

Quiz Score	Improvement points
More than 10 points below base score	0 points
0 points below to 1 point above base score	10 points
Base score to 10 points above base score	20 points
More than 10 points above score	30 points
Perfect paper irrespective of base score	30 points

Recognize the achievement of the participants using the team recognition forms. Teachers may use the following criteria to determine team awards:

Team average	Award
15 points	Good team
20 points	Great Team
25 points	Super Team

Helping Students Make Purposeful Links With the Audience

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Through professional reflection or reading, language teachers may come across a gem of an idea that also turns out to be practicable in the classroom. Some of these may not be extremely profound or revolutionary, but they still evoke a why-did-I-not-think-of-this-earlier feeling. This article will expand on one such idea—writing means writing for people-—inspired by works on the teaching of writing and on academic literacies like Brandt (1990), Prior (1998), Paltridge (2000) and Lillis (2003). It is written with reference to teaching academic writing to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learners before they enter mainstream university courses.

In the course of teaching academic writing to ESOL learners, one might come across long convoluted sentences which students believe to be sophisticated such as, "At the same time because the different in this respect of country between east and west is more obvious, understand for being convenient." Students might also use idiomatic or metaphorical forms that are not normally appropriate in academic writing, again because it is their idea of sophistication—the need to decorate writing with such forms to prove scholarship. For example, they might say that the "Customer is like God Himself to the retailer" to describe the importance of a customer to a business, "Condiments must be added to make our lives colourful" to talk about the importance of exercise and holidays, or "However, in China, universities still enjoy the meal of planned economy" to describe how universities in China remain complacent. In other instances, students might use a term from a textbook, often an IELTS or TOEFL preparation book. For example, they might use terms like *social system* loosely and liberally to mean either *society* or even just *people*.

In this article, I suggest that one way to help ESOL learners out of this difficulty is to encourage them to be more conscious of the audiences they are writing for and the need for writing to communicate with a reader. Writing in EAP means writing to be read. The sheer simplicity of this is aptly captured by Brandt when she says that "learning to write is learning that your words are being read" (p. 5) and that literacy "is not the narrow ability to deal with texts, but the broad ability to deal with people" (p. 14). For many ESOL learners, the reason for resorting to wordy convoluted sentences or

idiomatic or textbook phrases, is very probably the thought that such are the marks of scholarship. Arguably, any thought about audience is remote from their minds, or if they have any impression of audience at all, it must vaguely be one which admires some form of idiomatic or terminology-laden textbook English, captured in long convoluted sentences as in the example above.

For the teacher, the job at hand is to help students out of this mode. Given that good writing is both situated and ideological, one technique would be linking good writing with the notion of real-life audience. It would be useful for the teacher to help students come to some understanding that good writing is dependent on their audience. For more advanced classes, the teacher may also help students think through (read, expose, or deconstruct) the ideological forces responsible for shaping an audience's preferences.

Thinking About Audiences

Paltridge (2000) notes that it is good for students to know the expectations of the discourse community for whom they are writing. For a start, I have found it useful to help students brainstorm possible expectations of academic audiences, which may vary across subject areas (Lea & Street, 2000). From experience, some students initially show bemusement at the need for such a group activity. For them, their reader is very obviously a professor at a university. More gallant ones may attempt to say that the professor is probably elderly, educated, or knowledgeable. Also, I have found it is more often than not the case that the teacher has to tell students (when hinting fails) that in many universities in the English-speaking world, their peers can also be part of their audience.

What follows is that the teacher allows students the opportunity to think about a range of audiences. Lead questions can include:

1. What do you think the audiences you are writing for are looking for in your piece of writing?
2. What do you think your audiences want to know when they read your piece of work?
3. How will you enable them to understand you easily?
4. What will your audiences value most in your writing?
5. Will you write the same way for audiences from different faculties?

What is important to note, however, is that the exercise is not meant to yield a clear taxonomy of answers about what particular academic audiences expect. This view is supported in Lea and Street (2000) who observe that the expectations of academic audiences vary with their own academic world-view. The exercise, rather, is aimed at

answering Brandt's (1990) call to refocus students away from text and help them direct their thoughts at people. Brandt (1990) comes across strongly when she says the following:

> The radically social foundations of the literate orientation compel a reanalysis of literacy failures in school. In the prevailing view, students fail to the extent to which they fail to treat language objectively and separately from people (including themselves) (pp. 6-7).

Brandt goes on to say:

> Theories of literacy based on the need for decontextualization of thought and language often justify instructional practices that may mislead struggling students, deflecting them from the very sorts of clues they need to figure out reading and writing. More troubling, to characterize as antiliterate any language habits that value shared orientation and social solidarity is to foreclose on what in fact is the richest foundation of literacy (p. 7).

Following Brandt, the brainstorming exercise introduced earlier seeks to help students become more conscious of the audience, particularly the fact that the audience is not a distant abstract, but consists of real people with real expectations with whom they have to communicate intelligibly. This too must mean that students will need to focus in on their repertoire of ways to communicate comprehensibly with their audiences.

In the Classroom: Linking Language Features with Real-Life Audiences

Once students are more aware that writing for the academy involves writing for audiences, they will be in a better position to understand the demands of their writing tasks. Also, students need to understand how language features characterising academic text-types can be harnessed to communicate purposefully with real people. In relation to academic features and conventions, Paltridge (2000) notes that students need to understand how the conventions and requirements of the particular area of study, including how to use source texts and how to paraphrase, can enhance the effectiveness of their communication. This, too, supports Brandt's (1990) recommendation that students direct their thoughts at the people reading their writing.

This section will discuss how various academic conventions can be taught while keeping the audience in focus. The conventions are based on those outlined in U, Jenner, Devlin, and Grant (2004), an academic writing textbook. Two common

conventions (tentative language and reporting using paraphrase) have been chosen to illustrate how they can be taught in relation to audience. The students, who come from South Korea, Mainland China, Taiwan, Japan and other countries in the Asia Pacific region, are enrolled in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class and are studying English to help them write essays and project reports in their future areas of study. The course is designed particularly for those aiming to enroll in business-related subjects.

Tentative Language in Academic Discourse

U et al. (2004) note that tentativeness is important in academic writing as a way to modify generalisations. They outline various ways students can achieve tentativeness by using one of the following:

1. progressively weakening modal auxiliaries (e.g., People from another culture *can/may/might/could* find the Chinese address system unusual.)
2. adverbs such as *usually, probably*.
3. distancing words like *tend, seem, appear* (e.g., It would *seem/appear* that Iranian men use more body language than speech when they greet each other.)
4. qualifications of the subject such as *many, majority, in most respects, some*, (e.g., *In most respects,* Chinese superstitions about the house are also common sense.)
5. exceptions such as *with the exception of, apart from, except for* **(**e.g, *With the exception of* a small number of superstitions, these irrational beliefs or illogical fears have their origins in ancient beliefs and customs.)

The teacher using materials as those in U et al. (2004), must not only to teach and/or analyse the structures and patterns. Students must be challenged to think of their real-world applications and appreciate the value of tentativeness in relation to writing for academia. Teachers can elicit information about using tentativeness in academic writing from students, and often after a few minutes of group work or class discussion, they will be able to recognize its effects. For example, they see that modesty can be achieved through the use of tentative language. They discover that tentative language indicates that the writer is open to an opposite opinion or to more discussion and that it helps the writer engage the audience in discussion without alienating them with dogmatic rigidities. Students realise that tentative language gives the impression that the writer is reasonable and well-reasoned and that these are important qualities for communicating with an audience. They also see that tentative language helps the writer to make important points without imposing absolutes on the reader. As part of this discussion,

teachers can point out, if it has not been already discovered, that tentative language can also position the writer as a novice and the reader as an expert in the area under discussion. The whole process enables students to think about the people who will be reading their work, and not just about modal auxiliaries, adverbs, or distancing words.

Reporting Using Paraphrase as Part of Academic Discourse

U et. al. (2004) highlight common phrases used for acknowledging another author's ideas such as: *In an article/a study by X, As X points out, X has expressed a similar view, A study by X indicates that, X has drawn attention to the fact that.* They also highlight reporting verbs such as *claims, points out, has drawn our attention to*. Addressing the student, they point out that these words "may be attitudinal in nature; that is, the choice of a particular reporting verb will often indicate what sort of attitude you, as the writer, have about the idea or information you are reporting and its relative importance to the content of your paper" (U et al., 2004, p. 2/23).

After class discussion students are able to understand that the reporting using paraphrase technique enables the audience to see that the writer has considered and evaluated other points-of-view. They also recognize that it allows writers to show the audience their knowledge, in that they are able to demonstrate they had to read a lot of other works, and are not only able to summarise the authors' thoughts, but also present them in a way that demonstrates the authors' attitudes.

Through these techniques, students are not just taught language structures and atomised skills for their own sake, but are taught to see their significance in relation to a real audience. This is consistent with Brandt's (1990) argument against teaching language as a "detached and self-referential system of meaning" (p. 5), and her position that students must be made aware of the "who" in discourse—the personas and audiences. In addition, while attending to audience, students are reminded constantly of the need for comprehensibility and the importance of avoiding complicated structures or inappropriate idioms.

Potential for Deeper Discussion: Audiences, Ideology and Academic Conventions

Earlier I mentioned the importance of teachers helping students consider the ideological forces responsible for necessitating learning skills and conventions related to audiences. Students are encouraged to unravel what has been ideologically framed and conceptualised with the aim of teaching them to resist and/or dialogise (Lillis, 2003) these dominant ideologies. For example, the situation of a novice writing for an expert leads to an interesting discussion about what constitutes expertise and novicity. How tentative language results in modesty can lead to a discussion about why modesty is

ideologically desirable for certain audiences and how it is realised in language. However, a concern that remains is how such an interesting activity can be included in the ESOL curriculum, given institutional and other realities.

Coffee table talk in the staff room rather quickly reveals that language teachers vary in their response to discussions concerning writing, audiences, and ideology, an area now quite widely talked about in discussions of academic literacies. Some have read, understood, and eagerly support teaching academic literacies to students. Others have read, understood, and know about academic literacies, but for a number of reasons might not facilitate it in their classrooms. Other teachers know about academic literacies, but do not agree with it. Finally there are those who have never heard of academic literacies. This is not vastly different from having teachers who believe that writing should be taught as a situated sociohistoric activity (Brandt, 1990; Prior, 1998), through text description and modelling (Gerot, 1995; Paltridge, 2001), or at the level of atomised skills (Knapp, 1992; Brandt, 1990).

The point here is that given the range of philosophies in ELT and in this case EAP, and the range of beliefs about what teaching writing involves, there are sometimes constraints for encouraging students to think deeper into matters concerning writing, audience, and ideology. There is, for example, the belief that an EAP programme should concentrate on modelling the structures and forms of academic English because students are paying good money to the university to learn English—they are the proverbial geese that lay the golden eggs. They will be writing for people in academia and should be thoroughly encultured into the forms and structures of academic writing, both because it is a time-honoured practice and there is so little time for anything else. Of course, such beliefs, too, are in turn embedded in ideology.

Hence, specific skills such as “how to open or close an essay or whether to use the first person” (Lea & Street, 2000, p. 33), or “prescriptions about the use of impersonal and passive forms as opposed to first person and active forms” (Lea & Street, 2000, p. 35) become the standard fare for the course. Other old favourites include phrasal verbs, prepositions, collocations, and active and passive voices. Lea and Street (2000) call this a *skills-based deficit model*, based on atomised skills, problem-fixing, and an emphasis on surface features including grammar and spelling. They also note the “crudity and insensitivity of this approach” (Lea & Street, 2000, p. 34).

This, perhaps, is a part of current reality in some quarters of the ELT/EAP world. Foreign students pay three or four times what locals pay for their courses. In some situations, what have ideologies, deconstruction, and academic literacies to do with the real world of business English, some would say. Students all want to graduate with a piece of paper and find good jobs in tall air-conditioned office buildings in their home

countries. Students like it when teachers model texts and text-types, give them pat model answers, and talk knowledgeably about language structures. Moreover, it might even be cogently argued that the notion of audience is already subsumed within the notion of text-types. Besides, there are numerous books and software on language structures in the market and this makes for easy course planning. Because of these realities, the ideals of helping students think more deeply about audience and ideology and how these could affect writing, may have to be judiciously tempered for clientele. While this may sound pessimistic, there is still cause for optimism.

Optimistic Conclusion

For colleagues wanting to combine academic conventions, audience consciousness, and some discussion of ideologies shaping academic writing, the strategies described in this paper offer:

1. A departure from the skills-based deficit model based on atomised skills, described by Lea and Street (2000).
2. A way to alert students to the realities of readership, helping them engage an audience with clarity rather than decorating their writing with idiomatic expressions.
3. A way for academic conventions to be taught, but in relation to how they help to purposefully communicate with audience.
4. A gateway to discussion about academic literacies, allowing students to deconstruct the value systems which shape audiences' perceptions and expectations as well as ideologies which legitimate various kinds of discourse. This is a worthwhile inroad seeing that it is becoming increasingly accepted for students to be exposed to ideological matters as part of their language education.

Consequently, students will be freed to view writing as an act in which they are dealing with real people—not just text, text-types, or atomised technicalities. This is the one gem both teachers and students can value.

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English Grammar in Current Hong Kong Textbooks: A Critical Appraisal

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Despite some commentators' opposition to explicit grammar teaching in the 70s and 80s (e.g., Krashen, 1985), grammar instruction has come back into prominence. Those who are in favour of grammar teaching (e.g., White, 1987; Ur, 1988; Tsui, 1991; Ellis, 2005) argue that some grammatical forms cannot be acquired merely on the basis of comprehensible input and that formal instruction is necessary for learners to acquire those forms. They make a distinction between the learning of the first language in natural contexts where the amount of time and exposure to learning is so great that there is no necessity for formal grammar instruction and for the learning of a language in a second/foreign learning environment where the time available and motivation are much less, and organized grammar teaching is essential to acquiring the language. The issue now therefore is not whether grammar should be taught or not, but how to teach grammar.

A number of English language teaching experts have made critical comments on grammar instruction. Byrd (1994), Petrovitz (1997) and Nunan (1998) highlight the importance of contextualising grammar so that not only the structure is taken into account, but also the meaning and use. They emphasise that effective communication involves appropriate grammatical choices in context. Meanwhile, some studies (e.g., Collins, Hollo & Mar, 1997; Fortune, 1998; Millard, 2000) reveal that there are shortcomings in the presentation of grammar in some traditional grammar practice books. For example, Collins, Hollo and Mar's (1997) critical analysis of English grammar books and language books used in Australia revealed a low level of awareness of developments in contemporary linguistics with little change in grammar teaching approaches over the past 50 years. Millard (2000) studied adult ESL grammar textbooks and suggested that textbook writers should address more fully how to integrate grammar teaching within communicative language curricula.

In Hong Kong, the government's concern about how to present grammar effectively is evident in its publication, *Teaching Grammar and Spoken English: A Handbook for Hong Kong Schools* (Education Department, 1993), in which it states that:

> It is equally important for students to learn about grammar as well as how to put it to purposeful, communicative use. Both language form and function converge on a continuum of language learning where students first learn to grasp the basic formal elements and structures and then practise using them in meaningful contexts. The teaching of grammar is thus seen as a means towards an end, and the ultimate aim is to help students progress towards general fluency and successful communication (p. 2).

In recent years, the task-based learning approach has been adopted by the Hong Kong Curriculum Development Council. This, however, does not undermine the importance of grammar teaching at either the primary or the secondary level. The Primary and Secondary Syllabuses for English (published in 2004 and 1999 respectively) attach equal importance to both language form and function. The Secondary Syllabus states that:

> Task-based learning does not preclude the teaching of grammar (i.e. language items and forms). Fluency and accuracy are complementary, and learners must have a good command of language forms if they are to understand and express meanings effectively (p. 49).

The need for grammar instruction is widely accepted in Hong Kong, as revealed in Lee's study (1999) of Hong Kong secondary school teachers. Over 90% of Lee's respondents indicated that they either "always" or "often" used grammar exercise books in their teaching. However, they rarely questioned the linguistic accuracy or clarity of the textbooks they used. The aim of this paper is to critically assess the presentation of English grammar in textbooks published in Hong Kong and used by secondary students. The corpus (see Appendix) comprised 25 grammar practice books, their selection being guided by their comparative popularity, which in turn was determined via consultation with teachers and booksellers. Some of the books chosen, published by well-established publishers (e.g., Longman and Aristo), including *Longman Target English Grammar, Grammar Focus*, *Smart Grammar,* and *Easy Grammar,* are popularly used in the classroom while others which are published by less well-known publishers are mainly for self-study (e.g., *An Instant Approach to English Grammar for HKCEE and ASL Students* and *English Made Perfect Through Common Mistakes in Written English*). One limitation of this study is that there were no statistics available showing which grammar books had the largest share of the market. Nevertheless, since all the books studied were current and were on sale in bookstores at the time of writing this paper, their potential influence on Hong Kong English users is not in doubt.

The influence of the communicative approach in language teaching is evident in the books examined, with authors exploring grammar with reference to the broader social

functions of language and to the nature and structure of discourse, and not merely as an autonomous system to be learned as an end in itself. But how adequate is the grammar instruction presented in the textbooks? Do writers take on board the insights presented in the most influential and authoritative descriptive grammars of recent years (Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Quirk et al., 1985), or do they merely continue to accept the principles espoused in traditional grammar? To address this question we have followed the approach used by Collins and his associates (1997) in their Australian textbook study, and have organized our critical analysis according to four general areas in which traditional grammar is demonstrably deficient (the handling of form-meaning relationships, maintenance of the distinction between class and function, the presence of Latinate bias, and the existence of prescriptive content). Other issues addressed include the occurrence of factual errors in the textbooks examined, text/exercise artificiality, and *structural malaise.*

Notional Definitions

Most of the books surveyed rely heavily upon notional (solely meaning-based) definitions of grammatical categories. For example, consider the following definitions of the noun:

(1) A noun is a word used to show the name of a person, place, thing or idea.

(*Grammar Made Easy,* p. 78)

(2) A noun is a word that names a thing, a place, a quality, an action, a person.

(*An Easy Approach to English Grammar,* p. 1)

The problem with such definitions is that they fail to exclude members of other part-of-speech categories. For example, it is not just nouns that refer to qualities (e.g., *generosity*) but also adjectives (*generous*), and certainly not just nouns that denote actions (e.g., *demolition*) but also verbs (*demolish*).

The problem with notional definitions of this type is that we need to know in advance that a word is a noun (and that therefore an adjective such as *generous* or a verb such as *demolish* does not qualify) in order to accept it as a member of the class. The exercise of defining the parts of speech is therefore a circular one. The only way to avoid this circularity is to resort to considerations other than those of meaning: structural criteria of distribution and inflection. For example, nouns are distinctive in their capacity to be modified by adjectives and relative clauses, and in their capacity to take plural and possessive inflections (for example, we can say *extreme generosity* but not *extreme generous.*)

Such rules may disrupt the fine balance that is needed between simplicity and accuracy in teaching grammar, too far towards simplicity. The danger here is that as the inaccuracy of such rules becomes apparent to learners they will need to unlearn much of what they have been taught at the elementary stage. Unless formal descriptions too are introduced early learners may fail to appreciate the crucial role of formal considerations in enabling all the members of the class to be satisfactorily identified.

Consider, as another example, the following typical (notional) definitions of the subject:

(3) The subject of a sentence is the person or thing we talk about.

(*New Exercises in English* 2, p. 68)

(4) The subject tells us who or what is doing the action.

(*Grammar Practice 2000, Stage 1*, p. 1)

In the absence of supplementation from a formal perspective, these definitions will not satisfy the needs of learners. The definition in (3) overlooks the fact that there are cases in English where the subject could not be plausibly said to represent what the sentence is about. (For example, a sentence such as *No one likes Jane* is more sensibly interpreted as being about *Jane* than about the subject *no one*.) As for the definition in (4), the person or thing which does the action may not be the subject (as in *Jane was contacted by Peter*, where *Peter* is the doer but not the subject), and the subject may not be a doer (as in *Jane is upset*). The subject function in English is most effectively characterised in terms of a cluster of structural properties (including agreement with the verb, use in interrogative tags, and association with nominative case).

Grammatical Class and Grammatical Function

Another weakness that is evident in a number of the textbooks examined—albeit one less pervasive than that reported in the section above—is one that is very common in traditional school grammars: a failure to maintain the fundamental distinction between grammatical class and grammatical function.

Consider the class of adjectives, one of whose main functions is that of modifier in noun phrase structure. In the following example it is correctly assumed that this function can also be served by nouns (such as *factory* in the phrase *factory regulations*). The formulation “noun used as adjective” used by the authors, however, indicates that they have confused—or rather, coalesced—the class of adjective and the function of modifier (the noun *factory* for example can never be an adjective, but it can be used as a modifier).

(5) Some words are often used as nouns but can be used as adjectives.

nouns: Those *factories* make *shoes*.

adjectives: Please read these new *factory* regulations.

Those are *shoe* factories.

(*English in Focus: Teach and Test 4*, p. 56)

It is a similar sort of confusion between class and function that leads to the misclassification of prepositional phrases as adverb phrases in (6):

(6) Adverbs modify a verb, an adjective or another adverb. We can use an adverb phrase or clause instead of an adverb.

e.g., with a phrase: *The bus stopped outside this shop.*

You can go home in a few minutes' time.

(*English in Focus: Teach and Test 4*, p. 59)

Latin Bias

Approximately one quarter of the texts follow traditional grammar in their inclusion of categories derived from Latin grammar, but which have no place in the grammar of contemporary English. The most obvious examples are inflectional, where we find the complex verb paradigms of Latin—a highly inflecting language—being applied to the grammatical description of English, despite their marginal relevance to the comparatively simple paradigms of English. For example, it is assumed in a number of the textbooks, including *An Easy Approach to English Grammar*, that case is applicable to common and proper nouns as well as to pronouns in English—a suggestion that has validity only up to the beginning of the Middle English period:

(7) When a noun or a pronoun is the subject of a clause, that noun or pronoun is in the Nominative Case. This case tells us who or what does something.

When a noun or pronoun is the direct object of a verb, that noun or pronoun is in the Objective Case. This case tells us which person or thing the action of the verb is directed towards.

The pronoun which is the indirect object of a verb is in the Dative Case. The noun which is the direct object of a verb is in the Accusative Case. The object of a preposition is in the accusative case.

When a person or people are addressed, we use the Vocative Case (e.g., *Tony, are you going to eat your dinner or not?*)

(*An Easy Approach to English Grammar*, pp. 7-8)

Some of the textbooks present a Latin-based four-term gender classification of nouns, as in the following:

(8) Gender

1. masculine (or male): *boy, brother, uncle, father, bull, lion, tiger*
2. feminine (or female): *sister, mother, cow, aunt, Peter's sister, niece*
3. neuter: *ship, country, car, smoke, test, stone, tree, results, boxes*
4. common: *baby, cousin, friend, relative, spectator, doctor, patient*

(*English in Focus: Teach and Test 4*, pp. 119-120)

This classification is purely semantically-based: unlike Latin, French and German, English does not have grammatical gender. It would therefore be more appropriate if the categories posited were explored in a discussion of word formation and vocabulary extension.

Prescriptive Bias

Approximately one third of the textbooks examined include some prescriptive content—not inappropriately, given their pedagogical orientation. However, the textbooks generally manage to avoid the uncritically conservative stance and puristic zeal that are characteristic of many traditional school grammars. For example, in (9), even though the distribution of *shall* and *will* is stated too categorically, at least the author avoids the prescriptive formulation found in many traditional grammars—one completely out of touch with the facts of contemporary usage—that in all contexts shall should be used with first person subjects and will with second and third person subjects.

(9) In formal English, we use "shall" with "I" and "we". However, in spoken English, we use "will" for all persons.

(*Grammar Focus*, p. 27)

Unlike those traditional grammarians whose prescriptions tend to be insensitive to the fact that English, like all living languages, is subject to dialectal and stylistic variation, the author of *New Exercises in English 1* invokes considerations of stylistic variation in discussing the use of contracted forms of have in forming the present perfect:

(10) In conversation, we usually use the contracted forms (*I've heard the news; it's stopped raining*).

(*New Exercises in English 1*, p. 57)

Factual Errors

There was an alarmingly high incidence of factual errors in the textbooks examined. A small selection follows:

(11) When the noun followed by the prepositional phrase is the subject, the verb agrees in person and number with the first noun, not with any other noun in the prepositional phrase.

e.g., *The book on the table is mine.*

The books on the table are mine.

(*Smart Grammar 1*, p. 112)

This description is incomplete: in a sentence such as *The history books on the table are mine* the verb *are* agrees not with the first noun *history* (which premodifies the head noun *books*) but rather with the second noun *books*.

(12) Adjective

surprised, shocked, amazed, astonished + at/by

We were surprised at/by the news.

She was shocked at/by his behaviour.

(*Smart Grammar 2*, p. 150)

In (12) *surprised* and *shocked* are misclassified: they are surely verbs rather than adjectives when used with a *by*-phrase complement.

(13) We use the passive voice when it is not important, or it is not known, who or what does the action.

(*Smart Grammar 3*, p. 28)

This characterization applies to agentless passives only. The primary motivation for the selection of passive rather than active clauses is information structuring (insofar as a passive clause presents a different element as topic than its active counterpart).

(14)

noun	adjective	verb	adverb
choice	choosy	choose	choice

(*An Instant Approach to English Grammar*, p. 222)

In (14) *choice* is correctly labeled as a noun, but not as an adverb.

There is evidence in some of the textbooks that their authors are not fully in command of English.

(15) *Who serve dinner in restaurants every day?*

The waiters. Dinner is served by the waiters in restaurants every day.

(*English in Life 2*, p. 116)

Here the use of the definite article is unidiomatic.

(16) The object of a preposition is in the accusative case (e.g., *He phoned to me yesterday*).

(*An Easy Approach to English Grammar,* p. 7)

In (16) the presence of *to* renders the example unacceptable.

Artificiality

It was pleasing to see the textbooks embracing the communicative notion that as an instrument of communication, language should be taught within the context of its broader social functions. Unfortunately, however, we noted an occasional tendency for the context-based exercises presented in the textbooks to be unnatural and artificial. Consider the implausible dialogue in (17), where the answers are given in full rather than with the expected ellipsis of recoverable elements:

(17) There has been a traffic accident and a policeman is asking people about what happened. Using the question words in the box, complete the questions he asks.

1. Policeman: <u>When did the accident happen</u>?
   Witness: The accident happened at about 5.15 pm.
2. Policeman: <u>Who was driving the car</u>?
   Witness: A young man was driving the car.

(*Grammar Practice 2000, Stage 1,* p. 11)

In the following mechanical drill the use of the passive in the responses sounds quite unnatural because the topical flow is disrupted (*Mimi* is the topic in Jenny's questions, and would be retained in the answers if they were active).

(18) Last year, Jenny's sister, Mimi, was a clerk. Now she is working as a secretary. She is talking to Jenny about her work and her plans. Help Mimi answer Jenny's questions in the passive voice.

Jenny: *What did you do as a clerk?*

Mimi: *<u>Letters were typed by me</u>.*

<u>Notices were photocopied by me</u>.

<u>The telephones were answered by me</u>.

Jenny: *What about now as a secretary?*

Mimi: *Letters are written by me.*

Reports are drafted by me.

Coffee is made by me.

(*Easy Grammar 2*, p. 160)

Structural Malaise

Structural malaise refers to the widespread insensitivity to the structure-based analysis of language that we encountered amongst textbook writers. The primary focus of attention in traditional grammar was on the word and the sentence, and it is therefore not surprising that we should encounter a good deal of confusion in the treatment of phrases in the textbooks. Consider the following examples, each of which indicates the writer's ignorance of the internal structure of noun phrases. In (19) *my* is a constituent of the noun phrase *my old camera,* and in (20) *not enough* is a constituent of the noun phrase n*ot enough players*.

(19) We use possessive adjectives to show that someone or something belongs to someone or something. We always put a noun or a noun phrase after a possessive adjective.

Poss adj	N		Poss adj	N Phr
This is my	*camera.*		*This is my*	*old camera.*

(*Longman Target English Grammar 1A*, p. 24)

(20) The pattern with the word *enough* in negative statements is:

—*not enough* + subject + verb + …

e.g., *Not enough players turned up to field a team*

(*An Easy Approach to English Grammar*, p. 63)

Conclusion

The recently released results of the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers show that only 35% of self-claimed teachers passed the error explanation section (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2005),[1] and they were advised to study grammar books more often to improve their structural competence. However, as we have seen from the present study, a number of locally produced grammar books which language teachers use every day do not always provide accurate information about the details of English usage. This will have a negative impact on both the teachers' and the students' knowledge of English structure and use.

While it was pleasing to observe writers supporting the trend towards the context- and discourse-driven approach towards grammatical instruction that has been popularized in the communicative approach in recent decades, there is nevertheless considerable room for improvement. As we have seen, a number of textbooks surveyed failed to provide an adequate treatment of the fundamental relationships between form and meaning and between class and function, some betrayed the influence of traditional Latinate descriptions, some hid mechanical drills in artificial contexts, and—most alarmingly—many were guilty of straightforward factual errors. Although the present study examined only grammar books used and published in Hong Kong, our findings are relevant to ESL/EFL teachers in other countries, who will undoubtedly find similar problems in their textbooks. All teachers need to cultivate a critical stance in assessing the quality of grammar presentation when selecting and using textbooks.

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[1] All English teachers who are not English majors and have no relevant language teaching training are required to pass the benchmark test, which was first held in March 2001. They have to pass the test by 2006 to stay in their jobs. The test is open to the public. “Self-claimed teachers” refer to those candidates who identified themselves as teachers for the examination registration.

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Appendix

Grammar Practice Books

1. Booker, R. (2003). *Grammar Focus*. Hong Kong: Longman.
2. Chan, D. (2002). *Grammar Made Easy: An Analysis of Common Mistakes in Students' Writing*. Hong Kong: Greenwood Press.
3. Etherton, A. R. B. (2001). *English in Focus: Teach and Test 4.* Hong Kong: In Focus.
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Conference Announcements

The American University in Cairo, Egypt. December 22-24, 2005. "Learning and Standards: The Challenges of Change." E-mail:eflskill@aucegypt.edu. Http://www.aucegypt.edu/conferences/eflconf.

IATEFL. December 26-27, 2005. Ukraine National Conference, "Keeping Pace with Europe," Donetsk State University of Economics and Trade, Ukraine. Contact Igor Gizhko, Foreign Languages Department. Tel. 380-623052228. E-mail:igizhko @ yahoo.com.

ELTAI. February 3-4, 2006. 37th Annual Conference, "The English Curriculum: Empowerment through Spoken English," Chennai, Tamilnadu, South India. Contact S. Rajagopalan ELTAI, 17, Muthalamman Koil Street, West Mambalam, Chennai-600 033, India. Tel. 90-44-26443191. E-mail:elta-india@yahoo.com.in. Http://www.eltai.org.

TESOL/Applied Linguistics Grad Students. February 18, 2006. 3rd Annual TALGS Conference, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA. E-mail:talgs@mail.ecu.edu. Http://www.core.ecu.edu/eng/talgs.

Illinois Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages and Bilingual Education. March 3-4, 2006. 32nd Annual Convention, Holiday Inn Select, Naperville, Illinois, USA. Http://www.itbe.org.

Ming Chuan University. March 10-11, 2006. International Conference and Workshop on TEFL and Applied linguistics, "Language Teaching in the 21st Century: Trends, Policy, and Needs," Taiwan. Contact Teresa Hsieh, Academic Affairs Project Manager, Department of Applied English, Ming Chuan University, 5 Te-Ming Rd., Ta-Tung Village, Kuei-Shan, Taoyuan County, Taiwan, R.O.C. Tel. 886-3-3507001 ext. 3211-3213. Fax: 886-3-359-3870. Email:hhj@mcu.edu.tw. Http://www mcu.edu.tw-department-app-lang-english-call2005 htm.

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Making Idioms "Stick": Creative Activities for Communicative Competence

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Few English language instructors would disagree with the notion that in the teaching of vocabulary, little is more challenging than the teaching of idioms. It is not that students object to learning them; nothing could be further from the truth. Students generally love the colorful and expressive bits and pieces of language we commonly refer to as idioms. They are happy to read and recite dialogues, complete cloze exercises, as well as other "fun" activities or drills found in the many idioms textbooks on the market; however, we have come to question whether these sorts of activities result in the kind of communicative competence Widdowson (1990), Brown (2000), and Nunan and Swan (2004) advocate.

The difficulty in learning idioms, or any vocabulary items for that matter, comes in remembering and being able to use them correctly in both the linguistic and cultural context of spoken and written English (Boers, Demecheleer, & Eyckmans, 2004; Folse, 2004). It is not enough for students to memorize the meaning of idiomatic expressions. They must find a need for using those expressions in meaningful production and exchange of information (Ellis, 2000), or those newly-learned idioms are unlikely to "stick." When opportunity for meaningful exchange with native speakers is not an option, the teacher's best resource is to create a need.

Materials for creating a need can come from many sources: idiom textbooks, dictionaries of idioms, movies, television sitcoms, TV and radio talk shows, newspaper and magazine articles, overheard communication between native speakers, as well as Internet or online communication such as that experienced by many students in chat rooms. No matter where they find the material, students will need to process newly learned idioms in multiple ways in order for those idioms to "stick." Students need to do more than study, memorize, listen and repeat idioms. These vocabulary anomalies must be converted into mental images, massaged, and then used in communicative contexts of the students' own creation in order for learning to take place.

Getting Started

Given our students' passion for learning idioms, predicated no doubt on our own, we have developed a variety of activities that create a need for the acquisition and use of idiomatic language. These activities escalate in complexity, building from one-dimensional writing activities to multi-dimensional writing and oral presentations. Idioms are drawn from textbooks and from samples of language brought into the classroom. All activities require the use of a minimum of five idioms.

Warming Up With Diaries

The initial activity asks students to keep a diary using idioms learned during class that week from both idiom textbook sources and supplemental material. Students underline or highlight the idioms to reinforce them and make the teacher's grading easier. Diaries also allow students to personalize the idioms and place them in a familiar context. Maria, a Mexican student, wrote about eating out while Gabriella, a Brazilian, wrote about her day off (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Excerpts from student diary entries.

We went at the seafood buffet at the Rio and we pigged out, I can't believe how much food we ate but everything was delicious and to satisfy our sweet tooth I ate an apple pie which was to die for! and he had a banana split that made my mouth water. The dinner was on him ... —Maria	... It took us more than two hours to get home because he had a blowout on the highway. He fixed it and when we almost get home we were in a broadside. An old lady was to blame for it. The cops came and made a report. I was sick and tired and I was thinking that I wished be worked instead this kind of days off. As you can see, wasn't a very good day, in my next day off I'll go to the boonies in this way I'll be safe and sound. —Gabriella

The diaries are not shared with anyone other than the teacher so that students can gain confidence in their writing and use of colloquial language.

Expanding the Audience with Letters

Using the same strategy as with the diary, students direct correspondence to someone else in the form of a letter. They can choose to write to friends, family, or classmates. If students write to classmates, the teacher can set up an in-class postal network in which the receiver is either known or unknown to the writer. Claudia, a Cuban student, chose to write to a friend rather than a classmate (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Claudia's letter to a friend.

Dear Miriam,

Hey friend! What's up with you? I am here in Las Vegas having a blast! This city is pretty cool! You know, the attraction of the casinos makes me stay up till all hours of the night and sleep in every weekend. Even during the week I usually go out to dinner and take in a movie.

I met a nice guy in church. His name is Mark and he is to die for! I don't know him very good yet, but I'm just giving it a shot. I'm sure God is in control. Let's see, we two might hit it off in two nights.

I heard about your brother's accident, that's nuts, isn't it? But, take it easy! Everything will be all right.

I miss you.

Love,

Claudia

While class time does not always allow the letter receivers to respond, the awareness that a classmate or friend will read the letter encourages students to write authentically.

Adding Voice With Movie Reviews

To combine speech and text, the students next prepare movie reviews of their choice of films, either current or classic, American or foreign, on television or in a theatre. Because reviews are less familiar than diaries or letters, more extensive preparation is needed. We analyze reviews of current movies that students may have seen, looking for use of idioms as well as format. We often watch a short film and write a review as a class to model the basic concepts of film criticism. The students present their reviews to the

class as if they were film critics such as Ebert and Roper, and like such film critics, their performances are videotaped—for their own viewing and self-critique, not for the public. Mandana, an Indonesian student, chose to review a movie current at the time of the class (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Mandana's review of *Wag the Dog.*

Wag the Dog: A Great Story with a Lot of Funny Lines

A friend of mine hooked me up with a ticket to the movie *Wag the Dog*. It was a blockbuster and sold out. The movie is about how easy the government makes everything up. The subject of the movie is very interesting and the acting is awesome and they didn't blow their lines. A lot of people thought the movie would be a bomb, but I give this movie two thumbs up. I really enjoyed this movie.

Students are usually enthusiastic about this assignment because it allows them to share movies from their culture and discuss the latest events in the lives of their favorite stars.

Interacting through Dialogues

Writing dialogues is particularly flexible and engaging as it involves pair or trio work and can be adapted for any group of idioms. To begin the assignment, the students imagine characters with a problem in a particular setting. After writing a dialogue for the imagined situation, they rehearse the scene for presentation and then bring in props and costumes, if necessary, for their performance in front of the class. However, two Japanese students, Tomo and Makiko, didn't need any props or costumes for their between-class dialogue (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Makiko and Tomo's dialogue.

Tomo: What do you say we grab a bite, Makiko?

Makiko: Could we do it another time? I'm not in the mood to eat right now.

Tomo: What's eating you? I never see you get bent out of shape before!

Makiko: You know what, I went to the DMV at West Flamingo today and I aced the written test! 'Cause I pulled an all-nighter to cram for that...but I flunked the driving test!

Tomo: What's up with your driving test anyway?

Makiko: Well, unfortunately my examiner was so nasty! He didn't give me any chance to take a make-up when I ran a stop sign.

Tomo: Just one?! How could he possibly flunk you?

Makiko: What is worse, I cut a Vicky's class for that.

Tomo: Oh my god! She's going to freak out if she knew it!

Knowing that they will have an audience for their work often inspires students to write humorous and realistic exchanges and provides an opportunity to demonstrate authentic communication.

Selling the Public through Advertisements

Focusing on advertisements raises the students' awareness of the ubiquity of idioms in American English. First, the teacher points out the use of idiomatic language in magazine and newspaper advertisements. For instance, an advertisement for a well-known credit card company featured an Olympic high jumper and led off with the line, "You don't have to bend over backwards to pull for the team," while an advertisement for an arthritis medication urged, "Don't let your joints get you down." In preparation for designing their own advertisements, small student groups then examine teacher-collected magazines, looking at advertisements for idioms and trying to decipher their meanings. They share their findings with another group to broaden their awareness of idioms in advertisements. Then, individually, in pairs, or in teams, students select a service or product and create their own sales pitch, which they will later present to the class. Asuka, a student from Japan, sold the students on diet pills while Galina, a student from Bulgaria, sold them on pizza (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Asuka and Galina's advertisements.

Advertisements can lead to rich discussions of pop culture, idiomatic language, and the media and how they influence each other. Writing their own advertisements also inspires students' creativity and expands their use of idiomatic language.

Predicting the Future through Horoscopes

Virtually every newspaper in the United States as well as others in the English-speaking world have daily horoscopes. These columns are filled with little language jewels in the form of idiomatic expressions. The first step in this activity is for the class to review several weeks' worth of horoscopes from the local paper, deciphering the meaning of the idioms from the context. The students and teacher construct an idiom word-bank on the blackboard, forming the basis for their own writing of horoscopes. With the groundwork completed, students choose from among the idioms in the word bank and from various options for writing their horoscopes: a lengthy daily or weekly horoscope for their own sign or short daily horoscopes for all twelve signs of the zodiac. Some students really "get into it" as did Sandy, a student from Peru, who added art work to her horoscope (see Figure 6). Ripa, an Indonesian student, wrote about a happy social life while Bojidar, a Bulgarian with a dark sense of humor, wrote about having a bad day (see Figure 7).

Figure 6. Sandy's artistic prediction.

Figure 7. Astrological forecasts of Ripa and Bojidar.

June 3: You'd like to keep up with friends, but your friends may be running out of money. Your day *will take a turn* for the worse. Get a grip. Make plans to hang out at the club. Get dressed to kill and hit the town. You will meet a hunk and have a crush on him. Don't lead him on because he will love you at first sight.	Today the stars show a real black day for the Scorpions. Whatever you are going to do just skip it! Do not go to work—your boss is going to freak out and he can't stand you today without any visible reason! It doesn't matter how much you kiss up to him you will always rub him the wrong way. It is just one of those days. If you are a student, you better cut classes today. Your teacher has already prepared a killer test and you will totally blow it. It doesn't matter that you are a straight A student.

After composing the horoscopes, students share their writing in four-person groups, reading their horoscopes aloud as the members of the group read along. This step not only anchors the idioms in the students' active vocabulary but also gives them an opportunity for focused listening and comprehension.

Taking a Trip via Travel Brochures

Designing travel brochures is the culminating activity. With plenty of samples gathered from travel agents, hotel racks, newsstands, and tourist destinations, pairs of students analyze two or three brochures for the use of idiomatic language. For example, a brochure from Bonfante Gardens in Gilroy, California, boasts "a little environmental education thrown in for good measure," while a Disneyland brochure urges visitors to "check out all of the seasonal fun." As a class, the students make a list of all the idioms taught throughout the semester as well as of others garnered during that time. Then, each student selects a locale for his or her own brochure. The choice can be the student's own country, a place to visit, or a fantasy destination. After collecting pictures from magazines, the Internet, other travel brochures, and family photos, the students create text to match the pictures, using the idioms to entice travelers to their chosen destinations. Ji-Young, a Korean woman, designed a brochure to attract visitors to Thailand while Eman used dialogue boxes in his pictures to call people to his native country of Algeria (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Excerpts from travel brochures by Ji-Young and Eman.

Using a computerized projection of their completed brochures, students make a sales pitch to the rest of the class, followed by question-and-answer sessions. The overall activity seems to bring out the most creativity in our students, perhaps because of their fondness for travel or their desire to show off their homeland.

Winding Down

These seven activities, used in a single class on teaching idioms, all involve created communications that are either realistic, as in letter-writing, or that are imitative, as in movie reviews or travel brochures. As such, they force students to use idioms as part of their own oral and written expressions rather than as fill-ins for textbook exercises.

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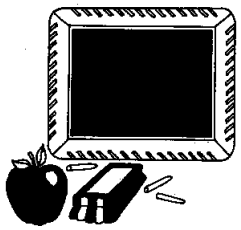

Tips for Teachers

Strengthening English and Research Skills Through Project Work

Lap Tuen Wong, Hong Kong University SPACE Community College, P.R.C.

The Hong Kong University School of Professional and Continuing Education, (HKU SPACE) Community College was established in 2000. It provides a flexible and diversified higher education experience for pre-baccalaureate students who seek to improve their employment skills or further their studies at local or overseas universities. Since its founding, the faculty has grown increasingly aware of the need for student involvement in research activities as a means of developing critical thinking skills and a sense of professionalism. Student participation in research also benefits the faculty and enhances the profile of the university. In the spring of 2005, several lecturers at HKU SPACE, including myself, embarked on a semester-long project designed to meet the needs mentioned above as well as to enhance our students' English language skills. The project culminated in the first-ever student conference at the community college level in Hong Kong, held on 30 April 2005. The theme of the conference was Language, Society, and Culture, and it was conducted in English. This article outlines the project, highlighting the steps that were particularly important for developing English language and research skills. It closes with some suggestions for adapting the project for other language teaching situations.

Preliminary Planning

The project began with selecting the conference participants. Fourteen students, all at the advanced level, were selected. They were assigned individual faculty advisers who oversaw student work and provided feedback at each step of the process. In order to provide the most realistic possible outcome for this project, planning of the student conference also began early. Four keynote speakers—all scholars and experts in the

fields of language, society, and culture—were invited to make presentations at the conference. To ensure that students could successfully participate in the conference, we designed a series of twelve training workshops focusing on the linguistic and research skills that our students needed.

The Workshops

The points below briefly describe some of the workshops, giving particular attention to those focusing on English language and research skills.

1. Topic selection and preliminary reading. Students chose topics and proposed preliminary research questions. Their advisers then provided them with relevant reading materials that were used for background and guided reading skills practice. Background reading helped students build a solid foundation in the subject matter before they began their research work. Guided reading tasks helped students learn to read beyond the literal level of a text and develop critical thinking skills. If necessary, students had the opportunity to revise their original research proposals at this stage.

2. Vocabulary development. Vocabulary development was an ongoing process. The preliminary readings and workshop setting helped students acquire much of the technical or academic vocabulary that they needed for further work on their chosen topics. In order to encourage greater reliance on English throughout the project, students were given a monolingual English dictionary and encouraged to study vocabulary by noticing how it was used in their readings rather than resorting to memorization in Chinese as they typically would have done.

3. Academic reading skills. After developing general background knowledge on their research topics, students began more serious reading. They learned to search for answers to their research questions. They gathered, organized, analyzed, and synthesized information from their readings. They began to make generalizations or assertions about their new learning.

4. Writing and research skills. At the beginning, students wrote opinion pieces about their topics. Later, they wrote more critical papers based on their readings. The lecturers presented information about qualitative and quantitative research strategies and examined advantages and disadvantages of various research instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, case studies, and observations. The college even gave students access to software such as the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for data analysis. We explained the format of a typical professional research paper including the form and function of the abstract, introduction, literature review, research methodology, data collection, discussion and analysis, conclusion, and bibliography.

Then, students drafted their own papers following this format. Advisers provided oral and written comments that were used to revise and polish the papers.

5. Speaking skills. Students practiced their conference presentations in several workshop sessions. Advisers applied writing process techniques to the oral component of the project, building in numerous opportunities for feedback and revision. Attention was given to numerous oral presentation skills including eye contact, body language, pronunciation, grammar, tone of voice, and techniques for successfully asking and answering questions after each presentation. In addition, students held their own group discussion sessions where they shared ideas about their strengths and weaknesses and how they might capitalize on the former and cope with the latter.

The general consensus of everyone involved in the project was that students' English language proficiency grew as a result of the workshops. One student commented, "I really enjoyed the preparation workshops for the conference because I've learnt and improved a lot, not only in my studies, but also in my second language—English."

The Culminating Event—The Student Conference

The student conference, organized for undergraduate and associate degree candidates and conducted in English, was the first of its kind held at the tertiary level in Hong Kong. The participation of four special conference experts made it a real, rather than simulated event. On one hand, the conference brought the project to a close. On the other hand, the conference was another important learning opportunity for students. Their presentations were recorded enabling them to review and reflect on their performances, identifying strengths and weaknesses. The conference also gave students a chance to practice several academic classroom skills. They took notes on each other's presentations and asked questions of and engaged in discussion with each other as well as with the keynote speakers.

Concluding Thoughts

This project was a success. We met the goals that we had set at the beginning. Briefly, these were enabling students to

* develop English language and research skills,
* interact with professionals in an academic setting, and
* share their research with others by presenting, or "publishing," their academic papers and projects.

While the project was a success, it also consumed an enormous amount of time and effort on the part of the organizers. Its underlying concept—a project in which students acquire both language and academic skills and then present their findings in a public forum—could be adapted for a wide variety of settings. Some teachers may be unable to work in as large or as cohesive a team as we were able to do. They may need to plan less ambitious workshops and projects. Some teachers may want to involve many more students, rather than selecting a few as we did. If so, students could work on group rather than individual projects. Less ambitious variations of the culminating event are also possible. For example, students might hold a poster session, an open house for parents, or invite another class to listen to their oral presentations. When resident experts are unavailable, school officials, local celebrities, or other respected community elders who are willing to use the target language in public could be the special guests. If a single public event requires too much organization, students could take turns presenting their work on a weekly basis. The essential elements were development of a student project, attention to building skills that ensured success, use of the target language in all stages, and a public forum in which to showcase student learning.

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Using L1 Humor in an L2 Class

Ding Jiali, School of Foreign Studies, Wuxi, P.R.C.

Have you ever planned carefully for a class, including communicative activities that should involve your students in active use of the target language, only to be met with complete silence? This has happened to me on more than one occasion. Often, when I reflect on these experiences afterward, I realize that my activity was too difficult or that I had not adequately prepared students for its linguistic demands. I was lucky one day, however, when out of such silence a new idea occurred to me and I was able to turn the silence into a lesson that everyone enjoyed.

On this particular day, several students were chuckling among themselves in class. In what is probably a familiar teacher response, I asked them what was so funny and if they wanted to share their joke with the rest of the class. Immediately, they fell silent. I knew that I had only a moment to decide how to treat this silence and that if I was careful, I might be able to turn an embarrassing moment into a fun English learning experience. I was aware of the value of humor in language learning and had tried several different ways of introducing English humor into my classes in the past. This time, however, I thought why not let the students tell us in English what they thought had been so funny even though it was not related to our lesson. I asked the class if they wanted to hear the funny story. They all shouted, “yes.” I said I also enjoy funny stories and that if they would tell their story in English, we could all enjoy it. I added that they should not worry about their mistakes but rather concentrate on telling the story. After a short pause, one student began. Little-by-little and with help from others, the story came out. Despite the language errors, the story-telling experience in English was a huge success. Soon everyone was laughing until tears ran down their faces.

In reflecting on this lesson later, I realized why this use of humor in my English class was more successful than my earlier attempts had been. In the past, I had only tried using humorous anecdotes or jokes that are in English language materials or associated with English language speakers. Often my students failed to appreciate the humor in them. In retrospect, this is no surprise. In order for my students to appreciate English humor, they needed greater familiarity with cultural aspects of English speakers' lives than our classes are generally able to give. Chinese humor, on the other hand, is second nature to them. Telling Chinese jokes, anecdotes, or humorous personal stories in English becomes a pleasurable language task and does not depend on cultural information that would require additional instructional time. Now, I frequently use Chinese humor in my English language classes. For example:

* I often tell a joke or humorous anecdote as a warm-up activity or a prelude to a new unit of instruction. Familiar context helps make the joke or story comprehensible, so that my students are able to attend to the language. Soon, I hear them repeating the joke or anecdote to each other.

* I assign students to come to class prepared with a funny joke or personal experience story that they will try to tell. First, they practice telling the stories in small groups. Then, each group nominates one story to be told to the rest of the class. By creating different groupings, students can practice their stories again with different listeners. Each time that students retell their stories, they become more fluent and confident.

* I have also used humor as a topic of discussion for lessons focused on cross-cultural communication. Sometimes, in this context, I can make use of those English jokes that did not work well in the past.

Since that first day when the students told their funny story in class, I have been able to include many forms of Chinese humor in my English language classes. Students are more relaxed, and even my serious, demanding students are pleased with the results.

Afterword—The Story That Started It All

The anecdote that helped me begin to consider using Chinese jokes and anecdotes in my English language classes may help to prove my point that L1 humor may be more effective in language classes than target language humor. You can decide for yourself whether this story would have had the same effect if it had been told in an English-speaking cultural context or in the cultural context where you teach. Briefly the story went something like this: It was Valentine's Day and the student telling the story was attending a family reunion dinner. During the dinner, her young cousin suggested that all the couples in attendance should tell their partners, “I love you.” The storyteller's father held his glass of wine up and tried several times to say the words to his wife. His lips quivered, and he broke into a sweat. Eventually, he blurted out, “Thank you.” Everyone at the dinner table laughed heartily, and when the story was told in class, all the students did too. In the end, the gentleman said that no matter what he wanted to do, he could not utter those words in public or in private.

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Ding Jiali is on the faculty of the School of Foreign Studies, Jiangnan University, Wuxi, PRC. She was a visiting fellow at the Australian National University from 2000 to 2001. She is interested in ways of activating students' curiosity, autonomy, and independence in learning and using the target language. She can be reached at dingjiali@yahoo.com.

Using Prediction Tasks to Help Student Writers

Medellin Stephens, Art of Living Center, Quebec City, Canada

Being an avid reader is a wonderful asset in a developing writer. Often, students who read widely or for pleasure acquire familiarity with various genres of writing and text structure more naturally than nonreaders do. Unfortunately, many of my community college and university level students, who need to be able to write well, are not avid readers. I have had some success in helping these students with their writing by working on skills that they also employ when they are reading, even if they are not strong readers. Prediction is one of these skills. Learning to use prediction gives students a tool that they can use in evaluating and revising their own and their classmates' writing.

Prediction is a normal part of everyday life. We choose what we wear in the morning or what to carry with us based on a prediction of what the weather will be like or what we will be doing that day. We make purchases based on predictions about what we will need or do later. We sometimes try to predict what will happen in the future, whether for fun or for real. Thus, prediction is not something that is foreign or difficult. Everyone does it. It is also an important tool in reading although few readers are conscious of it. To illustrate this point, consider the way the following paragraph begins.

Readers make predictions when they read titles, common expressions, sentences, and paragraphs. Sometimes a single word will create a prediction of what follows, particularly for native or fluent speakers of a language. Sometimes a reader's predictions are exactly the idea the writer will express, but mostly a reader's predictions fall within a range of possibilities. Now, what would you predict should follow this italicized passage? You might predict an example of the type of prediction that a word or passage might evoke or possibly how I would suggest making this notion of prediction clear to students. However, you would probably not expect or predict that I would discuss unexpected student responses or another reading skill, for example. We can use this notion of prediction to give students concrete feedback on their writing that will help them revise, and in so doing, better understand the writing process.

Following are sketches of several prediction tasks that I have used with developmental and ESL student writers.

Making Predictions From Titles

Titles are a good place to begin prediction tasks. If you are like me, your students frequently ask whether their papers need to have titles. I ask my students to imagine going into a library where all the titles have been removed from the books. That is how I feel when I sit down to read papers that do not have titles. If I ask them why the titles are important in the library, they will say that they tell us what will be in the books, so in a sense, they know why the titles are important. To help them feel this need, I prepare a list of titles from books and articles to use in class. Depending upon the level of technology available to you, this could be done with a PowerPoint slide, an overhead transparency, or even titles written one-by-one on a blackboard. Show a series of titles. Ask students to make a prediction about the content of each book, article, or essay. Suggest that they write down their predictions and then discuss them in small groups. They will be surprised by how similar their predictions are. It doesn't take long for students to realize that titles allow readers to make predictions about the content of a work and whether or not they want to read it. Sometimes students ask about misleading titles. When they do, I discuss reasons why writers sometimes do this, pointing out that it is rare in academic writing.

Making Predictions Within a Paragraph

Next, work with paragraph-length texts. For this, you will need sentence strips, an overhead transparency, PowerPoint slides, or some method of showing students a text sentence by sentence. In the beginning, use a well-written paragraph that has been broken apart. First, show the topic sentence and let students predict what the paragraph is about. Then, add another sentence or two and pause to let students make another prediction. Ask what they think the writer will talk about next. Continue in this manner. If time permits, you might ask students to silently write their predictions and then compare them with a partner or small group. Gradually they will see that they can often predict exactly what the writer will say and that even when they cannot, their predictions will probably match those of some of their classmates. This activity also helps students learn how to become more active readers when they approach a new text. In a variation on this activity, you can show students well-written thesis statements and let them predict the content and (sometimes) the structure of an academic essay.

Predicting Words and Phrases

When students have some experience predicting what idea will follow another, you can try using a paragraph in which you have strategically deleted some words and phrases. Students will be surprised by how often they can predict exactly what words they need to fill in the blanks. Here you discuss in a general way how much of what we

say and write is made up of formulaic expressions that are used by native and fluent writers to create new ideas and texts.

Once you have introduced the notion of prediction to your students, you will probably find teachable moments in which it is relevant, helpful, or fun in many other areas of classroom life. For example, as you conclude one activity, ask your class to predict what is coming next. Or, ask students to listen to the opening line of a news broadcast and predict what the lead story will be.

Prediction tasks help students begin to see texts from the point of view of a reader. When they have learned that well-written works allow readers to make generally successful predictions, they are ready to look at their own writing from the point of view of a reader, too. Using the same techniques as above, show your class a paragraph or text in which their predictions will not work. Often, the reason is that the text is writer-based rather than reader-based. Because they now understand that a good text makes prediction possible, they will accept that something about this paragraph is incomplete. In other words, they will understand that revision is necessary, not because a demanding teacher is not satisfied, but because the text is not yet ready for reading. For many developmental and ESL writers, this is a very important realization. From this point forward, your student writers will have a much better understanding of the need for and power of revision in the writing process. Very soon, you will hear them using prediction in the feedback that they give each other and in revising their own papers.

About the Author

Medellin Stephens holds an M.A. in ESL from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. She has taught developmental and ESL writing at a number of institutions of higher learning in Honolulu. Currently, she is on the staff of the Art of Living Center in Quebec City, Canada.

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The Regional Language Center (RELC) Portfolio Series

Review by Elise Fader
Brigham Young University-Hawaii, USA

THE RELC PORTFOLIO SERIES. Willy A. Renandya and Jack C. Richards, Series Editors, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Center (2002).

The Regional Language Center (RELC) Portfolio Series is comprised of twelve booklets written by individual authors. The booklets serve as resource material for ESL/EFL teachers, TESOL professors, and other language experts. The information in the booklets is presented in a succinct manner that is hands-on and user-friendly. The booklets range in length from approximately thirty to sixty pages. Each text is focused on one practical classroom topic such as teaching pronunciation or managing vocabulary learning, and a variety of principles, methods and techniques that can easily be used in one's own classroom, in workshops, or in-service courses. A valuable feature of the series is the ability to combine the topics or methods according to teacher and/or student needs.

Each booklet contains an introduction to the topic followed by explanations and tasks. The booklets end with a reference list and appendices, which vary depending on the topic. For example, the appendices in the booklet entitled *Planning Lessons for a Reading Class* has a model lesson plan designed for a thirty-five minute lesson and the reading to be used as part of that plan. *Teaching Listening in the Language Classroom* has several appendices containing a chart of listening strategies and tactics, a model of a listening diary, and a guide for self-directed learning. The appendices in other booklets provide answer keys to some of the tasks given in the booklets.

Due to the number of books in this series, it is not possible to give specific details about each one. However, it is important to give some idea of at least one booklet in the series. The booklet entitled *Planning Lessons for a Reading Class* introduces the topic by giving a definition of reading and three models of how reading occurs (Top-down, Bottom-up, and the Interactive). Chapter One gives general information about reading and lesson planning, Chapter Two discusses factors to consider when creating reading lesson plans, Chapters Three and Four focus on reading strategies (activating prior knowledge, making predictions, skimming/scanning, vocabulary development, and identifying main ideas) and the development of exercises to teach the strategies, and the last chapter concludes with a short summary of the concepts presented in the booklet.

Some of the ideas presented in each booklet will serve as validation of one's current teaching practices while others will give new ideas or techniques that will be beneficial for both teachers and students as they are implemented. One could purchase the entire series for a comprehensive set of resource materials or purchase books in a combination that would fill needs in a particular area. For example, if one wants to focus on only listening/speaking, it would be appropriate to purchase *Managing Vocabulary Learning*, *Teaching Listening in the Language Classroom*, and *Teaching Pronunciation: Why, What, When, and How*. Those studying in the TESOL field, both novice teachers and seasoned professionals, would be well served by reading this series.

The following is a list of the individual titles that comprise this series:

1. *Giving Feedback in Language Classes*. Marilyn Lewis. *S$6.00
2. *Managing Vocabulary Learning.* Paul Nation. S$7.00
3. *The Reflective Teacher: A Guide to Classroom Research*. Sandra Lee McKay. S$5.00
4. *Teaching Listening in the Language Classroom*. Christine G. M. Goh. S$7.00
5. *Planning Aims and Objectives in Language Programs.* Jack C. Richards. S$6.00
6. *Planning Lessons for a Reading Class*. Thomas S. C. Farrell. S$6.00
7. *Intervening to Help in the Writing Process.* Antonia Chandrasegaran. S$6.00
8. *Action Research in Action*. Edited by Gregory Hadley. S$7.00
9. *Teaching Pronunciation: Why, What, When, and How.* Gloria Poedjosoedarmo. S$6.00
10. *Text Features and Reading Comprehension*. Mary Lee Field. S$6.00
11. *Developing Language Course Materials*. Brian Tomlinson and Hitomi Masubara. S$6.00
12. *Learning Strategies: A Guide for Teachers*. Sara Cotterall and Hayo Reinders. S$6.00

*The S listed in front of each dollar sign stands for Singapore dollars.

About the Reviewer

Elise M. Fader has a M.A. in TESOL from Eastern Michigan University. She teaches academic writing, reading, listening and speaking in the English as an International Language Program at Brigham Young University-Hawaii.

The ELT Grammar Book: A Teacher-Friendly Reference Guide

Review by Justin Shewell
Brigham Young University, Utah, U.S.A.

THE ELT GRAMMAR BOOK: A TEACHER-FRIENDLY REFERENCE GUIDE. Firsten, R., & Killian, P. San Francisco: Alta Book Center Publishers. 2003. Pp. 569. $36.95. ISBN 1-882483-90-1

One area in English that seems to get a lot of attention worldwide is grammar. However, ideas about what is correct grammar and what is incorrect grammar can be very different among teachers. It is difficult for many teachers to know exactly what is correct, and how they can teach grammar to their students.

Enter *The ELT Grammar Book*, "a teacher-friendly reference guide" that helps teachers understand the grammar rules, and then offers ideas and tips for teaching grammar to students. This is definitely a teacher-oriented book, and a must-have for any teacher who may teach grammar.

The book is organized into sections based on specific English grammar points. For example, word order, the present, past, and future tenses, modals, and so on. Each section offers an in-depth review of the grammar rules and numerous helpful examples. Each section concludes with tips and ideas for teaching that particular grammar point in the classroom. These activities are varied, and most can be adapted for any level. This made it very easy for me to open to the section of the book related to what I was teaching on any given day, and find a variety of activities and classroom techniques that reinforced that grammar principle. Also, my students loved the activities and it helped make the class more exciting (something very important when you are teaching a class totally devoted to grammar).

The ELT Grammar Book is a reference, so it is easily adaptable to many different classroom and curriculum situations. Also, it is fairly inexpensive. Since it is so comprehensive, it makes a great addition to any program and can be an immense help to teachers.

I used the book as a reference for one semester in my grammar class (high-intermediate) and found it very useful. It did not have any information about gerunds and infinitives, which is a big part of our class, but other than that I found it to be an excellent resource.

About the Reviewer

Justin Shewell holds a B.A. in TESOL from BYU-Hawaii. He teaches at the English Language Center and is a graduate student at BYU. He has taught English in Korea and the United States.

Conference Announcements

The American University in Cairo and Oxford University. March 25, 2006. The Second AUCOXF Conference on Languages and Linguistics, American University in Cairo, Egypt, Contact Dr. Zeinab Ibrahim, The Arabic Language Institute, or Ms. Sanaa Makhlouf, Composition and Rhetoric Program, Department of English and Comparative Literature, or Dr. Mariam Osman, The English Language Department, The American University in Cairo, 113 Sharia Kasr Al Aini, Cairo, Egypt. Tel. 20-2-794-2964, Fax: 20-2-795-7565. Email:mariam@aucegypt.edu. Http://www.aucoxf@aucegypt.edu.

Penn TESOL-East. March 25, 2006. "ESL Concepts for Mainstream Teachers." Penn State Abington, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. E-mail:jgee@manor.edu. Http://www.penntesoleast.org.

ATESOL NSW and Australian Council of TESOL Associations. April 19-21, 2006. "Education for the Whole Person: The TESOL Response," Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Contact Robert Jackson, DET Multicultural Programs Unit Level 14, 1 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst, New South Wales 2010 Australia. Email: robert. jackson@det nsw.edu.au. Http://atesolnsw.org.

National Chung Cheng University. April 22-23, 2006. International Conference on English Instruction and Assessment, Chiayi, Taiwan. Contact Ms. Tang, Department of Foreign Languages & Literature, National Chung Cheng University, 168 University Rd., Min-Hsiung Chiayi, 621, Taiwan, R.O.C. Tel. 886-5-2721108, Fax:: 886-5-2720495. E-mail:admada@ccu.edu.tw. Http://www.ccunix.ccu.edu.tw/~fllccu/.

Teacher Education in Language Teaching. April 24-26, 2006. 41st RELC International Seminar. Contact SEMINAR SECRETARIAT SEAMEO Regional Language, Centre 30 Orange Grove Road, Singapore 258352 REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE. Tel: (65) 6885 7813 / 6885 7844. Fax: (65) 6734 2753. E-mail: admin@relc.org.sg. Http://www.relc.org.sg

Email English

Review by Neil McBeath
The Royal Air Force of Oman.

EMAIL ENGLISH by Paul Emmerson. 2004, Macmillan. ISBN: 1-405-01294-3, pp. 96.

Regular readers of the *TESL Reporter* cannot have failed to see Chan and Jixian's Tip for Teachers on *Teaching Business Email Writing* (*37*(1); 61-65). Coincidentally, Paul Emmerson has produced a textbook entirely devoted to this topic.

The book is composed of 32 double-page units, which are arranged in the following sections: Introduction (3 Units); Basics (9 Units); Language Focus (5 Units); Commercial (6 Units); Problems (2 Units); Direct/Indirect (2 Units) and Personal (3 Units). Many of these sections are self- defining. The five units in Language Focus, for example, are concerned with verb forms (i.e., tenses, comparative forms, sentence structure, common mistakes, and spelling and punctuation). Direct/Indirect, by contrast, is concerned with the pragmatic problem of *Being direct and brief* (pp. 62-63) as opposed to *Being indirect and polite* (pp. 64-65). The exercises are followed by a Phrase Bank Index (pp. 74-84) subdivided into Basics, Arrangements, Writing Styles, Commercial, Complaints and Apologies, Personal, and Reports. The book concludes with an answer key (pp. 85-96).

From this outline it can be seen that while the Notes to Students (p. 4) claim that the book's target audience is "learners of English at intermediate and upper intermediate level," it is also suitable for advanced learners and could be used for self-access learning. The Notes to the Teacher (p. 8) offer surprising freedom: "Work through Units 1-3 of Email English in sequence. After that you can do the units in any order."

For this reviewer the main surprise was the absence of emoticons. Unit 2: Missing Words and Abbreviations (pp. 10-11) introduces some of the forms used in sending text messages, but these are entirely graphemic (c=see; yr= your; asap = as soon as possible). This last example is given as an example of "a well-known phrase" (p. 11), but I would suggest that it may be better known in business circles than in general, conversational English. In Unit 1: Formal or Informal (pp. 8-9), moreover, it might have been wise to indicate that emoticons exist, but are used only in informal register. For the rest of the book, the material on Complaints and Apologies (pp. 54-57; 81) and Advice and Suggestions (pp. 68-69) could be incorporated as supplementary material for many

communicative ESL textbooks. It would probably be best, however, to limit the use of this book and to remember that emailing is only one small sub-genre of writing.

This book fills a niche in the textbook market. It deserves to do well, and it will be particularly useful to students of English for Business Purposes. For more mainstream EFL/ESL students, it should be used as a supplementary, rather than a core, text.

About the Reviewer

Neil McBeath is an English Education Officer working for The Royal Air Force of Oman. He is currently teaching ESP courses to aircraft engineering technicians. He holds two Master's degrees and has been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal of the Sultanate of Oman.

Conference Announcements

Eastern Mediterranean University. May 2-5, 2006. North Cyprus-2nd International ELT Conference, "ELT Profession: Challenges and Prospects." Contact Dr. Suleyman Goker, Faculty of Education, Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta, Turkish Republic of Northeren Cyprus, Mersin-10, Turkey. Tel. (90) 392-630 2400. Fax: (90) 392-630. E-mail:suleyman.goker@emu.edu.tr. Http://www.elt2006.emu.edu.tr.

McGill University and York University. May 4-7, 2006. "Language Acquisition Bilingualism: Consequences for a Multilingual Society," Toronto, Canada. E-mail: labconf@yorku.ca. Http://www.psych.york.ca/labconference.

Purdue University. June 8-10, 2006. Symposium on Second Language Writing, "Practicing Theory in Second Language Writing," West Lafayette, Indiana. Contact Tony Silva, Purdue University, Department of English, 500 Oval Drive, West Lafayette, Indiana 47907-2038. Tel. 765-494-3769. Fax: 765-494-3780. Email:tony@purdue.edu. Http://www.symposium.jslw.org/2006/.

The European Association for Computer Assisted Language Learning. July 4-7, 2006. Annual Conference, "Integrating CALL into Study Programmes," Granada, Spain. Contact Margaret Gammell, Dept. of Languages & Cultural Studies, University of Limerick, Ireland. E-mail:Margaret.Gammell@ul.ie. Http://www.eurocall-languages.org.

In Celebration of BYU-Hawaii's Golden Jubilee

by Maureen S. Andrade, Editor

The year 2005 marks the 50th anniversary of Brigham Young University-Hawaii, the institution which has supported the *TESL Reporter* since its inception in 1967. BYU-Hawaii was established in 1955 as the Church College of Hawaii (CCH) by the president and prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, David O. McKay, who stood in the sugar cane fields of Laie and proclaimed that the school was being built for two purposes, first to teach "the things pertaining to God and his kingdom," and second, to "develop manhood, character, and make noble men and women."

Classes at the Church College commenced on September 26, 1955 with 153 students. In the early days, only about 15% of the students were international. Today, 47% of the 2,500 students at BYU-Hawaii are international, originating from over 70 different countries and making the university one of the most international in the United States. As the number of international students increased, the need for English support courses became apparent. Although many students had attained as high a level of English as possible in their countries, it was not always sufficient for the demands of academic course work in English. As a result, the English Language Institute (ELI), now the English as an International Language (EIL) program, was created in 1964. In addition, the Bachelor of Arts degree in TESOL was established in 1967 to train teachers who would return to their nations, skilled in English, and knowledgeable about language

acquisition issues and methodologies. Concurrent with the BA program, the *TESL Reporter* was born to fulfill the need for a classroom-oriented journal for practitioners in the field throughout the Pacific Basin (see *TESL Reporter 25*(2) for a history of the BA TESOL and the *TESL Reporter*).

In addition to the increasing internationalization of the campus, the university has transformed itself in other ways as well, shifting from a two-year to a four-year college in 1961 and changing its name from CCH to Brigham Young University-Hawaii in 1974. The EIL program and the TESOL major have changed and improved over time, always remaining integral to the mission of the university and the fulfillment of the words of its founding father, President McKay, that "from this school…will go men and women whose influence will be felt for good towards the establishment of peace internationally." Hand-in-hand with these academic programs, the *TESL Reporter* is now distributed in over 100 countries where it has proven to be a valuable resource to English language teachers thanks to the generous support of BYU-Hawaii.

The *TESL Reporter* pays tribute to BYU-Hawaii and the men and women whose vision has been instrumental in making the university what it is today, particularly in its contributions to the field of TESOL and international educational initiatives, and we give thanks to our authors and readers, who, over the years have supported our efforts to promote the sharing of professional knowledge and expertise that has benefited numerous English language educators and learners.