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ARTICLES

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

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

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Articles

Tips for Teachers

Teacher Support and Student Willingness to Communicate: The Chinese Context

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Abstract

This article reports on a study that explored EFL teachers' awareness of cultural influence on students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in the Chinese context and investigated the strategies employed by the teachers to accommodate students' culturally specific WTC. Twelve teachers and twelve classes participated in this study in a Sino-British university in China. Data were collected through video-taped classroom interactions, interviews with teachers, and stimulated-recall interviews with students. The results show that the teachers are aware of the influence of the deeply-rooted Chinese culture on students' communication behavior. They are equally aware of the influence from the student's prior English learning experience in high school, and their tendency to submit to teacher authority in this specific Chinese sociocultural context. The findings suggest that teachers can use culturally accommodating strategies to promote students' willingness to communicate in class.

Keywords: willingness to communicate, teacher support, teacher immediacy, cultural awareness, classroom interaction

Introduction

Students' quietness in class is considered by many second language researchers and pedagogues as a negative attribute. In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), students' quietness is typically labelled reticence (Cheng, 2000; Tsui, 1996). As Tsui (1996) notes, the numerous contributing factors to student reticence include low second language (L2) proficiency level, fear of making mistakes and derision, the uneven allocation of turns, and the teacher's intolerance of silence, to name a few. How to reduce student reticence and get them to communicate willingly in L2 learning contexts is of great concern to language researchers

and teachers. Thus, the L2 willingness to communicate (WTC) construct has attracted an increasing amount of attention in the last decade.

L2 WTC refers to an individual's intention to engage in communication in an L2 when free to do so (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément & Noels, 1998). L2 WTC constitutes an important component of SLA and L2 pedagogy (Kang, 2005; Peng, 2013), as it can facilitate language learning when higher L2 WTC among students translates into increased opportunity for authentic L2 use (MacIntyre & Legatoo, 2011).

L2 WTC in the Chinese Classroom Context

L2 WTC has been researched in both English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom contexts and the empirical L2 WTC research has identified a range of psychological, contextual and social predictors of WTC, including motivation, personality, self-confidence, interlocutor, group dynamics, topic and task (Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Cao, 2011). As MacIntyre, Burns and Jessome (2011, p. 82) point out, "The notion of WTC integrates psychological, linguistic, educational, and communicative dimensions of language that typically have been studied independently of each other…these dimensions of language are not at all separate; rather, they are integrated as features of the students' experience." Cao (2009, 2014) provided empirical evidence to support MacIntyre et al.'s (2011) proposition that all relevant psychological, contextual and linguistic factors work in concert rather than a single factor works independently to create learners' WTC in an ESL context. Similarly, Peng (2012) demonstrated that L2 WTC in the Chinese EFL context is nurtured by the interaction between the learner-internal and learner-external factors inside and beyond the classroom walls.

Research into Chinese students' WTC is relatively scant. Liu's (2005) study examined Chinese tertiary students' unwillingness to communicate in the oral English language classroom by employing questionnaires, classroom observations and reflective journals. The study found that the factors that prohibited students' WTC in class were lack of practice, low English proficiency, lack of self-confidence, anxiety, cultural beliefs, personality, and fear of losing face. This study highlighted the importance of searching for reticence-coping strategies to promote learners' WTC in class.

Peng's (2007) study investigated contextual and situational factors contributing to Chinese EFL learners' WTC in the classroom. Based on questionnaire and interview data, two groups of factors were identified as influencing Chinese students' L2 WTC; namely, individual contextual factors and social contextual factors. The individual context included factors such as communicative competence, language anxiety, risk-taking and learners' beliefs. The social context included factors of classroom climate, group cohesiveness, teacher support and classroom organisation. She interpreted the eight factors from a cultural perspective, pointing out that communicative competence is not a priority in the culture of learning in China and therefore still a downplayed variable, and arguing that the classroom climate within the Chinese culture of learning and communication can be viewed as an environment built up by the majority of others to which the individual self is affiliated and oriented. She further argued that Chinese learners' WTC encompasses their linguistic, cognitive, affective and, cultural readiness. That is, their reluctant engagement in L2 communication could be attributable to the lack of one or more of such readiness factors.

Teacher Support and Student WTC

In a language classroom, teachers play an influential role in affecting students' WTC. How teachers conduct the lessons and how they interact with students can influence their communicative behavior in classrooms (Lee & Ng, 2010), and as the enforcer of the classroom regulations, teachers have the potential to increase or decrease students' WTC at any moment (MacIntyre et al., 2011). Wen and Clément (2003) suggested that the teacher's involvement, attitude, immediacy, and teaching style exerts a significant and determining sociocultural influence on student engagement and WTC. Teacher involvement refers to the quality of the interpersonal relationship of the teacher with his/her students, willingness to dedicate psychological resources to students, enjoyment of interaction with students, and attentiveness to students' needs and emotions. Teacher immediacy refers to communication behavior, either verbal or non-verbal, which can reduce the actual physical or psychological distance between the teacher and students.

In Cao's (2009) study, teaching method, teacher immediacy, and teacher interaction strategies were found to affect students' WTC in ESL classrooms. Some students seemed to like the varied and vivid teaching style possessed of the teacher

and consequently felt motivated to participate in class. Some students were especially enthusiastic about anticipating and volunteering answers to questions from teachers who adopted a more interactive and learner-centred teaching method. Students tended to be more willing to ask questions and participate more actively in class when they liked the teacher of that class. A teacher's approach behavior was reported to produce interpersonal closeness and promote students' WTC. Conversely, when a teacher kept a physical distance from a student, the student would interpret the distance as a source preventing the students' further clarification with the teacher. The students also felt discouraged from talking if the teacher did not seem to be engaged in the interaction with students or failed to acknowledge their answers.

In the Chinese EFL context, Peng (2007) found that teacher support was considered to be important by the students especially in activating their L2 WTC. Teacher support refers to teachers' dedication to and skills in providing both linguistic and non-linguistic aids and fostering a safe classroom environment to boost L2 communication. Teacher's classroom management skills and teaching styles, termed classroom organisation, was also found to have a role to play in influencing students' L2 WTC. In a follow-up study, Peng (2012) revealed that teacher factors, including teaching styles, methods and classroom procedure, were reported by Chinese students to contribute substantially to their WTC in class. The students appreciated teacher support and immediacy behavior, such as giving explanations in students' L1, chatting with students in L2 during break time, and being humorous or telling jokes in class.

Aims and Research Questions

Despite the fact that the influence of teacher on students' WTC has been explored to some extent in both ESL and EFL classroom contexts, this has been investigated through the perspective from students; that is, the findings were obtained from student self-reported interview, questionnaire or journal data. Very few L2 WTC studies have focused on teachers' perceptions of students' WTC in class and what teachers themselves can do to promote students' WTC level, and what teacher supportive behavior is beneficial for increasing students' WTC.

As MacIntyre et al. (2011) remarked, WTC should be viewed as a socially constructed dialogical process in which the verbal and nonverbal actions of the

other person (for example the teacher of the classroom), are critically important to the dynamics of WTC. Taking a dynamic dialogical approach (MacIntyre et al., 2011), this qualitative study aims to investigate (1) teachers' perceptions of students' WTC as situated in the Chinese cultural context, and (2) what teacher supportive behavior promotes students' WTC in class. It aims to address the following research questions:

1. What is teachers' awareness of Chinese students' cultural inclinations toward willingness to communicate in the English classroom?
2. What are teachers' practices in accommodating students' culturally specific willingness to communicate in the English classroom?

Method

Context and Participants

This research took place at a hybrid British-Chinese university in China. Unlike traditional Chinese universities where the medium of instruction in content programmes is Chinese, this university offers courses accredited by a British university and taught exclusively in English. Some of the students are expected to complete the four-year undergraduate study at this university, whereas others are enrolled in a 2+2 programme to complete the first two years of study in China and the last two years in the UK. All the Year 1 and Year 2 students are required to take an EAP and academic skills course, with 10 hours per week for Year 1 and 8 hours per week for Year 2 students. The EAP and academic skills programme is intended to prepare the students for academic studies in English and equip them with the necessary skills to succeed in their further studies in the academic context in the UK. The programme includes developing skills in note-taking in lectures, oral presentations, communication techniques in tutorials and seminars, group projects, writing academic essays and research reports.

Twelve English tutors at the university English Language Centre, and twelve Year 1 and Year 2 classes of approximately 240 students participated in this study. The participants in each class consisted of less than twenty adult Chinese learners of English between the ages of 18 and 19. All twelve tutors had native or near-native English proficiency and they came from a variety of backgrounds. All of them had

an MA in TESOL or Applied Linguistics and two of them held a PhD in Applied Linguistics. They had a range of teaching experience from five to thirty years.

Data Collection

Data collection involved classroom observations, stimulated-recall interviews with students, and semi-structured interviews with teachers. Eleven one-hour lessons, attended by eleven different groups of twenty students, were observed and video-taped. Video-taping was abandoned in one class because a student in that class opposed to being video-taped. One of the researchers sat in to take field notes instead. After observation, two to four participants in each class (a total of thirty-three) volunteered for a stimulated-recall interview (Appendix A). The students watched excerpts of video-recorded classroom interaction and made comments on any factors affecting their WTC. All the teachers were also interviewed after the class observations, for their views of the students' WTC behavior and the techniques they used to promote students' WTC (Appendix B).

Data Coding and Analysis

As this paper focused on teacher perception and practice, the twelve teacher interviews and the teacher-fronted activities in the video-taped classes were transcribed verbatim, coded and analysed. The results from the thirty-three stimulated-recall interviews with students will be reported in a future study.

The interview data was coded and analysed using content analysis (Guba & Lincole, 1994). Prior to coding and analysis of the interview data sets, the researchers gained familiarity with the data in the process of transcribing, reading and re-reading the transcripts. Salient and recurring ideas, and especially the occasions/incidents when the teachers commented on the cultural influences on students' WTC and the strategies they employed to promote students' WTC were identified. The initial step of coding involved identification of the incidences. Then codes were assigned to the incidents and an attempt was made to discover patterns or categories between the codes.

Results and Discussion

RQ1. Teacher's Awareness of Cultural Influence on Students' WTC

Based on interview data, three themes relating to teachers' awareness of Chinese students' cultural inclinations to WTC were identified. They are reported as (a) awareness of deeply rooted influence of Chinese culture on WTC; (b) awareness of influences from students' prior English learning experience; (c) awareness of the teacher being an authoritative figure.

Awareness of deeply rooted influence of the Chinese culture

It seems the majority of the teachers being interviewed are aware of the profound influence of Chinese culture on students' WTC and communication behavior in class. They reported that the students are particularly reluctant to respond to questions in a teacher-fronted activity, even though they already know what the correct answer is, and main reasons being not wanting to show off in front of the class. As Jenny remarked,

> "But when they're asked the questions, there's still the cultural embarrassment of volunteering an answer, and I think it's very much of a cultural background thing where they don't want to be seen to be smart or seen always to give the answer … they know the answer but maybe they're not humble enough to trumpet it, I think that is the thing that holds them back. One or two students do volunteer, but they're extraordinarily extroverted students, and others who do volunteer, do it quite hesitatingly, unless they're called by name."

George confirmed the cultural pressure a student might be under when attempting to volunteer answers in teacher-fronted activities, "When they're answering the teacher and they're the only one speaking, for that response they feel the most scrutiny, with the most cultural pressure."

In this EFL setting, the students are inevitably influenced by the Chinese culture. Chinese culture is commonly recognized as collectivistic. The collectivistic values still contribute significantly to the shaping of the Chinese self and to one's perception of the relationship between self and others. The other-directed self means that Chinese students tend to be very sensitive to the judgments from teachers and peers on their language behavior (Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Wen & Clement, 2003), therefore, they will be less likely to get involved in classroom

communication. This is similar to Peng and Woodrow's (2010) finding that if a Chinese student believes that frequently volunteering answers in class may be criticized by peers as "showing-off", he or she may develop anxiety before or during speaking up, especially when others are remaining silent. As a result, this kind of culture-fueled beliefs can have a controlling effect on students' self-confidence, which will have a direct effect on students' WTC.

Another teacher, Gabrielle, noted that students might use not wanting to show off as an excuse, because they are more concerned about not getting the answer wrong, "if they answer all the time, classmates might think they just want to show off, but I think it could also be an excuse, they just don't want to answer in case they get it wrong." As Wen and Clement (2003) suggest, Chinese students are more concerned with correctness and less likely to seek out conversations for fear of being wrong, because it is considered shameful to assume to know what one does not know, and this kind of shame generates loss of face. Usually more extroverted and outgoing students are on the whole, more tolerant of ambiguity.

Awareness of influences from students' prior English learning experience

Some teachers are also aware of the influences from the students' prior high school English learning experience, which was negative, on their current WTC and communication behavior in class. Neil reported that students who were discouraged by the teachers in high school English studies could have anxiety participating in teacher-led activities, "I've read that in high schools in China teachers can humiliate students who don't give the answers they expect to receive. That might make students unwilling to or fearful to contribute in class in open class." Tony expressed similar concern that some students had been criticized too much by their high school teachers,

> "I think that Chinese English teaching discourages students, most students… I think they've been told that so many times by their teacher that your English is not good enough, not good enough, that they believe it…they've been sold the story that their English is poor, but when you actually get them talking, they're more competent than they believe they are."

Awareness of the teacher being an authoritative figure

Wen and Clement (2003) claim that submission to teacher's authority, a recognized tendency in Chinese culture, provided another way to look at Chinese students' reluctance to participate in classroom communication. "Teachers are expected to impart knowedge, and students are supposed to be mentally instead of verbally active in class" (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). Being used to this passive way of learning, that is, receiving knowledge from the teacher, students might not feel comfortable studying in a student-centred mode, and they might feel time is wasted in group discussion. They tend to believe that their English proficiency is built on teacher's lectures rather than on their own practice.

These observations are also reflected in the teachers' comments from the interview data. For example, Jenny commented that students were not even used to maintaining eye contact with the teacher let alone participating verbally in open class, "in schools the authority of the teacher is so high, they are not meant to maintain eye contact with authority…The comfort zone is not there that they do eye contact, they don't feel comfortable."

RQ2 Teaching Practice/Teacher Strategies

In response to the second research question which concerns teacher strategies as to accommodating to students' culturally specific WTC and increase their WTC level in class, a number of themes from the interview and classroom interaction data emerged. They include (a) prolonged waiting time and thinking time; (b) focus-on-meaning activities; (c) teacher involvement and teacher immediacy; and (d) teacher elicitation and prompting techniques.

Prolonged waiting time and thinking time

A number of teachers said that they would give students an extended wait time for about six to seven seconds after they have thrown a question to the floor in the open class discussions. They thought that this prolonged wait time suited Chinese students who were used to being called upon in high school and were under the cultural influence of not showing off. This extra wait time would allow them to be more inclined to volunteer answers. Adrian reported that this extended wait time also gives students some extra time to think through their responses and avoids putting students on the spot. He was against the idea of forcing students to answer

because that would slow down the pace and make the students feel bad. This is also a technique reported in Lee and Ng's (2010) study as being workable to reduce students' reticence in English classes in Hong Kong.

Focus-on-meaning activities

Previous research has shown that when students focus more on the meaning than on the form, they are more tolerant of ambiguity and are thus more actively engaged in communication with less anxiety (Wen & Clement, 2003). This study has also shown that students tend to be more willing to participate in focus-on-meaning type of activities, such as role plays, seminars and debates. George, Neil and Peter commented that when students did debates or role plays, they were very much involved in the process of thinking through the arguments or imagining themselves in the given roles, and they got beyond worrying about the accuracy of the language, focused on advancing their ideas and opinions, and became more risk-taking in the participation process. Robert said that seminars tended to generate more willing participation from different students, rather than one or two more dominant students. It might be because the teacher was sitting back and acting as a facilitator only and the teacher's power was reduced and sort of handed over to the students, and that, in turn, encouraged more willing participation.

Teacher involvement and teacher immediacy

Teacher's involvement and immediacy behavior were reported in previous studies to influence students' WTC in class. These include the quality of interpersonal relationship of the teacher with students, attentiveness to students' needs and emotions, and verbal or non-verbal behavior to reduce the physical and psychological distance between the teacher and students (Cao, 2009; Peng, 2007, 2012; Wen & Clement, 2003). In this study, the teachers reported on several teacher immediacy and involvement strategies to reduce students' anxiety in participation and encourage quieter students to participate. For example, Gabrielle and Neil tended to give quiet students a chance to share the ideas before they contributed to the teacher, so at least they had the confidence knowing their peers had agreed with their ideas. Stanley's strategy for getting quiet students involved was to include them but not put them in the centre of attention. David thought sometimes quiet students would surprise him when he prompted them at a specific question because they would give him an excellent answer which would lead to something else.

Teacher elicitation and prompting techniques

An examination of the classroom interaction data from teacher-fronted activities revealed that the teachers used a range of elicitation and prompting techniques to promote willing participation from students. Excerpt 1 below shows the techniques employed by Alex in the Year 1 EAP for Engineering class.

Excerpt 1:

1. T3: *Have a look at this (pointing at a socket on the wall), what's this thing here?* (Ss looking at it with interest) Do you know this in English, s--- (No response)
2. T3: *Socket, an electric socket, an electric wall socket, how many how many holes has that thing got?*
3. SS: Five
4. T3: *There are actually two different ones. Why are there two different ones?*
5. S1: Different standard
6. T3: *Two different standards, if I want to bring in something called an adapter,* (board up 'adapter'), *how many of you have been to different countries where electricity standard is different?*
7. S2: Hong Kong, Japan, England
8. T3: *What happens in Hong Kong or England, do you know?* (eye contact with S2) *With electricity, is it the same as China?*
9. S3: No (from another table, T3 turns around to look at him)
10. S2: It's strange
11. T3: *It's strange, how is it strange* (turns to S2 and moves closer to him) *if I've brought my laptop and tried to plug it in in Hong Kong,*
12. S3: It won't work
13. S4: It won't work
14. S2: It can't get in

(Year 1, Engineering class)

In this excerpt, the teacher Alex asked two types of questions, display and referential questions. Display questions refer to questions that the teacher already knows the answer to and only asks them for comprehension check. Referential or open-ended questions are those which request information unknown to the teacher (Clifton, 2006; Cullen, 1998). Referential questions are found to elicit longer and

more complex learner responses, and unsolicited turns from students in the teacher-dominated IRF pattern. Display questions, on the other hand, yield minimum learner responses (Toth, 2011). As the excerpt shows, Alex started with display questions in lines 1 and 2 to check prior knowledge. But he then followed up with referential questions asking why (line 4) and how (line 11), to engage students with sustained communication with the teacher. He also used techniques of relating to students' personal experience (line 6) and more elicitation with a specific student (line 8).

Conclusion

This small scale study explored teacher perception of students' culturally specific communicative behavior in English classrooms in the context, and investigated their strategies for prompting students' willingness to communicate in class. The results show that teachers were aware of the profound influence of Chinese culture on students' WTC, as well as the influence from their prior English learning experience and their submission to teacher authority in this specific sociocultural context. The teachers reported that they used a range of accommodating teacher involvement and immediacy strategies to encourage willing participation from students in class.

An obvious limitation with this study lies in its small sample size. Since this study employed classroom observation and video-taping, an observer's paradox problem might have affected the authenticity of data. Some students reported in the interview that they participated more actively in the observed classes than in their normal English classes. Also, a member check should have been performed to test the interpretation of the interview data among the teacher participants.

Despite these limitations, this study has pedagogical implications for teachers who work in both the EFL and ESL contexts. This study shows the students' sociocultural background can have a determining influence on their willingness to participate in language classes. Teachers should not simply attribute students' reticence to individual factors such as motivation or personality, nor linguistic factors such as language proficiency level. Instead, teachers need to be mindful of the deeply rooted sociocultural influences (particularly among the many collectivistic cultures around the world) and employ culturally accommodating strategies to promote students' WTC, including proving teacher support, using meaning-fo-

cused activities, giving extra waiting and thinking time for students, using appropriate elicitation and prompting strategies, as well as trying to include quiet students in discussions.

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Appendix A: Stimulated-recall Interview Questions

General questions:

1. How did you feel about today's class?
2. What did you feel happy/unhappy with?
3. Did you feel like talking in today's class? Why/Why not?

Stimulated-recall questions:

1. What were you thinking right then/at this point?

2. Can you tell me what you were thinking at that point?
3. I saw you were laughing/looking confused/saying something there, what were you thinking then?
4. Can you remember what you were thinking when she said that/those words?
5. Can you tell me what you thought when she said that?

Probing questions:

I was wondering if I could ask you something. I'm just curious. I noticed when you were talking about the recording you mentioned …quite a lot. Is that what you are most concerned about when you are speaking? Can you say a bit more about this?

Appendix B: Guidelines for Teacher Interviews

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. How long have you been teaching at this school?
3. Which courses have you taught at this school?
4. Could you describe the goals and content of the course you're currently teaching?
5. What's your general impression on the students' participation in this class?
6. What do you think an active learner in class is like? Can you name some of the students who are active in this class and explain why?
7. Do you have any student whom you would consider more or less willing to communicate in a particular context, for example, whole class, small groups, or pairs? What clues do you have that lead you to perceive them as behaving as such?
8. Do you have any students in this class whom you would consider very quiet in class? What do you think inhibited them to communicate in class?
9. In what types of class or task are students more willing to communicate?
10. Can you think of a time when the class was particularly active? When was that? What materials did you use? Could you describe the event?

Effect of Windows Movie Maker on Writing Proficiency and Perceived Motivation

Ghada Awada, American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Abstract

This article reports the results of an experimental study on the effectiveness of the Windows Movie Maker (WMM) tool in improving the English language writing proficiency of lawyers and increasing their motivation for learning. The participants (n = 40) are limited-English proficient (LEP) lawyers enrolled in an English for specific purposes (ESP) course given in eleven 4-hour sessions covering the skills of legal writing. The study employed an experimental pretest-posttest control group design whereby two intact classes were randomly assigned to control and experimental conditions. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and two Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) tests were used to address the questions raised in the study. Results indicated that the use of the WMM tool was effective in improving the legal writing proficiency of the participants and in increasing their motivation for learning than regular instruction.

Keywords: English as a second language (ESL), English for specific purposes (ESP), Windows Movie Maker (WMM), Legal English proficiency

Introduction

Integration of technology in the English as a second language (ESL) classroom has been an important concern for researchers and practitioners worldwide for quite some time now. In this regard, Eastman (1996) suggests that the Internet-based tools and applications make learning easy and accessible and maintains that the Internet resources might constitute a gateway to teaching English in all its forms. Similarly, Liuolienė and Metiūnienė (2012) argue that the Internet has become a very important tool in the English language classroom and technological tools currently constitute an indispensable medium for the development of language proficiency. Numerous technological innovations such as blogs, wikis, webquests, and videos, among others, have been used to help learners acquire a

language other than their own and the benefits of these innovations in achieving the cognitive and the non-cognitive outcomes of modern ESL curricula are now well-established.

In fact, the use of videos in the language classroom is particularly important given that it provides immediate and shared context for learning as well as it gives samples of spoken language and pragmatics that would facilitate the teaching and learning process. Because of recent innovations in the domain of digital video making along with the availability of accessible and affordable equipment, and editing software, better opportunities for enhancing a variety of learning activities in ESL teaching and learning were made possible (McNulty & Lazarevic, 2012). Educators generally choose videos to facilitate the engagement of students more deeply in the subject matter and to help them save the information they have learned (Ortiz et al., 2012; Wagener, 2006).

Windows Movie Maker (WMM) is a user-friendly program which facilitates students' engagement in interactive tasks (Ohler, 2006). Making a movie provides a good learning opportunity for students since learners can use their own pictures and audio recordings or those provided by their teachers to make their own videos. WMM improves language and cultural skills as well (Ianotti, 2005, Ohler, 2006; Robin, 2008). Wagener (2006) underscored the significance of available digital video resources for language learners. Along similar lines, White et al. (2000) maintained that in comparison to printed materials, the video has multiple instructional advantages such as rich visual support, audio component, enhanced contextualization, and stronger control over the medium. These claims were empirically supported by Ortiz et al. (2012) who reported some evidence that the instructional video is an efficacious tool which can boost the fluency as well as improve pronunciation accuracy of English language learners.

Statement of the Problem

In the Lebanese context, videos in general and WMM videos in particular have not yet been used for enhancing the legal English classroom experience because of the slow digital adoption in the field of English for specific purposes. Therefore, this study attempts to identify how the Lebanese ESP learners and teachers can employ the tailored and designed WMM videos to enhance students' writing skills and boost their motivation. The study examines thoroughly the usefulness

and the challenges of integrating WMM as an educational tool in ESP classroom and its effect on students' attitudes towards ESP learning. It also provides the students with an opportunity to extend learning for students beyond the traditional classroom walls and to foster an environment where the learner is the center of the learning process.

Research Questions

The preceding review of the extant research suggests a need for further research in order to validate the significance of using video technology in teaching and learning. Consequently, the present study aimed to examine the relative effectiveness of the WMM in improving the legal English (LE) writing proficiency of LEP lawyers and enhancing their motivation for learning English as an additional language. Specifically, the study addressed the following questions:

1. What is the relative effect of using the WMM legal videos in comparison with standard process writing instruction in improving the legal English writing proficiency of ESP learners?
2. What are the perceptions of the participants regarding the effects of using the WMM legal videos in improving their motivation for English language learning?

The study is based on the premise that video- based ESL activities contribute to the overall English language proficiency of students as well as enhance their motivation for learning. Another assumption in the present study is that the acquisition of the (LE) vocabulary will improve the writing skills of LEP lawyers who have not been frequently exposed to legal English instruction in their law schools since the majority of their law courses were given in their native language (Arabic, or French). As such, lack of the mastery of legal English terminology prevents lawyers from using legal English for reading, writing, listening, and speaking in legal contexts.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study was framed within the theory of active learning which posits that viewing a video is an ongoing, active and extremely "interconnected process of monitoring and comprehending" and it is "…a cognitive activity" that keeps developing "to promote learning" (Marshall, 2002, p. 7). Mai (2007) asserts that the

theory of active learning provides students with the opportunity to learn through observation, participation and involvement in shaping their process of learning. Videos can facilitate active learning by allowing students to obtain, apply and analyze information while communicating with their peers to make the learning process more active. Multimedia learning theory (Mayer, 2001) is another theoretical framework of the present study. Multimedia typically refers to the presentation of material in auditory/verbal and visual/pictorial forms. Mayer's (2001) cognitive theory suggests that learning is activated through (a) selecting relevant words for processing in verbal working memory, (b) selecting relevant images for processing in visual working memory, (c) organizing selected words into a verbal mental model, (d) organizing selected images into a visual mental model, and (e) integrating verbal and visual representations as well as prior knowledge (p. 54). Mayer's (2001) research indicated that the use of videos is most effective for presenting complex topics since videos can help weak students in general and visual/spatial learners in particular to comprehend difficult topics. Williams and Lutes (1960) also indicate, "An examination of the principles of learning theory validates the idea that video can be a powerful tool as an engaging delivery system, especially when used as part of an active learning approach" (p. 4). A further theoretical foundation of the study is the SLT (Situational Language Teaching) and Oral Approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). As such, the focus of the study urges learners to develop behaviorist skills since the meaning of a specific structure or terminology should be deduced from the situation or context in which it is introduced. Global comprehension is the objective of this theory. Thus, the use of deduction strategies in the classroom, where learners are encouraged to infer and analyze in groups while viewing the video, is crucial (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Video as an Interactive, Task-Based Technological Tool in ESP Learning

The use of video technology in language teaching is in compliance with the learning styles of the 21st century learners who are characterized as being technologically-savvy and digital natives. The progress and affordability of digital devices make the uses and benefits of videos recognized in all classrooms. Research has underscored the significance of the use of instructional videos and indicated an increasing trend of using a variety of digital devices in schools and colleges (Chinnery, 2006; Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2007).

Some research (Mekheime, 2011; Joseph & Baskaran, 2011) has indicated a strong motivational role for video technology in ESL instruction. Video materials can raise cultural awareness and provide a rich and varied linguistic context (Hanson-Smith, 1999; Herron, Cole, Corrie, & Dubreil, 1999; Herron, Dubreil, Cole, & Corrie, 2000; Kitajima & Lyman-Hager, 1998; Lee, 1998). Arthur (1999) asserts, "Video can give students realistic models to imitate for role-play; can increase awareness of other cultures by teaching appropriateness and suitability; can strengthen audio/visual linguistic perceptions simultaneously; can widen the classroom repertoire and range of activities" (p. 4).

Other advantages include improving the comprehensibility of spoken materials through the insertion of full or keyword captions, or through monitoring the speech pace (Shea, 2000). Videos along with definitions are more efficacious in teaching unfamiliar vocabulary than a picture along with a text definition (Al-Seghayer, 2001). The instructional videos might help students retain more information, understand concepts more rapidly, and make students more enthusiastic about what they are learning (Brooke, 2003; Shrosbree, 2008; Masats et.al., 2009). Furthermore, video materials constitute authentic English input environments as they provide learners with the opportunity of grasping the dynamics of interaction (Masats et. al., 2009, p. 344).

Methodology

Design

The study employed an experimental pretest- posttest control group design whereby two intact classes were randomly assigned to control and experimental conditions. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and two Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) tests were used to address the questions raised in the study.

ANCOVA was used instead of the simple t-tests in addressing the questions raised in the study because the study employed a pretest- post-test control group design. Hence, the pretest scores of the participants on the dependent variables under investigation were used as covariates in order to mathematically adjust for any possible pre-existing differences between the control and the experimental group. Meanwhile, the treatment conditions (control versus experimental) were

used as an independent variable with two levels and the post-test scores as dependent variables in the ANCOVA analysis.

Participants

The participants included a total of 40 lawyers (n =40) in an ESP class in a well-established university in the Middle East assigned to experimental and control groups (20 participants in each). All the participants were native speakers of Arabic and came from similar socio-economic backgrounds. They were studying ESP in accordance with the dynamics and procedures of the English for Lawyers program designed by the researcher and described below. The age of the participants ranged from 26 to 58 years.

Significance of the Study

The study has practical significance in enhancing the quality of legal English instruction, an area of research that is still under developed. The English for Lawyers class studied in this research is intended for lawyers who have interest in learning the LE terminology needed for drafting legal documents, carrying out negotiations, or undertaking study or work purposes. In particular, the class is for practicing lawyers and law students. The present study aimed at examining the efficacy of using the video educational tool to enable the participating lawyers to understand and assimilate the language of law in English. The English for Lawyers course adopts a content-based approach in teaching legal English. Upon completion of the course, the control and experimental participants should enhance their language proficiency in legal contexts and should develop their presentation skills employing the learned legal English terminology and structures. More importantly, the present study is significant as there is a scarcity in the studies conducted to investigate the effectiveness of legal videos as tools in such a program. The uniqueness of the program and the use of the LE terminology videos make the present study significant in the field of teaching ESP.

Instruments

Two instruments were used to collect data and measure the variables of writing achievement and motivation for learning under investigation. Specifically, a teacher-made writing assessment tool was used as a pre-test and post-test measure of ESP writing achievement. Participants were asked to perform an ESP writing

task which required writing the proceedings of a lawsuit. The writings were scored holistically according to the quality of ideas, focus, organization, word choice, and language mechanics. Three experienced teachers of ESP, each with more than ten years of in-service teaching of EFL writing were selected to evaluate the pre- writing and post-writing tasks of the participants and unanimously agreed on reporting a score on a scale of 1-10.

In addition, the participants completed a writing motivation scale which consisted of a total of 5 Likert-type items; 4 of which were positively stated and 1 item negatively stated in order to detect careless response patterns or a response set. The Cronbach α internal consistency value of the scale was .74 based on data from the present study. Pre-test and post-test composite scores were computed for each participant by adding the scores on the 5 items.

Treatment

The treatment lasted for 11 weeks at the rate of 4 contact hours of instruction per week. The ESP writing instructional component of the control group consisted of regular process ESP writing practices following instruction delivered using legal texts, Word Banks and Role Play Presentations. The ESP control writing instruction focused on enabling learners to explore their topics in order to generate ideas and conceptualize their topics, in addition to learning how to write up their ideas and revise their written products.

Meanwhile, the experimental group practiced process writing following instructions delivered using Windows Movie Maker (WMM) legal videos, in addition to legal texts and Role Play presentation procedures. “Back to Screen” and “Dubbing,” adapted from Zero Prep: Ready-to-Go Activities for the Language Classroom by Pollard, Hess, and Herron (2001), were implemented to ensure the effective use of the WMM legal video. The WMM Legal videos which include a video “Civil and Criminal Cases” (see Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and Role Play presentations following the “Dubbing” and “Back to Screen” activities were the materials utilized in this study. The experimental group employed the WMM legal videos which gave them the meaning and the usage of the legal terminology along with the text.

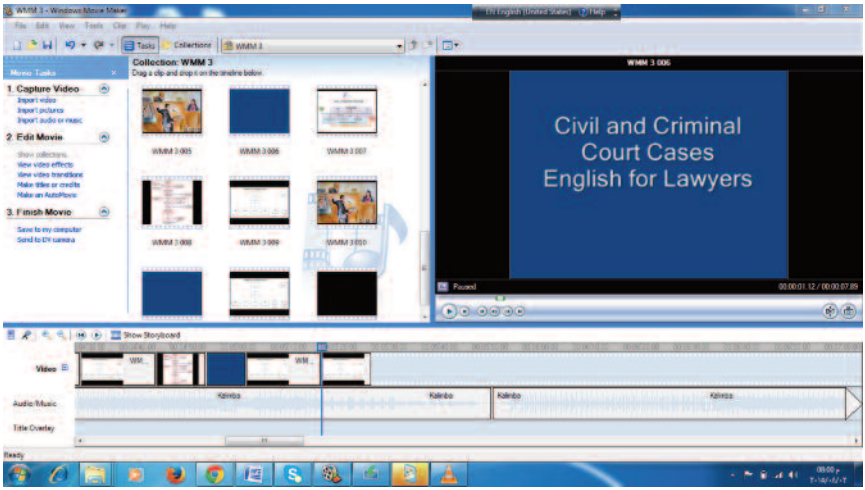

Figure 1. Sample screen from WMM Legal Video

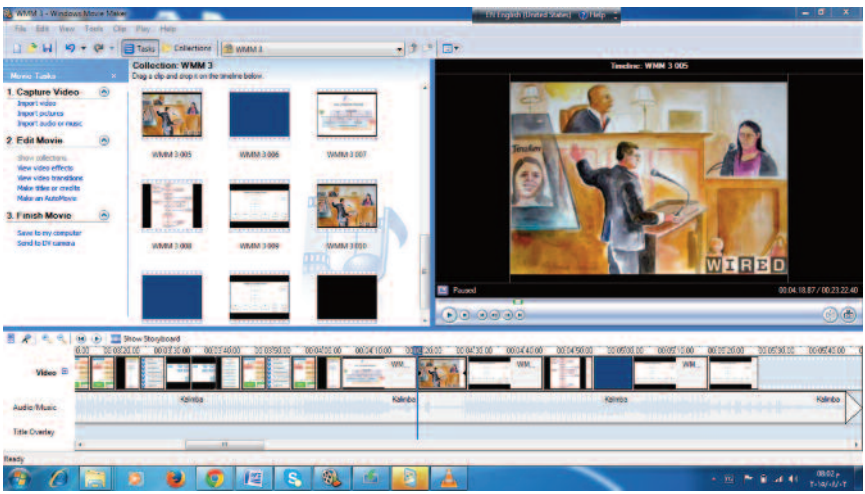

Figure 2. Sample screen from WMM Legal Video

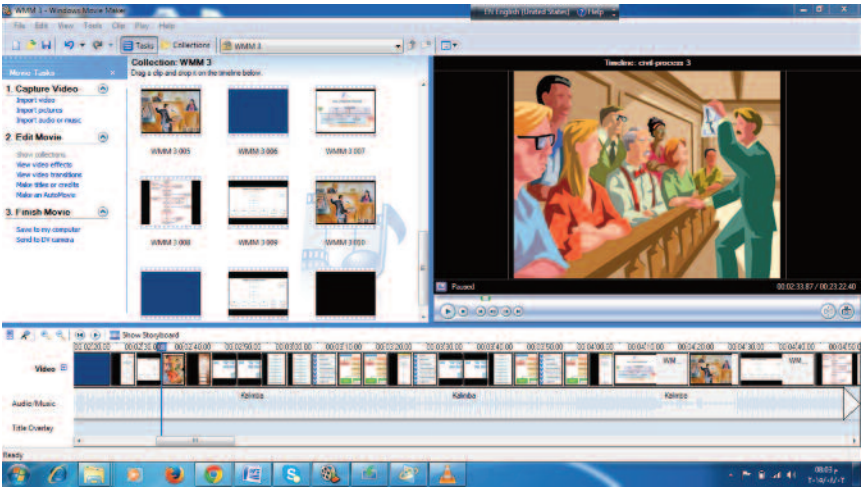

Figure 3. Sample screen from WMM Legal Video

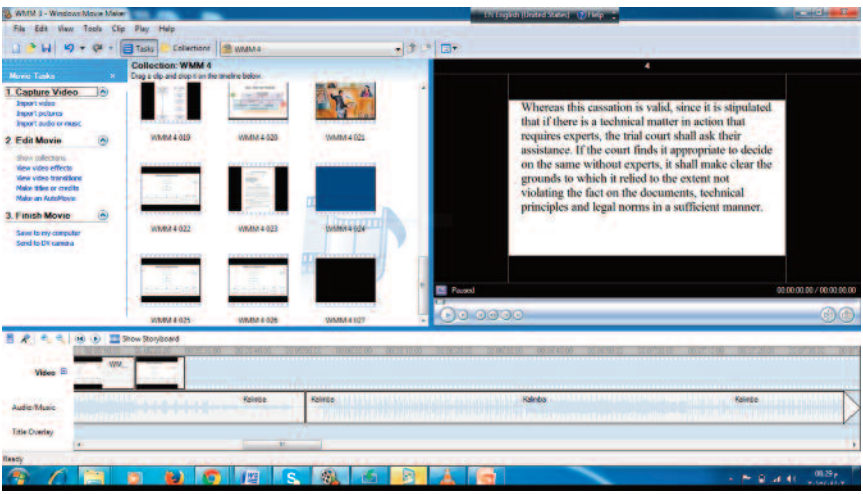

Figure 4. Sample screen from WMM Legal Video

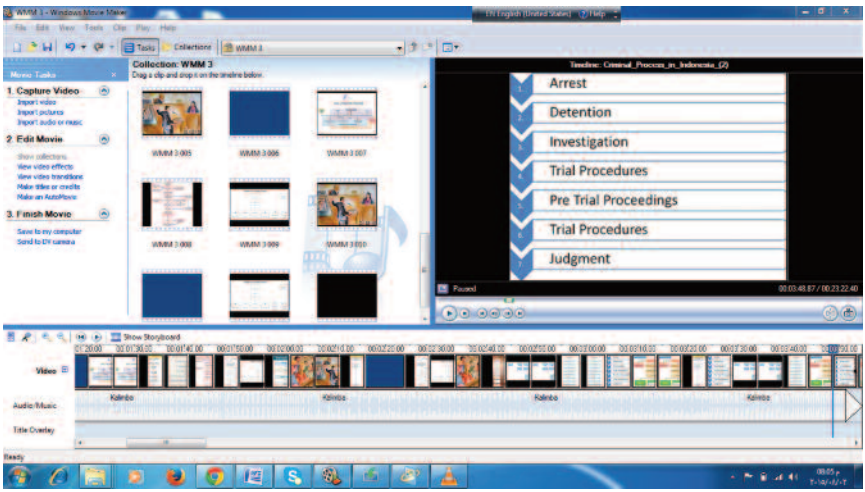

Figure 5. Sample screen from WMM Legal Video

The researcher divided the participants of the experimental group into pairs, with one group facing the screen and the other with their back to it. The participants facing the screen told the other participants what was happening in the video. Then learners switched seats to rotate roles. Next, the pairs wrote a chronological sequence of the events of the video, shared and discussed it with the other groups. Finally, all participants watched the video with sound. "Dubbing" was another activity used by the researcher to show a video without the sound but with legal terminology and pictures and to ask learners to write or to role play an imagined dialogue.

The Word Banks, along with pictures, were used in the WMM video made by the researcher and the WMM videos varied in accordance with the covered legal topic. More importantly, during the teacher-learner discussions, the researcher utilized the editing feature of WMM to add some LE terminology and structures suggested by the learners (See Figures 1,2,3,4,&5). The legal terminology videos included the basic terminology and the necessary steps that should be taken into account before, through and after filing a lawsuit. The WMM legal videos made by the teacher and edited by the teacher and the learners helped the learners to express feelings and experiences in an engaging, creative, and reachable way.

Control group participants, meanwhile, received regular instruction covering the same legal texts, word banks and writing activities given at the end of each lesson. The control group employed word bank and the text to practice process writing; following which they were asked to deliver well-structured presentations by role playing situations rooted in legal contexts. Finally, the writing assignment, the cornerstone of the role play activities, utilized the discussed legal text and the covered legal word banks.

Results

Research Question One

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were first computed for the pre-test and post-test scores of writing proficiency by treatment conditions (control versus experimental). The mean scores of the control and experimental groups were 8.95, SD 2.12 and 10.80, SD 1.28, respectively. An Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) test was conducted in order to address the first question raised in the study regarding the relative effect of using WMM legal videos on writing proficiency. The pretest writing proficiency scores of the participants were used as covariates in order to mathematically adjust for any pre-existing difference between the proficiency levels of the participants in the experimental group and their counterparts in the control group. Likewise, the posttest writing proficiency scores of both groups were used as the dependent variable and the treatment conditions (control versus experimental) were used as the independent variable.

The results of the ANCOVA test, conducted to address the first study question, are shown in Table 1 below and reveal that the experimental group participants outperformed the participants in the control group $F(39,1) = 19.38$, $P = .00$, . $\eta 2 =$. .34. The mean scores of the control and experimental groups were 8.95, SD 2.12 and 10.80, SD 1.28, respectively.

Table 1: ANCOVA Results of Study Question 1

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	493.948[a]	2	246.974	42.004	.000	.694
Intercept	342.760	1	342.760	58.295	.000	.612
PRATTDL	3.948	1	3.948	.671	.418	.018
Treatment	455.127	1	455.127	77.405	.000	.677
Error	217.552	37	5.880			
Total	10014.000	40				
Corrected Total	711.500	39				

a. R Squared=.694 (Adjusted R Squared=.678)

Research Question Two

Regarding motivation to learn, the mean questionnaire scores of the control and experimental groups were 11.75, SD 2.42 and 18.75, SD 2.40, respectively. Table 2 below reports the ANCOVA results regarding motivation for learning.

Table 2: ANCOVA Results of Study Question 2

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	55.700[a]	2	27.827	10.827	.000	.369
Intercept	143.744	1	143.744	55.882	.000	.602
Pretest	21.745	1	21.475	8.348	.006	.184
Treatment	49.869	1	49.869	19.387	.000	.344
Error	95.175	37	2.572			
Total	4051.500	40				
Corrected Total	150.875	39				

a. R Squared=.369 (Adjusted R Squared=.335)

The results reveal that the experimental group participants which used the WMM treatment developed higher levels of motivation for learning than their counterparts in the control group: $F(39,1) = 77.40$, $P = .00$, . $\eta 2 =$. .67. The mean scores of the control and experimental groups were 11.75, SD 2.42 and 18.75, SD 2.40, respectively.

Discussion

The results of the present study revealed that using WMM legal videos was more effective than regular instruction in improving the writing proficiency of lawyers studying ESP. Likewise, using legal videos increased the participants' levels of motivation for learning. These findings corroborate those of Al-Seghayer (2001), Liuolienė and Metiūnienė (2012), Mekheime (2011), Joseph & Baskaran (2011), Chinnery, 2006, Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2007, Wagener's (2006), White et al. (2000), Maclean & White (2007), Hanson-Smith (1999), Herron, Cole, Corrie, and Dubreil (1999), and Shea (2000).

A possible explanation of the effectiveness and positive attitudes towards WMM legal videos could be that the participants were actively involved in meaningful and contextualized learning instead of being passive recipients of vocabulary lists. A further explanation could be that the teacher using WMM could selectively employ the legal terminology needed by the lawyers to perform well in a certain situation and could use a variety of pictures, visual effects, music, fonts, designs and script to enhance learners' motivation. It should also be noted that the participants were able to edit the video and, add suggested text, and enrich their vocabulary added by the teacher.

Yet, further research involving representative samples of different ESP populations and grade levels is in order to determine to what extent the findings of the present study are generalizable as well as determine the effect of context-specific factors such as gender, linguistic composition, and cultural skills on the interplay between technology and language proficiency and dispositions. Because the instructor and the students created videos in an authentic way to associate language learning with real life situations outside the language classroom, and given that the VMM technology allowed the looking for specific segments of the video, learners' interaction and engagement in learning has been enhanced significantly. Furthermore, segmenting the viewing and using clips of the legal terminology video might have provided learners with the information in manageable chunks. By incorporating hands-on activities, discussion and other types of interaction around these clips or segments, the learners might have become more successful in meeting the learning objectives of the lesson.

The findings of the study also revealed the advisability of utilizing the Closed Captioning feature of the WMM to reinforce English reading skills. Turning down

the audio could also be a good technique to use for having students engage in prediction and sequencing skills. Furthermore, the WMM software provides teachers and learners with the opportunity to make their own legal terminology videos by using the visuals which will help with learning the legal terminology used in such videos.

Finally, it should be noted that the findings of the present study contradict those of Wang and Hartley (2003), Brooke (2003), Dal (2010), Shrosbree (2008), and Masats et. al. (2009). This suggests that the effects of technology-based language instruction could be mediated by certain socio-cultural, contextual and learner-related factors, spread of technology, sense of efficacy, proficiency level, technology apprehension, and so forth.

Limitations

The study employed a relatively small sample size, which limits the generalizability of the findings into other ESP and ESL contexts. Further research involving representative samples of different ESP populations and grade levels is in order to determine to what extent the findings of the present study are generalizable. Further research might also examine the effect of context-specific factors such as gender, linguistic composition, and cultural skills on the interplay between technology and language proficiency and dispositions.

Conclusions

The WMM as a computer-assisted learning tool can be an important component in teaching ESP writing in an engaging, interactive task-based manner. As such, language teachers in general, and ESP teachers in particular, should be fully cognizant of how computer-assisted language learning tools can benefit language teaching and boost students' motivation while meaningfully contributing to the learning and educational outcomes more generally. WMM videos are highly motivating to students, especially for those who otherwise might not become participants in classrooms. Videos provide an excellent opportunity for educators to advance literacy through interactive activities such as Dubbing, Back to Screen and role play.

Recommendations

The findings of the study underscore the importance of using the WMM videos to accomplish the lesson objectives in the ESP classroom. and to engage the learners in interactive tasks. The video activities including previewing might activate the learners' prior knowledge, introduce useful, unfamiliar vocabulary, and prepare learners for new learning stage. The video post-viewing activities allow the learners to reinforce and extend their new knowledge in meaningful and functional ways. As such, ESP instructors are encouraged to use technology, in general, and the WMM, in particular in order to achieve the cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes of their curriculum.

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The Impact of Creativity Enhancement on the Writing Ability of Young EFL Learners

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of creativity enhancement on young EFL learners' writing ability. The participants of the study were 45 EFL children at the higher levels of studying English. The participants were randomly assigned to one control and two experimental groups. The control group did not receive any specific treatment and only took the writing posttest; the two experimental groups received different kinds of writing activities. The first experimental group, the creative group, dealt with writing activities that included creativity elements which would enhance the learners' synthetic, analytic, and practical abilities with the aim of making them more creative in their writing. The non-creative group was exposed to the same number of writing activities but lacking creativity elements. A writing posttest was given to the participants at the end of the treatment. The results showed that the creative and non-creative group both outperformed the control group on the writing posttest. However, comparing the results of the creative and non-creative group on the writing posttest, the creative group also outperformed the non-creative group.

Keywords: creativity, children; synthetic, analytic, practical abilities, writing

Introduction

Writing is a difficult task for both beginning and mature writers. Hence, it is a tremendous accomplishment when young children begin writing (Puranik, Lonigan, & Kim, 2012). When we think of novice writers, especially young children, it is clear that they are still learning to control the linguistic as well as motor processes involved in text production.

The main aim in teaching writing is to lead students in using it as a tool for communicating knowledge and expressing viewpoints and emotions. Thompson

(2001, p. 87) has noted that "writing is a powerful means of linguistic input, output, and interaction, albeit lacking the immediacy of face-to-face communication, which enhances second language learners' acquisition."

Most of the studies dealing with children's writing focus on aspects in which creativity is not an essential factor. Lack of attention to creativity in children's classes, especially for developing their writing ability, will prevent young children from thinking creatively, achieving novel ideas, having a good imagination, evaluating their own production, and being motivated and interested in the skill they are learning. Without creative thinking, they would have nothing original to say, even if they have appropriate linguistic knowledge.

Creativity is considered to be a psychological construct to which limited attention has been paid even in the field of psychology, where it has been a marginal topic until recent decades. In the emerging field of creativity studies, understanding its nature, assessing and improving creativity in instruction and education, and teaching learners to think creatively have become important issues driving current research efforts.

Several aspects of young children's learning are important to consider when thinking about their education, and creativity is an important one which should be included in their teaching programs (Edwards & Hiler, 1993). Beghetto and Kaufman (2011) believe that by combining the perspectives of top educators and psychologists, practical advices can be generated in order to address the challenges of supporting creativity within the classroom. Creativity is known to be one of the best predictors of children's success in learning if they are provided with systematic training aimed at mastery of a particular domain.

The role of creativity in children's writing reveals the importance of developing young learners' creative abilities during the process of teaching. Therefore, as teachers, we should enhance our students' writing ability through tasks and techniques which foster their creative thinking.

Sternberg and Lubart (1999) propose a creativity model, maintaining that a creative work is a result of the combination and balance of three types of thinking that can be learned and enhanced in learners, whether they are young or adult: synthetic, analytic, and practical. Synthetic thinking helps learners to generate novel and interesting ideas and to make connections between unrelated and new things

in a novel way. Analytic thinking is generally considered to be critical thinking ability. By developing this way of thinking in learners, they would have the skill to analyze and evaluate ideas. Practical thinking would help learners to translate theory into practice and abstract ideas into practical accomplishments. By enhancing learners' practical thinking, they are able to convince other learners that their ideas are worthy and they could adapt to everyday life by drawing on existing knowledge and skills.

In order to develop these three types of thinking in young or adult learners, Sternberg and Lubart provide teachers with tasks that would help their students increase their:

-Synthetic thinking through creation, imagination, discovery, invention, and prediction.

-Analytic thinking through analysis, judgment, comparison, contrast, and evaluation

-Practical thinking through applying, everyday reasoning, and making thoughts come true.

The tasks mentioned by Sternberg and Lubart (1999) can have a great impact on the enhancement of students' creativity and can be applied to areas of teaching such as teaching ESL children to write creatively, which is the focus of the study.

Creativity and Second Language Teaching and Learning

Although creativity has been increasingly recognized and valued in the education literature as an effective component, research on this area has been scarce in the second language teaching field.

The first study on this topic was carried out by Carroll (1962, cited in Carroll, 1990) in the late 1950s. However, in Carroll's first study, creativity did not turn out to be an effective predictor for second language learning. Carroll (1990) himself remarks that "it is possible that the present situation in foreign language education and training is different from what it was in the 1950s and early 1960s" (p. 24).

With the emergence of newer language teaching methods (especially communicative language teaching), Otto (1998) conducted a similar study to Carroll's in order to examine the effects of learners' creativity on language learning using five different subtasks (consequences, unusual uses, common problems, categories,

and associations). After enhancing students' creativity through these activities, their scores on the linguistic creativity test was correlated with their English grades with highly significant results. The researcher concluded that students with higher levels of creativity can be expected to be more successful language learners than those lacking creativity.

In another study by Pishghadam, Khodadadi, & Zabihi (2011), the relationship between creativity and foreign language achievement was examined. To this end, a test of creativity was administered to language learning students and the results showed a significant correlation between learners' creativity and their foreign language achievement and there were significant differences in the mean academic achievement scores among language learners.

Albert and Kormos (2004) also indicated this point in their research conclusion that students who did better in a creativity tests were found to have produced more in their narrative task, thus in a foreign language setting, they might create more opportunities for themselves to use the language.

Integrating Creativity and Writing in Children's Second Language Learning Classes

For many young writers, the composing process needs a significant amount of time and an extensive rehearsal period. To help children find their voices in their writing, a balance between knowledge about language and creative language use must be sought in the primary years of learning to write in an additional or second language.

Creativity has been extensively theorized and investigated, but still receives little attention in discussions of young learners' writing. Grainger, Goouch, and Lambirth (2005) define writing as "a creative process intertwined with imagination and originality of ideas with the pursuit of purpose and judging value," it can be concluded that creativity is an important element central to children's growth as writers. They also observe that writing involves students in communicating, conveying meaning to themselves and others. They maintain that the act of writing itself can help in refining children's ways of thinking and reshaping points of view, since it allows children to make their ideas come true and think of them as new and novel ones. Thus, it is essential to consider the contribution that flexible, playful, dialogic, and imaginative practices can make to children's creative ca-

pacity, linguistic potential, and growth as writers, even in their second language writing classes.

Grainger (2005) also mentions the importance of enhancing children's creativity and imaginative involvement in the writing task in order to shape the purpose of the writing activity. Enhancing children's creativity encourages young writers to use their imagination and combine new ideas in order to create a novel and creative piece of writing.

Craft (2005) believes that developing creativity in writing is not an "extra" in learning to write, but is central to children's growth as writers and to their self-esteem. To develop their creativity in and through writing, children need skills and knowledge of writing, a growing assurance of themselves as writers, and the space and opportunity to develop their voices with support and encouragement.

How to Foster Creativity in Children's Writing

There are many factors that enhance creativity in children's writing. Some of these factors are described below:

Using Imagination in the Creative Process of Writing

As Grainger, Goouch, and Lambirth (2003) point out, the development of imagination in handling words, ideas and feelings helps children in the transition from improvisation to composition, as children begin to play with ideas, structures, patterns and combinations of words and sounds. This creative process includes great imagination as the writer seeks different perspectives to actively fashion, shape and refine the ideas generated.

Teachers' Own Creativity Influencing Children's Creativity

The teacher's ability to interest and inspire young writers deserves attention and development. Teachers' playfulness, openness, and innovative ideas also need to be developed and enriched if they are to contribute imaginatively to the construction of creative learners (Grainger, 2004). By telling tales or writing alongside the children, teachers are freed from the traditional patterns of classroom interaction and become more personally involved in instruction, using their knowledge, skills, and their intuitive insights (Grainger, 2002). Teachers can also be creative by providing plenty of playful opportunities for discussion, drama, storytelling,

and other explorations in order to ensure deep learning in and through writing. In this way, their teaching about forms, functions and features of writing can take place within a motivating and empowering context as they demonstrate the potential of creativity.

Affective Engagement, Participation and Motivation

The affective dimension in writing is important, since children's attitudes about writing influence their ability to take risks and persevere (Grainger, Goouch, & Lambirth, 2005). Children deserve to be invited into the learning experience as individuals and, to become fully involved in their learning, and use their imaginations intellects in creative contexts. Many schools have worked hard to retain the elements of a child-centered philosophy and have made a role for creativity, participation and motivation (Office for Standards in Education [OfSTED], 2002).

Choice and Autonomy in Writing

To develop creativity and voice in their writing, children should not only be introduced to a rich range of existing expressive domains, but should also be given the time and space to explore these for themselves, making choices, taking risks, and developing their preferences and independence as writers (Grainger, Goouch, & Lambirth, 2005).

Empirical Studies Regarding the Integration of Creativity and Writing

There are a few studies which deal with enhancing students' creativity in writing. Soh, Majid, and Tan (2003) carried out a research to enhance children's creativity in the writing skill. This study examined the effect of using a set of creative themes as creative tools to enhance creativity in writing. The findings showed that children who were taught the creative themes and used them in their writing exercises demonstrated an improvement in their creative writing. On the other hand, children in the control group working with no creative themes did not show any obvious improvements in their creative writing. The findings of the study also indicated that the participants scored higher for creativity components than for the language proficiency components.

Chik and Wan (2003) considered the effect of humorous rhymed stories as a means of enhancing children's creativity in their English writing. The results

showed that with respect to children's creative thinking, they significantly used more creativity in their English writing after the treatment was carried out. Therefore, Chik and Wan (2003, p. 45) concluded that teaching writing should be encouraged in a "language-rich environment by making greater use of literary or imaginative texts to promote critical thinking and encourage free expression and creativity."

In another study, that of Fraser (2006), creativity was fostered through metaphorical writing by children. Fraser believes that engaging students in writing their own metaphorical texts is one way in which students can generate novel responses through emotional exploration, imagination and enjoyment. Results in Fraser's study indicated that the participants of the experimental group who worked on metaphorical writing in order to gain higher creativity outperformed the control group on the writing posttest. Fraser concluded that by enhancing creativity in writing, as children's texts in the study revealed, students can show remarkable discernment and creativity when given the opportunity to do so.

The Present Study

The purpose of the present study is to examine a potential increase in children's writing skills as a result of specific actions aimed at creativity enhancement. The goal is to help them to produce something new by finding a voice in writing through developing and combining their ideas and opinions in a novel way. Additionally, the present study attempts to provide empirical evidence about the way enhancement of creativity can benefit the development of children's writing ability. In particular, the study focused on children who are learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) aiming to answer the following question: Does creativity enhancement in EFL children have an effect on their writing ability?

Method

Research Design

The present study is a quasi-experimental one, which investigates the effect of creativity enhancement on EFL children's writing ability. The independent variable is the method of teaching writing to young EFL learners, which was through specific strategies for enhancement of creativity. The dependent variable is the stu-

dents' ability to write creatively with regard to the ability to produce well-formed sentences in writing. The design of the study was the posttest-only control group design in which subjects are randomly assigned to groups. The groups are then randomly assigned to different conditions (Ary, Jacob, Razavieh, and Sorenson, 2006).

Participants

The participants of this study were 45 EFL children ranging in age from 8–10 years old, with 15 students in each group studying English at the highest levels of Institute X, and with (9 females and 6 males in the control group, 10 females and 5 males in the non-creative group, and 9 females and 6 males in the creative group). The students were a relatively homogenous group according to the criteria of passing the course studied at the institute and also based on the YLE (Young Learner English) proficiency test. Participants were randomly assigned to the three groups: two groups with two different experimental conditions and one control group. Between the experimental groups, one was randomly chosen to practice writing skills through writing activities and tasks based on the method of the institute. This group was labeled the non-creative group. The other experimental group, the creative group, practiced writing during the course based on the creative tasks of Sternberg and Lubart's (1999) creativity model and included all of the factors claimed to make a learner creative. The control group did not receive any writing activities at all. They followed the methodological procedure at the institute which involved learning vocabulary, grammar, and reading based on the book published by the institute.

Procedure and Materials

The creative and non-creative groups went through two different experiments regarding writing. Each group received seven instructional writing activities (one activity in each session). The control group did not receive any writing activity at all. The writing activities in the creative and non-creative groups were based on a writing framework by Flower and Hayes (1981), including three steps:

Planning: In this phase, after the topic of the writing was introduced to the learners, students had time to think about what they were going to write. Then they generated key words about the topic. Words were displayed for the students to use during their writing.

Drafting: In the second phase students were given time to write their thoughts on paper. Key words from the previous step were available for the students to use in their writings.

Revision: This phase included students' rereading writings. In this phase they had the opportunity to reflect critically with others on their drafts. The students' written works were read to the class by the teacher or the students themselves. This had two main benefits. On the one hand, students learned about their classmates' ideas related to the topic. Also students discussed and shared opinions about what they had heard. On the other hand, students laughed when hearing humorous topics and got a confidence boost when they chose to read aloud their paper in front of the class.

The figures below show the actual, focal treatment of each group:

The Creative Group
1. Think of "anger" as a person. Write about his clothes, characteristics, job, food,.. (imagination).
2. Write about the different things we can do with a book (discovery).
3. Write a happy and sad ending for the given story (prediction).
4. Write a judgment about the character of the story. Did he do the right thing? (judgment)
5. Compare yourself with a robot (comparison).
6. Find the seven differences between the two pictures (contrast).
7. Write about the different ways you try to make your angry mum happy (reasoning).

Figure 1. The Treatment of the Creative Group

The Non-creative Group
1. Decribe what you did yesterday.
2. What do you do with a book, pencil, chair, glass.
3. Write about what you did on your last birthday.
4. Write a letter to your teacher.
5. Compare your mother and father. Write about their similarities and differences.
6. Write about the different things you do when you are happy, sad, or scared.
Write a summary from the story of Jack and the beanstalk.

Figure 2. The Treatment of the Non-creative Group

The Control Group
1. Fill in the blanks with the new words you learned in the previous session.
2. Change these sentences into negative.
3. Change these sentences into yes / no questions.
4. Change these sentences into wh- questions using what, where, who, …
5. Correct the grammatical mistakes in the given sentences.
6. Read the story of Jack and the beanstalk and answer the following questions.
7. Decide whether these sentences from the story are true or false.

Figure 3. The Treatment of the Control Group

The seven writing activities in which the creative group engaged were based on the tasks addressed in Sternberg and Lubart's (1999) creativity model. These tasks are intended to enhance the learners' synthetic, analytic, and practical abilities and consequently, make them more creative in their work. Each activity included one element of a creative task as mentioned in the model. These elements were imagination, discovery, and prediction (factors for enhancing the synthetic ability); judgment, comparison, and contrast (factors for enhancing the analytic ability); and reasoning (factor for enhancing the practical ability).

The non-creative group also received the same number of writing activities with the same timing; however, their activities lacked any attention to creativity elements. They were ordinary writing tasks with usual and simple topics. Most of the activities came from the drills in the students' course book. During the treatment, students were asked to elaborate on their answers more in order to create a piece of writing. None of the topics for writing were intended to trigger students to use their imagination or creation. Thus, students in the non-creative group were not familiarized with the elements of creativity provided to the creative group. The control group did not deal with any kind of writing task. They had to work on some drills in order to improve their vocabulary, grammar, and reading based on the methodology of the institute.

The Figure 4 summarizes the differences between the writing activities given to the creative and non-creative groups:

Writing activities of the creative group	*Writing activities of the non-creative group*
1. Creating an imaginary character	1. Describing an ordinary day
2. Finding unusual uses for usual items	2. Finding usual uses for usual items
3. Predicting different endings for a story	3. Describing an event
4. Judging the character of a story	4. Writing a letter
5. Comparing two unrelated things	5. Comparing two related things
6. Finding differences between two things	6. Expressing feelings
7. Everyday reasoning	7. Summarizing a story

Figure 4. Comparison between Writing Activites of the Creative and Non-creative Groups

The last session of the treatment dealt with the writing posttest. Participants were provided a topic prompt and a sentence starter then encouraged to write a complete narrative on this topic.

After the treatment, the writing posttests were scored using the Language Creativity Rating Scale (Torrance, 1988; 1990; Sternberg, 1995; 1998; Soh, 1997). The scale assesses children's writing based on seven components. The first four components assess creativity including: originality (originality of ideas and story line), fluency (the development of ideas, interconnectedness), flexibility (the scope of the composition, flexibility in processing ideas), and elaboration (expansion of story line). The other three components assess language proficiency and include richness of vocabulary (appropriate use of suitable words), complexity of sentences (development of sentences), and accuracy in grammar (items such as tenses, syntax, spelling and punctuation). The total score for a composition exercise is 35 marks (5 per item) based on this rating scale.

Torrance (1988) defines each aspect of the scale to ensure reliability. The definitions of the four components used for assessing creativity in a piece of writing are as follows:

Originality: It involves the production of ideas that are unique or unusual. It also includes synthesis or putting information about a topic back together in a new and unpredictable way and deals with the rarity of the ideas.

Fluency: It refers to the production of a great number of ideas about a topic. It also involves giving many responses as possible to an idea.

Flexibility: It refers to the production of ideas that show a variety of possibilities of thought. It involves the ability to see things from different points of view.

Elaboration: It is the process of enhancing ideas by providing more detail. Additional detail and clarity improves interest in, and understanding of the topic.

To obtain a highly reliable result, two raters had several calibration sessions about scoring the papers. The raters agreed on the definitions of originality, fluency, flexibility, and elaboration, which were the elements included in the scale. The inter-rater reliability using the Pearson product-moment correlation adjusted by the Spearman prophecy formula was 87.42 for the control group, 89.68 for the non-creative group and 91.77 for the creative group. These results indicated that the scoring was highly reliable.

Results

The ANOVA calculated for the scores of the participants on a sample YLE proficiency test before the treatment there was no difference (p=.53) in the proficiency level of the participants, and the three groups could be considered homogenous (Table1). The alpha level was set at .05 for all analyses in this study.

Table 1. ANOVA for the YLE Test Scores of the Three Groups before the Treatment

	SS	df	MS	*F*	*p*
Between	96.1	2	48.05		
Within	3223.92	42	76.76	.62	.53
Total	3320.02	44			

* p< .05, two-tailed.

The results and descriptive statistics including mean, minimum, maximum and standard deviation conducted on the obtained data from the writing posttest are as shown in Table 2:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Three Groups on the Writing Posttest

Post-test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Control	15	12.27	5.29	6.50	23.50
Non-creative	15	19.00	6.36	7.50	30.50
Creative	15	26.30	7.10	13.00	35.00
Total	45	19.19	8.45	6.50	35.00

As shown in the above table, the mean of the posttests was 12.27 for the control group, 19.00 for the non-creative group, and 26.30 for the creative group. Considering the creativity scale used to correct the writings, the score of each writing test was out of 35. Comparing the means, it is indicated that the creative group with the highest mean score did better on the writing post-test than the two other groups.

To determine if there is a significant difference between the mean scores, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed (Table 3).

Table 3. ANOVA for Learners' Writing Ability based on Creativity Enhancement

	SS	df	MS	*F*	*p*
Between	1477.81	2	738.90		
Within	1665.83	42	39.67	18.63	.00*
Total	3143.64	44			

* p< .05, two-tailed.

The results of the ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference between the scores of the three groups F (2, 42) = 18.63, p = .00, with a 95% confidence interval, the first null hypothesis of no difference among groups is rejected.

In order to have a two by two comparison between the means of the three groups, a post-hoc Scheffe test for multiple comparisons was used (Table 4).

Table 4. Post-hoc Scheffe test for Multiple Comparisons between the Three Groups

		Mean Difference	Std. Error	*p*	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	Non-creative	-6.73*	2.30	.02	-12.57	-.89
	Creative	-14.03*	2.30	.00	-19.87	-8.20
Non-creative	Control	6.73*	2.30	.02	0.89	12.57
	Creative	-7.30*	2.30	.01	-13.13	-1.47
Creative	Control	14.03*	2.30	.00	8.20	19.87
	Non-creative	7.30*	2.30	.01	1.47	13.13

* p< .05, two-tailed.

Based on the above results, the following results can be noted:

- A significant difference existed posttest between the control and creative group (mean difference =14.03, p = .00). This result indicates that the participants of the creative group outperformed the participants of the control group which means that the creativity enhancement treatment condition led to an improvement in the learners' writing ability.
- Comparing the results of the control and non-creative group, the non-control group, with better scores on the writing posttest outperformed the control group. Thus, there was a significant difference between the control and non-creative group (mean difference = 6.73, p = .02). This means that the non-creative group's treatment condition also had an influence on its participants' writing ability.
- There was also a significant difference between the creative and non-creative group (mean difference = 7.30, p = .01). Considering the results of the two groups on the writing post-test, it is clear that the creative group outperformed the non-creative group. As a result, it can be concluded that the creative group's treatment condition, which was developing students' writing ability through writing tasks that included elements of creativity enhancement, had a greater effect on the participants' writing ability than the non-creative group's treatment condition, which developed writing ability using ordinary writing task that did not contain any factor to enhance the participants' creativity.

Discussion

The results of this study support those of previous studies (Edwards & Hiler, 1993; Beghetto & Kaufman, 2011) which accept a positive role for creativity enhancement in the process of teaching and learning. The prior studies together with this one all argue for the positive effect of creativity in promoting learners' own creative thinking abilities which leads to better learning. Considering the results of the present study, it can be concluded that adopting a creative method in order to teach a subject through developing learners' creativity has a definite impact on the learners' writing process and product. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of previously-mentioned studies focused on the use of creative activities in the participants' second language learning in the area of English writing (Albert & Kormos, 2004; Otto, 1998; Pishghadam, Khodadady, & Zabihi, 2011).

Regarding creativity in second language learning, the results of this study shed light on Sternberg and Lubart's (1995, 1998, 1999) theory of creativity known as the investment theory. Accordingly, Sternberg and Lubart asserted that creative

performance is enhanced by a combination of certain resources such as the three intellectual ways of thinking: synthetic, analytic, and practical thinking. This creativity model, used in the present study to enhance young learners' creativity, supported participants in the creative treatment group to perform more creatively on the written posttest.

Previous studies (Franken & Haslett, 2002; Ellis & Yuan, 2004; Kim & Kim, 2005; Hyland, 2007; Khoii & Tabrizi, 2011) have considered various factors such as interaction through instructor feedback, peer reviews, planning, genre based pedagogies, and input enhancement essential for developing the writing ability of young learners, but creativity was an element missing from these studies. On the other hand, studies by Craft (2005) and Grainger, Goouch, and Lambirth (2005) focused on developing creativity in writing as central to children's growth as writers and to their self-esteem.

Understanding the necessity of developing young learners' writing ability through creativity enhancement, Grainger, Goouch, and Lambirth (2005) asserted that there should be a balance between the creative process and the writing product. Thus, he adopted a definition of creativity as "an imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value". In order to examine creativity in writing, the present study was based on Grainger's definition as it highlights five key concepts which are important and beneficial elements in both the creative and writing processes. These five key points are using imagination, the creative process, originality, the pursuit of purpose, and judging value.

Regarding the importance of creativity enhancement in writing, the results of the present study supported similar studies (Chik & Wan, 2003; Soh et al., 2003; Fraser, 2006), which considered creativity as an effective predictor for writing. As Soh et. al. (2003) contend, children's creativity can be encouraged by exposing them to a wide variety of stimulation and by providing them opportunities to acquire information and materials. As such, children are able to combine and arrange the materials, giving them the freedom to ask questions, disagree, experiment, and do things that adults may regard as mistakes. The study by Soh (2003) also focused on enhancing young learners' creativity by exposing them to writing materials which contained elements of creativity enhancement. The participants in the creative experimental group of the present study, who were exposed to creative writing activities, had traces of imagination, originality, flexibility, creation, and

elaboration in their writing posttests, while the participants of the non-creative group had none.

The difference and uniqueness of the current study lies in the way creativity is enhanced. None of the previously mentioned studies relied on a certain model of creativity to enhance children's creativity in the language classroom. The contribution of this study lies in its use of the creativity model by Sternberg and Lubart (1995) as the basis for young learners' creativity enhancement. These tasks helped children develop and enhance their creativity, to be more successful learners in the skill of writing in English.

Conclusion and Implications

The teaching of writing continues to occupy a major place in second language pedagogy. However, few studies have dealt with creativity, as a central factor to children's growth as writers

Considering the effects of creativity enhancement on young learners' writing ability, the main implication of the present study is that creativity has an important role in teaching children how to write. The authors recommend that teachers, educators, teachers trainers, curriculum developers, syllabus designers and materials writers need to pay attention to this essential factor.

By including creativity enhancement in the teaching curriculum, teachers and materials writers would prepare materials integrated with creative tasks to trigger young learners' imagination, creation, analysis, evaluation, and judgment in order to lead them to a successful path of learning. Syllabus designers should also allocate enough time in their syllabi for teachers to deal with different types of creative activities in teaching the writing skill.

More specifically, teachers need to know that young learners' creative abilities are most likely to be developed in an atmosphere in which the teacher's creative abilities are properly engaged (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education [NACCCE], 1999, p. 90). The teachers' playfulness, openness, and innovative ideas also need to be developed and enriched if they are to contribute imaginatively to the construction of creative learners (Grainger, Goouch, & Lambirth, 2005). Creativity courses should be included in teacher education courses to help teachers learn how to become more creative in teaching, and as a result, to

be able to deal with pre-planned and published teaching materials and prescriptive methodology in creative ways.

As writing is a complex skill for young learners, teachers should also gain awareness about the attitude of their students' attitudes toward writing, such as through writing attitude questionnaires or interviews. Having learned their students' attitude toward writing, teachers can make writing activities more interesting by integrating them with elements of creativity to help students develop more in their writing. Finally, there is room for further research to address the skills speaking, reading and listening in order to examine the effects of the creativity treatment on them. It was unfortunate that our data was accidently erased before we were able to independently analyze the creativity sub-scores and proficiency sub-scores of the Torrance Test.

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Using Sound Recorders as a Pedagogical Tool for Language Development

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Introduction

Whereas journal writing is universally used in reading and writing classes to provide learners with opportunities to communicate meaningfully in written language, "oral journals," the practice of recording students' oral language to develop their spoken language suggested by Mir (2006), is less popular among language teachers. If students only practice speaking the target language in class, chances are it may take a long time for them to become fluent in the language (particularly in EFL contexts). Extensive practice outside of class is needed for students to get used to speaking the target language. Moreover, the ephemeral and instantaneous nature of oral language complicates the process of correcting student oral mistakes. If their language is recorded, it can be heard multiple times by the teacher, other students, and the students themselves so weaknesses can be identified and improved. This paper discusses ways in which a voice recorder may be used for fostering learner autonomy, confidence, pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy. Devices and programs for voice recording are also briefly discussed.

Recording to Improve Autonomy

Learner autonomy is defined as "the ability to take charge of one's learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3) or "the capacity to control one's own learning" (Benson, 2003, p. 305). The best example of an autonomous learner is a person who learns on their own and monitors his or her learning. An effective teacher is one who is able to inspire their students to discover the joy of learning on their own. Schooling years are limited, but things students have to learn are unlimited. Students, therefore, have to be assisted in learning to self-learn, self-evaluate, and self-motivate. Revering the teacher as the sole authority and a constant source of help is a way to limit self-discovery and self-learning. Teachers work hard and sometimes are inclined

to do too much for their learners in the hope that learners will benefit from what they do for them. The naked reality is, regardless of how hard the teacher works, without learners' conspicuous effort, no sizable learning is likely to take place. Writing teachers help learners to write by asking them to do the writing, give them some feedback to improve frequent and noticeable errors and then ask them to write again and again.

The same approach may be used for oral communication development. In oral communication classes, there is usually only one teacher and a group of students. If students expect to improve their speaking skills from classroom instruction only, it may take them an extended period of time to make any noticeable progress. Ideally, students are expected to go out and interact with others in the target language. However, in most contexts where students learn the target language as a foreign language, opportunity to interact in the target language may not be always readily available.

The teacher can enable students to take charge of the task to improve their speaking by asking them to complete assignments such as recording their own speech, listening to it again to improve it many times prior to presenting it to other students and the teacher for feedback and evaluation. Students do not usually have concrete evidence of their learning and progress, so the use of recordings can give them a way to see their progress over time. The teacher need not listen to all recordings, but it is important that they make their students do so to encourage self-learning and evaluation. Simply put, showing students how to improve their speaking, language accuracy, and fluency on their own using recording devices and software (with some monitoring and evaluation from the teacher) is one way to foster learner autonomy, which may serve them a lifetime.

Benson (2003) offered five principles for encouraging learner autonomy: playing an active role in students' learning process, giving students an array of learning resources and choices, giving students opportunities for making their own decisions, providing support to students, and encouraging students to be reflective learners. The principles Benson suggested can be put into practice by showing students how to utilize recording devices and software to enhance their oral language development. Teachers can give students a wide array of learning resources and choices by allowing them to choose topics they are personally interested in and using the devices (e.g., cellphones, audio recorders) or software programs (free

online software for audio and video recording) they are comfortable with to complete the assignments. During the process of completing the recording, students can also decide how many times they would like to record depending on how motivated and committed they are in fulfilling the requirement of the assignments.

By asking students to listen to what they have recorded and evaluate their own speaking, teachers take students a step closer to self-reflection by using themselves as a source for oral language development. Students can see what their areas of weaknesses are and what they need to do to improve such weaknesses.

Throughout the process of helping students to successfully complete the recording assignments, teachers can play an active role in students' learning via clear and detailed instructions on how to compete the task, giving students possible topics and materials for the task, and offering students easy-to-use rubrics for self or peer evaluation. Finally, the teacher can give students support by giving encouraging and motivating feedback to students so they can be ready to take on more responsibility for and control of their future learning endeavors.

Recording to Boost Confidence

In an attempt to clarify the concept of confidence in second language learning, Yates and Chisari (2013, p. 1) noted: "For the ESL learner, confidence is defined as a form of self-reliance and is often linked to self-esteem and motivation." When students feel confident, they think they are good at doing something. In order for students to be good at a skill, they need to undertake a tremendous amount of practice. In fact, it has been claimed that in order to perform a skill at an expert level, it takes approximately ten years of deliberate practice with optimal efforts (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993). To be able to use the target language with great confidence, students may have to complete an extended period of using it.

Adult second language learners are generally highly proficient in their native language and cognitively mature. their primary concern is typically their ability to effectively use the target language to convey ideas. Recording allows learners to focus better on their language issues, and prepare for class work in advance by recording it, listening to it, and identifying areas that need further improvement. With mutual consent, students can also record practice conversations with their classmates to listen and find areas of weaknesses.

One way to improve confidence using recording is to write out the planned speech and rehearse it multiple times prior to delivering the speech. The teacher can require students to prepare a written speech in advance, record the first and fifth presentations of the speech, and listen to the first and the fifth presentations in the end to see the progress they have made after deliberate practice. The progress the students see and hear can foster their confidence in speaking another language.

Recording to Perfect Pronunciation

In a book about teaching pronunciation, Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin, and Giner (2010) reviewed the literature on teaching pronunciation and provided a list of ten approaches to pronunciation instruction. One of the approaches is having students record their language production such as "rehearsed and spontaneous speeches, free conversations, and role plays" (p. 10) so that evaluation from the teacher, other students, and the student who does the recording can be conducted. The advantage of recorded speech is that it allows for an indefinite number of replays and can provide the teacher with negative evidence from students' interlanguage.

In natural contexts, when the teacher provides feedback, the student's speaking has completed and the student may not remember exactly what he or she has said. Sometimes, it is not possible for the teacher to repeat verbatim the erroneous version of students' utterances. The recording saves the teacher from having to repeat what the student has mispronounced to show him or her that such pronunciation is not correct or problematic. The teacher can also indicate the words, the specific minute and second or time range in the recording to enable students to self-correct on their own.

One way to help students to improve pronunciation is to tell them to record the speech again to improve the problematic pronunciation prior to assigning a grade for the assignment. A better grade for the assignment may be one way to motivate students to pay attention to themselves and the recording. Alternatively, students may be asked to exchange recordings they make and listen to one another's recording to provide feedback. Students may be given a simple rubric to use when carrying out peer-evaluation. Students can tell the person who did the recording the words and phrases they failed to understand to get clarification and find out the correct pronunciation together using an online dictionary or by seeking assistance from the teacher. Importantly, the recording allows the student an

opportunity to listen to what they have produced and self-evaluate their speech using a rubric developed by the teacher.

Another way to help students improve their pronunciation is to give them a conversation, a paragraph or a short text and ask them to record their reading of the materials. In a lesson focusing on word stress, for example, students may be asked to underline the words in the text that should be stressed, record their reading the passage, and have the recording evaluated by their peers and teacher. Teachers can also create a list of questions about a reading passage in a textbook or a newspaper article and have pairs of students work together to find out the answer from the text. Students will then use the questions and answers to create an interview. They may be required to practice in class or at home with their partners. Students may be required to send their recorded interviews to the teacher for a grade. Students can practice as many times as needed until they are happy with their production.

Recording to Increase Fluency

Nation (2001; 2014) described a 4/3/2 activity to help learners develop fluency in speaking. Students prepare a four minute talk and tell one student in four minutes, then another in three minutes, and a third student in two minutes. A similar activity can be required of students to complete at home on their own. Students may be asked to record themselves telling a story or retelling a piece of news read from a newspaper in 4, 3, and 2 two minutes with the same amount of information. The idea is for students to repeat what they have said again faster to gain fluency. Nation (2014) emphasized that students need to repeat the same materials again and again to improve speaking fluency. In fact, part of language learning is a matter of repetition. Students rarely learn a new word or grammar structure and know how to use it immediately. They usually have to learn it on multiple occasions. Particularly for speaking, although students may know how to say things in the target language, they may not be able to say them fluently.

One way to foster speaking fluency is practice speaking under time constraint. Being pushed to speak faster pushes students to speak more fluently, and familiarity with the content of what they say makes it easier for them to practice and reach the goal of communicating the same amount of information within a shorter period of time. Recording their speech enables students to keep track of the time when

they complete the activity. Students may also see that with ample practice they can communicate with better fluency.

Recording to Elevate Accuracy

In a recent publication, Dormer (2013) suggested that English language learners can improve their language accuracy through six stages of awareness, one of which is awareness of personal language use. Students have to know first what is wrong with their own language production regarding accuracy prior to being able to improving such inaccuracies. One simple way to help students improve their oral language accuracy is by having them record their presentation, listen to it, transcribe their own presentation, and read it to identify problematic language use. Students can then be asked to correct their own mistakes and record the presentation again to eliminate the mistakes made in the previous recording.

Another way to help students see their mistakes and improve their accuracy is providing students with erroneous segments from their speech (e.g., from and to a certain minute and second) and having them record the presentation again using the revised structures in their presentation. One of the learning outcomes in my oral presentation class is being able to use complete sentences. In addition to asking students to complete recordings as a practice step for homework assignments, I recorded students' presentations in class, sent the files to each student, and asked them to record the presentation again using complete sentences instead of the incomplete sentences and fragments noted during the presentations. The notes taken during the presentations were given to students to help them easily locate the places where more accurate language use was needed.

Devices and Programs for Voice Recording

Most cellphones these days have a recording function allowing users to record sounds and send them electronically. Professional digital voice recorders are another option. They are reliable and have very good sound quality. Modern professional voice recorders allow users to easily transfer data to external sources such as computers. Cellphones and professional voice recorders are portable and convenient for use in and out of classroom. For computer users, Sound Recorder for Windows or Audio Recorder for the Mac are relatively simple to use. Users can record, save, and send the files without much training.

There are various types of software programs available for quality voice recording. Below are several I have used and found useful:

- http://www.audacityteam.org/ - a free software that allows recording and editing
- http://vocaroo.com/ - allows users to record and save the file online. This website is very user-friendly.
- https://online-voice-recorder.com/ - after recording, users are prompted to save the file to their computers.

Conclusion

Part of what makes a teacher effective is giving students the right kind of resources and direction to make learners take control of their learning so they can become autonomous in their own academic pursuits. Teachers may see the saying that one can take a horse to water but one cannot make it drink sometimes relevant for their teaching situations. Teachers may provide all learning opportunities for their students to learn, but ultimately it is the students who have to do the learning for themselves if they wish to improve their own knowledge and skills. Technology innovations have offered teachers and students with infinite ways to be creatively adapted for their own teaching and learning contexts. As discussed earlier, sound recording functions available in most electronic devices may be a pedagogical tool for students to enhance learning autonomy, confidence, pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy. Learning possibilities are endless if learners are shown how to make use of the recording devices and software available to them.

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TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Using Picture-Based Humor to Lower Students' Affective Filter

Gabriel Fierro Fuentes, Escola Nikken Gakuen, Mie, Japan

I have taught English to secondary level students in Chile and Japan. As unlikely as it may seem, English language learners in both places exhibit similar behavior in that they are reluctant to use their English, even when they have a fair degree of proficiency in it. In other words, the gap between their level of competence and their performance is often very wide. Of course, there are several reasons for this, some of which are individual, but in general, I have found that in both settings:

- English language instruction is largely form-focused.
- English classes are typically viewed as standardized test preparation courses.
- Students are accustomed to being corrected when they make mistakes. They quickly "learn" that by not speaking, they can avoid correction.

Unfortunately, my colleagues who have taught in other countries tell me that these observations are not unique to Chile and Japan.

At first, I did not realize that the lack of response and unwillingness to speak that I saw in my students were really outward expressions of fear. As I got to know them better, I realized how high their level of anxiety was. I am a friendly, relaxed, outgoing person and a non-native speaker of English, but my students still saw me as an authoritarian figure who had power over them and might shame or ridicule them if they made mistakes. Clearly, their affective filter was too high. Telling them to relax was not enough; I needed to do, rather than say, something to help them overcome their fear if I wanted them to answer simple questions or engage in English conversation with each other and with me. If I could help them overcome their fear, I knew they would not only be able to use their English but that they would enjoy it and be surprised by their success. I decided humor might be

helpful, but I knew that word-based humor would only add to the level of anxiety in the class. Instead I tried the picture-based strategy described here.

Procedure

1. First, I planned my next lesson as usual creating a digital slide show to introduce the topic, new vocabulary, and example sentences to illustrate the grammatical patterns in our textbook. The topic was healthy and unhealthy personal habits, and the language focus was on modals such as should, shouldn't, must, and mustn't.
2. I added illustrations to my example sentences, but this time, I made two changes from my usual routine. First, I illustrated the target sentence patterns about healthy and unhealthy habits with images from the popular animated American television show The Simpsons, with which my students were familiar. Second, I pasted a photo of my own face over Bart Simpson's face.
3. In class, I previewed the topic as usual, using the opening slides of my presentation and focusing on the target structures.
4. Then, I advanced to the next slide showing the Simpsons with my picture where Bart's should be and these sample sentences: I am in 8th grade. I am 14 years old. I am an excellent boy. The last sentence was designed to introduce the topic of healthy (and unhealthy) habits in the context of this famous, but fictitious family. Making myself part of the family helped students see me as a participant in the fun. The positive effects appeared immediately. Students took notice, relaxed, laughed, and were eager for more.
5. On subsequent slides, students read "my" healthy habit sentences: I get up early. I drink plenty of water. They also read about some of "my" unhealthy habits: I go to sleep late. I get stressed.
6. In subsequent lessons, I continued using this technique.

This simple strategy—using pop culture illustrations and inserting my image into them—had a dramatic effect on classroom dynamics. Each humorous illustration helped students relax, process the target language information, and understand the example sentences. They eagerly looked forward to the next picture, sentence frame, and example. Moments of laughter, followed by understanding, lengthened the period of student engagement and gave me more time to explain and answer questions. More importantly, students were now eager to participate,

answer questions, and talk about their own health habits without fear of making mistakes. Before the lesson ended, students were giving each other advice and expressing opinions related to healthy and unhealthy habits, and from that time on, the classroom environment was more relaxed, more fun, and full of English.

A Few Thoughts . . .

1. Contextualizing new language information by placing my image on pop culture images had the desired effects for me—helping my students relax and making me seem more approachable. I hope readers will see how to adapt this idea for their students and teaching situation. For example, I can imagine using rock stars, popular entertainers, or historic figures to present and contextualize or localize lexical or grammatical information.
2. It is not necessary to have high tech facilities to use the ideas presented here. I could have used paper copies, magazine cut outs, or even hand-drawn images on the board.
3. I used this activity at the beginning of the class to present the new vocabulary and grammatical elements for my lesson. I could just as well have used it at the end to review, consolidate learning, check on understanding, or revive students just before class ends.

Conclusion

Many students in EFL settings experience high levels of anxiety when it comes to speaking English. No matter how often their teachers tell them not to worry about mistakes, tradition and prior experience make it difficult for them to shed their anxiety. This simple strategy—using picture-based humor—lowered the affective filter of my students, allowing them to relax enough to use the English they already knew and feel motivated to learn—and say—more.

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TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Applying Memory-Enhancing Techniques in Language Teaching

Anne Wheelock, Hawaii Pacific University, Honolulu, Hawaii

Imagine memorizing a thousand random digits in an hour or 300 random words in 15 minutes! Contestants in memory game competitions perform such feats despite having only average intelligence and memory capacity. Now, further imagine the potential if we could help language learners, apply the techniques of memory champions to the study of, for example, new vocabulary in a language class.

I began to consider this possibility after reading a book with the intriguing subtitle, *The art and science of remembering everything* (Foer, 2012). Foer chronicles his yearlong quest to compete against top "mental athletes" in the 2006 U.S. Memory Championships, which he eventually won. He recounts the critical role that visual images play in preserving knowledge and history in societies that depend on a strong oral tradition and laments our loss of a trained "internal memory" in the face of the vast "external memory" exemplified today by our mobile devices and the Internet. He reveals how successful cabbies, chess champions, and the aforementioned mental athletes create personalized images or "memory palaces" to move information from short-term memory into long-term memory.

This last point led me to wonder how I could apply visual imaging techniques to language learning and teaching. Of course, language teachers often use visual images, such as photos, video clips, whiteboard drawings, and body language to clarify the meaning of new words and expressions for our students in the short term, but could I, for example, help my students use visual imagery to understand and recall, for the long term, illusive expressions such as phrasal verbs? Phrasal verbs—those 2- or 3-word VERB + PREP expressions that pepper everyday speech but are notoriously difficult for English language learners to use well because they are often idiomatic, sometimes polysemic, and occur in separable and/or inseparable forms. In particular, I wondered whether I could help students create personal images of phrasal verbs that linked the literal meanings of the component words,

which they know, to the meaning of the idiomatic expression, which they struggle to remember. What follows is a procedure for adapting the use of visual imagery in the teaching of vocabulary with accompanying notes, examples, and caveats.

Procedure

1. (Optional) Read an online article about memory palaces to learn more about how experts create and use visual images to enhance their memory of new (and even trivial) information.
2. Plan a new vocabulary lesson as usual.
3. For several of the target items in your vocabulary list, prepare visual mnemonics, the more humorous or outlandish the images, the better. For example, I created a lesson based on [look + PREP] expressions and drew whimsical pictures designed to link the literal and idiomatic meanings in several of them (see Appendix).
4. Introduce the target vocabulary or ask students to preview it as they normally would for any new vocabulary lesson. For example, I asked pairs of students to investigate the meaning of the target expressions.
5. Introduce students to the visual imagery aspect of the lesson in an age- or level-appropriate way and show them the images you have created as examples. For example, I explained my drawing of look for, asked them to try to identify the look expression illustrated in the other three drawings—look up, look on, and look out—and then create their own images for the remaining expressions (see Appendix).
6. Have student pairs or volunteers draw their images on the board while their classmates guess which item from the list is being depicted.
7. Provide time for students to copy, adapt, or create their own visual memory cues for the entire list of target vocabulary. Note that after students understand the use of visual imagery, less class time will be required for lessons like this one because more of the work can be done at home or shared online.

Caveats

1.1 This activity based on look phrasal verbs is designed as a humorous introduction to the strategy of using visual memory devices to assist with vocabulary acquisition. It is not intended to imply that entire lessons on phrasal verbs are desirable. At the same time, readers who are interested

in such lessons will be surprised at how many phrasal verb activities, including illustrated ones, are freely available online.

1.2 In lessons where the target vocabulary is drawn from situational, thematic, or content-based texts, students can be encouraged to create images integrating the vocabulary with the content of the lesson. For example, if the topic is a traditional festival or holiday, encourage students to situate their vocabulary mnemonics in a drawing related to the festival.

Conclusion

As teachers, we appreciate the effectiveness of using visual images, such as photos, to aid our students in understanding new expressions in the moment. However, those moments of understanding are often fleeting. We can enhance the chances that those fleeting moments of understanding become long-term memories if we teach students to store information, such as new words and meanings, in visual images—the more outlandish and personal, the better. Creating their own visual mnemonics and sharing them with their classmates, contextualizes the target language, fosters autonomy, and builds confidence. It taps into visual and kinesthetic learning styles, lowers the affective filter, boosts motivation, and improves group dynamics. All of these factors further enhance the retention of new information.

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APPENDIX

Phrasal Verbs with "look"

Directions

1. Work with a partner.
2. Study the example for *look for*.
3. Can you identify the other three illustrated *look* verbs?
4. Choose one of the remaining *look* verbs, and create a picture to fit its meaning.
5. Write 2-3 silly or personal example sentences for your *look* verb.
6. Be prepared to teach your classmates the meaning, sentences, and picture memories you will used to remember your *look* verb.

look ahead	*look back*	~~*look for*~~	*look forward to*
look on	*look out*	*look through*	*look to, look up*