

# **Expectations Eclipsed in Foreign Language Education:**

**Learners and educators on an ongoing journey**

**Edited by**

Hülya Görür-Atabaş  
Sharon Turner

**Sabancı  
Üniversitesi**

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## **Foreword and Forward**

*Dear Colleague,*

*Between June 2-4, 2011 Sabancı University School of Languages welcomed colleagues from 21 different countries to a collaborative exploration of the challenging and inspiring journey of learners and educators in the field of language education.*

*The conference provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to share their views on language education. Colleagues met with world-renowned experts and authors in the fields of education and psychology, faculty and administrators from various universities and institutions, teachers from secondary educational backgrounds and higher education, as well as learners whose voices are often not directly shared but usually reported.*

*The conference name, Eclipsing Expectations, was inspired by two natural phenomena, a solar eclipse directly before the conference, and a lunar eclipse, immediately after. Learners and educators were hereby invited to join a journey to observe, learn and exchange ideas in order to create their own “eclipse” in the field of language education.*

*As a starting point for such an experience, the following considerations were suggested:*

*Are all participants in the learning process aligned?*

*What facilitates this alignment?*

*What hinders this alignment?*

*Can educators and learners become peers?*

*Can the roles be switched?*

*What can educators learn from learners?*

*Who are then the experts?*

*Are educators and learners dominating or liberating?*

*How can educators and learners explore beyond the obvious?*

*How can obscure elements in the learning process be made more visible?*

*Proposals for paper presentations, workshops and posters that sought answers to the questions above were invited to address the following key areas:*

*Research with learners*

*Feedback from learners and learning from feedback*

*Voices in curriculum development*

*Perceptions of assessment*

*Dreams, nightmares, and realities for all participants*

*Learner principles, practices, and processes in language learning*

*Teachers as learners of learners*

*Experimenting with learning*

*The conference title, the considerations and the key areas outlined above intrigued many colleagues and enticed them to attend our conference which included unique components such as:*

- Plenaries by language learners based on their perspectives of language education*
- Concurrent sessions, entitled Voices from the learners, in which language learners shared their experiences to pass on their messages to language educators*
- Special reflection events over breakfast with a renowned clinical psychologist*

- Eclipsing Expectations Virtual Platform which comprised of a range of educational events that took place online and in the Virtual Zones on conference premises*
- Cultural experiences such as a foreign languages' fair, music and dance performances took delegates solely beyond the academic experience of language*
- A "voyage" to the stars providing an exploration of the stars with a distinguished astrophysicist.*

*This journey, however, would not have been possible without the efforts, collaboration and contributions of all those who have had an important role in making this conference a unique experience for everyone involved.*

*We are especially grateful to our Director, Deniz Kurtoğlu Eken, administrative staff and instructor colleagues of the School of Languages, the wider Sabancı University community and also our learners who performed, presented and supported us in this endeavour.*

*Thank you to all our invited speakers and delegates who came together in order to provide everyone with an opportunity to share, reflect and learn from each other.*

*Thank you also to the Sabancı Foundation and all our sponsors in helping us to realize this conference.*

*We would now like to invite you to the third phase of our Eclipsing Expectations journey:*

*The following is a collection of selected papers, summaries and experiential essays by those delegates who chose to contribute to this publication.*

*Unlike traditional proceedings where the papers are categorized under various themes these papers stand individually and as a whole, leaving the reader to form their own connections. In this way, the proceedings reflect the perspectives, ideas, experiences and findings of the delegates' inspirational journey into Eclipsing Expectations. This collection also reflects the excitement of the conference where participants each had their own personal, meaningful journey based on their own paths chosen through the conference programme.*

*We hope that these various pathways and webs of knowledge will contribute to the whole multidimensional perspectives of collective experience for all readers of this volume.*

*We invite you to reflect and travel beyond our eclipse and enjoy this third phase of our journey into...*

### **The Conference Committee**

*Hülya Görür-Atabaş, Sharon Turner, Jacqueline Einer, Deniz Bingöl, Ekrem Şimşek, Meral Güçeri.*





## **Students' transfer of writing skills between languages and between courses**

**Zeynep İskenderođlu Önel**

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## Students' transfer of writing skills between languages and between courses

Zeynep İskenderoğlu Önel

### Introduction

Academic writing research reveals that writing serves different purposes in different courses and similarly students are expected to assume different roles in writing for different courses. In other words, different instructors may read student writing with “different sets of expectations, depending on the goals of writing, the perceived roles of the student writers, and the academic readers’ own disciplinary expertise” (Zhu, 2004, p. 30). Zhu describes this phenomenon as the expectation of “the transfer of general writing skills to different contexts.” It is obvious that students need to develop some general writing skills to a relatively high degree in order to be able to transfer these skills to the context of different courses. Research involving interviews with faculty members have revealed that these general skills can be summarized as: audience awareness, logical organization, paragraph development, coherence and cohesion, clarity, sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics (Zhu, 2004; Johns, 1981, in Snow & Brinton, 1988).

The need for students in different disciplines to be trained on writing skills is a complicated issue in terms of who will take the responsibility to teach students how to write in different courses. Attempts to answer this question have given way to movements such as Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) in North America. In the simplest terms, the WAC movement suggests that the responsibility for helping students improve their communication skills is shared by faculty members in the students’ disciplines and the language teacher, teaching writing skills.

In other words, not only the writing instructor but also the faculty members involved would focus on the format and organization, as well as the content of the written work, and should be able to give feedback in both areas. One drawback of the WAC movement has been that few faculty members are willing to do this kind of work, and more importantly, not many know how to

(L. F. Stoller, personal communication, March 7, 2011). In the same manner, as Spack (1988) argues that when teachers of English take the responsibility for teaching in different disciplines, they may have to “assign papers that they are ill-equipped to handle.” (p. 30).

Another potential solution to this dilemma is ‘The Adjunct Model’, or the ‘linked courses’ as Ann Johns calls since it suggests a more equal footing (L. F. Stoller, personal communication, March 7, 2011). This model requires the students to enroll in a content class, for instance a political science class, and a support English class. The English instructor and the political science professor communicate to discuss the content of the course. The English instructor also attends the political science class with her students and does all the reading and takes lecture notes, to be able to prepare students for what’s to come in a future political science class or to clarify what has been introduced. In addition, with this interdisciplinary approach the English instructor will design writing tasks with more meaningful contexts relevant to students’ area of study. Cummins’ (1991) Interdependence Hypothesis suggests that:

*To the extent that instruction in L<sub>x</sub> is effective in promoting proficiency in L<sub>x</sub>, transfer of this proficiency to L<sub>y</sub> will occur provided there is adequate exposure to L<sub>y</sub> (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn L<sub>y</sub>. (p. 77)*

In this respect, we can assume that if students have received effective writing instruction in L<sub>1</sub>, they should be able to transfer the writing skills to L<sub>2</sub>, provided they are sufficiently exposed to L<sub>2</sub>. Similarly, we can also argue that if students learn to write in a certain manner for one course, they should be able to write in the same manner for another course. At this point, the condition is that they get adequate guidance and instruction on the expectations of the content specific task.

In this study, the Interdependence Hypothesis makes the core of the research, which I personally place somewhere between a case study and classroom research.

### The Sabancı University Case Background

Sabancı University is an English medium university with an interdisciplinary approach that allows different faculties to interact and collaborate. Freshman students have to take the same courses regardless of the faculty they are

enrolled in. They all take 2-semester courses on social and political sciences (SPS), natural sciences, history of modern Turkey, Turkish language and literature (TLL), and communication skills in English (Freshman ENG).

The Freshman ENG course is a content-based skills course aiming to build upon and expand the students' communicative, critical analysis, study and research skills. Thus the course focuses on improving students' academic skills as well as English proficiency.

In order to develop students' academic skills, ENG courses offer focused instruction on discussion, seminar and writing skills. The types of writing tasks students are expected to produce include an in-class exam where they write essays of 600 hundred words for a content-specific question. In the take-home essay, they are provided with sources, which have been analyzed and discussed thoroughly in class, and are expected to write an argumentative essay, synthesizing these texts. In the research paper, however, they need to do a library search, find and evaluate sources, and use them in an argumentative essay of approximately 1500-2000 words. Both the take home-essay and the research paper are process essays, for which students receive teacher feedback before the final version.

As for the writing skills covered on the course, students get explicit instruction on effective writing. The focus of these training sessions comprises of a clear thesis statement, a well developed argument, effective examples, transition between ideas, transition within/between paragraphs, unity between ideas, in-text citation and references, and use of language.

A highly similar, focused instruction is given in Turkish Language and Literature (TLL) courses as well. Students are also expected to write an analytic paper of almost 2000 words as a requirement of this course in Turkish.

Another course where they are required to write analytic papers is the History of Civilizations (SPS) course. However, over the years, it has been observed that, although students receive focused instruction on writing skills both in English and in Turkish, they do not produce well organized, effective papers for this course.

## The Study

The aim of this study was to find out possible reasons for such a gap between courses. The Freshman ENG instructors and SPS instructors gathered to identify the problems and find solutions. ENG and TLL instructors had already

met to compare the two courses and identified several overlapping areas, which were thought to be reinforcing in terms of writing skills.

Being one of the Freshman ENG instructors, I took the initiative and carried out a small scale action research. After the identification of the problem, I asked my students to send to me their papers for TLL and for SPS courses along with their ENG papers in Fall 2010. I decided to compare papers students wrote in SPS, TLL, and ENG and analyze them in terms of effective writing skills (mentioned above). Then I carried out interviews with the students via email asking them questions about the process of writing the assignments for each of the courses. Where the email interviews were not informative enough, I organized face to face interviews for clarification of certain points in the emails. Both interviews were in Turkish.

The 40 students involved in the study were taking ENG, TLL and SPS in the same semester, completed assignments for all 3 courses, and agreed to send me their papers and to participate in the interview.

Student papers in each course were analyzed in terms of the question, the thesis statement, the organization, accuracy in use of language and choice of vocabulary, register, and source integration.

## Results

The results revealed that even some of the students who had developed an awareness of effective writing skills and used them in papers they had written for ENG and TLL failed to produce adequate papers for SPS. When they were asked the reason for this, they said they were not explicitly given the instructions to pay attention to writing rules. They needed to see the requirement openly stated on the task sheet for SPS papers, and sometimes verbally affirmed by their teaching assistants (TA).

It was observed that the nature of the question helps students to organize and develop well written arguments. For example, if the question comprises three or four sub-questions leading them to answer each separately then they do not need to create an overarching thesis statement. Similarly, they use each sub-question like a sub-title and write the paper accordingly and, therefore they produce well organized papers.

Another significant point was that the skills they said they were paying attention to in SPS papers and the ones we observed in their papers did not always match. This means more explicit instruction on how to go about writing SPS papers may be needed.

Language was another category considered in the student papers. Obviously, students with high language proficiency produced better papers. It was easier to follow not only the argumentation in those papers, but also the flow of ideas.

Below is a tabulated version of students' responses:

What students say they transfer	What is observed missing in some papers
1. Organization rules 2. Transition tools 3. Coherence 4. Conclusion rules 5. Source integration 6. Thesis Statement 7. Topic sentence	1. Thesis Statement
What is observed in many student papers	
1. Thesis Statement 2. Topic sentence	

What students say they transfer	Why students say they don't transfer
1. Teaching Assistants (TA) reminded them of writing rules 2. Student pays special attention 3. Student has internalized the skills	1. TAs do not care, as long as you don't give a list of ideas, but write in an essay format 2. Students who do and who don't get the same grade 3. TAs want you to write the correct content only

What students suggest
1. Students should gain awareness of the need to use effective writing skills 2. Topics in ENG and SPS may correspond 3. Markers need to pay attention to writing skills 4. Stricter marking schemes for SPS needed 5. TAs should explain to students the writing rules 6. Discussion sessions can be more discussion oriented than a revision of lectures

## Conclusion

The ENG and SPS groups decided to collaborate to improve student writing. A kind of 'linked course' model was piloted. Since there wasn't much time between Fall and Spring semesters, it was not really possible to plan a full course in Spring 2011. One of the SPS instructors and I collaborated at various stages during the pilot study. It was not possible for us to arrange a similar topic for the paper assignment given for each course; however, I was able to plan a 3-hour session on the SPS paper in class. First we analyzed the task

given in the previous semester and two papers that received an A and a C-grade respectively. Then we discussed the current task and brainstormed how they could go about writing a thesis statement. We also produced a mind-map on a potential introduction and how students could develop each of the ideas into paragraphs.

At the time of writing this paper, the marking of the SPS papers had not been completed. Once they are complete, the next step will be to compare students' ENG and SPS papers and the grades they received in each course. This will hopefully give us some idea on whether the focused instruction for the SPS paper has been helpful.

## Implications

The missing voice in this study is the teaching assistants (TAs). Involving them will not only satisfy triangulation purposes, but also give insights into how TAs guide students in the process of writing papers and how they mark papers. This may also lead to TA training in these areas.

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## **Reframing Languages: film in early secondary school curriculum**

**Shirley Lawes**

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## Reframing Languages: film in early secondary school curriculum

*Shirley Lawes*

Film is one of those teaching resources that language teachers always enthuse about and claim to value and yet rarely use. Harsh perhaps, but true. We've come to expect our materials to be ready packaged, ready 'levelled' and assessed at the right level, or else we work straight from the textbook. We have lost some of the joy of language teaching and the challenge of creating learning materials for ourselves that excite and inspire our learners; that teach them what languages are all about. I hear a chorus of responses like, 'no time!', 'can't fit anything different into our schemes of work' and 'too much trouble!' So when four brave teachers accepted our invitation to take part in a research project to use short film with their Year 8 (12-13 year olds) French classes, we were delighted to be able to test out our ideas with them. Our project was funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation in the UK and was led jointly by myself and Mark Reid, Head of Education at the British Film Institute.

Our aim was to investigate how a Key Stage 3(KS3)<sup>1</sup> modern foreign languages curriculum that includes a significant element of work with film can have an impact on teaching and learning. The research developed out of film workshops that had been running for several years on the PGCE Modern Foreign Languages course at the Institute of Education, University of London. Over a period of three years, over 200 student teachers of languages had participated in the film workshop, producing teaching and learning materials of high quality, demonstrating imagination, creativity and enormous enthusiasm for working with the medium of film (Lawes, 2008). The success of these workshops in terms of developing an innovative approach to teaching foreign languages at Key Stage 3 led us to the view that film as a linguistic resource and a cultural medium would be of great interest to practising teachers, particularly in the context of the new KS3 national curriculum. Furthermore, our pilot work suggests that the imaginative use of this resource could make a significant impact on the attainment and motivation of learners.

<sup>1</sup> Key Stage 3 spans Years 7,8 and 9 of the English secondary school curriculum (11-14 year olds).

The background motivation for exploring film in the languages curriculum came primarily from the perceived need to do something about what was becoming a crisis in modern foreign language learning in England. Learning foreign languages has never been the most popular activity amongst school pupils in England, but in 2004 learning languages was made optional from age 14 onwards, and since then the numbers of students continuing their language studies to examination level have fallen sharply. Needless to say, this has provoked concerns at all levels of the languages community about the erosion of the status of foreign languages in the school curriculum and it has become important for teachers to think about how they can successfully promote the subject area to ensure that as many pupils as possible are motivated to continue to learn a foreign language in Key Stage 4 and beyond.

These concerns were our starting points, along with the changes in the Key Stage 3 curriculum (QCA 2007) that seemed to offer the opportunity of reinvigorating both the content and form of what is taught in modern foreign languages in ways that impact substantially on both motivation and attainment. The new KS3 curriculum introduced in 2007 was intended to encourage teachers to look beyond the immediately transactional and functional uses of language that are presented in directly 'relevant' situations, and to reconsider the notion that foreign language learning is a cultural pursuit. Film is a cultural medium that has much potential to enrich the foreign languages learning experience, in terms of what could be called 'ethno-culture', that is, aspects of daily life, traditions and folklore that give important insights into the countries and people where the foreign language is spoken. It is also an accessible form of 'enrichment culture', an art form and cultural medium that can lead to a way of exploring literature, art and music while at the same time worthy of study in its own right.

How film, and in particular, short films ('shorts') can enhance the motivation and attainment of learners at an earlier stage has hardly been explored, or indeed acknowledged, and was worthy of study with a view to creating more enriching language learning experiences for learners through the unravelling of the conventions and layers of meaning that are unique to film as a cultural form. The technology that is now readily available in most schools makes film a much more accessible medium for use in the classroom to engage learners, to promote effective linguistic and cultural learning of both the 'ethno' and 'enrichment' variety as well as to begin to explore film narrative through a foreign language.

We were very keen that our research should involve classroom teachers as co-researchers. The four teachers, all from London schools, who volunteered for the project, were willing to give up their own time to learn how to use the technology, develop materials and their approaches to teaching French. Experimenting with short film throughout the year meant they needed the confidence to put aside

some parts of the prescribed curriculum and seek alternative ways of teaching, while ensuring that their chosen groups of learners would not be disadvantaged when it came to end-of-year tests. As researchers, we were as much interested in how using short film was a developmental tool for teachers as we were in improving learner engagement. With respect to the impact on teaching, we were looking at the extent to which participating teachers

- developed new pedagogical knowledge and approaches
- developed their knowledge of and confidence in exploring film as a cultural medium
- changed their expectations of pupils in terms of attainment
- integrated more effectively cultural awareness into their teaching
- With respect to the impact on learning, we were interested in the extent to which participating pupils
- improved their motivation towards learning French
- improved their attainment in listening, speaking, reading and writing
- developed an interest in film as a cultural form
- developed their cultural knowledge
- expressed the intention to continue learning French in Key Stage 4

Our project ran over four terms from September 2009 to December 2010 and involved 4 schools, each with 2 different ability groups of Year 8 learners of French. We invited a number of schools to take part and were looking for self-selecting participants – particularly teachers who were willing to be enthusiastic volunteers and co-researchers able to contribute to the design and development of lesson materials that they would teach. They also needed to be willing to design and implement formative assessments and undertake the writing of reflective journals. They each selected a top set and middle set<sup>2</sup> of French learners and over the three terms of the ‘intervention’ phase devised a unit of 5 lessons based on a short film. We met at the beginning of the project to choose three<sup>3</sup> films from a menu of 6 that we had previously used successfully with our PGCE student teachers, and we worked with the teachers on approaches developed by the British Film Institute over the years<sup>4</sup> to use ICT with the films in more creative ways. They learned how to use software to import stills and short sequences from the films into powerpoint and create a sequence of lessons around aspects of the film narrative.

The distinctive aspect of our project was that we were interested in exploring film as a cultural medium. Film offers a rich and substantial experience of the ‘forms of life’ of a culture – with music and voice, performance, setting, all scaffolded by stories that sweep a viewer along. Short films in particular offer very powerful

<sup>2</sup> Pupils are generally selected according to ability in English schools. A top set being the most able learners.

<sup>3</sup> *Le Bon Numéro*, an animation, *Les Crayons* were chosen (available from <http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/teaching/cineminis/pdfs/5-Thinking-about-film.pdf> and *La Place des fêtes*, from the compilation *Pais, Je t'aime*

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/teaching/cineminis/pdfs/5-Thinking-about-film.pdf> for examples.

experiences for teachers and learners. They are often more like poems than feature films – rich, densely allusive texts, whose stories are told in the language of pure cinema, principally because, as they are only typically shown in festivals, it is expensive and counter productive to use lots of dialogue. And they are short! Typically 4 – 6 minutes in length which means that they can be fully exploited in their entirety. The sorts of activities included watching and discussing, inferring and predicting in French, and of course learning about a range of film styles, periods and genres. But they were also creatively engaging with film: making French inter-titles in the animation *Le Bon Numéro*, for example, using the simple past tense; creating their own story endings, or choosing alternative soundtracks for *Les Crayons*; going on to make their own short films following *La place des fêtes*. Most encouragingly, some groups began to learn about French film language – the ‘plan Américain’, and the ‘contre-plongée’, for example. As one teacher put it ‘they’re much more likely to want to talk about film than about their favourite animals or their bedrooms.’

The results of this relatively small research project are most encouraging. Overall, levels of attainment improved significantly over the year, although we are aware that we cannot claim that progress is entirely attributable to the impact to the films themselves. However, one set of overall test results show 12 out of 18 of a bottom set working at National Curriculum level 6, after a year in which they completed three film units. Perhaps more importantly in terms of encouraging positive attitudes to foreign language learning, when surveyed at the end of the year, learners indicated that they had enjoyed learning through films, and found them more ‘stimulating’, ‘interesting’ and ‘unusual’. A significant number felt that they were better at all skills and more confident in speaking. In fact test results showed most improvement in speaking. So far, data is not available across all schools relating to numbers continuing with French, and clearly a number of other factors influence such decisions. However, the teachers reported learners to be more positive towards and confident in French after the work with film. Teachers also said their learners are more engaged and excited, as film offers them some experiences that are parallel to their own lives. In the lessons we observed, learners were very keen to participate and express their views in French, perhaps because they had something that they really wanted to communicate with others. Some described the films as ‘weird’, and were at first quite challenged by some ‘wacky’ visual images and narratives, but these fuelled their curiosity and engagement. And let’s not forget the teachers themselves. They found they became more adventurous in their teaching, and were expecting more of their students. Their own practice became more creative and enjoyable and they were learning themselves, both in terms of developing their own pedagogical approaches and about film. The project has confirmed unreservedly our belief in the potential of film as a powerful medium for learning in the languages’ classroom and we hope to convince many more language teachers to take a risk and ‘have a go!’



## **Integrating Digital Movie Projects in ESL Grammar Classes**

**Derya Kulavuz Önal**

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## Integrating Digital Movie Projects in ESL Grammar Classes

*Derya Kulavuz Önal*

21st century learners learn with technology. They are “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001), for whom digital technology and social media are integral parts of their daily lives; they use this technology to receive and share all kinds of information. Therefore, it has become essential for teachers to provide students learning experiences by integrating technology into their teaching as well, and thus make classroom learning more natural, active, and meaningful for them. However, using technology just for the sake of technology does not help teachers or learners to understand the educational uses of digital technology (Koehler & Mishra, 2005). For this reason, teachers need to seek ways to integrate technology in pedagogically-sound ways that are appropriate to the content they are teaching, as well as think critically about the learning outcomes and objectives when designing technology-integrated tasks in their classroom.

Most of the digital technologies today are not necessarily produced for educational purposes. Because of this, teachers need to repurpose them for educational use in order to integrate technology into their teaching in pedagogically-sound ways (Mishra & Koehler, 2009). This requires an understanding of and critical thinking about the complex interactions between the technology chosen to be used, content to be taught, and pedagogical needs of students (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). As shown in Figure 1 below, while designing a technology-integrated task or project in our classrooms, we as teachers need to think at a complex level:

- What content to choose, and how to modify this content for students' learning needs (content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge)
- What technology we are familiar and comfortable with, what technology is best to use when we consider our students' learning needs, what technology is best for a particular content and how this content should be modified for different technology tools (technological knowledge, technological pedagogical knowledge, technological content knowledge)

- What technology is best to use for my objectives for a particular content and for my students' learning needs (technological pedagogical content knowledge)

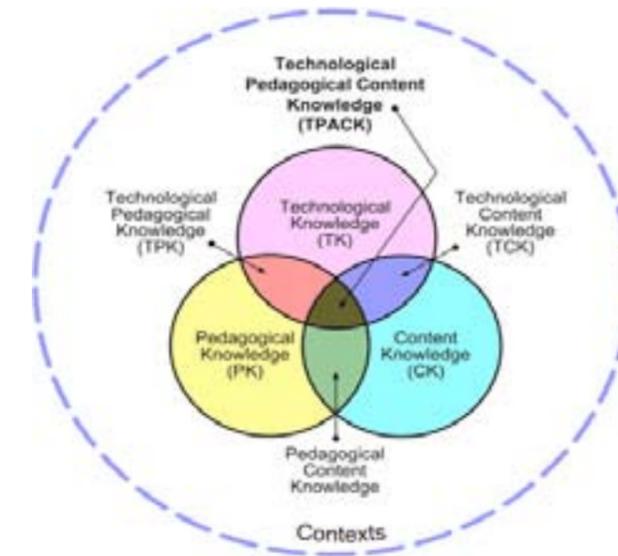


Figure 1. Mishra & Koehler's TPACK Model (Retrieved from [www.tpck.org](http://www.tpck.org) )

This framework was my point of departure when I implemented a digital movie project in my English as a Second Language (ESL) Grammar class in an Intensive English Program (IEP) in Spring 2008, where the curriculum followed a project-based learning approach. In this paper, I will share how this framework helped me organize and implement this project, how I implemented it, and what needs to be considered in the future.

### The Project Decision-making Process

**Contexts.** Following the principles of project-based learning (PBL), the curriculum in the IEP that I was teaching ([www.eli.usf.edu](http://www.eli.usf.edu)) required teachers to implement a comprehensive project in every class. Projects are considered to be “complex tasks that are based on challenging questions or problems; that involve students in design, problem-solving, decision-making, or investigative activities; that give students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time; and that culminate in realistic products or presentations” (Thomas, 2000, p. 1). Therefore, I wanted to challenge my students with a complex task where they make use of digital technologies, engage in decision-making and investigation, practice 21st century learning skills, and design and create a product over an extended period of time.

**Content.** The course was a focused grammar course in which we were following an English grammar textbook for intermediate learners. The course content included the following topics for the 14-week semester:

- Sentence types (simple, compound, and complex sentences)
- Subject-verb agreement
- Future tenses (including future perfect, future continuous, and future perfect continuous)
- Perfect tenses
- Modals
- Passive Voice
- Phrasal verbs
- Adjective Clauses

My students were supposed to be writing, revising their writing, giving an oral presentation, and apply grammatical knowledge through speaking and writing tasks (Table 1).

Table 1. Course description and goals determined by the program

Course Description	<i>This course focuses on producing complex grammatical forms in oral and written language, including the perfect tenses and the passive voice</i>
Strand Goals	<i>Students who take courses in the Grammar strand will: 1. increase grammatical knowledge through exercises and activities; 2. apply grammatical knowledge through speaking and writing tasks; and 3. improve ability to self-edit.</i>
Course Goals	<i>Students will complete the following tasks and projects for each unit: 1. complete the most communicative exercises in nine units 2. write two to three paragraphs for six of the nine units 3. revise the writing after receiving self-editing tips and feedback 3. give an oral presentation to a small group based on the revised writing</i>

Teaching a pure grammar class was challenging as most students think focusing mostly on grammar structures does not help them become better language users. Moreover, I wanted my students to show and use the grammar they learn in this class in an authentic and meaningful way.

**Pedagogy.** My students were intermediate level English learners from a variety of countries including Vietnam, Venezuela, Colombia, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. They were adult and young adult learners most of whom were learning English for academic and/or career purposes. This made

me think that it would be more beneficial for them if they left the class with a project that they could showcase in their future studies or career, or learn technology skills that might be useful for their future endeavors.

In addition, my students generally were interested in learning about different cultures and places in the world since they are from around the world.

### Technology

Our program had a computer lab equipped with enough computers for two classes at a time. Each computer had Windows operating system, headsets with microphones, and internet access. I was able to reserve the lab for 2 hours per week. I, myself, was familiar and comfortable with Web 2.0 technologies, video editing with Windows Movie Maker, and Microsoft applications. From my “bag of technology tools” I tried to choose the one not only appropriate for the content and the pedagogy but also manageable and teachable within the time given.

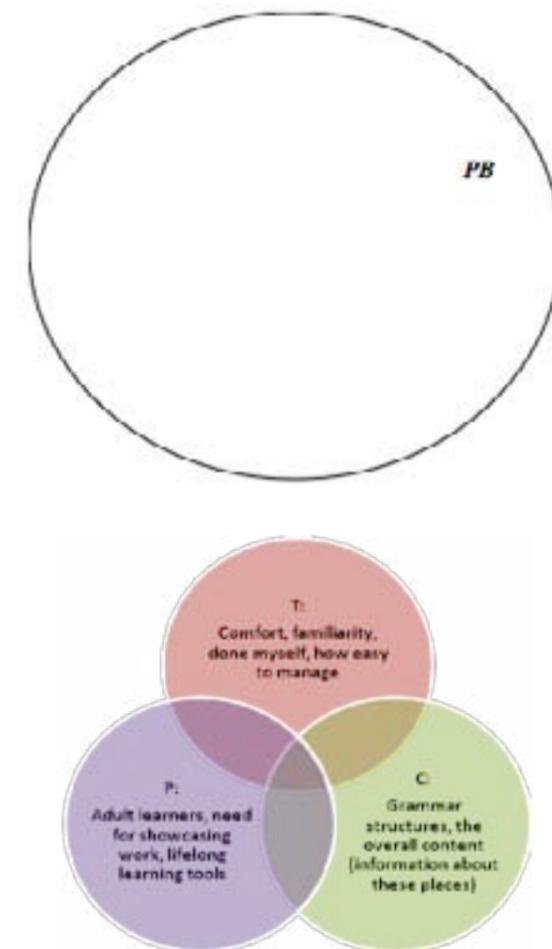


Figure 2. My decision-making process about contexts, content, pedagogy and technology

## Implementation

After considering all the items above, I decided that my students prepare a digital movie of a place in the world over 7 weeks. We named the project as “Top Places to Go before You Die!” and I decided to put all the final products in a blog for future access and sharing. During the 7-week process, we spent at least 2 hours each week in the computer lab.

Students first decided whether or not to work individually or with a partner, and which place to work on (see the detailed project handout at (<http://top-places.blogspot.com>)). The main criterion was to work on a place out of their hometowns so that they also learn about new places through this project. Then, they were supposed to search for information and images about this place, which also gave them an opportunity to practice their internet literacy. The project handout also guided them about what information to look for. They were then asked to create a script describing this place by using at least 1-2 examples of the grammar structures we had learned up to that point. The script also needed to have an introduction, body (main information about the place), and conclusion, and students were required to submit a first and an edited draft before they proceeded with the recording. Additionally, they made sure the images they chose and the order of them in the movie were in harmony with their script. During the initial weeks, we spent time in the computer lab learning how to use Movie Maker. They then narrated and recorded their scripts over the images to create a digital movie of the place of their choice, and added background music if they wished to do so. Finally, each student presented their videos in class during the final week. Later, we uploaded them to You Tube and embedded them to our blog.

## Assessment

When assessing this project, I did not consider the quality of the movies since this was not the objective; these students were not video editors or film makers. However, it was important to see that they had an audible voice, and that their pictures were in reasonable order and in harmony with the speech. However, other technical or technological skills were not assessed. In assessment, I paid more attention to the content of their script, and the use of grammar structures. Moreover, the students assessed each other’s movie in terms of overall attractiveness and effectiveness to create a desire in the audience to visit this place (see the project rubric at (<http://top-places.blogspot.com>)).

## Lessons Learned and Further Suggestions

Implementing digital movies in a class such as this one was rewarding. As expected, students with more interest in using digital technology, and with better time-management skills created better products. However, others also had a chance to practice these skills through this project. As a teacher, this project helped me better understand how technology should and can serve for content and learning objectives once the teacher thinks critically and deeply about the technology, pedagogy, content, and her teaching context. Furthermore, I would like to suggest a few more things to consider for those who wish to implement such a project in the future:

- Provide ample CLASS time: Students may be overloaded and burdened with the skills needed for a technology project. Although you give enough time for them to work on this project, it is necessary to allocate most of this time in class, so that you can help them with technology issues.
- Do one yourself before you ask them to do it! This has been my motto; do it yourself before you ask your students to do something. It is the best way in order to see what challenges are waiting for your students, and whether the allotted time for the project is reasonable or the project is manageable and doable. Additionally, it is necessary to prepare for questions and concerns during the project implementation phase, and what you create becomes a model for your students.
- Get familiar with the other versions or other available Web 2.0 tools for technology projects. When you start using a technology tool, it is necessary to be aware that students might have different versions of the same tool, or have different machines (PC vs. Mac), or simply do not have the software (e.g. video-editing software) in their computers. Therefore, teachers need to be prepared for these possibilities by making sure that they are familiar with different versions or available equivalents on the Internet.
- Let them see examples! Students learn from models. No matter how much detailed instruction you provide, every student will perceive them differently, or you cannot make sure that they understand something the way you want them to understand. Therefore, it is necessary to show them examples of end-products.
- Emphasize the difference between ‘presented’ vs. ‘read’: When narrating a digital movie, students work from a script. However, you need to make sure your students know the differences between genres. They should be aware that in this particular project, for example, their script and the way they narrate this script should sound as if they are presenting rather than reading from a paper.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to share my experiences of integrating digital movie projects in an ESL grammar class. I believe such a project not only provides a venue for students to use grammar structures in an authentic way by developing all four skills (writing, when writing their script; reading, when collecting information from the internet; speaking and pronunciation, when narrating their movie; listening, when listening to other movies, and their own voices during the narration process) but also can be implemented with learners at varying proficiency levels. However, teachers need to consider their content, learning objectives, student's learning needs, available technology tools, and the broader contexts before implementing technology-integrated projects in order to use technology as a learning tool.

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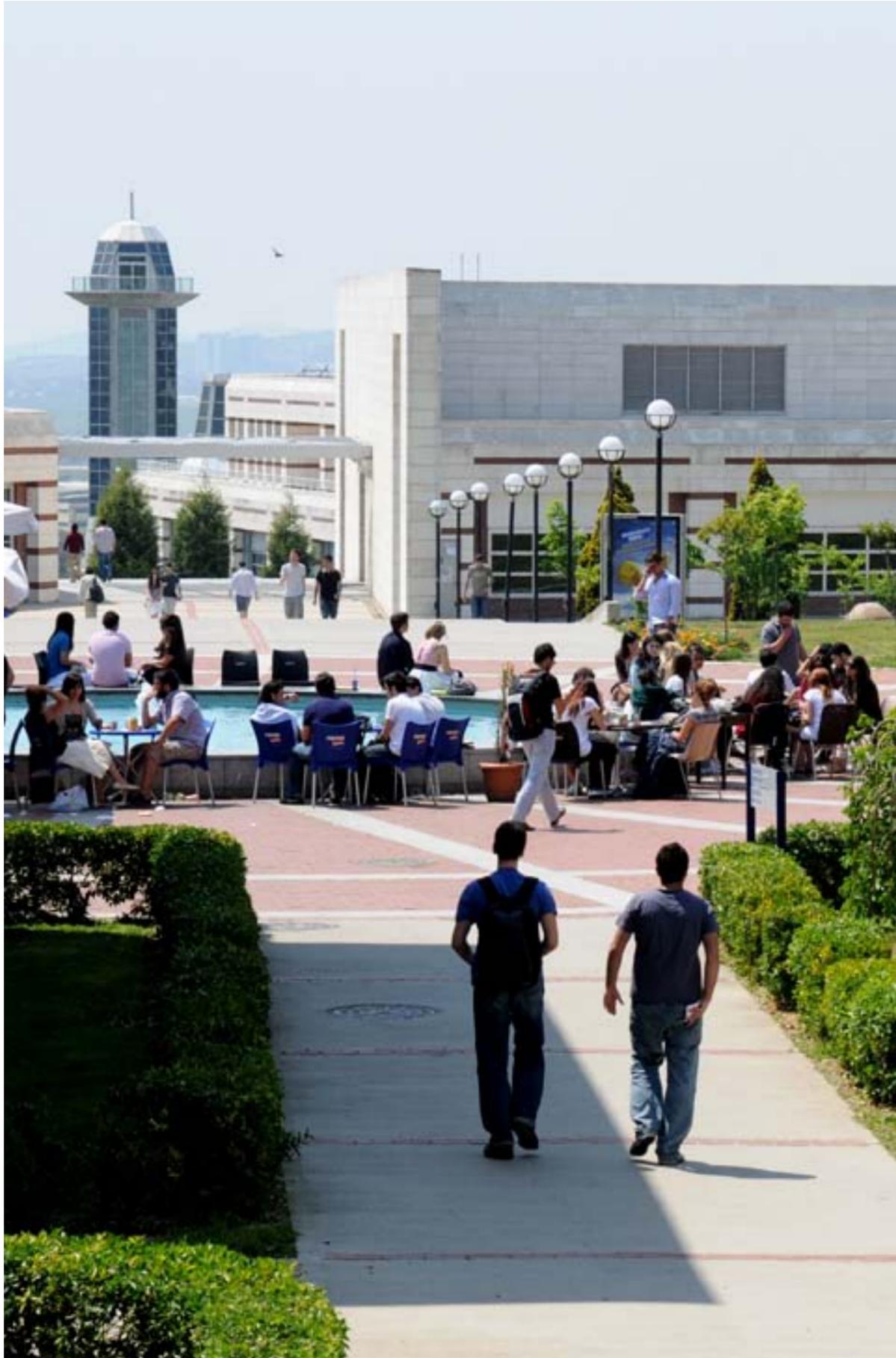
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## **Preparatory School EFL Students' Affective Profiles in Reading Skills**

**Şükran Saygı**

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## Preparatory School EFL Students' Affective Profiles in Reading Skills

Şükran Saygı

### 1. Background

Since it requires both more linguistic and cognitive processing than reading in the native language, reading in the target language is very challenging for language learners.

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) was conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 41 countries and Turkey in 2003: Turkey has the second lowest performance in all reading tests among the OECD countries (Cinoğlu, 2009). The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) provides information about the reading achievement of primary school students, concentrating on students in the fourth grade. In this study, Turkey's average was 449, which was significantly lower than the international average 500 (Akşit, 2007).

### 2. Purpose of the Study

Firstly, this study aims at defining the nature of motivation to read in Turkish (L1) and in English (L2). To do this, factors that comprise the EFL students' motivation to read were analyzed. Secondly, the relationship between the students' motivations to read together with their reading habits and their success in reading exams will be explored.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Questionnaire Population and Setting

The respondents for the questionnaire were foreign language students at Atılım University. Respondents were at two different instruction

levels, namely pre-intermediate (N = 172) and upper-intermediate (N=101).

### 3.2 Data Collection Instrument -The Questionnaire

The Reading Motivation in L1 and Reading Motivation in L2 Questionnaire consisted of 66 items (33 items in the L1 section and 33 items in the L2 section). The questionnaire was adapted from Wang & Guthrie's Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (2004) and Yamashita's (2007) reading attitude questionnaire.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Reading Motivation in L1 and L2 – A Factor Analysis

Table 1. Reading Motivation Factors – A Summary

Factor Extracted	Sample Item
Personal Reasons to Read	I have favorite subjects that I like to read about in English/Turkish.
Social Recognition	I feel happy when someone recognizes my reading ability in English/Turkish.
Anxiety	I feel anxious if I don't know all the words when I read something in English/Turkish.
Comfort	I don't mind even if I cannot understand the content entirely when I read something in English/Turkish.
Value	I can become more sophisticated if I read materials in English/Turkish.
Information	I can acquire broad knowledge if I read materials in English/Turkish.

### 4.2 Contribution of L1 Reading Motivation to L2 Reading Achievement (A Regression Analysis)

The period the students were exposed to the language accounted for 8.5 % of their reading achievement. After the addition of L1 reading motivation factors (reasons, recognition, value, comfort, anxiety and information), it was observed that none of the L1 reading motivation factors significantly predicted L2 reading achievement,  $R^2 = .096$ ,  $F(6, 265) = .508$ , ns.

Similar results were found in two different proficiency levels: none of the L1 reading motivation factors significantly predicted L2 reading achievement,  $R^2 = .035$ ,  $F(6, 164) = .337$ , ns (pre-intermediate); none of the L1 reading motivation factors significantly predicted L2 reading achievement,  $R^2 = .139$ ,  $F(6, 93) = .496$ , ns (upper-intermediate).

#### **4.3 Contribution of L2 Reading Motivation to L2 Reading Achievement (A Regression Analysis)**

It was observed that L2 reading motivation factors significantly predicted L2 reading achievement,  $R^2 = .166$ ,  $F(6, 265) = 4.291$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that the exposure period and L2 reading motivation factors significantly predicted 16.6 % of the reading grade. Of this variance, the exposure period accounted for 8.5 % of the variance while L2 reading motivation factors significantly explained 8.1 %.

**4.3.1. Pre-intermediate:** It was observed that L2 reading motivation factors significantly predicted L2 reading achievement,  $R^2 = .107$ ,  $F(6, 164) = 2.577$ ,  $p < .05$ . 10.7 % of reading achievement of the pre-intermediate students was significantly predicted by L2 reading motivation factors and the exposure period. L2 reading motivation factors were found to explain 8.4 % of the variance while the exposure period was found to explain 2.3 %.

**4.3.2. Upper-intermediate:** It was observed that none of L2 reading motivation factors significantly predicted L2 reading achievement,  $R^2 = .235$ ,  $F(6, 93) = .2492$ ,  $p < .05$ . This indicates that 23.5 % of the upper-intermediate level students' reading achievement was significantly predicted by L2 reading motivation factors and the exposure period. Of this variance, the exposure period accounted for 11.2 % of the variance, while L2 reading motivation factors significantly explained 12.3 %.

**4.3.3. Reading Habits and Behaviors in L2:** After the addition of L2 reading habits and behaviors (frequency, time, amount) it was observed that none of the independent variables significantly predicted L2 reading achievement,  $R^2 = .124$ ,  $F(3, 244) = 2.440$ , ns. However, the effect of L2 reading habits and behaviors of the students reached a marginally significant level;  $p = .065$ . 2.6 % of the total variance (12.4 %) was marginally significantly explained by the L2 reading habits and behavior factors. Among the independent variables time spent reading in English significantly predicted L2

reading achievement.

**4.3.4. Reading Text Preferences of the Students:** A positive significant correlation was observed between the students' reading achievement and their online text preferences such as online newspapers, games, the Internet, E-mails, electronic references ( $r = .17$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

## **5. Discussion**

**5.1 Motivation for Reading is Multi-dimensional:** In the current study, six different reading motivation factors were extracted from the questionnaire. This multidimensionality is in line with previous studies (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997; Yamashita, 2007; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Mori, 2002, Takase, 2007; Kim, 2010).

#### **5.2 Contribution of L1 Reading Motivation to L2 Reading Achievement:**

The interpretation of the relationship between L1 reading motivation and L2 reading achievement requires the discussion that reading is a language problem. In the current study, L2 reading scores of the students were not predicted by the students' motivations to read in Turkish or the materials they read in Turkish, instead their reading achievement depends on something else, and naturally it should be their English proficiency levels. This result, partially though, was expected in that the exposure period, as an indirect indicator, accounted for the reading achievement in L2, although the effect size was small.

#### **5.3 Contribution of L2 Reading Motivation to L2 Reading Achievement**

**5.3.1. Reading is a Language and a Reading Problem:** L1 and L2 reading are, naturally, different from one another. The difference is based on the limited exposure to L2 print, most of which comes from classroom practices. However, when reading in L2, readers are supported by a range of supporting resources unique to the L2 reading situation such as cognates, dictionaries, grammar textbooks, word glosses. These resources used to support L2 reading are not commonly used in L1 settings. The fact that L1 and L2 reading are different is clear, but how the L2 reading resources affect L2 reading development is less clear. When looking at the reading process from the language problem perspective, the role of grammar and vocabulary should be noted since reading enjoyment can come only when the reading is reasonably fluent and effortless. When students have difficulty in extracting print

information, they become increasingly frustrated (Koda, 2004 as cited in Strauss, 2008).

On the other hand, in the pre-intermediate level, the factor anxiety was found to be a significant predictor. Comfort is the significant predictor in the upper-intermediate level. These factors were closely associated with the proficiency levels of the students, and this suggests grammar and vocabulary knowledge of the students. To exemplify, the pre-intermediate level students' reading performances were affected by the anxiety they feel about the unknown vocabulary or the content of the material they read.

The small effect size of the L2 reading motivation constructs could also be attributed to the phenomenon reading is a reading comprehension problem. According to Coady (1979 as cited in Perkins et al., 1989) reading is an interactive complex of abilities and knowledge, some of which has a linguistic nature. He goes on to argue that students' store of textually relevant background knowledge and attained reading comprehension proficiency in L1 plays a crucial role in L2 reading. Another point he makes is that students have poor reading habits in their first language so the teachers have to teach reading skills which should have been learned in L1 instruction.

**5.3.2. Anxiety as a Factor in L2 Reading :** The current study revealed that pre-intermediate students' anxiety levels are a significant predictor of their reading comprehension. Saito et al. (1999) suggested that reading in a foreign language is anxiety provoking. In addition, foreign language reading anxiety is distinguishable from general foreign language anxiety. To clarify the reasons for the anxiety caused, unfamiliar words or grammar, and cultural topics were identified as aspects that provoke anxiety. Consistent with this, the items labeled as anxiety, suggested the same concepts: unfamiliar content and vocabulary.

**5.3.3. The Contribution of the Amount of Reading to L2 Achievement:** The contribution of time spent reading is significant for the upper-intermediate level students but not for pre-intermediate students. This indicates what the students learn during the period they are exposed to English could be transferred to higher proficiency levels. This again suggests that fluency in reading is a prerequisite for this type of transfer.

**5.3.4. The Contribution of Text Type Preferred to L2 Reading Achievement:** Regarding the relationship between students' text preferences and their reading achievement, it was observed that the preference for online texts such as online newspapers, texts on the Internet, computer games, e-mails, and electronic references significantly correlated with the reading grade.

Regarding the relationship between text type preferred and reading achievement, a small correlation was observed. This small correlation could be attributed to the fact that online reading is different from printed materials, and has yet to be researched thoroughly. Reading something online is more like "navigating" (Topping, 1997). Birkerts (1994 as cited in Liu, 2005) notes that the younger generation growing up in the digital environment lacks the ability to read deeply and to sustain a prolonged engagement in reading. The small correlation found between students' online reading materials could be attributed to the nature of hyper-reading in that it is plausible to expect that the students' gains from the online materials take time to transfer to classroom practices and exams.

## 6. Pedagogical Implications

As the results of the current study indicated, the curriculum and the reading syllabus do not include motivational components. At least, the motivational components of the course book, which constitutes the reading syllabus, are based on hidden assumptions. Since the teachers do not get support in this regard, curricular changes should be made to ease the burden on the teachers' shoulders and help them to uncover these assumptions.

Another result that calls for implementation in class is the use of technology in reading lessons. The current study revealed that students' interaction with online texts have a statistically significant effect on their reading grades. Considering this, some laboratory hours could be organized in which the students have the opportunity to read online, search on the Internet and report what they have learned in written or spoken form.

Similarly, the study revealed that the more time the students spend reading, the better grades they get. In line with Taylor et al. (1990), more time should be spared for the students so that they are exposed to the language under the supervision of the teacher.

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## Researching Culture in Turkish ELT Textbooks

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## Researching Culture in Turkish ELT Textbooks

*Alena Iriskulova*

The present article describes a study in the framework of a Master's Thesis which is being carried out by the author. All the presented results are preliminary. There are no final results and final conclusions made. All the information given in the conclusion part is based on the preliminary data obtained and analyzed.

The investigation of the integration of cultural elements into foreign language education can be traced back to the 1950s. Many research studies concerning this issue have been carried out since then. However, there are still controversial issues to consider. One of the moot points here is what place is given to students' native cultures, and how important these cultures are. The investigations conducted in many countries show that there were different tendencies towards the use of native and target cultures. In some cases target culture could be totally neglected due to political and economic reasons, for others it could be the opposite situation: the whole emphasis could be put on the target culture whereas the local cultural background of students remains outside of the classroom.

There have been investigations carried out on the topic of cultural elements in ELT in Turkey (See Çakit, 2006; Önalın, 2004; Gülcü, 2010), but still little attention has been paid to the cultural content of the ELT textbooks published in Turkey, and no investigations have examined the cultural content of the reading passages and dialogue texts of the textbooks. Furthermore, almost no attention has been given to the teachers' perceptions of the cultural load of the textbooks they use. Teachers are the 'messengers' of both language and culture and it is of no small importance to know what these messengers think about the issues they convey and about the materials they use in their lessons. In order to gain a complete picture about the place of culture in the ELT textbooks published in Turkey, it is necessary to take into account not only the teacher's perceptions, but also the perceptions of the students who are exposed to the textbooks.

Therefore, the main purpose of the study presented in this article is (1) to find out what teachers' perceptions of the cultural load in the ELT textbooks published in Turkey are; (2) to investigate what the perceptions of students,

who are being taught using these textbooks, are concerning the cultural load in the ELT textbooks published in Turkey; and (3) to examine the textbooks for 8<sup>th</sup> grade, published in Turkey, for the presence of cultural load. The present investigation, however, concentrates on quite a narrow area, not on the presence of culture in ELT textbooks in general, but on the reading passages of the textbooks. This is due to the assumption that a reading passages and dialogue texts contain a richer cultural load in comparison with other textbook items. Furthermore, cultural elements may be presented explicitly, and thus it can be easier to analyze their presence.

Based on the aims mentioned above, the following research questions are to be investigated in the present study:

- What is the percentage of using Turkish culture related words in comparison to the usage of target culture-related and international (other foreign) cultures-related words in text passages of the ELT textbooks for 8th grade published in Turkey?
- What is the frequency of usage of elements related to native (C1), target (C2), international<sup>1\*</sup> (C3) cultures or culture-neutral (CNEUT) elements in the reading passages?
- What types of culture-related items are more frequently used (names, geographical items, food items, referents to art, music and literature, references to famous people, references to traditions, and to the behavior of people)?
- How much are the reading passages and dialogues loaded with C1, C2, and C3?
- What aspects of native, target, and international cultures are represented in the reading passages and dialogues of the ELT textbooks for 8th grade published in Turkey?
- Do the reading passages and dialogues reflect the list of criteria developed by the researcher to analyze 8th grade textbooks?
- What are teachers' perceptions of the ELT textbooks published in Turkey in terms of cultural load?
- How useful and do teachers consider C1, C2, and C3 to be present in the reading passages and dialogues?
- Do teachers consider the textbooks they use in their lessons to have sufficient and appropriate cultural load?
- What are students' perceptions of the ELT textbooks published in Turkey in terms of cultural load?

## Methodology

**Subjects.** A pre-established amount of 30 teachers are supposed to be asked to participate in the present study. All teachers in this group are working in state schools in Ankara, teaching English to 8<sup>th</sup> graders and using a textbook published in Turkey. The ten interviewees chosen are volunteers from this group. Each teacher is asked to distribute a short questionnaire to his/her students which will amount to a minimum of 60 student participants.

**Materials.** Two textbooks for 8<sup>th</sup> grade – Spot On 8 and Let's Speak English 8 – are to be analyzed. The books are approved by the Turkish Ministry of Education, published locally and used at state schools in Ankara. Due to the aims of the study, not a whole textbook, but the reading passages and dialogues of it are to be investigated in terms of cultural load.

**Data collection procedures.** Six data collection procedures are chosen based on the goals and the research questions of the study.

- In order to answer the research question concerning the percentage of word usage related to students' native culture in comparison to the usage of target and international cultures and culture-neutral words in text passages, content analysis will be used.
- The second research question stated in the present study refers to the way native (C1), target (C2), and international (C3) cultures are represented in the text passages of the ELT textbook published in Turkey. The checklist is to be used by the author of the present research and two independent assistants in order to obtain an objective view of the books. For that a list of criteria has been developed to assess the integration of cultural elements into reading passages and dialogue texts.
- For the deeper analysis of the teachers' perceptions there is a detailed teacher questionnaire developed. It is to be distributed among the teachers either personally or via e-mail.
- Another questionnaire is to be used for the students in order to define their perceptions of the ELT textbooks published in Turkey in terms of cultural load.
- In order to obtain more reliable data, apart from questionnaires a semi-structured interview is to be implemented. This is due to the fact that interviews allow the researcher to go into much deeper detail than a questionnaire does.

**Data analysis procedures.** The preliminary data gathered via the selected data collection tools and the final data, which will be obtained later, are both quantitative and qualitative, and they should be analyzed in different ways. The qualitative data are obtained from open-ended questions of the questionnaires, and the interviews; they are to be transcribed and the content-analyzed.

Quantitative data are to be gathered using the Likert scale and yes/no items of the questionnaires as well as from the item frequency analysis technique application. The PASW program will be used for calculating the frequencies of the predetermined choices in order to see teachers' and students' preferences, the mean and the standard deviation of each item are to be calculated; and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to be computed in order to define the internal consistency of the questionnaire.

### Preliminary results

There are preliminary results obtained in terms of the cultural load of textbooks, teachers' and students' perceptions.

**Cultural load.** It is estimated that there are certain cultural elements prevailing in the reading passages and dialogues of the textbooks. In the "Names" category the target culture names had the greatest weight in both reading passages and dialogues. Food items appeared to be culture-neutral. There were native and target culture-related geographical references found with the target culture prevailing. Not many references to famous people were found, and the amount of native and target culture-related items was equal. There appeared to be a similar situation with the "Traditions" category. The rare elements belong either to the local or to the target culture.

**Teachers' perceptions.** The responses towards cultural presence in ELT textbooks appeared to be more than positive. All the teachers agreed on the point that target and native cultures should be included in the reading passages of textbooks. There were, however, some discrepancies on the point of other world cultures, 17% of teachers considered other cultures to be of no importance in the textbook materials.

It has to be noted, though, that the present results cannot be considered as totally reliable, since not all the teachers have been involved yet, and therefore, the data cannot be considered as complete.

**Students' perceptions.** According to the preliminary results, students appeared to be not totally satisfied with the ELT textbooks they are using in their lessons. In the following chart, the level of students' satisfaction is presented.

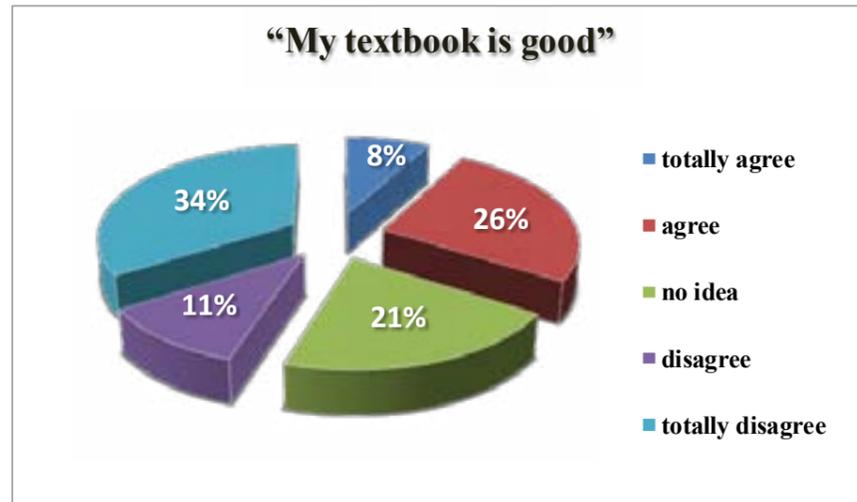


Image 1. Level of students' satisfaction with their textbook Spot On 8

As for students' attitudes towards various cultures, the overall picture shows that students place their native culture as the most important one, with other cultures following. The image below shows the students' perceptions of local, target (British and American), and other world cultures.

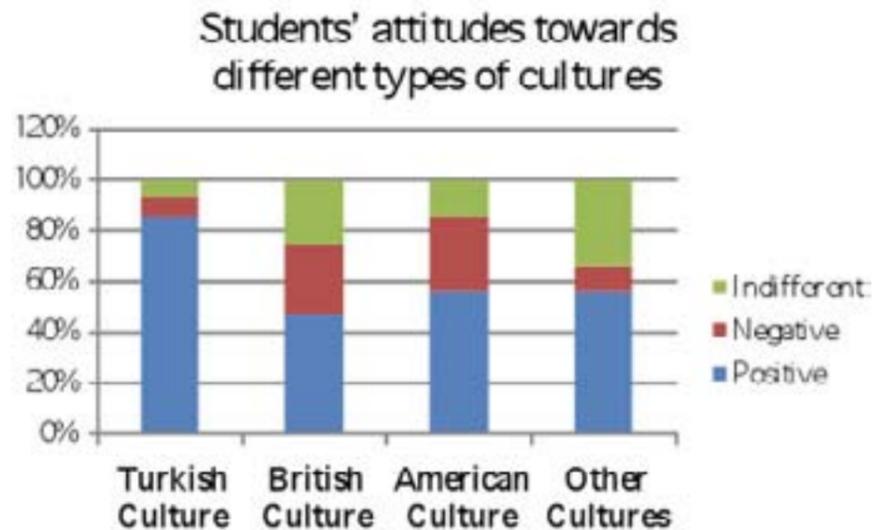


Image 2. Students' attitudes towards various cultures

Surprisingly, there was a wave of hostility found in the students' attitudes towards the textbooks' main characters. The following opinions were obtained from the application of the student questionnaire:

*Ders kitabımdaki okuma parçaları içinde Türk kültürü olmalı çünkü.. (Reading texts in my textbook should have references to Turkish culture because...)*

- “Ders kitaplarımız İngilizce olsa bile diyaloglarda Tessa ve Trevor yerine Türk karakterler olması daha iyi olmalı”.(If there were Turkish characters instead of English Tessa and Trevor, it would be better)
- “Tessa ve Trevor’dan sıkılık. Onları sevmiyoruz”. (We are tired of Tessa and Trevor. We don’t like them.)
- “Tessa ve Trevor’ı sevmiyoruz”.(We don’t like Tessa and Trevor)
- “Tessa ve Trevor’dan bıktım. Türk Kültürümüz gerektir”.( We are tired of Tessa and Trevor. We need our Turkish culture.)
- “Türk kültürü ilgimi çekiyor ve birçok geleneklerimiz var. Tessa ve Trevor artık ölsün”! (Turkish culture is interesting for me and there are some traditions. Let Tessa and Trevor die!)<sup>2</sup>

## Conclusion

There are both positive and negative findings obtained from the preliminary data sets. From one angle there is a general positive attitude of both teachers and students towards various cultures. However, from another, the level of students' satisfaction with their textbook, and the range of cultural elements in the textbook do not match the expectations of students and teachers. Upon the completion of the present research and the final data analysis it will become possible to judge the situation with textbooks and their cultural load. At the present stage we can see that there are some minor problems with the situation, and these problems should be evaluated and solved before they become a serious educational disaster.

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## Teaching Techniques

### Işıl Kuntsal

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## Teaching Techniques

### *Işıl Kuntsal*

Every good dish needs a unique mixture of spices just like every person needs unique learning styles. This is just like each student has their own characteristics; each person has a different learning style which can transform language learning into a joyful experience.

The variety of intelligences which Howard Gardner brings forth such as spatial intelligence, logical intelligence, linguistic and verbal intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, musical intelligence and body/movement intelligence can all appear in the classroom, especially when learning a foreign language.

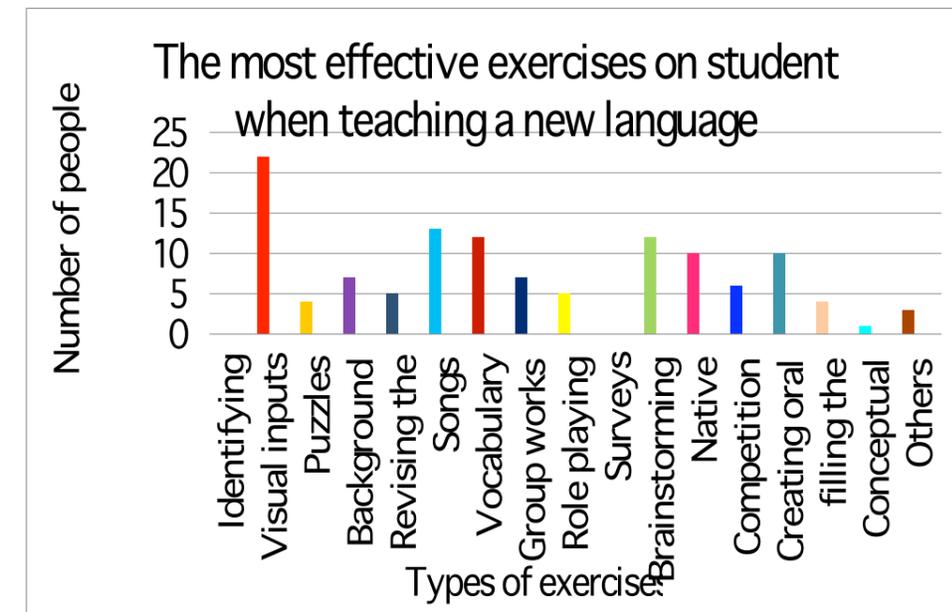
To better understand these intelligences, I have conducted a survey with 25 students who have been through a year of English language preparation courses at Sabancı University School of Languages. In the survey students were provided with sixteen language teaching techniques, including an option for any “other” technique, options and were asked to tick those they had experienced when learning English in their preparatory year.

The techniques provided were:

- Associating topics with certain colors or food
- Visual inputs e.g. Videos
- Maps
- Puzzles
- Background information about topics
- Revising the previous lesson
- Songs
- Vocabulary exercises e.g. Flash cards
- Group works
- Role playing
- Surveys
- Brainstorming
- Native speakers

- Competition games
- Creating oral stories
- Filling the blanks exercises
- Conceptual objects e.g. Ancient objects.

The results of the survey were interesting to me.



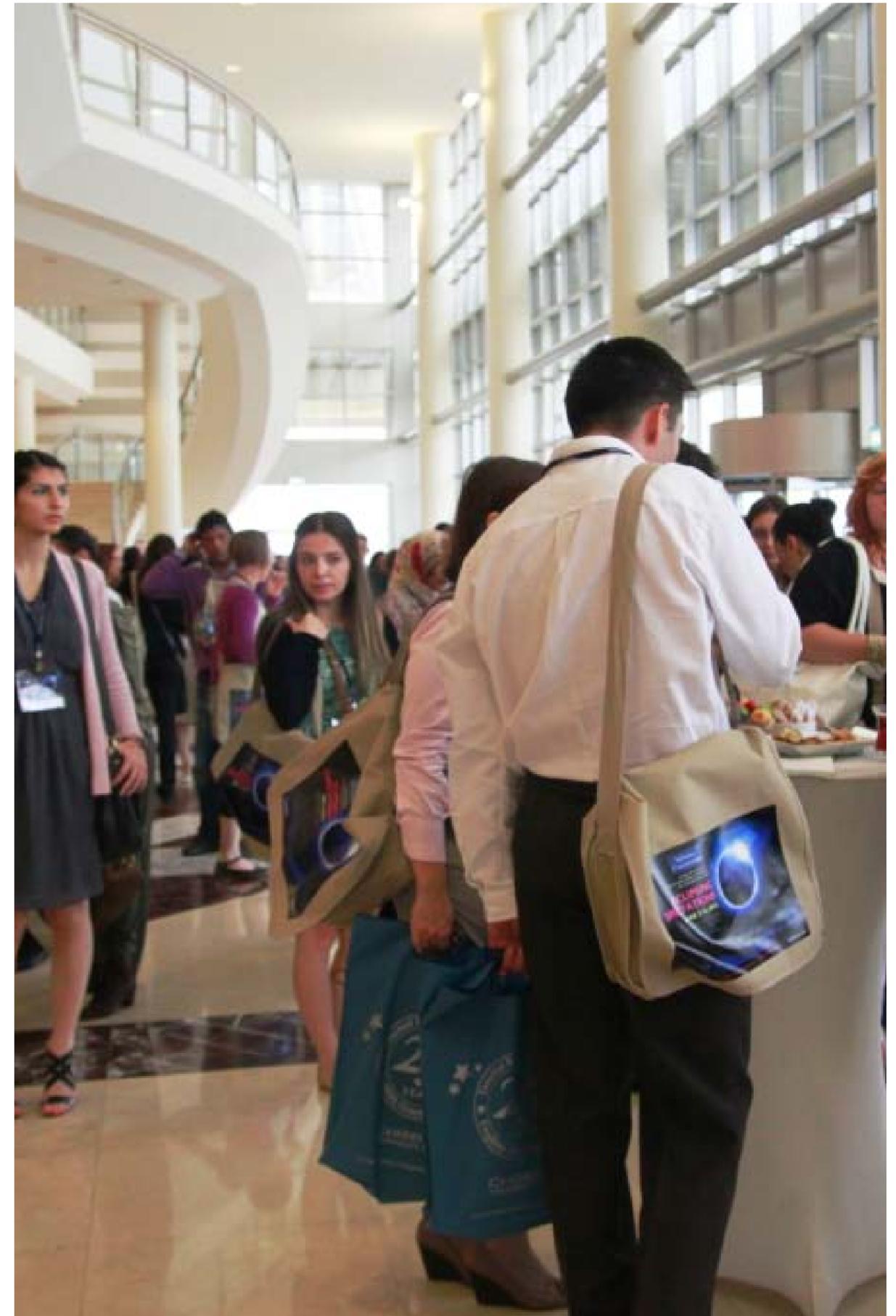
I expected students to generally agree on specific techniques, however it turned out that the preference of techniques used in learning a foreign language varies from student to student. For instance, visual input was the most frequent chosen teaching technique which was effective, however, there were students who said that they learn better by brainstorming, using songs or doing vocabulary exercises. This made me reflect on my own learning style and the techniques I prefer the instructor uses.

When I went through that one year English preparation class in the School of Languages I personally liked it when we made use of songs and visual input. Also the presence of native speakers and being encouraged to do group work were some factors that I found useful when learning English. Especially songs were effective because I felt that they somehow helped me to learn the pronunciation of individual words; they also were a great help in trying to remember vocabulary. If we consider that listening to music is a part of a student's life, it is just natural that using music in especially the foreign language classroom will be successful both for the student and the instructor. Another way that was of great use to me was when learning English with the use of visual input. It was much easier to recognize or remember vocabulary when we saw something that we could associate it with.

The other two influential factors like the presence of native English speakers and the encouragement to work in groups was especially effective for students like me because I learn better when I am given the opportunity to interact with people just like in real life. On one occasion our instructor brought in students from Pakistan who we naturally wanted to get to know and interact with as we had never met anyone from Pakistan before. They were excited just as we were which was good to see because it was real. Our teacher put us into various groups and gave each group a different topic to work on with our “visitors”. For instance one group’s aim was to talk about the food culture of both Turkey and Pakistan; the other was to exchange information about marriage ceremonies in each country and so on. In that way, we all learned something new and shared something about our own culture. It was an interesting experience. However, in doing all these activities we realized that we needed to make use of English in a meaningful and interesting way.

In conclusion, every individual has a different learning style which is great in creating diversity in the classroom and opportunities for us as students to learn from each other. However, on the other side it poses a difficulty for the instructor who has to cater for many learning styles at the same time. So, when creating lessons throughout the year multiple intelligences have to be considered and a variety of activities have to be used by which more students can become active in class and thus have more of an understanding of the lesson. In addition this variety of activities would also enable students to find their own way of studying when working independently outside class as they would consciously become aware of their learning style.

After all let us not forget that the clue for a good dish is in the right mixture of spices just like the clue for a good lesson is in the right mixture of activities that cater for the variety of intelligences in students.





## Noticing critical incidents and learning to reflect critically

**Nur Kurtoğlu-Hooton**

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## Noticing critical incidents and learning to reflect critically

*Nur Kurtoglu-Hooton*

**“Incidents happen, but critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation.”** (Tripp, 1993:8)

This quote from Tripp (1993) summarises well the fact that it is how we ourselves render an incident critical that makes that incident a critical incident (see also Halquist and Musanti, 2010: 453).

Many definitions of ‘critical incident’ exist in the literature. To take but a few, Brookfield (1995) provides a broad definition emphasizing that a critical incident is any event considered to be significant or memorable. For Schön (1987: 5-6) a critical incident is “a problematic situation that presents itself as a unique case and promotes reflection”. The starting point therefore is a problem. Sikes et al. (1985:432) have a more specific definition, one in which they also focus on possible outcomes: “a highly charged moment or episode that has enormous consequences for personal change and development”. I wish to exemplify critical incidents using two examples - one that involves a personal experience and another that relates to my teaching context.

I would like to start with an anecdote. My 11-year-old son, Cameron, plays the tenor horn. He has been playing it for six years within various school orchestras and brass ensembles outside school time. For the last three years or so he has, on occasions, expressed his strong desire to give up playing altogether much to the dismay of my husband and myself. The progression Cameron had shown in his music and his obvious talent had been sufficient for us to turn a blind eye to his wish all those years. Little did we know that his frustrations would culminate into “a highly charged moment” (Sikes et al. 1985) one day. That moment came a few months ago when Cameron handed over a handwritten letter for us to read:

*This letter is about why I feel that I don't want to play the tenor horn:*

- I can't play it properly when I don't want to do it
- I am forced by the school to play in time wasting bands / Ensembles
- I am not enjoying it and I will never enjoy it
- It's becoming a torture
- I feel that it is my choice because I am playing it and you're “enjoying” it while I am being tortured

*not kind regards*

*Cameron*

*What's your Answer?*

- Let me decide
- Torture me and not let me decide

I soon realized that the highly charged moment that was triggered with the letter above, together with “the invitation” to tick a box, constituted a critical incident for me. I needed to reflect upon it to understand my son's perspective.

How does one reflect? How did I reflect? Initially I may have reflected in a haphazard way, but I found myself constantly asking myself questions such as What was it that triggered Cameron to write that letter? Did we as his parents really force him to play music? Were we asking him to do something we ourselves hadn't been able to do when we were his age? Would he not miss his music if he were to quit? - and many more questions as can be imagined. The questions encouraged me to reflect in a more systematic manner.

While the critical incident was initially a problematic situation leading to a highly charged moment, it was soon to be superseded by a somewhat more positive outcome. A long and amicable chat with Cameron helped establish his need to “own” his music rather than be told what to do and when. He has a music diary in which he needs to note down how much practice he has done every day. When his decision to have some nights off from music practice was agreed as a family, it became apparent to me that our son was actually enjoying his music. I had experienced what I have elsewhere called ‘divergent change’ (Kurtoglu-Hooton, 2008; 2010); a kind of change (and growth) that

is open-ended and a kind of growth that motivated me to explore alternative ways of helping my son pursue his music. The episode itself had triggered a new perspective more aligned and more in tune with my son's expectations. Listening to him actively, and talking with (instead of talking to or talking at him - Humphreys, 2011) had undoubtedly made a huge difference. When Cameron gave me permission to use his letter in my conference paper at the Eclipsing Expectations Conference I knew then that the "incident" had had enormous consequences not just for me but for him, too. He is happy playing his tenor horn on days of his choice and is looking forward to going to another brass band (higher in level) after his successful audition.

The above critical incident was analysed with my role as a mother. I will now analyse another critical incident – this time in my role as a teacher educator. Some of my teaching involves working with student teachers who undertake supervised teaching practice as part of teacher education courses. I find it useful to ask the student teachers to reflect on the feedback they receive on their teaching practice (i.e. the post-observation feedback). A research study I carried out with some teachers has shown that using a task such as the one I outline here proves to be a useful tool for instigating reflection:

### **Learning from Teaching Practice feedback**

#### **Listen to the audio-recording of your group's feedback session, and complete the following tasks:**

- Choose an extract of about 1-2 minutes (from the tape) that you find particularly interesting in some way.
- Transcribe the extract.
- Comment on it briefly, explaining why you have chosen this particular extract and why it may be significant for you.

A task such as this one encourages student teachers to reflect in a systematic manner. Gary, one of the teachers, had identified a segment where the tutor (in this case myself) was praising all the three teachers in the group for having established good rapport with their learners and for the way they had involved them in the lesson. In reflecting on the segment he had transcribed, Gary had written:

*I found this segment of the teaching practice feedback to be particularly significant and interesting firstly because it affirmed that we as trainee teachers were doing a good job and that we had the respect of the learners. There is a lot of encouragement given in this extract, and this is a feature of the rest of the session, too. It is this kind of positive comment that really helps to maintain morale on what is a very demanding training course.*

The vulnerability of student teachers (Bullough Jr. et al., 1991; Copland, 2008) is a well-known phenomenon. The focus in Gary's comments above is on the significance of tutor encouragement and a positive learning environment in terms of maintaining student morale on a demanding course such as the teacher education course he was attending.

In the extract Gary had selected and transcribed there was also some tutor input on how a teacher could also try to use the traits of 'the teacher as an enabler' (see Scrivener, 1996) whatever language level the learners are at. In reflecting on this issue Gary had written:

*[..] this segment was of interest to me because it pointed to a major area where I can improve my teaching performance. The idea of assuming an enabler role with an intermediate level class did not seem appropriate to me, but it is certainly something I will seriously consider as a result of this feedback.*

*I have learned that getting the students actively involved with the learning experience is a vital part of any lesson. Not only does this make the lesson more interesting and fun for the students, but it shows that as a teacher you trust them to perform and deduce the rules of English for themselves. Furthermore, this approach creates a classroom environment that is much more conducive to learning than one where the teacher is standing at the front of the class and delivering a traditional 'lecture' because learners need to practice using language for themselves to gain confidence and fluency.*

In the comments above Gary is juxtaposing the tutor's comment against his own beliefs about whether it would be appropriate to be an enabler in a class of intermediate learners. His willingness to consider questioning his beliefs is in line with Burns' (2005) belief that change involves the challenging and questioning of one's beliefs. In the final paragraph Gary voices what he believes he has learnt and shows an awareness that teaching a language class and giving a lecture require two very different teaching styles.

The brief analysis above shows how student teachers can be encouraged to reflect in a systematic manner – a structured task such as the one discussed above provides the medium for critical incident analysis.

Whether I am teaching language learners, or language teachers (experienced as well as those with little or no experience), I have found it useful to make them aware of the levels of reflection listed below. As one moves up from

Level 1 towards Level 5 the level of reflection gets deeper. Thus while Level 1 is quite narrative and descriptive, Level 3, for example, encourages the person to consider the event or episode in the light of past experiences thereby requiring a deeper reflection level:

*Level 1 - reporting the event as it occurred;*

*Level 2 - responding to the event in a spontaneous and emotional manner;*

*Level 3 - relating to the event in terms of past experience and knowledge;*

*Level 4 - reasoning about the event in terms of alternatives;*

*Level 5 - reconstructing the event in terms of theories that can be applied to a broader range of experiences.*

Bain et al. (1999)

In this essay I have demonstrated that one way in which we can instigate reflection is using critical incident analysis. Although I have used this term throughout the essay I need to point out that the word “incident” has negative connotations for me. Using Tony Humphreys’ (personal communication) play on words the word seems to present itself as: In – see – I – dent (i.e. in it I see a dent).

Therefore, instead of the term critical (vital) incidents, in my talk I proposed to use a term such as curiosity-instigated episodes - a term I feel more comfortable with, for curiosity can be triggered by something that is negative or positive and is therefore more neutral as a term.

Curiosity is a trigger for learning and it is up to the individual to render any episodes critical. As Dewey (1933) stated “we do not learn from experience but from reflecting on experience”, and as Larrivee (2000:306) maintained, “... the more teachers explore, the more they discover. The more they question, the more they access new realms of possibility.” These apply not only for teachers but also for language learners and in fact any individual who is willing to learn.

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## Magical Metaphors

**Petra Grgičević Bakarić**  
**Edita Šalov**

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## Magical Metaphors

**Petra Grgičević Bakarić**  
**Edita Šalov**

### Abstract

As metaphors are being “revealed” as an inexhaustible well of indicators of cognitive processes and, thus linguistic and cultural particularities, they serve as an excellent example of the necessity for raising cross-cultural and linguistic awareness in ELT. Therefore, their magic will be unravelled through the comparison of a number of English and Croatian metaphors and related classroom activities.

### 1. Introduction: creativity as a must in the 21st century teaching environment

All teachers are familiar with the concept of creativity: planning a lesson is a creative act. It seems rather hard nowadays to motivate generations of students to become more involved in creative learning, since technological gadgets provide hours of fun. Yet, a variety of carefully selected materials, not necessarily found in the sanitized world of text books, are sure to grab their attention and reveal the pleasure of learning. There are many reasons why creativity in the language classroom is worth both students and teachers' effort:

- Creative environment promotes learning – people cannot learn effectively if they are not allowed to be creative: the so-called end-in-itself activities are definite to produce resistance on students' part, since they cannot see the point in doing them.
- Creative work paves the way for genuine communication – while doing creative tasks students use the language in its original form, which prepares them for using language outside the classroom.
- Creativity improves self-esteem – by using a variety of compensation strategies to make up for the lack of language in a communicative situation, students find their own solutions to linguistic problems, which boosts self-esteem and, consequently, motivation.

- Creative tasks bring a breath of fresh air into language classrooms – creative tasks make classroom work a more varied and enjoyable experience for both teachers and students.

### 2. The role of figurative language in ELT

#### 2.1 Metaphor in theory

In classical rhetoric, the term metaphor comes from the Greek meta, which means change and pherein, which means to carry. Therefore, a metaphor involves a carrying across of meaning between two apparently dissimilar objects. By saying that your love is a red rose, you transfer some qualities of a rose to your feelings of love to create a vivid picture in the mind.

In recent years the study of metaphor has extended to linguistics and cognitive psychology. Lakoff and Johnson's seminal work, *Metaphors we live by* (1980), revolutionized the view of metaphors. In their view metaphors are linguistic reflections of our own conceptions of the world. Since there are so many important concepts in our life, such as emotions and time, that are either abstract or not clearly delineated in our experience, we try to understand them by means of other more concrete concepts. For example, the metaphorical concept or conceptual metaphor Time is money reflects the view of the concept of time typical for modern Western culture. Time in our culture, just like money, is a valuable commodity: we both understand and experience time as something that can be spent, spared, wasted and saved. This particular concept gave birth to many metaphorical expressions, such as He's running out of time; The flat tire cost me an hour, etc.

The understanding of abstract concepts takes place within domains of basic human experience, which is a product of our bodies, our interactions with both our physical environment and other people within our culture.

Basic kinds of experience are products of human nature: some are universal and some vary from culture to culture.

#### 2.2. Why teach metaphorical language?

The reasons for introducing metaphorical language in ELT are, as follows:

- It is an effective way of expanding students' vocabulary: Once students learn the literal meaning of words, they can extend their vocabulary by using these words figuratively (e.g. to give birth, to get marching orders).

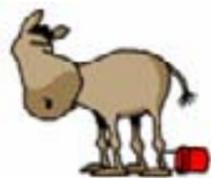
- It provides a clever strategy for organising new vocabulary to be learnt: by creating metaphorical sets, teachers can help students to organize and remember new words.
- It is a window into different cultures: values and assumptions of a certain culture are reflected in the language. Raising cultural awareness plays an important role in the process of foreign language acquisition.

### 2.3. Cultural Variation in Metaphor

There appear to be two large categories of causes that bring about the cultural variation. One is the broader cultural context and the other is the natural and physical environment in which a culture is located.

#### 2.4.1. The Traditional View of Idioms

Idioms are assumed to be a matter of lexicon that is independent of any conceptual system. The core conception of idioms can be represented in the following figure:



*Special idiomatic meaning: 'die'*

*The meanings of the linguistic forms: 'kick' 'the' 'bucket'*

*Linguistic forms and their syntactic properties: kick the bucket*

*(no passive, etc.)*

#### 2.4.2. The Cognitive Linguistic View of Idioms

In the following examples we will find many idioms related to the concept of fire, such as spark off, snuff out, burn the candle at both ends, etc. that do not contain the word itself. These suggest that it is the concept of fire, and not the individual words themselves that participate in the process of creating idiomatic expressions. An idiom is not just an expression that has a meaning that is somehow special in relation to the meanings of its constituting parts, but it arises from our more general knowledge of the world embodied in our conceptual system.

#### 2.4.3. Idioms Based on Metaphor, Conventional Knowledge and Metonymy

A conceptual metaphor is not the only cognitive mechanism that can motivate idioms. To see how two further mechanisms-conceptual metonymy and conventional knowledge- are also involved in this process,

we should turn to another conceptual domain: that of the human hand. For instance, the idiom hold one's hand means wait and see. This particular meaning arises in a large measure as a result of the metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR ACTIVITY. But we also appear to have further conventional knowledge associated with holding one's hand. When we hold our hands (i.e., when we arrest the movement of the hand), we have temporarily stopped an activity. We wait to see whether to continue or how to continue the activity that we are engaged in.

#### 2.5. Most Recent Pedagogical Applications of Metaphor Theory in ELT

If we raise students' awareness of metaphor, we can accelerate their vocabulary uptake. To do so, time and effort need to be invested in (a) drawing students' attention to lexical items and (b) stimulating storage of those items in long-term memory. Elaboration is an umbrella term for a range of mental operations that a learner might perform in connection with a lexical term. It includes the (1) association of the item with a particular context, (2) connecting it with already known L2 items belonging to the same lexical field, (3) comparing it with items in the mother tongue that happen to be similar in form or meaning, (4) associating it with a mental picture and so on.

The last stage of elaboration has become known in memory modelling as dual coding, where the mental picture serves as a pathway for remembering the lexical item. For example, telling students that the expression, show someone the ropes, goes back to the scene of an experienced sailor showing a novice around a ship, becomes useful because it is likely to call up in the student's mind a mental picture of that concrete scene.

### 3. Teaching Activities Involving Idiomatic Expressions

In this chapter we will try to show how Croatian students can breeze through their English vocabulary uptake. The expressions in question will be idioms related to weather and colours, since their appearance is nearly universal in all languages. We will come across various differences in their range, elaboration and emphasis on either their inherent metaphor or metonymy. We will also make an attempt at comparing the above mentioned idioms in English and Croatian by placing emphasis on the importance of their elaboration i.e. dual coding and raising students' cultural awareness regarding these two languages and cultures.

### 3.1. Weather Idioms

1 Students are asked to look at the common weather symbols and then answer the questions.



Which of the symbols describes?

- a a brief period when it rains? \_\_\_\_\_
- b a fall of hard, frozen raindrops? \_\_\_\_\_ etc.

2a Students are asked to read the headline from a newspaper article and to make a prediction of what the article is about.

2b Then students read the related article to see if their prediction was correct or not. Then they are required to underline the words connected with the weather and are encouraged to guess the metaphorical meanings.

3a Afterwards they are asked to complete the following definitions of the phrases in a)-e) with one word.

- i **to be snowed under:** to have too much to do and not enough \_\_\_\_\_ to do it
- ii **to cast a cloud over something:** to make people feel less optimistic or \_\_\_\_\_ about a situation etc.

3b After the phases (1) and (2) of the elaboration process have been introduced, students are asked to think of the equivalent expressions in Croatian. Afterwards their answers are checked.

As an additional tool for the long-term storage of the new items, they are all associated with an appropriate mental picture. For example:

English Idioms:	Croatian equivalents:
<b>to be snowed under with work</b>	to be overwhelmed by, swamped with work; these verbs are used in a metaphorical way. There is no idiomatic expression in Croatian that uses the same verb, but the mental picture of having so much work that one feels like being under a snow-drift is very well understood by Croatsians. We use dual coding: drawing attention to the literal meaning of the phrasal verb "snow up" and the metaphorical meaning of the other "snow" phrasal verb "be snowed under"
<b>to cast a cloud over something</b>	to cast a shadow over something; another source domain is used in Croatian: a shadow. It is very similar in form and meaning to the English one. Drawing attention to its literal meaning of e.g. a cloud covering the sun and its figurative meaning facilitates its uptake and storage.

In conclusion, the selected idioms in both languages are both predominantly metaphor- and conventional knowledge-based. The metaphorical elaborations underlining both kinds of idioms are not overlapping in any compared pair and there is an abundant variation in the range of metaphors. Still, there are a few rather similar idioms: *to cast a cloud, a hail of bullets*.



### 3.2. Colour Idioms

1 Students are asked to answer what the following colours make them think of.

- grey
- red
- white
- green
- black

**2** Then they look at the chart showing the colour associations in English.

Grey  
red  
white  
green  
black

boredom  
dullness  
anger  
embarrassment  
passion  
shame

innocence  
purity  
environment  
lack of experience  
nature  
youth

grief  
hatred  
hopelessness

**3a** Students are asked to combine the colour words with the nouns in the box to make English expressions.

area	carpet	fingers	humour	lie	light	market
------	--------	---------	--------	-----	-------	--------

a black.... b black... c green.... d green.... e grey... f red...  
g white...

**3b** They are asked to match the expressions from 3a with the definitions.

**3c** In the following example we use the already well-known elaboration process.

English collocations and idioms:	Croatian equivalents:
<b>white lie</b>	an innocent, well-meant lie; Croatian does not use a colour collocation. Special attention is drawn to the mental picture of the general associations attributed to the colour white in both English and Croatian and their connection with the expression's overall figurative meaning.
<b>to have green fingers</b>	to be good and skilful at gardening There is no equivalent colour collocation in Croatian. Making students aware of the associations given to the green colour in English and their involvement in the syntactic and semantic structure of the expression helps them understand, translate and memorize the phrase.

In conclusion, in Croatian and in English expressions overlap completely in the examples such as black humour, black market, to get the green light, while the two above shown are entirely different. This is due to the fact that both languages share the same broader cultural context and conventional knowledge. The compared expressions are both metaphor- and metonymy-based. Learning new idiomatic meanings does not pose any difficulty due to the usage of the same colour associations in both languages.

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## Feeding the Intelligences

**Nesrin Eren**

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## Feeding the Intelligences

### Nesrin Eren

Thinking back to the good old school days, most of us may remember that the one who was identified ‘intelligent’ in class was the one who did well in tests, especially in the ones measuring mathematical and grammatical abilities. To this day, although there have been some changes in the national curriculum (Akpunar & Doğan, 2011), the Turkish education system still places a strong emphasis on the development and use of verbal and mathematical intelligences. Therefore, success has predominantly been based on the scores achieved in national tests (i.e. SBS, LGS) measuring raw intelligences such as mathematic, grammatical, reading comprehension, and vocabulary abilities. As these tests are based on logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences, it leads the ones who have strong logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences to shine out and be identified as the ‘intelligent’ or ‘smart’ ones while it neglects the student who is a musical virtuoso or the one who contributes to a better learning environment by interacting actively with his or her peers.

Nonetheless, Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligence has been acknowledged by many educators and policymakers (Smith, 2008), which has helped educators think differently about what ‘being intelligent’ means. This in turn, has subsequently contributed to some positive changes in school curricula as well as the way teachers conduct their lessons (Saban, 2009).

Gardner (1983) defines intelligence as “the ability to solve problems or to create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings”. He proposes that every single individual has a unique intellectual make-up, and therefore learns, thinks, processes, and produces differently. Multiple intelligence theory assumes that we all possess at least nine intelligences; (1) linguistic, (2) logical-mathematical, (3) visual-spatial, (4) bodily kinesthetic, (5) interpersonal, (6) intrapersonal, (7) musical, (8) naturalist, and (9) existential intelligence, and that an individual may excel in one, two or even three of these, but that it is less likely that one can be good at them all (Gardner, 1983).

Research indicates that multiple intelligence instruction can make students better acquire and retain knowledge (Özdemir et al., 2006). It is proposed that multiple intelligence instruction should be employed since (1) it acknowledges each child as a unique individual with different potentials, (2) it provides teachers with a wider scope for effective lesson execution, (3) it supports

cooperation among all teachers in schools, and (4) it increases students awareness of the way they learn, think, process, and produce (Saban, 2009).

In short, no matter what approach we adopt to use, we, educators must seek to help students learn better by not only building on their strengths and working on their weaknesses but also by planning our lessons in a way that ‘feeds’ learners with different intelligences. For example, when doing a reading class or presenting a new a grammar item, in different stages of the lesson, we could make use of pictures, videos, maps, songs, games, music, realia, role plays, group work, etc. so as to ‘feed’ a wider range of students to successfully participate in classroom learning; thus, facilitating a deeper understanding of topic or language presented.

Below are two different examples on how various learners could be engaged, which were also shared in my workshop.

### Activity 1: Go Fishing

“Go Fishing” is an activity I came across on EFT Classroom 2.0 (posted by Victor Mejia). This activity is very similar to the board game “Let’s go fishing” where players have toy fishing poles and where they simultaneously try to catch fish to get the most fish in order to win. In this class activity, instead of fish and fishing poles, there are words written on fish shape pieces, a listening text (i.e. *lyrics of a song*) from which some words are blanked out and music of the lyrics in which the vocabulary or language is to be presented.

Upon reading the blog post, with some modifications and additions, I prepared a lesson on the ‘passive voice’. The song I chose to use for ‘Passive Voice’ was “*I can’t be tamed*” by Miley Cyrus. (This activity can be adapted with any other song to present other vocabulary or grammar items).

#### Procedure of the activity

##### Stage 1: Lead-in

Display one part of a picture of a singer, in this case, Miley Cyrus. Start by displaying the top of her head (Picture 1) and ask the students what they think it is. Then, show the eyes of the singer (Picture 2) and ask who they think it is (*the main purpose here is to generate some interest in the topic/lesson*).



[Picture 1]



[Picture 2]



[Picture 3]



[Picture 4]



[Picture 5]

By showing some more cues, go on eliciting until they get the whole picture of the singer (Picture 5.) This stage of the lesson would cater for mainly the visual-spatial, mathematical (they would most probably try to build the shapes and make predictions accordingly) and intrapersonal (they would probably quietly evaluate their predictions), interpersonal (they would share their predictions/reasons with others) ones.

Once they find out who it is, then ask them whether they know any of her songs to see whether they know the song. Young learners would know Miley Cyrus from the TV series Hannah Montana while not many teenagers would know about her. Therefore, if you teach young learners, it wouldn't be a good idea to do this song with them as they would already know the song by heart; thus, would not create any need to do the activity.

### **Stage 2: Pre-listening**

#### **(a) Discussion to generate some background knowledge**

Play the first part of the video (to be found on youtube) and stop at "...lady and gentlemen, in captivity...", and tell students in groups to discuss which animals and birds are kept in captivity; the reasons why they are kept in captivity; and what they think about keeping animals in captivity. Then, go on by eliciting their ideas. Once some ideas have been collected, continue playing the video to have them see what animal it is. Stop the video once Miley Cyrus appears in a bird costume (Picture 6).



[Picture 6]

Then give them the title of the song- 'I Can't be tamed', and ask them to predict what meaning it could have. Having done that, elicit their ideas and ask students to come up and write their ideas on the board.

Main Intelligences fed: visual-spatial, linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and naturalist intelligences.

#### **(b) Predicting the verbs to set a purpose for listening**

Distribute the lyrics from which some active and passive words are blanked out, and tell them to individually think of possible words that would fit into the blanks. Without any prior idea, it is very difficult to understand a listening text; therefore, asking students to predict what the words might be, using the context, can help them listen more carefully as they are to compare their predictions, which subsequently gives them a sense of a purpose for listening. Main Intelligences fed: intrapersonal, musical, naturalist, mathematical and linguistic intelligences.

### **Stage 3: Listening**

**(a)** Put students in groups of three or four. Then, give each group the pieces of paper on which the 'active and passive verbs' are written. Play the video, and the students 'go fishing' for the words they hear. The student who has the most verbs is the winner!

**(b)** Ask students to compare their predictions they made in stage 2.

**(c)** Have a whole class discussion on what is meant by "I can't be tamed" in the lyrics.

Main Intelligences fed: bodily-kinesthetic, naturalist, musical, mathematical, intrapersonal intelligences.

#### **Stage 4: Discovering the Grammar**

**(a)** Once the winners are applauded, ask students to work in groups to put the verbs in two different categories (as students have verbs like ‘be tamed’, ‘be jagged’, ‘understand’ they will easily put the verbs into two categories- active & passive verbs- even though they don’t know the structure).

**(b)** Ask the students some grammar related questions. For example, ask them to (1) find the doer of each verb; (2) how the verb is formed, (3) if the doer of the action is stated, and so on.

**(c)** Once the students have discovered the use and meaning of the language, go on with some controlled and freer practice from the available materials (i.e. from course book materials).

Main Intelligences fed: In the first part of this stage, mathematical and interpersonal ones would probably be more active here; thus, would help out the others in the group. During the practice stage, almost all intelligences would be involved as they all will refer to the previous stages.

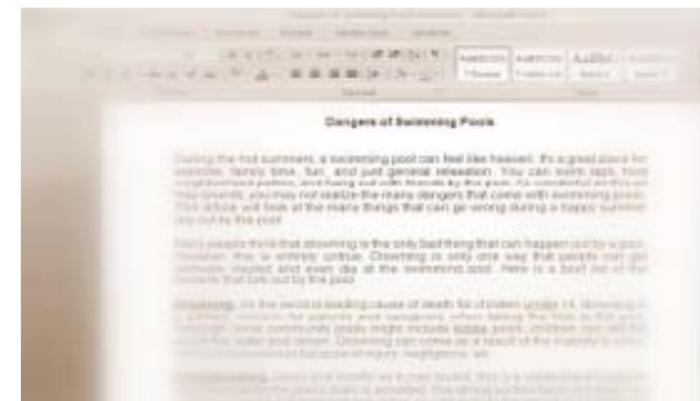
With this particular activity, the intelligence left out is the existential one. However, if we happen to have a student whose existential intelligence is strong, we could ask them some ‘big’ questions, such as “Do you think keeping animals in captivity would give bad karma?” They could then, in groups, discuss and share their ideas. By this, the existential ones will have the chance to share what he or she knows or believes in; thus, allowing them also to be valued and ‘fed’.

Having shared the above activity in my workshop, I asked participants to share their own ideas. Below you can see the ideas they came up with:

- Before giving the lyrics, show the video in silence. Then ask students to write up a story about it.
- Ask students to stand up when they hear a passive structure.
- As a speaking activity, students can take on the role of a member of the audience and share their opinions.
- Have students write a different ending.
- Ask students to tick things they see in the video from a brainstormed list.
- Have students watch a video without the music and they try to write the lyrics.
- Silent movies- understanding and deriving meaning (for productive skills lessons)

#### **Activity 2: Video-dictation for a Reading Class**

Students generally tend to find reading classes less fun primarily because they are not good L1 readers and that it generally turns out to be a silent and individual task. Sadly, when this is the case, reading classes “do not fulfill their potential to motivate to increase the acquisition of a second language” (Goodmacher & Kajiura, 2010). If a student is not intrinsically motivated, then a reading class may only cater for mainly the linguistic and intrapersonal intelligences. However, we can make our reading classes more engaging and fun by using videos (or other techniques that could foster collaboration and feed multiple intelligences) as a warmer or as a post activity. We can choose any video related to the topic of the text students are going to read from You Tube by just searching a key word. Another very useful web-site is EFL 2.0-Teacher Talk where you can find compiled set of videos for EFL classes.



The topic of the reading text above is about the dangers of swimming pools; therefore, using the video of ‘Mr. Bean at the swimming pool’ could fit the aim of activating their schemata of the concept and vocabulary.

#### **Procedure**

1. Assign A and B students.

2. Turn off the sound and play the video. While one student watches the video and describes the action, the other one listens to his or her partner. (In grammar classes, this video could also be used as a production activity in which students are asked to use present continuous. For further ideas on how to do it, see my blog post on video dictation at <http://nesrineren.edublogs.org/>)

3. Ask pairs to switch roles so that they can take turns to tell what is happening.
4. Stop the tape at a point and ask students to brainstorm ideas on possible dangers of swimming pools (you can ask students to come up to the board and write their ideas so that it can be discussed with the whole class).
5. Distribute the reading text and ask students to compare if any of the things they mentioned are in the text. The purpose of this activity is to set a purpose for reading so that students get involved with the text. After that, go on with the comprehension questions, and the tasks that follow it. It would be good to have students collaborate after each task like we do in real-life. Otherwise, as Goodmacher & Kajiura (2010) state, students tend to easily get demotivated and lose concentration. In their article they suggest some nice collaborative tasks that could be adopted apart from using videos in reading classes.
6. Students can then be asked to write or role-play a follow-up of the video. Playing some instrumental music (especially some music with sounds of nature) in the background could be soothing and 'feed' the musical and naturalist intelligences.  
Main Intelligences fed: bodily-kinesthetic, mathematical, linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist and musical intelligences.

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## **How Many Heads / Hats Do You Have?**

**Suzan Altıparmak**

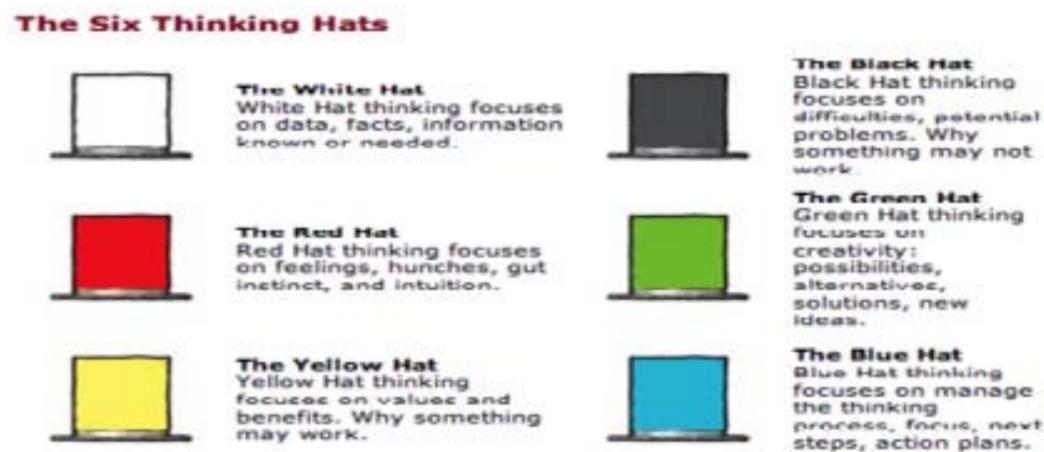
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## How Many Heads / Hats Do You Have?

**Suzan Altıparmak**

The idea of fostering critical thinking in a freshman class resulted in the need to find more original ideas that students had possibly not encountered before. While doing some research on different problem solving techniques, I came across an amazing website, <http://www.mindtools.com/>. This extremely rich website, which was originally created to provide creative solutions for business people, suggested a technique called the 'Six Thinking Hats'. The name intrigued me and upon further investigation the name Edward de Bono was everywhere.



Thinking that many of my students were career oriented, I decided to introduce them to a different technique of thinking/problem solving that they could make use of in the future. The first step was to familiarize them with the color coding of the hats and what each color symbolized. The learners found this step easier than I had assumed and made it clear that they would not need any further reference to the color coding in the coming steps of the process.

The second step was to activate this new passive information of thinking codes into active use. In order to merge the business world with the students' deepest desire, I proposed the idea of having a swimming pool on campus and informed the students that we were going to have a discussion on whether

to approve this proposal or not. I then asked the students to choose a hat that they felt closer to in terms of what the hat represented. I also asked one student to pick the blue one reminding her/him that s/he will be responsible for chairing the discussion and step in if her/his group had an argument not quite representative of their framework. For instance, if the black hat group made a comment including an emotion, the blue hat would interfere and warn the black hat to stay in the scope of their framework.

The responses students provided were really quite comprehensive showing that they had an insight about this way of thinking (App 1). They were quite creative and enjoyed being themselves as they were given the choice of a thinking frame with which they could personalize. However, when they were given another problem to solve and asked to choose a color that represented an opposite way of thinking, things got a bit complex and they felt quite challenged. This time, students, who had chosen the blue hat, had to be more proactive as they were chairing and were symbolically decision makers and therefore had to listen very carefully in order to critique their friends when they were out of their own thinking frame.

I have tried "the six hats activity" out in many different classes with different students from different faculties/departments and the results were almost similar, regardless of their proficiency in English. This was very rewarding because the aim was mainly to foster parallel thinking. The students might have possibly felt limited at times but this kind of practice hopefully formed a basis to train students to welcome and respect other opinions and be able to analyze the pros and cons of these opinions.

I later decided to adapt the same thinking pattern into the syllabus. The students were studying texts related to conformity and one of the most challenging articles both in terms of its provocative content and perplexing lexis was "A Society without Fathers and Husbands: The Na of China" by Chai Hun. The article mainly discusses a society where the institution of marriage is completely ignored and promiscuity is a natural life style. Obviously, it takes time for students to get into the theme, to digest the content and to be ready to discuss it. In order to make their life easier students first watched a video which gave them the opportunity to actually see the living conditions, the poverty and the harsh geographical conditions of that part of the world. This of course, took us to a different point where students questioned whether they were able to sympathize with the Na society and be less critical of them before watching the video. The poor living conditions somehow made promiscuity look less offensive and more tolerable for students.

This was an unexpected benefit of the entire process as many students discovered that they were quite judgmental and biased about issues that were against their values and this was an important learning point about themselves that they realized they had to work on. Therefore, it was a surprisingly valuable journey for the students to learn about a totally new value system, realize their own thinking mechanisms and how critical they are of other opinions.

The last part of the article focused on the measures the Chinese government tried to take over 25 years of planning and application to encourage, force or convince the Na society into marriage. However, none of the six steps the government has tried to impose works and all the efforts have failed. At this point the students are asked to assume the role of a Chinese government official, choose the color of the hat they wish to wear and work in their groups to find more effective solutions to this so called problem.

The students were given two options: either to stick to the previous hat color or challenge themselves by choosing a different hat and working in different groups. Being given the liberty, the students grouped themselves and came up with various solutions. This time the issue required thinking in a more political way which made the activity even more challenging. At the end they were all surprised with both themselves and their friends. Some blamed others for being too cruel; some blamed others for being too emotional and although they were not quite happy with each other's way of thinking, they gained awareness about how their future business meetings might be shaped.

At the end of the day, the main aim was not to confine students into certain molds or thinking patterns but let them experience how other people may think and be ready to address different thinking types to reach effective and solid decisions. It was also a valuable experience to be able to listen to others, evaluate and validate others' views and respect them. It was also food for thought for those who constantly kept complaining about the uselessness of academic language learning and constant emphasis on critical thinking.

Academic life and business life cannot be detached from each other as separate components in today's global world as the major goal and mission of many major universities is to contribute to the development of the "whole person" who will in the future represent their school in different fields. The "whole person" here refers to respecting ideas, being able to express themselves, assuming responsibility for their own actions, working for the betterment of society and leaving room for tolerance which can all be provided by "thinking critically".

## Appendix 1

The outcome of student discussions on whether to have a swimming pool or not within the given thinking frame:

### Example:

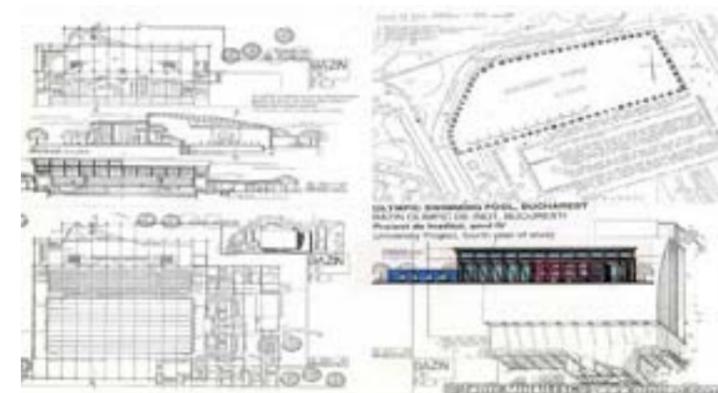
**BLUE - WHITE - RED - BLACK - YELLOW - GREEN - BLUE**



**BLUE:** Today's agenda: The university board has been informed about the request that the "student body" would like a swimming pool to be built on campus. The board has decided to take this offer into consideration and is opening it to your discussion.

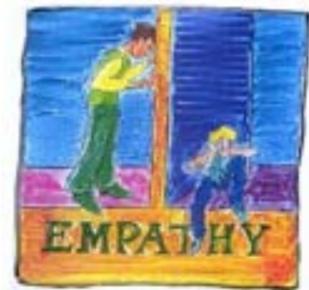


**WHITE:** NO DATA yet but has the cost of both indoor and outdoor pools been considered? Have the annual weather reports in the past 10 years been considered? Where is it planned to be built? Also consider feasibility, car park, other facilities, cost etc.





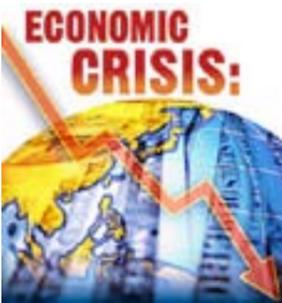
**RED:** The proposed pool looks pretentious while it may be highly cost-effective. Some students may feel uncomfortable as they may not be able to afford using it and therefore regard the presence of a pool as useless.



"Understanding what the other person is going through and being there"



**BLACK:** There is a global and local economic recession; so how necessary is it to allocate such a budget to a swimming pool? How about reconsidering the budget for more scholarship opportunities? Besides, it might be quite distracting especially for students taking summer school.



**YELLOW:** A swimming pool may contribute to both the school spirit and the motivation of the students and may even indirectly help them raise their academic success. It may also provide job opportunities at a time when there are so many unemployed people in the city. Besides, students may be offered part-time jobs too.



**GREEN:** The cost may eventually be compensated by charging students and organizing thematic pool parties. The pool can be heated in winter and the students may be charged accordingly. Themes like "bikini beauty contests" may attract many people and turn the pool into a "profit" facility in the long run.



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## Differences between Long-time Gradual Learning and Short-time Forced Learning

**Onur Albert Aslan**

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## Differences between Long-time Gradual Learning and Short-time Forced Learning

*Onur Albert Aslan*

My presentation about long-time and short-time learning is about practice and process in language learning and experimenting with learning. In this context it will be based on a comparison of different learning methods for foreign languages. The focus will be on English and German which I have had experience of learning so far. Initially, general information on how I learned English and German will be given. This essay also discusses the outcomes of learning both languages simultaneously when I was in high school and finally argues how different teaching and learning methods are currently affecting my life.

My English learning was a grammar-based learning, where the grammar books only had fill-in the blanks exercises, where when writing we only used some short sentences, and the only speaking activity was telling the teacher the answers to the questions in the grammar book; so we never had speaking exercises. Other than that I learned English from Turkish teachers and this has lasted for 15 years (up until now), which is long compared with the German learning process, which lasted only 5 years in high school. I learned German in the preparatory (first) year of the high school from both German and Turkish teachers, having lots of speaking, listening, and discussion exercises. After that preparatory year I only used it, but did not improve it. Thus 5 years German learning was actually 1 year; similarly the 15 years of learning English were actually 7 years only: not until right now, but up until the beginning of high school

The reason for this was simultaneously learning both languages in high school. The simultaneous learning process of English and German caused me to forget English and improve German instead. The factors that affected this situation were the similarity of both languages and the intense learning of German, both of which were constructive for German and destructive for English. Considering German as a new language for me, new words had to be memorized, and the similarity of English and German vocabulary made this process easier. On the other hand it was harmful for English because the German learning was intense. Speaking and hearing German so much made

the most known English words hard to remember while speaking English. Examples of such words are “I”, “and”, “of” that are usually not thought about separately while speaking.

Thus the similarity and depth caused these words to be replaced with their German versions and harmed my English skills.

The effects of learning these languages with different teaching methods can be summarized into two arguments. The first argument is the short-term consequence which claims that the faster the language is learned the more quickly it is forgotten. An example of this argument is the fact that one year after my high school graduation, I was unable to speak German but had not forgotten English. Thus the density of learning is more important than the total time spent to forget a language over a short period of time. The second argument claims that the long-term behavior of language learning whether over a short or over a long period of time does not affect the long-term memory processes. Therefore it does not matter if I learn English or German, rapidly or slowly, after a long time without using those language skills, they will be equal in terms of recalling them for re-use. For example, the forgotten German skills will be regained much more easily in a shorter time and will come to the same level as before because I experienced it in high school.

The above mentioned arguments have been experienced by me after the high school's preparatory year. I hadn't spoken German, which I had recently learned that year, for 2 months in my summer break. After 2 months, I went to Austria and during the first days it was very hard for me to speak German, because I was thinking a lot to construct a sentence, thus I did not speak fluently, but after two or three days I instantaneously remembered the language and was able to speak well. This example also shows that foreign language speaking abilities are stored in the subconscious and some amount of time is needed to extract them from there.

It is important to forget one foreign language (if there are totally two) in an academic environment and all of these past experiences above determine my strategy today. This means that I do not panic, because I know that the unused language skills can be remembered again much more easily after some study or practice.



## A Narrative at War with a Crossword – An Introduction to Interactive Fiction

### Joe Pereira

*Joe Pereira* has been a teacher and the ICT Co-ordinator at the British Council, Porto for nearly 15 years, with experience in teaching practically every age group and level as well as in teacher training. After completing an MA in Educational Technology and TESOL from the University of Manchester, his knowledge of Learning Technologies, particularly digital game-based learning, led to his involvement in the British Council's LearnEnglish Second Life project as a Language Learning Quest designer. Joe has also been an English tutor and teacher trainer in Second Life for the EU-funded Access to Virtual and Action Learning live Online (AVALON) project and is currently designing and teaching a Business English course on the British Council isle in Second Life. Beyond online learning and teaching, his main areas of expertise are in using 3D virtual worlds and video games in education, which has allowed him to raise awareness of these cutting edge tools through talks and workshops. His current research focus is on using interactive fiction games for language learning, hoping to infuse new interest and new perspectives in this retro technology. Outside of technology, his interests in teaching and learning include phonology, schema theory, metacognition and Karaoke.

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## A Narrative at War with a Crossword – An Introduction to Interactive Fiction

Joe Pereira

### Introduction

Interactive fiction (IF), also known as adventure games or text-adventures, is a form of electronic literature that has existed for 35 years. It is responsible for kick-starting the computer games market and was the most popular kind of video game throughout 1980s. Although the commercial market for interactive fiction ended in the early 1990s due to the growing quality of computer graphics, there has been a resurgence in the last 10 years due to the electronic literature community, its use in education, the many annual interactive fiction competitions and the widespread use of handheld devices, which allow users to play the classics anytime, anywhere.

"Will you read me a story?"

"Read you a story? What fun would that be? I've got a better idea: let's tell a story together."

The quote from "Photopia" (Cadre, 1990) gives a very good idea of what IF is - the writer (the author of the game) and the reader (the player of the game) telling a story together. Photopia marked a turning point in IF, where the literary aspects of the story overshadowed the puzzle aspects of the work - the narrative had clearly won over the crossword.

IF is an interactive narrative, where the reader is able to influence the pace of the story and how it unfolds. Because the reader takes control of the main character in the narrative and sees the world through her eyes and controls her actions, it is a form of participatory storytelling. It is both a work of literature and a video game. Additionally, and importantly, input is based on natural language. In the example below, from 9:05 (Cadre, 1990) the player finds herself in a bed with a ringing phone. One of many possible actions is

answering the phone, which will move the story forward providing a sense of the plot and opening up the game world for further exploration.



### Characteristics of IF

According to Montfort (2003), IF is unique amongst other forms of electronic literature because:

- 1) It is a text accepting and a text generating computer program: The component in IF that analyses natural language input and responds to it in a meaningful way is called a parser, which understands the most common and most interesting things people will try, but not everything. The very first text adventure games had a limited two-word parser which could only understand very basic verb + noun collocations due to the technological restraints of computer memory at the time. Subsequent games, following the example of Infocom, had a parser that could understand complex sentences.
- 2) It is a potential narrative - IF is a new medium. It produces non-linear text, meaning that it is not read straight through like a traditional book, but can fork into different paths, allowing new text, and new parts of the world to be discovered with each reading.
- 3) It provides a simulation of an environment or world – In IF, the geography of the world can be traversed, its objects can be manipulated and its characters can be interacted with. Players can act upon and see the results of simulated actions within this world.
- 4) It is a structure of rules, with which an outcome is sought, and played voluntarily: a game.

The premise of any IF work is to get to the end of the story, which usually involves overcoming obstacles in the form of logical puzzles which need to be solved. Only part of the situation of the game world is known at the start. Challenge in IF comes not only from interacting with and solving puzzles but from interacting with the game world and discovering the rules that govern it and the language the world model understands. This is akin to the pleasure of solving riddles. However, if the game is badly implemented or has a basic parser, this may lead to playing 'guess the verb', which often leads to frustration on the part of the player.

Another particularity of IF is that it is usually written in the second person singular of the present tense. The player is experiencing events and they are happening now. This more immediate nature makes the connection between the player and the protagonist stronger, as well as creating the illusion that the story is being written as the world is explored. This exploration of the world by moving the player character through it and the collection and manipulation of objects are what creates the sense of immersion and embodiment, in addition to moving the story forward and providing puzzles and the means to solve them. Puzzles in IF act as a challenge and force exploration of the game world. They should not be considered as an add-on to the narrative experience - they are an integral part of the interactive process between the reader and the writer, which generates the narrative. Importantly, they also act as a natural pause mechanism for reading and control the revelation of the narrative, in this way slowing the player down long enough to understand and synthesise the details of the story world. They can also act as a gateway mechanism, ensuring that the plot does not advance until all necessary plot pre-requisites have been met. In order to pass through these 'narrative curtains' set up through the game, the player must collect and combine pieces of the text and re-contextualise them.

### How to play IF

Most IF games understand and implement common action verbs such as 'open' and 'wear'.

Standard IF verbs related to exploration and the manipulation of objects such as 'look' and 'examine' and 'inventory' and 'get' are practically universal in IF games. Movement in IF is usually done through compass points such as North or East.



Common commands used in IF

In IF, commands must be given at a micro-level. Contrary to how things are explained in real-life, most actions need to be broken down into their component parts - unlocking a door before opening it; taking clothes off before taking a shower, etc. Part of the challenge in IF is in discovering how the world works and the language it understands. The reader needs to put herself into the game world and think in terms of what she has available to her and how things behave.

### IF for language learning

#### IF as digital game-based learning

Because IF has a game component – the 'crossword', it can be used for digital game-based learning. For an in-depth review of the principles of learning found in video games see Pereira (2009). Video games can be very motivating as the challenges they offer allow players to enter a state of 'flow', where they are totally concentrated on achieving their goals. While playing good games, stealth learning is activated - learning becomes a by-product of engagement, where enhanced retention of vocabulary and content knowledge is a common result. Beyond this concept of 'content' and perhaps more importantly, learners are able to implement life-long cognitive skills, such as critical and lateral thinking and meta-cognitive strategies (planning, monitoring and evaluating learning), which they may then apply in real world situations. Video games, due to their immersive game environments allow for 'learning by doing' - not just describing an action, but taking the necessary steps to do them – which can lead to deeper learning, and this is especially important when used as

a form of autonomous learning. Most importantly, games are fun – and it is when having fun that we are most engaged, and we are willing to learn what we believe is useful to us.

### IF as literature

IF, as a form of literature, can be treated as any other form of literature for learning purposes. Of course, the level of literary quality of many IF games can be argued, but many IF works, and particularly works which have won awards in IF competitions over the last decade, are noted for their high literary quality in addition to engaging and innovative game-play.

O'Connell (2009) comments on the use of literature for learning as a rich activity in itself, above traditional considerations, such as assessment:

*“once we engage the student in a text and treat them as readers, where the reading in itself is a creative act, forming a potentially dynamic partnership with the writer, then the individual, personal and subjective nature of the activity transcends any glib approach to assessment, such as right/wrong answers.”*

Ferradas (2009), points out how using literature offers change to conventional classroom pedagogy:

a focus on meaning rather than medium, with an emphasis on fluency; a focus on process rather than product; a change of teacher role to facilitator.

### IF for language skills work

IF is portable and scalable: It can be played alone for autonomous learning, or used in a classroom with one computer for whole class teaching, or students can be allocated a computer in pairs or groups, where every member of the group has a different task.

From an autonomous learning perspective, reading comprehension and fluency are the most developed. In IF, every word needs to be considered - nothing can be overlooked, otherwise puzzles cannot be solved and new avenues will not open themselves up to the reader. Having access to a dictionary or working out the meaning of unknown words through context is a must. Making progress through the game is clear evidence that the reader understands not only the words, but how the words fit into the world model. Making progress also involves using language for a real purpose - to reach the end of the story. A teacher is not required as IF provides the context for learners to use the language necessary to achieve immediate goals, with immediate feedback on success. With regards to the writing skill, extensive writing is not implemented during game-play, but spelling and typing skills are practised. Unless a text-to-speech feature is used (available on most IF interpreters), the listening skill will also not be practised and naturally, if played alone, the speaking skill will also not be practised.

In a classroom scenario, pre and post-reading tasks can be implemented, as they would with any reading task. Pre-reading tasks motivate the learners to read for pleasure and some sort of vocabulary building activity is recommended so that they won't ask too much about unknown words during play. While reading, IF provides natural pauses for reflection and progression, which is a clear sign that learners understand the text. Discrete language work can be practised in a post-reading phase, in addition to follow-up speaking or writing activities based on theme or cultural content. Further literary analysis can also be explored such as character motivation and examination of narrative plot structure.

Additionally, in the classroom setting, different student interaction patterns can be used to go beyond practising reading skills. Through computer-mediated communication tasks and varied group dynamics, speaking and listening tasks can also be implemented.

### Choosing an IF game

Some considerations need to be made when choosing an appropriate IF game to use with learners:

**Genre** - There are as many genres of story in IF as there are in books and choosing one that appeals to all your learners can be a difficult task.

**Length** - Classic IF games could take months to complete due to confusing geographies and difficult puzzles. Many recent games can take less than 2 hours, some even less than 30 minutes. A medium-length game might work well if played over many lessons.

**Locations** - more recent games have explored using single-rooms, which have the advantage of not needing to be mapped and limiting the player's focus. On the other hand, games with multiple locations require moving between spaces, which makes the story more participatory and encourages a stronger sense of engagement rather than passive observation.

**Narrative vs Crossword** - puzzle based games will engage the players as long as they do not become stuck and narrative based games with overly-long bunches of text will become 'boring' much more quickly. It is difficult to find the proper balance while also taking into consideration the above points.

Possibly the most important point, however, is that you have played through the game first yourself or at least have had a walkthrough and a map in order to be able to help learners if needed.

The best place to find IF games and interpreters to play them is at the Interactive Fiction Database: [www.IFDB.tads.org](http://www.IFDB.tads.org)

Alternatively, you can now play many games online at <http://parchment.toolness.com>

## Conclusion

IF offers a fun, challenging and interactive way for students to become fluent in reading and to learn to appreciate reading for pleasure. In my view, a new era for IF, with a firm place in education, is only just beginning.

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## **Making a Difference, in the Class and Beyond – Critical Thinking & Active Learning**

**Türkan Özkan**

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## Making a Difference, in the Class and Beyond – Critical Thinking & Active Learning

*Türkan Özkan*

The importance of active thinking and active learning in the language class is undeniable. Within the process of learning, thinking may not sound like a special activity but it is quite apparent that few people use their minds actively and think critically. This would explain why I believe that active thinking is a learnable skill and must be practiced in each content field at each educational level within a suitable environment that consists of various tasks that aim at activating critical thinking skills and providing a basis for active learning.

According to Busse (2007), students, at all levels of education, are lagging behind in problem-solving and thinking skills. He also points out that every course, especially in content subjects, students should be taught to think logically, analyze and compare, question and evaluate. Such an approach will require the teacher to construct tasks that aim at teaching the language and shifting the focus of the learners' attention beyond the more mechanical aspects of the foreign language system concurrently. In other words we need to "generate and carry out tasks that require learners to discover, process, and apply information as the key to actualizing active learning and thinking" (Jace, 2010).

Bonwell and Eison (1991) state that some characteristics of active learning are; students involved in more than listening, less emphasis placed on transmitting information and more on developing students' skills, students involved in higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation), students engaged in activities (e.g., reading discussing, writing), and greater emphasis placed on students' exploration of their own attitudes and values.

The primary requisite for putting higher-order thinking skills into practice and attaining specified objectives is meticulous planning of the tasks. Teachers at this point need to be increasingly mindful that involving the learner in student-centred activities in which participants find the opportunity to activate their thinking skills is a challenge on its own. The role of a teacher in such a process

is defined in a report as follows (A Joint Report, American Association for Higher Education, et. al. 2003); an instructor who will stimulate an active search by expecting student participation in activities in and beyond the classroom; designing projects, through which students apply their knowledge and skills; and build programs that feature extended and increasingly challenging opportunities for growth and development.

Would the definition above suggest that students being instructed by such a teacher would have to take more responsibility in the process of active learning? As we observe students who are confronted with tasks of this kind are not always willing to accomplish what is expected of them and show some kind of reluctance.

In such cases the instructor needs to display a firm attitude in terms of the approach and implementation of student-centered tasks. Felder (1996) points out the transition from a lecture-based classroom to a more student-centered learning environment with these words;

In the traditional approach, the burden of communicating course material resides primarily with the instructor. In student-centered instruction, some of this burden is shifted to the students. The students, whose teachers have been telling them everything they needed to know from the first grade on, don't necessarily appreciate having this support suddenly withdrawn. Some students view the approach as a threat or as some kind of game, and a few may become sullen or hostile when they find they have no choice about playing. When confronted with a need to take more responsibility for their own learning, they may grouse that they are paying tuition-or their parents are paying taxes-to be taught, not to teach themselves.

How can such resistance be diminished or how can such an understanding be modified? Students who are involved in such a learning environment should apprehend and be conscious of the whole idea of active and student-centered learning. It is also vital that an individual sanctifies the idea of active thinking and learning as a concept that does not only belong to classroom practice but as a concept that is present in all domains of life.

Research has suggested, that to achieve the goal of practising active thinking and learning, faculty must be knowledgeable of alternative techniques and strategies for questioning and discussion and must create a supportive intellectual and emotional environment that encourages students to take risks. (Bonwell, 1991).

This kind of an environment and strategy would reassure the practice of active thinking within and without the classroom boundaries and promote long-term retention of information, to motivate students toward further learning and to allow students to apply information in new settings. McKinney suggests that, “active learning techniques can occur in class or outside of class (e.g., computer simulations, internships, WWW assignments, class Internet discussion lists, independent study research)”.

While considering ways to promote active learning with students, we should not turn a blind eye to the fact that there are teachers who come up with all sorts of creative reasons why student-centered methods could not possibly work. As Felder (1996) explains;

We know the fears teachers have about the instructional methods we advocate, having had most of them ourselves, and we can usually satisfy most of the skeptics that some of the problems they anticipate will not occur and the others are solvable. Good lecturers may feel awkward when they start using student-centered methods and their course-end ratings may initially drop. It's tempting for instructors to give up in the face of all that, and many unfortunately do.

According to a report, (A Joint Report, American Association for Higher Education, 2003 ) active learning is defined as; a developmental, a cumulative process involving the whole person, relating past and present, integrating the new with the old, starting from transcending personal concerns and interests.

So, what are the tasks that will enable us to achieve the goals stated above and involve students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing? Literature can be helpful in the language learning process because of the personal involvement it fosters in readers. When a novel, play or short story is explored over a period of time, the result is that the reader begins to ‘inhabit’ the text. He or she is drawn into the book. The reader is eager to find out what happens as events unfold; he or she feels close to certain characters and shares their emotional responses. The language becomes ‘transparent’- the fiction summons the whole person into its own world. (Collie and Slater, 1987).

While reading and dealing with such texts it is vital to make sure that the learner has been given a purpose and has the sense of ownership. The suggested process will facilitate active thinking and enable learners to go beyond what they have read and make inferences.

Role-play, improvisation, think-pair-share type of tasks will provide opportunities for students to acquire an understanding of what active learning is. Analysis or reactions to videos is one other effective way to involve students effectively in a task; whether its a review of the extract or a follow-up pair work activity. Student debates allow students the opportunity to take a thesis or position and gather data and logic to support that view, critically. Analyzing case studies ,mini-researches, proposals or projects or a class research symposium would give the opportunity to students to work on designing a research study on a topic. Another practical task is to have students make journal or log entries periodically asking for a brief critical reflection or analysis of each entry as well. Students can also create visual representations of models, ideas, and the relationships between concepts which can be referred to as concept mapping. (McKinney, 2011)

Most of the suggested tasks can be adapted to different educational levels and different content fields. In other words, within the institution a horizontal and vertical approach would be both essential and beneficial to create the desired atmosphere based on the idea of active thinking and learning.

People go through life making passive associations, allowing whatever words or images float to the forefront of their minds to convey their thoughts. This tendency to live blurrily, rather than with acuity and awareness, inhibits communication on a large scale in our society. The result is that everyday interaction has become much less meaningful than it could be.

This is how the community that exists without active thinking is reflected by Bailyn (2010). It is mainly for this that it is highly essential that we promote and reinforce the usage of tasks in class that give our students the opportunities to question the happenings around them by using the language they are learning as an instrument. The classroom is the unique place to purvey the understanding of intentional, purposeful, active thinking and learning to our students and adopt it as a life-long skill. We teachers are the ones who can make a difference in how they think and learn.

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## Foreign Language Teaching in the Changing Classroom Scenario

**Meenu Bhatnagar**

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## Foreign Language Teaching in the Changing Classroom Scenario

**Meenu Bhatnagar**

### Purpose of Presentation and Relevance to the Conference Theme

The present paper is strictly based on my experience and observation of teaching the Russian Language to Indian learners and also on the feedback from the learners which has provided me with the insights to reflect upon some of the issues concerned with foreign language teaching today, especially, from the learners' perspective and accordingly to create improvisation opportunities for my own teaching techniques.

The aim of this paper is to share this experience and also to understand the mindset of today's learners and their needs, and thereby focus on identifying ways and the scope of improvising the teaching process to make it more effective, interesting and sensitive to the requirements of the learners of the 21st Century.

Foreign language teaching and learning at present faces immense competition from the growing popularity and utility of several professional courses like business management, computer science, fashion design, the hospitality business, and many others. It goes without saying that in today's environment, in a highly globalized market economy, to be competitive in foreign language courses requires a makeover to redefine their aims and objectives and also to re-form and re-structure the curricula, as well as to use innovative teaching methods to be in tune with the changing times.

It would not be untrue to state that knowledge of a foreign language has not just remained pertinent in the 21st Century but has acquired a whole new importance in the globalized world, be it in politics, trade, science & technology, defense, cultural exchange, travel, art or academics. As socio-political and economic relations, issues of global concerns like terrorism, energy problems, and environment related issues are bringing different societies and cultures in closer contact, knowledge of a foreign language helps in the better understanding of society, its culture and values which in turn can greatly help to avoid cross-cultural miscommunication.

Furthermore, the increasing influence of technology, in the present times, has affected the way societies live, interact and evolve. Our dependency on ever evolving technology is growing every day and is reflected in our changed way of living and thinking as a whole. Consequently, we see a paradigm shift in the orientation and attitude of today's classrooms as well. 21st Century classrooms are perceptually very different from the classrooms of the 70's, 80's or even 90's.

### Indian Classrooms

India's cultural, regional and linguistic diversity is very distinct and plays an important part in the formation of the mindset, instincts and personality of learners. Indian classrooms are most often a convergence of learners from different geographical regions and socio-cultural backgrounds of the country. In such a multicultural classroom, striking a balance between such a diverse set of learners is quite a task and requires a sensitive and patient approach.

Although, Indian learners are relatively good at learning languages, as they generally grow up speaking at least two local languages, sustaining their interest in learning a foreign language today in a non-native environment is not easy.

### Changing Classroom Scenario (general assessment of the classroom)

Most learners in their first year of language learning are motivated and serious, and it has been observed that the level of seriousness reduces gradually with time. Learners want to acquire language skills in a short span of time and without putting in much effort and therefore possess a casual attitude towards studies, which is reflected in their overall performance. Learners don't attend classes regularly<sup>1</sup> which is an area of deep concern as, in a language class, every day something new is introduced. Mugging<sup>2</sup> up texts, often without understanding, is their way to get by in the tests and exams. Learner's assignments are often a cut and paste job from the Internet. Especially for courses on translation, some learners don't shy in taking a short cut by using 'google translate' to get the translation instantly, which if done manually may take hours. Many courses on language and literature are often disliked or neglected which greatly affects the overall performance and confidence of learners. Learners, who genuinely put in the effort to learn a language well, are far fewer in number<sup>3</sup>.

If in the past the learners were driven largely by their quest to understand and appreciate culture, literature, society etc, and aspired to experience an intellectual development through it, then learners of today are quite a contrast

<sup>1</sup> It is a major problem as sustained communicative ability cannot be acquired by mugging up alone as it does not enhance the knowledge base.

<sup>2</sup> Awareness about the use of neologisms, borrowed words, slang, change in the connotations of words is necessary.

<sup>3</sup> video conferencing, use of computer & internet, radio, television, advertisements, pictures, slides, films, music etc.

in that they focus more on the monetary benefits which the course can potentially bring to them. This is justifiably so, as in the fast growing consumerist globalized society the pressure to get a job early and to move ahead of others weighs too much on today's learners.

### Understanding Today's Learners

We see a definite shift in the mental make up and attitude of the learners today. Learners of today are very career conscious, seemingly better informed, focused and very technology savvy. They don't want to spend years honing their skills, and prefer to opt for courses which can open up better career options for them or provide them with surety of placements. Most learners today join a language course thinking that learning a foreign language will increase their chances to get a job in a multinational company and also to travel abroad.

### Learner's Perspective

Learners' feedback is extremely important in defining and evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching process so as to maximize the learning output.

Learners today often question the utility of the courses and complain about the relevance of the courses. Learners today expect courses to be more specific to their needs especially taking into account the job market requirements. They criticize the usefulness of the teaching material and demand new teaching material reflecting new ideas/concepts which they can relate to. Learners feel that courses on the latest political and socio cultural developments be offered to give them a complete knowledge of contemporary society.

### Facing The Challenges Of Foreign Language Teaching Today

Language constantly evolves, and the development of language is greatly influenced by the developments in the socio-political, cultural, religious, and economic spheres of society. Language cannot be effectively acquired and used as a means of communication without the basic understanding of the facts which brings about changes in its character, content and usage. Today, language learning/teaching incorporates a much wider scope of information exchange and is no longer limited to mastering grammar rules, sentence structure or vocabulary only.

In order to make foreign language teaching/learning desirable and rewarding in the present times, the first and foremost attention should be given to the foreign language curriculum. 21st Century classrooms are learner-centered. The curriculum must be relevant to the times and must be improvised from time to time to reflect the changes in the moods and the tastes of society.

The curriculum must help to generate awareness in the learners about changes in the speech patterns<sup>4</sup> of a language and make them understand the practical application of the information and knowledge they gain in the classroom.

Besides literary texts, diplomatic speeches, reports, memorandum of understanding, contract agreements etc, should be used to acquaint the learners with the form and content of such texts.

Emphasis must be given on the use of technology<sup>5</sup> in teaching, as in the era of computer and internet, textbooks no longer remain the only source of information for teachers and learners. Technology based courses can help create a social, cultural and linguistic environment in the classroom. The effect of such teaching material will make a greater impact on the minds of the learners which will increase students' cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Teachers also need to adapt and should try to see the situation from the learner's viewpoint. New ideas/concepts come into being, new technologies are being developed, therefore, to be able to transmit that knowledge to the learners, teachers need to be aware of the latest developments and broaden their own knowledge base from time to time.

One of the most agonizing problems of teaching a language is to sustain the interest of the learner. Teachers should encourage learners to participate in discussions and presentations on a variety of relevant topics. Films, music, art, radio, TV programmes should be used extensively to simulate a socio cultural environment that may help better engage learners and to give them an opportunity to hear live speech.

### Making A Difference

Understanding the learner's need is key to enhancing the teaching output as well as academic excellence. Feedback from the learners has inspired me to effectively deviate from the usual way of teaching courses and to use techniques and technology to generate interest among learners. The use of the latest teaching materials in my classes, organizing film shows and extra curricular activities like quizzes, debates, etc. (basically involving learners as active participants rather than passive listeners) have also helped create a positive learning environment.

In a course on 'development of spoken skills', the usual teaching method is to provide learners with texts, after which grammar and vocabulary are explained in the class and learners are asked questions based on the texts. Most Learners mug up the texts, often without understanding, and answer. Learners often hesitate to speak in a foreign language and seldom pay attention to what and how they themselves speak.

<sup>4</sup> Awareness about the use of neologisms, borrowed words, slang, change in the connotations of words is necessary.

<sup>5</sup> video conferencing, use of computer & internet, radio, television, advertisements, pictures, slides, films, music etc.

In my classes, I recorded their answers, and then made them listen to their own voices. Many learners, when they heard their recorded voice, understood their own mistakes (grammatical or phonological) better and tried to correct them.

Over a period of time, it helped them improve their own speech, build their confidence and inculcated in them the skill to consciously and carefully join words together.

Another course called “text rendering” is designed primarily to consolidate listening skills, such that learners are made to listen to simple unknown texts, process the information in their mind and write the text in their own words.

Most learners dislike this course, while others find it boring and often question the utility of the course.

A lot of learners take listening for granted and do not listen attentively, hence do not understand enough to reproduce the text. I used simple texts, jokes, anecdotes, and sometimes I made the learners listen to the texts recorded in the voice of a native speaker and also used short films as texts. Each learner was then made to narrate their texts in class, and I would correct their mistakes there and then. Sometimes I would record their voices also. This way the classes became more interactive and interesting, helped the learners to improve their concentration which also proved to be a good way to make them listen attentively.

Use of alternate teaching materials like cassettes, newspapers/magazines, films, TV programmes, radio, physical objects, pictures, etc. especially in a non-native environment, enhances the learning environment, provides content and variety in the classroom and helps learners develop a ‘mental image’ of the society and its culture. Films, for example, through images and sound provide a completely different socio-cultural experience which capture the learner’s imagination, stimulate ‘intellectual curiosity’ and help to understand the ideological setup, the socio-political trends and achievements, and also cultural values through the ages in a society which are reflected in the language.

Involving learners in extra curricular activities like quizzes, debates, singing songs and staging plays, showcasing the society, history, art and culture helped to break the monotony of classroom teaching and allowed them to learn about various aspects of the foreign society which go well beyond classroom learning. Such activities help learners to shed their inhibitions and overcome their reluctance to communicate in a language and eventually build up their confidence.

## Conclusion

It is often seen that learners feel that teachers should use contemporary material and make lectures interesting for them, whereas teachers feel that learners are not serious, are lazy and less dedicated towards the learning of a language.

Designing more needs-based courses is the need of the hour to sustain the interest of our learners. More courses in translation and interpretation, dubbing of films/programmes, film appreciation, art and culture studies, etc may be useful.

Interaction with native speakers should be promoted to provide learners with an opportunity to hear live speech.

Offering more scholarships to the learners will allow learners to spend some time in the native environment to refine and perfect their language skills.

Thus, a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures can ensure the development of a positive attitude among learners, can motivate them to learn better, develop better communicative abilities, and sensitize them towards another society and culture.

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## Transforming Teaching and Learning Through Podcasting

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# Transforming Teaching and Learning Through Podcasting

**Merve Elbirlik Tülek**

## 1. Introduction

Technology has already turned into an integral part of both our personal and professional lives; likewise learners are becoming more and more technology oriented, mainly owing to Web 2.0 tools which offer us countless resources for classroom use. The use of technology both for teachers and students is a key to bringing the outside world into the classroom. One preeminent feature of using technology in learning is that it allows language practice and study away from the confines of the classroom. Supporting a course with technology can allow learners and teachers more flexibility in both time and place. Learners can access their materials whenever they want to. All these can have a dramatic effect on their study habits and the revision process. The use of technology outside language classrooms can make learners more autonomous by well-planned use of Web 2.0 tools. The learners can be exposed to authentic resources and practice all of the four main language skills - speaking, listening, writing and reading.

## 2. What is a podcast?

Podcast is a combination of Apple's well-known audio player, the iPod, and the word broadcast from TV and radio. A podcast is a computer audio file. Podcasts can be listened to in a variety of ways. They can be stored on a computer's hard drive or transferred to a portable music player, such as an iPod to be able to listen to it anytime and anywhere. Podcasts have a number of advantages over streaming audio. Once they have been downloaded, they can be kept and distributed by e-mail and can be copied repeatedly without any loss of quality. In the field of receptive skills of listening and reading, it is possible to identify a clear role played by a web-based environment in providing exposure.

Podcasts come in a number of formats, including:

- *presentations: pre-scripted and well-organized*
- *monologues: a single person extemporizing (or rambling, depending on your point of view!)*
- *interviews: a presenter asking guests questions*
- *dialogues: two or more people engaged in a conversation, usually about a pre-determined topic*

The following directory websites list podcasts by topic:

- *Podcast.net: <http://www.podcast.net>*
- *Podcast.com: <http://www.podcast.com>*
- *iPodder: <http://www.ipodder.org>*
- *The Podcast Bunker: <http://www.podcastbunker.com>*
- *Yahoo! Podcasts: <http://podcasts.yahoo.com>*
- *English Caster: <http://www.englishcaster.com>*

## 3. Why use podcasts?

Audio and video files available on the Web currently range from clips that are less than a minute for news reports to continuous live radio and TV from around the world. If you have access to the Web, you have countless listening opportunities available such as clips, news reports, live radio and TV shows and podcasts on various topics.

However, selecting an audio that you want to use with your learners is an important point. You need to take into consideration a couple of points, is the topic relevant to the coursebook? Is it appropriate for the level? Is the pace and the length appropriate for the level of the task? All you need to do is to get prepared before the lesson and use these recordings just like any published material.

You can vary the use of podcasts. Sometimes the target is gist listening and the activity is the lead-in to a discussion about the topic. Sometimes you can prepare more detailed questions and allow your learners to listen several times to catch the answer and sometimes you can use podcasts to pre-teach keyword vocabulary. Even by using some user friendly tools like Vocaroo and

Audioboo, some activities can be set as homework since podcasts are easy to distribute by e-mail and can be played on a variety of devices.

Learners can be encouraged to find podcasts that meet their interests or language needs and start downloading and listening to them on a regular basis, creating their own listening / podcast portfolios where they keep a track of which podcasts they listened to, what the topics were, whether and why they liked them or not. They can then present their portfolios to their peers and create their own podcasts for their listening portfolios.

*As a language teacher, there are a number of excellent reasons why you would want to record podcasts for your learners. The first reason is to provide listening practice that is specifically tailored to the needs of your learners or to fit with the course you are delivering. You can record monologues or, with the help of a colleague, dialogues that provide context-based models of grammar or vocabulary that is to be used in forthcoming lessons or recycled from a previous lesson. Learners who are more aural than visual in their learning style appreciate and benefit from these. Podcasts created by teachers can simply be models of native-speaker pronunciation and accent for learners who do not have the opportunity for regular exposure. (Sharma, Barrett, 2007.)*

Podcast activities can be planned by teachers in the form of a class discussion or a role-play. They can be distributed over the Web and shorter podcasts can be e-mailed to learners or long ones can be stored on your school's computer network where students can access them. Your learners can download podcasts onto their mp3 players and listen to them whenever and wherever they want to.

## 4. Practical activities

### 4.1 - Getting my students to talk about their daily routines:

Before the lesson: Inform the students about the links or give the students the links so that they can learn how to use them.

<http://vocaroo.com> (voice recording tool)

<http://www.mailvu.com> (great for pronunciation practice)

<http://www.fotobabble.com> (create your own talking photos)

<http://www.newtoolsworkshop.wikispaces.com/> (Web 2.0 pieces to pieces together)

<http://www.audioboo.fm/> (to record and upload audio)

1. Build a link between what you do in class and what you get the students to do for homework. Russell Stannard (2011) calls this the "connected classroom."
2. Plan the whole lesson (class and homework) as if one.
3. Plan the stages and structure.

During the lesson:

**Objective:** Have students talk about their daily routines

In class

- Brainstorm verbs in groups.
- Elicit and write them all on the board.
- Draw a time line on the board and note down some times.

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9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

### Get up

- The teacher now stands in front of the class and talks about his/her day using the timeline on the board.
- Get the students to draw their own timelines.
- Put students in pairs and get them to talk through each of their timelines.

### After the lesson:

- For homework: ask the students to take their timelines home and record themselves talking about their typical day and then send the recordings to their teacher (e.g. through Vocaroo, which is quite a user-friendly recording tool with quick recording and mailing features.)

### Teacher

- While listening to students' recordings, the teacher takes notes and provides oral feedback by recording it and e-mailing this to the students.

### 4.2 – Getting my students to talk about their best friends:

During the lesson:

**Objective:** Get students to talk about their best friends.

In class

- Start by showing a drawing/picture of a good friend of yours.
- Tell the students that they have to find out the following information by asking questions:

How you met  
 What the friend looks like  
 The friend's hobbies  
 The friend's personality  
 What the friend likes  
 2 pieces of extra information

- Give students time to form questions in groups.
- They ask you and you answer.
- Then put the students into different groups.
- Tell them to think of a good friend and ask the rest of the group about their best friends.
- Get feedback from a couple of groups.

#### After the lesson:

- For homework, students do a recording about their best friend and e-mail it to their teacher for feedback. They must cover the following areas:

How they met.  
 What their friend looks like.  
 Why they are good friends.  
 What they have in common.

- Students are given the links below to design their homework according to their needs and aims.

<http://vocaroo.com> (voice recording tool)

<http://www.mailvu.com> (great for pronunciation practice)

<http://www.fotobabble.com> (create your own talking photos)

<http://www.newtoolsworkshop.wikispaces.com/> (Web 2.0 pieces to pieces together)

<http://www.audioboo.fm/> (to record and upload audio)

## 4.3 – Interesting ways to use Voicethread:



### 4.3.1 Six Hat Thinking

Upload a statement detailing a problem to be solved. Students are assigned different colored hats as per De Bono's 6 Thinking Hats technique (1985).

Students respond to the problem according to the characteristics attributed to the color of their hat.

### 4.3.2 Reviews

*"Use Voicethread as an alternative 'My favourite ..' lesson idea. Import photos from a school outing and ask the class to document it. After exploring a topic in History, Education, or Geography, ask the class to discuss what they liked most or didn't enjoy."*

Kevin Mc Laughlin

### 4.3.3 What are they thinking about?

*"Find images of people, these might include: your own digital photos, Creative Commons images from Flickr (or other photo sharing sites), still pictures taken from a film, ask pupils to add text, audio, or comments to explore what the characters in the pictures might be saying, thinking or feeling. Great for developing inference, deduction and empathy skills."*

Mark Warner



### 4.3.4 Collaborative play scripts

Add a series of images or video footage to use as a basic storyline for a play. Each student takes on the 'voice' of a character and adds to the thread to develop the dialogue. Stage directions can also be included.

Vic Jenkins (vicjenkins on Twitter)

### 4.3.5 Improve Writing

Upload a piece of good writing and in shared reading, annotate what makes it good. Upload a piece of 'dull' writing and choose sections for your students to improve, annotate or record.

*It was raining. Bob got up. He went to see his friend John. John and Bob got wet. They felt cold so they hid in the woods. When they were in the woods, they heard a noise. A monster came out of the woods.*

Vicki Parsons

## 5. Conclusion

Technology is a practical alternative to complement and enhance classroom practice. Integration of pedagogy and technology is an important point to consider when using or creating podcasts. If there is a close correlation between the content of the lesson and podcasts, podcasts will be used more effectively. Podcasts present us with new opportunities for authentic tasks and materials and they offer new ways of practising language. Podcasts can be integrated into language lessons, or they can be used by learners outside the classroom for further practice, and as complementary material to the taught element of the course.

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## **Sharing the reading secret: Using think-aloud to improve reading comprehension of L2 texts**

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## Sharing the reading secret: Using think-aloud to improve reading comprehension of L2 texts

**Mohammad Reza Esmaili**  
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### Introduction

Protocol analysis or think-aloud has been frequently used as a means of observing language learners' cognitive processing and strategies as they perform various tasks. It has been popular in the field of cognitive science and psychology because the data obtained from protocol analysis allows researchers to observe, at some levels, the cognitive processes of subjects without influencing the sequencing of thoughts (Ericsson & Simon, 1998). In recent years, it has been actively employed in the field of applied linguistics and educational research in order to investigate strategies learners use in first and second languages. The assumption that underlies protocol analysis is that researchers can infer learners' underlying thought processes by analyzing their verbalization. Think-aloud requires participants to tell researchers what they are thinking and doing while performing a task. The participants are usually instructed to keep thinking aloud, acting as if they are alone in the room speaking to themselves. Think-aloud protocols are tape- and/or video-recorded and then transcribed for content analysis (Yoshida, 2008).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of thinking aloud on L2 reading in relation to the type of task Iranian EFL readers engage in while reading activities. Subsequently, answers to the following questions are sought:

1. Is there any significant difference between traditional strategies and think-aloud strategies in EFL learners' reading comprehension performance when gender is concerned?
2. Is there any interaction between gender and the method of teaching on achievement in reading comprehension?
3. Is there any significant difference in the amount of comprehension of reading

passages between elementary male/female readers when they employ think-aloud strategies?

4. Is there any significant difference in the amount of comprehension of reading passages between intermediate male/female readers when they employ think-aloud strategies?
5. Is there any significant difference in the amount of comprehension of reading passages between advanced male/female readers when they think aloud?
6. Is there any significant difference between advanced male/female readers' answers when they are exposed to a questionnaire based on think-aloud strategies?

### Method

#### Subjects

The subjects of this study were second semester (first year) bachelor of English majors at Azad university, Ghaemshahr branch. 360 students were initially selected for the study and assigned to experimental and comparison groups. They were screened into three proficiency levels based on their performance on the TOEFL test (Test of English as a Foreign Language). Grouping was done based on the dispersion of the TOEFL scores around the mean.

#### Instrumentation

1. The instruments of this research study were as follows:
2. The Nelson Standard Reading Test Version (c), 1997 was applied as a pre-test and post-test.
3. A language proficiency test, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language, Sharp, 1989) was utilized to screen the subjects into three proficiency levels of low, intermediate, and high.
4. Seventeen elementary reading passages, seventeen intermediate, and seventeen advanced reading passages were used. The level of difficulty of all reading passages was determined through the Fox Index model. On the other hand, these passages were all piloted on the subjects with similar characteristics in order to remove the malfunctioning points and stabilize the proper one.
5. On the basis of the model by Baumann et al., (1993); Jourdenais et al., (1995) the think-aloud group in our study involved a variety of strategies that included asking questions, drawing on prior knowledge, assessing during reading comprehension by asking "Is this making sense?", predicting and verifying,

inferring unstated ideas, retelling and rereading, and reading on to clarify meaning.

6. The researcher used a think-aloud based questionnaire entailing thirty closed form items on the Likert Scale involving five rating scales: always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never. The items were constructed based on recommendations about think-aloud strategies for reading comprehension by Baumann et al. (1993) and Jourdenais et al. (1995) .

## Procedures

In order to determine if the think-aloud is an effective technique for helping students learn to monitor their comprehension, the subjects were screened into three proficiency levels based on the TOEFL test. Grouping was done based on the dispersion of the TOEFL scores around the mean. The subjects were divided into low, intermediate and high groups. Each proficiency group was divided into a think-aloud (experimental) group and a non-think-aloud (comparison) group. Then, the Nelson Standard Reading Test Version (c), 1997 was administered as a pre-test to probe the subjects' differences in their entry level and to determine the homogeneity of the group.

After designating twelve groups based on their determined levels, the researcher prepared 17 reading passages for the high-level readers, 17 reading passages for the medium-level readers, and 17 reading passages for the low-level readers through the Fox Index model recommended by Farhady et al. (1994). The experimental group went through two aspects of experimental treatment a) training in think-aloud and b) reading lessons where think-aloud and class discussion were instrumental in the instruction given. Whereas, those in the comparison group had the traditional approach for reading comprehension, the subjects in a think-aloud group were instructed to verbalize whatever they were thinking as their thought naturally came to mind while reading and doing the assigned tasks. They were told to think aloud during their reading either in Persian or a combination of Persian and English. Students listened to a sample tape of a think-aloud task. It was important to explain to them that the purpose of listening to the sample tape was not to imitate it but to demonstrate what a think-aloud task would be like. Then they practiced think-aloud while reading the passages. When they started a sample reading passage, they also started the tape recorder and never stopped it until they finished the think-aloud task. These recorded verbalizations were transcribed and encoded for later analysis. The activities and procedures in the training

session were taken from or adapted from procedures suggested by Baumann et al., (1993) and Jourdenais et al., (1995).

In the last phase of the study, the researcher distributed a think-aloud questionnaire to 60 senior students – 30 male and 30 female - majoring in English translation at the Islamic Azad University of Ghaemshahr Branch to highlight the probable differences between the two sexes while answering these questions.

To check the effectiveness of the think-aloud instruction, a post-test was administered to both groups. Having collected the data the researcher processed the data using the statistical package for social sciences in order to provide answers to the research questions.

Results.

Following an ANOVA test it was revealed that subjects were homogeneous in terms of their language proficiency prior to the administration of the treatments.

Next, a two-way ANOVA was run to investigate the effects of gender on the subjects, the teaching methods of reading and the interaction between these two variables on the performance of the subjects in the post-test.

Based on the F-observed value it could be claimed that the method of teaching did not have any significant effect on the performance of the subjects in the post-test. However, the F-observed value for the interaction between the gender of the subjects and the teaching methods on the performance of the subjects in the post-test indicated that the traditional and think-aloud methods had significant effects on the performance of the female subjects only. The traditional method decreased the female subjects' performance, while the think-aloud method increased their performance. However, the two methods were of almost equal importance for the male subjects. Thus, it could be claimed that there was a significant difference between gender and the method of teaching in the achievement of reading comprehension.

In addition, a two-way ANOVA was run to investigate the effects of the gender of the subjects, their proficiency level and the interaction between these two variables on the performance of the subjects in the post-test. Based on the gained results it could be concluded that there was a significant difference between the female and male subjects mean scores in the post-test. Thus, it could be claimed that the gender variable had a significant effect on the performance of the subjects in the post-test since the female subjects performed better than the male subjects.

Since there is no significant effect on the proficiency levels in the performance of the subjects in the post-test, it could be claimed that the proficiency level did not have any significant effect in the performance of the subjects in the post-test. The results also indicated that the gender of the subjects had a significant effect on their performance in the post-test only. The proficiency level did not have a significant effect and at all three proficiency levels the female subjects performed better than the male subjects. Hence, it could be claimed that there was not any significant interaction between the gender of the subjects and their proficiency levels.

The last phase of this study dealt with the qualitative investigation. In this phase the researcher used a questionnaire to elicit the required data. The analytical procedures appear below.

Table1: Distribution of choices made by Female and Male subjects

		GENDER CHOICES DISTRIBUTION					Total	
		Choices						
		never often	seldom always	sometimes				
Gender	Female	Count	19	92	178	266	349	904
		% within Gender	2.1%	10.2%	19.7%	29.4%	38.6%	100.0%
Total	Male	Count	89	156	222	241	191	899
		% within Gender	9.9%	17.4%	24.7%	26.8%	21.2%	100.0%
		Count	108	248	400	507	540	1803
		% within Gender	6.0%	13.8%	22.2%	28.1%	30.0%	100.0%

As table 1 illustrates, the chi-squared observed value exceeded the critical  $X^2$  value. Thus there were significant differences between advanced male/female readers' answers when they were exposed to the questionnaire and the corresponding null-hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion and conclusion

The results of the statistical analysis pointed to statistically significant differences between the performance of reading comprehension measures of the experimental and comparison group. In other words, the experimental group outperformed the comparison group in reading comprehension. Hence, the instructional procedure had contributed to the improvement of EFL students' reading comprehension. This finding supports the use of think-aloud in reading instruction as advocated by researchers like Nist and Kirby (1989), Oster (2001), and Yoshida (2008). Additionally, it corroborates the findings

from empirical studies, e.g. Baumann, Jones, and Seifert-Kessel (1993), Bereiter and Bird (1985), and Thurmand (1986) that examined the effect of think-aloud on reading comprehension in general and reading strategies in particular.

In addition, the prominent pedagogical implications in this research correspond with what Woods (1996) believes. Woods (1996, p.76) postulated that guidelines for good practice in schools should not focus on discriminating between boys and girls, i.e. offering actual as well as formal equability of opportunity. Accordingly, the problem of equity towards different genders and their specific thinking abilities have remarkably been ignored in the prevalent educational curriculums. The bias and unfairness towards one gender has negatively influenced the teaching materials. So the experience of analyzing students' think-aloud protocols may give an opportunity for language teachers to become more sensitized to various comprehension problems that students encounter and offer clues to understand potential weaknesses that students may have in their L2 reading.

Also, as far as teaching methods and assessments are concerned most teachers and language practitioners still resort to traditional strategies of teaching passages for reading comprehension. By virtue of the acquired results in this study and the researchers' class observations, educational authorities are required to train language instructors so that they might avail themselves of thinking strategies in their reading comprehension classes. Moreover, regarding language teaching and assessment the gender of learners is usually neglected in language textbooks and classroom environments. The authorities of language teaching and learning are required to incorporate certain methodologies according to the gender of learners to facilitate the development of language teaching and learning.

By and large, the findings suggest that using think-aloud works well for helping students develop an ability to monitor their reading comprehension and to employ fix-up strategies when they detect comprehension difficulties.

Although there are some limitations of the protocol analysis as a method, think-aloud protocols offer potentially a valuable source of information about L2 reading to researchers. In the future, further research will be needed in order to investigate the validity and reliability of think-aloud protocols in L2 reading research.

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## Eclipsing Bilingual Performances: How To Get Yourself Heard

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## Eclipsing Bilingual Performances: How To Get Yourself Heard

*Meral Güçeri*  
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Oral presentation is known to be a life skill, therefore, is considered to be an indispensable component of any teaching and learning context. There is a misconception that great speakers have the innate ability to stand in front of an audience with no anxiety to give a moving and dynamic speech. Great speakers however, spend some time to learn the basics of speech such as organization, preparation and delivery. They also develop strategies to deal with anxiety. Hence, Sabancı University provides learners with the opportunity to improve their public speaking skills by developing oral presentation skills not only in the English language, which is the medium of instruction, but also in the mother tongue, Turkish. The purpose is to create bilingual graduates who communicate in both languages fluently.

### Introduction

There does not seem to be any research which attempts to examine how Turkish learners who study at university perform both in English and Turkish oral presentations when they are assigned the role of a presenter. Departing from this point, the purpose of this study is to investigate student performance in oral presentations in their native language L1 (Turkish) and also in English language (L2) as it is the medium of their study at the university.

To reach this goal the research focused on the answers to the following questions:

- How well do learners express their thoughts and opinions orally in L1 and L2?
- In which language are they more confident and or successful?

In addition sub-questions were designed to reveal explicitly the impact of the method and materials that are used in L1 (TLL-Turkish Language and

Literature- 101 and TLL102) and L2 (ENG-English- 101 and ENG 102) classes.

This research study is designed as a qualitative case study, with the hope that oral presentation skills could be revised and improved in both English and Turkish lessons according to the results obtained. Learners, a TLL instructor and an ENG instructor got involved in data collection, collation and evaluation processes.

The study is composed of four components: Introduction, method, results and discussion. The purpose of the study is not only to explore learner performance and behavior in L1 and L2 oral presentation skills in TLL and ENG courses, but also to see the similarities and differences between the feedback provided by the researchers and peers (learners).

### Method

A qualitative research method was preferred, and survey and interviewing techniques were employed.

### Data collection

The study was carried out in 2 semesters, Fall 2009 and Spring 2010. Data collection was completed in 3 hours a week for 9 weeks in TLL and ENG courses each semester.

7 male and 3 female freshmen got involved in the study. Their majors were as follows: 2 Management, 5 Engineering and 3 Social Sciences. Ten subjects, who took TLL 101& TLL 102 and ENG 101 & ENG 102 from the researchers, were identified and approached to get their consent for the study. Oral presentation tasks for TLL and ENG courses were not the same in nature but students were required to do oral presentations which led to whole class discussions. Tasks for both courses were demanding, moreover, students in ENG 101 and 102 were also required to do initial research, to design a power point presentation and to use APA citations on slides.

Researchers jointly designed data collection tools for the oral presentation observations and peer feedback. While students in groups did oral presentations in TLL and ENG classes, both researchers were present and they used data collection tools which focused on research, organization,

content, interaction and delivery. Another important aspect of the study was pre and post oral presentation tutorials which were conducted in the presence of both researchers and upon presenter's convenience. Post-oral presentation tutorials involved the self reflections of group members which were followed by the researchers' reflections. These sessions were video recorded if / when the group members allowed. As soon as a group presentation was completed in the classroom, peers (students –audience) provided the presenters with individual feedback online. That is, the class was split into 4 groups and each group gave either content, organization, delivery or language feedback to the presenters. So, each presenter could receive peer feedback in one area from at least 3 or 4 peers.

## Results

Results were collated under the following headings due to the nature of data collection tools used:

Content consisted of knowledge of subject material, research, and relevance of information, demonstration of a thorough understanding of the topic, originality of the content or approach.

Researcher feedback and peer feedback have not correlated all the time. For example; even though both researchers scored the same for content in ENG and TLL presentation performance, peer feedback appeared to be low in ENG but high in TLL. Mismatch in originality was also observed.

Regarding in depth understanding of the subject matter and existence of adequate content, researchers' scores correlated with peer feedback. However, there was a mismatch between the ENG and TLL researchers' originality feedback, that is, the content of the presentations in TLL was more original as it scored higher than ENG presentations.

Organization meant that the ideas should follow a logical order so they would be understood clearly. Researcher and peer feedback correlated in organization.

Delivery meant that the presenter had to follow oral presentation conventions, speak clearly and follow the academic genre. S/he was expected to adapt her/his style to the subject, purpose and audience, use effective body language, which were listed as eye contact, tone of voice, gestures and postures.

Researchers have found the presenters slightly more confident when they did their presentations in L1. However, when the use of academic genre was concerned, findings revealed that the presenters were more capable of using academic genre in L2. Use of voice, eye contact, gestures and postures in both languages were the same.

When eye contact gestures and postures were concerned, researchers' feedback correlated well with eye contact in both L1 and L2. Very low tone of voice and avoidance of eye-to-eye contact with the audience was observed in not only TLL but also ENG oral presentations.

Students had the tendency to read from their notes which was not desirable. Moreover, presenters kept their hands at their sides, performed with a lack of confidence and did not smile during their oral presentations. There was a mismatch between the researcher feedback and peer feedback in these areas.

Use of Powerpoint Presentations and Audio Visual Aids are an indispensable component of any oral presentation. Use of an audio-visual material's component highlighted effective integration of required audio-video materials by checking their quality, legibility and correct citation. This component was only relevant to ENG 101 and 102 presentations. Researchers' feedback correlates with peer feedback in effective design but do not eclipse in use.

Interaction, which is the ability to interact with the audience, ensures how well the presenter answers the questions. The presenters were more capable in dealing with instant questions and answers in L1 presentations. However, when the number of questions was concerned in overall interaction, presenters tended to be more interactive in L2. Attitude to questions was identified as an area to be dealt with.

Presenters displayed hostility to those who asked questions. They were either extremely defensive or did not answer the questions as desired. Lack of concentration to the answers given in both TLL and ENG presentations was observed.

Language involved fluency, accuracy and choice of subject specific vocabulary. Students were equally fluent and accurate in both L1 and L2 presentations. They have used a variety of subject specific jargon in L1 and L2. Language accuracy for peer feedback was slightly higher in L1 compared to L2. Hence, in L2 they used a wide range of vocabulary from their sources by integrating in-text citations in APA format both on slides and during the delivery.

## Conclusion and Discussion

The study revealed that oral presentation skills need to be practiced to improve organization, delivery and preparation. Public speaking obviously creates anxiety, therefore, speakers (oral presenters) should be encouraged to take risks and they should 'get their feet wet'. In order to accomplish successful public speaking, more time should be dedicated to the above mentioned sub skills such as research, content, organization, delivery, interaction and language at all levels of education.

Delivery skills are considered to be vitally important and need improvement. Therefore, oral presentations should be integrated into school curriculums at very early ages such as play school, primary and secondary education and also in all language programs. Furthermore, genre, audience and purpose should be stressed in teaching oral presentations to eclipse instructor-learner expectations.

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## Eclipsed by English

### Hakki Doğan Dalay

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## Eclipsed by English

*Hakkı Doğan Dalay*

The eclipsing expectations conference has been a great opportunity for many people with radically different language experiences to come together and share whatever stood out among their experiences. I would like to start by briefly describing my educational background: I went to a public primary school in my hometown, after which I attended the only high school for the talented and gifted students in Turkey, TEV İnanc High School. After graduation I received a full-scholarship grant from Sabancı University where I am currently a senior student majoring in Economics.

My presentation features a comparison of my English and German learning experiences. Although I am fluent in English, I could not attain the same success in German.

One of the aspects I believe is interesting in my case is the fact that I started learning German before English. Hence, my very first formal encounter with a foreign language was with German. I started taking German courses in a student club in second grade. That went on for a year until the earthquake in 1999, which took my family two years to recover from the psychological spill-over it created. Then, I had another three years of private German tutoring. What followed was a German elective in high school. On the other hand, my first formal encounter with English was when I was in fourth grade in primary school. English has been the medium of instruction in most of the courses I have taken in the past eight years. I have been attending Model UN conferences for the past eight years, all of which featured debate sessions in English. All of these conferences had native speakers of English, most of these conferences had very few non-native English speakers. Apart from these, I attended a summer school in Boston University when I was in high school, and in the summer of 2010 I participated in an internship in France, throughout which I communicated in English. I was a constant participant in the English Drama Club of my high school, and I pioneered the first initiative to start an English Drama Ensemble at Sabancı University. Although these details cover major parts of my English experience, I should also mention that I use English as part of my every-day encounters, while reading news, books etc. Hence, utilizing

this foreign language in various activities especially through oral interaction was an important factor in my language learning experience.

Besides constantly using the language, it is important to be able to establish a close relationship with the instructor. During my German learning experience before high school I had almost no connection with my German teachers outside of the classroom. When we occasionally met up we never used German as a medium for communication. Hence, I barely got any chance to practice my German outside the classroom. Actually, now when I look back, it does not take long to make a list of people I communicated with in German, except those who I met in Switzerland.

My high school was a boarding school with many international teachers, most of whom were unable to speak Turkish. Trying to communicate with these teachers in a foreign language was a challenge that I enjoyed. The nature of my struggle to learn English was thus based on voluntary action, which was fun since we were always organizing either a new drama performance or some other extra-curricular activity. Although I received a similar opportunity with German at high school, everybody was busy learning English, or practicing English and unfortunately no one was paying that much attention to German. Thus I realized that close encounters with speakers of a foreign language allows for the best possible learning and practice opportunity.

A final point I would like to make is the age factor in foreign language learning. As mentioned above, although I started learning German two years before I started learning English, I have not been able to build up on my German as easily as I did on my English. Besides many factors that might affect this outcome, I would have expected that after more than 7 years of learning German I should be at least as good as in English. Yet, my language competencies in English are far better than those in German. I can therefore conclude that starting to learn a foreign language at an early age may not necessarily yield a more positive outcome than learning a foreign language at a later age.

All in all, my experience has shown that speaking and building up close relationships with speakers of the foreign language help the most in learning a foreign language.



## Voices in Curriculum and Instruction: Integrating Alaska Native Culture and Language

**Claudia S. Dybdahl**  
**James H. Powell**

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## Voices in Curriculum and Instruction: Integrating Alaska Native Culture and Language

*Claudia S. Dybdahl*  
*James H. Powell*

“For many centuries whites scorned the knowledge of American Indians, regarding whatever the people said as gross, savage, superstition and insisting that their own view of the world, a complex mixture of folklore, religious doctrine, and Greek natural sciences, was the highest intellectual achievement of our species ” (p 1). So said, Vine Deloria, the prominent American Indian, writer, philosopher and activist in his book “Power and Place: Indian Education in America.” Unfortunately, Mr. Deloria’s characterization is supported by historical facts and, with few exceptions, continues to represent the status quo.

Since the beginning of the exploration and settlement of America by European immigrants in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, American Indians and Alaska Natives have been displaced and disrespected. Indigenous peoples were in fact considered the “Indian problem” throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and various policies such as forced relocation and the establishment of Indian reservations were implemented to isolate tribes and to force assimilation. Throughout this time educational policies also adhered to the goal of eradication of Indian cultures. Means of earning a livelihood, as through farming or various vocations, were tied to mandatory schooling for Indian children and in many communities, education and religion were completely confounded as missionaries were both the religious figures and the school teachers. Off-reservation boarding schools were established for Indian children, e.g., the Carlisle School in Pennsylvania, and young children were removed from their communities for years at a time in attempts to destroy tribal sovereignty and Indian cultures. Strict policies forbidding the use of Indigenous languages, foods, dress, religion, etc. were imposed in both missionary and boarding school settings with the aim of “Kill the Indian to save the man.” Western culture dominated the curricula and practice.

Beginning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century government goals and policies began to shift. In 1928 the Miriam Report was released and stated, “The philosophy underlying

the establishment of Indian boarding schools, that the way to ‘civilize’ the Indian is to take Indian children, even very young children, as completely as possible away from their home and family life, is at variance with modern views of education and social work...” While the thinking represented in this Report was ahead of its time, it was, nevertheless, a cornerstone for new policy. Under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, for example, the goal of education policy became cultural development as opposed to cultural eradication.

Nevertheless, in 1970, President Richard Nixon in response to the continuing failure of government policy declared unequivocally that “The time has come to break decisively with the past and to create the conditions for a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions.” Again, however, in 1991 the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force declared that the educational system continued to fail Indigenous youth and was characterized by: unfriendly school climates; Eurocentric curriculum; low teacher expectations; lack of Native educators as role models; and overt and subtle racism. Current (2011) educational policy, “No Child Left Behind (NCLB),” initiated by President George W. Bush in 2001, administers assessments in English only and tests curricula that continue to be exclusively representative of Western culture. The NCLB climate effectively puts schools that integrate local cultures or that include Indigenous language instruction at a severe disadvantage. Nationally, American Indian students continue to be underserved by the educational system. Alaska Native youth, also and in general, have not thrived under the Alaska state school system. Educational achievement in K-12 schools tends to be low and dropout rates high.

The purpose of this paper is to describe an innovative teacher preparation program that is being piloted by the University of Alaska Anchorage and that seeks to integrate Indigenous and Western knowledge bases, practices and languages. Due to a confluence of factors the program was developed and is being implemented in the community of Chevak, Alaska which is an off-road Bering Sea coastal community located in the Yukon-Kuskokwim River Delta. The Cup’ik people of Chevak (90% of the population) are considered to be Yup’ik Eskimos but they have their own dialect and are a historically distinct group. Most certified teachers in Chevak, however, are English-only speakers who come from outside the community. Separate and isolated housing for teachers has been constructed. Teacher turnover rate is high. Student achievement is low. The data in Table 1 below illustrate that in grade 6 the percentage of students who are not proficient in basic skills over a five year period has ranged from 45.45 to 73.07 and there is no discernable pattern of improvement.

Table 1: Chevak, Alaska  
 “Kashunamiut School District Alaska State Test Results:  
 California Achievement Test, Grade 6”

From: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Website

<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>Reading Not Proficient</b>	<b>Writing Not Proficient</b>	<b>Math Not Proficient</b>
2005-06	68.70	71.9	62.6
2006-07	56.67	70.59	61.11
2007-08	64.00	73.07	46.15
2008-09	68.75	62.50	56.25
2009-10	57.14	72.73	45.45

Among the factors that led to the establishment of this innovative teacher education program was the commitment of the College of Education at the University of Alaska Anchorage to multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching. Despite this commitment, however, and faced with a set of alarming data and a history of Alaska Native students being underserved by the school system, faculty engaged in a serious study of the research that addressed education for Indigenous peoples in the hopes of being able to contribute to the breaking of the cycle.

Theorists Grande, Castagno and Brayboy, and Ongtooguk and Dybdahl converge in their criticisms of the prevalent conceptions of multicultural education. Grande condemns the predominant conception of culturally relevant teaching (CRT) as being limited to sociocultural considerations and the promotion of multicultural harmony and inclusion. Likewise Castagno and Brayboy suggest that CRT has been reduced to meaningless generalizations and trivial anecdotes and has changed neither school systems nor school practices. Ongtooguk and Dybdahl discuss the continued widespread dissemination of racial stereotypes and the educational system’s perpetuation of positive, but unexamined, generalizations.

This same body of literature also addresses a reconceptualization of multicultural education. Sandy Grande states that issues of identity for Indigenous populations must be framed in relationship to the political, historical and economic histories that include struggles over tribal land, resources, treaty rights, etc. Ongtooguk and Dybdahl also stress the importance of the

political history, specifically in terms of the Constitutional framework that establishes the unique status of tribal governments and dual citizenship for Indigenous groups. Castagno and Brayboy talk about the importance of integrating Indigenous epistemologies into the school curricula and the necessity of directly dealing with issues of racism. Significantly, all of these theorists agree that schools must promote discussion and examination of the political aims of Indigenous societies in the United States for sovereignty and self-determination. Grande states that schools are places that provide students “...the social and intellectual space to reimagine what it means to be Indian in contemporary U.S. society, arming them with a critical analysis of the interesting systems of domination and the tools to navigate them (p 241).”

These ideas had a profound impact on the thinking of the UAA teacher education faculty. The narrow construction of culturally relevant teaching to ‘feel good’ practice was harshly critiqued and its ineffectiveness exposed. However, the theoretical framework described by post colonial researchers offered direction and the project goal was eventually formulated as one of: Preparing Alaska Native teachers who are knowledgeable about Western and Indigenous cultures through the

- Inclusion of members of the community, including elders and tribal government as partners in developing teachers
- Recognition of students as peers and an examination of the curriculum and teaching methodologies from both Western and Indigenous perspectives
- Conception of Indigenous teachers as professionals who use their skills and competencies to design models of education that support their communities and peoples and that liberate them from the imposition of models based solely on Western thought and practice

Practice, curricula and self-perception in the certification program would have to be upended in order for this goal to be met but highlights of some activities accomplished during the first full year of implementation (2010-2011) demonstrate that significant progress has been made.

The year began with a listening circle that was held in Chevak and attended by Cup’ik elders, Kashunamiut School District administrators, teachers and teaching assistants, as well as UAA faculty and staff. The history, hopes and vision for education that were expressed in this circle were vital in helping

UAA instructors select and shape the courses that would be offered during the 2010-11 academic year. Further, the superintendent of schools kept the ideas on each school board agenda throughout the year so that the community's vision for education would continue to be constructed and refined. The district's teaching assistant staff, most of whom are Alaska Native and enrolled in the program, were asked to begin attending faculty meetings for the first time in recent memory.

Courses were strategically selected for launching the program. A required course in Child Development was selected as the first course to be delivered on-site in the Fall of 2010 and the content enabled both the students and the UAA instructor to begin co-constructing the curriculum. The instructor began by presenting the traditional syllabus and initiating a discussion with the students regarding the integration of Cup'ik culture, language and history. Students, as parents, experienced teaching assistants and members of the Cup'ik community, modified and added to the course goals and objectives. The traditional models of emotional/social, physical and cognitive development, for example, were expanded to include spirituality and cultural respect. This experience not only changed the nature of the course content but also helped students to understand their peer role in contributing to the class. When Vygotsky's theory of development was presented, for example, a wave of excitement occurred as students immediately related it to widely held cultural beliefs about how children learn and grow. The rich discussion that resulted from students making this connection reflects the switch from the traditional dominant/subordinate relationship between students and instructor to one of peers.

It is essential that students connect the content of their courses to the community if students are to be prepared not only as teachers but also as future community leaders. An important discussion in this regard occurred in relationship to language acquisition when students related language learning to Cup'ik culture and reflected on the integral relationship between language and culture. Students have now requested that Cup'ik language be added as a component to the program so that they can continue to develop their Cup'ik language competencies and be better able, as teachers, to assist the children in both the Cup'ik and English languages. This vision is a significant departure from the cultural assumptions that underlie most teacher preparation programs in the United States.

The first year of program implementation was a huge step in moving from a University faculty's imagination to a community's reality. We, the students, the faculty and the community, are demonstrating that past practice need not constrain possibility and we are hopeful that our work will result in a powerful new paradigm that fundamentally shakes the thinking of the establishment in terms of education for Indigenous peoples.

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## Hearing Different Voices on Academic Writing Courses

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## Hearing Different Voices on Academic Writing Courses

*S. Yasemin Tezgiden*

Program evaluation lies at the heart of the systematic curriculum development process (Brown, 1995), as it holds all the other elements of a curriculum together. Brown (1995, p. 218) asserts that program evaluation has two purposes: “the promotion of improvement and the assessment of effectiveness.” Therefore, a systematic evaluation of any program is intended to improve current practice with the insight it provides to the stakeholders. This study investigating the effectiveness of two freshman academic writing courses at the Foreign Language Education (FLE) department of a research university in central Turkey intends to shed light on the effectiveness of the academic writing component of the program to inform future curriculum development efforts.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions at the end of the evaluation procedure:

- 1) How effective are first-year academic writing courses (FLE 135 Advanced Reading and Writing I and FLE 136 Advanced Reading and Writing II) in preparing FLE students for the third year FLE 311 Advanced Writing and Research Skills course in terms of developing their academic writing competencies?
  - a) *How competent are FLE junior students who take the FLE 311 Advanced Writing and Research Skills course perceived to be in terms of academic writing by students themselves and by their instructors?*
  - b) *How effective are FLE 135 Advanced Reading and Writing I and FLE 136 Advanced Reading and Writing II courses perceived to be, according to students themselves and their instructors, in terms of providing students with academic writing competencies?*

## Description of the Program

The Foreign Language Education Program evaluated in this study is a four-year undergraduate program at a research university in central Turkey aiming to train prospective English language teachers. The current FLE program was prepared in accordance with the program introduced by the Council of Higher Education in 2006. The program offers only three English writing courses. Two of them are integrated with reading skills. The third writing course is a combination of writing with research skills. The course offered in the first semester aims to develop writing skills at the paragraph level, whereas the second semester course intends to develop essay writing skills together with basic research skills. The fifth semester course, however, is an Advanced Writing and Research Skills course, which focuses mainly on conducting research.

## Participants

This study was conducted with the participation of students and instructors at the department of Foreign Language Education. 68 randomly selected students out of 110 students taking the FLE 311 Advanced Writing and Research Skills course in the fall semester of 2010-2011 academic year participated in the study. Six instructors also took part in the study, three of whom were teaching the FLE 311 course at the time the study was conducted. The rest of the instructors were teachers who had given FLE 135 and 136 courses when the participant students were freshman.

## Data Collection and Analysis

This study used two instruments: questionnaires and focused interviews. The questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed to collect information on the students' perceived academic writing competencies as well as their views on the effectiveness of freshman academic writing courses in a relatively structured manner. The focused interviews (Appendix B), however, were used so that participants would be able to express issues of concern to them in a more flexible manner.

Three different questionnaires were used in the study: student questionnaires, FLE 311 instructors' questionnaires and FLE 135 and 136 teachers' questionnaires. They were developed by the researcher based on Şallı-Çopur's (2008) questionnaire. The reliability of the student questionnaire (Alpha=.980) was verified through reliability analysis results in PASW 18 (Predictive Analytics Software). The closed-ended items in the questionnaire were developed based on the general aims of the FLE 135 and 136 courses as well

as the academic writing competencies in the literature. The questionnaire was piloted with the participation of FLE students and instructors before it took its final shape. The questionnaires were all administered in English, as the participants had advanced level English proficiency.

This study also used focused interviews to be able to gain in-depth knowledge about the perceptions of the participants. 9 students and 6 teachers were interviewed. All interviews, except one interview with an instructor, were conducted in Turkish so that the conversation would flow more naturally. The relevant parts to be used in this research report were later translated by the researcher.

To analyze the quantitative data of the study, the responses given to the closed-ended items of the questionnaires were coded in the statistics program called PASW 18 and descriptive statistics were run. The responses given to the open ended questions in the questionnaire and the transcripts of the interviews were analyzed thematically.

## Evaluation Findings

### Perceptions of academic writing competencies

The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data indicated that FLE junior students found themselves competent (with a mean of 3.63 out of 5) in academic writing skills although they did not think they reached excellence in academic writing. When student responses to the separate items are examined, it is seen that students feel competent in paraphrasing, summarizing, internet research and writing clearly, correct and appropriate sentences. However, their competence in giving citations is perceived to be the lowest. This shows that students' perceptions of their competencies follow a certain order from simple skills (writing sentences) to higher order skills (writing essays and referencing). Out of 9 students who participated in the interviews, 7 stated that they had problems in giving in-text and end-text citations, as they had not studied how to give references earlier in FLE 135 or 136. The student voices below display their complaints:

**Student 1:** *I have real difficulty in giving references. In freshman courses, we were not taught how to give citations. We didn't focus on research skills, either.*

**Student 3:** *I don't know if I have plagiarized or not. The instructor says some of the students have already failed the course because of plagiarism. But I don't know who they are, if I am among them or not.*

**Student 4:** *I thought there was no need to give in-text citations when I paraphrased. So my first draft was terrible. The instructor wrote plagiarism everywhere on my paper.*

When students were asked about their weaknesses in academic writing during the interviews, most of them talked about the problem of organizing ideas into a unified and coherent whole, as the following sequences of interviews display:

**Student 6:** *I don't think I am bad at writing. But when it comes to academic writing, you know, you have to pay a lot of attention to organization and things like that.*

**Student 8:** *In general, I find myself good at writing. But academic writing is different. I think I have problems with unity.*

However, FLE 311 instructors were not as positive as (with a mean value of 2.58) the learners about FLE students' academic writing competencies. Teacher interviews supported the low opinion of instructors revealed in the statistical analysis. Unlike student interviews, a common thread in FLE 311 teacher interviews about learners' academic writing competencies was students' level of proficiency in English. For FLE 311 instructors, learners' English writing skills were not sophisticated enough. According to the instructors, learners had many problems in grammar, as mentioned in the following excerpt taken from an interview:

**Instructor 1:** *Even with a very frequent word like research, obviously this is a research skills course, they still in their last draft wrote "researches." Same with data, they don't know if it is, you know, data, datas or ..*

FLE 311 instructors also reported that after realizing students did not know much about giving citations, they provided them with some guidelines about giving references. However, students were not able to benefit from the information given in the guidelines, as mentioned in the following lines:

**Instructor 1:** *A lot of them did not even know they have to write references from A to Z... Especially in-text citations, they had problems. Although I've repeatedly told them that you need to use the last name of the author comma the year when you're doing in-text citations, even in their last drafts they used first and second names with no year.*

**Instructor 2:** *Another thing is plagiarism. Students have old habits, of course. Defining plagiarism was important, at first.*

FLE 311 instructors also talked about the significance of critical thinking skills for academic writing, which was not an issue for the learners. They emphasized that students need to be able to read texts or research articles with a critical eye, as can be seen from the teacher voice below:

**Instructor 3:** *Most importantly, they aren't still able to evaluate other people's work. This is the biggest problem. Some of them can do that. But others, they just summarize what others have written.*

The analyses of the data reveal one striking difference in the perceptions of students and teachers about FLE students' academic writing competencies: while most FLE junior students think that they are competent in academic writing in general with some areas of weakness to be improved, FLE 311 instructors do not think FLE junior learners' level of academic writing competence is satisfactory.

### Perceptions of course effectiveness

Learner responses show freshman academic writing courses were perceived as effective in general (with a mean score of 3.39 out of 5). However, they were not considered as highly effective, as students thought there were still some problems in these courses. In fact, student perceptions of effectiveness differed depending on the instructor of the course. While some students perceived these courses to be highly effective, some thought they were totally ineffective, as the student voices below indicate:

**Student 10:** *In my opinion, the competencies I learnt in FLE 136 course helped me a lot not just in 311 but in all the essays I have written.*

**Student 19:** *Of course there is contribution of this course to FLE students, but if the syllabus is applied effectively during the semester, it'd be better. Some instructors of this course are not able to follow the syllabus or teach how students can write academic papers.*

**Student 22:** *They absolutely do not provide prerequisite knowledge for 311. The first time I learned APA style, citation, etc. was in the 311 course. However, these things should have been taught in 135 and 136.*

As for the instructors who taught these courses, they were more positive than the students (with a mean value of 3.77). Yet, they were aware of the problems. During the interviews, they underlined the structural problems in the FLE department and program: crowded classes, limited number of contact hours (3 hours a week), integration of reading and writing skills in one course, the lack of connection and coordination between these two courses, and the lack of guidance offered to novice teachers who were to teach this course for the first time.

### Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that FLE junior students are perceived to be competent in academic writing to a certain extent both by the students and the instructors. Yet, both students and teachers think that FLE students have certain weaknesses in academic writing that need to be improved. As for the reported effectiveness of freshman writing courses, students have differing views based on the instructor of the course. When it comes to teachers' views on the effectiveness of freshman writing courses, they thought these courses were not enough to prepare students for the junior level research course, since they could not cover all the necessary competencies due to certain limitations. In conclusion, this evaluation study revealed that the FLE 135 and 136 courses are effective only to a certain extent to prepare FLE students for the FLE 311 course in terms of academic writing competencies.

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## APPENDIX A

### STUDENT SURVEY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FRESHMAN WRITING COURSES AT FLE

Dear FLE students,

This questionnaire is part of a project conducted for the evaluation of first year Advanced Reading and Writing Courses I and II (FLE 135 & 136). The data collected through this questionnaire will be used in a PhD project. The aim of the project is to determine to what extent FLE 135 and 136 Advanced Reading and Writing Courses help students gain competence in academic writing skills and how effective these courses are in preparing students to third year FLE 311 Advanced Writing and Research course. For the success of the investigation, please do not leave out any questions and give sincere answers. In the questionnaire, you will respond to two questions for each statement: one on how competent you are in academic writing and the other on how effective you find FLE 135 and 136 courses in helping you gain the academic writing competencies. Your identity and answers to the questionnaire will be kept completely confidential, and the results of the questionnaire will only be used for research purposes.

If you would like to get further information about this questionnaire, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your participation.

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### PART I – Please circle the appropriate box for the following statements.

As a learner of English, how competent are you in the academic writing competencies listed below?					Academic writing competencies	How effective were FLE 135 and 136 courses in helping you gain the academic writing competencies listed below?				
Highly competent	Competent	Undecided	Somewhat competent	Incompetent		Highly effective	Effective	Undecided	Somewhat effective	Ineffective
5	4	3	2	1	1. Analyzing different types of paragraphs (e.g. expository, descriptive, narrative, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	2. Producing different types of paragraphs (e.g. expository, descriptive, narrative, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	3. Outlining a paragraph	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	4. Writing a topic sentence	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5. Developing supporting ideas (majors and minors)	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	6. Achieving paragraph unity, i.e. all the sentences should relate to the main idea.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	7. Achieving paragraph coherence, i.e. all the ideas hold together logically and flow smoothly, with transitions, keywords, etc.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	8. Writing clear, correct and appropriate sentences	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	9. Spelling and punctuation	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	10. Carrying out the stages in process writing (brainstorming, narrowing down a topic, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	11. Analyzing different types of essays (comparison-contrast, cause-effect, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	12. Producing different types of essays (comparison – contrast, cause-effect, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	13. Writing a thesis statement	5	4	3	2	1

5	4	3	2	1	14. Outlining essays	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	15. Writing effective introduction and conclusion paragraphs	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	16. Developing the body of an essay	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	17. Writing a good title	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	18. Producing unified essays, i.e. all the paragraphs support the thesis statement.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	19. Producing coherent essays, i.e. all the paragraphs connect smoothly to each other, by using transitions, linking words, etc.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	20. Revising and editing your own essay	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	21. Using academic sources in an essay	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	22. Evaluating sources for relevance and reliability	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	23. Conducting library search for an academic purpose	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	24. Conducting internet search for an academic purpose	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	25. Paraphrasing	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	26. Summarizing a paragraph	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	27. Summarizing a long text	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	28. Synthesizing, i.e. analyzing and integrating information	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	29. Introducing quotations and paraphrases by using appropriate reporting verbs	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	30. Identifying bibliographical information	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	31. Citing reference (in-text reference)	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	32. Citing reference (end-text reference)	5	4	3	2	1

**Part II. Please answer the following questions.**

- 1) Please indicate academic writing competencies (at most 3) from the above list you would want to further develop in FLE 135 and 136 courses.
  
- 2) Please indicate any other academic writing competencies you have gained other than those listed above, if any.
  
- 3) Please indicate any writing competency that you think should be left out from the FLE 135 and FLE 136 syllabi (indicate at most 3).
  
- 4) Do you think FLE 135 and FLE 136 courses provide FLE students with the academic writing competencies necessary for success in FLE 311 course? Why/Why not?

**PART III- Please fill in the following table.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	The name of the course instructor:
<b>In FLE 135 Academic Reading and Writing I, my academic writing ability has improved.</b>	5	4	3	2	1	
<b>In FLE 136 Academic Reading and Writing II, my academic writing ability has improved.</b>	5	4	3	2	1	

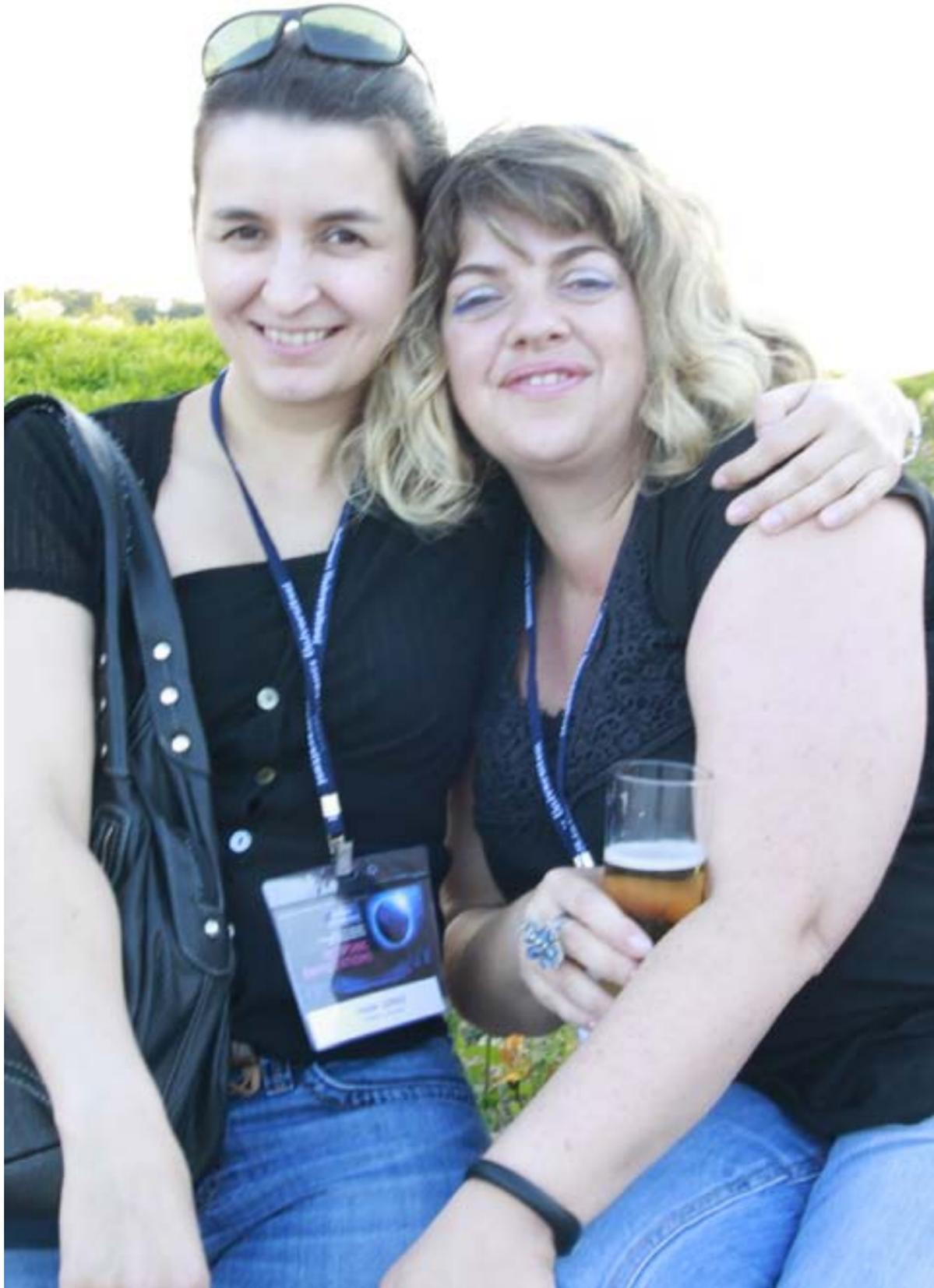
Please write your comments on the writing component of these courses (FLE 135 & 136):

Thank you for your cooperation. If you would like to participate in the interview phase of the study, please indicate your name, mobile phone number and email-address

**APPENDIX B**  
**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FLE 311 STUDENTS**

- 1) How do you evaluate your own academic writing competencies?
- 2) Do you think you have the academic writing competencies necessary for success in FLE 311 course? Why/Why not?
- 3) In which academic writing competencies do you think you are the weakest?
- 4) In which academic writing competencies do you think you are the strongest?
- 5) Before you take FLE 311 course, two courses are offered in order to improve the academic writing competencies of FLE students:  
  
FLE 135 Advanced Reading and Writing I  
FLE 136 Advanced Reading and Writing II  
  
Do you think that these courses prepared you for FLE 311 course in terms of developing your academic writing competence? Why/Why not?
- 6) What academic writing competencies should be focused most in FLE 135 & FLE 136 courses?
- 7) Do you have any other points you would like to mention?





## Learners' Voices on Vocabulary Learning

**Pınar Gündüz**

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## Learners' Voices on Vocabulary Learning

**Pınar Gündüz**

The size of the English language is estimated to be around 2 million words, with about 54,000 word families (Schmitt, 2000). Through formal instruction in class, we can only teach a fraction of these words due to the limited time available and the constraints imposed by other syllabus objectives. Thus, in class students rarely have the opportunity to thoroughly study and recycle target words. As most of vocabulary learning and vocabulary practice occurs outside the class, it is difficult to predict how and to what extent students are learning vocabulary, and which strategies they are employing to enable them to learn a new word. Thus, it is a question of whether learners create enough opportunities outside the class to compensate for the lack of repeated exposure necessary to retain, recall and use new words. Considering these factors, I wanted to explore whether the students were studying enough, using the right type of resources for different purposes, and employing the most effective strategies.

To look into students' vocabulary study and review habits, I administered a questionnaire (n=89). The results indicated that the most prevalent strategy employed by learners was memorizing L1 equivalents, and that they did not study vocabulary regularly. 29 students stated that they studied vocabulary only before exams, 8 students studied vocabulary once a month and 33 students studied target words once a week, indicating few students actually planned their learning. However, research tells us that forgetting is rapid at first, gradually slowing down. "It has been estimated that up to 80 per cent of material is lost within 24 hours of initial learning" (Thornbury, 2002). Thus, students who do not review vocabulary right after the first encounter/presentation need to 'relearn' the same target words when they want to review them, which causes frustration. It is therefore essential for learners to plan learning and reviewing carefully at spaced intervals. "Encounters with words should be arranged in increasingly longer intervals, e.g. at the end of the class session, then 24 hours later, and then a week later, there is a greater likelihood of long-term storage" (Schmitt et al, 2006, p. 242). Therefore, it is important that teachers encourage the principle of distributed practice. There should be a test right after teaching, and testing intervals should be extended gradually (Thornbury, 2002).

Ideas that encourage distributed practice can be as follows:

- *Having a word-wall in the classroom: at the end of each teaching day, students add new words to/organize the words on the word-wall according to different categories; eg: words they know, words they don't know, words that they find confusing, words they know but don't use.*
- *Preparing a month's calendar on cardboard. Students can record the words they learn on a particular day, so that they know which words to review when.*
- *Creating web-based quizzes and games that students can do in their own time.*
- *Starting every teaching day by going over the words from the previous day, and ending the day by testing the words that are introduced on that day.*

To determine the meaning of new words, the majority of the students (91.2%) looked up new words in an online English-Turkish dictionary. This might be due to the fact that the group consisted of Beginner level students, and they may have found the bilingual dictionary easier to understand, and thus quicker to study. The majority of online dictionaries from English to Turkish do not provide any example sentences or other useful information apart from a word's meaning. This means that the course book is the only resource where most students see a word in context. Another interesting point was that to find out the meaning of a word 42% of the students said they would ask their classmates, and in total only 7.2 % of the students said they would ask the teacher for the meaning in English, Turkish or to provide synonyms or antonyms. This shows that the majority of students preferred to use determination strategies rather than social strategies. It might be because they do not want to lose face in class by asking for help, or they may have feared looking unprepared for the lesson. It may also be because they prefer to study on their own.

As mentioned previously, the results of the questionnaire indicated that students relied heavily on memorizing an L1 equivalent. The vocabulary reviewing activities seemed to be limited to memorization techniques, which was not surprising considering the number of students who do not study regularly and frequently enough. The idea that every word or concept has an exact correspondence is called Semantic Equivalence Hypothesis, which is explained as "regard everything the same unless you have a good reason not to" (Schmitt & McCarthy, 2006, p. 166). This technique might be useful because it saves time, it is easy to check meaning and it "speeds recall by providing a 'path' routed through the learner's highly efficient L1 mental lexicon" (McCarthy, 1990). However, most words do not correspond exactly. What's more, knowing the L1 equivalent of a target word does not guarantee accurate use of it. Therefore, it is essential that students make use of other learning and reviewing strategies.

The questionnaire results showed that this was not the case. 63 students reported that to study vocabulary, they memorized a list of target words with their L1 equivalent. The second activity favoured by the students was reading the vocabulary companion<sup>1</sup>. The students seemed to rely mostly on surface level strategies that “entail minimum cognitive or emotional investment” (Jurkovic, 2006, p.27).

Research done on strategies that involve surface level versus deep level processing revealed that deeper vocabulary learning strategies, such as forming associations, enhance retention better compared to rote memorization (O'Malley and Chamot 1993). The findings indicate that very few students use complex strategies that require active manipulation and processing of the words. “Complex strategies, i.e. those demanding a deeper and more active manipulation of information result in more successful learning, i.e. longer retention of vocabulary” (Nation, 2002, p.59). This may explain why my students complained that they did not remember words a short time after they had studied them.

Strategies least preferred by learners appeared to be grouping words (n=3), creating mental images (n=6), and using vocabulary cards (n=7). Gu and Johnson (1996) in their study Vocabulary learning strategies and language learning outcomes state that there was not one perfect strategy, and that most successful learners were those who actively used a wide range of vocabulary strategies. They switch between strategies. It is, therefore, important to introduce and give practice in using different strategies students can employ to study and review vocabulary. However, a common mistake is that strategy training in class is usually restricted to introducing the strategy only. However, it is important to do structured and explicit strategy training in class. After presenting a strategy, students should immediately have the opportunity to try the strategy out in class with the help of the teacher/peers. They should then be asked to reflect on the strategy. Each strategy, no matter how simple it may seem, should be revisited in class at spaced intervals until students feel confident enough in using the strategy on their own. Strategies like using mnemonic devices or flash cards are not familiar to many students, and thus they definitely need to practice strategies before actively using them.

Teachers also need to draw students' attention to the fact that some strategies (deep level strategies) are more effective and efficient than others, and emphasize the fact that deeper level strategies enhance retention much better than shallow-level strategies.

Some practical ideas to encourage deeper level processing are:

- *Making students use all their senses. For instance, teachers may assign certain words to each student to record the words with an explanation or*

*example sentence, derivative forms, etc. Students can then share the voice files with their classmates.*

- *Getting students to write the same set of words down using a range of ranking/organizing activities.*
- *Getting students to create associations between previous learning and new words by drawing their attention to words coming from the same root, or asking students to use two target words together in a sentence.*
- *Encouraging oral and written production. For instance, after writing words and their definitions/synonyms/antonyms on separate cards, teachers can shuffle the cards and give each student a card. Students then walk around saying their word/definition out loud until they find the learner with a word/explanation matching theirs. When they find their pair, they sit down together and write a sentence using the target word. Saying the word aloud activates auditory memory and helps retention*

The questionnaire results also revealed that students did not seem to make use of strategies that require word production. Only 19 students stated that they wrote sentences in a vocabulary journal/log, and 2 students stated that they used the target words to create a story/paragraph while studying vocabulary. 37 students reported that they did not do any productive activities at all. Thornbury (2002) emphasizes the fact that using the words is essential to learning. He claims that recalling the form of the word to use it in a sentence helps retention, and words that are not actively used are lost: “use it or lose it”. Therefore, it is essential that students do activities that require oral or written production in and outside class.

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## Not Without a Pen

### Erk Ediz Yiğit

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## Not Without a Pen

### *Erk Ediz Yiğit*

Learning and memorization are two terms often used interchangeably by students and teachers. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, learning is “the alteration of behavior as a result of individual experience”, whereas memorization is “learning something so that you will remember it exactly” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online). Thus not only students but also teachers should not forget that memorization does not mean learning or vice versa. Learning is much more about being able to internalize something which means “accepting or absorbing an idea, opinion, belief, etc. so that it becomes part of your character”(Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

One should also not forget that there is a strong connection learning and between experiences that is why the term perceptual learning is attributed to the learning method of humans because it attaches “the effects of past experience on sensory perceptions”(Encyclopedia Britannica) to the process of learning.

All these are a reason why one should be aware of the individuality of learning. Every person internalizes differently. Every person has different past experiences and sensory perceptions that affect the way they learn. Why then do we still have traditional classrooms where the teacher still insists on using traditional teaching methods? Hasn't it already been proven that every individual learns in different ways and should therefore not be expected to fit into one standard approach of learning a foreign language?

It is for these reasons that I felt the need to remind my audience of the fact that every person learns in different ways and each person prefers different learning styles in this process. And although it is a difficult task to cater for every learning style of your students the important point is to be able to provide a variety of opportunities and ways to learning something.

In my presentation I mentioned the five types of learning styles: visual, aural, verbal, physical and logical, in order to share my own observations regarding each and to remind my audience of these.

Visual learners can learn easily with images, pictures, colors, and maps to organize information whereas aural learners like to work with sound and music, they have a good sense of pitch and rhythm and they can identify the sounds of different instruments and notice the music playing in the background of movies, TV shows and other media.

Verbal learning style involves both the written and spoken word because of that verbal learners love reading and writing. They also like to experiment and incorporate more speaking and writing in their learning.

Physical learners like using their body and sense of touch to learn about the world around them and like sports and exercise, and other physical activities. They tend to use physical style, touch, action, movement and hands-on work.

Finally, logical learners like using their brain for logical and mathematical reasoning, they can recognize patterns easily and use “systematical thinking” to help understand the links between various parts of a system.

The existence of different learning styles should show both students and teachers why we all need to go beyond the traditional learning and teaching methods still being used in and outside the classroom. Teachers need to sensitize students to a new variety of learning methods to help improve their students' learning process.



## **The Grades Students Want and the Grades They Deserve**

### ***Language Testing and Evaluation – Foreign Language Skill Development***

**Kelly Quinn**

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## The Grades Students Want and the Grades They Deserve

### *Language Testing and Evaluation - Foreign Language Skill Development*

*Kelly Quinn*

This paper will deal with the effect of grade entitlement on English Programs in Japanese universities. For years, teachers and administrators have noted that even though Japan is one of the highest spending countries on English education, there has not been commensurate increase in English ability. Most research has thus far focused on methodology, class size and teacher qualifications. Recent research dealing with academic entitlement at US universities may offer an alternative explanation for some of the lack of success that Japanese universities have experienced. Ellen Greenberger one of the author's of "Self-Entitled College Students: Contributions of Personality, Parenting, and Motivational Factors," which appeared last year in *The Journal of Youth and Adolescence* claims that in recent years, the number of students appealing their grades and expecting to be rewarded for effort rather than results has increased. The Greenberger article motivated this study. Two hundred Japanese students completed a survey that presented a number of grade scenarios. The students were asked, based on test grades and assignments completed, what grade they expected to receive in each hypothetical situation. Similarly, full-time and part-time teachers were asked what grade they would give in each situation. This paper will explain the different situations, students' and teachers' responses to the scenarios and then discuss the implications for English education in Japan.

#### 1. Introduction

Ellen Greenberger has used the term to describe students in American colleges and universities who, unsatisfied with their grades, appeal to the teacher to change them. She recounts a number of examples where students appealed to teachers that their effort should count toward their grade. Greenberger's article, *Self-entitled college students: contributions of personality, parenting and motivational factors*, motivated the research into Japanese student attitudes towards grades in their English classes.

## 2. Background and Methodology

Japanese students begin mandatory English classes in junior high school. In junior high school students study more than 100 hours of English per year. Similarly, in high school, students study for another 100 hours of English classes per year. These numbers are the minimum stipulated by the Japanese Ministry of Education. Most schools offer more. In addition to the number of hours of English education, Japan has a number of unique factors that demonstrate its economic commitment to English education. There are over 6,000 native English speaking Assistant Language Teachers working in Japan. In addition to the English education that Japan secondary schools provide, Japan is home to a multi-billion dollar private English school industry. The Japanese government has developed the Society of Testing English Proficiency (STEP), which create and provide tests tied to the benchmarks of the school curriculum. In 2008, over two million people took the different STEP tests. Also the Princeton based Educational Testing Service (ETS) has had great success in the Japanese market with its TOEIC test. 77,800 people took the secure TOEIC test in 2008 with many more taking the institutional version that is offered to universities and companies.

From the examples of effort above, certainly the Japanese commitment to English education can be clearly seen. What has this effort and application of economic muscle resulted in? The answer is, not much. In 2008, Japan ranked 136th out of 161 nations in TOEFL scores. For comparison consider that South Korea ranked 89th, China 99th, Taiwan 106th, and even North Korea scored higher coming in 11th place. None of these countries have demonstrated the economic effort to English education that Japan has. How then to explain this gap between resource allotment and lack of results. This paper offers a possible explanation by asking the research question "to what extent does students' sense of grade entitlement affect their attitude toward English classes". To this end, the authors of this study surveyed 400 Japanese students to research their attitudes toward grades and class effort. Roughly half of the students were from public, national universities and half were from a highly regarded private school in the Chubu area of Japan. None of the students were English majors, but all of the surveys were carried out in English classes required of non-English major students. Students were given three profiles of fictional students and asked what grade each student deserved.

### 3. Fictionalized Student Profiles and Student Responses

Each of the students in the fictionalized profiles was intended to represent an archetype of a student that all teachers will be familiar with. Profile 1 was intended to portray the diligent, but not particularly talented student.

#### 3.1 Profile of Student 1

- Attended all classes
- Received credit for all (10) Homework Assignments
- Received Scores of less than 50% on all (10) quizzes
- Final test score 50%

How did students evaluate this students' effort and what grades did they believe such a student deserves? Students' answers are summarized in the table below.

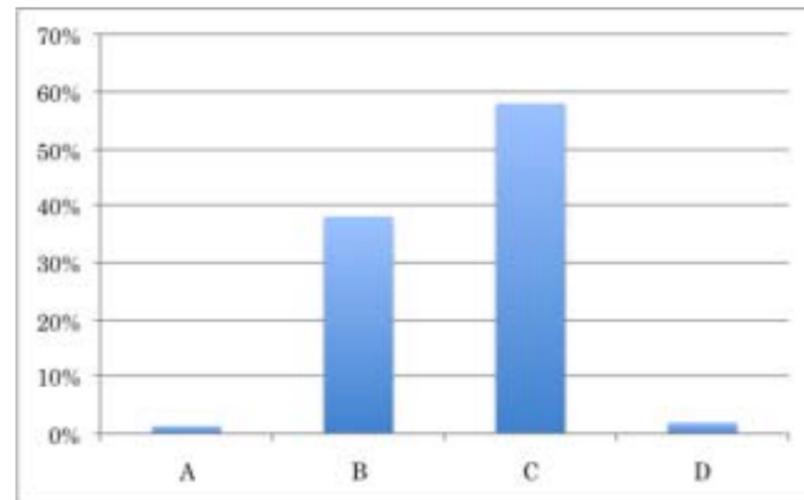


Table 1. Student Grades for Student 1

There are several interesting points about students' responses. First, almost 40% of students said that this student who never received more than 50% on any graded assignment or test deserved either an A or a B. Only about 3% of the students felt that the student deserved to fail. Overwhelmingly, students recommended that this student, who showed no mastery of the material, be allowed to pass the class. In comments students wrote that his attendance was good and he had made a good effort so he should pass. The responses regarding this student indicate that students believe effort is more important than competence with the material.

#### 3.2 Profile of Student 2

The student described in Profile 2 is intended to be the antithesis of Profile 1 – high proficiency, little effort. Starting in the 1980s, Japanese corporations began sending their workers abroad to live for extended periods of time. Often the families went with them and children were generally enrolled in local schools and learned to speak and write English well. When these families returned to Japan and the children attended Japanese universities with required English classes far below their level. Classes for these students were often uninteresting and unnecessary. Unlike the United States, where students of demonstrated ability can often opt out of required general education classes, in Japan, required classes are required for all students, regardless of individual history or background. For example, most US universities have a foreign language requirement. Studying for four semesters or two years is not uncommon. However, students are often given a proficiency test and if they demonstrate ability deemed to be equivalent to that acquired by students who take the required classes they can opt out of the required classes.

#### Profile of Student 2

- Absent 12 of 15 Class Meetings
- Completed 0 of 10 Homework Assignments
- Received Scores of 0 on all 10 Quizzes (Due to Absence)
- Final Test Score 95%

Student 2 is intended to represent those students who have proficiency beyond that required by their classes and so can't be bothered to make an effort in the class. How do students evaluate this person who has ability, but no work ethic? Their responses and grades are summarized in the table below.

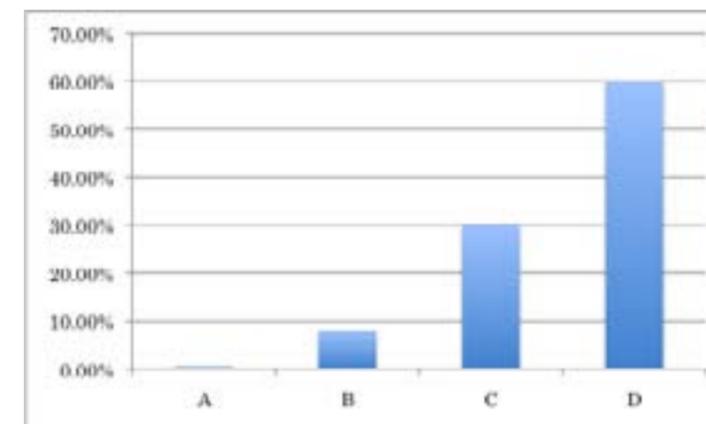


Table 2 Student Grades for Student 2

Students were overwhelmingly critical of students who do not come to class. Sixty percent of those surveyed responded that Student 2 should fail. D is a failing grade in Japan. Less than 10 percent of students surveyed felt that a student with this level of ability, an almost perfect score on the final exam, should receive a grade of distinction, either A or B. Thirty percent of students surveyed felt that given his ability, the student should pass, but because of the frequent absences, the only passing grade possible would be a C.

### 3.3 Profile of Student 3

The student described in Profile 3 is intended to show that students' grade expectations are unrealistic and not based on their performance in class, but rather on their effort.

#### Profile of Student 3

- Attended All Class Meetings
- Received Credit for All (10) Homework Assignments
- Received Average Quiz Grades of 67%
- Final Test Score 75%

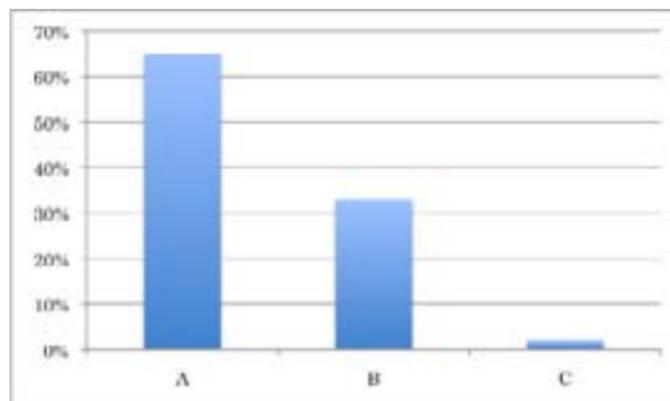


Table 3 Student Grades for Student 3

Again, students' responses reveal a number of surprising things. First, a majority of students, over 60 percent, felt that Student 3 deserved an A, despite failing to demonstrate superior mastery of the material. His attendance and diligence are apparent. He attended all of the classes and completed all of the homework, but on graded assignments, he never received a score above 80%. A score of 60 or 70% is hardly superior or excellent, but the students seem to feel that the student was working hard, trying his best and even though that effort did not result in a superior achievement, the effort should be rewarded with a superior grade.

### 4. Teachers Responses to the Survey

Eight full-time university English teachers and 12 part-time or adjunct teachers were given the same survey as the students and asked, based on the profiles, to assign likely grades to the students. Only 20 teachers were surveyed, but even with this small sample, some interesting trends are revealed in Figure 4 below.

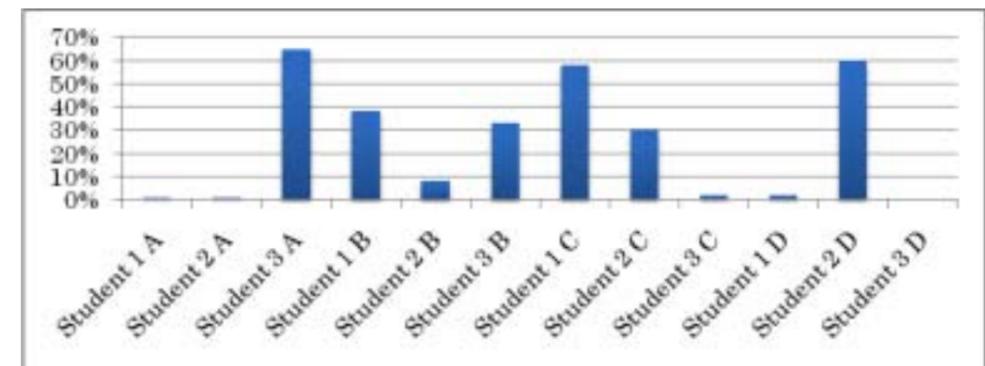


Figure 4 Teacher grades for fictional students

As Figure 4 shows, The teachers' grades correspond almost exactly with those of the students.

English teachers also seem to be rewarding effort more than proficiency. Almost all of the teachers passed Student 1 and nearly 40% felt that Student 1's effort deserved either an A or a B, mirroring the students' responses. A clear majority of teachers felt that Student 2, the student with high proficiency, but poor study habits, should fail, despite his acing the final exam. Finally, a clear majority of teachers gave mediocre Student 3 an A.

Adding to teachers difficulties may be the fact that many universities are making minimum attendance mandatory for classes. For example, several universities require that students attend a minimum of two thirds of class meetings, 10 of 15 usually. Other universities in the area limit students to three absences per semester. No one would disagree that attendance is important, and especially important in language classes, but the emphasis on attendance seems to reinforce students perceptions that attendance equals effort and effort should be rewarded. Without clear benchmarks and objective course goals, it is easy to see why universities fall back on emphasizing attendance. Still, this emphasis on attendance has not met with a corresponding rise in students' abilities. Universities need to begin a dialogue, a negotiation, about the level of ability required to pass a course and the level of ability needed to graduate from the university.

## 5. Conclusion

This is only a small study, but it does offer a possible explanation for why Japanese students, despite the financial commitment of vast resources by schools, universities and the national government, still lag behind their international peers. Students expect to be rewarded for effort rather than proficiency and teachers encourage this expectation by their own grading habits. Also, the emphasis on attendance as a tool for evaluation encourages students' belief that attendance and effort are more important than mastery of the material and distracts teachers from more valuable discussions about what level of proficiency represents mastery of the material and passing the course. These trends may explain the gap between Japanese financial and time commitments to English education and the lack of corresponding results in proficiency.

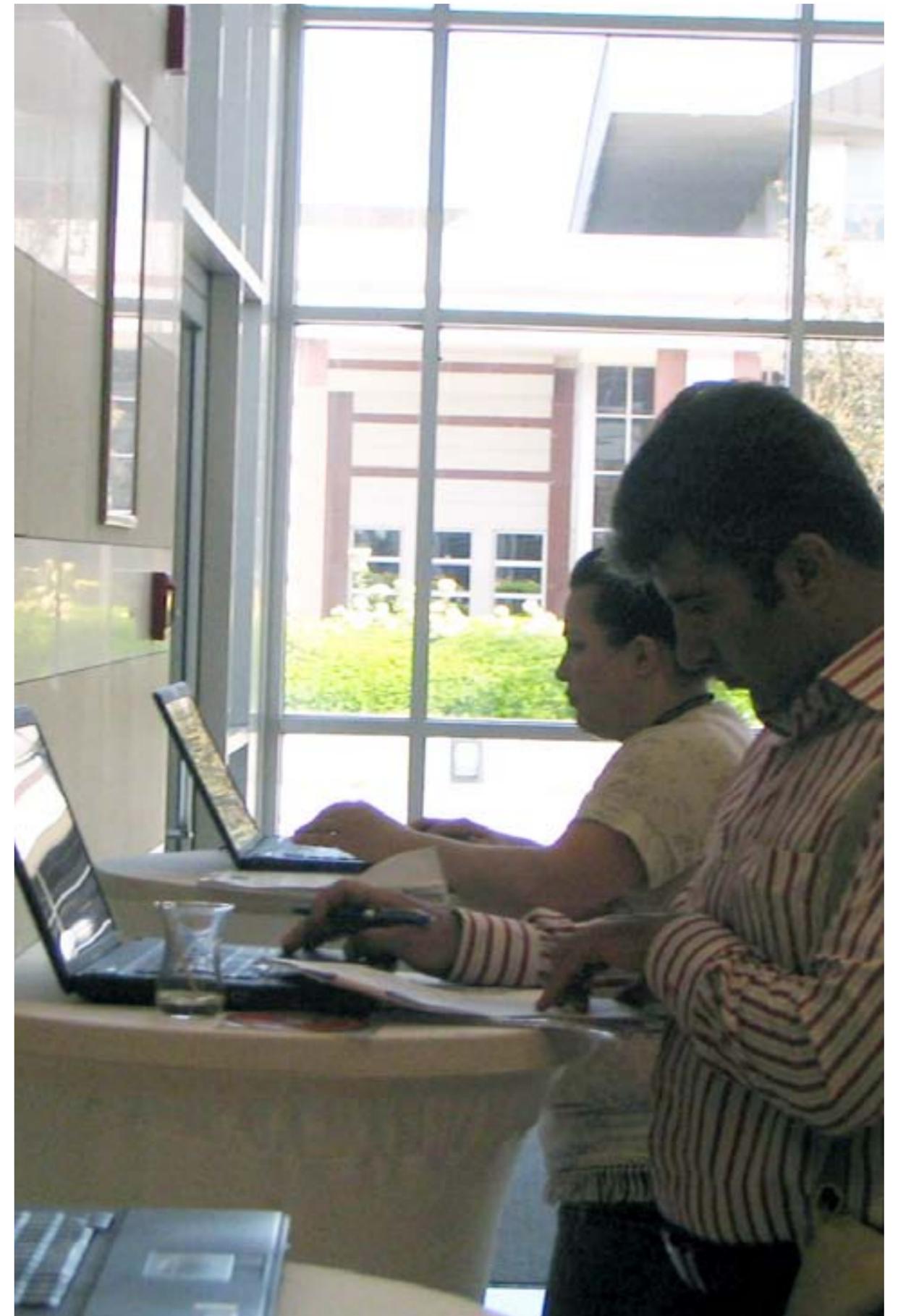
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## **Mobilization of Multiple Identities in ELT classroom: Discovering “teachable moments”**

**İlkem Kayıcan**

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## Mobilization of Multiple Identities in ELT classroom: Discovering “teachable moments”

*Ilkem Kayıcan*

ELT classrooms are considered the “spaces” where identities of the students have been “naturalized”; furthermore those classrooms are thought to be free from politics. However, one cannot ignore the fact that a “public space” such as a classroom cannot be regarded as “apolitic.” It has been constantly emphasized that besides linguistics, “culture” and “cultural means” of the country whose language is being spoken are crucial aspects of language teaching. However, the factor which has often been disregarded in language teaching is the significance of the culture and the social context of the country in which the language is taught. It means teaching English in Turkey differs from teaching it in any other country; therefore, the social context concerning political and cultural issues in Turkey gain considerable importance when one teaches. In light of such an analysis this study aims to examine the importance and the possibility of mobilizing identities of both the students and the teacher in an ELT classroom, considering the current social and political setting of Turkey.

Classroom is the “public space” in which the private and public intersect. That means I as a teacher take my identity into the classroom. Similarly students bring their identities there. Although I have always had homogeneous classes including only Turkish pupils, their cultural and political backgrounds clearly differ depending on where they come from, which family they grow up in and if they are members of any community or not. Therefore, rather than taking a position of “identity neutral” or “color blind”, which denies the interaction of different identities for the sake of turning the classroom into a so called “safe place”, I consider the significance of letting identities mobilize in order not just to underline the global understanding of teaching English as a second language, but at the same time not disregarding the realities of the home country I teach in.

In order to set the background clearly, let me start with a situation that happened in an ELT reading class. One of my colleagues told me about the plan of the lesson she did in her reading class. The text was on women’s rights and as usual she took some pictures for the warm-up stage of the lesson. The

pictures included some women at a demonstration holding banners asking for equality, in another picture, a woman looked strong and determined in a business suit and another included women who were probably Iranian or may be Turkish wearing the Burqa (a piece of garment that covers the face and body and is worn by certain Muslim women). Probably these are the pictures that we may also use to introduce the topic; however, the question she directed to the students made me critically think about the material because by pointing to the women in the Burqa she asked “Do you think they are independent?” She got the answer “no” from the entire classroom, which was the answer she was expecting.

Considering the situation above and many others that I have observed, I thought that most of my Turkish colleagues took Turkishness as a collective identity for granted, which means that they consider almost all students in class as secular, nationalist Turkish individuals, which allows them to decide if the woman in the Burqa has freedom or not. The question my colleague asked may present a regular picture of a classroom in Turkey; however, this and such attitudes strengthen the superior position of the dominant group in society by allowing judgments about others’ freedom and also reproduces the stereotyped judgment that has been developed while defining women in headscarves. Upon this experience I asked myself, “How can we know and judge her position?”, “How can we know or come to conclusions about a person’s identity by just “looking at” or seeing” him/her?” Paula Moya (2006), in her article entitled “What’s Identity got to do with it? Mobilizing Identities in the Multicultural Classroom” argued that; “... we as members of a society in which such identities are seen as significant are socialized to pick up visual cues (bodily comportment, clothing, accessories) as a way of “seeing” and thus “knowing” (pg. 107). She continues; “... our societal tendency [is] to privilege the act of “seeing” the Other as a proxy for “knowing” the Other” (ibid.) Moya calls this “visual fetishism” which equates seeing with knowing once you encounter another person. It reminded me of some of the experiences that I had had while trying to “know” my students.

Turkey has a multi-ethnic composition, so a classroom in Turkey becomes the “space” which potentially bears multiple identities. Therefore; the materials used, the discussions raised, the activities prepared cannot ignore such a “reality”, and this forces a teacher to regard and carefully examine the identities of his/her students. Yet, it is a well-known fact that “identity” is a very broad entity which needs to be framed clearly.

Rather than ontological terms, I consider identity as a relational entity which is constructed both by how we are treated by others and how we describe ourselves. The former is imposed by society; it is historical and collective while

the latter refers to our understanding of ourselves in relation to others. In both of these positions, we can be sure that identity has been shaped by the experience of social recognition since Hegel (Moya, 2006). For this reason classroom as a public space becomes crucial in order to recognize others and in order to express your own identity. Accordingly the classroom should be the place where both the Teacher (T) and Students (Ss) reveal their identities. T is the facilitator to let this happen; moreover, as Forsman underlines; T is the reflective practitioner “who interprets, understands and transforms the social life in school” (2010, 512). Considering such a role, I, from time to time, feel restless that some Ts avoid the “threat” of talking on and about identities. I argue that this does not make the classroom a safe place but rather leads Ss not to be able to go beyond formerly determined cultural and political borders during their educational lives.

In Turkey most secondary school institutions build their mentality on the understanding of homogenizing the students by presenting curriculums, “sterile” from some political realities and critical thinking, which also eliminates the process of globalization and modernization in education. So, such an understanding prevents the students from taking responsibilities in a multicultural world and causes them to get stuck in the borders of national myths which have been dominant in formal education for years. This homogenizing understanding of education also strengthens the view that there is always a split such as “us” and “them” which hinders ways to explore and understand the differences of others.

We know that some identities are socially stigmatized; “gypsies are thieves, blond girls are stupid, Kurds are dangerous, disabled people are always care-seeking etc.” Yes, some Romani citizens are thieves, some disabled individuals always ask for care, “However, stereotyped judgments similarize all members of a group, strip the person of his/her individual characteristics and turns him/her into a member of a stigmatized group. This, in turn, results in exclusion in many social spheres” (Çayır 2010, 49). Therefore, I attach so much importance to preparatory classes or ELT classes in universities in terms of letting identities mobilize because it is the primary setting where a Turkish student leaves his/her uniform behind and steps into an environment where s/he can express or open up him/herself to others independently.

It should also be noted that whatever is being taught, the students develop various responses most of which are based on their own accumulated beliefs, values, manners and aspects in relation to their identities. And those identities are bearers of the culture or community they belong to. I would like to point this out from two dimensions; first, the teacher should not take for granted that each student in a homogeneous classroom has the same behavior, traditions

and perspectives so that s/he should set the scene accordingly, including the objectives, materials and discussion topics of the lesson. Second, by taking the responsibility, teachers should sometimes turn the untouchable into the touchable through raising awareness about identities in the classroom, which would let Ss face their own stereotypical judgments and anxieties about particular identities while trying to construct their own.

In addition to allowing Ss to recognize the current globalization of the modern world in which various cultures interact, it is crucial to let them explore the cultural and economical differences present in their home society and realize their own “vision” about their own identities along with other identities while they are growing up in a country which is longing for a sustainable democracy, freedom and welfare. It should not be regarded as leaving the global perspective aside; on the contrary, this argues for incorporating locality into the cultural diversity of a globalized world. Therefore, “such an education might address global inequalities and social justice, and equip pupils with skills in linking local, national and global issues to act for a better future” (Çayır, Bağlı 2010, 10).

The question that is possibly evoked at this moment is, if the TESOL classroom can help each student frame their understanding and experience of cultural differences. My answer is yes, but let me state how. A study which was conducted in Greece provides a very good example to achieve this in an ELT classroom. The study is entitled “Multicultural awareness through English: a potential contribution in Greek Schools.” Two paradigms called MATE (Multicultural Awareness Through English) and TEIL (Teaching English as an International Language) are examined and the writers of this study claimed that these two paradigms are complementary because they have many common understandings which distinguish them from the traditional TEFL paradigm.

They explain why there is such a need:

*“The traditional TEFL materials tend to present individuals and countries in essentialised terms. For example, the characters that pupils encounter in the text books become representatives simply of particular nations and performers only of particular national-level cultural identities. Cultural diversity is lost in such essentialised treatment of the individuals and the countries in which they reside” (Fay, Lytra, Nitavaliagkou 2010, 582).*

It is undeniable that most TEFL materials lead students to observe and compare the American or British way of life including some other foreign countries; however, the current intercultural content and topics in the TEFL textbooks are not very close to presenting the complexity and diversity of

today's identities. Therefore; students could be furnished with activities which let them negotiate, share and develop their sense of identities. In order to accomplish this I believe we need to look for opportunities to add the home context scheme to the existing curriculum<sup>1</sup>, which will allow students to “experience cultural diversity within their local context” (ibid.588).<sup>2</sup>

I believe although we teach in relatively homogeneous classes in Turkey or elsewhere each student has sensibilities which we may overlook and this is something we are all aware of as teachers. Moya underlines that “Educators who take a realist approach to identity understand the importance of changing the classroom dynamics in which people with different identities interact” (2006, pg. 100). Accordingly, Ts should avoid assuming the Ss' identities through reliance on some generalizations.

Education and educational materials can primarily play an important role in order to raise awareness about different identities. Although there are some steps taken to implement this into the curriculum in Turkey, it still remains inadequate when I consider the level of “consciousness” of university students with whom I meet in preparatory classes. Latent or obvious there is an ongoing discrimination and discourse of hate taking place in Turkey. Therefore I feel responsible as a teacher to be aware of and also let my Ss feel responsible about these realities especially when they constantly emphasize their attachment to their country. I believe that the awareness about identities among teachers who are open to negotiate the perspectives of various senses of identities through possible activities in ELT classrooms will greatly contribute both to the students' and the teachers' development. We are not living in a world where we repress differences and disregard inequalities anymore. Rather than just nodding when we hear someone saying “education is a primary source of producing and spreading equality among individuals” we should try to take active roles in achieving this. “Being in the world” is always connected to our relation with an Other. It is the dialogical relationship where we can define ourselves not just by one singularity but by various singularities through depending on others. Therefore mobilizing identities in the classroom will let Ss make sense of their attachment to others and their society in particular and the world in a broader sense, which most probably will allow them to discover the ways of “being” in the world.

<sup>1</sup> Please see the attached material (Att.1) for an example of a speaking activity to introduce cultural diversity in a Turkish local context.

<sup>2</sup> Please see the related article pages 588-591 to find a reposition of some intercultural activities based on materials from an English Language textbook, which could also be adapted to any EFL classroom.



### **ATT.1**

#### **SUMMER CAMP SPEAKING ACTIVITY**

You have just arrived at the summer camp. Nobody knows each other and the camp manager lets you choose two others who you can stay together with. In each tent there can be 3 people.

Check the list of participants and choose 2 others to stay in your tent.

Once you decide as a group you need to explain the reasons why you choose those friends.

#### **THE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS:**

- An obese boy from the USA
- A girl from Kuştepe in a colorful skirt.
- A boy who is gay.
- An Alevi girl from Sivas
- A girl who always listens to MP3 player
- A blonde girl from İzmir.
- A boy who wears glasses and has freckles.
- A boy who does not look like so smart
- A girl whose leg is broken and hardly walks
- A tall blond boy who is very talkative.
- A boy from a village in Trabzon
- A boy who has a broken Turkish accent from Adiyaman
- A girl who uses sign language to communicate.
- A girl who is blind and has a guide dog

## Campers

Now choose 2 people with whom you can stay with in the same tent:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Corpus as a Teacher and Learner Tool**

**Münevver Mine Bağ**

*Münevver Mine Bağ has been an instructor of English for Academic Purposes at Sabancı University, School of Languages in Turkey since 2000. She is also taking part in the Book Project, Corpus Task Group and Grammar Task Group. She is presently interested in corpus and language teaching.*

## Corpus as a Teacher and Learner Tool

### Münevver Mine Bağ

“Corpus” has been used for decades for various purposes making its way in to language learning dictionaries and is now more widely used as an awareness raising tool in both self study and also syllabus design. It also sheds light on exploring specific needs in specific contexts. To illustrate, Sabanci University, School of Languages, Corpus Task Group work has contributed to a remarkable extent to re-examining needs and diagnosing areas which need to be remedied, supported and supplemented with the help of corpus analysis.

### The CORPUS PROJECT TASK GROUP

The Sabanci University, School of Languages Corpus Project Task Group aimed at creating discipline-specific corpora composed of core materials from three compulsory courses that are covered as interdisciplinary Freshman courses, which comprise of

- *Social & Political Studies (SPS),*
- *Natural Sciences (NS), and*
- *Mathematics.*

Another aim was to create a corpus for the Beyond the Boundaries, English in an Academic Environment (Sabanci University publication) course book series used to teach academic English and skills at the School of Languages, for the purposes of cross-referencing and comparison.

The reason for this venture was to explore the missing “language” elements in the School of Languages preparatory English courses. These Foundations Development Year courses aim to prepare the students for the Faculty courses, where English is the medium of instruction.

Data was compiled by scanning the materials used in 101 and 102 faculty courses and the Beyond the Boundaries using AntConc. The three faculty corpora all contain around 275K tokens, and the corpus, based on our textbooks, is around 340K tokens in size.

Initial uses of the data were in the form of the following:

- *Word-lists and keyword lists, based on comparisons of the discipline corpora and our pedagogical corpus, were formed.*
- *For the SPS corpus, the top 100 content keywords were added to the vocabulary syllabus at Upper Intermediate level.*
- *Data from the Mathematics and NS corpora has also been used to help prepare materials for an “English for Maths and Science” (EMS) course, which Upper Intermediate students take to prepare for the faculty lectures with specific content and language.*

The corpus has also been used to support and rationalize the assessment of certain vocabulary items and analyze the School of Languages’ writing assignment and exam texts to help the learners with common collocations and N-Grams to enhance their level of expression.

One recent and comprehensive use of the corpus to reinforce teaching at the School of Languages has been the analytical approach to the grammatical content of the corpus language in order to come up with suggestions to revise the grammar syllabus.

Teacher and student uses of the concordancing programmes

Teachers have and can emphasize the use of some online word sketch and concordancing tools to enable students’ individual development and to have a critical view of language use.

The concordancing lines generated by the software can be used for various purposes, such as exploring collocational sensitivity, limitations of use among words with similar meanings, analysis of homonyms in context, uses of a word with different meanings in different contexts, sensitivity of a word to the grammatical construction to assume a specific semantic role. Keyness of words in a certain context and frequency indicators help decisions of choice.

The links below are samples of some useful online software and shareware sites which help both teachers and learners to analyze the language of both teaching materials and learner produced texts, especially helping the learner writers, with introductory explanations from the sites themselves.

- <http://www.sketchengine.co.uk>
- The Sketch Engine (SkE) is designed for anyone wanting to research how words behave. It is a Corpus Query System incorporating word sketches.
- <http://beta.sketchengine.co.uk/ipauth/> (user account needed)
- <http://forbetterenglish.com/> The GDEX Demo Dictionary. This is an

experimental automatic collocations dictionary, based on the Sketch Engine technology.

- <http://www.just-the-word.com/> Just The Word collocations - helps you in writing English.
- <http://www.lextutor.ca/Compleat> Lexical Tutor
- A complete website for learning and learning about English words. You can test your vocabulary level, then work on the words at the level where you are weak ...
- [VocabprofileConcordancersTestsFrequencyList\\_LearnCorpusCrammarClozeRange](#)
- [http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/antwordprofiler\\_index.html](http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/antwordprofiler_index.html)
- The website of Laurence Anthony, Associate Professor at Waseda University Japan developer of AntConc, a freeware concordancer software program for Windows; AntWordProfiler. A freeware word profiling program for Windows and Macintosh .

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## My Journey in Foreign Languages

### Neslihan Astan

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## My Journey in Foreign Languages

### *Neslihan Astan*

My journey in foreign languages started in primary school when I first met with English. First, English was all about songs and games for me. Because of my age I was not aware of the purpose of learning English, but thanks to my parents and older brother I knew that this 'English' will be after me for years. By fourth grade, when grammar lessons began, English turned into a "memorization course". Year after year, English lessons became more serious and harder. Besides, there was hardly any speaking practice. By the end of primary school, which is grade 8, I began to think that I will never be able to actually speak English.

As I grew older my personality developed and my interests started to take shape up. With the help of the internet I soon got into touch with English pop culture. I listened to English songs and watched TV shows. My interest in movies also started in those years. I not only watched Hollywood movies in their original language but also used English subtitles. The more I was absorbed into pop culture, the more my interest in this foreign language increased. In my preparation year at high school I realized how much my language had improved through my own interests. Even though I hadn't had a chance to practice speaking English, listening to English served me well. In my preparation year I began to read English books. Not books required for the school but novels that I chose. As a result of my interests outside class, my English remarkably improved and I came first at the end of the preparation year was a highly motivating achievement for me. Through high school my success in foreign language learning gradually increased. I continued being a fan and follower of English pop culture. I knew that if I was to communicate and integrate with the rest of the world English was a key requirement. Using my English knowledge for these purposes made me more enthusiastic about being better in that language. English became a necessity for me to maintain my social awareness.

In the fall of 2010 I began my Foundation year studies at Sabancı University and my journey of/in English was about to reach its peak. With the Foundation year English became a necessity for my academic success and development. As

part of a civil involvement project I voluntarily taught English to kindergarten children for four months. Teaching English, even it was at kindergarten level, made me feel more satisfied with my English. This experience also taught me how to communicate with kids and how to be patient. So, it was both an academic and social experience for me.

The biggest and hardest opportunity of my journey of/in English appeared at the beginning of 2011 when I was given the opportunity to translate a self-development book from Turkish into English. The book is named 'Miracles of the Soul' and was published in the United States. It wasn't a long text but it was full of specific terms. I must admit that translating something is much harder than I thought. With this experience I learned lots of new words and phrases. It improved my language more than I had expected. I think my last two experiences, teaching and translating, were the manifestation of my journey of/in English. Now it's an absolute fact that English is and will be an essential part of my life and thus my journey will continue. If I would express this journey through a graph I can say that my success and motivation rates have grown exponentially. At the beginning of primary school I felt neutral towards English, and then I became obsessed with the grammar and experienced a sharp decline. However, through my own interests my success and motivation gradually increased. And finally it reached its peak with teaching and translation experiences.

Meanwhile, my second journey in a foreign language has already begun. I started to learn German in high school as a second foreign language. As I've mentioned before, at that age, I was aware of the advantages that a learning a foreign language could provide me with. As I've learned from my last experience I didn't become alienated from German just because of the linguistic rules, like I did while learning English. I'm not involved in German culture yet, but I'm open to every opportunity to practise speaking. I also want to make German a necessity for my academic development. I'm taking German classes at Sabancı University and I'm planning to go to Germany on an Erasmus project exchange.

To sum up, I have always thought if I have had more chance to practice speaking I would have more rapidly increased some of my foreign language skills in the graph of my journey in English. Nevertheless, now I'm able to use English in my daily life. Apart from that, as a German language learner I'm yet at an early stage of my journey.



## Just JING It!

### Neslihan Demirdirek

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## Just JING It!

**Neslihan Demirdirek**

### Abstract

This paper looks at how JING, a screen capture tool, can be used for different purposes in an EFL academic context. After a brief description of what JING is and how it works, different ways of using it such as giving feedback to students' written homework, guiding students to find learning materials online, explaining an assignment and highlighting important points about a task will be shared. The main benefits of using JING, which are mainly saving valuable time and making students feel as if their teacher was with them after class, will also be shared. Finally, the feedback from students who either got feedback through JING or used it for other purposes will be shown.

### Introduction

The advent of technology has revolutionised the way people learn and teach languages as there is an abundance of valuable tools that can be used in language teaching. One of them is screen capture tools which enable the user to record voice and all the actions done on the computer screen at the same time. This feature attracts teachers who try to find alternative ways of making teaching and learning more effective. As students can both listen to the recording and see what their teachers are doing on the screen, screen capture tools can be a solution to many problems teachers and students have. There are studies on student reactions to written feedback (Ferris, 1997), using screen capture tools (Stannard, 2008) and taped oral feedback (Gardner, 2004). However, there are not many studies on how to use a screen capture tool for different purposes in language education. As lack of time seems to be one of the main concerns of teachers, using screen capture tools can help to use the limited time available in a more efficient way.

## What is JING and how can it be used?

JING is a screen capture tool provided by Techsmith. The free version can easily be downloaded from the Internet, <http://www.techsmith.com/> by following a few simple steps. Once it is downloaded, by opening any document (a text, photo, etc) on a computer, the teacher clicks on the JING icon and marks the area to be recorded. When the record button is clicked, all the changes made on the document are recorded together with the oral comments made by the teacher. The main advantage of JING is the ease of sharing the recordings. With some other screen capture tools, before the recording can be shared with students, the file needs to be compressed and copied onto a CD. However, with JING when the recording is done, by clicking on 'share via screencast.com', it is sent to the main server and the user receives a link that can easily be shared by email.

### Different Purposes

#### a. Giving feedback on written homework

This seems to be one of the most popular uses of screen capture tools in language teaching. Research has shown that students do not really benefit from the written feedback they receive from their teachers (Ferris, 1997). Although this may result from a number of reasons, one main reason students do not understand the feedback provided is due to the use of terms used by the teacher. When students are confused about the feedback they get from their teachers, they are less likely to read it. It may result in teachers' wasting of valuable time and students may not get enough help to improve their level of proficiency. Stannard (2007) has put forward the idea of using screen capture tools to motivate and engage students more in the writing process. In the following two examples, to be found at <http://screencast.com/t/5cp66JQux> and <http://screencast.com/t/opTxikLzd> from an academic EFL context, students were given feedback on the short answers they wrote based on criteria for a short answer exam.

Before starting to record, the answer was read at least once to get a general idea about the strengths and weaknesses of the answer. During the recording, firstly the answer was read aloud and grammar, vocabulary and punctuation mistakes were corrected as much as possible. The main focus was on the use of language, which is the first point in the criteria. Secondly, the whole answer wasn't read aloud but feedback was given on whether it answered the question which is described as task fulfillment in the criteria. On a third check, feedback was given on rhetorical patterns which is the third point

in the criteria. Highlighting was used a lot to draw student's attention to the expected language for each rhetorical pattern. This seems to be more appealing especially to visual learners.

### **b. Reminding students of important information**

JING is a practical way of explaining a grammar point or vocabulary items. After a lesson, teachers can open a word document, type the points to be highlighted and then start recording their explanations by highlighting, circling or underlining the important points. This will serve as a reminder for the students who were in class and also as a short summary for those students who were absent that day. Here is a sample video explaining a grammar point: <http://screencast.com/t/Hol176uSaQ>

Apart from explaining an important grammar point or vocabulary items, it can be used to summarise the important points after a lesson. Here is an example from an academic EFL context where writing short answers is an important part of the teaching programme. In this video, after introducing the idea in class, the main expectations are explained to the students together with the assessment criteria that will be used while grading the short answer exam papers at the end of the semester: <http://screencast.com/t/P6zep916w> Students can refer to this recording to use it as an editing checklist whenever they write a short answer throughout the semester.

### **c. Guiding students on how to find online resources**

SUCourse is an online learning environment, used at Sabanci University, where teachers can share extra practice materials, assignments and announcements. It is a significant part of students' academic studies. Although, students were shown how to access this source in class at the beginning of the semester, they may have difficulties in accessing it later on. Similar to this, there are other materials on the library website and in the e-reserve section which students might find difficult to access and need to get help from their teachers or friends. However, by referring to the JING videos prepared, they can solve this problem on their own. Here is an example of a recording that shows how to reach SUCourse for Beginner Level students: <http://screencast.com/YWRhKDhmMm>

### **d. Clarification of an important point related to an assignment**

Teachers assign homework which might be complicated for students and which might need further clarification. The explanations given in class or the written task sheets may not be clear enough when the students go home and start doing the homework. For instance, in an academic context, citation is an indispensable part of the written assignments, however it may be challenging if the students have to do it for the first time. The following recording was prepared to clarify what was expected from the students by giving further explanations on the written task sheet and referring to a student essay to provide a concrete example. Here is an example: <http://screencast.com/vSxyBA2biq9J>.

### **e. Saving time at meetings or at training sessions**

JING is a tool that can be used with both students and teachers. As mentioned earlier, one of the main concerns of busy teachers is the lack of time to carry out a long list of duties. JING can help to save time at meetings if a recording is done to highlight important points and explain some of the main points to discuss and decide on during a meeting. This helps to speed up the process and leaves more time for other points to be discussed or results in shorter meetings, which everyone appreciates. Here is an example of how information about oral assessment is shared with colleagues through a JING recording before a meeting: <http://screencast.com/t/Ei5OVYvoUFLN>.

Similar to sharing feedback or information with students, this way is more effective than simply sending the word document as an attachment to an email as JING gives the opportunity to make comments, to reword what is said, to make it clear to everyone and emphasise some of the important points. In addition, JING can be used for training purposes as it is not always possible to arrange long training sessions for teachers due to the lack of time. JING recordings can help teachers share their practical teaching ideas or explanations of a technological tool with their colleagues.

## **Research**

After different uses of JING were tried out with 32 students in one year, they were given a questionnaire and interviewed. The main questions asked were as follows:

- Which one do you prefer to get feedback for your written homework; JING or traditional written feedback? WHY?
- Rate how useful JING is for the following purposes. (5 very useful – 1 not very useful)
- To learn how to access materials online
- To learn important points about an assignment
- To learn about a grammar point taught in class
- Why do you think it is (not) useful for the purposes mentioned above?

22 out of 32 students preferred JING to traditional written feedback, whereas only 6 preferred traditional feedback and 4 didn't favour one or the other. The reasons why they found JING more useful were:

1. Understanding the feedback better because the teacher provides more explanations compared to written feedback.
2. Being able to listen to the feedback again and again and thus understanding mistakes better.
3. Paying more attention to details in JING feedback because it is more motivating to check than written feedback.
4. Being more helpful because it is a listening practice as well.
5. Both listening and seeing make it easier to understand mistakes.
6. Becoming more interested and feeling like checking the feedback as opposed to traditional feedback.
7. Being similar to having a tutorial with the teacher.

Students who preferred traditional feedback stated the following reasons:

- Understanding written feedback better.
- Finding videos boring and not being able to watch till the end.
- Being used to getting traditional feedback.

Learning styles, preferences and previous learning experiences seem to play an important role in how students react to a new tool. 80% of the students found JING either useful or very useful to learn how to access materials online as in this particular context, online sources are an integral part of the teaching learning process. Students seem to enjoy the ease of finding materials without wasting time and also not having to ask the teacher or friends again and again. By making these videos available in the online learning environment, they can easily be referred to whenever the need arises. 76% of the students thought that JING is useful or very useful to learn important points about an assignment. Again, in this context most students find the requirements of an assignment challenging and are willing to use different tools that help them complete the assignments in a better way. Learning about a grammar point

also seems to be popular among students since 60% of them circled either "useful" or "very useful" for this purpose. Students seem to understand the important points about an assignment or a grammar point better because it is explained for a second time by the teacher and they feel as if the teacher were with them.

## Conclusion

As this was a small scale research, it is difficult to generalise the findings. However, the results from the survey and the interviews showed that screen capture tools have the potential to be used for many different purposes to facilitate teaching and learning in different contexts. As JING is easy to download and work with, it is a good idea to try it out with students and colleagues especially to help to understand different points and save time. To maximise the benefits, it is important to plan what to say and do on the screen before starting to record. If this planning is done carefully, the information is more precise and therefore the recording will be more helpful.

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## **On The Role of Different Text Structures in Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners**

**Mahmood Dehqan**

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## On The Role of Different Text Structures in Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners

*Mahmood Dehqan*

### Introduction

Although many scholars (Flick & Anderson, 1980; Nassaji, 2003; Raymond, 1993; Taillefer, 1996) have asserted that reading is a multifaceted process that goes beyond the description of a single facet, researchers have no choice but to dwell on a single aspect of the reading process at any given time. Grabe (2002) stated that reading for comprehension is the primary purpose for reading, though this is sometimes overlooked when students are asked to read overly difficult texts. Hadley (2001) claimed that background knowledge specifically affects the comprehension of foreign language readers and includes at least three types of knowledge:

- 1) linguistic information,
- 2) knowledge of the world,
- 3) knowledge of discourse structure

The organization of text, which is also called text structure or rhetorical pattern is the logical patterning which the writer uses to represent meaning. Text structure itself can be divided into two parts: 1) narrative text structure; and 2) expository text structure. While narrative text structure primarily entertains, expository text primarily communicates information. Meyer and Freedle (1984) stated that written discourse can be organized into five text structures: collection, description, problem/solution, causation, and comparison/contrast. Despite the recognition of the role of text structure as a kind of background knowledge in reading comprehension, research in this area is sparse.

When reviewing the previous studies that have been done in the realm of reading English as a foreign language in Iran, we come to realize that most of the researchers in the field have tried to investigate factors such as, reading strategies, bottom-up and top-down approaches to reading, skimming and scanning, and schema theory. In fact, almost little or no attention has been paid to rhetorical pattern or text structure as a determining factor in reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. As Sharp (2004) mentioned, much

of the research in the area of text structure and reading comprehension has been with L1 students.

Research for a foreign language has been more limited. Furthermore, most of the research in the field has considered the effect of text structure awareness in reading comprehension, the effect of text structure in recall and whether knowledge of text structure can be successfully taught. In addition, little attention has been paid to the comprehension problems of readers whose first language is Persian and who are required to read in English. Do the text structures have any effect on the readers' ability to comprehend text in English when it is their foreign language? So, the researcher felt that there is a need to investigate the relationship between different text structures and Iranian EFL learners' performance on reading comprehension.

Therefore, the study described here focused on text structure and its effect on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. Specifically, this study was designed to determine the effect of three expository text structures on reading comprehension of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Three expository text structures used in this study are: problem-solution; cause-effect; and compare-contrast. Moreover, the researcher will try to find which text structure is more facilitative and which one is more difficult for comprehension of Iranian EFL learners.

### Research Questions

1. Do different text structures (cause-effect, comparison-contrast, and problem-solution) have any effect on the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners?

-If the answer to the first question is yes, then the second question will raise.

2. Which of these text structures (comparison/contrast, cause/effect, and problem/solution) are more facilitative of comprehension for Iranian EFL learners?

### Hypothesis

Different text structures (cause-effect, comparison-contrast, and problem-solution) have no effect on the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners.

### Methodology

#### Participants

The participants of this research project were some seventy-five freshmen English language and literature students at Mazandaran

University with their age ranging from 19 to 27. A version of the TOEFL test was administered to make the subjects homogeneous. Out of 75 students, only 54, having met the criterion of scoring between one standard deviation above and below the mean of TOEFL test, were chosen to function as the subjects of this study. The sampling procedure in this study is convenient or available sampling.

The researcher tried to find the subjects who are in a reading course. In addition, the researcher selected half of the subjects from among females and half of them from among males in order to control the effect of a subjects' gender on the results of the study. These participants formed just one group which then received the instruction and took three reading comprehension tests.

## Instruments

### 1. Language Proficiency Test:

In order to homogenize the level of proficiency of the participants in this research study, a version of the TOEFL test has been administered to all learners. It consists of three parts: reading comprehension, grammatical structures and vocabulary. It has 100 items and all items are in multiple choice format.

### 2. Reading Comprehension Tests:

Three reading comprehension tests were used in this study. Each test consisted of two passages and sixteen multiple choice items. The passages in each test were in a particular text structure or rhetorical pattern; one comparison-contrast, another cause-effect, and the other problem-solution. It should also be mentioned that, the passages enjoy equal readability level (grade 9) according to the Fry Readability Graph (Ghaith & Harkouss, 2003). These passages were selected from Ghaith and Harkouss (2003). In addition, the reliability coefficients of the test were estimated to be .70, .67, and .71 which according to Bachman (1990), are acceptable estimates of reliability.

### Procedure

First, to ensure that all the subjects are homogenous regarding their English language proficiency levels, a version of the TOEFL test was administered to all subjects. Out of 75 students, only 54, having met the criterion of scoring between one standard deviation above or below the mean of the TOEFL test, were chosen to function as the subjects of this study.

In the next phase of this study the participants, who formed just one

group, then went through the process of instruction. Instruction includes 15 sessions of teaching the three text structures (cause-effect, problem-solution, and comparison-contrast). Five sessions were devoted to each text structure. Students were provided with some sample texts in that particular text structure and the instructor gave comments regarding that text and its peculiarities. At the end of the course students were given three reading comprehension test to see whether there is difference in comprehension of these text structures or not.

## Results and Discussion

The results of reading comprehension tests were analyzed by the Friedman Test, one-way ANOVA and paired sample t-tests. As it can be seen in table 1 there are differences among the three means. In order to find whether the difference among the three means is meaningful, a one-way ANOVA is used (Table 2). As it can be seen in this table, the difference among the three mean scores is significant. So, the null hypothesis of this study is rejected, leading to the conclusion that different text structures have an effect on reading comprehension of Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

Table 1. Mean rank of reading tests

	Mean Rank
Cause-effect (CE)	1.23
Problem-solution (PS)	2.34
Compare-contrast (CC)	2.43

Table 2. One-way ANOVA

F-ratio	Degree of Freedom	F-critical
8.826	2	5.3

In the next phase, paired sample t-tests were used to see which of these text structures are more facilitative and which are more difficult for comprehension for Iranian EFL learners (Table 3).

Table 3. Paired sample t-test

	t-observed	df	t-critical	
			0.05	0.01
CE-CC 1	-10.532 *	53	2.00	2.66
PS-CC 2	-1.937	53	2.00	2.66
CE-PS 3	-11.607 *	53	2.00	2.66

As it is shown in table 3, the t-observed exceeds the t-critical value at both levels of significance for the first and third pairs. When cause-effect text structure is compared with comparison-contrast and problem-solution, the difference in the mean scores is significant and meaningful, but when these two (comparison-contrast and problem-solution) are compared with each other the difference in the mean scores is not significant and meaningful.

The results of the study showed that different text structures have effects on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. It means that, these text structures may facilitate or hinder the comprehension of foreign language learners. In other words, it seems that Iranian EFL learners have difficulty comprehending some text structures in spite of intervention. Furthermore, this study reveals that cause-effect expository text structure is more difficult for comprehension than comparison-contrast and problem-solution expository text structure. It seems that this text structure (cause-effect) requires some comprehension strategies which are more difficult and different compared with other two text structures.

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## **Effectiveness of Student's Use of Laptops Outside the Classroom**

**Okan Bölükbaş**

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## Effectiveness of Student's Use of Laptops Outside the Classroom

Okan Bölükbaş

### Abstract

The study was aimed at investigating how efficiently students use their laptops outside the classroom. The study was undertaken at Sabancı University, School of Languages, Preparatory Programme. The findings indicate that although a laptop is a great tool for learning, students do not necessarily use their laptops in the way that could most contribute to their learning outside the classroom; consequently, in order to encourage and maximise the ideal use of laptops outside the classroom guidance, training, and counselling need to be provided

### Introduction

The study aimed at investigating how students in an EFL academic context use their laptops outside the classroom. It also aimed at discovering how the students' use of laptops outside the classroom contributes to their learning and the implications of this on teaching and learning practices. The following research questions are addressed by the study:

1. In what ways do preparatory programme students' use of laptops outside the classroom contribute to their language learning?
2. What implications does this have on teaching/learning practices?

The students are all equipped with a laptop provided by the school. The use of this technological tool is also encouraged by teachers in the classroom. However, outside the classroom the knowledge of how students use their laptops was unknown to the researcher. Therefore, the present study can shed light on what could be effective in the use of laptops for teaching and learning practices. It will show, for example, to what extent students use their laptops to improve their learning but also to entertain themselves. In light of these findings, suggestions will be made to promote the ideal use of this technological tool in education.

## Literature Review

*Our lives as faculty are full of everyday frustrations, challenges, and unrealised potential. While we have worked out solutions and strategies for dealing with many of these, it is clear that, given the right tools, we could be more efficient and effective. Technology now offers an increasing number of intuitive, reliable, "ready for prime time" tools to help faculty do the things they do every day (Clyde & Delohery, 2005).*

This excerpt by Clyde and Deloherty clearly emphasizes the crucial role that technology plays in teaching and learning. The 'right tool' that is referred to above could easily be interpreted as laptops. With recent technological advances and more affordable prices, laptops have attracted more educators' interest to support learning. There is substantial evidence that using technology as an instructional tool enhances student learning and educational outcomes (Gulek and Demirtas, 2005). Rockman et al. have made multiple evaluations on the findings of Microsoft's laptop immersion program, which resulted in positive effects on student learning and curriculum delivery (1997, 1998, 2000). Some of the key findings of this study are as follows:

### Student outcomes:

- *Laptop students spend more time doing homework on computers.*
- *Laptop students spend more time engaging in collaborative work than non-laptop students.*
- *Laptop students direct their own learning.*
- *Laptop students participate in more project-based instruction.*
- *Laptops increase access to information and improve research analysis skills.*

### Teacher outcomes:

- *Teachers who use laptops use a more constructivist approach to teaching.*
- *Teachers who use laptops feel more empowered in their classrooms.*

Research provides evidence that students who engage in collaborative work, participate in more project-based learning and have higher levels of motivation (Wigfield et al., 1998; Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000).

The use of laptops often goes hand in hand with the use of the Internet. As Green (1968) states:

*One fantastic feature of the Web is that it can provide a wide variety of information in various media formats. One can find reams of text on just about any subject, as well as multimedia archives and live camera feeds from around the world. For this reason, educators often point out*

*that the Web is particularly useful as a resource for students conducting research (pg. 31).*

To the knowledge of the researcher, a few studies have investigated the effectiveness of laptops in learning (Gulek and Demirtas, 2005). Nevertheless, there are no studies which examine the effectiveness of students' use of laptops outside the classroom.

## Data Collection

The data were collected from only one set of informants: 46 university students who were mainly at Upper Intermediate level. All students were enrolled in the Sabanci University School of Languages' Preparatory Programme, a one-year intensive English course. Students who get a score below 70 % on the university's English proficiency test are required to enrol in this intensive English programme in which they are placed in beginner, intermediate, and upper intermediate levels depending on their scores in the proficiency exam.

Initially, one semi-structured, individual interview was administered to collect data from a group of seven students. The students were approached and offered to take part in the study. Interviews were scheduled with those who volunteered.

The data collected from the interviews proved to be useful in that the survey questions were developed further in order to gain more insight into the research. After the addition of new questions and the edition or removal of others, a survey was administered to 39 students as a final research tool. Participants were either randomly selected students by the class teachers or students who volunteered to take part in this study. An anonymous survey website, SurveyMonkey, was used for the collection of data. This website had already become popular amongst many School of Languages teachers; therefore, many students had already had the experience of completing one or more surveys using this tool. Some students' familiarity coupled with the anonymous way of collecting data made this technological tool a practical and reliable method of data collection for the study. (Please see Appendix B)

## Conclusion

Students intensively use their laptops for an average of 3 to 4 hours every day outside the classroom, which makes the laptops the second mostly used technological device after mobile phones. However, as obvious as it is that

they use their laptops for long durations, it is more important to know what they do with their laptops.

In terms of entertainment, students clearly stated that they play computer games. In addition, some students suggested uninstalling games from laptops before these are distributed to students enrolling at Sabanci University. Apart from games, students use their laptops in the most basic ways including watching films and listening to music, in which the laptop functions merely as a TV and a radio. They also check personal email accounts, chat online and visit Facebook.

As for the use of laptops for learning purposes, all students use their laptops to do their homework. They also use online dictionaries while doing so. Most of the students do also work on supplementary materials, to further their learning outside class, provided through an online course management system (specific to Sabanci University) called SUCourse. In addition, many students visit website links sent by their teachers. The results show that course management system websites such as SUCourse can play a great role in supporting students' learning. The usage, content and practicality of such sites should be enhanced and students trained as to how to make the most of these opportunities.

In relation with the results for question 5 (please see Appendix B), most students use Internet shortcuts. The use of organised bookmarks should be encouraged and promoted as most of the work that students do on the Internet is based on using an Internet browser.

The findings for questions 7, 8, and 9 (please see Appendix B) indicate that students are basically aware that laptops are beneficial tools for learning as long as they are used in efficient ways. They also know that using a laptop can be addictive and that especially computer games have negative effects on students' success.

Areas where laptops can be used effectively are described in the points below:

1. *Homework given by teachers, based on Internet research is the most significant motivating factor for students to use their laptops outside the classroom for learning purposes. Teachers should, therefore, keep this in mind when assigning tasks to students.*
2. *In addition, students appreciate the links to useful educational websites sent by their teachers. A special compilation of ELT links could be prepared by teachers and installed by the laptop providers as a default on their browsers at the beginning of each semester. These links can be periodically updated and upgraded and sent to students.*

3. Finally, the use of course management system websites should be encouraged and promoted to support students' learning and studying outside the classroom.

In conclusion, the data collected revealed that the majority of upper intermediate level students at the School of Languages do not necessarily use their laptops effectively to contribute to their learning outside the classroom. Provided that laptop users are given the correct guidance, training, and counselling, the maximum contribution of self-study laptop use could be obtained through Internet based assignments, a collection of useful ELT links, and a course management system.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Tool Data

#### Place

1. Where do you usually use your laptop outside the classroom?
2. Where do you mostly use it (at home/in dorm)?
3. Are there any places that motivate you to use your laptop?

#### Time

4. What time of the day do you use your laptop?
5. How long in average do you use your laptop?
6. When do you prefer to use your laptop?

#### Purpose

7. For the purpose of entertainment, what do you do with your laptop (i.e. websites, etc.) on the internet?
8. For the purpose of learning English, what do you do with your laptop on the internet?
9. What reading do you do on the internet?
10. Do you use your laptop to watch DVDs? What kind of DVDs?
11. Do you play any computer games on your laptop?

#### Personal Opinion

12. In your opinion, what is the best way to use a laptop for learning English reasons?
13. Are there any web sites you could suggest to study English?
14. Let's say that now you are a Freshman student, for the new preparatory programme students, what would be your advice to use their laptops efficiently for learning purposes outside the classroom?
15. In your opinion, what kind of factors would motivate you to use your laptop outside the classroom for learning English?
16. What would you expect from your teacher to encourage you for more efficient use of laptops?

**Appendix B****Survey Tool Data**

Q1. What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about “laptop”?

Q2. How often do you use your laptop in these places every day?

Q3. How often do you play computer games?

Q4. For the purpose of entertainment and correspondence, what do you do with your laptop on the Internet outside the classroom?

Q5. For the purpose of learning and studying English, what do you do with your laptop outside the classroom?

Q6. Could you please take a look at the Internet browser’s favourites/bookmarks tab now and tick one of the following

	Percentage of Students	Number of Students
I have no idea about “favourites/bookmarks”	5.7%	2
I don’t use this tab	17.1%	6
There are 0-5 links about learning and studying English websites	37.1%	13
There are more than 5 links about learning and studying English websites	40.0%	14

Q7. Let us assume you were a Freshman student now. What would be your advice for newly enrolled students regarding the effective use of laptops for learning purposes outside the classroom?

Q8. In your opinion, what kind of factors would motivate you to use your laptop outside the classroom to learn English?

Q9. What would you expect your teacher to do in order to encourage you to use online resources more efficiently outside classtime? How could your teacher help you to use your laptop efficiently outside class?



## **ENGLISH: A game or a responsibility?**

**Cemre Mavioğlu**

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## ENGLISH: A game or a responsibility?

*Cemre Mavioğlu*

It is no longer a privilege to know a foreign language but an absolute necessity. Especially with the fast paced developments in communication technology and the internationalization in education, speaking one or even more foreign languages is a great asset for any student. Just like many of my peers I have been aware of this too and have seen very enjoyable but also bitter aspects of language learning, and felt like a toddler trying to make her first steps.

In my presentation I tried to provide a glimpse of my own reflection regarding my foreign language learning experience. Hence what is to follow is a window into my world of learning a language.

There were times I hated learning English and there were times I really enjoyed it. It is about how you go about learning a foreign language. Do you see it as a difficult responsibility, a duty, or something entertaining of which you will gain something? I think one needs to consider the educators' perceptions here too because it has to do with the way they teach. For instance my elementary school teachers used to arrange English book clubs for us which basically were parties where we could trade English books with each other and everybody could also bring something to eat from home. We also played vocabulary games which excited us due to the competitive aspect. We watched videos we were really keen on, played scrabble and arranged vocabulary tournaments, which was to ease our vocabulary learning process. At the end of each month our teachers would then award the ones who were most successful. Surely this was one of the reasons why we studied harder and harder to win the prizes of these competitions. So learning English was fun.

Learning English was also interactive and meaningful for us. The English Drama Club at school provided us with a realistic reason to interact and speak in a foreign language as we put various plays onto stage.

Another thing that I have observed during my foreign language learning experience is that learning about the culture of the target language makes a big difference in one's learning. Most of the people I observed, especially those who skipped the preparatory year at the School of Languages at Sabanci

University and started their undergraduate studies right away, were those who had experienced living in a foreign cultural setting and who could speak more than one foreign language. Most of them had done some exchange visits, lived abroad for a while or had a foreign parent. I also realized that my generation was luckier than my parents' in that we were surrounded by foreign cultural influences, especially American Culture. We kind of grew up with these. I think that is what improved my generation's understanding and success in learning foreign languages. Let me provide an example to illustrate what I mean. For example the word 'başınız sağolsun' in Turkish is an expression used by people to express their empathy with you when somebody has passed away. However, as there is no direct translation of this expression into English it can only be translated as 'I'm sorry for your loss' which is definitely does not pick up the whole idea expressed in the Turkish version. That is to say, it is not always possible to understand why people use a word for, if you are not familiar with the cultural meaning. Because every word has derived from an experience, every word has a "story" and if you are not aware of it, you can't have empathy and thus you cannot efficiently communicate in that language. That's the reason why I believe teaching children how to feel like the ones your trying to talk their language of, in other words cultural aspects of a foreign language, should be a significant component of the foreign language classroom. What could be one way to do this? One of the things that improved my English was that I really liked watching American series, which in return did not only provide me with exposure to English but also American culture. I realized that after one point I wasn't trying to catch the subtitles because I started even guessing the response a character would give in a dialog. This really made my foreign language learning process less painful.

But of course learning it is not always so much fun, take for example exams. I remember in elementary school there were times I cried because of the low grades I got from English or for not remembering a word while in the middle of a debate, or not knowing the difference between two similar words. Exams made one study more and more in order to remember everything. Learning a foreign language can really be a difficult responsibility at times and it can really be disturbing not to have full control over what you are actually saying. One other aspect where I sometimes lost control over was pronunciation. This was especially a problem when I went for a four week exchange to Louisiana, in the United States. I became the subject of many jokes due to me mispronouncing words like "foot" and "food" or "soap" and "soup", which put me into trouble several times. Sometimes people would understand that I was a foreigner but sometimes they wouldn't which was something that really influenced their perception and attitude towards me. When people understand that you really care about their language and their culture, you suddenly become not that much of a foreigner to them. And that was the challenge I had to work with in

those four weeks in Louisiana. Even though trying to explain myself created pressure on me, the thing that made everything enjoyable for me in the end was to think that this visit was something that I was supposed to enjoy and benefit from.

I think one of the reasons for having had this conference was to share the struggles both students and teachers go through when learning and/or teaching a foreign language; and to come up with possible solutions to those struggles for the following generations to come. I really think that learning foreign languages does not need to be difficult. Even though one has to work hard at times, it's the duty of the educators to encourage and sensitize students to the culture of that foreign language so as to provide a better understanding of the language.





## Not Your Father's Role Play: Improvisation for a New Generation

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## Not Your Father's Role Play: Improvisation for a New Generation

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*Susan Spencer*

EFL teachers have long recognized the value of using drama techniques in the classroom to bridge the gap between language usage and use, between knowing about a language and knowing a language for the purpose of communication. However, in embracing the popular drama technique of improvisation, many EFL teachers unwittingly fall into the grammar trap, either designing improvisation activities to teach grammar structures or emphasizing the grammatical aspects of their students' improvisations.

Dramatization and improvisation, usually in the forms of sketches and story telling in ELT classes, involve students in a multi-sensory, meaningful approach to language learning. The learners explore the linguistic and conceptual aspects of communication without concentrating on the mechanics of language. Students are able to develop a sense of self-awareness through dramatic interpretation without being self-conscious specifically because they have a communicative purpose. However, if teachers consciously or unconsciously employ 'grammar-based improvisation' techniques, they undermine the potential of improvisation as an enabler of building communication skills.

In real life, we never stop in the middle of our conversation to analyze our mistakes or criticize the grammatical aspects of our speech, as our purpose is communicative. However, in using improvisation as a language skill enhancement technique in an EFL class, teachers often fall back on longstanding habits of identifying and correcting grammar mistakes. In so doing, they defeat one of the purposes of using improvisation at all, which is to replicate real life situations as far as possible and emulate language used for the purpose of communication.

This presentation distilled the traditional ten-or-more principles of improvisation into three:

- (1) Take risks. Don't think. Just do.
- (2) Be open to everything.
- (3) Keep going.

These principles were illustrated through the activity of expanding on a dialogue that presented only single key words or phrases. Participants had to interpret meaning and respond in a back and forth manner where each utterance was dependent on the preceding one. Through multiple participants, the variety of possible meanings and speech acts were illustrated. The 'take home lesson' of the activity was the importance of conveying what you have in mind rather than how well your speech conforms to grammatical rules.

Bringing real life into the classroom is a worthy aim of EFL teachers. Improvisation is a useful tool in so doing, but only if we use improvisation as it is meant to be – unscripted, imperfect, and above all, communicative in purpose and content.



## **Teachers as Collaborators to Motivate Learning Autonomy in English Speaking Class- Two Cases at a Senior High School and a University**

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## Teachers as Collaborators to Motivate Learning Autonomy in English Speaking Class- Two Cases at a Senior High School and a University

*Yiling Chen*

### Abstract

The notion of collaborative learning and teaching in foreign language education has been popular for decades. This concept focuses on learners and encourages them to learn a language by experiential and shared learning. The learners are believed to learn best if they learn through the conscious or unconscious internalization of their own or observed experiences which build upon our past experiences or knowledge. There is an assumption that the learning that can result from the experience, if the activities are manifested 'properly', is a commodity called 'knowledge'. This tends to be the view of the training and development literature (Moon, 2001). Within this concept, the role of teachers as collaborators in the teaching and learning process represents a change to traditional educational patterns. Moreover, increasing numbers of instructors are realizing the importance of motivating learning autonomy among students in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. In this paper, I will consider to what extent the concept of a teacher as a collaborator can be applied to the senior high school and university EFL classes in Taiwan, and how to motivate EFL learners to be autonomous. Attention is first paid to the theoretical grounding of the concept and the characteristics of a teacher as a collaborator. Following this, the English education contexts in Taiwan is highlighted in order to consider how far this concept can be achieved. Finally, conclusions will be drawn from this small-scale exploration.

### Introduction

When we consider foreign language education, the main aspects in our mind are learners and teachers. There is a notion of collaborative learning and teaching in foreign language education, which "has emerged over the last ten years as the significant concept within the field of language education" (Nunan, 1992, p.1). This concept focuses on learners and encourages them to learn language by experiential and shared learning. Within this concept, the role of teachers as collaborators in the teaching and learning process represents a change to traditional educational patterns.

The author carried out experimental teaching (namely 'collaborative teaching', which is different from traditional lecturing teaching) for a semester at a senior high school and a university. The courses chosen for experimental teaching were 'Practical English' for majors in the Department of Applied English at a vocational senior high school, and 'English Audio-Visual Training' for majors in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at a university. During the academic year, the first semester was taught in the traditional way, and the second semester was taught by collaborative teaching. In this paper I will only consider to what extent the concept of a teacher as a collaborator can be applied to the English (as foreign language) educational contexts both at a senior high school and at a university in Taiwan. Attention firstly is paid to the theoretical grounding of the concept and characteristics of a teacher as a collaborator. Following this, the English educational contexts in both schools are highlighted in order to consider how far this concept can be achieved. Finally, conclusions will be drawn from this small-scale exploration.

### Literature Review

It is believed that when students sense they are finding out something that is important and useful to them, using their own powers of observation and interpersonal skills, everything changes. Therefore, we, as teachers, should not only lecture in class but also encourage hands-on exercises. We want to be sure that they 'really learn something useful and meaningful'; the notion of 'experiential learning' emerged in the 1960s (McKeachie and Svinicki, 2006). Kolb's (1984) general theoretical model of experiential learning has had outstanding influence. In experiential learning, personal experience is viewed as the central point for learning, giving "life, texture, and subjective personal meaning to abstract concepts and at the same time providing a concrete, publicly shared reference point for testing the implications and validity of ideas created during the leaning process" (ibid, p21). In this model, reflection plays an important role in the process by providing a bridge between experience and theoretical conceptualisation.

The context of foreign language education is changing with many new competing theories, including the development of experiential learning. Kohonen (1989: p30) mentions that 'current pedagogical thinking seems to be shifting away from the traditional behaviouristic model of teaching as transmission of knowledge towards an experiential model whereby teaching is seen as transformation of existing or partly understood knowledge, based on constructivist view of learning'. Miller (1988) presents a table to compare the traditional model with the experiential model. In the experiential model, control of the process is shifted from the teacher towards the learner.

Learners are at the centre. Learning starts with the goals chosen by learners themselves. To a great extent, the teacher cooperatively facilitates learners to achieve their goals in a small group setting. These distinctions, compared to the traditional model, not only influence physical settings in foreign language education, such as structuring the classroom, but also have great effects on the role of the teacher in the learning and teaching process. In the next part, the focus will be shifted to the characteristics of a teacher as a collaborator in the cooperative foreign language class.

### Applicability

The concept of a teacher as a collaborator seems very influential and significant. The aim is to encourage the learner to learn autonomously. However, from my point of view, this concept would be difficult to apply to foreign language education in Taiwan, since it challenges the educational and cultural context in Taiwan. I would like to explain this from three aspects.

Firstly, this concept challenges the meaning of teacher in a Taiwanese cultural context. In a collaborative learning class, one major change is the role of the teacher. The teacher is most likely to be a member of the learners' group, a collaborator. This change is not entirely 'new' but still too 'advanced' to be accepted, especially in a high school context. Our culture pays a high degree of respect to the role of teacher, which even can be traced back thousands of years. We transmit the notion of Confucius: to respect the teacher. We believe that the teacher is the person who teaches knowledge and copes with the complexity of life. In this cultural context, children are educated to respect their teachers and follow their teacher's words. I find that the notion of 'teacher as authority' creates a contradiction with the age of the learners. That is to say, it is easier to implement collaborative teaching with older learners. Take this experimental teaching for example; it was easier to apply collaborative teaching in a university context than in a high school context. Further, the learner autonomy of undergraduates was more likely to be encouraged than in senior high students. The high school students in this study could not even accept the notion of collaborative teaching, which required their efforts to do something by themselves instead of reciting textbooks. Most of them were reluctant to research or do reports on their own, mainly because it was not the objective with which they had grown up. In this sense, the concept of the teacher as a collaborator would be restricted in its application in certain educational contexts.

Secondly, the current foreign language education pattern in primary and secondary schools in Taiwan is difficult to change more generally. In our

foreign language classes, the number of pupils is normally between 50 and 60. Such a big size restricts the teacher's behaviour. The teacher cannot physically arrange group learning in one classroom, because the space is limited, and it is easy to be out of control. Pupils must be arranged in a very structured form. The teacher stands in the front and lectures to the whole class. The demonstration is in a single form, teacher-dominated. However, as McDonnell (1992) states,

*when the teacher intervenes, there are demonstrations of problem-solving language and behaviours; when students are encouraged to go back over a discussion to pursue a new strategy, there are demonstrations of negotiation; when students are asked to reflect on how the group worked together, there are demonstrations of cooperative skills (p.170).*

In conclusion, this multi-demonstration classroom has not been achieved at senior high school, but partially accomplished in the university setting. For example, because of the large number of pupils in a single class at high school, it can only be imagined how difficult it was to encourage active learning. When I negotiated with individuals to set goals and meet their needs by consideration of individual's language level, I was always in a dilemma. How could teachers plan a lesson to meet an individual's interest and pay attention to their language ability at same time? Further, the 50 students at this age did not actually know what they wanted to learn. As a result, the motivation of both high and low level pupils decreased. In addition, in this high school, the school had an English (as foreign language) textbook for all and it was difficult to design collaborative class activities. Thus, the outlook for the application of this concept is not very optimistic in a senior high school setting. By contrast, the situation at a university was easier. Instructors at the university were allowed to choose textbooks freely and the number of students in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature is comparatively small. It was unproblematic for me to move students around or design an active exercise in class. Furthermore, my students enjoyed collaborative teaching more than a dull, lecturing lesson. They learned better when materials were related to their daily lives or were presented by peers.

Thirdly, assessment in foreign language education provides barriers to this concept in a senior high school context. Our basic approach in assessing senior high school students was external summative assessment. All of the national assessments are paper-based, and assess vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing, without listening and speaking. That is, communicative skills are omitted. The method and content of assessment limits a language teacher's behaviours. This kind of assessment-driven teaching and learning is consistent with the idea of backwash, as Johnson (2001) states, which is "the effect that

testing has on teaching” (p291). For better or worse, tests and examinations exert control over what goes on in a classroom. Teachers cannot focus on the communication of language by adopting communicative approaches because students are not assessed communicatively. In this situation, there is no space to achieve collaborative language learning in senior high schools. Fortunately, on the other hand, undergraduates do not have further entrance exams, unless they want to go on to graduate school. Further to this, one of the core teaching objectives at the university is to encourage the innovation and creativity of students; therefore, implementing collaborative teaching was not difficult while the experimental teaching was carried out.

## Conclusion

In this paper, attention was firstly paid to the theoretical grounds for the concept of collaborative learning and teaching and the characteristics of a teacher as a collaborator. Following that, the application of this concept in a Taiwanese context was considered, at both a senior high school and a university. The conclusion drawn from this exploration is that although the concept of a teacher as a collaborator is valuable, and is one that aims at encouraging autonomous learning, it is difficult to apply this to foreign (English) language education in senior high schools because of the boundaries of culture and the educational context. However, this does not mean I reject entirely the idea. It is still worthwhile for individual Taiwanese foreign language teachers to reflect on personal experience and improve professional skills by considering this concept, and implementing it at senior high schools if possible. In contrast, the notion can and should be carried out in a university setting since instructors at universities have more decision-making rights and universities are regarded as ‘authority-free teaching lands’. As Andresen et al. (2000) points out, collaborative learning is where learners are personally engaged or where their related experience plays a significant role in the process of learning and cognition development.

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## Effective Language Learning

### Hazal Yıldırım

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## Effective Language Learning

### *Hazal Yıldırım*

In my opinion, the best way to learn a language is to live in the country where the language we want to learn is spoken. However, this way is not an easily achievable one. This is why I would like to share some of my suggestions for creating effective language learning opportunities when living in the country of the target language is not possible:

One way is to learn it through extensive exposure to the target language because the more the student hears and sees the language the better he/she will get used to it and remember it. For example watching movies in English and with English subtitles. Also, the teacher must build up a strong and up-to-date bank of materials in order to prepare students to get the best advantage from these materials. Teachers should not be afraid to gently 'force' students to watch, listen and read texts in that language because watching TV serials with subtitles, for examples, helped me a lot when I was learning Spanish. Naturally the technological equipment of the classrooms plays a significant role in this. In this respect Sabanci University School of Languages' students are lucky and learn a lot by using such visual materials.

Another important factor in effectively learning a foreign language is continuity and organization. Teachers need to be very well prepared and organized for their lessons so that schematically everything is clear in the students' minds and so that students are able to make connections between different topics.

Furthermore the way one learns a language affects the success in learning that language too. For example, I learned Spanish 4 years ago in Panama as an exchange student and I started to learn Russian 3 years ago. When I compared these two languages, I've noticed that Russian is far more difficult than Spanish. Especially the Cyril alphabet makes this language harder. But this opinion may arise from the ways that I used to learn these languages. Because, I learned Spanish by talking to and listening to people talking in a Spanish speaking country; whereas I learned Russian in a formal classroom environment in the School of Languages. Nevertheless, I believe that when a person learns one foreign language, it gets easier to learn a second or even

a third one; no matter what method it is learned by, because, while learning the first foreign language, we learn how to use our brain in a different way, we learn how to adapt ourselves to the system of that language. The important point here is for the teacher to make students realize that they are actually learning that language, that they are making real progress, because this will motivate students and encourage them to spend even more effort on learning. For instance, even if a student is enrolled in a low level course, teachers may get them to watch cartoons with subtitles, very easy and interesting videos or to listen to very easy, popular songs and translate them. Materials need to be interesting in order to make students want to watch, listen to or read outside class hours.

One final factor in foreign language learning is assigning homework on a regular basis. This is beneficial because if a student is not a student who likes to study day by day, having to do homework will force her/him to do it and thus she/he will not have to study for the exam on the very last day because she/he will already have studied by doing the all homework.

The above factors have all helped in becoming a successful language learner and they will all help you in considering issues in language learning and teaching.



## Informed and Uniformed Movement into Leadership: Tales of Identity Shift and Feedback Peril

**Martha W. Young**  
**Anil Karaağaç**  
**Zuhal Doğan**

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## **Informed and Uniformed Movement Into Leadership: Tales of Identity Shift and Feedback Peril**

**Martha W. Young**  
**Anıl Karaağaç**  
**Zuhal Doğan**

Being a member of a teaching faculty in any level of education, primary, secondary or university level has its benefits, two of which include a synergistic means of oral processing of learner engagement and feedback and that of belonging to a community at large. Coming out of a class that went well or that did not go so well, teachers are able to ruminate over the classroom moments with colleagues around them who can listen and offer insight based on understanding of a particular cohort of students or content being taught, either of which incorporate an element of workplace consistency.

As members of a teaching community, teachers enjoy the daily presence of one another, the mutual mastery of knowledge, the collaborative on-the-spot problem solving, the tasks and routines held in common and to various degrees friendships grown from shared life events in the work place and possibly from personal lives as well. This community among teachers is a valuable perk in the field of education. What happens, then, when a teacher moves from being in the classroom, moves from being in the work room among peers to becoming an educational leader?

For the purposes of the observations included in this workshop and paper, educational leadership has less to do with management or the possession of a title and more to do with the viable process of impacting a group of people to realize a shared goal. (Ricketts, 2009) By this definition understandably anyone instructing in a classroom who realizes stated objectives is an educational leader, however the immediate focus is upon those who are currently training primary and secondary government school classroom teachers in Turkey called Formateurs by the Ministry of Education. For one and a half years they are engaged in a project of traveling to all cities in the country every other week and training English language teachers in topics relevant to upcoming national curricular changes which harmonize with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Topics include Developing

Speaking Strategies (and developing strategies for all four skills), Integrated Skills, Classroom Management, Assessment, Materials Development and Adaptation, and CEFR. The Formateurs were invited to attend professional development trainings and some weeks later told they had been selected for this project while being given the option to refuse the interruption to their current professional situation of maintaining their classroom instruction in their home cities. By accepting, they were saying “yes” to being pulled from among their colleagues to begin training them (meaning their colleagues with whom they had formerly processed learner feedback now were to become their learners), they were saying “yes” to traveling every other week to a variety of cities across Turkey, they were saying “yes” to working in intensified situations with total strangers as new colleagues with whom they may or may not now process learner feedback, and they were saying “yes” to new direct supervisors.

The Public Affairs and Culture Sector of the U.S. Embassy in Turkey is often called upon to provide English Language Fellows and expertise for various English teacher training opportunities in the country. With the understanding of the scope and goals of this project, English Language Fellows were encouraged to join the endeavor with the Formateurs who had noticeable story, skill and potential.

Anıl Karaağaç and Zuhal Yılmaz Doğan were introduced in Mugla, Turkey in December 2010 while they, along with other Formateurs, were gathered around tables late at night with open computers working on power point presentations and handouts for the week. The midnight hour was obvious as was the camaraderie among the Formateurs. From an educational perspective, the reflections from the day finished along with ongoing collaborations were fascinating. On the final day of the training seminar in Mugla both Anıl and Zuhal did two unusual things: first they wrapped their arms around participants to say good-bye explaining that these were former colleagues of Formateurs present, and secondly they dove for the evaluation forms, eagerly going through the feedback to see the participants’ response to the workshops they had given. In the course of fifteen minutes these two had manifested two remarkable elements in their newer teacher training positions: the coping with the identity shift from classroom teacher to teacher trainer and the avid interest in learner feedback to inform their craft of training!

Dialogue with these two was begun and pursued throughout the remaining school year. Literature, ideas and responses to transitioning to educational leadership were shared. Both the identity shift and attending learner feedback remained central to conversations. Regarding identity shift, Zuhal acknowledged she approached the training seminars in her home city, Istanbul

with much unease because the classrooms that she was walking into were filled with colleagues with whom she had been formerly trained in specialty workshops, side by side! She shared the following conversation held just before her presentation began in which she froze and told a white lie because she truly did not know how to tell this former peer that she was now his trainer.

See Figure 1 below.



Figure 1

Anil spoke of gratitude for the articles she read because she felt less alone (Zuhale also concurred) and related to comments of two joint authors in particular. “Both Karl and Jason worried about losing their street credibility. Beyond the mere appearance of credibility, however, both worried that their lack of ongoing experience with students in schools would compromise their ability to give good advice to student teachers. Jason pointed out that “teachers are skeptics” ...” (Dinkelmana, Margolisb and Sikkengac, 2006, p. 121 ) Even though Anil knew her training and classroom experience were serving her well, she was challenged each seminar week with statements like “I’m a teacher for twenty years” or “Are you an active classroom teacher right now?” or “How did you become a teacher trainer?” She still finds herself having to talk to herself with encouraging words like “Remember that we are sharing with them to remind them to activate what they say they already know” as she walks into the training sessions. Zuhale also concurs with the self talk, especially if the participants exhibit resistance. The Formateurs who had begun as strangers to each other had quickly become each others’ support and feedback processing mechanism, this was clear, especially between these two trainers.

As for formal feedback from their learners, they soon were not satisfied with the mandatory form issued on Fridays so together they voluntarily created one to better pinpoint issues more central to learner engagement and their professional growth. With this they were hoping to elicit direct input into areas of their teaching vulnerabilities which had surfaced over the first few months in the official Ministry of Education evaluation forms. Two examples from more which were fully developed in the workshop include Anil being criticized for her paralanguage (which brought her to tears!) and Zuhale being told to slow her pace down. See Figure 2 below.

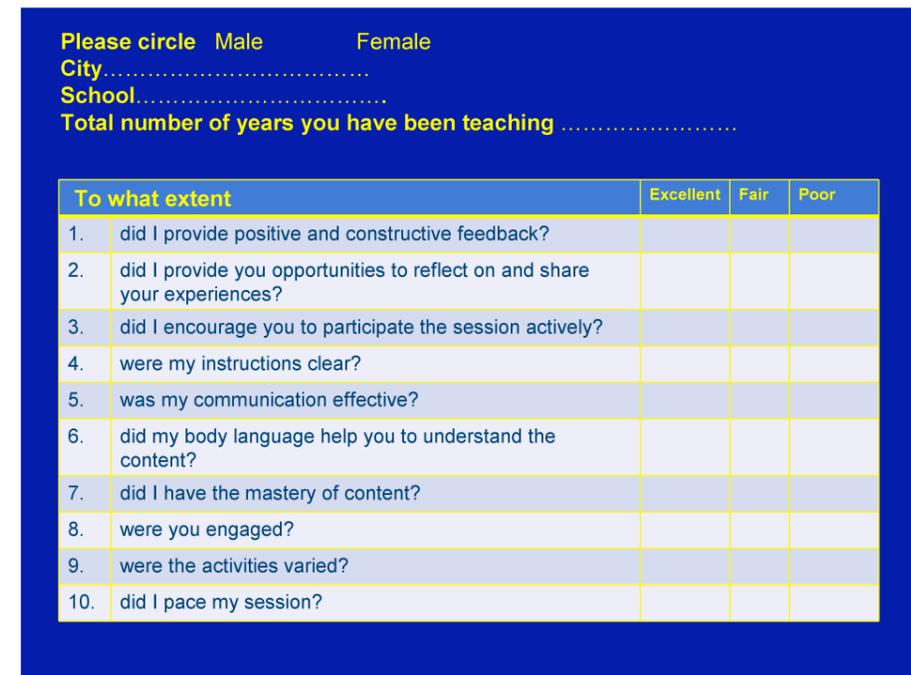
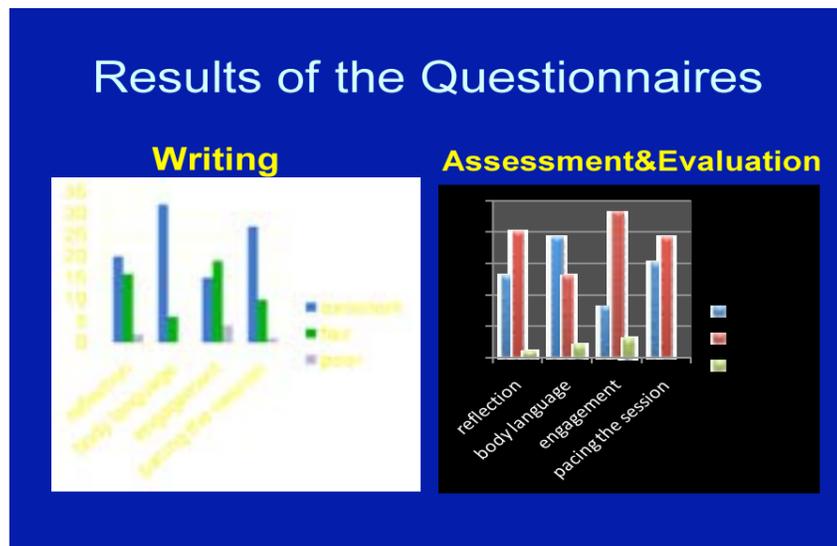
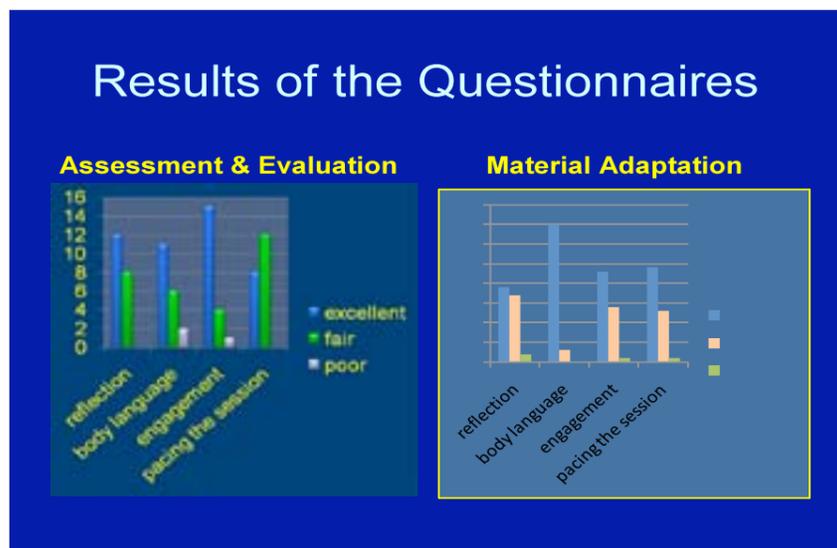


Figure 2

This feedback form was given at the end of workshops that both Anil and Zuhale offered during the weeklong seminars in various Turkish cities. Mixed results emerged from these questionnaires as participants were confused by the word “fair” and did not perceive it as a mark in the middle, yet overall Anil and Zuhale were able to better monitor the changes they had implemented in their training sessions over the months. Their curiosity and excitement were observable as they reflected on their practice and implemented active responses to decisions made from feedback during the winter and spring months of 2011. Below are samples of their findings:



Anil's results from a one week training session in Afyon



Zuhal's results from a one week training session in Afyon

The process of the ongoing discussions about their teaching, crafting the questionnaires, managing negative feedback as well as positive with this informing their teacher training seminars in the next city has proven to be rewarding and beneficial to both Anil and Zuhal. Prior to the onset of conversations, they said they had felt vague tensions and initial insecurities in their work but were not certain what they were dealing with. By talking and thoroughly teasing out the various components of this unusual year, they have been able to pinpoint issues within their identity shift into educational leadership as well as detect new professional growth within themselves and

adaptive abilities to both perform and become resourceful. Prior to the effort put into communication for this workshop and taking a closer look at what they had been through they were unaware of their own reflective practices and the effects of the Ministry of Education training project. The teaching / learning cycle continues with primary and secondary teachers being the learners, from whom Anil and Zuhal continue to learn as they focus on improving both their instruction and student learning. The Formateurs themselves have obviously become their own new teaching community of support with the afternoons and evenings, following each day of workshops, becoming a hub of informational activity as reflections are mused upon in groups over tea, power points are fine tuned collaboratively and these trainers offer their ear, handouts and expertise to help their colleagues prepare for the next day. To date, the Formateurs in general and Anil and Zuhal in particular have been insightful, flexible and resourceful as they have responded to certain challenges while stepping up into educational leadership.

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## Podcasting and Pleasure Listening

**Rachel Alcorn**

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## Podcasting and Pleasure Listening

*Rachel Alcorn*

### Abstract

This paper focuses on the reasons and motivation behind a podcasting project and podcasting workshop which were carried out at Fatih University, Istanbul. The podcasting project aimed to encourage students to listen to English language radio podcasts which were specifically targeted at them, while the workshop aimed to give teachers the confidence and ability to make podcasts both inside and outside the classroom. The project was completed in the academic year 2010-2011 with 8 English language radio shows being produced during this time. No numerical results were recorded as the project focussed on the idea of “pleasure listening” and therefore students were not forced to listen or partake in the project. All students involved were volunteers from B2 level (in the Common European Framework of Refernces) at Fatih University Prep School. A small amount of verbal feedback was collected from some teachers and students, and the overall result was generally a positive towards the project.

### Introduction

Podcasting has increased dramatically in recent years, thanks to new technological developments which have allowed for easy and fast access to the Internet. This has led to an increase in the number of people downloading films, music, podcasts, and more. Currently a large number of people have access to a laptop, mp3 player, iPod or phone where they can download, save and transport digital audio files. This has also led to an increase in the number of education podcasts available for language learners on the web, and this phenomenon is not limited to English language podcasts. Podcasts are digital audio files which can be uploaded to the Internet for students to download. They are relatively cheap to produce and easy to upload and download, and in terms of language teaching they are beneficial for students to improve listening and fluency skills.

Teaching needs to stay up to date with new technological developments in order to continue to engage the Internet generation. Students use the Internet daily to do many things such as access information, read the news, and communicate with friends. This leads to the discussion about where podcasting can contribute to the language learning process. Podcasts can be used inside and outside the classroom as a learning tool for students and they can be a motivational way to encourage students to listen. The following paper looks at a project which took place over two semesters at Fatih University, Istanbul, and a workshop which was subsequently presented at two conferences: Fatih University, May 2011 and Sabanci University, June 2011.

### The aim of the project

Podcasting and Pleasure Listening was developed in October 2010 with the aim of introducing students to fun and interesting English language radio at a “local” level. By “local” the project aimed to create, produce and record English language radio shows which were based at Fatih University Prep School, and to which the students could relate to and understand. The idea was to make music radio programmes around twenty minutes in length, which would be interesting and motivating for students to want to listen to. Each programme included music, movie reviews, competitions, interviews and the use of words which were relevant to the students’ classroom experiences. The idea of “pleasure listening” was to ensure that students did not feel pressured to take part in this project. All students were encouraged to listen, however they were not forced to partake and there were no compulsory or exam-related activities. The students did not have to answer any comprehension based questions or take any form of test, however in the beginning comprehension quizzes were created for those students who wanted to challenge themselves.

The project was presented to the students as an extra-curricular activity which would be fun as well as beneficial to their learning experience. With this in mind, it was clear from the beginning that the more highly motivated students would be willing to participate. The students needed to be willing to download and listen to the podcasts without being pursued by their teachers. Participation was on a voluntary and personal basis, with all B2 level students in that module being given instructions about where to find the podcasts online and how to download them. The podcasts were produced in the style of a radio programme with requests taken from the students as the project

developed. Most shows included 3 or 4 songs, spoken English links between songs, movie reviews, interviews and other spoken sections. The idea behind the format was to create a school-based radio programme which students could relate to and feel part of. Towards the end of the project, they could also participate in creating the interview section.

When students go abroad to learn a language they are surrounded by their target language. For example, if a student is studying English in London, they mostly hear English around them such as when travelling in taxis, or shopping. However, when students are learning a new language in their native country, it is difficult to immerse them in the new language. This is often perceived to be a key difficulty for students studying in the prep school system in Turkey. Students are exposed to English inside the classroom, however this exposure stops as soon as they exit the classroom. In order to try to encourage students to improve their listening skills and fluency they need to be encouraged to listen to and read as much English language material as possible. Within the university systems, one of the best ways to encourage further listening outside the classroom could be to produce local radio podcasts which students can listen to, and more importantly, which students can relate to. At a more advanced stage universities could then start to develop university radio stations broadcasting in many different languages from Turkish to English to French and so on.

### The project

In the first stage, the format and script for the radio programmes were written which gave timings for song length, as well as scripts for movie reviews and interview questions. As soon as the programme outline was finished the programme was recorded using a microphone and Goldwave, an audio recording software which is available on the Internet. The trial version can be downloaded and used for free for a limited time only, while the full version can be purchased. Once a radio programme was recorded, it was edited using the Goldwave software. Editing included changing the volume of some sections, cutting parts which did not work and adding music and sound effects. This was then uploaded to the Internet using a file sharing website. The website I used was [www.ifile.it](http://www.ifile.it) which uploads and saves files for others to download. The files could not be uploaded directly to the prep school website as this would infringe on music copyright law. By using this file sharing website, only those students who had the password could access the file, therefore music was not being shared illegally. The students were informed about each new

radio programme using posters in the schools which gave the students the password to access the file. At this point it became the students' responsibility to decide if they wanted to participate or not.

In the second semester, I decided to experiment with a different audio recording programme called Audacity which is available free online and did not have a trial period. I found Audacity to be better than Goldwave, especially during the editing stage or when trying to merge music and voice together. The editing tools were also clearer and the overall programme is very user-friendly. At this stage, I decided to demonstrate Audacity instead of Goldwave at the conference proceedings.

### Workshop

After the project was completed during the final module in 2011, a workshop was developed to demonstrate to other teachers how podcasting tools can be used in and out of the classroom. Inside the classroom podcasts can be created, produced and recorded by students as an activity, while outside the classroom podcasts can be created as extra listening materials. The workshop aimed to give participants practical skills for creating these podcasts which included how to write radio scripts and how to record using Audacity, as well as some technical editing skills. In the workshop teachers analysed how podcasts can motivate students to listen for pleasure in order to improve their writing, speaking and listening skills.

The workshop was developed to demonstrate how to use Audacity as a tool for making podcasts. Participants were given a script which we used to record one piece of audio to the software. Once the recording was done, I demonstrated the use of different tools in the programme. Participants were shown how to cut, copy, paste, merge audio, and change voice tone and speed, as well as some other functions. Participants were then given an opportunity to ask questions, make suggestions, and give feedback regarding the recording software. The overall verbal feedback from the workshop was positive.

### Conclusion

This project was considered a great success at Fatih University. Many students gave positive feedback to their teachers verbally and this was fed back to me. Towards the end of the module, some students asked if there would be more

podcasts in the future which was encouraging. The workshop which grew out of the project was also well-received at two conferences. This paper was not completed as a research project, and therefore there are no empirical results included. Using both Goldwave and Audacity led to a little confusion in the beginning, however I would recommend Audacity as the stronger audio recording software programme. In the future, I would like to undertake a research project to examine if and how podcasts can help students to both improve their listening and speaking skills, while at the same time increasing their motivation levels.

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## **Warning: English is waiting for you in Turkey!**

### **Orçun Göl**

*Orçun Göl is a Sophomore student at Sabancı University in Turkey. He has been studying English for 15 years. He knows also basic German. Orçun Göl is interested in management as a field of study. His biggest ambition is to work as CEO for MNC in the service sector.*

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## **Warning: English is waiting for you in Turkey!**

**Orçun Göl**

My first contact with English was at primary school. Our teacher announced to us that we were going to learn English on the day after tomorrow since we had become fourth grade students. All of the students were excited and wondered about it, especially me. The reason for this was that I could not help staring at my father's book, that were laid on the shelves in my house all the time. My father was a typical role model for me before I began to primary school, thus every move he has made has always been for me a step to follow as a son. He once did try to become an English teacher in his youth. That is the reason why there were tons of books in a row on the shelves. Indeed, I was trying to reach his English novel books on the shelf. I was so enthusiastic when I managed to grab one from the shelf because I could then feel like my idol. Even though I was not able to read them, I did understand: Another Brick in the Wall!

My first English teacher walked in, gave a "Hello!" to us, took a deep breath, then opened a book, turned the page robotically and started to teach the letters and numbers. She then continued with one basic question: "What is your name?" I liked the way she asked my name. My first impression of English was quite good. Moreover, I thought that this first love could teach me many things. But it happened again and again. Entering the class, opening the book, turning the page; they all became robotic in my mind. The wonder of English had already left; the only thing stayed behind was my sacrifice to learn. What I dreamed of the most was to feel alive in English. My first love transformed into a cliché love. However, the answer was the same: 'My name is Orçun'. I asked myself 'Why were we losing time with the same stuff every year and not practicing?'

In conclusion, we are living in a rapid consumer world. The recent century has witnessed so many changes. Also they have happened in every aspect of our daily lives. Nevertheless, technology and its advantages can not be ignored and as a result the principles of old system should be revised and updated as well. There are a new generation of students who were almost born with online games, Facebook, Twitter and the Internet. Therefore, using technology is

the best thing to do to involve this new generation of teens. Teachers should interact with technology and students' interests. The current curriculum should be updated according to the basic requirements of students. The curriculum now seems old- fashioned, like an oppressor, compulsory and has so many repetitions. It is possible to say that language is both a pragmatic and practical tool hence it should be used more in lessons within the scope of the meaning of this terminology. The way that a teacher speaks in English sometimes does not affect the students; although conversations between them could be more effective.

How could this idea be implemented? If this is possible, the curriculum should be shaped around a buddy system: Students from other countries could be invited to get education in Turkey thereby Turkish students could get connected with English in natural way and other languages through a real world approach. It is not possible to deny that academic knowledge which is given by the curriculum is pretty satisfying, but there would be something to say against it, because a language is also based on communication with people and this should not be ignored.





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