ETiC

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Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University
西交利物浦大学

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Editorial

Welcome to ETiC Issue 3, the journal for English teachers in China. It begins with a feature interview with Russell Stannard, well known for championing the use of technology in language learning. Next, the Research section includes two articles, one looking into students' dictionary use and the other investigating the beliefs of teachers and students about learning English.

The Reflections section follows with four articles, discussing World Englishes, English for Specific Purposes, the debate between EGAP and ESAP, and the use of PPTs in the classroom. In the Review section you will find our usual book review and 'Insites' article, and the issue concludes with our other regulars, 'Do you know...?' and 'Chinese Corner'.

At this point, I probably need to mention that this is my last issue as Editor, as I will be moving on to pastures new. Therefore, I'd like to thank all those who have given so generously of their time in the last couple of years helping to create ETiC. It's something I'm incredibly proud to have been a part of. I'd especially like to thank Sarah Butler, Don Jack and Eoin Jordan for their tireless work as fellow editors, and who also join me in bowing out of the ETiC Editorial Team.

Looking to the future, we will be leaving the journal in safe hands, with joint Editors taking over the reins: Amanda Hilmarsson-Dunn and Mark Critchley. I'm sure that under their guidance, ETiC will continue to grow into an established academic publication.

To that end, the plan is to produce ETiC Issue 4 in February 2014. It is intended that its theme will be the teaching of spoken English, and Amanda and Mark would especially like submissions connected to this topic. However, that does not preclude submissions on other subjects.

Please email submissions to etic@xjtlu.edu.cn. You can find the ETiC Author Guidelines and past issues at etic.xjtlu.edu.cn. The provisional submissions deadline for ETiC Issue 4 is mid-October 2013.

Back to this issue, thanks again to everyone involved with producing it, and thank you for reading it.

Paul has taught English for over ten years, both in England and China, mainly at university level, and has a particular interest in writing in all its many forms.

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Contents

Speaking with… Russell Stannard

Interview by Sarah Butler & Jackie Hemingway

Russell Stannard is a principal teaching fellow at the University of Warwick and specialises in the use of media and technology in ELT. His website www.teachertrainingvideos.com, which was reviewed in ETiC Issue 1, has won several awards including the Times Higher "Outstanding Initiative in ICT Award", TEFLnet "Website of the year" and the British Council "ELTons award for Innovation". Russell is well known in the ELT world for his work on using video screen capture to provide feedback to students and has presented all over the world. He has worked on a variety of books and publications, and also writes a monthly column 'Webwatcher' in English Teaching Professional where he reviews websites of interest to ELT teachers. In this interview, Russell kindly took time from his busy schedule to answer our questions about the different areas of his work and to share his experience of working in China. (Images courtesy of Russell Stannard)

How did you first become interested in incorporating ICT into language learning?

My interest in using ICT in language teaching came from my beliefs about the way we learn a language. I have always been a bit of a technophobe but I realised there was so much I could do with technology which was linked to current ideas about language learning. For example I could get my students to record themselves speaking, I could get students to share content and write blogs etc. Technology can offer lots of affordances that can make language learning more interesting. So for that reason I decided to face technology head on. I left my job in Spain where I was Director of Studies at International House and returned to the UK to do a Master's degree in Multimedia.

Your column in *ETp* has inspired many teachers to use internet resources in their work. What criteria do you use to judge how useful a web page is?

Firstly it has to be easy. Teachers don't have lots of time to learn difficult technologies with lots of 'barriers to entry'. So snappy, easy tools that offer real learning opportunities are the things I like best. I really like tools that encourage production. So, tools that allow us to record our students speaking or get them writing. I love tools that extend the learning outside of the lesson.

What would you suggest as a good starting point for someone relatively new to ICT?

Well that is exactly what my site is there for. It is to encourage teachers to get started and make use of technology. I would start with a tool like Vocaroo (which I know you can use in China). It is a really simple tool to use and you can use it to get your students to record themselves speaking and then share their

recordings over the Internet or via email. Or the teacher can create recordings that the students can listen to. You can find the training videos for Vocaroo at the end of this article. It is really popular with teachers around the world.

You have done a lot of work on using ICT to give feedback. How does this enable you to give better quality feedback to your students? How do you find students react to this form of feedback?

Yes, it is probably the idea that has given me the most publicity; I was even invited onto the TV! I actually had the idea in 2000 when I first saw screen capture software being used. However, I didn't actually try out the idea until 2006 because I didn't know how to use the technology.

Students love it as they get a sort of 'live recording' where they can see and hear me correcting their work. I simply open up the student's written work on my computer, turn on the screen capture software and start correcting their work. Everything I say or do is then recorded. I then send the video to the students. You can see an example here: http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/luFeedback/index.html.

Interestingly, all the original research was done with Chinese students. If you watch the video it becomes immediately obvious why this might be a great way of providing students with feedback and you can see why the idea has become so popular.

The feedback is visual and oral; you can provide more feedback in a shorter space of time and you can really make use of your voice and the visual elements. It is much more in line with the way that students work these days, with sound and visuals. There are studies taking place in Norway, Canada, the UK and Japan that I know about and they have all found similar results.

You speak all over the world. How do you prepare to speak in front of such a wide variety of audiences?

If I was really honest I would have to say that the obstacles to greater use of technology are pretty similar around the world. So the differences are not that great. I try to focus on easy tools that have real clear advantages to offer and that all teachers can make use of. These are popular in any country of the world. Teachers all around the world are under similar pressures and will respond to tools and ideas that can make a difference to their teaching and learning.

You have presented in China on a number of occasions. What are some of the current trends in ICT in China?

Actually I have probably presented in China more than any other country in the world except the UK. The Chinese market is still evolving. You have enormous differences between rural areas and the cities and a whole range of levels from nursery school right up to students working on their PhDs. The trend is without a doubt moving towards greater use of ICT but it is very patchy. So you have private language schools with IWBs [interactive white boards] and good internet connections, and private schools that also have amazing facilities too (I was at a private school in Hangzhou that had its own mini stadium not long ago!). On the other hand I have visited state schools in various provinces where there are 60 students in the class and access to just one computer. So it is difficult to say what the single trend is. What I have been exposed to recently and where I know there is a lot of interest is in offering on-line courses for training teachers etc. So the use of Moodle combined with video

content etc. for providing teachers with training is a trend I will continue as many teachers can't always travel and get to the training courses. In such a large country like China, where the demand for training and English tuition is huge, the affordances of distance learning provision are of real interest. I know through contacts I have with publishers and even people involved in the provision of training of teachers, that this is something that will be developing more and more.

One difficulty with the use of ICT in China is the restriction of access to many sites such as *YouTube* and blogging sites. During your experience of training teachers in China have you found this to be an issue and if so how have you dealt with it?

Yes, I have. For example I was training teachers with using Blogger in the past but I know that it is now blocked. The obvious option is to look at Chinese alternatives to Blogger or Facebook. However the tools I most train with like Vocaroo, myBrainShark and of course JING, which I use for feedback, are not restricted. So in most cases it has not affected the training I do. I use YouTube but it is not something I ever focus on in my training. JING is the main tool I work with. It has enormous potential for feedback, reflection and getting students to speak. It is free and there is no restriction on it. It is really worth looking at and is by far the most popular tool on my site.

Chinese students tend to be generally reticent in the classroom. Do you have any recommendations for using ICT to develop students' confidence and to encourage students to be more active?

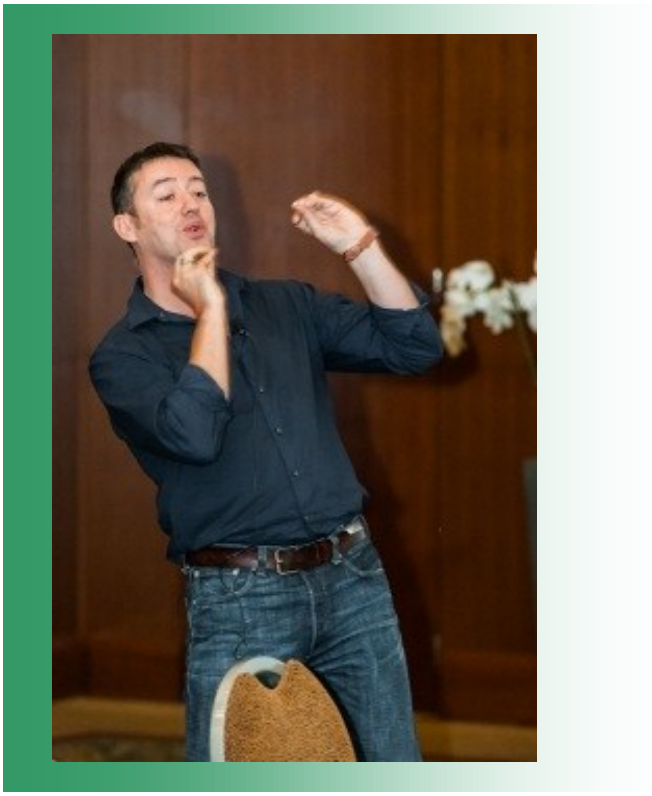
Yes, I sort of agree with you but I also think that once Chinese students see the value of something, they really go for it. Here in the UK, I mainly teach Chinese teachers and students and once they see the potential of using tools like JING, myBrainShark or PresentMe then they start to really engage with them. The key is making sure that the students/teachers (I train and teach both) understand the value of a particular tool and see why it can improve their teaching and learning. Again, starting with a few simple tools is key.

Does China differ to the UK in its approach to integrating technology in teaching?

In some ways, yes. Firstly because the Chinese market is very diverse and there are a whole range of different initiatives taking place. Also, because the state provision tends to be very centralised and passing exams is an absolute priority. Having said that, teachers in China, just like teachers in the UK, could do with more support, more training and more time to learn about ICT and, in that way, there are not so many differences. Teachers are under pressure, and opportunities to experiment, make mistakes and try out different things are limited in both contexts. I really wish that every teacher could have an experimental class for say 1 or 2 lessons a week where they could adopt and try out new ideas without the pressure of getting the students through a curriculum or through an exam.

You are now researching podcasting. How useful do you think podcasts are in learning?

Yes, along with feedback and reflection, it is my other big interest. I love the idea of getting the students to record podcasts at home. This means that they are actually speaking outside



of class. I like the students to practice and prepare in the lesson but actually do their recordings at home. They then share the recordings with me and I can listen and provide feedback and play the best examples in the class. It might be telling a story, talking about someone they admire, providing simple information about themselves, working in pairs, talking on a given topic. I use the idea all the time. I work with a variety of tools like myBrainShark, which is a free podcasting tool, and with JING. Again, I have done most of these experiments with Chinese teachers and students, and they have been really interesting. The more speaking we can get our students to do, the better.

What do you think is the next big thing in technology and language learning?

God, I wish I knew. Tablets and computers will merge and become the same thing. I guess on-line distance provision will just grow and grow. So all the tools that help to develop on-line courses will become more and more popular. Skills with tools like Moodle which is a virtual learning environment or Adobe Connect (a sort of on-line classroom or virtual classroom) will become really important and anyone who knows these tools well will be very employable. These are the immediate developments I see.

What's next for Russell Stannard?

This summer is going to be amazing. I am doing a lot of work with the British Council. I will be starting a project to develop training materials for teachers in India and also going out to Armenia to do some training. I am also working in Iceland, Poland, Greece, Turkey, Norway and Spain over the next 6 months, so really exciting.

The question I didn't get asked that I would like to answer!

I don't think I have ever had such a detailed interview. You covered loads of ground. Just to say, if any teacher wants to get into technology and wants to start with a few easy tools then start with Vocaroo and then look at tools like myBrainShark, JING, PresentMe and perhaps Wallwisher. I promise these tools will change your teaching and learning forever.

Help videos to get you started with technology:

MyBrainShark: *http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/brainpod/index.html*
Vocaroo: *http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/vocaroo1/index.html*
JING: *http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/Jing/index.html*
Wallwisher: *http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/wall/index.html*
PresentMe: *http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/presentme/index.html*

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Sarah Butler has extensive experience teaching EAP, Business English and young learners. She has most recently taught at XJTLU, where she was also the Professional Development Officer for the Language Centre.

An Investigation into the Dictionary Use and Look-up Behaviour of Foundation Year Chinese Students in a Language Centre at a Sino-British University in China

By Michelle Day

This study looked at the dictionary look-up behaviour of Foundation Year undergraduate Chinese students at a Sino-British university in China. 76 students took part in an experiment using the MacMillan monolingual dictionary in order to determine their ability to look up the correct meaning of unfamiliar words in a reading text. Two questionnaires, one given before and the other after the reading task, were also used to gain an insight into students' dictionary ownership and use. The results show that around 55% of students use a monolingual dictionary more than once a week, and 80% of students use their mobile phones with a bilingual dictionary function at least once a week, with more than 70% of these students using this type of dictionary daily. The results also reveal that all students who took part in the task were unable to choose the correct meaning of at least one word they looked up in the dictionary. This has wider implications as teachers should understand that students may need their guidance on choosing and using dictionaries as it cannot be assumed that using a dictionary results in students understanding a vocabulary item.

Background

At Xi'an Jiaotong–Liverpool University (XJTLU), all Foundation Year students receive a hardback copy of the Macmillan monolingual Dictionary for Advanced Learners as part of their course materials since much of the existing literature surrounding dictionaries supports the use of a monolingual dictionary rather than a bilingual dictionary. This study was in response to a question that had arisen regarding whether students actually *used* this dictionary, and then went on to further investigate how they used this and other dictionaries, as well as their ability to choose the correct meaning of the words they looked up.

Literature review

Dictionary use

The importance of dictionaries and, hence, the understanding of their uses and users can be summed up by Stein (2002) who remarks 'it is undeniable that every L2 learner uses a dictionary at some stage' (p. ix). The dictionary is clearly a crucial second-language learning tool for every second- and foreign-language learner. Debate exists as to whether students should be encouraged to use a dictionary at all when reading. Bensoussan, Sim and Weiss (1984), for example, believe that ESL learners should be discouraged from using a dictionary in general as this prevents them practicing the ability to guess words from context. Possibly, for most ESL learners, and Chinese students in particular, a dictionary is a much leaned-on crutch. Chi (2002) points out that the dictionary has 'always enjoyed a high status in Chinese culture, being regarded as a teacher who cannot talk' (p. 355).

Day, M. (2013) An investigation into the dictionary use and look-up behaviour of foundation year Chinese students at a language centre at a Sino-British university in China. *English Teaching in China, 3,* 5–10.

As the dictionary is an 'instrument for learning a second or foreign language' (Fan, 2000), much research has been conducted into language learners' dictionaries, which has in turn improved the quality of these dictionaries. In one study, Nesi (2002) investigated how international students at British universities use dictionaries. During a 3 year period, she assigned six groups of students a dictionary task which required them to reveal how they had used dictionaries when engaging in a reading task. She was able to analyse 89 students who were asked a series of questions requiring a written answer both before and after completing a reading task. She asked them questions relating to how they felt about looking up words in a dictionary and which dictionaries they used. The results showed that although most students were competent and able to decide on the correct meaning over 50 percent of the subjects chose the wrong meaning for at least 1 of the consultations. An interesting finding was that many of the subjects were unaware of the errors they made in interpreting the words.

Another study by Fan (2000) investigated the behaviour of students in Hong Kong universities when using bilingualised dictionaries.[1] She aimed to find out how frequently students used dictionaries and how the information contained in these dictionaries was perceived by these students. It was found that students with a higher level of English proficiency made more use of bilingualised dictionaries.

Dictionary consultation process

Hartmann (2001) describes the look-up process as a number of stages ranging from perceiving a linguistic problem and a need to solve it, deciding on the words to be looked up and searching for the information, and integrating that information with the linguistic situation where the problem has occurred. Nesi (2003) also produced a taxonomy of reference skills at university level in which she divided dictionary use into a number of stages. Her study was only concerned with stages 1-4 however, as stage 5 involves recording the words looked up, a step that this research was not concerned with. The stages are:

1. Before study
2. Before consultation
3. Locating information
4. Interpreting entry information

Research questions

RQ 1: What types of dictionaries do students use?

RQ 2: Do students use a paper monolingual dictionary both generally and when reading a text?

RQ3: How successful are students in looking up the correct meaning of words they meet when reading a text?

Procedure

The research instrument comprised a pre-exercise and a post-exercise questionnaire, which both contained mainly closed questions but did have at least one open question. The first questionnaire asked students a number of questions about the dictionaries they owned, and how often, where and for what purpose they used them. They were then given a short reading text with instructions stating that they should read the text, but only a maximum of 5 words in total were allowed to be checked in a dictionary. A follow-up, or post-exercise, questionnaire dealt with the dictionaries they had used to comprehend the reading text, their level of satisfaction with these dictionaries and any problems they may have encountered.

Results and analysis

The surveys saw a high response rate (99%) with 73 students answering the pre-task questionnaire, 67 (90%) completing the reading task, and 52 (70%) answering the post-reading questionnaire.

Pre-reading task questionnaire: dictionary ownership and use

In relation to students' use of dictionaries, (RQ1), the results reveal that the dictionary

[1] *Bilingualised dictionaries contain the monolingual information about a word and its translation into the learner's other tongue (Laufer and Kimmel, 1997).*

used most frequently is a bilingual dictionary application on their mobile phone, with 85% of students stating that they use this type of dictionary more than once a week (Appendix 1). The results also show that 70% of these students used their mobile phone dictionaries daily. The questionnaire did not probe the reasons for this being the most popular type of dictionary but this was investigated in a previous unpublished study by the researcher who found the overwhelming reason was the sheer convenience of having a mobile phone to hand.[2]

Students also appear to use online dictionaries frequently, as nearly 60% stated that they use them daily, with another 30% using them once a week. Electronic bilingual dictionaries also appear to be popular, as around 68% of students report using this type of dictionary once a week or more.

To address RQ2, the results show that around 18% of students used the MacMillan monolingual dictionary daily, with 40% reporting using it at least once a week, and 25% using it once a month or more. In earlier studies it was clear that one of the barriers to using the Macmillan monolingual dictionary was the inconvenience of carrying it to and from class, as it is bulky and heavy.

The results also clearly show the reasons students use their dictionaries. Although all students report using a dictionary to check the meaning, spelling, pronunciation, word family and examples of a word being used, the results corroborate an earlier study conducted by Nesi and Haill (2002) which found that the main reason students use a dictionary is to check the meaning of a word (Appendix 2). Over 75% of students claim to use a dictionary most often to check meanings.

Reading task

Students looked up a total of 31 different words among them. Figure 1 gives some examples of the words looked up, and the number of students who got the correct meaning, and those who did not, in the context of the reading text.

The words looked up by students were checked against the word frequency lists and dictionary from the Corpus of Contemporary

Figure 1.

Word	Number of students with correct meaning	Number of students with incorrect meaning
alleviate	36	0
fiasco	34	4
terminal	21	13
descend	7	36
cope	7	0
handle	3	1

Figure 2.

Number of incorrect look-ups	Number of students	Percentage of students
0	17	27%
1	27	42%
2	17	27%
3	2	3%
4	1	1%
5	0	0%

[2] *Doubts as to whether dictionaries on mobile phones are of sufficient quality will be discussed in the later sections of this investigation.*

American English. This is a corpus of words showing the 5000 most commonly occurring words in the English language. The word which was most frequently looked up by students, 'alleviate,' was not found in this list, so it is understandable that students were unfamiliar with it. The second most commonly checked word was 'fiasco' which was also not found in the list, neither were the words 'terminal,' 'shambles,' and 'backlog' (See Figure 2).

In relation to the students' ability to find the correct meaning of a word, 17 students (27%) succeeded in choosing the most appropriate meaning of all 5 words they looked up. This means that 47 students (73%) were unsuccessful in choosing the appropriate meaning of one or more of the words they looked up. Only 3 students were unsuccessful at looking up more than 2 words.

There were 3 categories of look up problems with words:

1. The participant chose the wrong dictionary entry (53 cases)
2. The participant chose the correct entry but misinterpreted the meaning (5 cases)
3. The participant found entries but was unable to decide (4 cases)

By far the largest category of errors found was category 1, in which the students chose the wrong entry. Some examples of category 1 errors can be found in Figure 3. Some of these errors were commented on by the students, and some were not, which shows that some students were aware that they may have chosen the wrong entry. Some of the post task questionnaire responses are given below:

- "Too many meanings and some meanings I don't know clearly."
- "I can't find in some dictionary and I don't know what 'shuffling gait' is."
- "Don't know how to choose the correct one."
- "How does the meaning relate to the context."
- "Dictionary had over 5 meanings and all of them are difficult for me to understand."

Figure 3. Category 1 errors (Wrong dictionary entry chosen)

Word	Context	Perceived meaning
terminal	'In the airport terminal...'	*In the final stage before death*
descend	'Things soon descended into chaos'	*To make a sudden attack on*
shambles	'It was all a shambles'	*To walk tiredly or slowly dragging feet in a tired lazy way*
spite	'In spite of …'	*Feeling a need to see others suffer.'*

Figure 4. Category 2 errors (Correct entry chosen but misinterpreted the meaning)

Word	Context	Perceived meaning
backlog	'A backlog of luggage.'	*One word has 2 forms*
descend	'Descend into chaos'	*To go down.*

Figure 5. Category 3 errors (Entry found but unable to decide on correct meaning)

Word	Context	Perceived meaning
handles	'The airport handles...'	*To take action to deal with a situation* *The part of a door or window that you use to open it*
descend	'Descend into chaos.'	*To go down a mountain or slope* *To come nearer to the ground* *To become lower*

Some students, however, were unaware that they had chosen the incorrect word. One example was the word 'temporary' for which the student wrote the wrong meaning, interpreting it as 'current, now' but commented that "Dictionary is easy to use to describe this word".

Post-reading task questionnaire

The results of the post-reading questionnaire showed which dictionaries students used for the reading tasks, and how satisfied they were with these. Students stated that online dictionaries were the most helpful dictionaries they had consulted, which explains why many students reported in the pre-task questionnaire using this type of dictionary. Many students also felt that the hard-copy English-English dictionary was helpful, but this may have been because students believed that there is an expectation for them to use this type of dictionary. Only a small number of students reported being particularly dissatisfied with any one type of dictionary, but most students appeared to be very satisfied with both online dictionaries and electronic English-Chinese dictionaries.[3]

In response to how satisfied students were with their dictionaries, one student commented that he/she knew "English-English dictionaries are good but I don't know how to use it". Another student, however, commented that he/she was "very satisfied" with this type of dictionary. One student also remarked that a dictionary must "show a clear meaning, the usage, word family and examples". Two students stated that they would like dictionaries to give some indication of which words are more common and also give synonyms, and another pointed out that "you should guess meanings first and then use the dictionary".

The open-ended questions revealed that rather than guess the meaning from context, the overwhelming majority of students chose to look up the words that they were not able to understand. Two students did, however, state that they chose to look up only words that they felt were key and would hinder their comprehension had they not understood them.

Conclusions

RQ 1: What types of dictionaries do students use?

RQ 2: Do students use a paper monolingual dictionary both generally and when reading a text?

In relation to dictionary use, the results show, unsurprisingly, that students overwhelmingly use online dictionaries more than any other type of dictionary. These are presumably accessed online through a computer or mobile (smart) phone, although the research design did not allow for this to be ascertained. The results did also show that a sizeable number of students used a paper monolingual dictionary, although around half of students asked only used this type of dictionary once a month or less. Students also reported that online dictionaries were the most helpful in looking up words in the reading task.

RQ3: How successful are students in looking up the correct meaning of words they meet when reading a text?

In relation to the success of student look-ups, not all students succeeded in using a dictionary to look up the correct meaning for each word. The majority of these incorrectly chose the wrong dictionary entry, rather than being unable to decide or misinterpreting the meaning.

Implications and recommendations

The first recommendation is that students need training on how to use dictionaries to avoid choosing the wrong dictionary meaning of words. Teachers could provide instruction to students about dictionary use, possibly going through examples of words in the context of a reading passage in class, using the dictionary together to remind students to look at all the entries for a word, not just take the first meaning. Correct and incorrect examples could be given so that students, especially weaker ones, gain an increased awareness of the dictionary consultation process.

A second recommendation is that students

[3] 90% of students stated they were either very or extremely satisfied with online dictionaries, and around 80% stated this for electronic English-Chinese dictionaries.

could also be trained to use the paper monolingual dictionary more efficiently. Some language centres provide students with this type of dictionary, expecting them to use it while giving no thought as to whether they are able to. Some students come from language backgrounds which are not alphabetical, posing a difficulty in looking words up efficiently. Other students may not be familiar with the abbreviations used for certain terms, which can be found in a glossary at the beginning or end of the dictionary. In addition, students often report that they know a monolingual dictionary is useful, but they do not know why. Teachers themselves may not fully understand why.

Therefore, a final recommendation is that teachers should learn about monolingual dictionaries themselves and the arguments for and against their use, as there is differing opinion as to whether students should use this type of dictionary or not.

The findings of the research may be applicable to Chinese students in other university contexts, especially in Sino-British universities or other universities which teach through the medium of English. In addition, with the development of technology, including online dictionaries and faster smartphones, it may be that the students are using paper dictionaries less. Further research could investigate how successfully students use online dictionaries and how they compare to other more traditional types of dictionaries.

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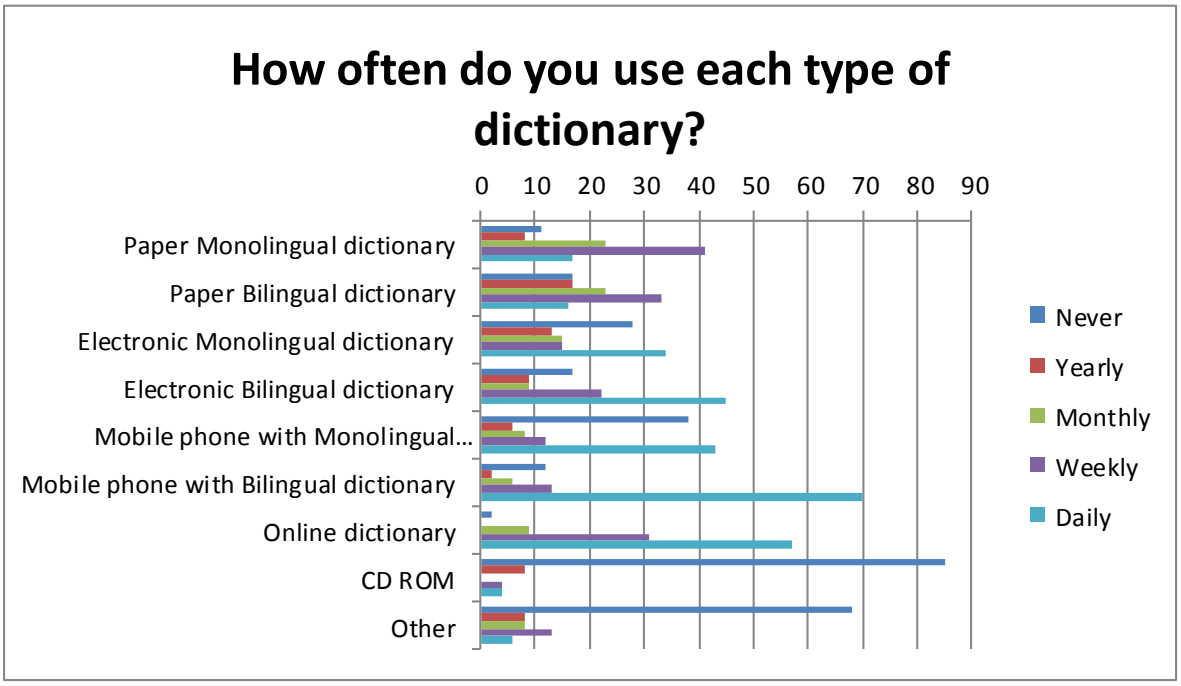
Appendices

Appendix 1



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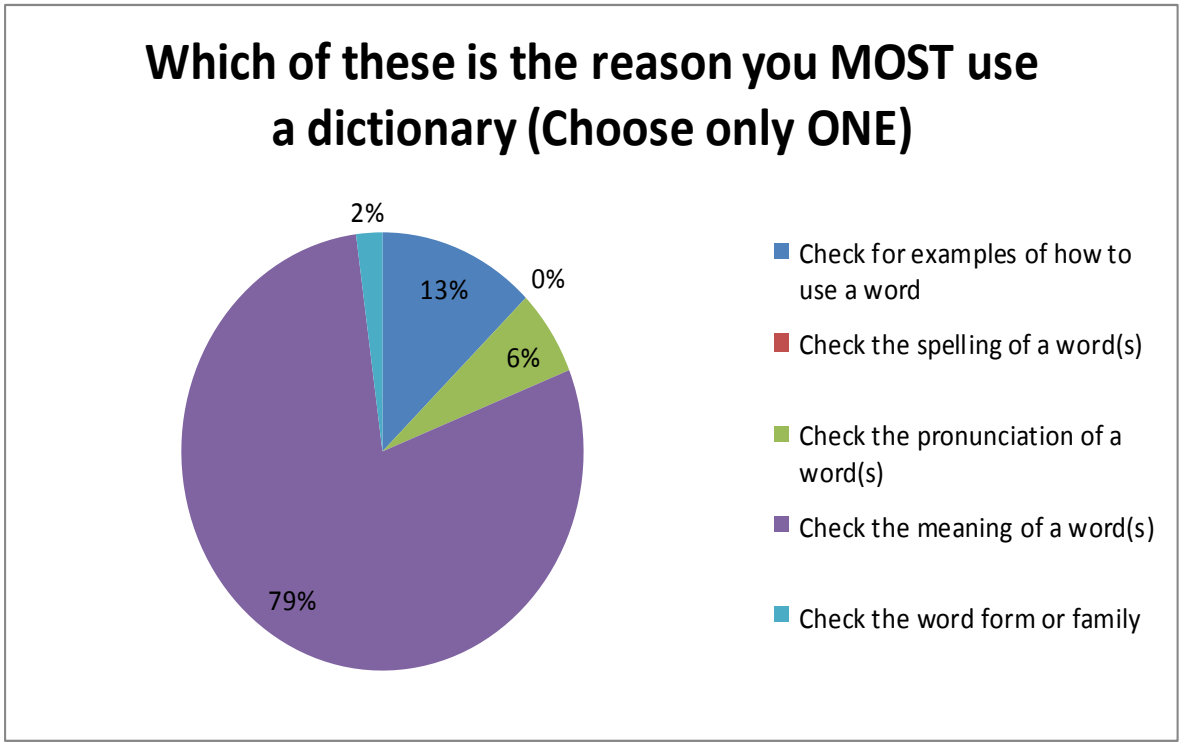
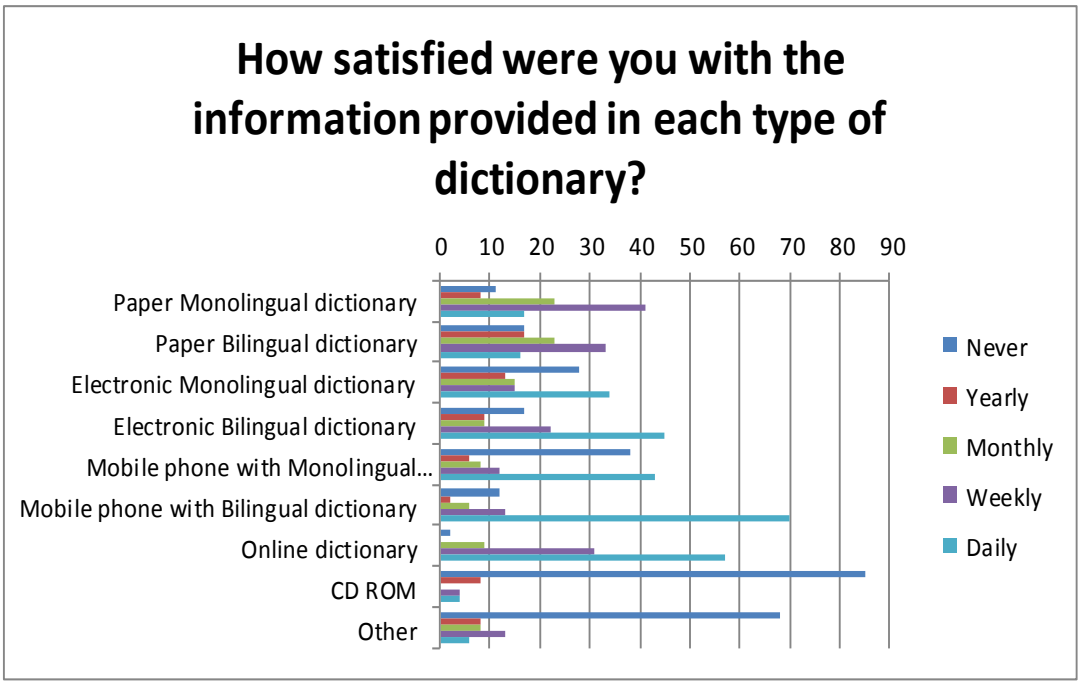
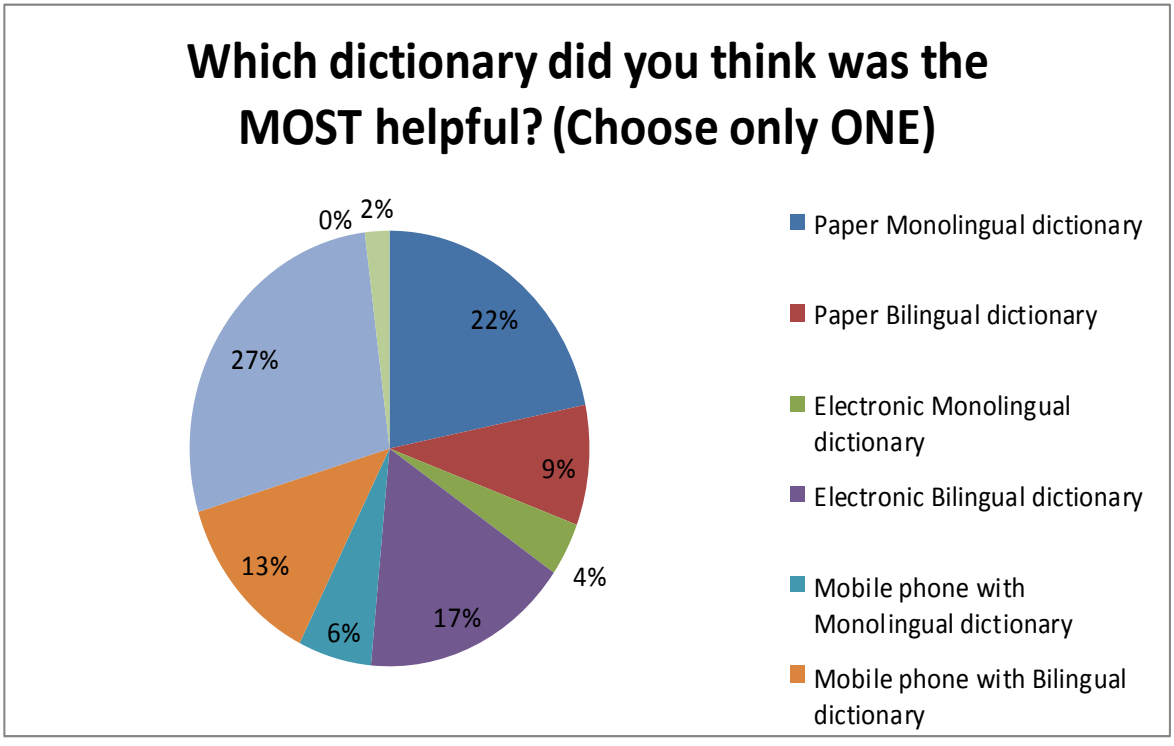


Appendix 3



Appendix 4



Do Teachers Understand What Their Students Believe About Learning English?

By Donal Crawford

Beliefs about language learning are thought to influence language learners' use of and preference for various language learning strategies. Similarly, teachers' beliefs about language learning will influence their pedagogical and classroom approaches. Yet beliefs are rarely externally manifested and, therefore, need to be ascertained directly. The beliefs about language learning of 163 Chinese high school students and 38 mixed nationality teachers were obtained via questionnaire. Additionally, teachers' perceptions of the students' beliefs were ascertained. Results indicated that students and teachers held a range of beliefs. Teachers often understood students' beliefs, but notably underestimated their students' support of communicative language learning. It is suggested that teachers should analyse their students' beliefs to prevent mismatches of expectations or conflicts over classroom practices.

Introduction

Students' beliefs about learning a second or foreign language are recognised as having an impact on their approaches, motivation and success in learning that language (Barcelos, 2000; Dörnyei, 2005; Horwitz, 1988, 1999). For example, students with 'positive' or enabling beliefs are more likely to maintain motivation and overcome obstacles. Similarly 'negative' or unrealistic beliefs may lead to frustration, anxiety, and consequent reduced success (Kern, 1995; Kuntz, 1996; Oh, 1995).

From a pedagogical perspective within the classroom, students' internally held beliefs about language learning are clearly of relevance to the effectiveness of teaching and learning, especially if they do not match with the teacher's beliefs, approaches, and/or methodologies (Bernat & Gvosdenko, 2005). Cortazzi and Jin (1996) note how differences in opinions, between learners and teachers from different cultural backgrounds, about the 'best' way to learn a language can result in mismatched expectations and hence dissatisfaction and unproductivity. Cotterall (1995) and Kern (1995) also found that mismatches between the beliefs and approaches of learners and teachers reduced the effectiveness of learning in the classroom.

Most studies to date have analysed students' and/or teacher beliefs about language learning, and the recognition that teachers should pay attention to this is most welcome. However, little research has analysed the consequent question of the extent to which teachers accurately understand their students' beliefs, which is obviously important if they are to reflect on how they impact on their teaching approaches.

The aim of this study therefore is twofold. Firstly, it adds to the data on similarities and differences in beliefs about language learning (specifically learning English) between students and teachers. Secondly, it attempts to determine the extent of any mismatches between student beliefs and what their teachers *think* they believe.

Method

Students' and teachers' beliefs about language learning were elicited by a questionnaire, which was based on Horwitz's 'Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI)', English as a Second Language (ESL) version (1987),

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although only three groups of beliefs were addressed rather than Horwitz's original five. Twenty statements were presented in 'simplified' English, and respondents had to choose for each statement from one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree) on a Likert scale. Minor changes to wording were made to maintain appropriacy for these respondents. The statements are given in full in the results section.

The questionnaire was administered to a total of 163 Chinese national high school students, studying in the first year of a two-year IGCSE programme in Shanghai, China. It was also given to 38 teachers at the school (approximately 50% Chinese-English bilingual Chinese nationals and 50% English-speakers from a number of countries). The students were given the questionnaire in their normal ESL classes, and their class teachers were available to assist with language queries. The survey was conducted early in the first semester, reducing the likelihood of teacher beliefs/teaching methods influencing students. The teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire with respect to their own beliefs and to indicate for each statement what they considered most of their students to believe (or to leave it blank if they did not know/had no opinion).

Table 1. Beliefs about the Difficulty of Language Learning

Items		Respondents	1	2	3	4	5
3	Some languages are easier to learn than others.	Teacher	30.0	70.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Student	17.9	42.3	19.9	16.7	3.2
		T thinks S	33.3	60.0	6.7	0.0	0.0
4	English is: 1. a very difficult language 2. a difficult language 3. a language of medium difficulty 4. an easy language 5. a very easy language	Teacher	0.0	31.6	36.8	31.6	0.0
		Student	1.3	31.4	57.7	9.6	0.0
		T thinks S	30.8	23.1	46.2	0.0	0.0
15	If someone spent one hour a day learning English, how long would it take them to speak English very well: 1. less than a year 2. 1-2 years 3. 3-5 years 4. 5-10 years 5. You can't learn English in 1 hour/ day	Teacher	9.5	42.9	28.6	14.3	4.8
		Student	7.7	28.4	40.0	12.3	11.6
		T thinks S	0.0	16.7	50.0	16.7	16.7
25	It is easier to speak than understand English.	Teacher	14.3	19.0	28.6	33.3	4.8
		Student	11.5	22.4	42.9	20.5	2.6
		T thinks S	14.3	21.4	28.6	14.3	21.4
34	It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	Teacher	4.8	33.3	42.9	14.3	4.8
		Student	5.1	23.7	35.3	28.8	7.1
		T thinks S	18.8	62.5	12.5	6.3	0.0

Results and discussion

A total of 156 completed student responses were analysed, along with 21 teacher responses (not all teacher responses were complete, with some gaps in indicating teacher opinions on student beliefs). Results are calculated below as a percentage of actual responses, and are organised according to Horwitz's (1987) taxonomy (item numbers relate to Horwitz's original 35 statement questionnaire).

To aid the following discussion, the results may often be conflated (i.e. agree-neutral-disagree). Table 1 shows that many more teachers than students considered English to be an easy language (item 4), although teachers over-estimated the level of difficulty students considered it to have. Comparing language difficulty (item 3), teachers unanimously agreed with this statement, whereas students showed a wider range of responses, a situation the teachers seem poorly aware of. Comparing beliefs about speaking and understanding English (item 25), interestingly, show similar ranges of beliefs between teachers and students, and teachers also appeared to understand this in regard to their students. In contrast, although teacher and student beliefs regarding passive and active English skills (item 34) are not dissimilar; a large majority of teachers believed that students would agree with the proposition that reading/writing is easier than speaking/listening, which is shown not to be the case. This may be linked with teachers over-estimating Chinese students' reticence in using

Table 2. Beliefs about the Nature of Language Learning

Items		Respondents	1	2	3	4	5
8	It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.	Teacher	10.0	25.0	20.0	30.0	15.0
		Student	29.0	42.6	18.1	9.0	1.3
		T thinks S	7.1	42.9	21.4	28.6	0.0
12	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.	Teacher	61.9	23.8	9.5	4.8	0.0
		Student	54.5	36.5	7.7	0.6	0.6
		T thinks S	28.6	50.0	14.3	7.1	0.0
17	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary words.	Teacher	9.5	42.9	28.6	14.3	4.8
		Student	7.7	28.4	40.0	12.3	11.6
		T thinks S	0.0	16.7	50.0	16.7	16.7
22	If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	Teacher	4.8	4.8	19.0	47.6	23.8
		Student	10.9	32.7	25.0	24.4	7.1
		T thinks S	0.0	42.9	42.9	7.1	7.1
23	The most important part of learning English is learning the grammar.	Teacher	0.0	28.6	23.8	38.1	9.5
		Student	5.8	20.5	35.3	32.1	6.4
		T thinks S	7.1	35.7	42.9	14.3	0.0
27	Learning English is different than learning other academic subjects.	Teacher	23.8	47.6	9.5	14.3	4.8
		Student	14.1	34.0	38.5	10.9	2.6
		T thinks S	13.3	40.0	40.0	6.7	0.0
28	The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from Chinese.	Teacher	0.0	0.0	28.6	57.1	14.3
		Student	3.9	10.3	31.0	37.4	17.4
		T thinks S	6.7	53.3	26.7	13.3	0.0
35	English learning involves a lot of memorisation.	Teacher	9.5	38.1	33.3	19.0	0.0
		Student	36.8	47.7	14.8	0.6	0.0
		T thinks S	31.3	62.5	6.3	0.0	0.0

communicative English, a point which will be explored further below. Finally, there were a wide range of opinions among both teachers and students regarding the length of time needed to master English.

Table 2 illustrates teachers' and students' beliefs about the nature of language learning. There was broad overall agreement in all three answer groups that it is best to learn English in an English-speaking country (item 12). However, there was a wide variation regarding the need for English-speaking cultural knowledge in learning the language. Results from item 8 show only 35% of teachers agreed that it is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English, with 45% disagreeing. This compares with figures of 71.6% and 10.3% respectively for students. Teachers also underestimated this level of agreement among students, which could lead to students receiving less teaching about culture than they would like.

Most of the other items in Table 2 examine the relative importance of different facets of language learning – vocabulary (item 17), error correction (item 22), grammar (item 23), translation from L1 (item 28), and memorisation (item 35). Regarding the primacy of vocabulary and grammar, both teachers and students show a spread of opinions, with teachers somewhat underestimating the importance of vocabulary to students and conversely overestimating the importance of grammar. There is a stark difference in opinions on the impact of early error correction (item 22). A large majority of teachers disagreed with the proposition that error correction is essential for future accuracy, whereas more students agreed with this (although there is a significant minority of 31.5% who also disagreed). Teachers appear to be aware of this difference. They also seemed to understand that students considered learning English to involve a lot of memorisation (item 35), an opinion teachers

Table 3. Beliefs about Learning & Communication Strategies

Items		Respondents	1	2	3	4	5
7	It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	Teacher	25.0	20.0	25.0	25.0	5.0
		Student	57.1	32.7	5.8	3.8	0.6
		T thinks S	20.0	46.7	20.0	13.3	0.0
9	You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	Teacher	5.0	0.0	5.0	30.0	60.0
		Student	1.9	4.5	6.4	34.6	52.6
		T thinks S	6.3	62.5	12.5	18.8	0.0
13	I enjoy practicing a foreign language with the native speakers I meet.	Teacher	23.8	52.4	14.3	4.8	4.8
		Student	22.4	46.8	26.9	3.2	0.6
		T thinks S	13.3	26.7	26.7	33.3	0.0
14	It's OK to guess if you don't know a word in a foreign language.	Teacher	19.0	47.6	23.8	9.5	0.0
		Student	28.8	53.8	13.5	3.2	0.6
		T thinks S	0.0	26.7	6.7	53.3	13.3
18	It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	Teacher	57.1	33.3	9.5	0.0	0.0
		Student	40.4	46.8	10.3	2.6	0.0
		T thinks S	46.7	53.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
21	I feel timid or shy speaking a foreign language with other people.	Teacher	4.8	4.8	19.0	47.6	23.8
		Student	10.9	32.7	25.0	24.4	7.1
		T thinks S	0.0	42.9	42.9	7.1	7.1
26	It is important to practice with MP3s, cassettes or tapes.	Teacher	19.0	38.1	28.6	9.5	4.8
		Student	16.8	51.6	21.9	9.7	0.0
		T thinks S	13.3	53.3	13.3	20.0	0.0

broadly shared (although to a lesser extent). However, teachers were largely incorrect in their assessment of the importance to students of translation from Chinese. In fact both teachers and students generally disagreed (teachers more so) that the most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from Chinese. However, the majority of teachers believed that students agreed with this proposition.

Some of the most interesting results are found in relation to beliefs about learning and communication strategies, displayed in Table 3. Teachers and students generally agreed on two communication strategies. They both strongly disagreed with item 9 (you shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly) and agreed with item 14 (it's OK to guess if you don't know a word in a foreign language). Unfortunately, teachers seemed to believe that students are not in favour of taking risks in order to communicate, with 68.3% of teachers thinking students would agree with item 9, when only about 5% did so. 66.6% of teachers considered that students do not want to guess words, while the actual figure for students was 3.8%. Quite a significant percentage of teachers also held the belief that students dislike practicing communicating with native speakers (item 13) whereas only 3.8% of students reported not enjoying this activity. Generally the students appeared to be believers in communicative English strategies. Teachers were of the same opinion, yet they continued to hold perhaps stereotypical views of Chinese learners as less communicative and more L1 translation focused. This view is supported by the mismatches in items 34 and 28 discussed above.

In terms of two specific learning strategies explored here there seems to be close agreement in the value of repeating/practising (item 18) and using audio resources to practice (item 26). However, the importance of good pronunciation in speaking shows greater variance. Surprisingly, teachers varied widely in their belief that it is important to speak English with excellent pronunciation. Nearly 90% of students, on the other hand, were in favour of this proposition, a strength of belief that teachers somewhat underestimated.

Conclusions

As expected, and in agreement with previous research (Barcelos, 2000) there are a range of beliefs about learning English/a foreign language, both among students and teachers. Some of the beliefs expressed in the questionnaire show quite close overall agreement, while others do not, and notable differences between student and teacher beliefs are discussed above. It was not the aim of this research to examine the validity or invalidity of any of these beliefs. Rather, the results show that it is probably wise for teachers to consider not only their own beliefs but also those of their students, as there may be unexpected differences.

Teachers did, in fact, often show quite good understanding of the students' beliefs, indicating that, even when the teacher held beliefs that differed from those of students, they frequently had an insight into how students understand language learning. However, this understanding was not consistent, with some quite significant mismatches.

In past research there has been particular concern that teachers imposing communicative language teaching methodologies on students who culturally have learned in a different way may produce mismatches of expectations and practice (Cortazzi, 1990; Kumaravadivelu, 1991; Ellis, 1996). However, this study showed definite similarities in beliefs supporting communicative-style approaches and strategies among both teachers and students. On the other hand, teachers broadly maintained an opinion that Chinese students are not in favour of these approaches. It would seem important that teachers take advantage of students' willingness to communicate more in order to increase language use opportunities in and out of class.

Some caveats must be made in these interpretations of the results. Firstly, it is important to emphasise that this study is looking at aggregations of beliefs, when, in fact, all beliefs are individual. Within this study there were many cases of widely diverging views among both teachers and students. Any attempt to bring this research into the classroom should bear this in mind. Secondly,

response numbers from teachers were smaller than is to be desired. A greater number of responses, particularly regarding what teachers estimate students believe, would increase the confidence level in these results. Nevertheless, this research does show the value that could be obtained from teachers actively investigating and considering their own and their students' beliefs about language learning.

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Introduction to the World Englishes Debates, with 'Chinese Characteristics'

By Amanda Hilmarsson-Dunn

Introduction

The debate over which varieties of English or 'Englishes' should be taught in different parts of the world has been going on for at least 30 years. The debate was highlighted at the British Council's 50th anniversary conference in 1984 when Randolph Quirk and Braj Kachru argued over which standard of English should be taught, the former being in favour of teaching to a standard English model in all contexts, and the latter in favour of a model related to how English is used in countries where English is not the mother tongue, i.e. a 'World Englishes' model (McKay, 2002, pp. 50–51).

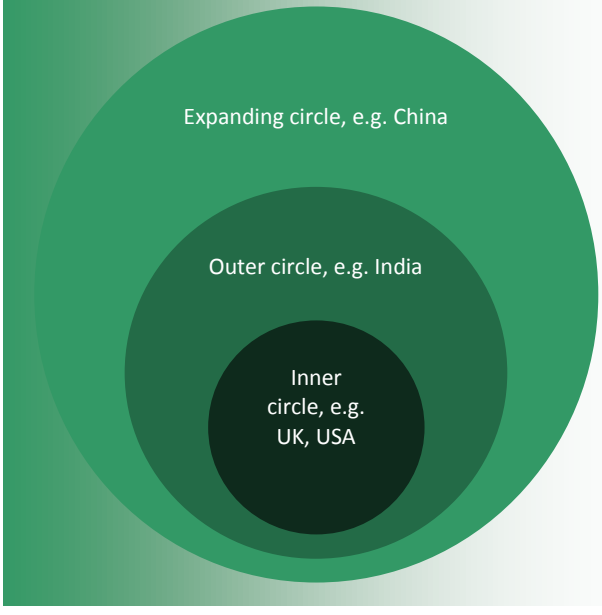
Since that time the number of English speakers around the world has increased significantly so that there are now more non-native speakers than native speakers. In view of this, as Ferguson (2006) points out "[a]s an international language English can no longer be the exclusive property of its native speakers" (p. 175). Given that the English language is now 'owned' by non-native speakers as well as native speakers, some scholars question the assumption that standards for English learning should be set according to native English speaker (typically British or American) models.

This article aims to introduce the main World Englishes debates, that is which English should be taught and which teachers should teach it with particular reference to China.

Kachru's model of Englishes around the world

The usual model used to show the demographic distribution of Englishes, i.e. Englishes which are linked to a specific territory or culture, is that devised by Kachru in 1986 (see Figure 1). In this model he uses a three circle typology: **inner circle** Englishes are represented by mother tongue English speakers (ENL – English as a native language) from the mother country, the UK, and from the first migrations to countries such as North

Figure 1. Kachru's Concentric Circle of English (based on Kachru 1997, p. 213)



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America and Australia. The latter Englishes have developed in different ways from British English due to the different sociolinguistic contexts in which the migrants found themselves, for example, vocabulary change through contact with indigenous peoples (Jenkins, 2009, p. 5).

Outer circle Englishes are represented by those countries which were colonised by Britain and where English has been or is learned as a second language (ESL). These countries include India and Nigeria. Some native speakers consider these Englishes to be 'interlanguage', i.e. learner language, where the native (inner circle) speaker target has not yet been reached.

Expanding circle Englishes are represented by countries where English is increasingly learned as a foreign language (EFL). English has never had an official role in these countries, but is being learned as a means of communication with native and other non-native speakers in the globalised world. The expanding circle is, indeed, where the number of English speakers is expanding the most rapidly, and includes China.

Kachru's model has been and still is extremely influential. For example, Crystal (2004) referred to it when he calculated that numbers of non-native English speakers (ESL and EFL) – in the outer and expanding circles – overtook numbers of native (ENL) speakers in the inner circle somewhere between 1997 and 2003 (between his first and second editions of *English as a Global Language*). According to Crystal, this is a situation which is 'without precedent' (p. 29) for an international language. Crystal updated his 2003 calculations in 2008 and estimated that there could be as many as two billion speakers of English by that time (cited in Jenkins, 2009, p. 232). The numbers are shown in Figure 2.

The situation in China

The recent history of English in China has been somewhat chequered. After the Communists took power in 1949 English was the language of the enemy. In 1952, there were only eight HE institutions teaching English in China (Chang, 2006, p. 515). In the early 1960s, after China broke off relations with Russia (Russian was the first foreign language taught at that time), an official decision was taken to make English the first foreign language in secondary schools. However, English was then banned during most of the cultural revolution between 1966 and 1976 and only reinstated in a small way at the higher education level when China resumed its membership of the United Nations in 1971 and after President Nixon visited China in 1972 (Feng, 2009, p. 86). From 1978 onwards, English became an essential ingredient in China's modernization programme, the 'Four Modernizations', which refers to the modernization of industry,

Figure 2. Trends in the growth of English (based on Crystal, 2003, p. 67–69)

English as a global language	First edition (1997)	Second edition (2003)
Inner circle (mainly ENL)	320 – 380 million	320 – 380 million
Outer circle (mainly ESL)	150 – 300 million	300 – 500 million
Expanding circle (mainly EFL)	100 – 1000 million	500 – 1000 million
Global estimates	**First edition (1997)**	**Second edition (2003)**
L1 speakers of English	337 million	329 million
L2 speakers of English	235 million	431 million
L1 and L2 speakers of English in 2008	2 billion	

agriculture, national defense, and science and technology (Feng, 2009, p. 86) along with its 'open door' and reform policies. Thereafter English language teaching in China rapidly increased.

In 1982, the Ministry of Education in China stipulated that English should be designated as the first foreign language to be taught in secondary schools and as the preferred foreign language to be taught in higher education institutions (Chang, 2006, p. 516). English degree courses have played an important role in China's development according to Chang (2006):

> *Supported by national foreign language policy, [China] is enjoying a period of unprecedented development against a background of accelerating globalisation and the rise of English as a global language* (p. 518).

English has also become a high status language, which can be demonstrated by the fact that many parents, particularly in the wealthier areas, are prepared to invest in expensive bilingual education from an early age; e.g. in Harbin in 2005 the annual cost of bilingual kindergarten was 2300 US dollars, well above average family income for that year (Feng, 2009, p. 93). By 2003 there were bilingual kindergartens in major cities, 200 million children learning English in Chinese medium schools and 13 million at universities. By 2006 there were 350 million learners of English in China (Pan and Seargeant, 2012, p. 62).

Currently, the teaching of English usually starts when children are nine or ten years old and they study English as a compulsory subject for nine to ten years, although an important point to note is that the provision of English greatly varies between regions. For example, inland and remote regions have far less access to English than the coastal regions and economically wealthy areas (Feng, 2009, p. 92).

Which pedagogical model – Standard English or China English?

The accepted model for teaching English in China is that of standard British or American English. However, with over 350 million Chinese learning English the question is why they should be learning English according to these standards, rather than a home-grown China English standard.

Several linguistic features of China English have been identified by China English scholars. He and Li (2009, pp. 72–74) list them according to the four levels of phonology, lexis, syntax and discourse pragmatics and believe that these features may be more useful to Asian learners of English than British or American norms.

- **Phonology**: e.g. replacement of θ with *s* and ð with *d*
- **Lexis**: e.g. *four modernizations*
- **Syntax**: e.g. the null subject parameter, where subjects are required in English sentences but are optional in Chinese
- **Discourse pragmatics**: e.g. in standard English texts, the main topic comes first followed by supporting material, while in China it is the other way round

Until recently standard varieties of British and American English were promoted as the only acceptable pedagogical models for English language teaching. Reasons for this are, among other things, because the standard language has prestige, while non-standard language forms are stigmatised. A language needs to be codified, that is the 'correct' forms of grammar and orthography need to be written down in order to achieve legitimacy. Once codified, any variations on these established norms are considered to be 'errors'. The main way to spread new words and linguistic forms is through dictionaries and grammar books, the authoritative works on standard usage. The new forms are then spread through education in the standard language.

Englishes which deviate from the standard, such as the English varieties in the outer and expanding circles which have non-standard features in spoken and written forms, are considered by some scholars in inner circle countries and, in fact, by some teachers in outer and expanding circle countries, to be non-legitimate, or an attempt to justify an inability to learn the standard language. For example, new linguistic forms such as *teacheress*, an example of Indian English, would most likely be marked as an 'error', according to the standard English model, but an 'innovation' for a World Englishes model.

However, the practice of English in all circles "is always embedded in local cultures and is always influenced by the previous linguistic habits of the new speakers" (Mufwene, 2010, p. 47) and is continuously subject to variation and change, as is evident from the many varieties of Englishes. As Mufwene (2010) points out, "the notion of a global English with uniform structural features all over the world is a utopia we may soon forget about" (p. 47).

One of the findings of He and Li's (2009) study into student perceptions of China English was that participants felt that linguistic features of China English, such as those above, "cannot be avoided in the English learning process and thus ought to be a legitimate part of the local English curriculum" (2009, p. 86). China English, according to Qiong (in Jenkins, 2009) is a language:

> *…which is as good a communicative tool as standard English. The pronunciation is close enough not to be too much of a problem; there may be some syntactic and grammatical differences attributable to the influence of Chinese; and the lexis may occasionally differ, reflecting cultural differences…* (p. 216).

These cultural differences are reflected by some linguistic features where it is not possible to find English equivalents, such as the 'four modernizations'. According to He and Li (2009, p. 85), this alternative English, which has standard English as its core but with some of the above Chinese linguistic features, would give Chinese teachers feelings of empowerment knowing that their 'Chinese-accented English' was recognized institutionally. This brings us to the question of which teachers should be employed to teach English in China.

Native or non-native English speaking teachers?

Any suggestion that a suitably qualified non-native English teacher is not an appropriate person to teach English stirs the blood of your average applied linguist. For example, quite recently, a job advertisement appeared on the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) mail list. The job specified that the institution concerned required a 'native English speaker' to teach English in Spain. This sparked a spirited chorus of indignation against the institution, which had chosen so unadvisedly to place its advertisement on BAAL's mail pages. The opinion of many applied linguists is that it is a fallacy that native speaking English teachers are 'better' teachers than non-native English speakers (Phillipson, 1992, p. 126; Cook, 1999). Indeed many researchers have striven to demonstrate the benefits to be had from being taught by non-native English speaking teachers, who so clearly understand the difficulties in learning English (Medgyes, 1992; Seidlhofer, 1999; Richard-Amato, 2003). In China, however, there are higher education institutions which seek specifically to employ native English speaking teachers, particularly as regards oral English (Stanley, 2013). He and Miller (2011) carried out an investigation into whether Chinese students in China, who were studying non-English majors, preferred native English speaking teachers or Chinese teachers of English. They found that students believed they could benefit from both types. In reality, Chinese speakers of English are likely to have to communicate with a variety of other non-native English speakers.

Alternative pedagogical models

One idea for an alternative pedagogical model is for an English containing English as a lingua franca (ELF) forms. These are linguistic features which are common 'errors' with all learners of English globally, such as uncountable nouns with the plural 's', e.g. *informations*, the omission of the 3rd person singular *s* or *es* of regular verbs, and use of the wrong article or omission of articles, none of which have an adverse effect on understanding (for more information on the nature of ELF, see Jenkins, 2009, pp. 143–150). One limitation of Kachru's model is that it cannot show the location of ELF speakers, because ELF speakers cross boundaries between the circles (Ferguson, 2007). ELF, Ferguson asserts, is a 'deterritorialised' variety because it is a formulation of globalisation, occupying academic, administrative and political domains.

Another model could be the speaker's own variety of English, such as China English, "the English used by Chinese people in China, being based on standard English and having Chinese characteristics" (Wang, 1991 in He and Li,

2009, p. 71).

However, unless these models acquire prestige through being codified in dictionaries and grammar books, they are unlikely to be adopted by policy makers. As Spolsky (2004) remarks, "[o]ne of the views of the standard variety is that it is a conspiracy of the elite establishment to maintain power" (p. 27). As long as power remains in the hands of standard English speakers, then this is the variety of English that English learners globally will strive to attain**.** Ferguson (2006) points out that there is little enthusiasm in Singapore or India for example, for a standard Indian or standard Singapore English. This has implications for China English, as 'high level political endorsement is surely necessary if a local variety, however sociolinguistically valid, is to find adoption as a teaching model' (p. 171).

Conclusion

This article has constituted a very brief overview of the main debates in World Englishes: which English to teach and which teachers should teach English. If China becomes the country with the highest number of English speakers in the world there may be a justification to standardise China English. However, whether this happens will depend upon political will as well as attitudes of Chinese learners and their motivations for learning English.

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What's so Specific about ESP?

Don Jack

Introduction

This article aims to provide an overview of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and to distinguish this area of English language teaching from general English teaching. It will also aim to highlight the various distinctions within ESP. It is hoped that highlighting these distinctions will assist in assessing student needs and in choosing appropriate materials and activities to meet these needs.

What is ESP?

Writers on ESP have offered a number of defining characteristics meant to distinguish this area of language teaching from general English teaching. Fanning (1990), for example, follows Robinson's claims that "ESP should be goal-directed and secondly that it be based on needs analysis" (p. 159). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) think that "ESP should be properly seen not as any particular language produced but as an approach to language teaching which is directed by specific and apparent reasons for learning" (p. 19). The specific needs of the learner are again emphasised by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998). They also add the additional requirement that ESP should "make use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves" (p. 4). All these definitions share broadly similar conceptions, and may be summed up in the four characteristics presented by Johns and Price-Machado (2001, p. 44).

They list the "absolute characteristics" of ESP as being:

- *designed to meet the specified needs of the learner*
- *related to content (i.e. in the themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations or activities*
- *centred on the language appropriate to these activities in syntax, lexis, discourse semantics, and the analysis of discourse*
- *in contrast to 'General English'*

These characteristics aim to provide a descriptive outline by which we can recognise particular examples of ESP practice. A consideration of these points is therefore a necessary first step in the design of ESP syllabi, courses and lessons. If the proposed course does not display these characteristics, then it is fair to question whether it is an ESP course at all.

What is so specific about ESP?

A focus on student needs is often cited as the feature that contrasts ESP with general English. General English is often associated with the broad aim of improving students' language ability. This view can be treated dismissively in ESP. For example, Jordan (1997) describes general English teaching as "TENOR 'the teaching of language for no obvious reason', no reason obvious to the learner that is" (p. 4). So what is different about ESP?

The pre-occupying focus of ESP can be described as defining and meeting students' needs (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991, p. 299). This concentration on needs is centred in two broad areas. These are English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). These broad categories are divided again to meet the further varying needs of learners. For example, within EAP, there are the areas of English for Science and Technology (EST), for Business and Economics (EBE), for Medical Purposes (EMP), and for Law (ELP). These more specifically defined areas are known as English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). Each of these courses would be designed to assist the learner with the language and skills necessary for successful study within these disciplines, dealing not only with the vocabulary and structures commonly found within each area, but also with the

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conventions for presenting written and oral academic work.

A similar range of divisions has developed to assist employees or those about to be employed within a particular sector to develop the language and skills necessary to conduct their work. The divisions may be the same, such as English for Medical Purposes or English for Business Purposes, but the learner's needs will be different from those seeking the successful completion of a course of study in English at college or university. With English for Specific Occupational Purposes (ESOP), the focus will be much more on the needs of the learner within his or her everyday work situation. Within the English for Business Purposes division, this might include work on the language and skills required to participate in meetings, or in negotiations, or in simply how to deal with general telephone enquiries. In fact, it is possible to focus courses and lessons within both EAP and EOP into ever narrowing points of specificity. For example, it is quite possible for an EAP teacher to assist one particular student prepare for the presentation of a particular paper at one specific conference. This idea is expressed more graphically in Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998) idea of a continuum of English language teaching (Figure 1).

On this conception, ELT has five degrees of specificity, starting with general English for beginners and moving on to intermediate and advanced courses. After that they place general English for academic/business purposes. The courses at this point in the continuum would focus on general "core language and skills" required for academic study or business communication. The next point on the continuum sees courses focused on specific areas, such as medical English or negotiating skills. The final and most specific point on the continuum would include focus on English for one specific course or even an individual student's specific business needs.

It is important to emphasise that the continuum outlined above focuses on degrees of specificity and not on degrees of ability. It is quite possible for a beginning student to end up at the higher end of the specificity scale. A beginner level businessman may, for example, want a course specifically to help him in dealing with telephone conversations from colleagues abroad. This would fall under position 5 in the continuum, and the student's success would be determined by his ability to deal with the other defining characteristics of ESP. Johns and Price-Machado (2001) define these characteristics as "related in content (i.e. theme and topic) to particular disciplines, occupations or activities" and they must be "centred on language appropriate to these activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics and the analysis of discourse" (p. 44). In addition, it has been noted that ESP lessons should "make use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 4).

Figure 1. Continuum of Language Teaching (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 9)

GENERAL SPECIFIC

1	2	3	4	5
Position 1	Position 2	Position 3	Position 4	Position 5
English for Beginners	Intermediate to advanced EGP courses with a focus on particular skills	EGAP/EGBP courses based on common-core language and skills not related to specific disciplines or professions	Courses for broad disciplinary or professional areas, for example Report Writing for Scientists and Engineers, Medical English Legal English, Negotiation/Meeting Skills for Business People	1) An 'academic support' course related to a particular academic course 2) One-to-one work with business people

So, if the businessman is unable to deal with any of these aspects, it will clearly take him longer to achieve his aims, but this does not mean that he will have to start in a general English course for beginners and work his way up to the specific course on telephoning. It will be up to the teacher to design materials and activities that focus on the student's specific aims while dealing with any language and skills deficiencies the student has in relation to these aims.

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) emphasise that the idea of a continuum clarifies "the essentially fluid nature of the various types of ESP teaching and the degree of overlap between common core EAP and EBP and general English" (p. 8). They say that examples of overlap between ESP and general English may come down to a matter of perception. A listening lesson, for example, might be perceived as general English in a general English class, but the same lesson might be classed as EAP in a pre-sessional or foundation university course.

In assessing student needs, therefore, teachers can use the idea of the continuum suggested by Johns and Dudley-Evans to help with course preparation. The idea of the continuum allows teachers and students to pinpoint how specific the course needs to be. This will entail the type of materials needed and how much research the teacher will have to do on the underlying methodology of the particular subject area. Viewing ELT as a continuum not only helps with overall course preparation but also with particular lesson preparation within the course itself. It can help teachers determine how much general help students will need in order to deal with the specific content of each lesson, allowing teachers to isolate particular areas of language and particular skills to be included within specific lessons.

Conclusion

This article provided an overview of ESP. It noted that ESP is distinguished from general English in the materials it uses and in the approach it takes. The material used in ESP courses will mirror the content and language of the specific areas of study or work that the students will eventually undertake. In addition, the activities and approach to lessons will mirror the activities undertaken within the specific areas the students aim to enter. It also introduced Johns and Dudley-Evan's continuum of ELT as a means of distinguishing the degree of specificity of ESP courses. The article suggested that this continuum can help teachers focus on the specific needs of students and help to plan courses and even individual lessons within these courses.

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International Students are Always Ready for ESAP

Seth Hartigan

Many factors that affect the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classroom in a foundation year program may lie beyond the control of the teacher: the incoming proficiency level, the contact time available with students, and various demands from subject departments in the university. Nevertheless, EAP instructors in international universities must consider additional factors: Should they adopt a 'back to basics' approach to English teaching to help low proficiency students? Should instructors choose class topics only in their students' major subjects or from across the curriculum? How subject-specific should the content be when teaching EAP?

Conventional wisdom has suggested that lower proficiency students must be instructed in General English before moving to Academic English. Certainly, some have argued, students must delay instruction in subject-specific Academic English until they have mastered the basics (Alexander, 2012). "Walk before you run" might be the mantra of the generalists. Indeed, reality often intrudes into curriculum design, and the limited time available for classes may prevent students from learning a wide range of lexis on a variety of topics.

However, such a 'back to basics' approach is not universally accepted by practitioners (Hyland, 2007; Bruce, 2011) and the 'general versus specific English' debate cannot even begin until instructors decide whether a common core of academic language and skills exist that are always transferable across disciplines. If they are not transferable, should EAP instructors instead focus on the texts, skills and language forms used by learners in their distinct academic departments and begin with English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP)? This article will argue that, indeed, this is the case, and that an ESAP based approach is appropriate from the beginning.

General English, EAP or ESAP?

The traditional approach to a university foundation program has recommended beginning with General English instruction before attempting any EAP instruction (Cf. Alexander, 2012). Such traditionalists might argue even more strenuously for teaching General English to low proficiency students before allowing them to study Academic English. Once the general tenets of Academic English are mastered, the argument continues, students are now ready for subject-specific Academic English.

Such an approach should raise several concerns in the mind of an instructor. First, teachers must consider whether Academic English is too difficult for lower level learners. Second, the existence of a "common core" of Academic English must be accepted or rejected. Finally, the extent of the transferability of any generic academic skills and practices across different subjects should be considered. These topics will be addressed in turn.

Is Academic English too difficult to begin with?

Proponents of General English first may argue that ESAP is too difficult for low proficiency learners to comprehend. These learners, the argument continues, instead need a solid foundation of basic English before attempting to use English in an academic context.

This call for a gradual approach is not supported by current research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). SLA research indicates that students acquire language features, including lexis, as needed, rather than in the order instructors teach them (Hyland, 2002; Cook, 2011; Alexander, 2012). A student's "interlanguage" does not conform to a syllabus; instead students adapt as they are challenged. In a sense, new lexis is new lexis,

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regardless of whether it is general or specific. While authentic discipline texts (journal articles, etc.) may be beyond the reading comprehension of a foundation year student, properly scaffolded subject-specific texts are both comprehensible and more relevant for learners than general interest material (Alexander & Argent, 2010). Indeed, the purpose of teaching EAP arguably fails when the goal of preparation for disciplinary study is abandoned.

Is there a common core of Academic English?

Like their concern regarding General English, critics of an early focus on ESAP also stress that students need a foundation in Academic English before attempting discipline specific EAP:

> *Attempts to teach a 'restricted' language ("English for Engineers") too often ignore the danger in so doing of trying to climb a ladder which is sinking in the mud; it is no use trying to approach a point on the upper rungs if there is no foundation* (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik, 1985, p. 29).

The notion of a common core of academic lexis is, however, contested by some scholars (Hyland & Tse, 2007). In several studies, they note that words on the Academic Word List (AWL) often vary by academic department. For example, "volume" can mean "book" in Applied Linguistics and "quantity" in Biology, whereas "abstract" can mean "remove" in Engineering and "theoretical" in the social sciences. Thus, Hyland and Tse (2007, 2009) recommend the use of subject-specific corpora as opposed to "general" lists like the AWL.

Similarly, attempting to avoid discipline specific vocabulary artificially constrains and retards learners from acquiring the lexis needed for their majors. As Bloor and Bloor (1986) have noted:

> *There is no common core of language preexisting to varieties. The core is, rather, an essential part of any one of the innumerable varieties of the language* (p. 28).

General English is thus a part of specific Academic English. As Gillett (2010) has noted, there is no need to master the common core of English before EAP, as any "common core" would preexist in EAP. By definition, what is common is in the specific, whereas differing specificities may not overlap. Therefore, by focusing on the specific, an EAP tutor meets the needs of the learner without neglecting some "common core." Moreover, by focusing on one specific discipline (e.g. law), the tutor avoids teaching irrelevantly specific material that is necessary for a different discipline (e.g. chemical engineering) but not the learner's discipline (Hyland, 2009).

Such logic applies to the teaching of the varieties of English. General English is common to general EAP. General EAP is common to specific EAP. Hence, with limited time and resources at hand, tutors should begin and end with discipline specific EAP.

Are there generic academic skills and practices that are transferable across different subjects?

Instructors following an English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) model will likely focus on the skills and study activities thought to be common to all disciplines studied by their students (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Spack, 1988). One assumption necessary to sustain an EGAP approach is therefore the existence of generic academic practices that can be applied anywhere on campus. While some general academic activities are certainly practiced on any campus, when examined closely the conventions of research and writing are rarely generalizable or neutrally applicable (Hyland, 2006).

Jordan (1997) notes that some generic academic skills – skimming, scanning, paraphrasing, summarizing, library internet research, lecture note-taking, oral presentations, and participating in seminars – differ very little across disciplines. These general skills needed by all students are supplemented in a discipline with more specific skills common to that field. No reason exists, however, not to practice these *generic* and *specific* skills with *subject-specific* content. For example, foundation year business students who will begin a three-year-long course of

study within the business department can begin applying strategies for reading or attending to lectures when reading accessible business texts or while listening to discourse on business topics. Why use precious time in discussing topics such as dating or marriage if they do not include a business related aspect?

Some might contend that students should be entertained by studying interesting content and not "bored" by a focus on subject-specific material. Aside from the fact that students chose their discipline, and can be expected to have an interest in their subject, having fun should not be the primary goal of an EAP lesson (Alexander, 2012). Levity certainly has its place in the classroom. Even the dullest material can be enlivened with some panache or energy from the teacher. But university tutors should ask themselves what best serves the students, momentary laughs or a deep foundation of preparation for what will be a difficult course of study?

Additional arguments for general EAP (EGAP)

Spack (1988) argues that language teachers lack the expertise and confidence to teach subject conventions, arguing:

> *...we should leave the teaching of writing in the disciplines to the teachers of those disciplines.* (p. 30)

EAP (writing) courses should therefore focus on the process of writing which is common across a range of disciplines (Spack, 1988, pp. 44–45). This generalist approach again ignores that the common core of academic skills or lexis, as noted above, either already exists within the specific or fails to truly be common.

Nevertheless, students would likely benefit from the experience of subject instructors who have a solid grounding in the writing of their discipline *if* subject professors were willing to teach composition in their discipline. In reality, subject teachers spend little if any time in their classes teaching writing. EAP tutors must therefore guide students in their disciplinary discourse practices, including writing, or no one will.

Spack (1988) worries that ESAP writing instructors will be doing their students a disservice by passing themselves off as experts in the writing of a specific discipline, when, in fact, they are not (p. 38). Raising such a concern misses the central point. Subject faculty are not teaching literacy skills because they lack the interest, and likely the expertise, to teach writing in a way comprehensible to their students (Hyland, 2006). Writing in their discipline is now a largely unconscious activity for the subject instructor and, not having conspicuously attended to the process of writing, they could not explain it well to a novice (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002).

An EAP tutor can more easily delineate the subject-specific skills and lexis of a discipline as an outsider (rather than attempt to condense generic forms from across the academy). Indeed, the structure of common formats (e.g. lab report or dissertation) can differ completely across disciplines (Hyland, 2006). For example, a specific writing approach, then, will avoid misleading students to think that science report writing is appropriate for their economics professor.

Another concern raised against specificity is that ESAP does not prepare students for the unpredictable, real world or for study in other disciplines (Hyland, 2006). This concern is misplaced, as foundation year programs need not consult crystal balls. Tutors already know what lies in the immediate future of their students: study in their chosen discipline. Duty demands that tutors prepare them for the realities of university study, not worry about the unknown.

The argument for ESAP

The ESAP model marries the teaching of skills and language related to the demands of a particular discipline or academic department. Alexander (2012) argues that EAP should:

> *...follow a deep end strategy, teaching toward the target academic performance and scaffolding tasks … thus supporting students to acquire procedural knowledge about discourse practices which they can reapply in the context of their own academic*

disciplines (p. 108).

This model generally requires cooperation between EAP instructors and the subject department and faculty. Such coordination is necessary to uncover the specific features needed in an academic discipline, especially where EAP instructors are not well versed in the subjects their students will study (Hyland, 2002). A genre-based approach to teaching writing may work well in an ESAP context, as instructors can focus on texts identified by the department.

Instructors in ESAP can also strengthen their credibility by avoiding a deficit model of teaching and thereby increase EAP's status in the academy. The particulars of academic vocabulary and academic communication skills needed at university are quite different from the everyday language taught by General English teachers. EAP professionals may therefore be seen as more highly skilled than other English instructors, having to incorporate the language of a discipline and the academic skills needed for success at university. Recognition of such competence will raise EAP instructors' profiles amongst university faculty in general. With such an understanding in mind, EAP will not be seen as a mere bandage to cover the language defects in students but instead be considered part of a specialized academic community (Hyland, 2006).

Student progress

How fast can students be reasonably expected to progress in EAP? One attempt at answering this question by the Association of Language Testers of Europe (ALTE) notes that approximately 200 hours of direct, in-class instruction are necessary for a student to progress from the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) level B1 to B2. ALTE estimates that approximately an additional 200 hours of instruction are also needed to progress from B2 to C1, with C1 being the generally accepted target in the United Kingdom as a sufficient level for independent university study. This time estimate is necessarily dependent on a number of factors, including the age and motivation of the learners, their study backgrounds, the amount of time spent in self-study and any prior learning experiences. The ALTE estimate nevertheless provides a helpful reference point.

Should students be considered low level only when they have low proficiency in English? Sometimes students will have significant background knowledge of the subject they will study at university, but often they will not. For example, learners in science may have a relatively high level of subject knowledge but low English proficiency. Other students may have little experience with the subject and low proficiency in English. Such factors may also affect the speed of student progress in an ESAP course.

As an example, assume a year-long foundation program, with about 200 contact hours between tutor and student. If a significant percentage of these students enter at the B1 level, they cannot reasonably progress beyond CEFR B2 (even if all goes perfectly well according to ALTE's estimate). Students would require an additional year of 200 contact hours before even approaching CEFR level C1, but in their second year at university such students must already begin to take classes in their major subject. Neglecting specific content in the earliest days makes little sense unless students are willing to devote years to an EAP program before they start to study subject content.

Prepare students for their subject

How soon and how far should instructors go toward ESAP? Calls for early adoption of subject specific content can be found originating from a number of sources. Hyland advocates early subject specificity in EAP, as he notes:

> *Effective language teaching involves taking specificity seriously* (2002, p. 117).

Instructors can also hear a plea for early ESAP coming from students themselves. Research indicates that, when asked, students identify subject specificity as very important to them.

In an interview-based longitudinal study of 28 undergraduates at Hong Kong University (HKU), and a questionnaire survey of 3,009 first-year students at HKU, students reported academic writing (style, cohesion, grammar) to be the most problematic skill to attain. They

also indicated that a lack of knowledge of specific vocabulary hindered their studies:

> *The survey results have clear implications for EAP practitioners* (Evans & Morrison, 2010, p. 395).

Students recognize that they need to write in the genre appropriate for their particular audience and follow the conventions of their academic departments. The need to address these student concerns is paramount. According to Evans and Morrison:

> *EAP courses based exclusively on survey findings of this kind may overlook what seems to be the central challenge confronting freshmen namely* ***the need to understand and appropriate the discourse practices of the disciplinary community they have chosen to enter*** (2010, p. 395)[emphasis added].

Therefore, instructors who adopt an ESAP approach from the start will best prepare students for what they need, specific writing and lexis acquisition for their major subject of study.

Motivation

Research has shown, through genre analysis as well as by other means, that the more content-specific the course, the more students will find it useful and be motivated (Jordan, 1997, p. 252). Subject-specific topics, vocabulary and activities are more important to tertiary learners and will increase their motivation. This becomes apparent when instructors acknowledge that academic genres only take on meaning when they are situated in a context. Students communicate effectively by using a discipline's particular conventions, and they will be motivated when they see the usefulness of what they learn in a foundation year. Low proficiency learners will similarly be more motivated by topics in their subject as they will see the practical application of the lessons to their future work.

Conclusion

EAP teachers do not need to be subject specialist experts but instead should possess "the ability to ask intelligent questions" about the topic (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, as cited in Jordan, 1997). More specificity in subject vocabulary earlier in a foundation program will aid lexical development, save time by being more efficient, and allow for more recycling of subject-specific vocabulary and more retention of that knowledge. Using subject-specific genre for writing opportunities will also increase the transferability of skill practice and may increase student motivation, as students will be able to see the usefulness of their work. Students also will have more opportunities to practice writing (and reading) in genres specific to their discipline. Finally, more specificity might be a way to balance mixed ability classes so that higher level students do not lose interest, while lower-level students are supported.

When students do not study across disciplines in a "liberal arts" curriculum, the argument for specificity is even stronger. A focus on discipline specificity prepares them for their real world academic life while general EAP may waste valuable time teaching irrelevant practices. Therefore, international university students are best set on their academic career by bringing ESAP into their foundation program as early as possible.

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On the Use of PowerPoint in the EFL Classroom

By Jonathan Pierrel

PPTs in Most EFL Classrooms in China

I was quite surprised when I arrived in China two years ago to see that most of the teachers used PowerPoint presentations (PPTs) in the classroom on a daily basis. At the beginning of this semester, I was reminded of that fact when our Director congratulated us for making it through the previous semester which had involved a significant curriculum change. To convey this achievement, he mentioned that "many PPTs had been created". Shortly after, a colleague who joined the level I had been working in asked me if I could share my PPTs from last semester with her to have a better understanding of what was expected. I am all in favor of sharing resources among colleagues, but I was not of much help that time because, contrary to the majority of teachers in my department, I use PPTs quite infrequently – that is, only when I deem it useful. Having a PPT for each classroom was mandatory until the new Director decided otherwise two years ago. Although this is no longer a requirement in my department, its effects are still felt.

I believe that such scenarios are not isolated in China. Strong efforts to introduce computers and projectors in classrooms started around 1999. Among the 375 higher-education institutions that Cai and Wu (2003) surveyed across China, 70% of them already had computers and projectors in their classrooms in 2001. More than 10 years later, it would be reasonable to assume that this figure would be much higher. Once the classrooms have been equipped, teachers are often told by the administration to use the technology that has been put at their disposal (Selber, 2004). Unfortunately, such rapid proliferation of computer equipment in the classroom rarely correlates with sufficient teacher training to instruct teachers on how to use the technology effectively for teaching (ibid). This situation may often translate in practice to teachers feeling that they should use a PPT document for instruction. This article will argue that teachers should not blindly accept such a drastic teaching delivery paradigm change. We need to consciously make the decision to use or not to use PPTs by considering the implications that come with it.

The Effects of PPTs

There is no denying that PowerPoint can be an effective tool to deliver information, but using it is not anodyne. Hill Arford, Lubitow and Smollin (2012) and Khoury and Mattar (2012), among others, provide constructive literature reviews on the use of PPTs in higher education. The positive effects that are mentioned by these authors and others include:

- It can save time in the classroom (instead of

Pierrel, J. (2013) On the use of Powerpoint in the EFL classroom. *English Teaching in China, 3,* 32–35.

writing by hand on the board);

- Students generally respond to PPTs positively:
  - PPTs provide structure to the lessons;
  - The materials are often clearer;
  - Students may see the class as more entertaining;
  - Students find it easier to take notes, which improves their confidence.
- Teachers also tend to feel more confident;
- It is easy to keep PPT files, update them, and use them again later;
- It can reduce printing costs.

These advantages certainly lead to the fact that PPTs are widely used in the classroom, but we should not forget to consider their disadvantages:

- Students tend to become more "passive":
  - They are more likely to skip classes or pay less attention in class if they know they can simply get the content later with the PPT;
  - They are reluctant to take notes since they know they can get the files later on.
- Classes are perceived as too "pre-planned":
  - Teachers are less likely to be spontaneous;
  - Students may consider such classes boring if there is little interaction.
- The information may become over-simplified and lack breadth, depth and complexity;
- There is less interaction between the teacher and the students:
  - Students are less likely to interrupt the teacher if they have the feeling that their comment may disrupt the flow of the class;
  - Students can feel sleepier if the lights are dimmed;
  - It is difficult to adapt or change the content of a PPT during class to take into consideration the students' participation, since to make changes one has to edit the presentation mode, edit the text, and then return to the presentation mode.

It is also worth noting that the literature does not suggest that using PPTs in the classroom improves students' retention, nor does it improve students' scores. Levasseur and Sawyer (2006) point out that there is "no significant change in learning outcomes when instructors augment their lectures with computer-generated slides" (p. 111). Even more interestingly, Amare (2006) conducted a study which she concludes by saying that: "while most students say they preferred PowerPoint, performance scores were higher in the sections with the traditional lecture format" (p. 297). It is important to note that those studies were not carried out in an EFL context, and that even for content courses using PPTs may lead to potential issues. So what are the implications in language classes where we try to develop students' linguistic skills?

Are PPTs beneficial in an EFL classroom?

Going through the list of advantages given above, it is obvious to see how using PPTs can be useful in the EFL classroom, especially with lower-level students who might have more difficulties understanding oral English. However, I believe that there is a danger of overusing PPTs in the classroom and that conscious use of PPTs would benefit students.

Among the disadvantages listed above, the deterioration of interaction becomes a major factor in an EFL context. Language classes should engage the students and foster interaction. According to Ellis (1999), interaction facilitates language acquisition. Interaction consciously or unconsciously "sets the scene for potential learning" (Ellis, 1999, p. 4). However, PPTs may be counter-productive in that regard. If they are not designed appropriately, PPTs tend to lead to a unidirectional form of interaction: from teachers to students. When students offer answers or suggestions that might not have been considered by the teacher when planning the lesson, these answers may appear to the student as inappropriate if they are not mentioned on the screen. Furthermore, with a pre-planned structure constrained by the nature of PPTs, it is difficult to adapt the content of the presented information accordingly. Consequently, teachers need to be increasingly conscious when designing their

PPTs so that it empowers them to generate constructive interaction with the students.

Additionally, always providing written information and instruction also encourages the students to rely on what is written on the screen instead of paying attention to what is being said. The students can quickly develop the habit of relying on visual information to "survive" the classroom experience of communicating in a foreign language. However, once they leave the classroom, they will most probably not be able to rely on a PPT slide behind the speaker's head.

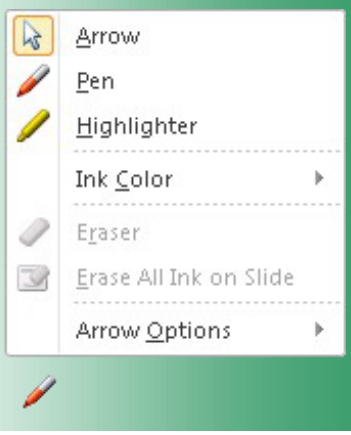
If we are not careful, using PPTs in EFL classrooms can lead to negative consequences. However, certain strategies can help us minimize some of those potential issues and make the use of PPTs more effective.

Tips

Here are a few tips that can help you use PPTs more effectively:

- Use a black font with a white background: the contrast is usually strong enough to keep visual clarity when there is abundant light in the classroom. That way, you will be able to draw the curtains open to benefit from natural light or use the lights without dimming them, which may prevent drowsiness.
- Appropriately use the "animation" features so that not all the text appears on the slide at the same time. This will help you to maintain some interaction with the students by asking them what they think is coming next. It also helps them stay focused when there is not too much text displayed at the same time.

Figure 1.



- Use the built-in functions "Pen", or "Highlighter" to annotate slides during your presentation to account for spontaneous ideas and to incorporate the feedback from your audience. (These functions are available if you hover your mouse over the lower left-hand corner of the screen in the full-screen presentation mode – see Figure 1). Or even better, ask your school to invest in a touch screen and an electronic pen to be able to write or draw by hand on the slides.
- Use a remote control to be able to keep your presentation running without having to be physically confined to the space next to the computer. This will give you back your "ability to use proximity-based management strategies" (Giles & Baggett, 2008-2009, p. 49).
- Use the shortcuts "B" or "W" to turn the screen black or white respectively when the information that is projected on the screen no longer matches with what you are saying.
- Project a word document instead. You can start from an empty page or one with some text written on it beforehand. But projecting a word document instead of a PPT will enable you to bring back the interaction between you and your students in the classroom. Provided that you can type fast enough, you can write what the students say and have other students analyze what was suggested by their peers (whether it is for grammar or content). It will also give you back your liberty to choose at that moment what you want to be written on the screen. You do not have to follow the order of a pre-planned PPT.

Conclusion

Using PPTs provides practical advantages that all users benefit from, whether it is to save time, bring structure to the lessons, or boost teachers' confidence. That said, to become smart users – as opposed to being used by technology – we should consciously reflect on how we use PPTs in our classrooms. The tips listed above can be used as guiding signs in deciding how to effectively use PPTs in the classroom. That said, not using such tools can also become more attractive. Next time you

plan to use a PPT, ask yourself if you could do without it to bring back or enhance the interaction between you and your students.

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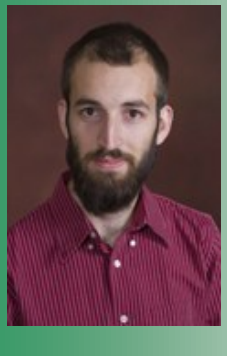

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Book Review: Practice in a Second Language: Perspectives from Applied Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology

Layla Shelmerdine

Edited by Robert M. DeKeyser

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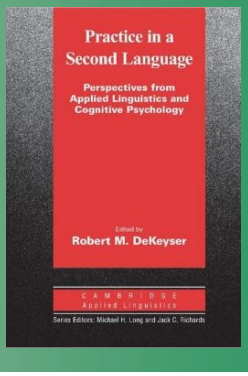

Teacher-practitioners have always understood that practice is a necessity for second language (L2) learning. However, the concept of practice has rarely been considered from a theoretical perspective. The book, *Practice in a Second Language: Perspectives from Applied Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology,* edited by Robert M. DeKeyser, attempts to remedy that oversight. This volume of twelve original articles (one of the many volumes in the Cambridge Applied Linguistics Series) examines practice in reference to the four basic skills in language learning: writing, reading, listening and speaking. The introductory article by DeKeyser, "Situating the Concept of Practice", provides a succinct overview of how practice is perceived in applied linguistics, cognitive psychology and educational psychology. He also defines the concept of practice as "specific activities in the second language, engaged in systematically, deliberately, with the goals of developing knowledge of and skills in the second language" (pp. 1 & 8). He then presents an overview of the current understanding of practice in both cognitive and educational psychology (specifically in the area of applied linguistics).

The four chapters in the first section, "Foundations", focus on the context of practice, specifically what "aspects of practice should hold true for all learning in all contexts" (p. 19). In this section practice is sub-divided into receptive (input) practice (Ronald Leow), output practice (Hitoshi Muranoi), interaction as practice (Alison MacKey) and the role of feedback in practice (Jennifer Leeman). Leow conducts a review of the relevant literature and studies on receptive practice which he defines as authentic or artificial L2 input that provides examples of the target L2 which learners can use to practice the L2 (p. 22). Muranoi examines the current psycholinguistic models of L2 output, and also reviews empirical studies on the effects of output practice in reading, writing, and speaking. MacKey reviews the relevant literature and explores how different interactional processes, for example negotiating for meaning, impact L2 learners. Finally, Leeman rounds off the first section by discussing the importance of feedback, the theories behind giving feedback and links this to empirical studies on negative feedback.

The four chapters of section two, "Institutional Contexts", look at practice in specific contexts, both formal educational contexts and informal situations: immersion (Leila Ranta and Roy Lyster), second language education (Kris Van den Branden), foreign language classrooms (Lourdes Ortega), and

study abroad as practice (Robert DeKeyser). Ranta and Lyster argue that immersion does not equate to realistic opportunities to practice and offer suggestions how this can be remedied. Van den Branden lays out suggestions to make practice in the L2 classroom more relevant to authentic communication outside the classroom. Ortega looks at practice from a cognitive-interactionist perspective and argues that "meaningful use of language drives acquisition" (p. 180) and, therefore, language practice (in foreign language classrooms) should have a communicative purpose and not just be practice by rote or repetition. The last chapter by DeKeyser, similar to Chapter 5 by Ranta and Lyster, looks at L2 practice by students who are studying abroad. DeKeyser examines the literature on the progress students make in language acquisition while studying abroad, and demonstrates that students who study abroad often gain fluency but not accuracy.

The two chapters in section three, "Individual Differences", look at how the age (Carmen Muñoz) and aptitude of individual learners (Peter Robinson) affect their practice. Muñoz reviews the relevant research, from both psychology and second language acquisition, on age-related differences in L2 acquisition. She demonstrates that young children are not necessarily better at language learning and suggests that different classroom activities embedded in practice are appropriate for different individuals at different ages. Robinson examines how an individual's aptitude for language learning is influenced by various "cognitive demands of practice" (p. 256), in other words the mental exertion required to perform a learning task. The final chapter presents an overview of all three sections to extricate best L2 language practice. In this concluding chapter, also written by DeKeyser, he summarizes the issues addressed throughout the book: which type of practice or practice activities are appropriate depending on the goal of the practice, in which context the practice is taking place and, most importantly, for what type of learner(s).

This volume is an excellent resource for second-language educators, curriculum developers, graduate students and education researchers. The glossary at the end of the book is both useful and essential for those without a background in cognitive psychology or applied linguistics. Although *Practice in a Second Language* is a book about theory and provides little in the way of instructional or application models, there is a lot of useful information, if the reader is patient and determined, that could be used to improve practice or help teacher-practitioners reflect on their practice in a variety of L2 and foreign language teaching classrooms.

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Insites

Deborah Kerr

This section highlights some useful learning and teaching websites that can help with planning, teaching and professional development.

Future Me

http://www.futureme.org

FutureMe.org is a website that will send an email from you to yourself at a specified future date. Over 2.5 million email letters have been submitted; return dates range from days to years and even decades into the future. Some writers pen themselves notes of encouragement; others congratulate or berate their future selves for goals they may or may not have attained. Other emails serve as reminders, or simply provide memories for reflection.

For the educator, the site provides for a practical and beneficial first week's homework assignment in reflection and goal setting. Students can be asked to write a letter explaining who and where they currently are and to brainstorm and plan for their futures. Return dates set toward the end of semester provide a timely reminder of one's goals just before final examinations; most students will have forgotten all about this first day's assignment until the emails are received in their inboxes. This is also an opportune time to suggest further reflection and re-strategizing for the future. For a real surprise, suggest that students pen themselves a letter not to be returned until graduation day!

Dear FutureMe,
Dear me,
I will get above a 3.5 on my next report card. I will achieve this by doing at the very minimum of two hours of homework every night. The plan is to turn my phone off during this time and stop listening to music during homework time. Also try to get right on my homework after dance class and stay up till all hours if it is not complete. I shall not procrastinate and do things the moment I get a chance. This is my first goal...

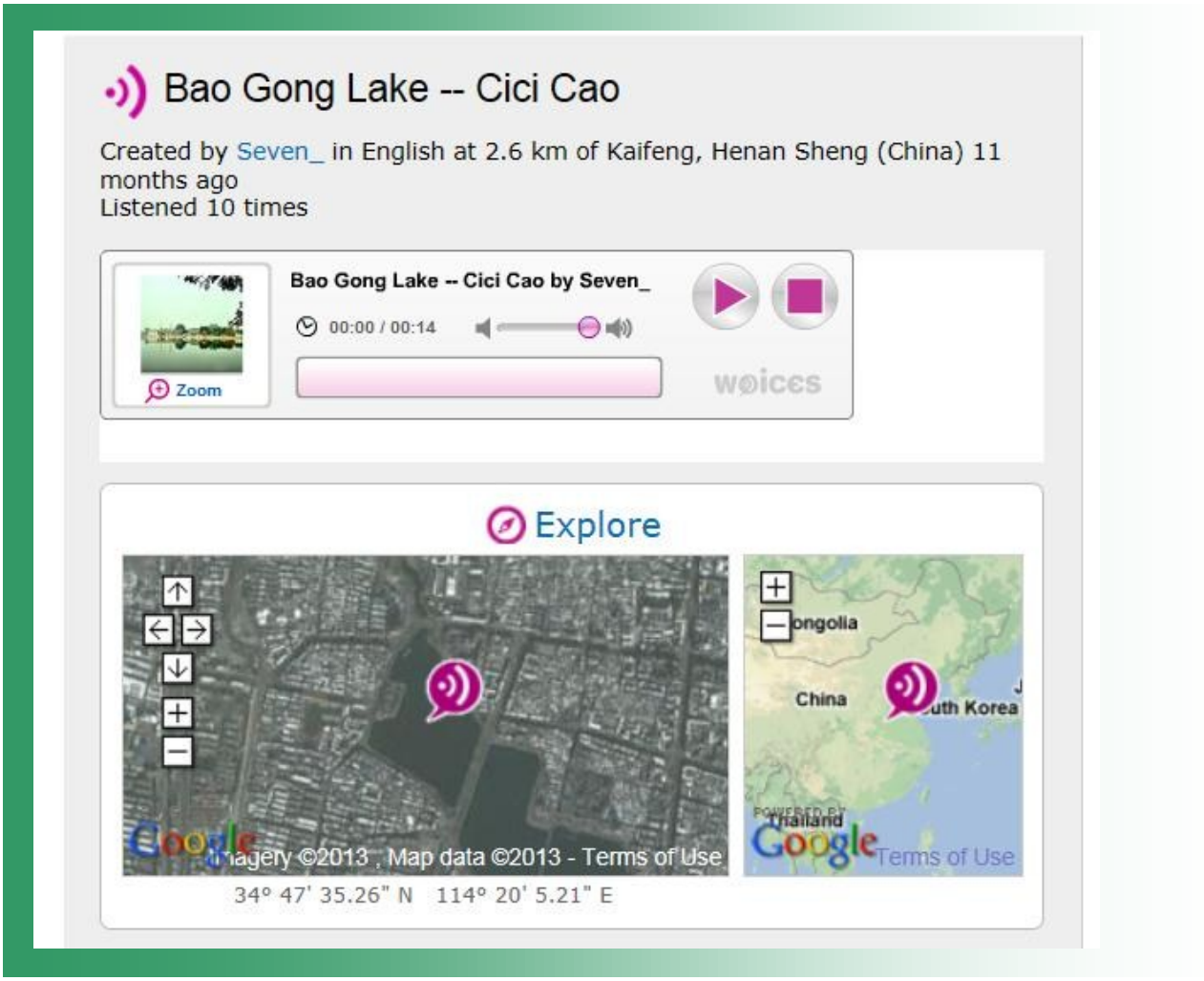
World Voices

http://woices.com

World Voices at Woices.com is a website designed for user creation and sharing of geolocalized audio guides. Since 2008, Woices has collected audio guides for worldwide locales ranging from neighborhood streets and popular local venues to famous landmarks and tourist sites. The guides are narrated and uploaded individually by people from around the world and in many languages. Because apps are available for both Apple and Android systems, and the Woices site provides a mobile interface for other users, the internet-connected public can both create and listen to on-the-spot audio guides from virtually anywhere.

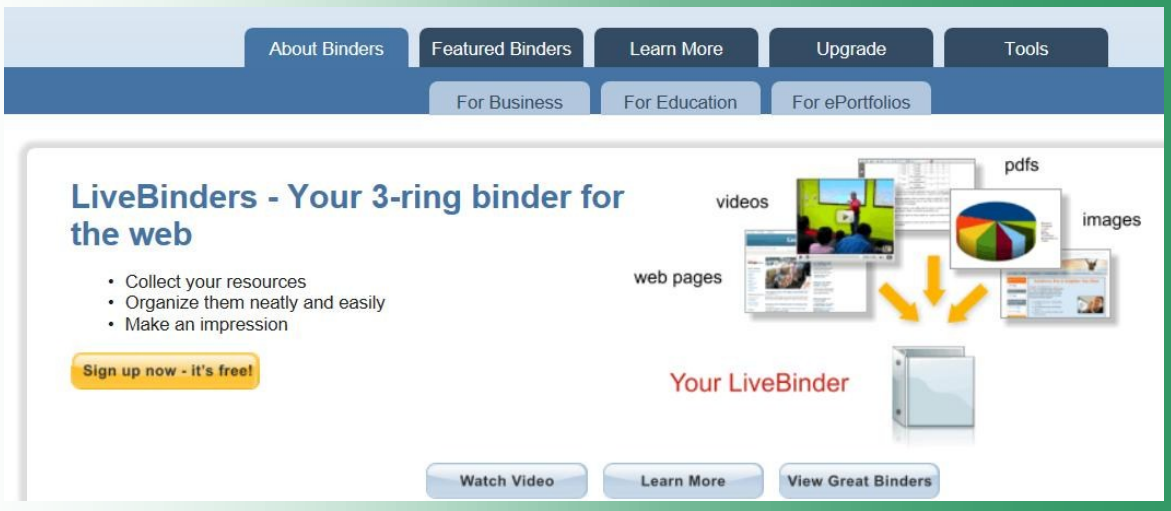
From an educator's perspective, the website provides a modern and constructive platform in which to engage learners in exercising their academic skills while serving the community in an experiential and novel way. Choosing a site and a theme, conducting research, taking and organizing notes, and planning and expressing content for the audio guide become motivating pedagogical endeavors in the context of an international community service project.

Site-specific guides or "echoes" can be grouped into "walks" to describe and explain sites of interest ranging from local restaurant fare to famous tourist spots. Students can be tasked with envisioning and organizing guides according to their knowledge, skills and research interests. Whatever the theme, the creators of these guides enjoy multiple opportunities to engage academically in a practical yet stimulating and worthwhile project, and in the process to add their personal voices to the world community.



LiveBinders

http://www.livebinders.com/



Livebinders.com is the 21st century electronic version of the three-ring binder. The site allows the storage, organization and display of documents, images, video, web links and screenshots. The free basic membership provides for the uploading of up to 100 MB of electronic data. Paid packages for private, commercial and educational use deliver even more capacity. In the educational context, the site is popularly employed to organize and share the content of specific classes, create student portfolios and serve as professional resource libraries.

Educators assemble electronic notebooks to present class content in a traditional and customary manner, with notebook tabs announcing sections, and pages available visually just as they are in a physical notebook; the difference and advantage with a Livebinder is that the notebook content can be accessed virtually, eliminating the need for a physical presence, and with the added advantage of allowing for live links to pertinent websites, as well as the ability to embed audio and video content into the notebook. Ready-made portfolio templates provide a stage for students to collect and share examples of their accomplishments in multiple subject areas, to display and share project work and to reflect on learning. Binders can be made public or private, and organized onto "shelves". There are currently over 1000 public binders categorized into scores of searchable subject areas and levels. These public collections thus serve concurrently as a valuable resource library for internet-connected schools around the world.

Deborah Kerr has been professionally involved in the field of second language acquisition for over twenty years. Her pedagogical style is based on engaging learners by creating high interest and motivating lessons.

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Do You Know... Which Qualification to get Next?

Interviews by Paul Meier

Qualification inflation, needing ever higher levels of degrees, diplomas and certificates, is something that affects most modern professions, English teaching included. Whereas up until a few years ago a CELTA was enough for most English teachers to get an EFL job in China, schools and universities, driven by ever stiffer visa requirements, are increasingly demanding qualifications at or above MA level. So, when choosing to study for a postgraduate qualification, what should you consider? ETiC's Paul Meier interviewed four XJTLU Language Centre tutors who have done or are doing a variety of postgraduate qualifications to get an insight into what's involved. Here's what they had to say...

DELTA

***Nick McIntosh**, LC Tutor, discusses studying for a DELTA with Bell Online*

http://www.bellenglish.com/Courses/77035/Online-Delta-/

Why did you choose to study a DELTA?

At this point, what I have been lucky enough to do is to get into university teaching with just undergraduate degrees and a CELTA. However, the game has changed. You now need a Master's level qualification. The DELTA, according to Ofqual, is now recognised as one of those. It's much more practical, much more hands-on than, say, an Applied Linguistics Masters. It's been recommended to me by a number of people whose teaching style and knowledge I respect, so that was a big part of it.

How long do you think it will take to complete the DELTA?

In total, it requires about a year to get done. There are three different modules, each running about two to three months in length, but because of the way that it is offered by Bell, by the time I finish in November it will be approximately a year.

How much does it cost?

Quite a lot! The different modules have different costs associated with them. The observed teaching practice, for instance, is the most intensive in terms of labour requirements from Bell's point of view. That costs £1800 by itself. All up, £2400–£2500 is about right, possibly a bit more.

How much work does it involve?

That depends on the module. For example, Module 1 is an exam and it's heavily taught,

whereby what Bell will do is assign you certain tutors and you will have a number of tasks you need to complete. Over the course of a given week, you would need to make a submission and everything else, so you could be looking at one or two hours a night. Or, if you put your work into the weekend, you could be looking at investing pretty much your entire weekend on that. Module 3, for instance, has just a single assignment of 4500 words, so there were periods where I would have been putting in a good 15 hours per week and seeing that as being quite reasonable.

Why did you choose to do it with Bell and online?

It was more online than Bell in particular. In China there are limited places that will offer the DELTA. Bell was the best candidate in terms of what they were offering. Having completed Module 1 with them, they were excellent. Very good advice from tutors around improving work and study needs and so on. I have since done Module 3 with them as well, and the tutors, the set-up, they've been excellent. I would not hesitate to recommend them to anyone.

Would you recommend doing the DELTA to others?

Definitely! I would fairly confidently say that it has had a massive impact on my teaching in terms of pedagogical knowledge, in terms of approaches in the class, in terms of teaching meta-knowledge, however you want to phrase it. Where the CELTA teaches you a few tricks you can use in the classroom, the DELTA gets you thinking much more deeply. Are those good tricks in terms of learner requirements? It has an immediate and very positive impact on teaching. The online facet I would recommend as well. Bell has done a really good job and it means that you can juggle it with a full-time job.

Doctor of Education – Higher Education (EdD)

***Eoin Jordan**, LC Year 1 Manager, discusses studying online for a Doctor of Education – Higher Education (EdD) with the University of Liverpool*

http://www.liv.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/taught_courses/laureate_online_doctor_of_education_-_higher_education

Why did you choose to do a doctorate?

I was interested in pursuing further study for career reasons and I felt it might open doors in different areas. The reason I chose this specific course was because my background has been very much in English teaching and my MA was in Applied Linguistics, and I had thought about doing further study in that specific area but didn't want to specialize greatly. I wanted to gain a more general understanding of education, and higher education particular, and to have a qualification that would then also potentially allow me more flexibility in job choice.

So, why choose a doctorate over a PhD?

I think the professional doctorates, as they're often referred to, like the Doctor of Education, were largely constructed in response to some criticisms of the traditional PhD. I think that there is more of an emphasis in the EdD on transferrable skills and teamwork. A criticism of some PhDs is that they can be very specialized pieces of study which are less transferrable to other environments.

What is the structure of the course?

There are nine initial modules, and that's followed-up by your thesis, which would be about 50,000 words.

How long do you think it will take you to complete the EdD?

I don't know for sure. The standard time to

complete it is four and a half years, and that's what I'm aiming to do. If I need over five years I'd need to apply for an extension.

Is it part-time or full-time?

It's part-time, as in I'm doing a full-time job while doing this. They recommend that people spend 12 to 20 hours per week and I'm probably spending around 15 hours a week on the course on average.

Doing what?

It's very structured. Almost every week I will do a discussion task, whereby I've got to write five hundred words, referenced, based on some set readings and further reading on the topic. During the second half of the week, I need to make follow-up responses to other people's posts. And so we, basically, have an online discussion.

On top of that, over the course of each module, which is typically ten weeks long, I have to produce two written assignments, usually two to three thousand words each. As well as that, parallel to each module there is a developmental module, which basically involves keeping a learning-log, having at least one online Skype tutorial with a mentor, and then at the end producing a two or three thousand word reflective assignment.

Why did you choose the University of Liverpool to study with?

Well, I think that one of the most important things was the fact that it's an entirely distance learning programme, and that obviously means that there's no commitment from me to do a period of residency anywhere, which is useful for me. The other thing, obviously, is the fact that it's a Doctorate in Higher Education rather than the other option I would have considered, which would have been a PhD in Applied Linguistics. The fact that it has this broader overview of higher education was attractive to me.

PhD in Applied Linguistics

***Xuelian Xu**, LC Tutor, discusses the PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Nottingham she completed in the UK in 2007*

http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/courses/english/modern-english-language-mphilphd.aspx

Why did you choose to do a PhD?

Well, it was my life's dream. I just wanted to do it.

Was it also for career reasons?

Yes, part of the reason was because of my career. Before I studied abroad I was an English teacher in China, and my students' questions encouraged me to do further study. Then I started my master's degree and then I just went ahead for a PhD.

How much work was involved?

Well, in the UK, when you are a full-time research student you basically need to work every day. I wouldn't say eight hours a day, but usually at the beginning of each semester you need to plan out your work, your timetable. You need to say within three months I'm going to achieve this, for example finish my literature review, from when to when I'm going to do empirical studies and so on.

What was the overall structure of your PhD?

Just before I finished my MA, I wrote a proposal. After I started my PhD study, in the first year, basically, you need to read a lot to

work on your literature review, get your topics right and generate your research questions. Then, after that you need another, say, half a year for empirical studies. In my case, I did research on Chinese EFL learners, so I came back to China and chose a few universities to do the questionnaire with.

Then, when all the data are collected you need to focus on data analysis. And one of the most important things for PhD research is that you need to get some originality, because the examiners like to see originality in your research. After that, I spent a few months analysing the data using some advanced statistical methods, which also took me, maybe, a month to learn how to use. Then, after I'd got all of the data ready for writing up, I spent a year finishing the whole book. You write chapter by chapter, which your supervisor gives you feedback on.

Do you think you could have done it part -time or distance, or do you think it was worth going to the UK to do it?

Personally, I don't regret being a full-time research student. I think I benefitted far more than being a part-time research student. You live there. You get more familiar with the culture, how people live, the lifestyle, because being an English language teacher I wanted to get familiar with many aspects of British life.

Would you recommend doing a PhD?

Yes, I would encourage them to do a PhD if they have a dream like me and want to be an academic.

Trinity Diploma in TESOL & MA TESOL

Mark Coyle, *LC Continuing Support Manager, discusses the Trinity Diploma in TESOL he completed in 2006 and the MA TESOL he completed through distance learning in 2010 with Sheffield Hallam University*

http://www.trinitycollege.co.uk/site/?id=202
http://www.shu.ac.uk/prospectus/course/244/

Let's discuss the Trinity Diploma in TESOL first. What was the structure of the course?

For the Trinity Diploma we had three modules, so each module had very specific teaching related outcomes. There was the observation, where we had to observe someone who has the qualification, and later on observations where we were observed. There was also a learner project where you had to make a course for some of your learners. Each week you had a topic which you had to research.

How long did it take?

The course was run over one year.

Do you think career-wise it's been worth it?

Before I did it, I didn't have any TESOL qualifications, so it was my first step, and without it I wouldn't have got the job at XJTLU and wouldn't have got onto an MA TESOL.

So, would you recommend the Trinity Diploma in TESOL to others?

I would recommend it to tutors who might have an MA in something else because it really does improve your teaching. It's very much focused towards getting you to be a better teacher in the classroom, and making assessments, and making curriculum. However, if you've been doing ESL or EAP teaching for a few years, you might find it a little bit easy.

The qualification you did after the Trinity Diploma was an MA.

I waited two years then found a course where I would be able to use the credits from my Postgraduate Diploma from Trinity in the MA. Sheffield Hallam, where I did my TESOL online MA, had a three year course, and in the first

year you do the Cert., so if you've got the Diploma already you go into Year 2, which saves you a year.

And how would you evaluate the MA career-wise?

Very good. Sheffield Hallam is quite well-regarded for MA TESOL, and the feedback you get from the tutors is quite good. Career-wise, it was worthwhile.

Did you feel you got much support on the course?

The support was lacking during the online phase. But when you were putting in the essays, yes they were there. You had a supervisor assigned to you who would give you feedback on the essay, but on the online phase it was very easy when you compare it to the Trinity.

How do you think the Diploma compared to the MA?

The Diploma is much more relevant to what you're doing in that class. One week you're doing assessments and the next week you'll be doing observations, and you'll just have seen a classroom management technique, and you're going straight in and using it there and then.

Would you recommend both courses to other people?

For different people, yes. For someone who's got a qualification, maybe Applied Linguistics, the Diploma would be much better. For someone who has just started teaching then it would make sense to do a cert and then carry-on to the MA.

ETiC News!

ETiC at the Colloquium

Paul Meier and Sarah Butler gave a poster presentation at the first Annual XJTLU Learning and Teaching Staff Colloquium. They presented ETiC to non-ELT academics, explaining how it was created and what we had achieved so far. There was particular interest from academics teaching English literature and communication.

Chinese Corner

Things to consider when choosing a Chinese name

Ex-pats living and working in China often adopt a Chinese name, which shows a certain respect for the local Chinese language and culture. But what sort of name to choose?

The obvious choice is simply to use the phonetic translation of your given name, which will usually translate into two or three characters emulating the Chinese style. You can find the phonetic translations of common western names in the back of most Chinese dictionaries, and you may find that your school has already adopted it for its Chinese paperwork anyway. Examples include *Bǎo Luó* (保罗) for "Paul", *Mǎ Kè* (马克) for "Mark" and *Mǐ Xuě* (米雪) for "Michelle". Adopting a phonetic translation of your name is useful as it allows Chinese people to refer to you in a more recognizable form, i.e. emulating Chinese characters.

Chinese parents usually choose names for their children which reflect the aspirations they have for them. Sometimes the family name contains part of the meaning, such as ***Zhāng*** *Yì Fēi* (张翼飞), "**Open** Wings Fly", and ***Fù*** *Qiáng* (傅强), "Rich Strong", while sometimes the family name carries no meaning, for example ***Lǐ*** *Tiān Yī* (李天一), "(surname) Sky First" (i.e. "No.1 in the world"). This habit of conferring aspirational or meaningful names may also be why you sometimes get students choosing English names such as "Perfect", "King", "Beauty" or "Sky", emulating the Chinese naming method or even their own Chinese names.

You can adopt this method of naming by choosing a similarly meaningful moniker. An example is the famous (in China) Canadian called *Dà Shān* (大山), or "Big Mountain". However, for a Chinese name to be considered proper, rather than just a nickname like *Dà Shān*, it needs to include a Chinese family name, such as *Wáng* (王), *Lǐ* (李) or *Zhāng* (张), usually from the bǎi jiā xìng (百家姓), "100 family names".

Also, when choosing a name you also need to consider the kind of impression you wish to make. A name such as ***Mǎ*** *Xiāo Yáo* (马逍遥), "**Horse** Wild Free", sounds "cool/funny/silly" (Chinese person's words), which is fine if you are young and want to come across as "cool/funny/silly". However, if you want to be taken seriously, a more serious name is probably more appropriate.

So, in conclusion, if you want a "real" Chinese name it should include a family name, and a meaningful given name. It would probably be advisable to get a Chinese person to help you navigate the subtleties of meaning that Chinese characters contain (see the problem translating *Lǐ Tiān Yī* above). Alternatively, you can choose the simple translation of your own name, which is functional if a little boring.

[1] The character for *fù* (富) which means 'Rich' is a different character to the character for *Fù* (傅) used as a surname. However, because they are the same tone, the meaning can be implied.

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