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folio

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Extensive Reading Foundation Language Learner Literature Awards

The MATSDA / University of Limerick 2015 Conference

Creating Motivation with L2 Materials

June 20th-21st, 2015

Plenary Speakers

Jill Hadfield *Jeremy Harmer* *Annie Hughes* *Alan Maley*
Hitomi Masuhara *Freda Mishan* *Anne O'Keeffe* *Brian Tomlinson*

Venue

PhD TESOL Summer School, University of Limerick

Times

Registration: 08.30 on June 20th and 21st

Conference: 09.00-18.00 on June 21st; 09.00-17.30 on June 21st

Fees

(to include lunch and coffee)

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MATSDA members: €160 (€110 for one day)

Non-members: €190 (€125 for one day)

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https://www.iccbookings.com/reg/matsda-2015-conference/28.aspx

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Offers of Papers

To offer a paper for a forty minute presentation or to offer a poster presentation, please contact: Brian Tomlinson: *brianjohntomlinson@gmail.com*

See You in Limerick in June 2015

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From the Editor

Freda Mishan, University of Limerick

Welcome to the first 2015 issue of Folio. While this issue represents diversity, as ever showcasing the work of practitioners and researchers from around the world, a unifying thread also emerges: innovation. From Myriam del Río Hernández's article on using literature with *ab intio* language learners to Danny Norrington-Davies' paper on using visualisation techniques with literature and Rod Bolitho's call to go 'back to basics' and examine the fundamentals of our language learning materials, it is heartening to see that the field of materials development is more active and innovative than ever. Indeed, this is reflected in recent and forthcoming conferences – the President's Greeting mentions the 2014 conference on authenticity, creativity, innovation, and culture held by MATSDA's sister organisation in Indonesia and the 2015 MATSDA conference is on creating motivation with materials – and a new organisation, *the C (creativity) Group* (see the introductory piece in this issue). One aspect of innovation is the ability to take a different perspective, and a number of our contributors do this: Michael Tasseron, for instance, investigates learners' perceptions of their materials, while Marina Bouckaert explores the controversial area of materials development by novice teachers. Paul Benjamin challenges the notion of 'cultural appropriacy', preoccupation with which notoriously stultifies coursebook materials, and, in his second article, coursebook representation of pragmatics. Averil Bolster's article (the second part of her study reported in issue 16.1) takes the logical next step, examining how, why and to what degree teachers adapt coursebook material. Last but by no means least, two articles look at materials for specific environments; Soraya Garcia's in the digital environment and Peter Levrai and Averil Bolster's at those used to support students in giving academic presentation. Our book review spot, once again provided by Philip Prowse, gives us an incisive review of a new volume by Nigel Harwood.

What impresses me about many of this issue's contributions is the extent to which practitioners are prepared to take risks with their materials in pursuit of their beliefs and principles – and that there is invariably a benefit in terms of learner engagement and empowerment. I would like to thank all the contributors for their generosity in sharing their work and ideas with the language teaching community and encourage our readers to do the same.

I'd like to close with a thought-provoking quote from Rod Bolitho's article 'Language textbooks and materials: a way and ways':

'The biggest single fallacy in our field is that learners learn what textbooks offer and what teachers teach'.

This may make us question our whole *raison d'etre* as materials developers and as teachers. But at least it makes us question - for from questioning and probing come the sort of innovation and creativity that make MATSDA the vibrant community it is.

On that note, I look forward to welcoming you all here to the MATSDA Limerick conference in June 2015!

Freda Mishan
University of Limerick
January 2015

Greetings from the President

Brian Tomlinson, MATSDA President

We're still receiving e-mail and face to face responses to our Conference on SLA and Materials Development at the University of Liverpool on June 28th-29th, 2014. The general consensus seems to be that we succeeded in our aim of linking practice to theory and theory to practice as well as in stimulating thought and discussion about important issues in relation to second language acquisition research and materials development for language learning. Many regular MATSDA conference goers even said they thought it was our best conference yet. Most of the plenary speakers from that conference have been joined by other experts on the interface between materials development and SLA research in contributing to a book which will be published later this year as: Tomlinson, B. (ed.) 2015. *Second Language Research and Materials Development for Language Learning*. New York: Routledge.

For this year's Conference we're returning to the excellent facilities and beautiful grounds of the University of Limerick. We'll be holding a joint conference there with the PhD Summer School of the University of Limerick on June 20th-21st 2015. Our theme will be Creating Motivation with L2 Materials and our plenary speakers will include Gill Hadfield, Jeremy Harmer, Annie Hughes, Alan Maley, Hitomi Masuhara, Freda Mishan, Anne O'Keeffe and Brian Tomlinson. Many of the contributors to the Conference will be from the C Group *http://thecreativitygroup.weebly.com*, an independent group of EFL professionals dedicated to fostering creativity in language teaching. As usual speakers will be coming from all over the world and we're confident in putting on a Conference to rival the successful conference we held on applied linguistics and materials development at the University of Limerick in 2012 (a conference which stimulated Tomlinson, B. (ed.) 2013. *Applied Linguistics and Materials Development*. London: Bloomsbury).

In October 2014 I went with Hitomi Masuhara, our Secretary, to represent MATSDA at the second conference of our sister organisation in Indonesia, ELTeaM. The theme was Authenticity, Creativity, Innovation, and Culture in Language Teaching and both Hitomi and I gave plenary presentations. We also held discussions with committee members about future cooperation with MATSDA. We've now made similar contributions to conferences in Argentina, Japan, Malaysia, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa and the USA and we're always open to discuss cooperation with other associations around the world.

Brian Tomlinson
President of MATSDA

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Language Textbooks and Materials: A Way and Ways

Rod Bolitho

More than thirty years ago, Earl Stevick posed a number of questions in Chapter 1 of his seminal work, *Teaching Languages: A Way and Ways*, two of which seem to me to be as relevant now as they were back then:

> *'Why do some language students succeed, and others fail?*
>
> *Why do some language teachers fail, and others succeed?'*
>
> (Stevick 1980, p.3)

What follows in Stevick's book is, unsurprisingly, a detailed and insightful discussion of the many and complex factors that influence success and failure in foreign language teaching and learning. One element that appears to him to be crucial is that learning needs to have 'depth' if it is to be meaningful:

> *'If what a student says makes little or no difference to him, it has little "depth" (...). But some things that he says, or hears or reads, make a difference to him in many ways. This kind of experience is relatively "deep"'*
>
> (ibid: 9)
>
> *Just a little earlier in the same chapter, he maintained that success 'depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom'*
>
> (ibid: 4)

Few of us would deny that he has a fair point here, but I would like to argue that the nature and quality of teaching materials, especially coursebooks, which are the main artefacts that teachers and learners rely on and negotiate around in the language classroom, are potentially decisive factors in the achievement of the kind of depth of experience that Stevick postulated as a necessary precondition for success. This in turn raises the issue of how materials can provide at the very least a jumping-off point that would enable teachers and learners to engage in the foreign language in a sufficiently deep and meaningful way.

It might be worth approaching this conundrum by looking at and challenging some of the guidelines that are commonly cited by publishers when they commission books from authors or review proposals:

- a textbook should have a framework, within which units should be of a standard length and format
- material should be tied to a level and therefore linguistically graded from easier to more difficult
- subjects such as religion, sex, drugs and politics are taboo and should be avoided
- there should be provision for progress checks to see whether the input provided in the textbook has been absorbed and turned into intake, and ultimately output, by the learner-users

Tomlinson (2003) reviews some of the frameworks for materials writing suggested in the literature and goes on to suggest his own framework, based on texts or tasks as a starting point. He criticises several of those he reviews as having no obvious basis in theory for the staging and sequencing they propose. The effect of the imposition of many of these frameworks is potentially stultifying for both teachers and learners. Units in a coursebook quickly become formulaic and predictable in nature, which may be comforting and disciplined from a publishing perspective, but as the teaching and learning encounters based on the materials go on, they inevitably become routinised and increasingly dull, thus making depth in learning more and more difficult to achieve. Tomlinson (ibid.) acknowledges the need for a framework, citing his experience in training writers in different contexts, but the ones he proposes are acquisition-oriented, and based on texts or tasks as starting points. He cites a number of different criteria for the selection of texts, laying particular stress on the need for them to be potentially both cognitively and affectively engaging. The same need holds good for the tasks, though some may focus more on cognition than affect, or vice versa. Thus, instead of starting with learners' diagnosed needs, or with a traditional Presentation > Practice > Production sequence, he relies on depth of engagement as a key principle of his framework. And his practical examples (Tomlinson, ibid.) include subject matter that may by some criteria be seen as controversial or even taboo. I will return to these points in the conclusion to this article.

In the days when innovative 'risk' publishing was still a possibility, Oxford University Press launched

a two-book series entitled *Quartet* (Grellet, Maley and Welsing published in 1982 and 1983). In the introduction to Teacher's Book 1, they state:

> *We have not attempted to assign it a specific level. (...) For them (students) simply to go over the graveyard of their former failures, digging up their errors, is not normally of much use. Instead, they need to be able to engage in interesting activities through the medium of the foreign language.*
>
> (1982, p.1)

and a little further on:

> *The materials are flexible in that the units do not have to be done in any special order, but can be selected to suit the interests or linguistic problems of any given group. Likewise, within any unit, the teacher can decide to do more, or less, formal language work.*
>
> *The units are not standardized. That is, each unit has its own format, and units differ considerably both in length and internal structure. This makes for considerable variety, since no two units are entirely alike, though similar kinds of activities occur."*
>
> (ibid: 1)

Quartet, then, was an attempt to sell a different kind of coursebook into a global market. It was innovative, task-based (long before researchers made a bid for the introduction and ownership of the concept of Task-Based Learning), and with an emphasis on engagement and depth of learners' encounters with the language, aimed at fostering opportunities for acquisition. You would search its pages in vain for activities asking learners to give each other directions based on a street plan of an imaginary town, or cooked texts and dialogues saturated with examples of a target structure. Unsurprisingly, *Quartet* did not break any sales records. It was almost certainly ahead of its time.

Another of the guidelines mentioned above focusses on learners' progress. However important it may be to learners, their parents and their sponsors to be able to measure progress in some way, the notion that it can be described within the confines of what a textbook offers is, in the modern age, patently misguided. The biggest single fallacy in our field is that learners learn what textbooks offer and what teachers teach. They don't. They learn what they want to learn and when they are ready to learn, and teachers have even less control over that than was once the case. Classroom input does not necessarily lead to intake. There is increasing evidence, in the digital age, that learners pick up language from many different sources, and that their subsequent language output is derived from encounters with the language which no textbook can predict and which the teacher may not even know about. For all these reasons, the modern textbook has to be very different from its predecessors. In the classical tradition, based on the teaching of Latin and Ancient Greek, the deal was simple: if you learned by heart everything that was in the textbook you would pass the exam. The textbook was often, literally, a book of texts. A modern textbook has to be seen as a point of departure, stimulating engagement with the language, rather than as the journey itself. This is a more challenging view of a textbook for those who use it as well as those who write it, but it has the great advantage that it no longer invites collusion between the writers, the teacher and the learners in the flawed belief that progress in the language is bound up with progressing through the book.

All this leaves us with at least two more questions to address:

Who is best placed to write textbooks to meet the requirements of 21st Century learners?

We are still very much in the era of global, 'blockbuster' coursebooks. The major UK publishing houses are clearly interested in volume in their assaults on the market, and they usually commission native speaker writers to write materials. Some of these writers become 'names', stars in the firmament of ELT, performing at conferences and travelling widely in thinly disguised efforts to promote their books. Teachers and learners often favour books written by native speakers. But these writers are by definition remote from most of the contexts they are writing for, and no amount of conference appearances across the world will bring them close to some of the classrooms where their books are used. The impact of these books on local authoring capacity is often very negative. There are countries around the world with few or no practising ELT textbook writers.

The logical corollary of a global coursebook is a local one, written by teachers who are familiar at first hand with the context they are writing for. However, in many contexts, and notably in Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union states, textbook writing has long been the lucrative and prestige-bringing province of university-based 'experts', many of whom have little direct classroom contact. This resulted in materials that were rooted in the methodological traditions that prevailed at any given time, rather than in any close understanding of language as communication. There are signs that this trend is gradually tailing off as the countries concerned have all emerged from the kind of isolation that allowed a foreign language to be seen as just a school subject rather than as a tool for educational and professional advancement.

In my own work on projects with local teacher-authors

I have found that they learn quickly on the job, from each other as well as from me, and that as busy professionals, they manage the burden of writing best if they work in teams. This has the additional advantage of bringing different thinking and writing styles to the project, which reduces the danger of their writing getting stuck in a rut and at the same time often adds wisdom and depth to their work. They are also by far the best judges of the cultural sensitivities and taboos that may apply in their own working contexts.

Where do authors start when they decide to write a textbook?

It is relevant here to look at and comment on some possible starting points.

Starting from a curriculum or from a set of standards

This is most likely to apply to coursebooks produced for a particular national or local context. A coursebook which follows the progression prescribed in a curriculum stands a good chance of being accepted and perceived as relevant. However, the curriculum can constrain writers, teachers and learners alike, and can result in a rather pedestrian product. Part of the problem, in my experience, is that writers tend to see the language curriculum from a narrow angle, without consulting other parts of the document where cross-cutting elements and transferable skills such as citizenship, critical thinking, team-building, self-awareness raising etc are mentioned. There is a danger, both in coursebooks and in the classroom, that these elements are seen (if they are seen at all!) as 'someone else's responsibility'. In effect they become 'no-one's business', largely because nobody knows how to integrate them into textbooks or lessons, and yet these are the elements that, if addressed through materials, can go a long way to adding some of Stevick's 'depth' to the experience of learning.

Starting from a needs analysis

Work in the field of English for Specific Purposes in the seventies and eighties brought to prominence the idea of analysing learner needs in order to provide a pared down version of a language course to busy professionals, academics or specialised students who had no time for a full-blown language course with a strong everyday-communicative dimension. This has resulted in a steady flow of published materials, each addressing a specialised field. The problem with this kind of 'all-protein' approach is that it seems to neglect the basic humanity of course participants who often (as in the case of ESP classes I have taught) cry out for material which engages them affectively and challenges them to think beyond the confines of their discipline areas. This puts the onus on the teacher to provide the kind of stimuli that might add depth of engagement to a learning experience.

Starting from a view of language

Language coursebooks self-evidently need to reflect some sort of position on the nature of the language they seek to teach. For many long years, this view was based on an understanding of language systems as the main building blocks of language. Materials were based on a grammatical syllabus which was in turn drawn from time-honoured models for the teaching of classical languages. Lexis was added in approved doses (so many new words per lesson or unit) and phonological features were attended to in special practice activities, often based on sounds in isolation or in contrast. Language in this model was served up in bite-sized chunks, requiring learners to assemble it synthetically and gradually until they were able to make whole utterances or write whole texts. Depth of learning experience, even for mature adults, was (if it happened at all!) a matter of severely delayed gratification.

All this changed with the advent of the notional-functional approach in the eighties, when language was first properly analysed according to its communicative purpose rather than its forms. This development has been liberating for those who are concerned with authenticity in both language input and learner experience, as it has helped to loosen some of the shackles on learner output at a much earlier stage in a course, and has introduced a different set of standards to assess progress and proficiency in language learning.

Language awareness work, still largely underexplored in mainstream coursebooks, reverses the synthetic, brick by brick approach to progress by exposing learners to whole texts to trigger both affective response and cognitive analysis of the uses to which language is put by a writer or speaker.

Starting from a methodological principle

Course materials in the third quarter of the last century were often rooted in methods and an unwavering belief in their efficacy. Audio-lingual, audio-visual and situational approaches all had their adherents and their manifestations in successful series of coursebooks. More recently, the Presentation > Practice > Production paradigm has been extraordinarily powerful on introductory training courses for language teachers for several decades now. It is hardly surprising, then, that teachers look for coursebooks that enable them to put this approach into practice in the classroom with a minimal need for adaptation. A well-known drawback of this approach is that the production stage, which involves more freedom for learners as they work on their output, all too often gets squeezed out of lessons by lack of time, yet this is where the deepest learning experience is likely to lie. Task-based learning as a

model has also found its way into materials, starting with innovative books produced as early as the late seventies, but only later gathering real momentum. The danger of adhering to a single methodological principle either in materials writing or in teaching, however powerful it may be, is that it may not suit all learners and it can easily result in the routinisation of learning. The quest for the 'holy grail' of the perfect method seems at last to have been abandoned, or at least shelved for now, while the focus of methodology has shifted towards developing a clearer understanding of how learners learn.

Starting from a view of learning

Materials writing has been influenced by a number of different positions on how people learn, among them first and second language acquisition theories, beliefs about learning styles and multiple intelligences, the importance of learning strategies, the development of learner autonomy, motivation and the key role of affective engagement in learning. As in the cases described above, none of these can offer a complete account of how different learners approach a language, and none by itself is sufficient to provide a foundation for the writing of materials. However, most primary coursebooks are rooted in an understanding of how small children learn, and they consequently eschew any direct focus on language systems or other aspects of formal instruction. The work of Piaget and of Vygotsky is much cited in the literature on teaching young learners, and this has a clear impact on materials. Textbooks for any age group and purpose now normally include material to appeal to different learning styles as well as attention to learning strategies and at least a nod to the development of autonomy in learners. Depth in learning may depend to a significant extent on the presence of these features in the material.

Conclusions

It may be useful to bring this trawl through some of the issues involved in materials development to a conclusion by going back to the title of Stevick's book, borrowed for this article. There are clearly many 'ways' of approaching the task of writing materials, and we should be very suspicious of any attempt to promote a single 'way', whether it comes from a theoretical or an intuitive standpoint. Nonetheless there are a few lessons emerging from this process of thinking in print that I believe are worth passing on:

- local authors are best placed to write materials for their own context
- team-authoring is likely to result in rich materials in terms of ideas, thinking styles, flexibility and understanding
- frameworks are useful as long as they don't become straitjackets
- there is no single principle that should dominate all others in the writing of good materials; textbooks should be the product of complex thought processes, interactions and inspirations, and an approach based on principled eclecticism is likely to yield a rich and varied menu of learning opportunities
- materials can and should provide starting points for learning to be deep and meaningful enough to be memorable and lasting; whether teachers and learners accept the challenge is beyond the writers' influence
- there are no simple answers to Stevick's two questions about learners and teachers, but materials can and should play a part in achieving the kind of success he strives towards in his book.

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Rod Bolitho *is Academic Director of Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE). He started out teaching English in Germany and has been involved in teacher education and trainer training for over 30 years. He has been consultant to a number of British Council projects since 1989, and is currently involved in Teacher Education reform work in Uzbekistan and Ukraine, an EAP materials project in Russia and a curriculum development project in Luxemburg. He has authored many articles and a number of books, including (with Brian Tomlinson) 'Discover English', (with Tony Wright) 'Trainer Development' and with Amol Padwad he recently co-edited a collection on Continuing Professional Development for the British Council, India. His main professional interests lie in the fields of CPD, Materials Writing and Language Awareness. He enjoys reading, cooking and walking, and is a lifelong Liverpool FC supporter.*

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Perspectives on ELT Materials Development: Student Teachers' Voices

Marina Bouckaert

A version of this paper was submitted in October 2013 as a requirement for the professional Doctorate of Education programme offered by Roehampton University, London.

Introduction

Many pre-service teacher education programmes contain courses or course components that focus on classroom materials development (e.g. Horsley, 2010; Polat, 2010). These courses generally aim to prepare future teachers for their potential role in the selection, adaptation and design of materials whose purpose is to support their pupils' learning. In this respect, '[t]eacher education has a vital part to play in shaping teachers' attitudes and developing their abilities' (McGrath 2013, p.219), and I concur that 'a carefully designed, contextually sensitive and practice-based approach to teacher education in materials evaluation and design [...] could make a real difference' (ibid.). But the question that springs to mind is what kind of difference this would be. And even before the assumption is considered that such a course could help shape students' ideas and ideals concerning English language teaching (ELT) materials, I wonder what those ideas are to begin with. Where is the student teacher's voice in the literature on classroom materials?

Context and theoretical framework

The aims of this small-scale qualitative research project were to elicit, analyse and interpret pre-service teachers' perspectives on ELT materials development. The participants were pre-service teachers of English who study at the teacher education institute of Fontys University of Applied Sciences (FLOT). Located in the south of the Netherlands, this institute offers 19 Bachelor programmes with a compulsory component on materials development (FLOT, 2012). To pass this third-year course, student teachers are required to develop, execute and evaluate a unit of materials for six to eight lessons at their placement schools.

I shall first present a framework of reference based on the literature in the relevant subject areas, before I elaborate on the methodological design and outcomes of the research.

Materials evaluation and design in teacher education

The claim that classroom materials development should play a central role in both pre-service and in-service teacher education (Canniveng and Martinez, 2003) is not uncontroversial. Whether you support the inclusion – let alone centrality – of materials development in teacher education appears to depend largely on your beliefs about teacher-generated materials. The view that materials design 'is not in itself an appropriate goal for pre-service training' (McGrath 2002, p.1) has generally been held by those who feel that it is a last resort, in case there are no suitable materials available. For them, the disadvantages of teacher-made materials – e.g. high costs, lack of specialised training, disputable quality (Richards, 2001) – outweigh the advantages. In addition, Chong (2013) raises the issue of readiness on the part of students to adapt or design materials, citing tutors who claim that 'you can't teach a child to run before they can walk'.

While acknowledging that time and costs are involved in the development of new materials, I have not encountered any arguments behind the assumption that teachers' materials are by definition of a lesser quality than those published for a larger audience. Providing specialised training in teacher education disqualifies the argument that (future) teachers lack the required knowledge and skills to design materials. If the contents of such a course are well-aligned with its theoretical, developmental, and practical objectives (Tomlinson, 2003), the course will enhance students' abilities to evaluate published materials and also to develop high-quality materials themselves. This way, it will guide them in learning to walk before they can run.

The arguments in favour of 'DIY materials design' (Block, 1991), among others, are relevance, flexibility, and the development of staff expertise (Richards, 2001). The most obvious advantages of DIY materials are, indeed, that they are designed in a specific context to meet the needs of particular learners – and thus 'reflect local content, issues, and concerns' (ibid., p.261) – and that they can relatively easily be revised if and when required. As a professional development tool, materials development has been found to provide excellent learning opportunities for the developers as well as the learners (Tin, 2003; Shawer, Gilmore and Banks-Joseph, 2009).

Student voice

If '[t]he general expectation expressed in the professional literature [...] is that teachers will adopt a critical and creative stance in relation to materials' (McGrath 2013, p.50), then the objectives of teacher education are not just to equip students with the knowledge and skills to evaluate and create teaching materials, but also to support their development of criticality. The rationale behind the centrality of pre-service teachers' views concerning ELT materials, therefore, has its foundation in critical pedagogy.

A pedagogy that is critical is based on the idea of education as political and value-laden, rather than transmissive and reproductive (Giroux, 2011). For Giroux, learning – and thus, I would add, learning to teach – a foreign language is 'a largely humanistic endeavour rather than an elite or strictly methodological task' (ibid., p.179). This endeavour contains elements of empowerment and democracy. The lived experiences of students are the starting point for a pedagogy that critiques hegemonic truths and serves to be emancipatory (Cho, 2013). Dialogues and discussions are crucial democratic tools in this type of pedagogy: the construction of voice becomes a 'reciprocal activity between teachers and students' (Batchelor 2008, p.44).

This research is limited to student voice in relation to three aspects: a. ELT classroom materials, b. the role of the (future) teacher as a developer of those materials, and c. students' expectations of and learning objectives for a materials development course.

a. ELT classroom materials

Attempts have been made to analyse teachers' – but, as far as I am able to discern, not student teachers' – conceptualisations of ELT materials (e.g. McGrath, 2002; McGrath, 2013). Presumably, pre-service teachers extrapolate desirable characteristics from their experiences in prior placements and as language learners. These characteristics generally relate to the cognitive, affective, and utilitarian functions of materials. This tripartite division is extracted from Masuhara and Tomlinson's (2010) overview of seven prerequisites for learning derived from studies in second language acquisition and neuroscience:

- Cognitive qualities of materials are about academic content and mental activities, including 'opportunity for hypothesis forming, trialling and revision';
- Affective qualities relate to emotional involvement and attitudes, including 'willing investment of effort' and motivation;
- Utilitarian qualities are concerned with the aims and intentions behind materials in achieving 'intake, acquisition and development' through 'extensive, rich and varied exposure to meaningful input in use' (ibid., p. 411).

b. The teacher as developer

Teachers increasingly experience scope to modify materials and become active designers (Polat, 2010). This could reflect the assumption that the time spent on materials development is not only worthwhile, but is also one of the key elements of being a reflective ELT professional (Block, 1991). In fact, Shawer et al. (2009) found a positive relationship between the curriculum-developer and curriculum-maker approaches and learner-related factors (students' language, pragmatic, schematic, and affective needs), and a negative relationship between the curriculum-transmitter approach and the same learner-related factors. Regardless of whether one agrees with the authors' rather bold conclusion, which is that positive learning outcomes are only brought about by curriculum-developers and -makers, clearly, the 'concepts of teacher as technician, consumer, receiver, transmitter, and implementer of other people's knowledge' (ibid., p.136) are contested.

A recent Dutch survey (Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling, [Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development] SLO, 2012) reveals that nearly 80% of secondary school teachers sometimes or often develop materials as an addition to the coursebook. However, this percentage has been slightly decreasing since 2007. The explanations the respondents give for this decrease are both practical (materials development cost them more time than they had expected, or they had just switched to a new coursebook and wanted to explore its options first) and more structural in nature (teachers feel they lack a central place to store, share and evaluate newly created materials).

c. Expectations and learning objectives

One way in which student voice can be elicited quite readily is to ask students about their wishes for the outcomes of a new course. 'Needs assessment' and 'determining goals and objectives' (Graves 1996, p.13), two preliminary steps in the course development process, are manifested when students are asked to problematise their current positions. The idea of 'problematisation', which Graves derives from Freire (1973), is in essence a reflection on the givens, challenges, and possibilities of one's situation. Problematisation may well have as a consequence that students learn to place greater value on their own practical knowledge. Their voices are heard and are taken as seriously as those of people they consider to be experts (ibid.), which may prevent them from feeling intimidated by those experts (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2010).

It is worth finding out what pre-service teachers themselves aim at and expect to learn from a course

on materials evaluation and design; they are not 'blank slates', but bring with them a set of preconceptions about ELT materials and about the teacher in relation to those materials. Their beliefs should be used to build on, as these will have a bearing on their teaching practice (Tin, 2003; Leavy, McSorley and Boté, 2007; Sanger and Osguthorpe, 2011). The onus is on teacher educators to help students articulate their views (Leavy et al., 2007) first, before these can be critically examined and developed further.

Methodology: design and procedure

This qualitative research project aimed to arrive at a more informed understanding of the following main questions:

1. What are student teachers' views on classroom materials?
2. What are their views on designing their own classroom materials?
3. What do they want to learn in relation to classroom materials development?

Participants and setting

Two groups of fulltime pre-service English teachers (n = 38, aged 19-30) started the third-year materials development course at FLOT in September 2013. 30 students gave their informed consent. The probability sampling technique of random selection (Denscombe, 2010) was used to limit the number of participants for the initial data analysis procedure; this resulted in an exploratory sample of 20 students.

Data collection and ethical considerations

The participants were invited to write about their thoughts on materials development in a so-called 'vision document'. More specifically, I asked them to consider three questions directly linked to the research questions; the original Dutch questions and their English translations can be found in Appendix 1. The participants were not given any guidelines with regard to form and length of this document; my intention was to allow for creativity, and to give them the opportunity to personalise the assignment. I asked the questions in Dutch and then instructed the students to formulate their answers in Dutch or in English, whichever they felt more comfortable with. I also provided some guidance in the shape of sub-questions for the participants to consider if the main questions proved to be too daunting, and allowed time in class to write down key words and phrases and share them with the group if they wanted. To comply with Denscombe's (2010) key principles of research ethics, I emphasised that I would anonymise the documents, and that I would take every precaution to ensure that my role as a researcher would not interfere with my role as their tutor and assessor.

Data analysis

The first step in the analysis procedure was to scrutinise the vision documents. The aim was to deconstruct them in order to reconstruct the participants' lived realities, so the process took the form of an inductive, grounded approach 'to derive concepts and theories that capture the meaning contained within the data' (Denscombe 2010, p.283). After having read the assignments, I coded the first 10 in the qualitative data analysis software programme Atlas.ti. The documents that I coded allowed me to find patterns in the data, and arrive at broader categories and general concepts which I linked up with my theoretical framework. Finally, I carefully re-read the remaining 10 assignments to ensure I would not be overlooking any major findings.

Results

It transpired that all the participants had written their documents in Dutch. One of them had drawn a collection of mind maps; all the others had chosen to write in key words or phrases or full sentences, either in separate blocks to answer each question or as a free-flowing text. Below, the numbers in brackets refer to the individual students cited.

ELT classroom materials

When it comes to the desirable characteristics of teaching materials in the English classroom, the participants in this study consider several:

- **Cognitive qualities**

  Materials should be 'educational' (S5); for some participants, this means that they should be aimed at the target level of the pupils they were designed for – for others, slightly higher so that they challenge the pupils and allow them to grow. Materials should differentiate by offering 'deepened understanding for excellent pupils and support for weaker pupils' (S2). They should offer mnemonics to 'convey and practise concrete knowledge as efficiently and useably as possible' (S3; S8).

- **Affective qualities**

Materials should also be challenging in the sense of provoking a response; the general consensus among the participants is that they should appeal to the interests of the pupils. Their task is to engage the pupils and 'keep them interested in the subject matter that has to be learnt' (S10), e.g. by being visually attractive (S15; S20). Good materials motivate and activate; they 'bring out the best in the pupil in a short period of time' (S1). Participants refer to the acknowledgement of pupils' varying perspectives and learning styles.

- **Utilitarian qualities**

  Materials should be 'effective' (S5; S8). Their aims, objectives and contents should be formulated clearly, and they should contain a variety of assignments that are 'short and to the point' (S3). This will ensure optimal learning results for the pupils (S6). One participant summarises their main utilitarian qualities as 'real-life', substantive, efficient and functional (S7). Others refer to the importance of a clear structure and sequencing 'so you know what you are learning' (S4).

Quite a few participants list characteristics that combine functions or are multi-interpretable; for instance, they write that materials should be 'attractive' (S7), 'close to the pupils' (S9), 'personal' and 'diverse' (S10). They also use this opportunity to give their opinions about the (published) ELT materials they have encountered; they vary from comments on the lack of relevance with regard to vocabulary and grammar in coursebooks (S2) to the observation that too much text and 'mishmash' in materials is distracting (S3). The flexibility and 'timelessness' of new materials are commended (S16). In short, 'classroom materials should comply with a lot of demands' (S3). They are generally seen as a key element in pupil motivation.

The teacher as developer

When it comes to how the decision to design their own classroom materials is affected, the participants in this study mention structural considerations rather than practical ones, and focus mainly on the advantages. They claim that (student) teachers are able to learn a lot from materials development; it can serve to motivate, challenge and inspire, and allows them to use their creativity and topical developments (S2; S3). 'It puts your own skills to the test, as well as your ability to assess the level of your pupils and what they are capable of', although the responsibility that comes with it should not be underestimated (S3).

On the whole, many participants elaborate on the qualities of good classroom materials instead of providing their views on the more abstract notion of teachers (or themselves) as developers. As one participant writes, 'coursebooks provide so much to hold on to that the teacher does not feel challenged to do anything but lecture his pupils' (S2). Nevertheless, none of the 30 participants describe their view of the teacher as developer in such a way that would legitimise the label 'curriculum-transmitter' (Shawer et al., 2009). All of them appear to agree that DIY materials development has its merits, whether as 'an addition to the prevalent coursebook at school, when the necessity seems apparent' (S18), or as an endeavour 'necessary in your development as a teacher' (S27). Quite a few participants claim to be against adopting the coursebook indiscriminately (e.g. S3; S4; S5; S6).

Participants who can be categorised as curriculum-developers in general describe their ability to use the coursebook as a starting point and adapt where necessary. They may 'give it a twist' (S7) to personalise the materials for themselves and the pupils (S9). Needs assessment is related to pupils (S1; S10) as well as to colleagues who should be able to use the materials too (S6; S22). Several participants might be described as curriculum-makers; only one of them is more explicit about 'the opportunity and freedom' to design new lessons (S2).

Expectations and learning objectives

The participants problematise their current situations by describing what they are capable of and what they expect the future holds.

- **Givens**

  Most of the participants list the skills they already possess before they continue to state how they would like to enhance those. Most do this on an abstract level, referring, for example, to their ability to 'assess what is important for pupils' (S1) or to 'connect learning objectives to pupils' interests' (S9). Others write about their materials adaptation and design skills: 'I can make exercises to accompany a grammar instruction' (S9), for instance, or 'I can look at existing materials and evaluate what is missing or what might be improved' (S4).

- **Challenges and possibilities**

  A few participants put their feelings towards future developments into words, thereby making it clear whether they consider them to be challenges or possibilities. They use descriptions like 'a very big job' (S2), 'a challenge' (S10), 'discovering the possibilities' (S9), and 'being able to use experiences to reach [my] ideal' (S5). Most simply state what it is they want to learn. This ranges from quite abstract objectives such as 'become better and confident at making my own materials' (S3) and doing so in an effective, professional, creative way

(S4; S10; S13), to more concrete objectives: use information and communication technology (S2; S17), 'predict and assess whether developed ideas and learning materials are useable in practice' (S7), and 'make materials accessible to colleagues' (S8).

There are references to prior courses at FLOT as well as to prospective professional environments. In general, the participants relate their learning objectives specifically to this course in materials development and express their hopes and wishes for its outcomes in the near future.

Discussion

Outcomes

In relation to the – sometimes ambivalent – relationship with classroom materials expressed in the literature, I was interested in finding out whether those sentiments are echoed by pre-service teachers. How do they position themselves towards published ELT materials and the design of their own? For these 30 participants, 'good' ELT materials exhibit a range of qualities. The students do not confine themselves to listing cognitive, affective and utilitarian functions (Masuhara and Tomlinson, 2010), but show their abilities to think outside the box. They recognise and emphasise the importance of high-quality materials in the teaching and learning environment.

When it comes to the role they envisage for themselves, my expectation was that not all students would find it either useful or necessary to design classroom materials. However, not a single participant expressed this view. This does not mean that all of them only look at DIY materials development from a positive viewpoint; the students wrote their assignments at the start of a course in materials evaluation and design, and knew their tutor would be reading them. This may well have affected the contents of their vision documents. Many documents contain concrete references to prior placements and courses in their Bachelor programme, and to the third-year placement and their careers. This shows the practical relevance of materials evaluation and design for the participants.

Like the secondary school teachers in the SLO review study (2012) mentioned above, I assumed the student teachers would describe both practical and more structural factors that affect their views. It transpired that they focused on the latter. A plausible explanation is that the participants have not had sufficient experience in schools to be faced with time constraints and other practical considerations. As a tutor, engaging with views that do not comment on the lack of specialised training and the 'disputable quality' of teacher-made materials has been refreshing. Most of these students may not be put off by the amount of effort that goes into materials development. Instead, some are – even at this pre-service stage in their careers – able to commend its merits to professional development. In short, the participants in this study seem to be drawn to the advantages of teacher-made materials more so than to the disadvantages (Richards, 2001). In a sense, they have used this opportunity to challenge hegemonic 'truths' (Cho, 2013).

Lastly, I was interested in discovering whether student teachers would reveal themselves as self-proclaimed curriculum-transmitters, curriculum-developers, and curriculum-makers (Shawer et al., 2009). In fact, none of the Dutch students claimed they would rather stick to the coursebook alone, and all of them expressed a wish to develop materials. Again, this may have been due to the timing and goal of the assignment itself. However, the participants' elaborations reflect a true interest in materials design. Some of them showed their ability to consider the abstract notion of the teacher as developer. For others, it may have been a daunting question to answer.

Research methodology

Asking the participants to write about their visions was an exciting venture into the unknown; I hoped this unfamiliar, fairly unrestricted method would work for them. The documents themselves reveal a range of approaches – some answers consist of just a few key words or phrases without any arguments or explanations, whereas others resemble essay paragraphs with strong, elaborate opinions – and this variety, for me, catches both the multiplicity of voices and the breadth and depth of the contents of those voices. Undoubtedly, the method will have been (too) challenging for some participants. However, an advantage of a written assignment like this is that it allows the participants time to ponder the questions, rephrase their thoughts, leave their work for a while, and so on. In addition, a written document can be adapted and expanded at later moments in time; students could be required to do this both during and after the course, for example. This would allow tutors to investigate if and how students' views have been affected throughout the course.

Emancipatory action as a goal in more rigorous terms was beyond the scope of this initial research project, but I aim to use and develop my understanding of its outcomes in future research and in my teaching practice. It would be most interesting, as a follow-up activity, to discuss these outcomes with the students to engage in a truly reciprocal process of exchange (Batchelor, 2008). Future research of this kind might help assess whether this approach to problematisation led to an increased appreciation on the part of the participants of their own practical knowledge and experiences (in relation to Graves, 1996) and was emancipatory in that sense.

Conclusion

This paper started out with the assumption that curriculum development in the form of materials evaluation and design plays a pivotal role in teacher education (e.g. Shawer et al., 2009; McGrath, 2013). It is not just about equipping pre-service teachers with subject knowledge and curriculum skills to help them rise above the curriculum-transmitter mode (Shawer et al., 2009). (Student) teachers' beliefs, which impact on the selection and design of materials (Polat, 2010), should also be taken into account. They can be used in pre-service programmes as the starting point for dialogues that stimulate critical awareness and a sense of autonomy in thinking and in practice (Sanger and Osguthorpe, 2011). A bottom-up, 'reflective process in which questions and inconsistencies [are] more important than answers locked into consistent rules and customary ways of thinking' (Leavy et al. 2007, p.1230) truly has the potential to help student teachers voice their ideas and ideals concerning ELT classroom materials.

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Appendix 1

Original questions in Dutch	English translations
1. Wat is jouw visie op lesmateriaal? • Wat is de (ideale) functie van lesmateriaal? • Waaraan voldoen goede materialen volgens jou?	1. What is your perspective on classroom materials? • What is the (ideal) function/purpose of classroom materials? • What do you consider to be the characteristics of good classroom materials?
2. Wat is jouw visie op het zelf ontwerpen ervan? • Hoe geef jij kleur aan eigengemaakt material?	2. What is your perspective on designing your own classroom materials? • How do you express your personal style in your own classroom materials?
3. Wat wil je leren? Vraag jezelf af: • Wat kan ik? • Wat wil ik? • Wat wil ik kunnen in de toekomst? • Wat moet ik kunnen in de toekomst?	3. What do you want to learn? Ask yourself: • What am I able to do? • What do I want (to do)? • What do I want to be able to do in the future? • What do I have to be able to do in the future?

The C Group

(Creativity for Change in Language Education)

The C group was formed in 2013. It aims to bring together ELT professionals who share an interest in developing more creative approaches to teaching, learning, materials writing and assessment, as a counterweight to the prevailing culture of control, uniformity and measurement.

Please take a look at our website: *http://thecreativitygroup.weebly.com* where you will find more detailed information about the group, including its aims and manifesto.

If you are interested in joining the group and feel you could contribute to it, there is a simple form on the website. Just complete it and return to Chris Lima *chrislima90@yahoo.co.uk*. This is intended to be an inclusive group, open to all who share our views.

Do pass this information on to anyone you feel might be interested in joining us.

Alan Maley and Chaz Pugliese

FOLIO 16/2

Materials Adaptation of EAP Materials by Experienced Teachers (Part II)

Averil Bolster

This is the second part of a two-part paper, the first of which was published in Folio 16.1.

Part 1 Summary

In the previous edition of Folio, I indicated that my curiosity about whether or not there was empirical evidence to support the statement that 'every teacher is a materials developer' (Tomlinson, 2003, p.1) led me to carry out a materials adaptation study at the overseas branch campus of the University of Nottingham Ningbo, China (UNNC). This study took the form of three questionnaires which were given to 18 EAP teachers working on a foundation year programme for undergraduate students at the Centre for English Language Education (CELE) of UNNC. The questionnaires are included as appendices in the first part of this paper. They consisted of a teacher profile questionnaire as well as a pre- and post-lesson plan questionnaire (Questionnaires part A and B, respectively). The materials used by all 18 teachers in the lesson in question were from Walker and Harvey's (2009) *English for Business Studies in Higher Education Studies Course Book* (lesson 4.2 on pages 32-3).

The primary research question was:

- Is every teacher a materials developer?

Two more secondary questions were used:

- Do experienced teachers adapt the published materials they are required to use and if so, to what extent?
- Would teachers appreciate the flexibility to personalise and localise published materials in the form of 'the gapped textbook'?

Results

Teacher Profile

The participants in my study were colleagues at UNNC who swiftly volunteered when I garnered interest for the project. Although I had a general understanding that they were qualified and experienced EAP teachers, I designed the questionnaire to find out if this were really the case. The first thing that struck me when I began to analyse the results of the questionnaires was the impressive amount of experience and qualifications that the participants have, as well as the range of countries they have worked in. Between the 18 participants, they have worked in 37 different countries, spread over all continents. In Table 1.0, the range of years of teaching experience can be seen and it is obvious that this is a highly experienced cohort. They also have an array of qualifications to go with this practical experience. Out of the 18 teachers surveyed, 14 already hold or are studying for MA degrees (several already have more than one MA). CELTAs, DELTAs and PGCEs also feature heavily. One other area that I asked about in the Teacher Profile Questionnaire was whether or not the participants had themselves been language learners. My view is that having learned a language other than your own is another element of experience which can allow teachers to empathise with their students. Teachers who have also been language students themselves should have an awareness of their own learning style. This might, in turn, have an impact on their teaching style and use of material. All 18 of the cohort are either native-speakers of English or have a native-like level of English and all had studied a second language.

Total Years	Mean of Total Years	Median of Total Years	EAP/ESAP Years	Mean of EAP/ESAP Years	Median of EAP/EASP Years
Min. 5 Max. 30	14	12.5	Min. 1 Max. 21	6.6	5

Table 1.0 Total Years of ELT Experience and Years of Teaching in EAP/ESAP Contexts

Quantitative Results

The results from Questionnaire A about how much the teachers surveyed planned to adapt the material from Lesson 4.2 of Garnet Education's *English for Business Studies* in Higher Education Studies can be seen in Table 2.0 and Figure 1.0. How much (or how little) an exercise was adapted can be seen in Table 2.0. According to these results, each exercise from the lesson was adapted in some way by the participating teachers and no exercise was used unchanged by all. Exercise C, which was the most adapted section of the materials, was a simple describing pictures activity. Most teachers disliked this activity for a number of reasons such as, according to Tutor A, the 'pictures are out-of-date and confusing' and 'describing an object is not really part of lesson aims' (Tutor C). In the student's book, the stated aims of the lesson were:

- Prepare to read a text by looking at the title and topic sentences
- Understand the purpose of discourse markers and stance markers in the development of a topic

(Walker and Harvey, 2009, p.66)

The second most adapted exercise was exercise B and this was an activity in which the students had to predict what the reading text would be about and what they thought problems caused by technology at work could be. While one tutor who did not plan to change this exercise at all thought that 'it is useful to predict content' (Tutor C), Tutor E planned to omit one of the three questions because of time constraints. Exercises A and G were the least adapted sections. In the case of exercise A, the general consensus amongst tutors who had not made any adaptation to it was that it was 'a decent lead-in to the lesson' (Tutor G). Tutor P decided to extend this lead-in exercise by personalising the topic. He did this by relating the original question about 'the most important technological development for business in the last 50 years' to the students' own lives and prompted discussion about which types of technology they value most (Walker and Harvey, 2009). Exercise G also produced an almost even split in terms of adaptation. Tutor N identified this exercise as a natural follow-on from section D but Tutor Q felt strongly that it 'seems like overkill – time could be better spent'. How that time could be utilised was not included in the response.

Another way to view the results is by how much adaptation each individual made. Figure 1.0 conveys what percentage of the lesson each teacher made changes to. In addition to no exercise being used completely as it in the textbook, no teacher used the material wholly unchanged. The mean and median of how much teachers adapted are 64.5% and 62.5% respectively.

% Materials Adapted By Tutor

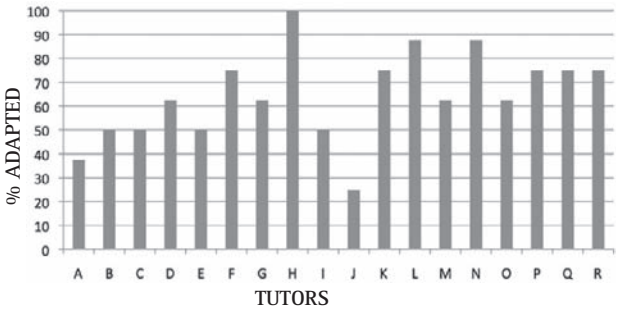

Figure 1.0 Questionnaire Part A - Results by Tutor (A – R)

Questionnaire B also provided some quantitative results from several yes/no questions. There was an even split of teachers (9 versus 9) who had used the material previous to the surveyed lesson but this did

	No Change	Change: Extend	Expand	Subtract	Abridge	Complexity	Reorder	Replace	% Adapted
Ex. A	8	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	55%
Ex. B	4	1	3	4	2	2	1	1	78%
Ex. C	3	-	-	8	2	2	2	3	83%
Ex. D	7	1	3	2	-	5	1	1	61%
Ex. E	6	-	6	3	1	2	-	1	66%
Ex. F	7	-	2	4	1	1	-	3	61%
Ex. G	8	-	1	3	1	4	1	1	55%
Ex. H	6	1	1	7	-	3	-	2	66%

Table 2.0 Questionnaire A - Results by Exercise

Note: 2 changes made by one tutor for Ex. A; 2 changes made by one tutor for Ex. B; 2 changes made by two tutors for Ex. C; 2 changes made by two tutors for Ex. D; 2 changes made by one tutor for Ex. E; 2 changes made by one tutor for Ex. G; 2 changes made by two tutors for Ex. H

not seem to have an impact on the results since there was no discernible pattern as to whether teachers who had used the material before adapted more or less than those who were using it for the first time. Another yes/no question highlighted the fact that the majority of those surveyed thought that the lesson aims had been met, with 11 out of 18 respondents answering 'yes' and four participants believed that the aims were partially met. Only three of those surveyed did not believe that 'the aims set out in the coursebook' were met. However, those that felt that the lesson aims had not or had only partially been met by using the published materials mentioned in their questionnaire responses that they achieved the aims in other ways, i.e. by replacing or expanding the materials.

Qualitative Results

Some open-ended questions which were intended to gauge the participants' views about the having more freedom to add to published materials, were asked in Questionnaire B. The answers to Question 3 – *'To what extent did you feel helped or hindered by the published materials (including the notes in the Teacher's Book, if you used them)? 0% being completely hindered and 100% being completely helped'* provided an interesting spread in addition to some comments. Eleven participants gave a percentage as their answer, three people provided no response at all and four participants did not give a percentage but included comments instead. The terms 'helped' and 'hindered' were not elaborated upon in the questionnaire so that participants would include their own interpretation in their answers. However, the question was written with Hutchinson and Torres' (1994, p.319) concept of 'constraint' in mind. The participants' responses can be seen in Figure 2.0.

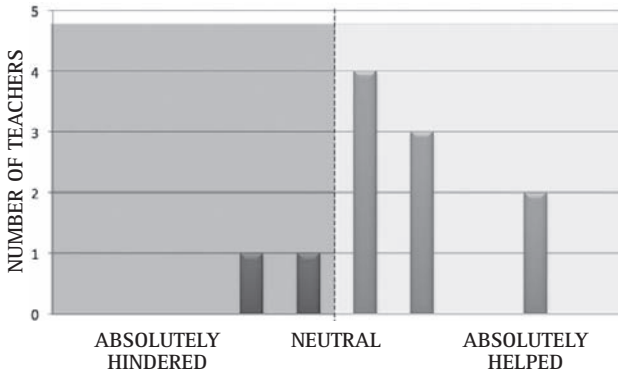

Figure 2.0 Answer to Part B, Question 3 - Did you feel helped or hindered by the published materials?

This would suggest that while the materials were generally considered helpful, a sizeable number of teachers found them only partially helpful. There seem to be mixed feelings towards commercial materials and their teacher's books. These comments give an insight into the variety of thoughts the participants have about them. On the positive side, tutors felt that using published materials saved preparation time and they were useful for checking answers (Tutors L and N). Tutor D appreciates having published materials but claims they are mostly used for guidance since 'I trust my long teaching experience'. Tutor H claimed to be 60% helped by the materials but also claimed 'they could be much better'. Tutor B was also positive overall about the published materials by stating 'didn't feel hindered by the coursebook or the teacher's book. I didn't look in detail at the Teacher's Book: there is too much in there and it doesn't feel time-efficient to look through it all when perhaps I won't use it.' Similarly, Tutor O was generally in favour of the materials but found that the amount to be covered in class is too much in the time given. This is a common concern I have heard and expressed myself amongst EAP colleagues over the years and it was no surprise that it was often mentioned in feedback in this study. One more tutor provided a comment for this question. Tutor F felt that the commercial materials were not realistic enough for the preliminary year students and that 'the text itself did not lend itself to making the lesson interesting – a chapter from an undergraduate textbook would be more useful and interesting'. This point will be put to good use later.

The comments acquired from Question 5, which was '*How can materials avoid limiting teachers in their practice?*' highlighted three common themes, namely freedom, quality of material and institutional limits. Teachers appreciate materials that provide variety and allow them the freedom to pick and choose activities that best suit the needs of their students. Some sample answers include Tutor Q's 'by being open-ended'; Tutor J's 'by offering possible alternatives to teachers' preconceived ideas or practices normally used' and Tutor B claims that 'I don't really feel limited by most materials. I like it when materials provide a lot of tasks so I can choose'. Another point which was raised by a number of participants was that of the quality of materials. Tutor I recognises that teachers are capable of being selective with materials that are provided but feels that 'if they have to create their own materials because of inadequate or badly written materials, their energy will be sapped'. Tutor M echoes this sentiment by acknowledging that teachers 'alter materials to suit their needs ... however, having poorly designed and/or irrelevant materials would hinder a teacher in that they would perhaps not be useful'. The third noticeable point about what limits teachers in their practice was not connected to materials as such but more to the institution. Tutor K believes that as long as teachers make good choices about the published materials they are given, they should not feel hindered. This tutor adds, 'perhaps if the Director of Studies says that teachers should follow them to the letter, then they could be limiting.' Tutor G also believes that materials do not place limitations on teachers since they should

be able to adapt, supplement, replace or reject them to suit their and their students' needs. 'It's being told when, what and how to teach using those materials that limit teachers in their practice.'

Question 6 of Questionnaire B was also open-ended. 'If *English for Business Studies in Higher Education Studies Course Book* were published with a blank page following '4.2 Reading', would you use this blank page? In what way?' was included in order to discern how accepting of a 'Gapped Textbook' the participants would be. Responses to this idea were wide-ranging and it will be further discussed later in this article.

Discussion and Implications

In his seminal article, *What do we want teaching materials for?* Allwright (1981, p.8) claims that 'not too much can be expected of teaching materials'. This assumption is expanded on in Harwood's (2005) homage to Allwright's article, *What do we want EAP teaching materials for?* when he states that no textbook can wholly suit every language learning classroom. Bailey's (1996) research shows that teachers make decisions in the classroom to veer from their lesson plans in order to meet the needs of their students, and as this research project demonstrates, teachers also make decisions before class to veer from the prescribed plan in a commercial textbook. This decision-making skill is made possible by training and experience which give teachers the confidence and 'large repertoire of activities' (Leinhardt and Greeno, 1986, p.76) required to make cogent decisions for the benefit of their students. Harmer (2001, p.8) sums it up neatly when he explains that, 'coursebooks like any lesson plan [...], are proposals for action, not instructions for use. Teachers look at these proposals and decide if they agree with them'.

The participants in this research project are highly qualified and experienced teachers and the results unsurprisingly displayed a significant level of adaptation of the published materials. Perhaps this is because 'the good teacher is constantly adapting' (Madsen and Bowen, 1978). The most commonly cited reasons for adapting materials in this study were limited time, wanting to personalise the topic, possible boredom caused by repetitive exercises and out-of-date topics.

Most teachers appreciate having a core textbook to give them guidance and save them some lesson preparation time. This thinking is in line with the pro- and weak anti-textbook viewpoint. From my research project, Tutor L comments on the published material, 'it saved me having to spend hours finding/prepping alternative sources'. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) made such a point as support for textbooks. Since they are still in wide use and teachers are adapting them, how can textbooks be made more suitable for the varied classrooms worldwide? Although alternatives have been suggested (Swales, 1980; Prabhu, 1989 in Maley, 2003) as ways of bridging the distance between generic commercial textbooks and the specific needs of individual classes, we have not seen an explosion of these kinds of courses on bookshop shelves. Publishers do not want to take the risk of producing something that they are unsure will sell. Formats that have proven successful are continued because as Harwood (2005, p.152) acknowledges, 'marketability rather than pedagogical effectiveness is therefore said to be the publishers' main concern'. As a result, new textbooks tend to be glossy renderings of previously successful ones. Swales (1995a, p.133) laments that his 'unfinished textbook' was never developed commercially but he still supports the concept of courses which are designed by textbook writers but which allow for input from individual teachers who are 'sensitive to his or her students' specific target situation'. As the present study shows, teachers adapt published materials, which seems to reflect Saraceni's (2003, p.73) belief that, 'adapting materials ... is always carried out in the classroom, to different extents, by the teachers'. Table 2.0 illustrates the most common types of adaptation which occurred are change of complexity, expansion, subtraction (i.e. reducing the quantity of materials (Islam and Mares, 2003). The findings of this small-scale study suggest that publishers and materials writers need to ensure that sufficient variety and flexibility are built into materials.

Considering the reluctance of publishers to release books which are significantly different from what has gone before, could the 'gapped textbook' be a feasible compromise? I hoped to find out if it could gain acceptance in this research project. This is why open-ended questions were included in Questionnaire B. The open-ended questions provided a fascinating insight into what teachers really think about materials and their ideas about what to do with them. These qualitative results allowed me to determine what the participating teachers found useful from the chosen published material and what could be suitable or not for their particular classes. One of the participants (Tutor P) recognised that publishers might not agree with this concept and for teachers, 'a blank page would feel odd'. In response to the post-lesson survey question about how teachers might use a blank page if it were included in the textbook, Tutor Q simply answered 'I wouldn't.' Uncertainty was expressed by Tutor B, 'I'm not sure how I would use this'. In contrast, most of the other participants provided examples of what they would do with some built-in space to the published materials. Some of the suggested uses of a blank page following the reading text were summary-writing, comprehension and discussion questions, writing an essay plan based on the text and students writing their own gap-fill sentences to test their peers. Something that no participant suggested for the blank page was that students bring a text from one of their content-specific (in this case, business

studies) textbooks to analyse and identify common features it shares with the ESAP text. In this case, the learners themselves would be involved in choosing what to include in the textbook's gap. Involving the learner in the adaptation process reflects the first principle which Clarke (1989, p.135) proposed, i.e. 'learner commitment'. According to this principle, learners who are involved in adapting the materials that have been chosen for them are more committed and create more purposeful activities. This is how I envisage the 'gapped textbook' working to greater link published materials with the specific needs of learners.

Another advantage of this kind of textbook is that the format would not be as rigid as other commercial materials. One of the reasons Clark (2010, p.25) gives for choosing to run a workshop about materials adaptation was that she found using a book with the same format throughout becomes 'monotonous' unless variety is introduced. This fixed format of textbooks is common in all areas of ELT but when developing a framework for a text-driven approach to materials development, Tomlinson (2003, p. 112) warns that an 'EAP course should relate to the target learners' purposes for doing the course but if all the texts do this explicitly there is a danger of tedium and, therefore, of lack of engagement'. In my research project, Tutor O claimed that the 'blank page' would have been used to include a debate or role-play activity. These would have been very different (and probably welcome) activities following the reading text. By using the space in the textbook to strengthen gaps in the students' learning or by involving the students in identifying what they feel is missing in their L2 learning, enables localisation and personalisation of material. It could also lead to 'varied repetition' which Tomlinson (2003, p.234) identifies as useful for language acquisition.

Conclusions

Many of the findings from this research project confirmed what I had suspected. Since no teacher wholly used the material as it was presented in the textbook and every exercise was adapted by some teachers, I concluded (in this case, at least) that every teacher is indeed a materials developer (Tomlinson, 2003, p.1). To what degree of a developer varied greatly since there was a spread of 25% to 100% of changes made (see Table 2.0) to the published material, with an average percentage of adaptation of 64.5.

Discerning an answer to my third research question (Would teachers appreciate the flexibility to personalise and localise published materials in the form of 'the gapped textbook'?) was more difficult. The feedback given by participants identified flexibility and choice as characteristics that teachers appreciate in published materials but whether they would use or accept the concept of 'the gapped textbook' was not explicitly determined. This was most likely due to the wording of the questionnaires. A significant limitation of the research is that it was only carried out via questionnaires. Dörnyei (2003, p.47) states that open-ended questionnaires are not always the best choice for qualitative research. However, he does acknowledge that they have a place in research due to the unexpected answers they can produce and by comparison with quantitative data, a certain 'richness' is provided (ibid.). In attempting not to lead the participants to answer the open-questions towards my preference, I believe I did not articulate the concept of 'the gapped textbook' effectively despite piloting the questionnaire with several colleagues. What was obvious from the data gained from the participants though was that commercial materials should be designed with the awareness that they will most likely be adapted. Hence, overly prescriptive and rigid materials should be avoided.

Limitations and Future Research

For this materials adaptation research, to actually observe the participants' lessons and witness how the published materials were used in class may have produced further significant findings. However, the demands that come with a full-time teaching and materials development position, combined with the physical impossibility of observing 18 lessons which are taking place at the same time as my own lesson, meant that this was not feasible. Another area which was not touched upon during this project but which has a deep impact on how teachers use materials in reality is the limitations placed on them by their institutions or language teaching organisation (LTO). Some LTOs impose strict requirements about what and how lessons are taught. Several larger, longitudinal research projects with time and resources available would be required to carry out classroom observations to support the findings of teacher surveys and explore how institutional requirements impact on teachers' adaptation of materials. What is obvious is that materials adaptation by classroom teachers is an area which is crying out for further research.

From carrying out this modest project, I became more aware of the need for teachers to undertake their own research in the classroom, i.e. action research and utilise their findings in a wider context. After all, it is in the classroom where the most exciting developments take place. We hone our skills as competent and confident decision-makers and classroom managers and most importantly, we can see first-hand what our students need and what techniques and activities best help them to acquire language. Masuhara (2011, p. 238) claims that teachers are 'the central figures in materials development'. This description is especially valid when one considers that teachers are in a privileged position to be able to evaluate, adapt and develop materials every day and the knowledge gained from this in situ

research could be fed back into commercial materials. I would suggest that offshore branch campuses are the ideal places for this research and development to take place. In the case of the research reported in this article, there is an experienced teaching staff of over 60 in the Centre for English Language Education and a student body of approximately 1,200 in the Preliminary Year with similar goals and needs. Harwood (2005, p.151) is a keen supporter of researchers becoming textbook writers and encourages a move towards textbook writing being seen of as a 'scholarly activity'. Swales (1995b) and Tomlinson (2012) are other such advocates. Achieving this scholarly recognition of teachers' classroom research and translating it into sound materials for other teachers who may not be in the position to do it themselves is a future development that I look forward to.

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FOLIO 16/2

These materials work and the learners agree!

Michael Tasseron

Introduction

Research on the evaluation of pedagogical materials typically focuses on teacher responses and observations, and the contributions of external researchers. Learners seem to be involved to a far lesser extent (McGrath, 2013, p. 149). Furthermore, the findings from published research pertaining to such evaluations often tend to overlook the language acquisition outcomes of the pedagogical materials used (Ellis, 2011). This article aims to provide further insight into this by detailing research on small group task-based learning conducted at a Japanese university. The research analyzed the relationship between the pedagogical materials used in a task-based learning syllabus and their impact on learning as perceived by learners of English working in small groups. Of additional importance were the perceived non-linguistic effects of these materials. The article will conclude with a discussion about the implications for teachers, learners and researchers.

Collaborative learning

For the purposes of this discussion, collaborative learning will refer to learners working in small groups comprising three to four learners. Task-based learning (TBL) is by its nature an approach which relies on learner interaction. Long (1990, p. 37) contends that group work is particularly suited to the performance of certain tasks. The rationale for using this type of classroom arrangement is that learners have more opportunities to interact with one another, as compared with one-on-one exchanges between teachers and learners (McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara, 2013, p. 231). In relation to learner preferences, it has also been found that in certain contexts learners express a preference for group work over individual work (Spratt, 2001, p. 87; McGrath, 2013, p. 164). Group work is deemed to be beneficial to language learning as it encourages cooperation between learners (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p. 59; Jacobs, 1988, p.100; Harumi, 2011, p. 268). Such cooperation is congruent with the sociocultural perspective of language learning, which regards interaction and output as essential components in facilitating language acquisition (Swain, 1985 cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 80). Affective factors such as motivation may also be positively influenced by such learner modes (McDonough et al. 2013, p. 239). The issues of learner motivation and involvement are of particular relevance to this discussion. English is compulsory in Japanese universities for first year learners irrespective of their major subjects, and large class sizes, often in excess of forty students, are common. Unsurprisingly, these factors contribute to some undesirable outcomes in the language classroom; and motivational issues, learner reticence and silence feature with reasonable frequency in literature about the Japanese university EFL context (see Harumi, 2011; Sakui and Cowie, 2012; King, 2013).

Learner evaluations of pedagogical materials and tasks

For purposes of clarification in this section, the term pedagogical materials will be used as it is by Tomlinson (2012) to refer to 'anything that can be used to facilitate the learning of a language' (p. 143). Ellis (2011, p. 223) likens tasks to pedagogical materials. Tasks are thus the operationalization of such materials. In the subsequent discussion no distinction will therefore be made between *tasks and materials*.

The learner's role?

As noted at the start, learners appear to be involved to a far lesser extent than teachers in published evaluations of pedagogical materials (McGrath, 2013, p. 149). Tomlinson (2012, p. 146-147), discusses how materials evaluation over the last four decades has typically involved compilations of checklists based on certain criteria. In his overview of the literature, what is evident is that such evaluations have been aimed almost exclusively at teachers. A number of recent studies examined by McGrath (2013, p. 106) seem to suggest that the role of learners is being taken more seriously, however he contends that this appears to be the exception rather than the norm. Ellis (2011) reports on several studies which evaluate task-based teaching. Of the studies reviewed, data was collected mostly from teachers, and typically focused on how they viewed TBL implementation in their respective contexts. In his review Ellis (2011, p. 223) notes that no effort was made to gauge the learning

outcomes of the respective TBL courses. He also remarks with surprise that the pedagogical materials used were largely ignored - and thus their impact on language acquisition. Two noteworthy exceptions where data was collected from both learners and teachers are detailed in studies by Barkhuizen (1998) and McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007).

It has been argued that learners should have a more central role in materials selection, use and evaluation (McGrath, 2013). This is due to the significant investment of time and effort they are expected to devote to using such materials. Involving learners in the evaluation process is beneficial in that it can provide insights into the role of such materials in the learning process, and of their relevance in a particular setting (McGrath, 2013, p. 151).

On a practical level, however, this can be a challenging undertaking. McGrath (2013, p. 184) cites factors which can hinder learner involvement, such as teacher inexperience, a lack of training and time constraints. It also needs to be pointed out that evaluating learning materials in a systematic manner is a complex undertaking (Ellis, 1997, p. 41). Tomlinson (2012, p. 147) states further that the criteria used for evaluations are also contextually dependent, and cautions against transferring their application to different settings. Such factors undoubtedly compound the difficulty of the process. Therefore both experienced and inexperienced teachers wanting to conduct such evaluations would need expert guidance; which is simply not available in many educational institutions.

Macro and micro evaluations of tasks

Ellis (2011, p. 215) distinguishes between macro- and micro-evaluations in TBL. The former are concerned with courses or syllabi holistically, and the latter with the learning outcomes of pedagogical tasks. The study by McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) falls into the former category, as does another by Al Busaidi and Tindle (2010). Their study evaluates the impact of a new communicative approach and pedagogical materials on learning over several months. A study by Barkhuizen (1998) which examines learner perceptions of certain classroom tasks, is, on the contrary, a micro evaluation. The study in this article can be regarded as a micro-evaluation since the aim was to investigate the perceived effects of the pedagogical materials on learning in small-group contexts. Ellis (2011, p. 224) cites the value of both macro and micro-evaluations in that the findings can lead to modifications to the materials, which may then result in improvements to them.

Tomlinson (2013, p. 30-33) identifies three means to conduct evaluations, namely pre-use, whilst-use and post-use evaluations. He deems post-use evaluations to the most effective, as these can measure both the short and long-term effects of the materials. McDonough et al. (2013, p. 62) concur, stating that the results from post-use evaluations are valuable to teachers in terms of personal reflection and development. The findings from such retrospective evaluations are more beneficial than predictive evaluations, since the former have in effect been tested, compared with the hypothetical nature of the latter (Ellis, 1997, p. 37). For these reasons a post-use or retrospective evaluation was conducted in this study, and the following research questions were formulated:

1) How effective did learners perceive the materials to be in developing their linguistic skills? (These included: speaking, listening, reading and writing, general English ability, vocabulary acquisition, practical English use and knowledge of the thematic content).

2) What were the learner perceptions of the non-linguistic effects of the materials?

The Study

The setting for this research was a university in the Kanto area of Japan. The course under analysis is a blended learning course. Learners are also required to complete two additional first-year English courses.

The Pedagogical Materials

For the pedagogical materials, the decision was made to use to *WebQuests*, which Mishan (2013) defines as 'technology-mediated research projects' (p. 290). These are carried out by learners who source information online. WebQuests can adopt a typical TBL framework in their application (Mishan, 2013). They are thus reasonably easy to implement by teachers familiar with the general aspects of TBL. In such projects, Mishan (2013, p. 291) recommends that the teacher assumes the role of facilitator and guide. She believes that such tasks facilitate language acquisition, as they are authentic, they involve collaboration and negotiation, and they can positively impact learner motivation. A WebQuest she recommends, and chosen for the first project of this study, requires learners to create a blog about their favorite sports star.

It was important to plan tasks which would engage learners, and hopefully counter some of the potential challenges facing teachers of large classes at Japanese universities. It was thus decided that the tasks should be conducted by learners working in small groups comprising three to four members. It was believed that working in groups would foster a sense of collective responsibility, and thereby ensure participation. Additionally, it was believed that the subject matter would appeal to the learners, and would be engaging to them. The tasks learners were expected to complete are what Ellis (2010)

defines as 'unfocused tasks' (p. 36). Such tasks do not expect learners to pay attention to a predetermined linguistic feature, instead they are concerned with output based on the learners' linguistic repertoire.

Also of importance in all the projects were the non-linguistic aims related to working in small groups. These were to aid learners in developing skills that they would be able to apply in real-world settings. Examples include being able to collaborate successfully, problem-solving, negotiating and project management.

The semester projects were implemented as follows:

Project 1: A blog about a sports star

Project 2: A blog about a social issue

Project 3: A five-minute film about the social issue in Project 2

Approximately four weeks were allotted for each project. For the blog projects, learners spent their lessons sourcing material from English websites, discussing the design of their blogs and creating them. They were encouraged to use English in their discussions as much as possible. Feedback was provided on written drafts of the blogs prior to their publication online. There was a 300-word minimum requirement for the textual component of each blog. If there was insufficient content from English websites, learners were permitted to source information from Japanese websites, which they subsequently translated. Assistance regarding the technical aspects related to making the film (Project 3) was provided by the teacher.

Learners were assessed on all three projects, as well as on their participation in class. For the short film project, learners were permitted a great deal of flexibility in terms of how they wanted to produce their film. However, they were encouraged to submit their scripts to me as their teacher for feedback prior to filming and production.

Method

The participants (N=29) were Japanese first-year undergraduate learners, typically 18 to 19 years of age. They were all non-English majors. English classes at the university are streamed based on the results of a proficiency test. In terms of general ability, the majority of learners ranged from elementary to pre-intermediate level (CEFR levels A1 to B1).

Data collection and analysis

Two sources of data collection were used in the study, namely a questionnaire administered to learners and field notes compiled by myself as the teacher/researcher.

The questionnaire

Micro-evaluations of tasks can entail collecting data about certain aspects of the tasks, and can include learner opinions about them (Ellis, 2011, p. 224). Ellis (1997, p. 39-40) recommends three methods for conducting an empirical micro-evaluation of tasks. These comprise student-based evaluations, which try to gauge the effectiveness of a task based on learner attitudes to it; response-based evaluations, in which the teacher assesses the task outcomes based on observing learners performing it; and learning-based evaluations which aim to measure the impact of tasks on learning. For instance, this may entail investigating whether learners are able to use a new language feature contained within the task. This study aimed to investigate learner perceptions of the pedagogical materials retrospectively, and was thus a student-based evaluation.

A 41-item questionnaire was used which drew on data from statements presented on a five point Likert scale. Learners had to express their level of agreement with the statements, with choices ranging from *Strongly agree* to *Strongly disagree*. Mean values were calculated and those of above three indicated support for each statement. The standard deviations indicate a variation of between 0.6 and 1.2 in the responses. The first part of the questionnaire was concerned with the perceived effects of the materials on language skills development and use, while the second part was related to the non-linguistic aspects. The questionnaire was administered electronically by email to 73 learners, of whom 29 responded; thereby achieving a response rate of 40%. Prior to administering the questionnaire, the aims of the study were explained to the learners in English, as were the ethical guidelines which were adopted for the research.

Field notes

Notes from observations made during and after the lessons were recorded in a notebook by myself as teacher/researcher over the course of the semester. Such notes included data about learner interactions, as well as discussions conducted by myself with groups of learners while they were completing the assigned tasks.

Findings

The findings will be presented in the order of the two research questions which were posed. The questionnaire data will first be discussed, followed by data from the field notes. The first question was concerned with the perceived linguistic effects of the materials, as detailed above.

Linguistic effects

Blogs

Both the first and second projects followed a similar format. The findings will therefore be jointly discussed. The findings suggest that learners perceived the materials used in these projects to be of value in aiding their English language skills. However, the perceived degree to which these skills benefitted varied, as can be seen below (Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1. Sports star blog

Linguistic Effects	Mean & (Standard Deviation)
The sports star blog helped me improve my...	
general English ability.	3.8 (0.6)
speaking skills.	3.5 (0.9)
reading skills.	3.9 (0.7
listening skills.	3.1 (0.9)
writing skills.	4.3 (1.0)
vocabulary skills.	3.6 (0.6)
The blog helped me use English in a practical way.	4.0 (0.9)
The blog helped me learn more about the sports star I was researching.	4.1 (1.1)

Table 2. Social issue blog

Linguistic Effects	Mean & (Standard Deviation)
The social issue blog helped me improve my...	
general English ability.	4.0 (0.7)
speaking skills.	3.8 (0.9)
reading skills.	3.9 (0.7)
listening skills.	3.4 (0.9)
writing skills.	4.2 (0.9)
vocabulary skills.	3.9 (0.7)
The blog helped me use English in a practical way.	4.2 (0.9)
The blog helped me learn more about the social issue I was researching.	4.1 (1.0)

In terms of the perceived effects on language skills development, the responses indicate that these tasks were regarded as aiding primarily the learners' writing ability. This is demonstrated by mean scores of above 4 recorded for both blog tasks. Reading skills were also regarded as being enhanced by both tasks, with mean scores of 3.9 recorded respectively. Such responses were expected, since these were the two skills which were primarily used during the tasks. Learners did not believe the tasks made a significant contribution to the development of their speaking skills, which the recorded lower mean scores attest to. It was also hoped that learners would try to make use of more English when discussing the different aspects of their blogs. However, this typically did not occur despite being asked to do so, and it was noted that most of the discussions were conducted in Japanese. While discussing a consciousness-raising task, Ellis (2010, p. 51) makes the point that learners need metalinguistic proficiency in addition to L2 proficiency if they are to benefit fully from the discussions involving the prescribed tasks. The same would apply in the context of this study. Discussions about the technical aspects of blogs would therefore also require knowledge of L2 metalanguage which the majority of learners did not possess. It was therefore unrealistic to ask the learners to do so in English. However, L1 use in such situations is not necessarily disadvantageous. On the contrary, Nation (2003, p. 3) argues that the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom can be beneficial, especially during tasks which exceed the abilities of the learners. The discussions learners conducted during the tasks mentioned above could be regarded as such. Therefore using their L1 was in all likelihood more efficacious than attempting to do so in their L2. (Nation's views are supported by Swain and Lapkin (2000), who conducted a study on 8th grade English speaking learners of French enrolled in an immersion programme. They contend that the nature of the task can influence the amount of learner L1 needed. Moreover, they argue that 'judicious' (p. 268) L1 use can aid L2 learning).

Responses to the statements about whether the projects facilitated the use of practical English, also elicited reasonably high mean scores. What is suggested here is that the materials fulfilled their role in aiding learners to use English in an authentic manner. This was an important consideration mentioned earlier with respect to the theoretical underpinnings of the materials (Mishan, 2013). The materials were also believed to improve learner knowledge about the content they were researching, which again indicates a positive correlation between the materials and their perceived effects.

Films

The responses indicate that, as with the blog tasks, learners also regarded the film task as aiding the development of their linguistic skills holistically, facilitating practical language usage, as well as enhancing their knowledge

of the subject matter being researched. A summary of the data is provided below (Table 3).

Table 3. Social issue film

Linguistic Effects	Mean & (Standard Deviation)
The social issue film helped me improve my...	
general English ability.	3.9 (0.8)
speaking skills.	4.1 (1.0)
reading skills.	3.1 (0.9)
listening skills.	3.8 (1.1)
writing skills.	3.6 (1.0)
vocabulary skills.	3.6 (0.9)
The film helped me use English in a practical way.	4.1 (0.9)
The film helped me learn more about the social issue I was researching.	4.0 (1.0)

As was found with the blog tasks, learners also believed that making the films benefitted certain skills more than others. In contrast to the blog tasks, however, learners regarded the film task as aiding their speaking skills most, which a mean value of 4.1 for the corresponding statement demonstrates. Films and their production are inherently multi-dimensional. In a language learning context, it could be argued that the task of making a film uses all the language skills. What is surprising however, is that what emerges from the data does not lend credence to this premise. While a mean score of 4.1 indicates that learners believed this task to be efficacious in developing their speaking skills, there was a marked contrast in relation to how useful they felt it was in terms of reading and writing, where low mean scores of 3.1 and 3.6 respectively were recorded. This is despite learners being required to prepare scripts, which they made extensive use of while producing their films.

Non-linguistic effects

The second research question dealt with learner perceptions of the non-linguistic effects of the materials. This included an analysis of several scenarios learners would likely encounter in their future places of work.

Blogs

The data for both blog tasks will be discussed jointly. The data is summarized below (Table 4).

Table 4. Making blogs 1 & 2 in small group settings

Non-linguistic effects Possible real world application	Mean & (Standard Deviation)
Making blogs 1 & 2 helped me to...	
understand my classmates' opinions.	4.2 (1.0)
learn how to cooperate with the other people in my group.	4.2 (1.0)
to solve problems related to working with other people.	4.1 (1.1)
make new friends.	4.1 (1.0)

With regard to the perceived practical value of the materials outside of the classroom context, the recorded mean scores were all 4.1 and above. What is evident here is that respondents regarded the materials as highly beneficial in terms of acquiring such skills. TBL is fundamentally concerned with authenticity in relation to language use and communication (Ellis, 2010, p. 38). However, what can be added here is that the notion of 'authenticity' and its application extends beyond the linguistic realm.

Films

A discussion of the non-linguistic effects of the film task proceeds below (Table 5 contains a summary of the data).

Table 5. Making a film in small group settings

Non-linguistic effects Possible real world application	Mean & (Standard Deviation)
Making the film helped me to...	
understand my classmates' opinions.	4.2 (1.0)
learn how to cooperate with the other people in my group.	4.3 (1.2)
to solve problems related to working with other people.	4.3 (1.2)
make new friends.	4.0 (1.0)

The mean scores for the belief that these skills can be transferred to contexts out of the classroom were similar to those recorded for the blog tasks. The responses show a slight increase in the mean scores for the statements about group cooperation (4.2 to 4.3) and problem-solving (4.1 to 4.3). This might be attributed to the complexity of the film-making task, where the likelihood of encountering technical and logistical challenges was increased, as opposed to the

blog tasks.

Field notes data

It was observed that learners remained actively engaged in completing the assigned blog and film tasks. For the most part they also appeared to enjoy the tasks. They were encouraged to work on their assigned tasks in any way they deemed suitable. This resulted in an informal, convivial classroom atmosphere and encouraged more learner-teacher interactions than I had experienced previously in a whole-class mode. I spent a few minutes with each group during the lessons, and learners frequently asked me questions relating to the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of their blogs and films. The questions were mostly about the choice of appropriate vocabulary, blog design and my recommendations for film-editing software and applications. It was noted that the majority of learners participated and cooperated enthusiastically in their groups. Working in groups also engendered learner independence and collective responsibility. This was demonstrated by the groups who requested they be permitted to work on their films outside of the classroom during lesson time; returning to the classroom a few minutes before the end of the lesson of their own volition. Incidences of non-participation were minimal during all three projects, however there were instances where this did occur. In such instances teacher intervention was necessary, but the results had a negligible impact on behaviour.

Discussion

There are a number of considerations from the findings which have implications for teachers and learners. Firstly, the suitability of the materials selection for the context in which they are used. Secondly, the importance of classroom modes, and finally, the benefits of involving learners in the evaluation of the pedagogical materials.

It could be argued that the pedagogical materials used were effective in developing the L2 skills of the learners, as well as aiding them in developing certain life skills which can be applied outside of the classroom. The efficacy of the materials can be attributable to their TBL theoretical underpinnings, as well as the suitability of the learning context in which they were used.

The relationship between the adopted classroom mode and the pedagogical materials is also of importance to this discussion. The findings show a number of positive effects of the materials, resulting from learners working collaboratively. Learners regarded the materials as beneficial to language learning, and as pointed out earlier, this also extended to the development of their non-linguistic skills. This therefore corresponds to what was stated in the reviewed literature about the advantages for learners of working in small groups (Anderson and Lynch, 1988; Jacobs, 1988; McDonough et al., 2013).

The implications of this are noteworthy, taking into account some of the issues confronting teachers of compulsory English classes at many Japanese universities. It can therefore be argued that making use of pedagogical materials which encourage such learner collaboration can go a long way in addressing the challenges mentioned previously. These include scenarios where teachers are faced with large class sizes, and with learners reluctant to participate actively in lessons.

The final point relates to the involvement of learners in evaluating the materials they use. As noted previously, the input of learners is frequently overlooked (McGrath, 2013; Tomlinson, 2012). This may be attributable to factors which are beyond the control of teachers at many learning institutions, and not something easily remedied. However, as pointed out by Tomlinson (2013) and McDonough et al. (2013), such evaluations are advantageous. They provide teachers with feedback directly from the learners who use the materials, which may then inform the materials' subsequent revision and use. The findings from this study demonstrate the value of conducting such evaluations. For instance, there was agreement among the learners involved that the materials aided in developing their linguistic and non-linguistic skills. However, what the findings show was that the development of these skills appeared to be uneven through the different tasks. Thus, in subsequent courses these materials can be modified in order to be more comprehensive in terms of their linguistic aims. Without conducting such post-use evaluations, it is difficult to ascertain what learners need from pedagogical materials for their linguistic development. Teachers may also be unaware of the aspects of materials which learners find enjoyable, and informing materials with feedback about these may have further implications in terms of motivation and confidence; both of which are essential to successful language learning.

It must be noted that there are limitations to the findings. Firstly, the findings emerge from the context in which the study took place and are thus not necessarily generalisable. Furthermore, data was drawn from a relatively small sample, and cannot be assumed to be representative of all the learners who were enrolled in the course.

Conclusion

This article has detailed a small-scale research project which investigated how learners working in collaborative settings perceived the linguistic and non-linguistic effects of the pedagogical materials

they used in an integrated English course. The findings suggest that the materials aided in the development of both sets of skills. The role of the learner in evaluating pedagogical materials is often overlooked, and the aim of this study is to therefore address this, albeit in a limited manner. Our understanding of the relationship between pedagogical materials and learning could be further enhanced by more such studies.

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Cultural Appropriacy in Materials Adaptation: Do We Need to Walk on Eggshells?

Paul Benjamin

Introduction

This article aims to make suggestions as to how original published materials can be adapted to fit what I call 'the culture of the classroom' in a more identifiable way with the aim being to increase intrinsic motivation in a specific group of learners. The term 'the culture of the classroom' is derived from Tomlinson and Masuhara's (2004, p. 19) definition of cultural as 'referring to the totality of a way of life shared by a group of people linked by common and distinctive characteristics, activities, beliefs and circumstances', and helps to make the case that in the Middle East our learners, though religious, also have interests and needs that extend beyond this, and that awareness of these interests should impact our selection and design of materials. A simple illustration of this could be that the learner profile presented in this article describes a group of teenage boys whose youth culture is not wholly dissimilar to that of teenagers anywhere else in the world. They are interested in smart technology and football, amongst other things, and it is these things that are central to the culture of the classroom. What follows below is an analysis of a published coursebook, *Challenges 3: Middle East Edition* (hereafter *Challenges 3*), (Harris, Mower, Sikorzynska and Williams, 2007), that is in wide circulation throughout the Middle East, and this article itself represents a piece of action research investigating the approach to the task of adapting published materials in a culturally appropriate way in a context that is unique in its cultural complexity.

When used to describe EFL materials in the Middle East, the phrase 'culturally appropriate' often means that the materials do not risk offending Islamic beliefs. However, Middle Eastern learners have other shared interests and activities, and are proud of their heritage and national treasures just as any other group of learners would be. In short, delivering culturally appropriate EFL classes to Muslims involves realising and embracing the fact that they enjoy a rich and diverse culture alongside Islam, and tapping in to the distinctive characteristics and activities that motivate Muslim learners and give them their desire to learn. What should develop from this is an understanding that culture is not only a nationalised institution: it exists within the group of students in any class. What they like and what they are interested in is the culture of the classroom, and it is this that we need to isolate and use in conjunction with their wider cultural influences when developing materials for them.

The materials adapted in this article are a reading lesson contained in Module 5 of *Challenges 3* entitled 'Water' (Harris et al. 2007, pp. 48-49). The reading texts themselves are about the natural wonders Patagonia, the Everglades and the Victoria Falls. This material, and indeed the material contained in the remainder of the coursebook, is not unlike material found in many 'mass-produced' ELT coursebooks that are circulated over a wide market area, containing standardised topics that could be found in almost any EFL coursebook and when applied to a specific class, the learners tend to find that it is fairly unconnected with their real concerns (Maley 2003, p. 8). The reason these materials have been selected for examination is that they are directly relevant to the points made above about cultural appropriacy and the culture of the classroom. Although they are culturally appropriate in the sense that they contain no overtly religious overtures, they are not appropriate for the culture of the classroom as the centrepiece of this material, the reading texts themselves, are about distant places unknown to these learners (see the learner profile below for further discussion of this point).

The *Challenges* series used in the Middle East has already been developed to conform to the cultural considerations of the region, and claims that the materials contained are 'culturally appropriate' for the Arab market (Harris et al. 2007). However, from my experiences using the book it is clear that there is a lack of learner engagement with the materials, as their interests are not represented in the pages of the coursebook. This is most likely due to the need for publishers to produce books for use in the Middle East that cater for both genders, but which are in reality used in single gender classrooms as education is generally segregated in the Middle East. This leads to

the inevitable problem that although the materials are 'appropriate', they miss the target in terms of culture even if they hit the target in terms of religion.

Learner Profile

In this study, the original materials in *Challenges 3* are used in a class of twenty-four secondary school level Saudi Arabian boys aged 13-14. They share Arabic as their L1, and are at the CEF B1 level that *Challenges 3* is intended for. These learners are extremely nationalistic and are proud of the heritage of Saudi Arabia and the wider Gulf region. This sense of nationalism is reinforced by most of them not having travelled outside of the Middle East, nor intending to do so. This relates to the comments above which detailed why the materials under analysis here are inappropriate for the culture of the classroom as I believe the materials would be more effective if they were localised, to cater for the learners' restricted, but not enclosed, world knowledge. As a general rule, the members of the class are better at speaking and listening than they are at reading and writing.

Challenges 3 is used in this context to teach students according to Saudi Ministry of Education (MOE) guidelines, although the *Challenges* series was not written specifically to conform to these guidelines. Objective learner needs are embodied in the curriculum aims conforming to the Saudi TEFL curriculum which specifies that basic language skills need to be 'imparted' to facilitate communication with English-speaking peoples (Liton 2012, p. 130). This makes it essential that classroom materials provide opportunities for students to use language for communicative purposes. The students are mainly extrinsically motivated by parental pressure and the desire to save face by passing examinations, but they can be intrinsically motivated by materials that are personalised to their needs and interests. Particularly popular inclusions include the use of technology such as smart phones and tablet computers, as well as topics they are familiar and comfortable with such as texts about their region or culture. The learners in this context are also very competitive, so incorporating an element of competition to their work is usually rewarding. These needs and interests have influenced the principled changes to the materials, as well as the learners' subjective needs, those areas adjudged by the teacher to be important for individual learner development, which are for learners to be engaged by relevant and personalised materials that can help to boost their intrinsic motivation.

Culture and Learning Issues

A central theme to this article is that these reading materials have been adapted with specific attention to the interests and needs of the learners. The underlying goal in this process is that if we are able to harness our learners' interests and apply them pedagogically then this can help to improve their intrinsic motivation. This can be best encapsulated by the concept of 'individual interest', which is linked to intrinsic motivation and describes the extent to which a learner is interested in a certain topic area or activity (Abu-Rabia, 2003, p. 348). Benware and Deci (1984) and Grolnick and Ryan (1987) demonstrated that students who exhibited 'individual interest' and as a result were intrinsically motivated showed greater conceptual comprehension of text content than students who were extrinsically motivated (both cited in Abu-Rabia, 2003, p. 348). If comprehension is linked to interest, and interest is generated in part by familiar cultural content, it is worth considering that when measuring overall understanding it is important to select the most appropriate text types (Kobayashi, 2002, p. 210).

Consequently, it could be argued that the most appropriate EFL materials for use in Arab classrooms would incorporate culturally targeted content as these are more likely to increase intrinsic motivation. The most de-motivating skills for Arabic speakers are commonly reading and writing, which has its roots in the L1, as an issue readers of Arabic face is the need for sentence context to aid word recognition: reading Arabic requires an understanding of the gist of a text in order to correctly identify and read the words it contains (Abu-Rabia, 2002, p. 305, Abbott, 2006, p. 640). Abbott (2006, p. 635) points to extensive research showing that when learners select strategies for learning an L2, it is cultural background that most affects their choices. Fender (2003) demonstrates that Arab learners are good at comprehending and integrating words into larger phrase and clause units, leading Abbott (2006, pp. 365-636) to suggest that they might have a proclivity for top-down reading strategies.

Top-down reading strategies include recognizing the main idea of a text, integrating scattered information, drawing inferences and predicting what might happen (Abbott, 2006, p. 638), all of which lend themselves to the learning experiences of Arab learners where they learn the need for context and gist in order to decipher meaning and recognise words. Consequently, when an L2 is introduced, these learning experiences and the skills gleaned from them will transfer into L2 reading (Abbott, 2006, p. 640), so it is important when designing materials for Arab learners that there is sufficient priming and opportunity for them to harness their top-down processing techniques. Importantly, Walter (2007, p. 15) discusses how it can be necessary for strategies to be taught to L2 learners, as existing strategies used for reading in the L1 may not transfer to the L2. A way to help this process may be to provide learners with materials that use culturally familiar content.

Focussing on culturally familiar content is important

because when learners read authentic texts, defined here as texts 'where no concessions are made to foreign speakers' (Harmer, 2007, p. 273), about unfamiliar subject matter in the L2, they encounter more unfamiliar language and cultural references creating a heightened need for them to 'repair' gaps in their understanding (Alsheihk and Mokhtari 2011, p. 157). Alsheihk and Mokhtari's paper suggests that there is a relationship between metacognitive reading strategies and comprehension, and that successful readers use more of these strategies than unsuccessful ones (2011, p. 151). However, the authors also suggest that teachers should explicitly teach metacognitive strategies such as clarifying the purposes of the reading, identifying the important aspects of the text and focussing attention on these aspects rather than simply presenting questions that ask learners to find basic facts contained in the text which require little analysis (ibid.). This influences the selection and design of materials as it provides a clear rationale for reading comprehension questions to be less 'testy' and more designed to access the learner's comprehension and thoughts on the text (Maley, 2003, p. 10-11).

Following this, Tomlinson and Masuhara's (2004, p. 19) earlier description of culture needs to be broken down: the 'group of people' and the 'community' they talk about are the group of learners in this context, and we have to consider and adapt to their shared interests and goals. One of these is unequivocally Islam as every child in the class is a Muslim. However, if we posit that the community is not the whole country but rather the class of learners, and we accept that intrinsic motivation is boosted by culturally familiar content, and we also accept that the inclinations, interests and goals of a community are part of their culture, it seems to serve the interests of the learners if the materials they are exposed to serve the dual goals of being 'Islamically friendly' and catered to the culture of the classroom.

Principles Motivating Changes to the Material

The underpinning methodology used in the changes to these materials is Tomlinson's text-driven approach, which uses pre-reading activities aimed at readying the learners' minds to connect the texts to their own lives and post-listening activities aimed at helping the learners to develop their mental representations of the text (Tomlinson, 2001). The MOE aims and learner needs have also helped to inform the changes, which in turn are based on principled criteria set out in McGrath (2002) and Tomlinson (2010a, 2010b and 2011). The first of these principles is 'personalization', which McGrath defines as 'drawing on learners' lives and exploiting their knowledge and interests to devise examples and activities which are about them' (2002, p. 74). This principle links to the learner profile as it allows the integration of technology into the classroom, which is an effective approach when teaching Saudi learners (Liton, 2012, p. 147), whilst allowing the freedom to develop effective materials for a specific class and purpose where pre-prepared materials cannot precisely meet the needs of a specific class (McBeath, 2007, p. 4, Harwood, 2010, p. 4).

The second key principle is 'localisation', which McGrath defines as 'recognising the need for contextual relevance' (2002, p. 74). This fits with the learner profile and more broadly with the need to localise material content not solely because of religion, but also by considering geographical and cultural identity. For this reason, the changes made to the materials have attempted to incorporate more readily identifiable *Arab* content, not more readily identifiable *Islamic* content. This is not a prerequisite of teaching in the Middle East: indeed learning about other cultures can be very engaging for many learners. However, localisation is helpful in stimulating top-down processing, as learners are able to access their existing knowledge, and is a helpful approach for learners who find reading especially challenging.

Tomlinson's principle of language acquisition that learners need opportunities to use language to achieve a communicative purpose (2010b, p. 10) is the third principle in this approach. As the teacher in this context has to abide by the Saudi TEFL curriculum which aims to facilitate communication in English; this criterion is especially relevant to this learner profile.

Developing and Adapting the Materials

The adaptations made to the materials are set out below under the heading of each of the above principles in turn, although there is, naturally, some overlap. Throughout, terms such as 'deleting' and 'abridging' are in line with the definitions given in McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara (2013, pp. 70-77) and every attempt has been made in the adaptations not to completely deviate from the skills and language presented in the original materials. The adapted materials that are discussed are contained in the appendices.

Personalisation

The 'warm-up' exercise in the original material presents a box of key words to describe features of landscape which the learners are tasked to match to pictures on the opposite page. However, it was judged that this exercise would benefit from adaptation, as some of the words do not appear immediately relevant to the learner profile. The complete list of words in the original material is: *forest, glacier, gorge, hill, island,*

lake, marsh, mountain, river, swamp and waterfall. Harmer (2007, p. 229) argues that when teaching vocabulary explaining meaning is part of the teacher's art, and of course in this case a visual aid could be used. However, it was judged that time would be better spent teaching more targeted vocabulary such as *desert* instead of *glacier* which lacks direct relevance. There was also the issue that the presentation of this new vocabulary lacks any real personalisation to the learner profile, and does not give learners a chance to see these words in context.

This difficulty was compounded in this case as although the original warm-up asked the learners to match the key words to pictures on the opposite page, very few of the words were represented in these pictures. Consequently, the activity has been modified by rewriting the instructions and introducing the use of QR (Quick Response) Codes to bring up pictures all of the key words (see Figure 1). This activity can now be conducted by sticking the QR codes on the classroom walls and have the learners walk around the room and scan the QR Codes with their smart phones or tablets to bring up a picture of each key word on their screen and match the words and pictures this way. They can also keep the pictures on their devices for later use in the lesson or for revision purposes. Such an activity fits with McGrath's personalisation principle (2002, p. 74) by allowing students to use their smart devices in class as part of the learning process and is a good 'Readiness Activity' to prepare the learners for the later reading texts (Tomlinson, 1998). For a guide to creating and using QR codes for this purpose see the Appendices.

Figure 1: Scan the QR Code above to bring up a picture of 'sea' on your smart device.

Localisation

The key source of input in the original material is a set of three reading texts, and the most obvious concern about these is their need for localisation. The learner profile reveals that few of the learners have travelled outside the Middle East, but the original texts are about the natural wonders in South America, the USA and Africa. These places have limited contextual relevance for these learners so provide limited opportunity for top-down processing, and also do not exploit the learners' sense of nationalism (McGrath 2002, p. 74). By rewriting the reading texts and relating them to the learners' world knowledge, the aim is to improve comprehension and elicitation, thus allowing them to bring 'real world knowledge' to the texts (Banegas 2010, p. 28, Watkins 2005, p. 62). The new texts are about three natural wonders in the Arab world: the Dead Sea in Jordan, the Jabal Qarah Caves in Saudi Arabia, and the Cedars of God in Lebanon (See Appendices) and are intended, with improved desktop publishing, to be presented as tourist information leaflets.

Good materials can provide exposure to authentic input in part due to the spoken or written texts they include, but to do this they need to be rich in features that are characteristic of authentic discourse in the target language (Tomlinson 2011, p. 14). By presenting the new texts as tourist information leaflets, even if the language is still graded, they gain perceived authenticity by looking like real language. The new texts are longer, but as Tomlinson writes, longer texts can be easier for learners to understand, as there is more information and context to help them (2011, xvi). The original material contained several adjectives within the texts that were highlighted in red, and these have been maintained in the rewritten materials (see the underlined words in the Appendices). As well as this, certain lexical chunks such as 'you can see where the name comes from' in the new Dead Sea text have been maintained so that the original cohesion of the material and coursebook is not compromised too heavily. The original materials were not authentic, and were not presented as belonging to any specific genre of writing.

To develop the 'Reading' section as an effective 'intake response activity' where the learners are tasked to consider and explain their feelings and reactions to the contents of the text (Tomlinson 2003, p. 115), the instructions for the reading activity and the comprehension questions have also been rewritten. Good comprehension questions will focus learners on the most important parts of a text with the aim of helping them to understand it (Watkins 2005, p. 59), something the original comprehension questions are not judged to achieve. The new questions are designed to be less 'factual' and 'referential' and contain more 'opinion questions' and 'personalised questions' (Maley 2003, pp. 10-11) with the hope of helping learners to rely more on what they know and have learned and not giving them questions that task them to look for very specific snippets of information.

Language for Communicative Purposes

Adaptations elsewhere in the materials have mainly focussed on extending, abridging and rewriting sections to provide greater opportunities to use language for a communicative purpose. The original activity 3 simply

asked the learners to read about one of the original natural wonders and tell their group about it, but has been extended to give the learners the opportunity to use the language for communicative purposes (Tomlinson 2010b, p. 10). By extending the activity and providing scaffolding in the language presented in the speech bubbles (see Appendix 1), this activity acts as a 'development activity' to help learners express what they have taken from the readings using the target language (Tomlinson, 1998).

The language introduced by the language focus activities in the original material was very diffuse and unfocused, with adjectives, quantifiers, conjunctions and comparatives and superlatives all being briefly covered on one page. This has been abridged and focus placed on comparative and superlative adjectives to exploit the highlighted adjectives from the original reading texts. The 'Fact or Fiction' box in the new material is actually rewritten and reordered from the original material and has been localised to help provide contextual relevance (McGrath 2002, p. 74) by making it about the Rub' Al Khali desert in the Arabian Peninsula rather than its original topic of a waterfall in Venezuela. By doing this, this section has developed into an effective 'input response activity' (Tomlinson, 1998) where the learners have to go back to the original text and make discoveries about the target language themselves, and also be given an opportunity to produce language rather than complete the gap-fill exercise contained in the original material.

The 'Speaking' section realised in activities 9 and 10 in the original material ostensibly provided learners with an opportunity to use the target language. However, the activity was fairly weak as it provided no opportunity for research or preparation and relied on learners instantly being able to produce language to talk about their favourite place. In order to remedy this, it has been expanded into a writing exercise where students are tasked to write their own tourist information leaflet in groups. This fits into the text-driven approach as a further and expanded 'development activity', and allows learners the chance to produce contextually relevant language that is supposed to achieve a communicative purpose (Tomlinson, 1998, McGrath 2002, p. 74, Tomlinson 2010b, p. 10). The new activity is given a competitive edge to cater to the learner profile by having students present their work and vote on which place they would most like to visit.

Conclusions

The aim of this article has been to demonstrate that developing culturally and geographically appropriate EFL materials for use in Arab classrooms means we need to be more nuanced in our selection of materials that do not offend Islamic beliefs. Returning again to Tomlinson and Masuhara's (2004, p. 19) definition of cultural 'referring to the totality of a way of life shared by a group of people', it is important for materials writers to consider more than religion when developing culturally appropriate materials for the Arab Gulf. As the materials described above and presented in the Appendices show, readings about far-flung and unvisited places such as Patagonia or the United States may avoid religious overtures, but they lack any relevance for this learner profile and are in desperate need of localisation and personalisation. The original coursebook materials also lacked a clear and productive way for learners to use language to achieve a communicative purpose, and the changes made are designed to give learners such opportunities and contribute to their objective need to communicate with English-speaking peoples. The result has been the development of materials that complement the culture of the classroom by tapping into the existing world knowledge the members of the class share and adapting the materials to tie in with that knowledge. Furthermore, the introduction of smart technology in the warm-up allows the learners to access knowledge using a medium that is at the core of their culture as teenagers. These adaptations have allowed a blend between the needs of the learners and course aims, as well as the culture of the classroom.

Author's note

I would be really interested to hear from other people teaching in the Middle East who would like to use these materials with their classes, especially from teachers who are teaching entirely female classes who may have suggestions or insights on how the materials can be adapted for use with girls. If anybody would like to use these materials, please email me at the address in my biodata below.

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Language Learner Literature Writers' Group

Hi, This is Rob Waring. Please consider joining the all new *Language Learner Literature Writers Group*. We'll discuss issues related to the writing of graded readers and other Language Learner Literature.

This is a place to ask questions about the writing of graded readers, ask if a title has already been published, suggest ideas for readers, ask about markets, availability, simplification issues, gradings etc. Note this is a group independent of any particular publisher.

If you have written or wish to write graded readers or other LLL, please consider joining.

At the moment (till the spammers find us) we'll be an open group.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LLL_writers

Tell all and sundry please.

Rob

Appendix 1: Adapted Material – 2 Pages

14 Arabian Wonders

Warm-up

1. Look at the Key Words in the box. Do you know what any of them mean? Can you match them to the pictures on the walls of the classroom?

Key Words: Landscape

desert, waterfall, sea, oasis, river, hill, forest, mountain, cave, island, lake

Reading

2. Work in groups of three. Each one of you will read one tourist information leaflet about a different natural wonder (1-3). After reading, you will tell your group about the destination in your leaflet. Answer the questions below as you read to help you explain the important information to your group.

    1. What is your natural wonder called and where is it?
    2. Do you think you and your family would have fun there? Why?
    3. When is the best time of year for you to visit your natural wonder?
    4. Does any interesting wildlife live there? If not, why?
    5. Is there anything you really want to do there?
    6. What do you think is the most interesting fact about your natural wonder?

Speaking

3. Now tell your group about your natural wonder. Use some of the expressions below to help you. Decide which place you would all like to visit most.

1

Language Building

4. Look at the Fact or Fiction box below. Do you think the facts about Rub' Al Khali are true?

Fact or Fiction?

The Rub' Al Khali in Arabia is the biggest desert in the world. At over 650,000 square kilometres, it is bigger than the Ad Dahna desert in Saudi Arabia. It is also one of the hottest places on Earth. The hottest temperature ever recorded there was 142 degrees!

Work with your group. Do you think these facts about your three natural wonders are true or false?

1. The Dead Sea is lower than the Jabal Qarah caves.
2. The Cedars of God are some of the tallest trees in the world.
3. In the winter, the Jabal Qarah caves are warmer than the Shouf Mountains.
4. The Dead Sea is the most famous natural wonder in the Middle East.

Use the adjectives in red from your information leaflet to write five sentences like these, then share your sentences with your group. Who has the most interesting fact?

Writing: A Tourist Information Leaflet

5. Think of a place near you or in your country that you think is a natural wonder. Think of two or three interesting things about it or reasons why people may want to visit it.

   Example
   Al Hasa Oasis – Saudi Arabia – near Jabal Qarah caves – lots of wildlife – good place for swimming and ATV riding

6. Work with your group. Describe your place to your group and then decide which place you all think is the best. Find out some more information about the place and some good photos of it. Now write a tourist information leaflet about the place with your group. Try to use some of the adjectives in red from the information leaflets you read. You will present your leaflet to the class when it is finished and then vote on which place you most want to visit. Good luck!

2

Appendix 2: Rewritten Reading Texts – 3 Pages

Reading text 1: The Dead Sea

1. The Dead Sea

Jordan

The Dead Sea is in Jordan and is one of the most famous natural wonders in the Middle East. The most interesting thing about the Dead Sea is that it is not a sea at all- it is a lake!

The surface of this salt lake is 1,388 feet below sea level, making it the lowest place on earth. There is so much salt in the Dead Sea that nothing can live in it, so you can see where the name comes from. Because there is so much salt, even heavy people can float in the Dead Sea and read a book at the same time!

The weather in the Dead Sea area is sunny and dry year-round but because of its low level it is not as hot as the rest of the Middle East in the summer.

There are also a wide variety of things for you and your family to do there. Visitors can swim and float in the water, or walk along the beach and take pictures of the breathtaking views. At night there are hotels and restaurants that offer food from all over the world, as well as local restaurants with food from the Arab world.

Perhaps the most memorable part of your visit will be the spectacular fireworks display over the waters of the Dead Sea every Sunday and Wednesday.

So, why don't you book a visit to the Dead Sea today, and enjoy an experience you and your family will remember forever!

To book your visit today, visit the website or call the free phone number below.

www.deadseavacations.me.com

0700-113-5782

Reading Text 2: The Jabal Qarah Caves

2. Jabal Qarah Caves
Saudi Arabia

The Jabal Qarah Caves are near Al Hofuf in Saudi Arabia and are one of the deepest cave systems in the world. The Jabal Qarah Caves are the biggest cave system in the Middle East, and are famous around the world for their underground waterfall.

You can step into the narrow passageways and enter the cool darkness of the Jabal Qarah Caves. These unique caves have a lot of long passageways that lead to the largest freshwater oasis in the Kingdom, and the only underground waterfall in the Middle East.

The caves are cool in the summer and warm in the winter, making them a great place to visit all year round!

There are so many activities for you and your family to do at the Jabal Qarah Caves. You can explore the underground cave system, or climb the rocky hills that surround it. Also, if you go far enough underground, you can even swim in the underground oasis or just listen to the deafening sound of the waterfall! The nearby town of Al Hofuf has many hotels and restaurants with food from all over the world.

Wildlife is rare near the Jabal Qarah caves. Because it is in the desert and it is very hot, only scorpions and some small animals can live there.

So, why don't you book a trip to the Jabal Qarah Caves today, and enjoy an experience you and your family will remember forever!

To book your trip, visit our website or call our free phone number below.

www.jabalqarahcaves.com.sa

0700-227-5942

Reading Text 3: The Cedars of God

3.The Cedars of God

Lebanon

The Cedars of God stretch along the snow-capped Shouf mountains in Lebanon. Some of the trees are over 2000 years old and among the tallest in the world.

You can find the Cedars of God on a unique landscape of dense forests and high mountains. They are part of a diverse ecosystem that is home to a wide variety of birds and animals, including endangered species such as the Anatolian Leopard.

The Cedars of God are in an area that is very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter. In the winter, the snow can be the heaviest in the Middle East so you have to bring the right clothes when you visit!

The area is ideal for outdoor activities in both warm and cold weather. In the winter there are activities like skiing and snow trekking. In the warmer months, there are different things to do. You can swim and go fishing in the nearby lakes, or go bird watching and look out for other animals like the Palestine Mole or the Syrian Brown Bear in the dense forests. Avoid visiting in the summer because of the very hot weather.

You can visit the Cedars of God at any time of year, but remember the area may close if there is heavy snow in the winter.

So, why don't you book a trip to the Jabal Qarah Caves today, and enjoy an experience you and your family will remember forever!

To book your trip, visit the website or call the free phone number below.

www.cedars ofgod.me.com

0800-194-0742

Appendix 3: A Guide to Creating QR Codes

The first thing you need to do is download the app 'Scan' for your smart device. When you have done this, either follow the step-by-step guide below or scan this QR Code for a video guide and then skip to step 7:

Step-by-step guide:

1. Go to www.photobucket.com and open an account. It is free and only requires an email address to open an account.
2. Find the photo(s) or picture(s) you want to use in your class and upload these to Photobucket. You can do this by clicking the orange 'Upload' button at the top of the screen and dragging the photo or locating it in your files.
3. Next, click on 'Library' at the top of the screen. This will bring up all of your pictures. Hover your mouse over the picture you want, then hover over the gear in the top right-hand corner of the picture and click on the 'Get Links' option.
4. This will give you a list of http links. Copy the link named 'Direct' (the second one down).
5. Now go to www.qrstuff.com. Copy this link in to the bar under the heading 'Content', and click on 'Download QR Code' on the far right of the screen.
6. The code will be downloaded as a .pdf file. Open it and then scan it with your smart device. If you have done everything right it should bring up the image on your smart device screen!
7. I like to stick QR codes on classroom walls and have students collect and match them to lists of vocabulary. This is a great way to introduce new words and provide a visual context.

FOLIO 16/2

Capturing Connotation: Second Language Acquisition Through Literary Texts

Myriam del Río Hernández

Introduction

This article shows why and how to integrate literary texts into second language teaching programs from beginner level and explores the advantages gained by this practice, with a particular emphasis on understanding connotative language (but also of cultural nuances). Connotation points towards the emotions associated with a word, as opposed to denotative language which has a literal meaning. Drawing from Genette's (1997) intertextuality theory, which describes the links every text establishes with other texts, it is argued that while it is not necessary to adapt or simplify a literary text, it is legitimate and useful to 'play' with it by cutting, transforming and rewriting.

In order to show how this can be done successfully, two activities - taken from beginners (CEF level A1) Basque and pre-intermediate (A2/B1) English - are described in this article, together with step-by-step instructions. They were used with university students and high school learners respectively.

The aim of these activities is an ambitious one: to instill a discursive competence in students that comes interconnected with the multilingual and pluricultural world around us. The literary theory framework for these activities is now sketched below.

Literary language

Literary language is very often a special kind of language that adds layers of meaning to the ordinary speech/ words of everyday use. For this reason it is referred to by Lotman (1977) as a second language above the 'natural' language. Kristeva reaffirms this quality:

> *Based on natural language, art is nevertheless of another, 'superstructural' order: it redistributes the primary logic of language according to new logical rules, conferring on humanity new mental (or, as one would say today, new cognitive) possibilities, different principles of logic for the reconstruction of the self and the world.*
>
> *(1994, p. 376)*

Below the formal linguistic structures lies the author's conception of the world. Each writer's particular use of words reveals nuances and deeper meanings rarely present in everyday conversations. Moreover, the cultural and social context articulates itself in the literary text through discursive structures. In the same way Bakhtin (1981) holds that every text is produced at the heart of a culture with a long tradition of text production and which has specific characteristics known to the linguistic community in which that text is engendered. Most native speakers of a language share some expectations about how the discourse of ordering food, for instance, or a business meeting or fairy tale are structured. For second language learners with a lack of foreign cultural knowledge, the intertextual nature of text - its links to other texts - can present both an obstacle as well as an opportunity to find a point of contact with their own culture.

The combination of cultural and social qualities together with a 'special, or unusual, use of language' (Lazar, 1993, p. 5) makes the literary text the perfect tool to teach both language and culture. In a literary work, text and context appear indissolubly linked and it lies with the teacher to design activities that help the student to unravel the explicit and implicit content (and perhaps also the cultural nuances that appear in the text).

As Kramsch points out with regards to many language activities that use literary texts:

> *What seems to be missing is someone to tie the strings, draw the implications, and incite reflection on the nature of language, of literary narrative, of cultural assumptions and intertextualities: what was said, and what was not said – both in the text and by the students.*
>
> *(2011, p. 363)*

In this way students gain what Collie and Slater call 'language and cultural enrichment' (1987, p. 4). Even though both appear closely related, this article concentrates on the acquisition of connotative language.

Often students understand the words but not the meaning hidden in the other layers of the text: what I am proposing here is to develop strategies to understand a language that is rich in connotation and implicit meanings; a language that is usually deeper than everyday conversation and more subjective. It is important to point out that this is not a linguistic

function unique to literary texts – all speech acts may (and usually do) include multiple layers of meaning. The literary text is merely proposed as a particularly useful and rich tool to make these layers transparent.

Admittedly, designing second language activities that aim to go beyond form in order to grasp the implicit meaning of connotative language is, to say the least, a challenging task for teachers. But I strongly posit that the effort is worth it. Piloting of the materials described below has demonstrated that if such activities are done properly, the results can be overwhelmingly positive and rewarding.

Intertextuality

To this end and before going onto the practical level, we need to explore the didactic possibilities that the concept of intertextuality in literature brings to the classroom. In this theoretical approach, texts appear as polysemic, that is, open to a variety of interpretations, and interconnected (i.e. linked to other texts). As such they can be explored and looked at from different perspectives and in various ways. The central notion to this proposition is 'play', for which I will draw on one of the five types of transtextuality described by Genette (1997): the hypertext. The French literary theorist writes: 'By hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*)' (p. 5). In its quality as hypertext the text explicitly allows connections and awakens the awareness of differences and similarities with other texts, including variations of itself. The idea of transformation and derivation provides a legitimization to explore the text, which can be changed, reduced and amplified in multiple ways not only by the author but also by the readers: it becomes a space for experimentation. Used as such by students, it can foster insights into the way a text is built, its words and literary devices. Its constituent parts can be split up and rebuilt, maybe substituted by new components. Its meaning can be deciphered through the imitation of its language. In addition to enhanced awareness, there is connection. According to Genette, all literary texts bring other texts to memory and establish bonds between them.

In my view applying this theory to the way literary texts are used in the language classroom paves the way to creating innovative and efficient activities. It vindicates an approach to include literature in the second language acquisition classroom that is both serious and playful.

An example may serve to illustrate the point. Hamlet's famous soliloquy is perhaps the most monolithic text of English, maybe even of world literature, a text that is generally considered 'untouchable' and may be closely scrutinized in performance for nuances of intonation and placement of breaths. Of course the very notion of a performance of a text already indicates its mutability. This becomes even more obvious when we consider that the now famous monologue, which consists of 33 verses, was taken from the 1623 First Folio, printed seven years after the author's death as a compilation of scripts from various sources. Twenty years earlier, *during* Shakespeare's lifetime and only three years after the first known production of *Hamlet*, the First Quarto text was published, which contains a much shorter version (11 verses) of the speech:

> *To be, or not to be, aye, there's the point*
> *To die, to sleepe, is that all? Aye all:*
> *No, to sleepe, to dreame, aye there it goes*
>
> *(21E)*

Many theories have been put forward regarding the respective authenticity of the two texts with the latter version variously described as a theatregoer's notes from memory or the actual 'snappy' performance version, as opposed to the longer print version. We may have personal preferences, but we cannot know whether one is 'more original' than the other; which is hypotext and which hypertext – indeed the question is moot. Both texts are different manifestations of a set of ideas, and students and readers should be encouraged to playfully add their versions to the existing ones. Thus, an assignment in the (advanced) language classroom may be to 'pad out' the soliloquy in order to make the transition from one idea to the next more obvious, recreating, as it were, a possible hypotext: 'Well, the way I see it, it boils down to, how can I say... well: to be – or not to be – that is really the question, isn't it...'

Literary texts are to be treated with respect but this does not mean we need to pay them a reverence that prevents us touching them. They have withstood the test of time and will not suffer from a playful investigation at the hands of second language learners. On the contrary, they constitute a vehicle for a better understanding of language and culture.

By playing with, transforming or imitating texts, students become aware of the differences between denotative and connotative meaning and understand these through the required close examination of the language used. Dealing with the text in such a hands-on manner allows for an easier deciphering of its language and the realization of its potential as a tool to express complex concepts that might otherwise disappear. In addition to this, practice in apprehending hidden meanings of language reinforces a skill that can be used with every type of text, fictional or non-fictional: academic, political, journalistic, commercial etc.

Designing activities

The question now arises of how to design effective activities that aim at enhancing connotative language

decoding skills. First of all some consideration must be taken into account before starting planning. A careful selection of texts and factors such as the type of learner, curriculum and assessment are fundamental points, consideration of which is crucial to the success of integrating literary works into the language classroom. Lazar (1993, p. 56) provides selection criteria in the form of a checklist divided in three sections: type of course (level of students, length of course...), type of students (age/intellectual maturity, cultural background...) and other text-related factors (availability, length of the text...).

Regarding the level at which literary texts can be used in the language class, this article defends the plausibility of integrating literature already at beginner level, even from the very first day of class. There are three important conditions which enable this. In the first place, the tasks need to be carefully designed and explained to students (aims, outcomes etc.). From the point of view of language level, the texts and tasks should not be much above the students' capacity and they should offer possibilities to create different activities in accordance with students' interests. In the second place, a thorough search for and selection of appropriate texts is desirable. Finally, poetry appears to be particularly suitable, perhaps due to its concise and subjective nature.

A question often raised is whether it is acceptable to adapt literary works for use in the language classroom. I believe it is fundamental not to change the language of a literary text but it is legitimate, keeping in mind Genette's palimpsests, to play with it. However, this should not include a mere simplification of the literary text in order to make it more understandable.

Two activities in two different languages and different levels (Basque A1 and English A2) are presented with step-by-step instructions. They both use authentic poems and have been utilized in the classroom successfully. They are examples that hopefully will inspire teachers of any languages to design their own. For the first activity I have chosen Basque, a language with which I assume the vast majority of readers will not be familiar, to try to illustrate the point that previous linguistic knowledge is not required.

Activity 1: First day of class: it is a poem!

Language and level: Basque. Beginners (A1), first day of language class.

Materials: (A fragment of) a poem by Basque author Kepa Junkera and a recorded version sung by Lila Downs, a Mexican singer.

Learning aims: to have a first contact with the pronunciation and intonation of the language; to become aware of its sentence structure; to learn some basic vocabulary as well as to build some first basic sentences/verses in the target language.

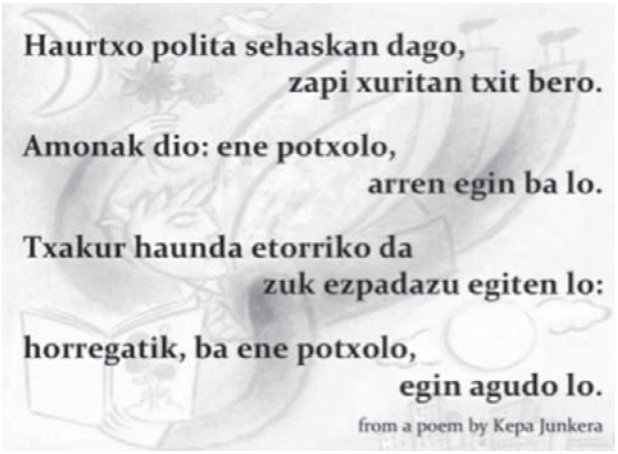
Skills: Oral and written.

Task 1

Students are divided into groups of three and given an envelope, inside of which they find the poem cut up into verses. They spread the contents of the envelope on the table.

As they listen to the poem, they put the verses in order. The song can be played several times. Once finished, students are shown the correct order of the poem (Figure 1) and check if they did it correctly.

Figure 1:



Task 2

One of the verses has been isolated and will be worked on with the help of images (Figure 2). The teacher asks students about the possible meanings of the words. Students make the first hypotheses in groups of three, then suggestions are pooled by the whole class. The particular order of the sentence is learnt together with some vocabulary.

Figure 2:

Task 3

Following the same sentence structure, the students are given vocabulary options (Figure 3) to build their own verses by changing elements. They are given time to write individual sentences and then asked to share these with the class.

Figure 3:

This activity allows for a first contact with the language that is highly positive and motivating. Students realize there are a culture and a community behind the language. At the same time they deal with authentic language and also with how speakers use it for different purposes. In this case they learn about word order and how the laudative suffix *-txo* is added to a word to underline a feeling of love and warmth. By substituting the words with new ones of their choice, students create new verses and become thus active producers of texts. They feel empowered and surprised to be able to do this in a foreign language and their levels of motivation rise.

There is no need to translate the whole poem into the L1 or to know every word as students get used to inferring meaning as a learning strategy.

Activity 2: Beginners class: We wrote a poem!

Language and level: English (A2/B1), pre-intermediate.

Materials: John Cooper Clarke's poem 'I wanna be yours'.

Learning aims: practice using figurative language and learn new words.

Skills: Oral and written.

Task 1

Match up items from group A with items from group B:

1. am not/are not/is not		A. wanna
2. do not		B. ain't
3. want to	Example: 4-D	C. gonna
4. don't know		D. dunno
5. going to		E. don't

Task 2

2A. Read the poem individually:

I wanna be your vacuum cleaner
breathing in your dust
I wanna be your **Ford Cortina**
I will never rust
If you like your coffee hot
let me be your **coffee pot**
You call the shots
I wanna be yours

I wanna be your **raincoat**
for those frequent rainy days
I wanna be your **dreamboat**
when you want to sail away
Let me be your **teddy bear**
take me with you anywhere
I don't care
I wanna be yours

I wanna be your **electric meter**
I will not run out
I wanna be the **electric heater**
you'll get cold without
I wanna be your **setting lotion**
hold your hair in deep devotion
Deep as the deep Atlantic ocean
that's how deep is my devotion

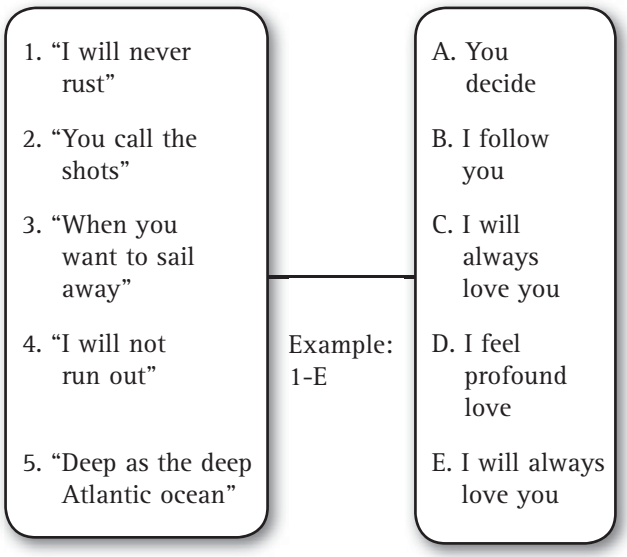
2B. In groups of three, make a classification of the words in bold in the following groups:

Household	Transport	Toy	Clothes	Beauty
vacuum	.....	.....	.....	.....
cleaner	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

2.C. Now add 2 or 3 words to each group. You can use a dictionary or ask your teacher.

Task 3

Match the expressions from group A with their meaning in group B:



Task 4

Write your own poem. Take the new words from table 2B to create your verses. Follow this model. Use your imagination and try to be poetic and make witty connections:

Let me be your ....., I will .....

Example: Let me be your hairdryer, I will blow you away.

Conclusion

Literary texts serve the purpose of a wider educational function in the language classroom thanks to their malleability but also to their privileged nature as carriers of cultural traces interwoven within their linguistic wrapping. The inclusion of strategies to unravel the implicit meanings of language is a vital skill that needs to be added to the communicative competences in language acquisition courses. In this article, the necessity of acquiring this symbolic competence plus the ability to excel in the handling of connotative language has been emphasized. The reasons for this approach have been put forward, the advantages underlined and two examples given that can be transferred to other languages and levels. These sample activities should be seen as starting points suggestive of similar tasks such as: paint a poem (create an image or collage to illustrate a poem), prediction (give students the beginning sentences of a novel and they have to continue), compare descriptive texts (give students some words from a character description, students produce their own version and compare it with the real one), substitution (students substitute some selected words in a text with antonyms and discuss the effect). To embrace the inclusion of literary texts is not without challenges, but the stimulation of discursive and intercultural abilities through intertextual and ludic approaches brings a new perspective to the learning of language. The aim is to serve an outcome that is ambitious in more than one way: to instill a discursive competence in students that comes interconnected with the multilingual and pluricultural world around us.

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FOLIO 16/2

Visualisation, memory and engaging L2 learners in the reading experience

Danny Norrington-Davies

Introduction

The belief that we produce mental images has existed for centuries, from pre-literate tribal Africa to modern Japan, from islands in the Western Pacific to the Brazilian rainforest. It can be found in traditional Hindu and Buddhist spiritual beliefs (Noll, 1985) and has been observed in Shamanistic practices in North America and Central Asia (Thomas, 1997). References to imagery can be found in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Confucius and Hobbes, and its influence has been cited in the foreword to Coleridge's Kubla Khan and the notes of Faraday and Galileo (Miller, 1987). Writers such as Tennessee Williams and John Hawkes have described how mental images play a significant role in the creative process (Miller, 2005) and Gabriel Garcia Marquez famously refused to sell the film rights for his book *100 Years of Solitude* because he wanted his readers to imagine the characters the way they saw them in their mind.

It is this last example that I am particularly interested in. Garcia Marquez clearly believes that when we read, we convert the words on the page into our own imagined versions of the characters, settings and action, or as Moreillon (2007, p.39) beautifully puts it 'we are the directors of the movie that plays inside our heads'. Moreillon also suggests that our most powerful and enduring memories are the ones that are attached to such sensory experiences, and I intuitively believe that both her claims are true. When I read novels and short stories, I am acutely aware of the very vivid images of the characters and settings that the words on the page evoke, and I can often recall these images a long time after I have finished the story. This experience adds to the joy of reading, and it was because of this feeling, rather than any specific teaching principle or SLA theory, that I regularly incorporate visualisation into reading skills lessons. However, it took a conversation with a group of adult English language learners to open my eyes to the benefits the technique could have.

I teach ESL (English as a Second Language) to adult learners at a private language school in London, and one of the most common difficulties my learners claim to have is that they struggle to remember new lexis. I was therefore surprised and interested when, after encouraging a group of learners at CEF B2 level to create mental images of the main characters in a short text by Roald Dahl, they reported in a follow up lesson that they were able to remember what they had read in great detail. When I tested their claims by asking them to summarise the story for me, I found that not only were they able to describe it in detail but they could also recall a number of specific words, collocations and phrases. Fascinatingly, many of them were also embellishing their retellings with the mental images they had generated during the visualisation task. As a result, I became particularly interested in discovering what it was that had enabled the learners to recall the text so successfully.

In this article I will describe firstly how I encourage learners to visualise when they read narrative texts and explore the benefits I believe this has on learning. To do this, I will draw on the literature and my own small-scale research that suggests that doing guided visualisation activities after reading narrative texts can result in greater recall of both the text and new lexis. I will also draw on interviews with learners to explore the impact this training can have on subsequent learning, how it helps students understand texts on a deeper level and how visualisation activities can draw out recollections that can be used as the springboard for enriching and genuine conversations.

A visualisation and reading lesson

The text my learners had recalled so clearly is an extract from 'The Way up to Heaven', a short story by Roald Dahl written in 1960. I had been using this text for a number of years with B1+ learners to help them understand and use narrative tenses in stories, but after discovering how much my learners enjoyed reading it I decided that a past tenses gap fill was a bit of a waste. I therefore started getting my learners to do more creative things with the extract, and this led to using guided visualisation and getting students to create posters depicting what they 'saw'.

Denis (1984) suggests that a good narrative will contain vocabulary and be written in such a way that it naturally elicits vivid images and evokes feelings in the reader, and for me 'The Way up to Heaven' does both. It describes the day an old couple prepare to move out of their house in New York. Adjectives

are used to evoke images of the house (*gloomy*), the weather (a *blustery* January morning) and the characters (the *decrepit but loyal servants*, the *stern-looking* Mrs Foster in an *old-fashioned, ermine fur coat*). To describe the action, the texts reads quite slowly (*it was a gloomy place, and few people came to visit*) before the author begins to describe the action at an increasingly frenetic pace in which '*the house came alive', 'there was a great deal of bustling about*' and '*Mrs Foster flew from room-to-room to supervise the feverish operations*'. At the end of the extract the reader learns that Mr Foster has not yet come out of his room and that Mrs Foster is worried that unless he does, they will miss their flight. He is never described and nor is the reader informed of what he is doing in there. For many of my students, this creates a real sense of curiosity, so much so that a number of them have searched for the book online and read the ending.

For the purposes of the lesson I re-titled the text 'The Big Day' (Appendix 1) to encourage learners to predict what might be happening in the story. The learners get together to think of occasions that could be classed as a big day, for example, a wedding, graduation or feast day. Their ideas are elicited and written up on the whiteboard. Once we have done this, the students read the text to quickly ascertain what is being described (the family are moving house). As I usually have between two and three hours with my students, I also like to encourage more critical reading and deeper processing of the story by encouraging the learners to discuss why the family might be moving, where they might be going and why Mr Foster might still be in his room. This often leads to some interesting discussions and has again encouraged some learners to read the end of the story later.

This stage is also likely to involve a discussion of unknown words and phrases, and this is something I encourage prior to the visualisation stage. Numerous studies have shown that a significant obstacle to L2 visualisation is the fact that when learners read descriptive and narrative texts their ability to create mental images is frequently inhibited by the presence of unknown or difficult lexis, which in turn can limit their general understanding of texts (e.g. Stevick 1986 Tomlinson 1997). Similar results have also been reported by Masahara (1998, in Tomlinson 2001) who found that when asked to read the beginning of a novel, where native speakers and more advanced L2 readers reported creating mental images, intermediate L2 readers reported their need to translate and decode at word level. In discussions and interviews with learners during my own research, this issue was also frequently reported.

Once we have explored the unknown lexis, I ask the learners to relax and close their eyes whilst I read the story aloud. At different points in the text, I pause and ask guiding questions, such as 'What does Mrs Foster

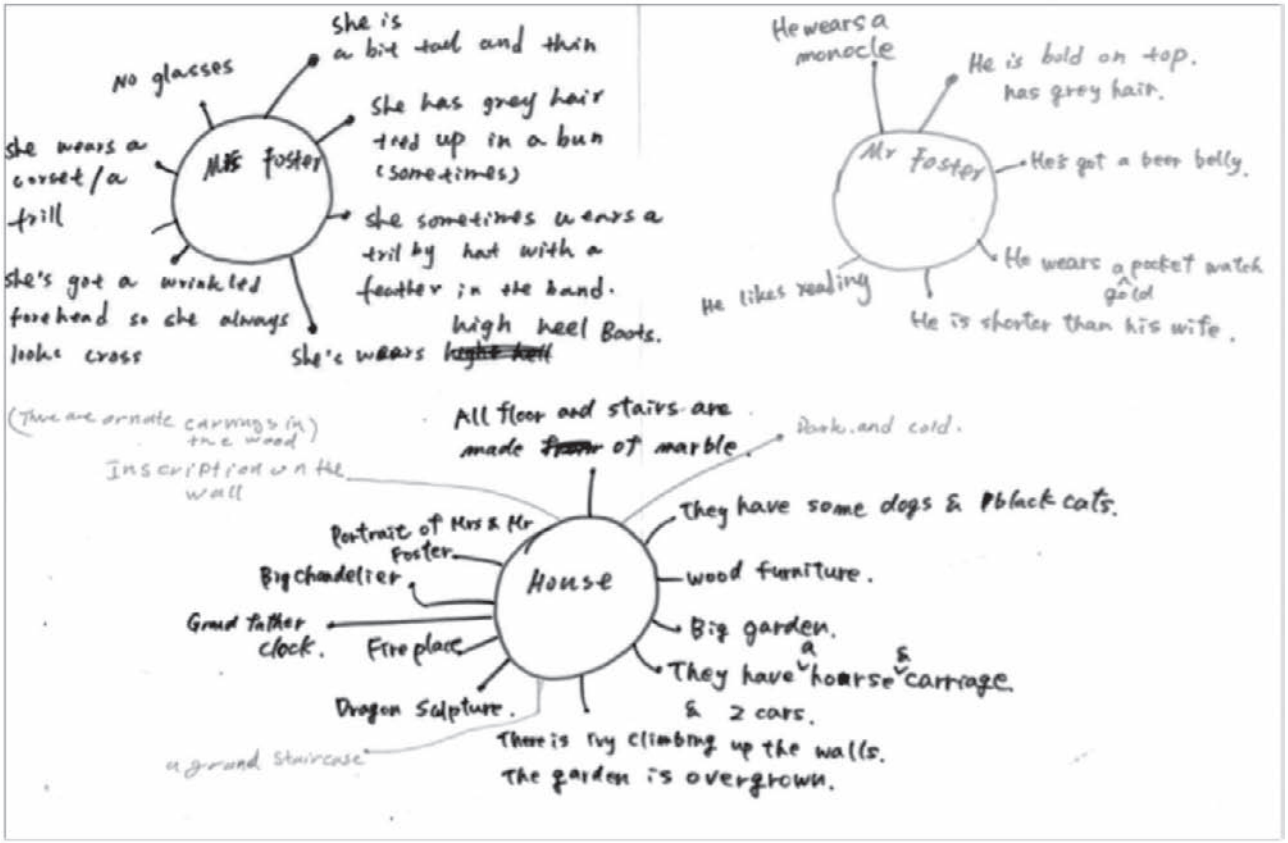

Figure 1

look like?', 'What is she wearing and how does she move?' or 'Why is the house so gloomy?' (Appendix 2). This guided visualisation task is designed to enable the learners to create images in their minds that depict the setting, the characters and their actions and behaviour, something they would not necessarily do without instruction (Clark and Paivio, 1991). Once this is done, the learners create small groups to share their images and make posters depicting what they saw (Figure 1). This task is open-ended, and I monitor and discuss the posters with each group, feeding in the language the learners need to describe what they 'saw'.

When the learners have completed their posters we move on to a presentation stage. The posters are put up on the classroom walls and each group prepares to share their images with their classmates. We then create new groups who are instructed to walk around the classroom as if it were a gallery. When a group reaches a poster, the student involved in creating it shares the images with their classmates, describing how they came to include an image and teaching any new words and phrases. Once this is done, we gather together for feedback, discussing any differences in the images and posters and exploring any interesting language that came up. Finally, pairs get together to summarise the story to one another.

Why use visualisation in the classroom?

As I stated earlier, for a long time I encouraged my learners to create mental images after reading texts because of my own feelings about reading and visualisation. Like any teacher, I was also basing my belief in the benefits of visualisation on the positive reaction of my students, the high levels of genuine interaction in lessons, the amount of new language generated during the creation of the posters and the fact that some students express an interest in reading the rest of the story at the end of the lesson. However, after the discussion with the group of learners who had recalled the text so well, I decided to investigate the technique further, and the following section is a summary of what I found.

Learners use mental imagery to aid recall

In a small piece of classroom research I carried out for my MA dissertation, I explored the effect of visualisation on recall by randomly assigning two B1 level classes as a Visualising group (VG) and a Non-visualising group (NG). After processing the text for meaning, the students in the VG were prompted to visualise after reading 'The Big Day' and to share their mental images within the group. However, the NG were instructed to read the text, answer comprehension questions and work out the meaning of unknown lexis. One week later I met the classes again and asked each learner to reconstruct the text from memory, giving them the first two lines as a prompt.

I then used independent-samples t-tests to analyse the recall scores of propositions (ideas in the text), lexis and propositions + lexis combined for each group, and though the results showed no significance at the level of $p>.05$ (primarily due to the relatively small sample size, this was not an unexpected outcome), the VG scored higher in all three categories. It is also interesting to note that six of the top seven individual scorers were in the VG, and in terms of recall of specific lexical items, the four highest scorers were all in the VG. Indeed, as the results for lexis and propositions + lexis were approaching significance, the results offered tentative statistical support to the proposition that visualisation and the use of mental images leads to greater recall in text reconstructions. These results mirror findings from a number of similar experiments, e.g. Kulhavy and Svenson (1975), Giesen and Peeck (1984), Tomlinson (1996), Tomlinson (1997), Ghazanfari (2009) and Erfani, Iranmehr and Davari (2011).

However, my interviews with learners after the text reconstruction more clearly pointed to effective use of visualisation and mental imagery when recalling the story and this theme is illustrated in the following comments:

> *[transcription note: ( ) indicates a pause]*
>
> The *gloomy* I... I... love Sherlock Holmes. I don't know is current century or not but I suppose in my mind is a house like age of Sherlock Holmes.
>
> (recalling how he remembered *antique, butler* and *chef*) I have 3 image. When speaking about ( ) it's very interesting this. When they are talking about furniture I have on the door of the house and I see the *downstairs* ( ) *the stairs on the left and the kitchen on the right*. But when the previously talking about the *butler*, I'm there and I see the kitchen on the left and the stairs on the right
>
> in my home in my family eh ( ) we was ( ) we had a restaurant and when eh ( ) speak about *popping out the butler* I imagine some ( ) devices. I imagine of the the ( ) the old kitchen of my grandparents

In one interview, a student also discusses how she had tried to 'follow the characters' in the story, describing herself observing the butler carrying suitcases downstairs from the hall to the bottom of the stairs. She then suggests that from her position in the story, the kitchen is located on her right. In the interview she claims that these images helped her write the following excerpt.

> The butler took the baggage downstairs in the hall. The maid removed the dust and dropped the antique furniture. Meanwhile the cook popping out from the kitchen for a brief speak with the butler.

All of these examples clearly point to learners using mental images to recall the text.

Visualisation prompts interesting recollections

Moreillon (2007, 39) claims that 'Our most powerful memories are attached to sensory experiences. A smell or a taste can trigger a long-cherished memory', and for one learner in particular this was quite a common theme of our discussions. On his poster he had suggested that Mr Foster wore a suit with a pocket watch on the left hand side, and his rationale for this is described below.

> Is the same pocket as my uncle. Is on the left (indicates left hand jacket pocket). When I was young I was an uncle they had a pocket watch and when come at home eh ( ) I ask him "please, please, please put the watch here" (indicates his ear) and I sat next to him and, always in the left. In the pocket in your left. I put in my here (points to his ear) on the watch.

This was then followed by this most fascinating exchange:

Student: Do you know how eh ( ) remember personally (laughs) My grandparent had a movie eh ( ) a cine. A hall of cine.

Teacher: Yeah.

Student: When he was very young. Sixties. Sixties in Spain and eh ( ) they had the eh ( ) censor when you stop a image. The people you don't want to see. The dictator of the ( ) a rule of operation the machine. I go with my grandparent. my brother to go the cine from here and was my grandparent who this action. this eh ( ) this image No (Emphatic) Phwah (Mimes putting his hand over the camera)

Teacher: So he had to censor it?

Student: And I saw the film in the ( ) in the ( ) hand of my grandparent.

Teacher: Oh wow.

Student: and the people. The people was in the "Waaaa!" (whistles and boos) "Out! Out!" Yeah. That I saw hundred of times.

Teacher: And it's very vivid.

Student: I remember perfectly the hand of my grandparent. Perfectly (emphasis) Perfectly.

Arnold (1999, p.262) suggests that 'The fact that emotional traces are coded with images and words has important implications for language teaching. When used appropriately, images can provide a strong impetus for learning (and) greatly empower learning'. I believe this to be true, and this is why I feel it is important that we encourage learners to reminisce and share their recollections, and visualisation activities are a great way to make this happen.

Training can encourage learners to use visualisation as a strategy

In follow-up interviews, when asked if the process of the experiment had had any impact on their learning and the way they read or tried to remember new language, the following comments from learners provide evidence that there is some effect:

> (Describing trying to see images as they read in L2) Yes is happen. It is not always no? In the beginning was in conscious. Now not. Now is like a skill I try use because some words for me are very difficult

It is interesting to note how this learner is trying to use visualisation as a reading strategy, though this was not something we ever discussed. It is also interesting to see how the presence of difficult or unknown words is preventing him from doing this.

> Yeah just ( ) I used sometime ( ) sometimes I used ( ) how can I say the ( ) close my eyes and imagine what is in? Yeah I used it sometimes. Yeah it really worked

This comment was particularly interesting for me it came from a student who had struggled to describe any mental images in his first interview, likening the only pictures he could recall as being like photographs. Now he was using visualisation techniques not as a reading strategy but to picture and remember new words. He followed this exchange by describing how he could recall *flowerbed, perennial* and *weed* from an IELTS reading text.

> there's two *flowerbed* each side of the house. One flowerbed have *weed* (long pause) *weed* have ( ) *weed* have many words right? So one is useless weed and one is for *tobacco*. Like this. And the other side ( ) the other side have *perennial* flowers

It can therefore be seen that after visualising training, some learners start using the technique as a reading strategy or as a way of remembering new lexis.

Visualisation encourages pushed output and reformulation of learner language

During the poster-making stage, because the learners are put in a position where they need to share their

images, they are pushed to find ways of describing things that they saw but do not have the words for. In many ways, this stage shares aspects of Community Language Learning in that the meanings are provided by the learner and the form by the teacher (Thornbury, 1997). This means that pushed output and reformulation play a big part in this stage of the lesson.

Over time, I have seen learners using circumlocution techniques, e.g. 'is a large wood clock higher than me' (grandfather clock), drawing pictures, miming, using dictionaries and, with a class of Spanish learners, using their L1. With some reflection on these strategies, a teacher can explore the success of circumlocution techniques or code-switching, encourage learners to push themselves to describe new things and show them the value of reformulation. The stage can also help new teachers work with emerging language more confidently as it can be done outside the glare of whole class interaction and at word and phrase level.

Visualisation can help learners appreciate good storytelling

Moreillon (2007, p.41) describes how writers use literary devices such as pace, similes and metaphors 'to help shape our sensory experience of texts, to help make connections between our senses and language', and visualisation activities can be used to help learners appreciate a writer's craft in this way. By reading the text aloud as learners visualise, I am able to demonstrate how Roald Dahl's choice of words and phrasing quickens the pace of the story, and some learners have claimed to enjoy this aspect of the extract. I can therefore encourage learners to read the text silently to themselves, trying to quicken the speed of their inner voice when they get to the moving day.

Moreillon's comments about the connection between the senses and language were also borne out in the following comment from one interviewee, who described how she had remembered the word *blustery*.

> Because I focalised the ehm ( ) the situation that it was not calm or ( ) it was ehm ( ) frenetic for ( ) the *Foster family*..... I imagine outside and feeling the breeze like ( ) maybe it's the wind..... Just the sound of (makes a noise like wind) like this, maybe.

Visualisation can lead to more extensive reading

Rosenblatt (2005, p.63) claims that 'students need to be helped to have personally satisfying and personally meaningful transactions with literature (which) develops the habit of turning to literature for the pleasures and insights it offers' and this visualisation lesson has had a good effect in this regard, with some students going on to read the rest of the story in their own time or some asking what books I would recommend. Of course I am aware that it may be the power of the writer that is encouraging the learners to read more, but I believe that encouraging the learners to visualise and hearing the story read aloud enables me to help learners appreciate the writing more, as Rosenblatt suggests.

Pedagogical implications

While I cannot assume that mental imagery alone determined the outcome of the text reconstruction scores, the results have strengthened my belief in the value of using visualisation techniques in the classroom. Tomlinson (1997, p.216) states 'if learners who do visualise typically understand and recall more than those who do not then it would be very important for teachers to help non-visualisers to start visualising'. Taken alongside the findings from my study, I believe that helping learners to visualise and giving them repeated opportunities to do so will have immediate, small effects on their ability to understand and recall narrative and descriptive texts and the lexis encountered within. I also believe that it is important to emphasize the importance of sensory experience in reading lessons, as reinforcing these experiences supports students' understanding of the significance of the senses in learning and recall' (Moreillon 2007, p.40).

The problems caused by unknown lexis also need to be addressed when considering how visualisation can be used in the language classroom. Texts that are used for visualisation training need to be chosen carefully so that too much unknown or difficult lexis does not impede the process. Methods that can be utilised before visualising tasks include the pre-teaching or guessing of unknown words or the use of texts that students have already decoded. Texts could also be in the L1, with the poster stage then done in English. It also seems that guided visualisation has a role to play, as 'instructions and related context effects can influence the arousal of imagery, so that students and others are more likely to generate mental images if instructed to do so than if left to their own devices' (Clark and Paivio 1991, p.155).

I will continue to incorporate visualisation in my reading skills lessons and am always on the look-out for interesting texts (I recently used a restaurant review and visualisation task and my learners created fascinating sub-plots to what was described in the review). I believe though that further research should be conducted to establish the effects of visualisation on recall. Such studies should take into account the need for larger visualising and non-visualising groups in order to lower the margin of error and generate statistically significant data. I also feel that longitudinal research would enable teachers to explore the impact of the treatment on learning and memory

strategies. Self-reports from semi-structured interviews would be complemented by the introduction of more extensive visualisation training, learning journals and the use of think-alouds during classroom reading tasks. Such studies would enable researchers and teachers to conclude that imagery has a positive effect on comprehension and recall and that visualisation is a viable technique that should be incorporated into L2 learning course design.

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Appendix 1: The Big Day

Mr Eugene Foster, who was nearly 70 years old, lived with his wife in a large, six storey house in New York,

on the lower East side. They had four decrepit but loyal servants. It was a particularly gloomy place, and few people ever came to visit them. But on this particular, blustery morning in January, the house came alive and there was a great deal of bustling about. One maid carried bundles of dust sheets to every room, while another draped them over the antique furniture. The butler brought down suitcases and put them in the hall. The cook kept popping out of the kitchen for a quick word with the butler, and Mrs Foster herself, stern looking in an old-fashioned ermine fur coat with a black fleece hat on her head flew from room to room to supervise the feverish operations. Actually, she had thought of nothing else since they had decided to move, and now all she thought of was that she was going to miss her plane if her husband didn't come out of his room and get ready.

Appendix 2: Script for visualisation cues

"Close your eyes and listen to the story. As I read, try to make pictures in your mind that describe the story"

Mr Eugene Foster, who was nearly 70 years old, lived with his wife in a large, six storey house in New York, on the lower East side. They had four decrepit but loyal servants. It was a particularly gloomy place, and few people ever came to visit them.

"Picture the house. What can you see? Why is this old house so gloomy? Why do no people come to visit? What do you see on the walls? On the floor? What kind of furniture do they have? What rooms do you see? Can you hear anything? What noises do you think you would hear in this house? There are also four old servants. What do they look like and how do they move?. I'm going to read more now. Notice how I read this bit faster. Think about why"

But on this particular, blustery morning in January, the house came alive and there was a great deal of bustling about. One maid carried bundles of dust sheets to every room, while another draped them over the antique furniture. The butler brought down suitcases and put them in the hall. The cook kept popping out of the kitchen for a quick word with the butler, and Mrs Foster herself, stern looking in an old-fashioned ermine fur coat with a black fleece hat on her head flew from room to room to supervise the feverish operations.

"What are all the people doing? Can you see what each servant is doing? What do they look like? Imagine Mrs Foster, this stern looking old lady. You know what she's wearing. Can you see her? What does she look like? Is she tall or short? How does she move? What's she like? It says she's in charge. Is she really?

Actually, she had thought of nothing else since they had decided to move, and now all she thought of was that she was going to miss her plane if her husband didn't come out of his room and get ready.

Ok, we can't see Mr Foster but i want you to imagine this old man. What does he look like? What's he wearing? Also, what is he doing? We know he won't come out of his room. Why not?

Ok. Now tell your partners what you saw. As you do so, make a poster of your images.

FOLIO 16/2

Can an Understanding of Discourse and Pragmatics Make Our Texts More Realistic? An Example from an Arabian Coursebook

Paul Benjamin

Introduction

There is an ever-growing need in the EFL classroom for teachers to act as de facto materials developers who increasingly need to 'evaluate, adapt and produce materials' to ensure that there is a match between their learners and their materials (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 1). Linked to this is the common classroom problem of presenting a text from a coursebook where the language contained is either so graded or so contrived that it offers little opportunity for affective cognitive engagement (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 3) and provides few features that are characteristic of authentic discourse in the target language which are such important characteristic of good materials (Tomlinson 2011, p. 14). This article aims to look directly at this problem by applying discoursal and pragmatic considerations to a conversation contained in a listening and speaking lesson from the textbook *Challenges 3: Middle East Edition* (Harris, Mower, Sikorzynska and Williams, 2007) and suggest how the conversation can be improved to make it more realistic and thus more useful to the learners as an example of language in use. Challenges 3 itself has been adapted for specific use by teenagers at the CEF B1 level in the Middle East, and would typically be used in a monolingual secondary school class of Arabic speakers. In the case of the text under discussion here (see Appendix 1), which depicts a conversation between friends, certain discoursal and pragmatic considerations such as the 'rules' of turn-taking, relevance and politeness should arise if the text is to be an authentic representation of the target language.

There are, however, areas where it does not achieve this. This article will aim to examine these three areas of discourse and pragmatics and make suggestions as to how this material can be adapted to incorporate them. The article will be divided into two sections: firstly a review of relevant literature about principles of turn-taking, relevance and politeness with the aim of providing a context and rationale for suggested changes. The second section will focus specifically on how these principles can be applied to this specific listening text. The transcript of the original conversation (hereafter Conversation 1) is included in Appendix 1, whilst a rewritten version that takes into account the forthcoming analysis is included in Appendix 2 (Conversation 2). Both Appendices are worth reading prior to the following analysis to help orientate the reader as to their contents when it is referred to. As this text is the main source of language input in the original material, it is the most potent area for discussion as to how the intricacies of these three discoursal and pragmatic areas can be presented to the learners.

Part 1: Review of the Literature

As noted in the introduction, Conversation 1 takes place between friends. This is useful as when analysing discourse it is important to consider the participants, their relationship, the equality and power relationships between them and the goals of the interaction (McCarthy, Matthiessen and Slade 2002 p. 56). To apply these considerations to the casual conversation presented in Appendix 1 leads to the conclusion that the participants are friends and know each other well, that they share equal power footing and that their goal would be to sustain and maintain social relationships. It follows from these conclusions that because such interactions are highly interpersonal there is no set agenda in such a conversation and that the speech produced is spontaneous, or 'on-line' and co-constructed (McCarthy 2001, p. 49; Watkins 2005, p. 76).

Turn Taking

Thornbury and Slade write that 'conversational interaction is jointly managed through a shared understanding of the "rules" of turn-taking' (2006, p. 188). These 'rules' are not codified, but are socially constructed and can vary from culture to culture. Turn-taking in any language will carry conventions such as who can interrupt whom and how they do this, as well as how topics are changed. This means the interlocutors will be required to monitor each other and control the turn-taking system in order for the conversation to develop and flow correctly (Celce-Mercia and Olshtain 2000, pp. 9-10). To ensure that

communication can continue in a casual conversation like that in Conversation 1, this process of monitoring will connect to strategic decisions about how listeners will fit their own contribution into the topic of the conversation and judging when it is appropriate to divert or change the topic conversation (Nunan 2013, p. 86), a skill that Conversation 1 is intended to develop.

Relevance and Topic

Relevance and topic in discourse are particularly salient to Conversation 1 as on several occasions the relevance or cohesion of utterances is questionable. Transition Relevance Places (TRPs), or places where a second person can take up the talk such as a silence, a nomination to speak or even by the same speaker continuing when nobody else does (Radford, Atkinson, Britain, Clahsen and Spencer 2009, p. 401), are central to the maintenance of relevance in discourse. Adjacency pairs are an example of TRPs, and are also the way in which we can identify regularities in turn-taking as they follow simple patterns such as greeting-greeting (e.g. A: Hello. B: Hi.) or question answer (e.g. A: How are you? B: Fine.). An essential point about adjacency pairs is that they are by nature coherent, providing unity in a piece of discourse and allowing the utterances to 'hang together' and be related (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain 2000, p. 8).

Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) aimed to identify features that govern Anglo-American discourse and intended to reflect on how we regularly use and flout these maxims to convey something more than the literal meaning of our utterances (see Leech 1983, p. 8 and Celce-Murcia and Olshtain 2000, p. 22). Grice's maxim of relation, part of the CP, suggests that contributions to a conversation should be relevant in order to maintain coherence. In the case of Conversation 1, there are areas where Grice's CP is not observed causing an unnatural and arbitrary change in topic (see lines 1-2 in Appendix 1 as an example). In short, unless we flout Grice's maxim of relation one utterance following another should be about the same topic in order to achieve relevance unless there is clear evidence a change in topic is needed: for example by the current topic starting to flag, or by the need to change the topic in order to talk about something else of immediate importance (Thornbury and Slade 2006, p. 127), such as an imminent danger.

Politeness

Interruption is an important aspect of politeness; one of the main aims of Conversation 1 is to teach interruption strategies. Celce-Mercier and Olshtain (2000, p. 25) write that 'the area of politeness deals with perceptions, expectations, and conventional realisations of communicative strategies which enhance social harmony.' Linked to this is Leech's Politeness Principle (PP), which highlights the need to minimise unfavourable behaviour such as cutting in or brusquely changing the subject in order to increase favourable consequences and preserve 'face'. Politeness in linguistic terms refers to showing an awareness of another person's 'face': the emotional and social sense of self that we all have and expect others to recognise. On top of this, there are 'face-threatening' and 'face-saving' acts, which are realised by the kind of speech we use: a face-threatening act could be the use of an imperative (e.g. 'Get me water.'), whilst a face-saving act would employ a more indirect construction such as 'Could you get me some water' (Yule 2010, p. 135). This holds particular relevance to Conversation 1 as there are examples of face-threatening acts being used, arguably, quite unnecessarily (for example, see lines 6-7 where one speaker, Aisha, is interrupted).

Part 2: Adaptations to the Material

All the aspects of discourse analysis discussed above will be covered in this section and, for convenience, lines of the original dialogue have been numbered 1-20, and will be referred to as such. The lines of the rewritten version are numbered 1-22. These features are discussed in the analysis following each excerpt. The original material also contained a 'key expressions' box (key expressions: 'sorry to interrupt'; 'by the way'; 'as I was saying'; 'changing the subject'; 'let's talk about that later') displaying the language items the material was supposed to demonstrate in use (see Appendix 1). Key features of the dialogue excerpts below have been italicised, underlined or are in bold. The reasons for doing so vary so are explained in the analysis that accompanies each section.

Section 1

The first section of Conversation 1 under analysis is lines 1-3, which are reproduced here for clarity:

1. **Aisha**: Hey, I bought this new book yesterday. It's really...

2. **Mona:***Sorry to interrupt*. Have you seen my brother and cousin?

3. **Aisha:** No, I haven't. By the way, do you like my new bag? Oh, here they are. Where were you?

Firstly, Aisha and Mona are clearly supposed to be of equal social status and are talking as friends which is implied by a set of pictures accompanying the dialogue showing them at university and smiling at each other and also by Aisha's informal use of the word 'hey'. Despite this, Mona interrupts Aisha mid-utterance (italicised), even though Aisha is she clearly coming to the end of an utterance which would serve as a TRP. The interruption totally changes the subject and by interrupting, Mona is implying that what has to say is

of greater importance. However her question to Aisha is swiftly dealt with and the conversation moves on again to discuss Aisha's new bag, and we never find out why she wanted to talk about her new book. Conversations do change topic readily, but it is surprising that Aisha does not return to the subject of the book, as she clearly felt it was a relevant thing to talk to Mona about. It seems as if the material is attempting to demonstrate the key expressions with little regard for the cohesion of the surrounding dialogue.

Keeping the dialogue as it is could give learners a misleading example of coherence and cohesion in turn-taking conventions as by interrupting in the way that Mona does threatens Aisha's negative face as it assumes a higher social status and the right to overrule Aisha's topic of conversation. It is true that this would be socially acceptable if the 'brother and cousin' were needed urgently, but as the rest of the dialogue shows, they are not. By interrupting, Mona also flouts Grice's maxim of relation and removes Aisha's right to equal status in turn-taking rights (Fairclough 2010, pp. 48-49). To reinforce this point, lines 1-7 from Conversation 2 are reproduced here to demonstrate a less face-threatening way of demonstrating the key expressions (italicised):

1. **Aisha:** So, I bought this new book yesterday. It's really useful for our Biology assignment.
2. **Mona:** Oh, great! I need all the help I can get with that! *Sorry to change the subject*, <u>have you seen my brother and cousin</u>?
3. **Aisha:** <u>No, why</u>?
4. **Mona:** It's no problem. <u>We're supposed to be meeting here and they're late, that's all.</u>
5. **Aisha:** I'm sure they'll be here soon. Hey, *by the way*, do you like my new bag? I got it half price!
6. **Mona:** Oh wow! It's gorgeous. How much was it?
7. **Aisha:** I know. It was only 300 Dirhams! Oh, here come's your brother and cousin.

In this version, Mona does not at any stage threaten Aisha's face by interrupting her, and the changes in topic are dealt with more appropriately by using adjacency pairs as clear TRPs in lines 2-4 (underlined). There is also a clearer sense of cohesion as each utterance directly relates to the utterance before it, as well as demonstrating to learners less aggressive ways to change the topic of conversation.

Section 2

The second section of Conversation 1 under examination is lines 4-7, which are reproduced here:

4. **Mohammed:** Well, we were speaking to Mr Foster. He told us to choose two great people to present in class tomorrow. I think scientists would be best.
5. **Jamal:** Yeah, I'm more interested in poets.
6. **Aisha:** Good idea, you could discuss the poems of...
7. **Mohammed:** *As I was saying*, I think scientists are the best choice. After all they are the greatest people. Without them where would we be today? Yes, science...

Again this piece of the material demonstrates interruption strategies (italicised), but in doing so suggests precedents that could impact the learners' overall pragmatic competence. In interesting point is that, according to Nunan (2013, p. 97), men talk and interrupt more than women, during cross-gender conversations. This is supported by Yule (2010, pp. 276-277) who writes that in cross-gender discussions men interrupt women more, whilst women produce more back-channels than men. This gender split is especially interesting here as the dialogue is between men and women in the Middle East, where gender relations are very different to those in an Anglo-American context and where the social power relationship between men and women is extremely heavily weighted towards men. Although research reveals that men interrupt women more it is worth questioning whether this is a value that we should teach to our learners. McGrath (2004, p. 357) considers a similar point by questioning whether textbooks should simply present reality or if teachers should reserve the right to alter them for what we perceive as the better. In this instance I would suggest that tackling this issue with learners in the Middle East could easily cause unintentional offence and is best left alone, but in other contexts could certainly be a valuable discussion to have with learners.

Another concern is that EFL textbooks often lack information regarding sociocultural variables and the ways particular speech acts can be construed. As this material is intended to be used in the Middle East, giving the learners some information about social conventions in Western culture could be fruitful if they may go on to deploy the target language in a Western country (McConachy and Hata 2013, p. 295) as interrupting somebody as brusquely as Mohammed does Aisha in this text would almost certainly be viewed as extremely rude in many contexts.

Aside from this however, this section of the material still has problems. Firstly, Aisha is not flouting the maxim of relevance when she continues Jamal's talk about poets, but Mohammed cuts in quite abruptly and talks about what he was saying. Perhaps if Aisha was veering totally away from the topic this would be acceptable in some contexts, but as her contribution is very relevant, Mohammed, like Mona earlier, is

threatening Aisha's negative face by interrupting in this way and assuming a superior social status. Also, like the example in Section 1, Aisha is very close to the end of her utterance and this would become an appropriate TRP where Mohammed could offer his contribution. Below the adapted version of this section of the material is reproduced:

11. **Jamal:** I disagree. I'm more interested in poets.

12. **Aisha:** That's a good idea; you could discuss the poems of Ted Hughes.

13. **Mohammed:** True, but *as I was saying*, I think scientists are the best choice. After all they are the greatest people. Without them, where would we be today?

This is intended to be an illustration of how the coherence of the conversation can be improved by making use of adjacency pairs to demonstrate how interlocutors can acknowledge what each other are saying (underlined). Of course, in natural conversation this can be done using back-channelling devices such as nodding or saying 'mmm', however displaying physical actions in a listening tape is impossible, although it would be possible and perhaps fruitful to re-record the dialogue to include audible back-channels such as 'yeah', 'right', 'really?' or 'mm-hmm' so learners could hear different ways of showing attention and interest. The main point is that Mohammed's original interruption served little purpose except to display the use of the structure 'as I was saying' to interrupt and could give learners the impression that this is a polite way to do so. In reality of course, 'as I was saying' does not need to be used to interrupt but can function, as shown in Conversation 2, to redirect the conversation as part of a new utterance.

Section 3

The final section to be examined is lines 16-18 from Conversation 1:

16. **Mohammed:** Can I say something? Well done to the two of us and our presenting skills!

17. **Jamal:** Thanks to Aisha and Mona for helping though!

18. **Mona:** *Changing the subject*, can you see that guy talking on his mobile while he's driving. It's illegal now, isn't it?

The most obvious problems here regard relevance and cohesion. Mona's use of the key expression (italicised) in line 18 to change the subject does not 'hang together' with what Jamal says in line 17 (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain 2000, p. 8). It is likely that in a real conversation she would acknowledge Jamal's thanks by smiling or nodding, but as we cannot show this in a listening tape it is possible that the learners could believe that she was not listening, or that accepting thanks is not culturally acceptable. The 'preferred response' to a 'thank you' is for it to be acknowledged by the person you are thanking, but instead Mona offers a 'dispreferred response' and in the process breaks Grice's maxim of relation. Mona changes the subject wildly to talk about something that is largely unconnected to what is happening and to the social situation and suggests that the material is forcing in the key expression with little regard for authenticity or reality. To illustrate this, lines 18-22 of Conversation 2 are reproduced here:

18. **Jamal:** It's difficult, but why don't we choose one poem as an example?

19. **Mohammed:** We'll never agree! And what about the scientist? Who shall we choose?

20. **Aisha:** *Sorry to interrupt*, but **I was just telling** Mona about this great book I bought yesterday. It might help you. Do you want to borrow it?

21. **Mohammed:** That's great! Thanks Aisha.

22. **Aisha:** No problem.

This version attempts to demonstrate that Aisha's new interruption (italicised) does not have to cut somebody off mid-utterance as it does in line 2 of the original dialogue. Instead, she politely waits for Mohammed's TRP and then answers his question with an offer of help (underlined). This also demonstrates a structure to reference back to an earlier point in the conversation (bold) as a way of bringing cohesion to the whole conversation. Previously, we never knew why Aisha had started talking about the book she had bought, but now there is a clearer and more cohesive reason for its introduction. This cohesion can be used to demonstrate how learners can bring previous life experience to a conversation, and Aisha's offer fits nicely with Grice's maxim of relation whilst being more true to the rules of turn taking and not assuming a higher social status by ignoring what Mohammed says.

Conclusion and Future Developments

Overall the original material contains some useful themes for developing learners' competence in pragmatics and discourse, but there is definitely scope for adaptation. The material makes the common mistake of presenting the language as usable in situation 'X', but does not demonstrate additional contexts of use or encourage learners to evaluate or analyse the illocutionary force of the language (Murray 2010, pp. 294-299), especially in terms of how they will be perceived by others if they use these language items as modelled in the original material. The suggested changes are intended to show that with a greater

attention to pragmatics and discourse structure on the part of the materials writer, we are less likely to present structures that, if assimilated and reproduced, could lead learners to interrupt impolitely or offend somebody unintentionally. One key area for future development would be the development of corpus-informed listening materials like those contained in the Touchstone series (McCarthy, McCarten and Sandiford (2005 - 2008) or the Unlock series (e.g. O'Neill, 2014) produced using the Cambridge University Press learner corpus. The changes made to the dialogue in this paper were largely intuitive, and although this is common in materials adaptations, this does not mean they are changes that reflect common or universal use of the structures used for interrupting and changing the subject. A corpus analysis would show in greater detail how these structures are used and whether their incorporation into the material based on intuition alone is valid. In lieu of this however, this article has attempted to be a demonstration of how discoursal and pragmatic understanding can help teachers in their role as evaluators, adaptors and producers of materials as outlined by Tomlinson (2003, p. 1) at the start of this paper.

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Appendix 1: Original Dialogue

Key expressions: 'sorry to interrupt'; 'by the way'; 'as I was saying'; 'changing the subject'; 'let's talk about that later'

Aisha and Mona are waiting outside school.

1. **Aisha**: Hey, I bought this book yesterday. It's really...
2. **Mona**: Sorry to interrupt. Have you seen my brother and cousin?
3. **Aisha**: No, I haven't. By the way, do you like my new bag? Oh, here they are. Where were you?
4. **Mohammed**: Well, we were speaking to Mr Foster.

He told us to choose two great people to present in class tomorrow. I think scientists would be best.

5. **Jamal**: Yeah. I'm more interested in poets.

6. **Aisha**: Good idea. You could discuss the poems of...

7. **Mohammed**: As I was saying, I think scientists are the best choice. After all they are the greatest people. Without them where would we be today? Yes, science...

8. **Jamal**: I still think poets would be more interesting.

9. **Mona**: Well, perhaps you could talk about poets and scientists.

10. **Jamal**: Good idea. I'm happy with that. We'll have to think of something that connects them though.

11. **Mohammed**: That's not so easy... Poets and scientists are both searching for something and they inspire us in different ways, I suppose...

12. **Jamal**: Yeah! Let's choose one poem as an example.

13. **Mohammed**: We'll never agree! And what about the scientist? Who shall we choose?

14. **Jamal**: I've got this reference book, let's have a look.

15. **Mohammed**: Good idea.

Later, they talk about the presentation.

16. **Mohammed**: Can I say something? Well done to the two of us and our presenting skills!

17. **Jamal**: Thanks to Aisha and Mona for helping though!

18. **Mona**: Changing the subject, can you see that guy talking on his mobile while he's driving. It's illegal now, isn't it?

19. **Mohammed**: Hey- that's a good idea for my essay!

20. **Jamal**: Come on, Mohammed. Let's talk about that later. Let's get out of here!

Appendix 2: Rewritten Dialogue

Aisha and Mona are waiting outside school.

Aisha: So, I bought this new book yesterday. It's really useful for our Biology assignment.

Mona: Oh, great! I need all the help I can get with that! Sorry to *change the subject*, have you seen my brother and cousin?

Aisha: No, why?

Mona: It's no problem. We're supposed to be meeting here and they're late, that's all.

Aisha: I'm sure they'll be here soon. Hey, *by the way*, do you like my new bag? I got it half price!

Mona: Oh wow! It's gorgeous. How much was it?

Aisha: I know. It was only 300 Dirhams. Oh, here come's your brother and cousin.

Mohammed & Jamal: Hey guys.

Mona: Hey. Where have you been?

Mohammed: We were speaking to Mr Foster. He told us to choose two great people to present in the class tomorrow. I think scientists would be best because of how they've changed the world.

Jamal: I disagree. I'm more interested in poets.

Aisha: That's a good idea; you could discuss the poems of Ted Hughes.

Mohammed: True, but as *I was saying*, I think scientists are the best choice. After all they are the greatest people. Without them, where would we be today?

Jamal: I still think poets would be more interesting, and I like Aisha's idea about Ted Hughes.

Mona: Well, why don't you talk about both?

Jamal: That's a good idea. I'm happy with that. We'll have to think of something that connects them though.

Mohammed: That's not so easy... I suppose poets and scientists are both searching for something and they inspire us in different ways...

Jamal: It's difficult, but why don't we choose one poem as an example?

Mohammed: We'll never agree! And what about the scientist? Who shall we choose?

Aisha: *Sorry to interrupt*, but *I was just telling* Mona about this great book I bought yesterday. It might help you. Do you want to borrow it?

Mohammed: That's great! Thanks Aisha.

Aisha: No problem.

FOLIO 16/2

Using Social Constructivism and Digital Content to Enhance English Language Teacher Training

Soraya Garcia Esteban

Introduction

According to Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, acquisition and participation are synergistic strategies in learning situations where learning takes place through interactions with other students, teachers, and the world at large. Aspects of participation involve teaching in meaningful contexts to students based on their personal and social history, negotiating, class discussions, small group collaborative learning with projects and tasks, and valuing meaningful activity over correct answers. Dewey (1933/1998), also called for an education grounded in real experience and considered that learning should take place in real-world practical workshops in which students can demonstrate their knowledge through creativity and collaboration.

Based on this philosophy, this article explores the use of digital contents such as social media (blogs), video (YouTube), multimedia software (iEdiLim), audio (Movie Maker) and the web (online dictionaries, TESOL websites, and Google search, etc.) as effective motivating tools to develop communicative and task-based activities for learning and teaching English as a foreign language (TESOL). This study is based on the impressions and experiences of developing social constructive authentic tasks in higher education using new technologies. It considers not only current language learning paradigms related to social participation, but also how the digital integration of the different linguistic skills promotes participative learning in pedagogical motivating contexts.

Literature Review

Motivation is a crucial factor in successful language learning but students are not always internally motivated; they sometimes need situated motivation, which is found in environmental conditions that the teacher creates (Gardner and Lambert, 1972 and Dörnyei, 1994, 2006). Influential authors such as Tomlinson (2011, 2012) also consider motivation a significant factor and propose some commonly agreed theoretical principles for second language acquisition and language learning which will be considered in the current research study report (2008, p.4).

Language acquisition is based on neuro-psychological processes and is said to be counter-intuitive to learning due to the fact that it is a subconscious process, similar to how children acquire their first language (Maslo, 2007, p.41). Language learning is, however, a conscious process; it is the product of either a formal learning situation or a self-study programme (Ortega, 2008). This paper agrees with Zašerinska (2010, p.7) in that the synergy between language acquisition and language learning involves a process of analysing the meaning of the key concepts `language acquisition´, `language learning´, `second language´, and `foreign language´, and considers that these are related to the idea of developing a system of external and internal perspectives as a life necessity, and the unity of all language in the pedagogical discourse.

Social software or Web 2.0 applications (popularly called 'social media´) is now considered to be on top of Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of motivational needs according to psychologists (Reig, 2012). Opportunities for language learning and motivation can be offered via digital devices as learners are exposed to new language and are prompted to engage in collaboration that promotes negotiation of meaning (Luzón, 2009; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Digital content comes in many forms; from text, audio and videos files, to graphics, animations and images (Mullan, 2014). Digital technologies can be adapted to current educational trends and help learners improve language learning as they facilitate dynamic education and the ability to share experiences in the foreign language. Online digital learning objects/the web can be used in a participative, collaborative and reflective way. The web is considered, therefore, a useful resource not only for reading and writing texts in English, but also for speaking about, listening to, and watching content via social media and different multimedia resources (Dudeney and Hockly, 2007; Miller, 2007; Stanley, 2013, etc.).

The web is one of the main technical resources proposed for language learning because it enables access to numerous resources as well as to all kinds of information (specific texts, reports, articles, etc.) and facilitates multimedia interaction (see, for example Alexander, 2006). The web allows for the design of interactive tasks using multimedia software (such as EdiLim, Myscrapbook and Movie Maker) as well as providing websites with teachers´ lesson plans and language teaching sites (EFL / TESOL) with discussion forums or interactive exercises. In addition, the web offers encyclopaedic reference resources such as *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language*, publications, movies, etc. that can be used to help motivate learning through multimedia and audio applications with text transcription (YouTube, RealPlayer, etc.).

Social media (blogs, wikis, etc.) offers the potential for creating and publishing personal tasks or projects ensuring a collaborative didactic approach with the possibility of discussion and visualization of contents. A blog or wiki can be designed to encourage practice in linguistic skills (such as grammar and vocabulary development, listening, etc.) with web links to EFL sites containing specific texts, interactive activities, online dictionaries, grammar references, prepared exercises and examination materials. This form of digital content also promotes writing and reading with the participation of the students in posts, chats, forums, etc. engaging them in desirable practices such as collaborative content creation, peer assessment and motivation (Duffy 2008, p. 120).

Considering this type of potential the web offers to English language teaching, this paper explores how the use of digital content for language learning is underpinned by social constructivism, develops Tomlinson's principles for second language learning (e.g. 2008, p.4), and enhances students' linguistic skills by carrying out motivating and participative tasks. The findings from this exploratory project illustrate the efficiency of technology in promoting language learning.

Procedure

This research project was carried out at Universidad de Alcalá (Spain) with 32 second-year full time students of *English as a Foreign Language* doing a BA in Primary Education. The survey consisted of four Likert-scale questions enquiring about the efficiency of technology in learning English based on Tomlinson's (2008, p.4) principles. As shown in Table 1, participants indicated their involvement with digital content in a scale from 1 (agree) to 3 (disagree). Quantitative data were collected from the answers to the survey to analyse general trends. Qualitative data were obtained from open questions concerning rationalization of the student's experience and proposals for improvement. Succeeding data analysis, interviews were held in order to foster students' critical thinking about their own learning experience. This reflection was discussed in a dialogic relation between the language teacher-instructor and the teacher-candidates.

The case study was carried out with students working autonomously and outside class time in groups of ten over the twelve ECTS contact hours assigned to the course. The assignment was designed to reinforce the contents of the subject, which had been previously explained in traditional on-campus lectures using a virtual learning environment platform (Blackboard). The digital experience consisted of viewing a video and reading, creating, presenting, and commenting syllabi in blogs. The project was aimed at developing the respondents' language skills (reading, writing, and speaking and listening) in a motivating and participatory technological setting.

The first two tasks assigned to the teacher trainers were to discuss and answer some questions about an English language instructional video on YouTube (see Read, 2013 on Using flashcards effectively) and an illustrative blog (see Pérez, 2012 on ESL Didactic experiences). These listening (video) and reading (blog) activities contained educational theory, materials and resources for teaching English in the Primary classroom and were intended to exemplify some contents of the subject (Learning and teaching language skills). Based on the revision of these examples from the web, the third activity involved designing and writing a lesson plan to teach English to Primary Education pupils. Once the language accuracy was checked, students were asked in the fourth assignment to create a blog and publish their lesson plan and activities. Each personalized blog contained different digital resources such as TESOL multimedia images, audio and videos in English from YouTube, links to activities created for language teaching using Edilim, Movie Maker, etc. or to resource sites for English language teachers (onestopenglish and British Council). The fifth task required an oral presentation of the blog and, consequently, listening to peers´ work and to embedded audios with stories and songs. Based on the assumption that blogs can promote a motivational collaborative climate for evaluation and critical reflection, students were asked to conclude by writing a post on their favourite blog/ lesson plan, commenting on it according to rubrics provided by the teacher (appropriate use of resources, language, interest, and relevance).

Besides using multimedia and social media to develop language skills, students took advantage of the web to access to online dictionaries (e.g. www.wordreference.com) and websites with didactic texts and articles of interest for extensive readings about specific topics (such as *Halloween, Children's literature*, etc.).

Results And Discussion

The analysis of the learners´ responses and reflections on their own learning using digital content show that the process developed met the objectives based on Tomlinson´s (2008, p.4) principles, as illustrated by the data below.

1. Digital content enables learning in a motivated, relaxed, positive and engaged manner

Analysis and specification of these data, both written and in personal interviews, indicates that all participants agreed that they were able to learn in a motivated, relaxed, positive and engaged manner as technology promotes intrinsic motivation offering varied multimedia that facilitate students´ interaction. The students worked with motivating resources (YouTube, on-line dictionaries, TESOL websites, etc.) that allowed for independent actions (i.e. creating blogs, videos, interactive activities), decision-making (search for specific information and texts of interest) and monitoring personal progress (self-assessment according to the teacher and peers´ comments on posts), which fosters autonomous learning.

2. Technology facilitates contextualized and comprehensible language

Nearly all students (96%) acknowledged that technology grants contextualized and comprehensible language by carrying out specific tasks. Working on texts and specific contents related to teacher training with the web also ensured control, responsibility and personal learning reflection as students' productions (blogs) were published through social media sites to be evaluated by teachers, peers and other users (posts). Technology assists the practice of contextualized and comprehensible language provided that the proposed assignments are designed to meet the specified needs of the learner, are related in content (i.e. in its themes and topics) to a particular discipline/occupation (in this case, Primary Education teacher), and are centred on the language appropriate to those activities in terms of syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics and so on. Only 2.5% of the participants expressed their preference to learn contents only through traditional education, as they consider social media etc. difficult to use.

3. Digital content allows language to be salient, meaningful, and frequently encountered (interaction and communication)

More than 93% respondents agreed that using social media, multimedia and the web for carrying out virtual assignments ensures that the language and discourse features are salient, meaningful and frequently encountered as they facilitate interaction and communication (on the web) by means of particular media tools (i.e. blogs, YouTube, etc.). Working with blogs to carry out constructive tasks in a foreign language fulfils the principles of social constructivism. It involves active participation by the student in decisions regarding the selection of resources to produce significant content to be edited, published and shared with a specific audience. Only 3% of the participants said that social media does not allow 'real' communication due to its asynchronous transmission.

4. Technology facilitates the integration of the different language skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking)

Finally, the majority of the learners (83.3%) considered that technology allows for wider and more multi-dimensional processing of the language as the use of different resources enables the technical integration of the different language skills and access to audio/text processing (on TESOL websites, multimedia didactic videos and audio, etc.) with up-to-date information. Nevertheless, 16.6% students believed that technology does not easily integrate the speaking skill; they prefer oral presentations to be held in person to generate face-to-face discussion.

The above data documents participants´ responses

Table 1. Use of Digital Content in Primary Education Teacher Training

	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Discussion
1. Were the digital content you have used along the course (Blogs, YouTube, images, TESOL websites, on-line dictionaries, etc.) motivating to practice the subject contents?	100%	0%	0%	
2. In your opinion, does technology allow acquiring contents and language related to Primary Education? (e.g. Read (2013) video, etc.?)	96%	11.5%	2.5%	
3. Do you consider that digital content develops communication, interaction and participation?	93%	4%	3%	
4. Does technology facilitate the integration of the different language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking?	83.3%	00%	16.6%	

and reflections on their perceived results on practice. The findings revealed that most students consider that learning with specific digital content (video, software applications, audio and images) enhances language learning and helps develop language skills. According to the students, technology facilitates the development of the foreign language carrying out different oral and written tasks by providing access to didactic web links and by carrying out recommended online tasks.

Analysis and specification of these data has also illustrated that the use of digital content enables social constructivist principles to come into play in the need for social interaction, the acquisition of knowledge through different means in real contexts, and by carrying out multimedia cooperative tasks (Derycke, Smith and Hemery, 1995; Gould, 1996; Beatty 2003).

Conclusions

This study has sought to better understand how digital content promotes motivation in learning and teaching English by recognizing the web as a facilitator of access to different resources, provider of instruction and information.

Social media enables meaningful learning since the student is considered someone active who is able to construct his or her own knowledge through interactions with other students, teachers, and the world at large (social constructivism). This study based on digital content does not follow any established content nor specific textbooks but aims to create a motivating approach for language learning based on appropriate pedagogical principles.

Further proposals for enhancing language learning are: to present contexts that satisfy students´ specific needs; to adapt the type, level and amount of content to the student; and to provide a personalized immediate feedback and assessment with suggestions for improvement. This instruction can be accomplished using mobile learning applications that allow students flexibility to select between lessons that can be completed anywhere at anytime.

This study leaves an open door for further research on a more comprehensive project that incorporates BYOD (bring your own device) to develop all language skills and involves digital-based activities carried out with mobile devices. Pre-service educators need to be trained in didactic situations that facilitate language acquisition with resources that are digital, easily portable, have access to internet, multimedia capabilities and can facilitate a large number of tasks. This will qualify them to teach a digital generation of young people who will be using new media to learn, communicate, and socialize in innovative and exciting ways.

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FOLIO 16/2

Developing A Closer Understanding of Academic Oral Presentations

Peter Levrai and Averil Bolster

Introduction

Oral Presentations are an important part of studying in an English-medium university environment and will be something many students face, whatever their field of study. Such presentations can be particularly challenging for non-native English speakers (NNES). Despite the importance of oral presentations as a form of academic discourse, they remain a relatively under-researched area and an area where there is limited targeted EAP presentation training materials. There is no clear conceptualization in the existing literature of which the authors are aware as to the key features that make a presentation academic. This paper aims to redress that issue with the aim of then evaluating the training materials currently available to help NNES develop their academic oral presentation skills.

Through discussion with lecturers from different disciplines it can be determined that the same level of academic rigour is expected of an oral presentation as would be demanded from a written piece of work - an academically sound oral presentation should be logical, coherent, research-based and referenced. A criteria-driven evaluation of EAP presentation titles suggests that while they are relatively successful in developing technical presentation skills they may not be meeting the expectations of lecturers in terms of enabling students to generate academically sound presentations.

Why presentations?

Oral presentations are an important part of the undergraduate university experience (Zappa-Hollman, 2007) and can be considered 'a key skill in academic life.' (Alexander, Argent and Spencer, 2008, p.245). This assertion is certainly true in the context this project took place – that of University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC), a branch campus of University of Nottingham UK, where students of all disciplines in various years of their undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes carry out presentations in their studies. Presentation tasks range from informal seminar presentations of a journal article the students have read to thirty-second poster pitch group presentations during which students have to try to sell an innovation. Architecture students have to manage maps, concept panels and models as they present their design to a close questioning audience while Electrical Engineering students need to present a circuit board they have built, discuss its performance in relation to theory, and make the business case for how it may be applied. Ultimately it may be a presentation task, like a viva, which is the culmination of a student's academic career.

Substance over style

Over the course of the academic year 2011-12 there was an opportunity to observe students delivering presentations for their lecturers. While watching Environmental Science research presentations the particular challenges of an academic presentation became clear. One of the first students approached the presentation as they may have been told to in a generic presentation course and they had strong presentation skills, speaking confidently and clearly. From a language teacher's perspective they seemed to have dealt with the task well. When it came time for questions, however, the substance of their presentation was seriously challenged by their lecturers and the academic rigour expected from student presentations was highlighted.

A later student, while not as linguistically competent or confident as the first, gave a presentation which was much more positively received by the lecturers. She achieved this by transposing the structure of a written research assignment to an oral presentation. Her presentation opened with a review of the current research and knowledge in the area, which led to identifying the gap in knowledge and outlining what her research project was designed to find out. She moved through the methodology of her approach, presented the results and in the discussion and conclusion returned to her research question and evaluated how successfully she had found out what she had intended. When it came time for questions from her lecturers she was able to deal with them confidently and appropriately. Despite her linguistic disadvantage compared to the earlier presenter, she was able to present *academically* more effectively by focusing on the purpose of the presentation and ensuring the audience was clear about the logical progression of her research project.

This observation is in line with a point made by

Alexander et al. (2008, p.249), that presentation feedback to students in an EAP context should focus on higher level task achievement (clarity of purpose, use of evidence) rather than surface language issues. In the way a student could have linguistically sophisticated writing skills (in terms of grammatical control and lexical flexibility) yet still have problems in producing an academically sound essay, so might a student have effective presentation skills (in terms of delivery) and yet fail to deliver an academically sound presentation. The success of a presentation, from a subject lecturer viewpoint, seems to be on the delivery of a well-argued, supported, logical presentation which demonstrates understanding of the topic rather than students simply demonstrating good presentation skills. A concern of this paper is to determine how well current commercially available materials help develop such skills.

Understanding academic oral presentations

Despite the importance of presentations there are surprisingly few commercial EAP materials available which specialise in oral presentations for students. Academic reading, writing and listening skills books dominate the market. This relative dearth of academic presentation materials may be due to the fact that in comparison to 'the research article, which is the most researched academic genre, little work has been done to describe the spoken academic genres' (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001, p 188). As Ferris and Tagg noted in 1996, not much work had been done exploring oral academic literacy, and this is still sadly the case and presented difficulty when researching this paper. The lack of depth in the research field of academic presentations was highlighted by Miles (n.d.) although the issue is slowly being addressed. For example, Seliman and Naitim (unpublished) investigated the moves in English for Workspace presentations and Soureshjani and Ghanbari (2012) considered the factors which impact the effectiveness of an academic presentation. What is lacking, however, is any significant published research building on the findings of Zappa-Hollman (2007) describing the key features which contribute to a successful academic oral presentation.

Delving deeper

We aimed to add to this understanding of the needs of an academic presentation course through discussions with faculty staff from UNNC and a visiting professor from an American university. The lecturers came from the disciplines of Architecture (Lecturer A), Business (Lecturers B and C), Law and Business (Lecturer D), Environmental Science (Lecturer E), Education (Lecturer F), English Studies (Lecturer G) and International Studies (Lecturer H).The breadth of specialities covered by the lecturers was of great use because it highlighted that presentations are used in a wide variety of subjects. Apart from the variety of disciplines, there was also diversity within the group of lecturers Participants came from countries such as the US, the UK, Egypt, Nigeria, the Netherlands, Singapore and Australia. In terms of gender, there were five men and three women.

We met with the lecturers individually and the discussions were videoed for later review. The framework was relatively open to allow for the opportunity for on-the-spot clarification and exploration of topics which came from the lecturers. Each discussion lasted 15-20 minutes and the four major topics of discussion were:

1. Why are student presentations used in higher education?
2. What kind of presenting and presentations do your students have to do?
3. What makes a good presentation for your division?
4. What makes a presentation academic?

and they were followed up with detailed questions. The responses are summarised below.

Why are student presentations used in Higher Education?

Five of the eight lecturers (A, D, F, G and H) stated in different ways that presenting is an important communication skill which is transferable to the students' future life in the world of work. Communicating information, especially information which the students themselves have found, seems to be the key reason for using presentations in academic work. There was a slightly different but by no means less important reason given by Lecturer D, who succinctly stated that an academic presentation was 'the truest measure of mastery of the subject matter'. In essence, the three main reasons for doing academic presentations are as follows:

a. The academic presentation provides important transferable communication skills
b. Presentations based on research allow students to make their own discoveries and learn independently
c. How much and how well students know the subject matter can be identified in academic presentations.

What kind of presenting and presentations do your students have to do?

Each lecturer talked about their own particular type of presentation or genre although many similarities exist across the disciplines, such as the prevalence for both individual and group presentations. Formal

assessments and more informal 'stand up and give their views' (Lecturer B) types are also common across different branches of study. The immediate response from Lecturers A and E (both from the school of Science and Engineering) to this question was that their students always have to present their research.

What makes a good presentation for your division?

While there is a great deal of subjectivity when it comes to identifying favoured features when observing others speak in public, there are four key issues that were common to many of the lecturers. These four points are:

- timing
- structure
- audience awareness
- research basis.

Having observed hundreds of student presentations over their careers, it is unsurprising that timing was an issue that was mentioned by six lecturers (A, B, D, E, F and H). Lecturer E claims that NES students in the UK are more conscious of timing and of how much information can be put into a 12-minute presentation than their NNES counterparts in China. This issue was also raised by Lecturer A who mentioned that his NNES students often either tried to 'squeeze' too much or 'expand' too little information into their allotted presentation time.

Six lecturers (A, B, E, F, G and H) also stressed that a good presentation should be well-structured and have a logical organisation. Again, six of the eight lecturers (A, B, C, D, E and H) explicitly mentioned being aware of the audience and engaging them as being of major importance. The Q&A session at the end of presentations is cited by Lecturer B as a time for everyone to become involved; Lecturer C claimed this to be the most important part of the entire presentation. Having content which is based on solid, verifiable research was also raised as a feature of a good presentation by six of the lecturers (A, B, C, D, E and G).

What makes a presentation academic?

Answers to this question bore the most similarities of all of the questions posed and it became clear that the key words most associated with what makes a presentation academic are *references, citations* and *verifiable*. Lecturer A stated that all images and information must be referenced and cited while Lecturer B went one step further by claiming it is necessary that sources can be verified. This was supported by Lecturer F, who asserted that information in an academic presentation 'has to be verifiable; otherwise it's a chat'. Referencing sources was also raised by Lecturer H and she expressed her dismay that in her experience, many MA and even PhD students do not know how to cite orally. It is the synthesising of sources that contributes to making a presentation academic for Lecturer G.

Lecturers C and D did not refer to citations or verifiability explicitly but they did express what a presentation being academic means to them. Lecturer D believed it should be 'borne of research techniques' with a solid argument. He followed this by saying that a student presenter should never simply 'parrot' the research because 'if you cannot speak freely about the subject matter, you do not have mastery of the subject'. Having a genuine knowledge and understanding of the subject is also critical for Lecturer C who posits that if students have prepared sufficiently they will no longer be nervous since 'they are living the project'. For him, it is in the Q&A section of an academic presentation that students really display their knowledge and it is at this point that discussion of the subject can be facilitated and expanded upon.

To summarise, four features that make a presentation suitable for academic contexts are that it:

- contains references and is verifiable
- contains citations to sources, which are synthesised
- contains solid arguments borne of research
- demonstrates a student's true knowledge and encourages further discussion of the subject.

Defining the scope of the academic presentation

As outlined at the start of this paper there are many types of presentation tasks university students may be asked to do, from formal assessments to informal seminar presentations. The thing that unites them, however, is that they take place in the university sphere and it could be argued that there are common expectations that cut across different academic disciplines. The discussions made clear the rigorous standards lecturers have when it comes to presentations and that these are viewed in a similar light to academic essays, a point support by Zappa-Hollman (2007). Indeed, it seems to be the case that while the medium may differ (oral and written) the key features of academic discourse are similar, with a clear parallel in the expectations of a good written assignment and a successful oral presentation. As Lecturer F stated, an academic presentation is 'a verbal version of a written presentation'. Issues such as overall structure, logical progression and firmly research-rooted conclusions based on reliable and verifiable evidence are as much a factor in oral presentations as essays. Oral presentations are also very much seen as a communicative act and the ability to make complex arguments or issues accessible to a wider public is highly valued. A particular challenge of an oral presentation however, is that students are also expected to be able to articulate knowledge that

is outside of the content of the presentation. Where an academic essay represents the student's complete answer, in an oral presentation the student's ideas and arguments are open to questioning and it was widely felt by the lecturers that the question and answer stage of the presentation was the most valuable and insightful. Essentially, an academic oral presentation contributes to, or promotes, further discussion (Zappa-Hollman, 2007). This could lead us to the following definition of the academic presentation:

> *An oral academic presentation is a clear articulation of ideas, based on and referencing sources or research evidence, in which the presenter leads the audience to logical and sound conclusions. Through the presentation the presenter must analyse and evaluate information, making their reaction and position clear to the audience. Information in an academic presentation must be verifiable and the presenter must have a wider and deeper knowledge of the topic than that presented in the body of the presentation. A presentation should lead to discussion and further debate, with the presenter able to respond to audience questions competently.*

A review of NES academic presentation materials

Having considered the expectations of lecturers across disciplines it was felt important to review the scope and coverage of materials designed to help native English speakers (NES) develop their academic presentation skills. The purpose of this review was to enhance the criteria-referenced survey by establishing the needs of NES student presenters and, by default, NNES students, The three titles reviewed were *Speaking Your Mind: Oral Presentations and Seminar Skills* (Stott, Bryan and Young, 2001), *A Student's Guide To Presentations* (Chivers and Schoolbred, 2007) and *Presentation Skills for Students: second edition* (Emden and Becker, 2010).

Of the four features of student presentations identified from the subject lecturer discussions - timing, structure, audience awareness and research basis – none of these were dealt with in any great detail in the three publications reviewed above. The importance of time management is addressed in Chivers and Schoolbred (2007) and Emden and Becker (2010) but not in Stott et al. (2001). How to structure and logically organise an academic presentation is barely undertaken in Stott et al. (2001), apart from a brief section called 'Disposition of arrangement of material' on page 102 and signposting on page 119. Any notable advice on carrying out research in advance of presentations is absent in this book too. However, 'knowing the audience' is featured in Chapter 5.

Structuring academic presentations is approached in Emden and Becker (2010) albeit in a simple introduction - low point - conclusion manner (Chapter 5). Much greater detail and variety is dedicated to structure and organisation in Chapter 7 of Chivers and Schoolbred (2007). This publication also dedicates a whole chapter (6) to 'understanding your audience' while Emden and Becker (2010) do not. However, they do implicitly raise the issues of audience awareness in various sections of the book. Similar to Stott et al. (2001), Emden and Becker (2010) avoid dealing with the research that has to be done in order to prepare for an academic presentation, whereas Chivers and Schoolbred (2007) address this issue to some degree in Chapter 7.

Aside from the four features of good academic presentations, the characteristics of what makes a presentation specifically suitable for academia – verifiability and the use of referencing and citations - were not examined in any of these three books targeted at NES students. However, there were numerous other positive features about presenting in all of these books which were influential in designing the criteria for the survey evaluation of EAP presentations materials. All three books provided advice, to some degree, on giving presentations in seminars; using one's voice, building confidence and dealing with nerves; using notes and visual aids. Both Emden and Becker (2010) and Chivers and Schoolbred (2007) advise how to build a team for group work and touch on topics such as forming a group, allocating roles and dealing with conflict. Only Chivers and Schoolbred (2007) address rehearsing in the area the presentation is to be held in and being aware of learning styles comprehensively, while a unique positive feature of Stott et al. (2001) is that they include a 'sample criteria sheet for peer oral assessment' as an appendix.

Criteria-driven evaluation of NNES presentation materials

At the time of writing there were three stand-alone EAP presentation titles available for review. These were *University Foundation Study: Presentations - Module 11* (Manning and Wilding, 1999), *Passport to Academic Presentations* (Bell, 2008) and *Giving Academic Presentations* (Reinhart, 2002). The latter two titles have recently released second editions but unfortunately there was no opportunity to review them for this paper.

To evaluate the NNES presentation materials, a criteria-driven approach, as outlined by Tomlinson, Dat, Masuhara and Rubdy (2001), was preferred. However, the very act of writing criteria limits the scope of the evaluation so it was decided to divide the evaluation into two parts; an overall impression and an in-depth criteria-based evaluation. This is in line with the proposed framework of McDonough and

Shaw (2003) of an 'external' and 'internal' evaluation. The overall impression represents 30% of the total score and the criteria-based evaluation 70%. This division is representative of the greater validity that more objective criteria-driven analysis carries over impressionistic analysis.

The criteria were influenced by the discussions with subject lecturers and review of NS targeted academic presentation books. Due to the very specific nature of the materials being evaluated, some of the typical categories suggested for criterion-referenced surveys could be excluded. There was no need to categorise the criteria as being age-specific, for example, because they are all targeted towards a similar student profile, which is young adults in tertiary level education. Additionally, local criteria would not be required since they were being viewed globally or 'context-free' (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 23). The final list contained 40 criteria (see Appendix 1) and in terms of survey questions, a mix of analytical (focusing on the materials) and evaluative (focusing on the users of the materials and their effects) ones were used. Scales of 1 to 5 were employed; 1 meaning least likely or 'not at all' and 5 meaning most likely or 'fully'. This resulted in a possible minimum score of 40 and maximum score of 200.

Evaluation results

These criteria were then given to three experienced EAP professionals, two of whom work on materials development (one male, one female) and one of whom works in student academic advising (male). The three evaluators carried out the analysis separately and they were unaware of the identity of the other participants. The results of the three evaluators' marks were collated and an average was calculated. The higher the mark, the greater 'the potential value of the set of learning materials' (Tomlinson, 2003, p.15).

Combined Results

From the results in Table 1.0 and Figure 3.0, it can be seen that the second title (Bell, 2008) performed the best. The overall impression scores for this set of materials were noticeably higher than the others: 26% higher than Manning and Wilding (1999) and 13% higher than Reinhart (2002).

Table 1.0 The overall results of the evaluation of NNES-targeted EAP presentation materials

NNES-targeted Materials	Overall Result
University Foundation Study: Presentations - Module 11	48%
Passport to Academic Presentations	61%
Giving Academic Presentations	58%

Impressionistic, Criteria-Based and Overall Evaluation

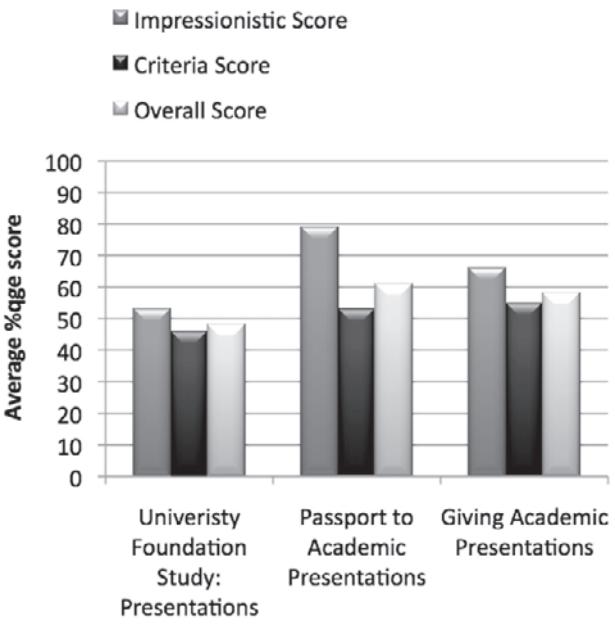

Fig 3.0 – **Breakdown of Evaluation Results**

With such a difference in the initial subjective marks, it is worth viewing the results of the criteria-referenced evaluation in more detail. The results for each set of materials can be found in the following section.

Criteria category results

Once the overall impression score is removed and only the criteria-driven evaluation is taken into account, there is a different pattern from the simple overview of the combined scores (see Fig 4.0). Instead, when viewing the average of each section of the criteria-based evaluation Reinhart (2002) emerges with the highest average percentage in the three categories of 'General Presentation Skills', 'Academic Presentations' and 'Language Support' and could therefore arguably be considered the most appropriate material.

One result which was surprising was that the lowest scoring of the four categories for both Bell (2008) and Reinhart (2002) was that of 'Academic Presentations'. It could be assumed that materials that bear 'academic' in the title should perform strongly in this category. For Manning and Wilding (1999) the category which performed most poorly was 'Language Support' while 'Academic Presentations' gained the second lowest percentage points for these materials.

Overview of Average Evaluation Results

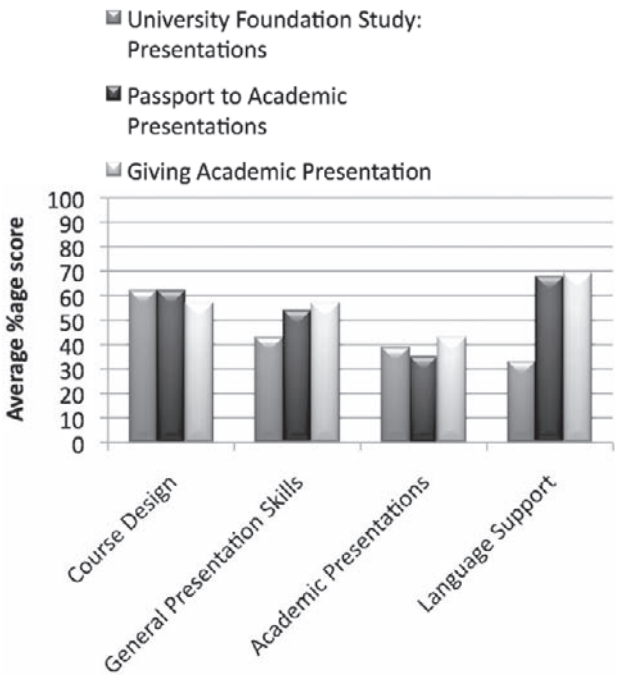

Fig 4.0 **Overview of Average Evaluation Results by Category**

A substantial point that this highlights is that both NES and NNES-targeted academic presentation materials contain very little guidance on what was determined as relevant for oral presentations by subject lecturers. The results from the materials evaluation of the three NNES materials also showed that the features concluded as being 'academic' in oral presentations by content lecturers were barely touched upon. Survey questions about avoiding plagiarism, citing sources, using references and basing presentations on verifiable research elicited mainly the minimum score of one or two from the three evaluators.

Conclusion

In 1996, Ferris and Tagg clearly identified the need to gather information about 'real-world academic tasks' (which includes oral presentations) in order to be able to 'equip EAP students for the variety of challenges awaiting them' (1996, p.53). Since then, there has still been relatively little research on the oral academic presentation. This paper strives to add to what is accessible and to encourage further discussion on the topic since it is an important skill in EAP learning and deserves to be recognised as such. The fact that presentation skills can be transferred from academia to learners' professional lives, or 'from *gown* to *town*' as Hill and Storey (2003, p.373) put it, is reason enough to teach them.

This project aimed to add to our understanding of the particular features of academic presentations. We identified three reasons why presentations are carried out in academic contexts. They can be summarised as being (a) transferable communication skills (b) research-based and allowing students to learn independently and (c) important in revealing how well students know the subject matter. Four features that content lecturers acknowledge as key to delivering presentations effectively were also established. These lecturers want their students to deliver well-timed and well-structured presentations which are based on research and take the audience into account.

In addition, the characteristics of what makes a presentation particularly relevant to academic contexts were also determined. According to the majority of the subject matter lecturers, academic oral presentations should (i) contain references and be verifiable; (ii) contain synthesised sources; (iii) contain solid arguments borne of research and (iv) demonstrate that the student truly knows his or her subject and encourages further discussion on the topic. However, more work needs to be done, particularly in examining the conventions of different presentation genres to see how closely they match their written counterparts, but for the moment we can say with certainty that oral presentations are an important form of academic discourse and that students need more than technical presentation skills to deliver effective academic presentations.

With is being the case, the criteria-driven evaluation of existing NNES academic presentation materials suggests current training materials focus on developing general presentation skills but could do more to develop the specific skills needed to delivery successful academic presentations. In particular, more focus on the structure and organisation of different genres of academic presentation and guidance on integrating sources and referencing would be welcome.

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Appendix 1: Evaluation Criteria

Course Design

1. Do the materials provide clearly stated aims?
2. Are the learners likely to be engaged by the topics in the materials?
3. Do the materials include instructions which are clear?
4. Do the materials include good quality pictures/graphics?
5. Do the materials contain multi-media components?
6. Are there opportunities for the learners to reflect on their learning?
7. Will the self-study opportunities in the material motivate the learners to study independently?
8. Do the materials provide a peer evaluation sheet for presentations?
9. Do the materials provide a self-evaluation sheet for presentations?
10. Do the materials include an index of key terms?

General Presentation Skills

11. Do the materials introduce the characteristics of an effective presentation?
12. Are learners likely to be able to produce a well-structured presentation?
13. Are learners likely to take into account the intended audience when preparing presentations?
14. Are learners likely to give engaging presentations to appeal to the different learning styles of the audience members?
15. Are learners likely to be able to produce effective notes to help them deliver their presentations?
16. To what extent are learners encouraged to develop techniques to avoid reading from a script in presentations?
17. To what extent is the importance of timing stressed when planning a presentation?
18. Do the materials provide advice for overcoming nervousness?
19. Are the learners likely to develop more confidence in giving presentations?
20. Do the materials provide guidance about dealing with audience questions at the end of a presentation?

21. Do the materials provide tips on the use of technology in presentations, e.g. PowerPoint?
22. To what extent will learners be able to present tables, graphs or charts effectively?
23. To what extent will learners be able to present diagrams, sketches or models effectively?
24. Do the materials raise learners' awareness of the environment of the presentation room?
25. Are the learners likely to maximise their use of body language in presentations?

Academic Presentations

26. To what extent will learners be able to give presentations of different genres, e.g. problem-solution/research-based/presenting a journal article/poster presentation?
27. To what extent do the materials prepare students for individual presentations?
28. Do the materials provide features of what makes a good informal presentation in seminars?
29. Do the materials give advice for developing group presentations?
30. Do the materials provide advice on team management for group presentations?
31. Do the materials inform the reader how to carry out research before a presentation?
32. Do the materials encourage students to base their presentations on verifiable research?
33. Are the learners likely to be able to avoid plagiarism when planning their presentations?
34. How likely will the learners be able to cite their sources effectively both orally and in visual aids?
35. Do the materials guide the students in the use of providing references at the end of their presentations?

Language Support

36. To what extent will students be able to use signposting language to aid in structuring their presentations?
37. Do the materials include glossaries of key vocabulary related to presentations?
38. Do the materials provide guidance on maximising the use of one's voice in engaging an audience?
39. Do the materials encourage students to improve the clarity of their speech?
40. To what extend do the materials encourage students to use an appropriate academic register in their presentations?

FOLIO 16/2

BOOK REVIEW

English Language Teaching Textbooks Content, Consumption, Production

By N. Harwood (Ed.)
Palgrave Macmillan 2014, 373pp., £24.99
ISBN 9 781137 276308

Reviewed by Philip Prowse

Edited volumes of papers are notoriously difficult to review. Does one give equal space to each paper (there are eleven in this collection) and end up with a review which exceeds the word limit? Or does one pick and choose papers for comment, thereby inevitably offending those authors whose papers are not commented on? Ian McGrath's review of Harwood's previous 2010 collection of papers on materials writing in ELTJ 67/1 offers a solution. McGrath summarises the contents, teases out general points and then focuses on some papers of particular interest to him. This reviewer will attempt to follow his example.

Harwood describes the volume as 'intended, for teachers, teacher trainers, researchers, publishers and materials writers', with the focus 'squarely on published ELT textbooks' and 'more specifically ... on "global" textbooks, normally published in the West and marketed worldwide.' (p. 1)

The book opens with an introductory chapter from the editor, and is then divided into three sections, reflecting the book's sub-title: Studies of Textbook Content, Studies of Textbook Consumption, and Studies of Textbook Production. We will return later to the terminology used to describe Parts II and III.

Harwood's opening chapter reviews research into both ELT and mainstream education textbooks, providing a clear and concise overview of what is to follow. It concludes with a call for more research into textbook use in ELT, lamenting the resource implications of such studies, and contrasting the paucity of ELT textbook use studies with those coming from mainstream education.

Part I opens with a chapter by Gray and Block on the depiction of the working class in textbooks from the 1970s to the present day. Two textbooks from each decade are chosen and analysed from this perspective, with a conclusion that working-class characters have a much lower profile now than then. The second chapter, by Freeman, puts forward a taxonomy of reading comprehension question types, and analyses four global textbooks to see what use is made of different comprehension activities. The final chapter by Dixon et al. looks at materials for the training of teachers who will be teaching reading to learners of English in mainstream education in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Singapore.

Part II contains three chapters, the first two, Chapters 5 and 6, co-authored by Harwood with Menkabu and Grammatosi respectively. Menkabu looks at teachers' views on an English for Medical Purposes textbook in Saudi Arabia, and the extent to which the teachers did, or did not, use the book in the classroom, and why. Grammatosi focuses on one UK-based EAP teacher, and the context reasons for infrequent use of the prescribed textbook. The third chapter is by Hadley, who describes the socio-political background to the use of a global textbook in a Japanese university, and then draws conclusions as to the validity of some anti-textbook arguments.

Part III has four chapters, the first of which is by Timmis, who gives an account of a mismatch between the expectations of a writing team and the publisher in a textbook project. The next two chapters focus on the production of well-known EAP textbooks. Stoller and Robinson explain how they created *Write Like a Chemist*, and Feak and Swales discuss the revision processes of two of their textbooks and the conflicting expectations of various stakeholders. The final chapter in this section is by Hadfield, who uses data from her reflective log written while designing part of a teacher resource book, to show how textbook writing 'cannot be reduced to a linear progression' (p. 320) and is a recursive process, underpinned by 'tacit' principles.

The tripartite structure of the book works well, and, as with any collection, the reader can be drawn more to some papers rather than others. There is a good balance here from quite heavily statistical ones

(for example, Chapter 4, Dixon et al.), to the more confessional style of Timmis (Chapter 8). Leaving aside the thorny question of how one can quantify what happens when a textbook is in use (and indeed whether the enterprise is worth it given the variables) it is refreshing to hear the voices of teachers, rather than only having to read pages of tables. The teachers' voices in Chapter 5 (on teachers' conceptualization and use of a medical textbook) and Chapter 6 (a case study on a teacher's use of a textbook in an EAP course) are both memorable and valuable.

As a whole, this volume provides a welcome continuation of Harwood (2010) with its new focus on published materials. There is a bias towards EAP (four of the eleven papers), and Chapters 9 and 10, while fascinating in themselves, may not seem relevant to someone struggling with the large-class secondary situation. Nevertheless, these two accounts are useful, both historically for what they chart, and also for the lessons to be learnt.

As someone with a long involvement in textbook writing, this reviewer is only too aware of the importance and difficulty of the authenticity issue. It was therefore pleasing to see a number of pages cited in the index under 'authenticity'. Checking through them, it was good to see Peacock's 1997 and 1998 studies referred to by Harwood (pp. 17, 18). He also refers to McCarten and McCarthy (2010), and McCarthy and McCarten (2012) (pp. 21-22), and quotes from the 2010 article (p.22 of it) thus: 'real conversations rarely contain the number and variety of examples of a target language item ... Most conversations are not particularly interesting in themselves ...' This quotation really goes to the heart of the authenticity conundrum, and two things subsequently in this volume were therefore surprising. The first that, perhaps something that is inevitable in a collection when the introduction is written last, this discussion is not seriously addressed in other chapters. The second is that neither the editor, nor any of the contributors, refers to a key text in this area: 'Designing Authenticity into Language Learning Materials' (Mishan 2005).

Chapter 2, 'All Middle Class Now? Evolving Representations of the Working Class in the Neoliberal Era: The Case of ELT Textbooks', by Gray and Block is a tour de force, even though reading it initially involves wading through some heavy socio-political jargon. But once the authors get on to analysis of, and quotation from, the six textbooks chosen from those published between the 1970s and 2010 it is compulsive reading. It is hard to disagree with the conclusion: 'The erasure of the working class from ELT textbooks can be seen both as representative of a failure to educate and as a betrayal of working class language learners'. However, while the authors do explain their decision-making process in choosing the books to analyse (p. 55), one has to ask why the 1970s are represented by two books by the same author, one of which is by no stretch of the imagination a textbook. Robert O'Neill (who died in August 2014) was a great writer, but *English in Situations* (which this reviewer used in classes many years ago) takes eleven concepts (for concept read grammar point) and offers oral activities at three levels of increasing difficulty at each level. Legendary of course, but not a textbook.

In Chapter 3, 'Reading Comprehension Questions: The Distribution of Different Types in Global EFL Textbooks', Freeman explains how she created a taxonomy of reading comprehension types and applied it to various editions of four global textbooks. The taxonomy (pp. 83-84) will be of great use to all materials writers, supplementing or supplanting those which we have created ourselves. The 'Results' section of the application of the taxonomy (pp. 85-101) is one at which the eyes of some readers (like this reviewer) may glaze over, but no-one is likely to nod off over the Discussion and Conclusion which follow. These sections amply repay careful study, both for the detail and the conclusions drawn. One nugget relates to the comprehension question types in four editions of *Headway* (OUP). Freeman defines 'textually explicit' questions in her taxonomy as 'In this question type the answer to the question can be found directly in the text. There is word-matching between the question and the text. The information required is in sequential sentences' (p. 83). The four editions of *Headway* are 1986, 1996, 2003 and 2009. Explicit questions in 1986 are less than 5% of the total, in 1996 just under 15%, in 2003 nearing 25% and by 2009 over 30%. The reason for this? Freeman quotes interviews with writers/editors (there is no attribution) to the effect that by 1996 *Headway* 'was a victim of its own success' and (originally an adult course) 'is now used in secondary schools ... so the material is now written with the idea of keeping it at thirteen plus' (p. 102). So much for critical thinking! This chapter is highly recommended to everyone wrestling with the thorny problem of comprehension question types and this reviewer only wishes he had had access to it earlier!

It would be very gratifying to be able to make the same unconditional recommendation for Chapter 7, 'Global Textbooks in Local Contexts: An Empirical Study of Effectiveness', not least because of Hadley's conclusion that 'there are strong indicators that GTs (global textbooks) can play an important role in helping, and not harming second language learning' (p. 230). Hadley begins with a great deal of referencing of mainstream education studies (for example, p. 208) which while evidence of wide reading by the author may be less relevant than they appear, and includes a (referenced) statement of fact, which, to this reviewer, does not reflect reality. Hadley writes: 'During the Cold War, higher education was seen in both the Western and Soviet Blocs as an intellectual bulwark in the national defense strategies against each other'

(p. 209). This reviewer's own experience at the highest level of tertiary English Studies throughout Poland in the 1976-79 period does not bear this out. In university English and Applied Linguistics Departments in Poland (particularly in Poznan, Warsaw, Lodz and Gdansk) the level of research and scholarship in applied linguistics was not only cognizant of, but ahead of, what was happening in, for example, the UK. There was inter-change and co-operation, not confrontation.

Hadley continues with a very thorough and interesting outline of his study of the use of a GT in a Japanese university context (pp. 215-223). This is followed by a description of the statistical methods used to analyse the results. One of the aims of the study was to test Tomlinson's (2008) claim that 'ELT materials ... make a significant contribution to the failure of many learners of English'. Many textbook writers would also like to see that claim tested. Unfortunately, what happened here, when boiled down, consisted of participants taking the *Interchange* placement test at the start, and again at the end, of their studies. And there was an improvement. Well, yes, but would an extensive reading programme, for example, not have produced a similar result? And is using a placement test (without the spoken component) as an entry and exit test advisable? So while this reviewer likes the conclusion, he is unconvinced by the way it was reached.

Timmis opens Chapter 8, 'Writing Materials for Publication: Questions Raised and Lessons Learned', with a clear description of a materials writing project and a cogent exposition of a text-driven and guided discovery approach to it. With engaging frankness, Timmis explains how, while in the writing team's eye their framework met the brief supplied by the publisher, the feedback received showed this not to be the case: 'As we started to send in draft units, word came back from the publisher that "there should be three grammar points per unit". It would have been helpful if we had been aware of this apparently arbitrary figure from the outset, and selecting a fixed number of grammar points was somewhat at variance with our principle that texts should determine what we teach ...' (p. 252). Cultural appropriateness was also an issue: 'I must confess to my naivety here: I had never considered the role of English language teaching textbooks in promoting national values ... national values were meant to be a recurrent theme in the syllabus for these materials, and the textbook was seen in part as a vehicle for a certain view of the national identity. This was a revelation to me' (p. 254). Throughout the chapter, Timmis's tone is direct and disarming. One final quotation: 'One of the consistent complaints from the teachers was that the dialogues in our materials were too long. I couldn't understand why they were too long until a teacher explained that they expected the learners to memorise them, a thought that had never entered my head'. A splendid chapter, a baring of the soul by a materials writer struggling with the specificity of a particular situation.

Finally, both in the book and this review, we turn to Chapter 11, Hadfield's 'Chaosmos: Spontaneity and Order in the Materials Design Process'. Starting with two accounts of the materials writing process, and moving on to a consideration of critical debate on the creative process in general, Hadfield lays the ground for a fascinating account from her own reflective log of how she wrote three chapters of practical activities as part of a co-authored book with Dornyei, *Motivating Learning*. Lengthy extracts (for example, pp. 336-337) reveal the internal dialogue going on in the materials writer's head. The account reveals not only insights into the creative process, but also the essential 'housekeeping' type functions like rubric writing (pp. 342-346). Here Hadfield emphasizes the recursive nature of the process by showing how writing a rubric can lead one to see an activity in a new light and revise it. As the chapter's title tells us, Hadfield is reflecting on the dynamic opposition between spontaneity and order, and in her conclusions says 'However, I would argue that this apparent lack of order is not a fault, implying lack of systematicity; rather it is a process that entails a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness in coping with the design requirements of very different activities' (p. 347). This reviewer finds himself in complete agreement with her statement that 'The fact that materials design is messy, recursive, spontaneous, and *ad hoc* does not therefore imply that it is unprincipled or lacks an underlying coherence and consistency' (p. 352). This chapter exemplifies the best of this collection: a firm grounding in theory, a riveting description of experience, and a very personal voice.

One minor niggle: a more consistent approach to the capitalization of book titles in the references would have been welcome.

A return to the book's sub-title, which includes the terms 'Textbook Consumption' and 'Textbook Production', was promised. In an era where publishers can describe authors as 'content-providers' whose template-guided gobbets of language practice can be exploited in a multiplicity of ways on a multiplicity of platforms, it is unfortunate that the title under review uses quasi-industrial terms like consumption and production, while the terms 'use' and 'creation' are available. However, this should not discourage readers, as there is much to commend in this multi-faceted collection of papers.

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The reviewer

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Extensive Reading Foundation Language Learner Literature Awards

The LLL Awards are given by the Extensive Reading Foundation, a not-for-profit organization that supports and promotes extensive reading in language education. Each year these awards are conferred on books that are selected for their outstanding overall quality and likely enduring appeal. The winning book in each of five categories is chosen by an international jury, taking into account the internet votes and comments of students and teachers around the world.

The 2014 Award winners were announced at the CLESOL conference, Wellington, New Zealand, in July. The Awards will be presented to the winners by Catherine Walter at the IATEFL Conference in Manchester, UK, 11-14 April 2015.

Winners 2014

Young Learners

Skater Boy

By Maria Cleary
Illustrated by Lorenzo Sabbatini
Publisher: Helbling Languages (Helbling Young Readers)
ISBN: 978-3-85272-526-0

Judges' comment
The book has a familiar story arc, but it invests it with energy and humor. It builds on adult disapproval of some activities that kids enjoy, even though the kids have good motives. The diction level is good, and sentence structures are nicely, but manageably, various. The illustrations are engagingly off-beat.

Reader's comment
It is a great story, simply told and with a good message. My class loved it.

Adolescents and Adult: Beginner

The Tomorrow Mirror

By Nicola Prentis
Illustrated by Christian Bienefeld
Publisher: Pearson Education Ltd (Penguin Active Reading)
ISBN: 978-1-44793-805-7

Judges' comment
In this original fantasy/horror story set in modern UK, a young boy finds out that the mysterious mirror in his home reflects what will happen the next day. The story grabs the readers right from the beginning, and keeps their interest throughout the book, culminating with a surprise ending. The illustrations are a creative representation of the storyline.

Reader's comment
I like this book because the story is original and we are touched by Jason's life. This story takes us into the character's head. I love it!

Adolescents and Adult: Elementary

Anne of Green Gables

By Lucy Maud Montgomery
Retold by Michael Lacey Freeman
Illustrated by Gaia Bordicchia
Publisher: ELI (Teen Readers)
ISBN: 978-88-536-1576-3

Judges' comment
This excellent book simply, but engagingly, retells the story of Anne and her relationships with Marilla, Matthew, and the community and environment around her. The cute illustrations are aimed at younger readers, but older readers will equally enjoy the story.

Reader's comment
Anne's feelings often go up and down. She makes many mistakes or does surprising things, so the story develops one thing after another. It is interesting for me. I can see Anne's kindness and childlike character. I also can see the process of building good relationships between Anne and many other people. This story makes my mind warm. This is a good story.

Adolescents and Adults: Intermediate

Bob Marley

By Vicky Shipton
Photo research by Pupak Navabpour
Publisher: Scholastic (ELT Readers)
ISBN: 978-1-908-35198-2

Judges' comment
This biography reads like a story bringing this 1970s

iconic figure to life for all students who may not know reggae music. Students also learn about the history of Jamaica, Rastafari, and other famous Jamaicans. The images include a lot of personal family photos that really add to the book.

Reader's comment
This book is very well illustrated and describes Bob Marley's biography using easy vocabulary. In addition, this book gives us some information about the history of Jamaica. It is essential knowledge to understand about the background of the society and culture, especially when you don't know about other's history. Also, the self-study activities were very helpful to clarify what I've understood of this book.

Adolescents and Adults: Upper Intermediate and Advanced

A Dangerous Sky

By Michael Austen
Publisher: Cambridge University Press (Cambridge English Readers)
ISBN: 978-1-107-69405-7

Judges' comment
Francesca, a young Swiss woman comes to England to pursue her dream of learning to fly a plane. Problems with her flying instructor cause her to lose her confidence and question his real motives. The language feels very natural and 'ungraded', and the story touches on many interesting modern themes.

Reader's comment
I thought this book was extremely well written, with lots of attention to detail. We can empathize with the main character in the first chapter, 'Now that the moment had arrived, she suddenly wondered if it was what she really wanted'. While the content might make readers feel rather uncomfortable, I think that the sexual harassment and stalking the main character experiences are important subjects, and I commend Cambridge for publishing this book. I also like that the main character has doubts about whether she has really experienced sexual harassment, as I think this same question must go through the minds of many victims. There were so many other well-depicted scenes, such as the description of her first take off and solo flight. I do believe this is one of the most well-written graded readers I have come across at this level.

Freelance Register

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