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From Applied Linguistics to Linguistics Applied: Issues, Practices, Trends

Edited by

Maeve Conrick and Martin Howard

British Studies in Applied Linguistics Volume 22

From Applied Linguistics to Linguistics Applied: Issues, Practices, Trends

British Studies in Applied Linguistics

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British Studies in Applied Linguistics: Volume 22

From Applied Linguistics to Linguistics Applied: Issues, Practices, Trends

Selected papers from the
British Association for Applied Linguistics and Irish Association for Applied Linguistics conference at University College Cork, September 2006

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Maeve Conrick and Martin Howard

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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1 Introduction

Maeve Conrick

This volume is a collection of papers from the joint conference of the British Association for Applied Linguistics and the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics, held at University College Cork, National University of Ireland Cork, on 7-9 September 2006. The theme chosen for the conference was 'From Applied Linguistics to Linguistics Applied: Issues, Practices, Trends'. The papers in this volume address this theme in a range of ways, reflecting the continuing diversity of Applied Linguistics as a research field. Many of the presenters at the conference were concerned with defining the discipline, how it is evolving and how it relates to or distinguishes itself from other disciplines, whether in terms of theory or practice. Concern with these issues is apparent in the papers collected in this volume, notably in the ways in which the authors situate their contribution in relation to existing practices or emerging trends in their specific field of interest.

The thematic framework of the conference brought into focus the distinction drawn between 'Linguistics Applied' and 'Applied Linguistics' (see Widdowson, 2000) and gave rise to many references to Brumfit's much-quoted definition of Applied Linguistics as: 'The theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue' (Brumfit, 1995: 27).

In the papers presented in this volume, the 'real-world' dimension of the field is apparent in the range and variety of contexts discussed, from educational settings to the media and healthcare. The variety of approaches which characterise the work of applied linguists is also evident in the range of theoretical positions adopted and the research practices brought to bear on the linguistic issues under discussion, including *inter alia* the perspectives of second language acquisition, sociocultural theory and discourse analysis.

The first paper, by Hunston, Hirata and Otoshi, addresses the theme very explicitly by discussing whether corpus research into spoken English is valid both as Applied Linguistics and as Linguistics Applied. The paper investigates to what extent expert non-native speakers of English use the same discoursal, lexical and grammatical features as native speakers, with a view to establishing whether or not materials based on non-native speaker English could be used to raise the consciousness of learners with regard to the features of naturally-occurring interaction. One of the assumptions behind the study was that teachers might not pay attention to the findings of corpus linguists, treating those findings as Linguistics rather than Applied Linguistics. For example, if a feature occurred only in native speaker discourse, it might be considered unimportant for those learners who were unlikely to have much interaction with native speakers. The research confirms that all the features under investigation (discourse markers, vague language, backchannels, pauses and non-clausal units) occur in both groups.

The next five papers deal with specific aspects of skills such as listening (Harris), reading (Lyddy), writing (Beard, Burrell, Swinnerton and Peel; Manchón, Murphy and Roca de Larios; Kobayashi and Rinnert). Harris and Lyddy both consider the Irish context, where interest in issues related to achievement in the Irish language has been to the fore in recent years, especially following the passing of the Official Languages Act 2003, a legislative instrument which has as its objective the promotion of the Irish language. One of the provisions of the Act was the appointment of a Language Commissioner (An Coimisinéir Teanga), who, in his first Annual Report (An Coimisinéir Teanga, 2005), referred to the need for improvement in levels of achievement in Irish, given the level of state investment in the teaching of Irish in schools. Harris reports on a large-scale study carried out in 2002 on behalf of the Department of Education and Science. He concludes that there has been a considerable decline in performance in Irish Listening in ordinary primary[1] schools since 1985, especially in relation to listening vocabulary and general comprehension, skills which the author regards as of particular importance because of their role in the use of Irish for real communication. Harris situates his findings in the context of educational and language planning and makes recommendations with regard to developing a plan of action to remedy the situation, which would include wider use of Irish in school and additional supports in the home and the community. Lyddy's paper also deals with the achievements of children in Irish primary schools, thirty-nine pupils from Irish-medium schools and twenty-six from English-medium (Gaeltacht) schools, aged 11 to 12. She addresses the very specific issue of cross-language (English and Irish) homograph recognition, using a computerised lexical decision task and finds that Gaeltacht-schooled children continue to operate and to interpret stimuli within an Irish language mode rather than being influenced by the English context.

Beard, Burrell, Swinnerton and Peel investigate the development of persuasive writing in primary school children in England in Year 5 (aged 9 to 11) and a year later when the children were in Year 6, using a repeat design and standardised instrument, the NFER *Literacy Impact* package. The authors' aim is to attempt to establish what constitutes progression at this level, comparing two contrasting genres (persuasive and narrative). They find encouraging results, with many children demonstrating ability to include features specific to persuasive writing in Time 2. While Beard and Burrell's analysis focuses on pupil progression rather than on the influence of pedagogical practices, Manchón, Murphy and Roca de Larios's paper investigates the effects of instruction on aspects of strategies and beliefs about writing. This study looks at a very different context from that of the previous paper: university students of English at a Spanish university. The results show statistically significant changes with regard to both beliefs (especially self-efficacy beliefs) and strategies (mainly revision) and the authors suggest strongly that the level of teacher training is crucial in effecting change in strategic behaviour of students. Kobayashi and Rinnert consider another aspect of writing, in this instance the transferability of aspects of argumentative writing competence from L2 to L1. The study looks at three groups of Japanese writers: those with no overseas L2 writing instruction/experience, those with one year, and those with extensive overseas experience. Few studies have looked at the issue of reverse transfer of L2 to L1. The study finds evidence that the training/practice in writing experienced by students in overseas educational settings may have an impact on the transfer of writing features.

The next two papers look at issues of 'grammar', albeit from different perspectives and with different objectives. Hill's paper looks specifically at two grammatical forms, the future tense form *will* and the present perfect aspect, in his investigation of the validity of the central tenet of Pienemann's Processability Theory, i.e., the inalterability of sequence and rate of acquisition. He presents an alternative model, based on a sociocognitive approach to language development, suggesting that sequence is alterable if it is based on conceptual rather than morphological factors. The findings indicate that the sequence and rate of acquisition are not necessarily set by morphological difficulty alone and points out that L2 instruction sequences could benefit from being more closely related to psycholinguistic processes. Badger and MacDonald look at the use of 'grammatical' as a lexical item appearing in a corpus of five hundred British newspaper articles. The paper investigates how frequently prescriptive ideologies are manifested in the print media and finds that overtly prescriptive uses of 'grammatical' are most frequent, but that about one third of uses are descriptive. The authors point to the fact that linguists (who are rarely consulted on such matters) could play a role in guiding such judgements.

The next two papers focus on aspects of multilingualism, with reference to the Canadian context. Byrd Clark explores the discourse of multilingualism and citizenship, with the objective of discussing overlapping identities in four self-identified multi-generational Italian young participants in a pre-service university French course. She uses the approaches of critical ethnography and discourse analysis to demonstrate how the participants socially construct their identities, and what being Canadian, multilingual and multicultural means to them in the context of the acquisition of French as an official language. Hearnden's paper deals with the 'real-world' issue of the communicative needs of internationally educated nurses in Ontario, in a study involving twenty-nine participants from twelve different language backgrounds, Bosnian, Chinese, Danish, English, Farsi, Hungarian, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog and Ukrainian. Her findings show a gap between most available language instruction and the sociolinguistic needs of internationally educated nurses, specifically in relation to the specialist needs of the nursing profession. She concludes by calling for the development of sociolinguistic and sociocultural educational opportunities with nursing specific ESL instruction as a critical component.

Bressan's paper returns to the higher education sphere, examining the role and dynamics of group project work. Contrasts are drawn between groups in language learning environments and authentic communities of practice. The findings of the study differentiate between the outcomes of group work for British and international students, suggesting that international students are getting much more out of group assessment work than British students and that it is in fact British students who are most in need of initiation into an internationalized environment.

In the final paper, Roberts reflects on the issue of the English language on the international stage, evaluating the various labels that have been used to describe the world-wide use of English, such as English as an International Language (EIL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and Global English. He problematises attempts to identify International English as a variety and discusses ways in which English is being reconceptualised to better reflect its status and use world-wide.

All of the papers in this volume testify to the range and richness of research being carried out currently in Applied Linguistics internationally. The diversity of issues, practices and trends in evidence in the papers demonstrates that, on a solid foundation of principle and practice, the field continues to evolve, revealing new insights into real-world problems in which language is very much a central feature.

Notes

1 Harris distinguishes between three types of primary schools in Ireland: 'all-Irish' immersion schools, 'Gaeltacht' schools, i.e. schools in Irish-speaking areas, and 'ordinary' schools (the majority, where Irish is taught as a second language).

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2 The grammar of spoken English and the discourse of non-native speakers

Susan Hunston, Eri Hirata and Yumi Otoshi

Introduction

It is not always apparent whether descriptive studies of naturally-occurring language are properly located within 'Linguistics' or 'Applied Linguistics'. Widdowson (2000), for example, complains of language teachers being coerced into obeying the strictures of purely linguistics studies (what he calls 'Linguistics Applied') rather than being encouraged to prioritise the teaching situation ('Applied Linguistics'). Borsley and Ingham (2002) on the other hand locate descriptive corpus studies firmly within Applied Linguistics and are concerned that 'pure' Linguistics should not be required to march to the Applied Linguistics drum.

It is true that many of the large-scale, and particularly corpus-based, studies of English undertaken in the last twenty years have taken as their rationale the needs of the language learner and teacher. This was evidenced first of all in dictionaries: following the publication of the first COBUILD dictionary (Sinclair et al. 1987), almost all dictionaries that have advertised themselves as, variously, 'corpus-based', 'corpus-driven' or 'corpus-informed' have been presented as relevant primarily for language learning and teaching. Similarly, many corpus-based studies of the grammar of English, from Sinclair et al. (1990) to Carter and McCarthy (2006) are written for learners and teachers of English. The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Biber et al. 1999) is an exception to this, but its publication was followed three years later by a shorter volume for 'advanced students of English and their teachers' (2002: 2).

In short, the acknowledged starting point for many corpus studies of English has been the need of the (advanced) learner and the teacher for more accurate, detailed and useful descriptions of the language. This raises at least three questions. The first is:

- Does the description have validity outside the teaching context, that is, does it stand up as Linguistics, whether applied or not?

It is beyond the scope of this paper to answer this question, but assuming for the time being that the answer is 'yes', the additional validity of the research as Applied Linguistics can be established by investigating the next two questions:

- Is the research relevant? That is, is the language that is described of a kind that learners might need to know about?
- Is the advice given feasible? That is, if the resulting descriptions are recommended as something that should be taught, can teachers realistically be expected to follow that recommendation?

Corpus techniques are particularly well suited to making quantitative and qualitative comparisons between collections of texts. In recent years there has been a considerable amount of research carried out on the grammatical, lexical and discoursal differences between different varieties of English, and in particular between written and spoken English. Biber et al. (1999) focus on proportional differences between registers. Carter and McCarthy (2006: 9--10) prioritise the features of spoken English in their description, treating items that are common in speech but not in writing as at least as valid as those that are more common in writing. This might be illustrated by considering the feature referred to in Biber et al. (1999: 1072) as 'prefaces' and in Carter and McCarthy (2006: 192--194) as 'headers'. An example given by Biber et al. is: 'North and South London they're two different worlds.' In this example, the noun phrase *North and South London* stands outside the main clause *they're two different worlds*. This feature of spoken English is not ignored by grammarians such as Quirk et al. (1972), but it is mentioned by them briefly as a type of 'reinforcement': the item that Quirk et al. focus on is the 'reinforcing pronoun' (*they* in the example above), while the 'preface' or 'header' (*North and South London*) is not given a metalinguistic label (Quirk et al. 1972: 970). Carter and McCarthy, in contrast, devote a three-page section to this feature of spoken language.

Writers such as Willis (2003) have argued persuasively that learners of English should be taught about how spoken English differs from written English, that this instruction is best carried out in the form of consciousness-raising activities, and that these activities require as their basis examples of naturally-occurring interaction. Hunston (2004) raised some questions related to this methodology, the most pertinent of which was how teachers were to obtain such examples if they were teaching in places where interactions between native speakers of English are difficult to obtain. It was suggested that under such circumstances the obvious solution is for teachers to use their own interactions as the source of examples, but this in turn raises the question of how similar to native speaker interaction teachers' interactions would be.

This paper summarises research reported in Hirata (2005) and Otoshi (2005), in which interactions between native speakers and non-native speakers were compared. The research question was: to what extent do expert non-native speakers of English use the same discoursal, lexical and grammatical features of spoken interaction as native speakers do? The purpose behind this question was to discover whether materials designed to raise the consciousness of learners with regard to the features of naturally-occurring interaction in English could feasibly be based on non-native speaker English. It should be stressed that we were not aiming to assess our subjects' expertise in English; we only wished to know whether those linguistic features that are specific to spoken English were present in their interaction.

The research

Two separate studies were carried out by two of the authors of this paper and reported in Hirata (2005) and Otoshi (2005). Although spontaneous interaction would be preferable for observing features of spoken English, it was decided instead to set up a series of situations in which two speakers were required to complete an interactive task. There were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, it cannot be expected that non-native speakers of English who share a first language will interact spontaneously in English. Secondly, the topic and character of spontaneous interactions are very varied, whereas we wanted to maintain an element of comparability. It was also decided to record native speakers of English as well as non-native speakers. Although we now know much about the features of native speaker interaction, from Carter, McCarthy, and others, we specifically wanted to see whether non-native speakers use the same features to the same extent as native speakers under similar recording conditions. Our data offers confirmation, if any is needed, that the features noted by Carter, McCarthy and others do occur frequently even in a fairly small amount of data, and even when the interactions are elicited rather than being spontaneous.

Hirata's study consisted of three pairs of native speakers (NS) and three pairs of non-native speakers (NNS). Each NNS pair consisted of one Japanese speaker and one speaker of another language (Greek or Chinese). Otoshi used five pairs of native speakers and five pairs of non-native speakers, all Japanese. All the participants involved in both studies were teachers of English; many were students on the MA TEFL at the University of Birmingham during 2004-05. None of the participants were assessed in terms of their level of English; we made no attempt to select speakers whose English we felt was particularly good. It was assumed that as practising teachers of English all our subjects counted as 'expert speakers'; more importantly, it was assumed that the language of any of the participants might be expected to be used as a model for learners of English in the country in which they worked.

Each researcher used prompts to elicit interaction from the participants. Hirata asked one member of each pair to 'tell a story', suggesting topics such as 'a trip', 'an interesting experience' or 'a favourite recipe'. (This prompt elicited a variety of discourse types, not simply those with a narrative structure.) Otoshi used 'story prompts' with three NS and three NNS pairs, for example 'Tell your partner about an experience when a stranger was kind to you'. With the other four pairs she used 'conversation prompts', which required the pairs to complete tasks such as 'Select from the following list five important qualities for a husband or wife and rank them in order of importance'. All the interactions were then transcribed and subjected to exploration as described below.

Hirata's subject pairs yielded interactions of between 4 and 10 minutes long. Otoshi's yielded interactions of 18-28 minutes. It will be noted that Hirata's subjects were less constrained in terms of what they were asked to do, and their interactions might therefore be seen as more spontaneous. Otoshi's subjects, on the other hand, produced interactions that were more directly comparable to one another because the topics and genres were restricted.

It should be noted too that the two dissertations resulting from these research projects (Hirata 2005 and Otoshi 2005) contain much more detail and exemplification than can be replicated here. Both suggest directions for future research on a wider scale.

Because they were dealing with a restricted amount of data each, Hirata and Otoshi chose to deal with topics for analysis that arose out of the data, rather than restricting themselves to complementary topics as had been our original plan. Between them they covered five of the topics discussed by Carter and McCarthy (1995) and McCarthy and Carter (2001): discourse markers and vague language (both studies), backchannels and pauses (Hirata only), and non-clausal units (Otoshi only). Each feature is known to occur regularly in the discourse of native speakers but to be dealt with only fleetingly if at all in standard reference grammars. Some of the features are proscribed by standard pedagogic grammars (e.g. non-clausal units) or are thought to be indicators of disfluency (e.g. pauses).

Findings

Hirata's and Otoshi's findings fall into three groups: similarities between NS and NNS, differences in frequency between NS and NNS, differences in function between NS and NNS. We will deal with each of these in turn.

Similarities

The research indicated that all the features investigated are used by speakers from each of the groups under investigation. That is, both native speakers and non-native speakers use discourse markers, and use them in a similar way; individuals from both groups use pauses and back-channels; a similar range and type of vague language is used by both groups; speakers from both groups use non-clausal units. In other words, none of the five features of spoken interaction is outside the experience of the non-native speakers under investigation.

In terms of vague language, the similarity is perhaps greater than expected. According to Hirata (2005), and using both Channell's (1994) and Carter and McCarthy's (2006) categories, the native speakers in her study use these markers of vagueness:

- Hedges: *sort of, kind of, like*
- Vague category markers: *and stuff, like something, or something*
- Approximations: *about, around, round*
- Vague quantifiers: *a bit, loads of, a lot of, several, some*

The non-native speakers use these:

- Hedges: *kind of, like*
- Vague category markers: *something, something like that, or something, and so forth*
- Approximations: *about*
- Vague quantifiers: *a bit, a lot of, some*

Although the native speakers use a slightly wider range overall, what is more striking is that both groups use the same types of markers.

Differences in frequency

The second set of findings focuses on where there appears to be a difference in frequency, though it must be borne in mind that the numbers reported here are not wholly reliable because there is only a relatively small amount of data. Overall the non-native speakers use more and longer pauses (Hirata 2005). This is something that can be explained in terms of relative disfluency: the non-native speakers need more 'thinking time' to prepare their utterances than native speakers do. Hirata suggests, however, that there may also be a cultural influence, in that some interactional styles are more tolerant of silence than others. In particular, she notes that some non-native speakers seem to prefer to be silent than to utter a face-threatening act. In example 1, speaker J uses silence and an instance of vague language as an alternative to an open contradiction of C's interpretation of J's previous utterance:

(1) C: I see, so he just wanted to play in the movie
J: Yeah (2) kind of (1.5) I think…

These strategies – a pause and a preface – are similar to the markers of 'dispreferreds' used by native speakers to mitigate face-threatening acts such as disagreement or non-compliance with a request (Pomerantz 1985).

The non-native speakers in Hirata's data also use more back-channel overall, and especially vocalisations (*Mm, ah*). The native speakers use more comments and questions (*yeah? I know, oh no*). Table 1, based on Hirata (2005: 29), shows the number of instances in her data of each form.

	Native speakers	**Non-native speakers**
Mm hmmm / mm	11	56
Uh huh	0	6
Ah / ah ah ah ah / ahhh	0	8
Ah right / ah yes	1	1
Yes / yeah / yeah?	8	4
Right	1	3
Oh / oh no / oh god	4	1
Ok	0	2
Wow	0	1
I know	1	0
Total	**26**	**82**

Table 1: Incidence of back-channelling

More surprisingly, perhaps, Otoshi (2005) found that the non-native speakers in her study use more instances of *I mean and you know*. These phrases will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

One of the most striking of the features of spoken English noted by Carter and McCarthy is what is sometimes known as 'situational ellipsis'. In 'situational ellipsis' an element is omitted from a clause that is not predicted by the usual workings of cohesion and that is recoverable from the situation rather than from the preceding text. It is striking because, according to standard grammar books, ellipsis of clausal elements such as subject and operator should be unacceptable in English. This is a key point at which the grammar of writing and the grammar of speech diverge. Carter and McCarthy themselves advise caution in the use the term 'ellipsis', remarking that 'in reality nothing is 'missing' from elliptical messages' and that the same contrast between speech and writing might as well be described in terms of the increased elaboration of written discourse rather than in terms of 'omissions' in spoken discourse (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 181). Using the term 'ellipsis' can imply that the written version of an utterance is the 'correct' one, with the spoken version being an imperfect copy, a view that Carter and McCarthy vehemently argue against. Be that as it may, the term 'ellipsis' is a fairly useful one in that it conveys the fact that in a sub-clausal utterance such as *Want some tea?* a subject (*you*) and an operator (*do*) are recoverable from the context and that the utterance diverges from written English. We might expect that speakers who have been instructed in English might view such utterances as incorrect and avoid them. Otoshi (2005) indeed found that such initial ellipsis is more frequent in the native speaker discourse than in that of the non-native speakers. Clauses without subjects are particularly rare in the NNS discourse.

An example of the kind of ellipsis noted by Otoshi as very frequent in her NS data is shown in Example 2.

(2) B1: I came back one day and it was like sort of lying there and I was like Ooh dear. [...] Got a pencil. [...] Prodding it. No, [...] not moving.
B2: [...] A sharpened pencil?

The square brackets in example 2 show where an element is, arguably, missing from the utterance in question. The word 'arguably' is used advisedly here. As noted above, it is equally possible to argue that nothing at all is missing but that the unit of construction of spoken English is the phrase, whereas in written English it is the clause. All that the square brackets do, then, is to highlight those places where the structure of the written and the spoken languages diverge.

Otoshi (2005) notes that distinguishing situational ellipsis from anaphoric ellipsis (Biber et al. 1999: 1104) or structural ellipsis (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 181) is far from straightforward, leading to difficulties in quantifying this feature. However, Table 2 shows her proposed quantification of the amount of situational ellipsis in each set of data, with the number of ellipted clauses normalised to a figure per thousand words.

	Native speakers	**Non-native speakers**
Narrative pair 1	15.9	5
Narrative pair 2	11.6	1.5
Narrative pair 3	9.6	11.5
Average, narrative	*12*	*5.7*
Conversation pair 1	23.6	12.2
Conversation pair 2	9.2	9.7
Average, conversation	*13.9*	*10.6*

Table 2: Frequency of situational ellipsis per thousand words

In both the narrative and the conversation tasks, there are fewer instances of ellipsis in the discourse of the non-native speaker pairs than in that of the native speakers. In addition, ellipsis is less frequent in narrative than in conversation (though the difference is not as great as predicted by Carter and McCarthy (1995: 145)). On the other hand, the difference between some of the pairs is greater than between the NS and the NNS groups. For example, NS conversation pairs 1 and 2 differ more than either pair differs from either NNS pair. Although overall the NS pairs use this feature more than the NNS pairs do, NS narrative pair 3 uses less ellipsis than NNS narrative pair 3. It is clear that this is a feature of spoken English that is either extremely variable between individual speakers, or very sensitive to highly specific elements of context. What is also clear is that most of the interactions represented in table 2 would be useful as a source of data to raise learners' awareness of this feature of spoken English.

Otoshi does, however, raise one further issue. She suggests that whereas example 2 is typical of her NS data, the instances of ellipsis in the NNS data are somewhat different. Example 3 shows an instance where the hearer has to work somewhat harder to establish the link between the first clause and the second sub-clausal unit than is the case in example 2.

(3) C1: I have to write all comments of each student about their personalities and whatever. […] Forty students.

Example 4 gives an example of a type of medial ellipsis which, Otoshi reports, is not found in her NS data.

(4) C2: I heard that you know German people […] just like Japanese

Although medial ellipsis is discussed by Biber et al. (1999: 1107) as a particular feature of the speech of younger American speakers, they do not cite instances of this type, where the copular verb is ellipted (though ellipsis of the copular verb is common when it occurs initially, as in interrogative clauses (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 183)).

Differences in function

The third set of findings from these studies illustrate items which are frequent in the discourse of all groups of speakers but which are used with different functions by native speakers and non-native speakers. These items include *you know*, *I mean* and *sort of / like*. These items are known to be frequent in spoken English and are widely acknowledged to have an interactive function. It is often difficult, however, to pin down their function more precisely. We attempted to categorise and describe the items with which these phrases co-occur.

In the native speaker discourse, *you know* co-occurs with the expression of opinion and with clarification, as in examples 5 and 6.

(5) NS: at the end of the day **you know** you should try your best in everything

(6) NS: and then I got a big polystyrene float **you know** like get your big boxes …

In example 5 it could be argued that *you know* accompanies a face-threatening act, the imposition of an opinion on an interlocutor. In example 6, it could be seen as part of establishing a common understanding of the formulation *polystyrene float*. This latter function occurs also with *I mean*, as in example 7, where a common understanding of 'being terrible with money' is established.

(7) NS: I'm terrible with money. I'm terrible. **I mean** I've got about a hundred pounds left of my grant. I spent it all.

As for *sort of* and *kind of*, the native speakers in Otoshi's study use them as a hedge or as mitigation of a face-threatening act, as in examples 8 and 9.

(8) NS: It's **kind of** annoying

(9) NS: I think we should always consider the other person's feelings and… never be **sort of** domineering in that respect.

Very often, however, the function of these phrases is extremely difficult to specify, and it is tempting simply to suggest that they are interactive in a general sense, engaging the listener without imposing on him/her and indicating that the information in the interaction is jointly negotiated. In many places, however, we were struck by the co-occurrence of *you know*, *sort of* and *like* with what appeared to be key information in a narrative, as in examples 10-14 below. Our interpretation is that these phrases serve to draw attention to what follows them as important information for the listener.

(10) NS: [The bus] went straight across the T-junction and all these cars slam their brakes on. And then it wedges itself. It **sort of** slams into the building.

(11) NS: Some young vandal had actually broken on to the bus and had **like** cut the handbrake.

(12) NS: And yeah when I was at uni I had **like** a gerbil.

(13) NS: I just ended up getting up and thinking I'm okay and then **sort of** spots of blood started running down my top…

(14) NS: And by the time we got down there cos **you know** Biscuit was a wicked little gerbil…

There is overlap in the use of these phrases by native and non-native speakers. Both groups, for example, use *sort of* and *like* as hedges and mitigators. Example 15 shows a non-native speaker example, where the speaker uses *kind of control* as an alternative to producing a different vocabulary item.

(15) NNS: If they can't control, not control, but **kind of** control students, the class would be destroyed.

In our data, however, we do see certain differences, although all of these are open to interpretation. For example, both *you know* and *I mean* in the discourse of non-native speakers co-occur with self-repair or sentence recasting, as in example 16.

(16) NNS: We were- we were going to- **I mean** we go- went to the same school.

We also interpret some examples of *you know* as illustrating its co-occurrence with 'difficult' vocabulary items, as in example 17.

(17) NNS: And then the car ran into the **you know** freeway and the car spinned **you know** sideway…

It might be argued that the speaker in example 17 uses *you know* to gain thinking time to find an inaccessible vocabulary item. Equally plausible, however, is the view that the speaker is not confident that the hearer will know the words *freeway* and *sideway[s]* and uses *you know* to signal 'difficult word coming up'. Alternatively, of course, this use may be interpreted as identical to the native speaker one: using *you know* to highlight important elements of the story. However, this last interpretation is made less likely by the mid-phrase position of *you know*, which is more typical of the NNS interactions than of the NS ones.

Summary and discussion

The studies reported in this paper compared the discourse of native speaker and non-native speaker pairs of interactants, using similar prompts to obtain comparable interactions. We wished to find out whether both groups of speakers used the same features of spoken English and if so to what extent. This information would confirm whether or not the features noted by Carter, McCarthy, Biber and others as distinctive to spoken, as opposed to written, English are found also in the discourse of expert non-native speakers.

An assumption that lay behind our study was that teachers might legitimately ignore the findings of corpus linguists – treating those findings as Linguistics that could be applied or not rather than as Applied Linguistics – if either of the following two conditions obtained:

a. A relevance condition: If something occurred only in native speaker discourse it might be assumed to be of low priority to learners who were unlikely to interact with native speakers.
b. A feasibility condition: If teachers would find it difficult to obtain examples of something that occurred in native speaker spoken

discourse they might be unable to present it to their students even if they thought it was important.

Our studies confirm that all the features of spoken English investigated occur in the discourse of both native and non-native speakers. Although there are differences in frequency of occurrence of these features among the pairs investigated, these do not consistently distinguish between native and non-native speakers. This suggests that the features noted are indeed of importance to learners of spoken English, and that teachers of English themselves are appropriate sources of interactions to be used in classrooms for awareness-raising activities. We did, however, note some differences in the function of the words and phrases investigated, and these suggest avenues for future research:

- the use by native and non-native speakers of medial ellipsis;
- the ways that native and non-native speakers signal self-repair;
- the functions of interactive items such as *you know* and *I mean* and of vague language markers such as *sort of* in narrative; in particular, further exploration is needed of the hypothesis that they co-occur with key points in the story;
- the use by non-native speakers of *you know* and *I mean* in particular.

Most importantly, perhaps, we have illustrated that spoken interaction by expert non-native speakers of English is a fruitful ground for investigation, and that the features noted by corpus research that are markers of spoken interaction comprise useful starting points for that investigation. We have stressed that looking for sameness is as important as looking for difference. We have demonstrated that the interaction of non-native speaker teachers of English, even when prompted, provides a good source of data for introducing learners to the features of spoken English, although we have also noted that native speaker and non-native speaker use of the same features is by no means always identical. To return to our initial questions, we have confirmed that corpus research into spoken English is valid both as Applied Linguistics and as Linguistics Applied.

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3 National trends in achievement in Irish Listening at primary level: A challenge for language revitalisation and language policy

John Harris

Introduction

The Irish language has provided a key case study for scholars working in the areas of language education and language revitalisation for many years (Dorian, 1988; Fishman, 1991, 2001; Macnamara, 1971; Ó Riagáin, 2001; Spolsky, 2004; Wright, 2004). At least three features of the Irish initiative are notable: (1) the weak position of the language in the Gaeltacht Irish-speaking areas in the west at the time when the revitalisation initiative of the state originally began in 1922; (2) the failure in the intervening 85 years or so to improve the rate of intergenerational transmission of the language *within families and homes* - either in the Gaeltacht, or in the country more generally; (3) the heavy reliance placed on the education system to compensate for this failure of natural transmission by reproducing a basic competence in the language in each new generation.

From the beginning of the state, the teaching of Irish at primary level has been perhaps the central element in the larger revitalisation effort (Harris, 1997, 2005). At present, Irish is taught to virtually all primary-school pupils. In the vast majority of cases, it is taught as a second language and as a single school subject in 'ordinary' mainstream schools. It is also taught in immersion ('all-Irish') schools which, while still relatively small in number, have grown substantially over the last twenty years. And, of course, it is taught in Gaeltacht schools. The success of primary schools in teaching Irish then is a matter of considerable importance in both educational and language revitalisation terms.

The present paper examines trends in achievement in Irish Listening among sixth-grade pupils at primary level. The data comes from a series of national surveys of achievement in spoken Irish in 'ordinary', 'all-Irish' and Gaeltacht schools, conducted in 1985 and 2002. The 2002 survey was conducted on behalf of the Department of Education and Science (DES) by a team led by John Harris (Trinity College Dublin) and including Patrick Forde, Peter Archer and Mary O Gorman (Educational Research Centre) and Siobhán

Nic Fhearaile (Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann). A more complete account of some of the aspects of the surveys discussed here can be found in Harris, Forde, Archer, Nic Fhearaile and O Gorman (2006). The earlier survey was conducted by Harris and Murtagh (1988).

The two surveys examined both Irish Listening and Irish Speaking skills in all three kinds of schools. Our main focus here, however, is on Irish Listening in ordinary schools, although data on all-Irish schools, and to a lesser extent Gaeltacht schools, are also mentioned. The findings relating to achievement in Irish Listening are interpreted in the light of a range of other data derived from surveys of teachers and parents and from a number of previous studies (Harris, 1984; Harris and Murtagh, 1988; Harris and Murtagh, 1999).

The surveys and tests

Achievement in Irish Listening was measured using a criterion-referenced test (Harris, 1984; Harris and Murtagh, 1988). A number of minor but essential changes had to be made in the original 1985 test for the 2002 administration. These changes were necessary in order to accommodate changes in culture or in the physical environment in the interim. Among the issues of this kind were the changeover from the pound to the euro and changes in house furnishings. These modifications were made in such a way that the basic linguistic content of the objectives and items was not altered in any fundamental way. A number of statistical checks were made to establish the test was not any more difficult for pupils in 2002 because of these adjustments (See Harris et al, 2006). Questionnaires were used to obtain the information on parents' and teachers' views and practices in relation to Irish.

Most of the performance data we will be presenting consists of the percentage of sixth-grade pupils who achieve each of three defined levels of performance on each of the content-skill objective in Irish Listening represented on the test: (i) mastery (a high level of performance), (ii) at least minimal progress (without attaining mastery), and (iii) failure. In the case of the Irish Listening Test, we also compare overall mean scores on the test in 1985 and 2002.

Seven content-skill objectives were represented on the Irish Listening Test and they are identified here by brief names such as *Listening vocabulary*. A greater number of items on the test are devoted to the more general objectives e.g. *General comprehension of speech*. Fewer items are assigned to objectives which require pupils to identify the correct *form* of a particular Irish word to fit a given spoken or pictorial context (e.g. *Understanding the morphology of verbs in listening*). All items were in multiple-choice form and were presented on audio tape to entire class-groups of pupils. Examiners could give instructions in Irish or English, whichever language would best ensure that the pupil understood the task. The items themselves, however, were entirely in Irish.

Irish Listening in Ordinary schools

Whether we examine overall mean scores or the percentages of pupils attaining mastery of individual objectives, it is clear that there has been a considerable drop between 1985 and 2002 in performance in Irish Listening in ordinary schools. The fall in mean score in ordinary schools (Table 1) amounts to 12.9 raw score points, almost the 1985 standard deviation. There is no significant difference between mean scores in Irish Listening in 1985 and 2002 for all-Irish and Gaeltacht schools.

School type	**1985 Mean (SE)**	**Standard deviation**	**2002 Mean (SE)**	**Standard deviation**	**Difference 2002-1985**
Ordinary	46.9 *(0.97)*	13.65	34.0 *(0.47)*	9.35	**-12.9**
All-Irish	66.0 *(1.09)*	6.95	63.7 *(0.71)*	6.56	-2.3
Gaeltacht	59.8 *(1.46)*	11.23	56.1 *(1.80)*	13.72	-3.7

Significant differences (p<.05) are printed in bold. Standard errors are printed in italics.

Table 1: Mean raw scores of pupils on the Irish Listening Test in 1985 and 2002 in ordinary, all-Irish and Gaeltacht schools

There has been a substantial and statistically significant fall-off between 1985 and 2002 in the percentage of pupils in ordinary schools attaining high levels of performance (mastery) for six of the seven Irish Listening objectives tested (Table 2). For example, there was a fall of 36.1% and 40.5% respectively in the percentages of pupils mastering the *Listening vocabulary* and *General comprehension of speech* objectives. The result is that only 5.9% and 7.8% of pupils respectively in ordinary schools achieve mastery of these two objectives in 2002. The decline in relation to these objectives would seem to be of particular importance because they are central to the use of Irish for real communication.

Ordinary Schools	**Attain mastery**		**Difference**
Listening objective	**1985**	**2002**	**(2002 – 1985)**
Sound discrimination	84.7%	84.2%	- 0.5%
	(1.39)	*(1.41)*	
Listening vocabulary	42.0%	5.9%	**- 36.1%**
	(3.00)	*(1.08)*	
General comprehension of speech	48.3%	7.8%	**- 40.5%**
	(2.94)	*(1.20)*	
Understanding the morphology of	26.9%	2.9%	**- 24.0%**
verbs	*(2.35)*	*(0.61)*	
Understanding the morphology of	33.9%	11.8%	**- 22.1%**
prepositions	*(2.43)*	*(0.91)*	
Understanding the morphology of	30.6%	14.0%	**- 16.6%**
qualifiers	*(2.68)*	*(1.42)*	
Understanding the morphology of	16.8%	3.7%	**- 13.1%**
nouns	*(1.54)*	*(0.49)*	

Significant differences (p<.05) are printed in bold. Standard error printed in italics. N (1985) = 2155, N (2002) = 2728.

Table 2: Percentage of sixth-grade pupils in ordinary schools who attain mastery on each objective on the Irish Listening Test in 1985 and 2002

Objectives relating to *Understanding the morphology of verbs in listening* and *Understanding the morphology of prepositions in listening* are associated with falls of 24% and 22.1% respectively, with only 2.9% and 11.8% respectively still mastering these objectives in 2002. Two other objectives, related to understanding the morphology of qualifiers and nouns are associated with a decline in the percentage achieving mastery of 16.6% and 13.1% respectively. *Sound discrimination* is the only objective where the decline in performance is not statistically significant.

For most objectives, the decline in the percentage of pupils in ordinary schools attaining mastery is associated with a moderate increase in the percentage of pupils reaching the lower level of performance defined as ‘minimal progress’, but a larger increase in the percentages failing. For example, *Listening vocabulary* and *General comprehension of speech* are associated with an increase between 1985 and 2002 of 27.9% and 24.4%

respectively in the percentages failing (Table 3), while increases in the percentages making at least minimal progress (not shown in tabular form) are only 8.3% and 16% respectively.

Ordinary Schools	**Fail**		**Difference**
Listening objective	**1985**	**2002**	**(2002 - 1985)**
Sound discrimination	3.9%	3.1%	- 0.8%
	(0.53)	*(0.66)*	
Listening vocabulary	14.4%	42.3%	**+ 27.9%**
	(1.93)	*(2.00)*	
General comprehension of speech	11.8%	36.2%	**+ 24.4%**
	(1.59)	*(1.75)*	
Understanding the morphology of	27.7%	48.7%	**+ 21.0%**
verbs	*(2.00)*	*(1.40)*	
Understanding the morphology of	9.6%	18.9%	**+ 9.3%**
prepositions	*(0.93)*	*(1.09)*	
Understanding the morphology of	15.7%	23.3%	**+ 7.6%**
qualifiers	*(1.42)*	*(1.22)*	
Understanding the morphology of	19.7%	37.5%	**+ 17.8%**
nouns	*(1.54)*	*(1.54)*	

Significant differences (p<.05) are printed in bold. Standard error printed in italics. N (1985) = 2155, N (2002) = 2728.

Table 3: Percentage of sixth-grade pupils in ordinary schools who fail each objective on the Irish Listening Test in 1985 and 2002

Irish Listening in All-Irish schools

In all-Irish schools very high percentages of pupils achieved mastery of most objectives in 2002 (Table 4). *Listening vocabulary* and *General comprehension of speech*, for example, are mastered by 89.3% and 96.3% respectively. In the case of a further three objectives, the lowest percentage attaining mastery is 86.4%. Despite the generally high percentages of all-Irish pupils mastering most Irish Listening objectives in 2002, and the fact that overall mean score on the test in 1985 and 2002 do not differ significantly (Table 1), there are statistically significant declines since 1985 in the percentage of pupils mastering three objectives - *Understanding the morphology of verbs in listening* (a fall of 14.8%), Understanding *the* *morphology of prepositions in listening* (a decline of 6.6%) and *Understanding the morphology of nouns* (a fall of 24.4%).

All-Irish Schools	**Attain mastery**		**Difference**
Listening objective	**1985**	**2002**	**(2002 - 1985)**
Sound discrimination	96.0%	97.0%	+1.0%
	(1.24)	*(1.06)*	
Listening vocabulary	90.4%	89.3%	-1.1%
	(4.04)	*(3.13)*	
General comprehension of speech	96.4%	96.3%	-0.1%
	(1.00)	*(1.92)*	
Understanding the morphology of	76.1%	61.3%	**- 14.8%**
verbs	*(3.72)*	*(4.02)*	
Understanding the morphology of	93.0%	86.4%	**- 6.6%**
prepositions	*(1.44)*	*(1.57)*	
Understanding the morphology of	80.1%	87.8%	**+7.7%**
qualifiers	*(2.69)*	*(2.12)*	
Understanding the morphology of	56.5%	32.1%	**- 24.4%**
nouns	*(6.89)*	*(3.06)*	

Significant differences ($p<.05$) are printed in bold. Standard error printed in italics. N (1985) = 301, N = 640 (2002).

Table 4: Percentage of sixth-grade pupils in all-Irish schools who attain mastery on each objective on the Irish Listening Test in 1985 and 2002

Unlike the situation in ordinary schools, the decline in the percentages attaining mastery of specific objectives in all-Irish schools involves a slippage to minimal progress rather than to failure (latter results not shown in tabular form). Failure on all of the seven listening objectives is extremely low in all-Irish schools, and in all but one case *Understanding the morphology of qualifiers in listening* (where the increase is only 0.3%), has not changed significantly since 1985.

It should be noted also (Table 4) that the two central Irish Listening objectives, *Listening vocabulary* and *General comprehension of speech*, are mastered by very similar percentages of pupils in 1985 and 2002 and the differences are not statistically significant. These latter objectives are also the ones tested by the greatest number of items. Finally, in this regard, the percentage of pupils in all-Irish schools attaining mastery of one Irish Listening objective, *Understanding the morphology of qualifiers*, actually *increased* significantly (by 7.7%) between 1985 and 2002. A further objective *Sound discrimination* is also associated with an increase in the percentage attaining mastery in 2002, but this is not statistically significant.

Parents and Irish: Attitudes, proficiency and frequency of use

We turn now to some of the findings from the survey of parents. These data will be useful in considering some of the factors which may be responsible for the decline in achievement in Irish Listening just described. Some findings from the survey of teachers will also be mentioned later in the paper in the context of the discussion of possible causative factors later. But limitations of space here prevent us from presenting the teacher data in tabular form.

All the data relating to parents are for 2002, as we do not have corresponding data for 1985. In answer to a question which asked 'what is your general attitude to Irish now?' the most common response of parents of pupils in ordinary schools (Table 5) was 'neutral' (39.6%), followed closely by 'favourable' (34.2%). Smaller percentages were 'very favourable', 'unfavourable' or 'very unfavourable'. The contrast with the attitudes of all-Irish school parents is striking: 56.5% of all-Irish parents were very favourable towards Irish, compared to 46.7% of Gaeltacht parents, and 14.5% of ordinary school parents.

Parents' general attitude to Irish now	**Ordinary**	**All-Irish**	**Gaeltacht**
Very Favourable	14.5% *(0.71)*	56.5% *(3.12)*	46.7% *(3.48)*
Favourable	34.2% *(0.97)*	35.9% *(2.56)*	35.6% *(2.42)*
Neutral	39.6% *(0.96)*	6.6% *(0.98)*	14.7% *(2.03)*
Unfavourable/Very unfavourable	11.2% *(0.67)*	0.7% *(0.35)*	2.6% *(0.80)*
Missing	0.5% *(0.13)*	0.3% *(0.22)*	0.5% *(0.42)*

Standard error printed in italics. N Ordinary = 2744, N All-Irish = 609, N Gaeltacht = 575.

Table 5: Percentage of parents in three populations of schools according to their general attitude to Irish now

The most frequent *speaking ability* category selected by parents to describe themselves (Table 6) varies by school type: ‘a few simple sentences’ is the most frequent category in the case of ordinary school parents (37.7%), ‘parts of conversations’ for all-Irish school parents (38.3%), and ‘native-speaker ability’ for Gaeltacht school parents (37.2%). A combined total of 32% of ordinary school parents assign themselves to one of the two lowest Irish-speaking categories: ‘No Irish’ and ‘the odd word’.

Parents’ ability to speak Irish	**Ordinary**	**All-Irish**	**Gaeltacht**
No Irish	10.8% *(0.89)*	1.8% *(0.64)*	3.3% *(0.78)*
Only the odd word	21.2% *(0.97)*	8.2% *(1.30)*	8.1% *(1.39)*
A few simple sentences	37.7% *(1.18)*	26.9% *(1.65)*	15.8% *(2.19)*
Parts of conversation	22.6% *(1.00)*	38.3% *(2.44)*	19.9% *(2.37)*
Most conversations	6.2% *(0.51)*	18.7% *(1.90)*	14.1% *(2.13)*
Native speaker ability	1.0% *(0.18)*	5.8% *(1.17)*	37.2% *(5.21)*
Missing	0.6% *(0.14)*	0.4% *(0.24)*	1.7% *(0.71)*

Standard error printed in italics. N Ordinary = 2744, N All-Irish = 609, N Gaeltacht = 575.

Table 6: Percentage of parents in three populations of schools according to their self-assessed ability to speak Irish

By comparison with ordinary school parents, only 10% of all-Irish parents and 11.4% of Gaeltacht parents rated their speaking ability as low as ‘no Irish’ or ‘only the odd word’. Bearing in mind that a further 15.8% of Gaeltacht parents rated their speaking ability as ‘simple sentences’, these data indicate the very large variability in Irish-language backgrounds encountered by teachers in Gaeltacht schools.

Substantial percentages of parents of pupils in ordinary schools rarely if ever spoke Irish to their children (33.1% ‘seldom’ and 42.3% ‘never’) (Table 7). All-Irish school parents do not fall into these low usage patterns as often: while 25.5% of them ‘seldom’ speak Irish to the child, only 8.4% ‘never’ do.

Parent speaks Irish to child	Ordinary	All-Irish	Gaeltacht
Always	0.1% *(0.09)*	1.1% *(0.55)*	22.6% *(4.76)*
Very often	1.0% *(0.24)*	5.2% *(1.04)*	8.1% *(1.73)*
Often	2.2% *(0.29)*	15.6% *(1.97)*	14.5% *(2.39)*
Occasionally	20.6% *(0.82)*	43.4% *(1.73)*	25.7% *(2.78)*
Seldom	33.1% *(0.99)*	25.5% *(1.17)*	17.7% *(2.34)*
Never	42.3% *(1.28)*	8.4% *(1.45)*	10.8% *(1.89)*
Missing	0.7% *(0.15)*	0.8% *(0.45)*	0.7% *(0.45)*

Standard error printed in italics. N Ordinary = 2744, N All-Irish = 609, N Gaeltacht = 575.

Table 7: Percentage of parents (respondent) in three populations of schools according to the frequency with which they speak Irish to their child

Parental praise and encouragement and the child's feelings about Irish

The parents who reported the most positive attitude to studying Irish among their children were associated with all-Irish schools: 71.9% said that their child liked it. Most parents of children in ordinary schools said that their child either had 'no particular feelings about studying Irish' (40.6%) or disliked it (30.8%) (Table 8)

Child's feelings about studying Irish	Ordinary	All-Irish	Gaeltacht
Likes studying Irish	27.2% *(1.12)*	71.9% *(2.75)*	59.9% *(3.36)*
Has no particular feelings about studying Irish	40.6% *(1.07)*	24.8% *(2.51)*	30.6% *(2.58)*
Dislikes studying Irish	30.8% *(1.10)*	3.0% *(0.76)*	8.4% *(1.69)*
Missing	1.4% *(0.22)*	0.3% *(0.02)*	1.1% *(0.65)*

Standard error printed in italics. N Ordinary = 2744, N All-Irish = 609, N Gaeltacht = 575.

Table 8: Percentage of parents in three populations of schools according to how their child generally feels about studying Irish in school

Parents were also asked what general attitude to Irish they try to encourage in their child (Table 9). Gaeltacht parents were most affirmative with 64.2% choosing the option 'I let my child know that Irish is important' – compared to 55% of parents in all-Irish schools and 32.5% of parents in ordinary schools. Two-thirds of ordinary school parents, however, say they 'leave it up to my child to develop his/her own attitude to Irish'.

General attitude to Irish encouraged by parent	**Ordinary**	**All-Irish**	**Gaeltacht**
I let my child know that Irish is important	32.5% *(1.04)*	55.0% *(2.13)*	64.2% *(2.66)*
I leave it up to my child to develop his/her own attitude to Irish	66.2% *(1.02)*	44.3% *(2.09)*	34.3% *(2.73)*
I discourage my child from taking Irish seriously	0.7% *(0.20)*	0.1% *(0.12)*	0.4% *(0.27)*
Missing	0.6% *(0.14)*	0.6% *(0.40)*	1.2% *(0.52)*

Standard error printed in italics. N Ordinary = 2744, N All-Irish = 609, N Gaeltacht = 575.

Table 9: Percentage of parents in three populations of schools according to the general attitude towards Irish which they try to encourage in their child

Another element of parental support for Irish is praise for school achievements (Table 10). Of eight aspects of English, Irish, Mathematics and Project work, most parents 'often' praise English reading (73.1%) and Mathematics (72.9%). Only in the case of the three aspects of Irish do the percentages of parents 'often' offering praise fall below 50%: 49.8% in the case of Irish reading, 48.2% for Irish writing, and 38.4% in the case of Spoken/oral Irish. At the other extreme, while only 2.3% of parents said that they 'hardly ever' praised the English reading achievements of their children, and only 2% hardly ever praised their mathematics achievements, 25% hardly ever praised the child's spoken/oral Irish.

Ordinary schools. Subjects:	**Parent praises child's achievements........**			
	Often	**Occasionally**	**Hardly ever**	**Missing**
English reading	73.1% *(0.97)*	22.8% *(0.86)*	2.3% *(0.29)*	1.8% *(0.24)*
English writing	69.8% *(0.88)*	24.9% *(0.91)*	2.6% *(0.30)*	2.7% *(0.32)*
Spoken/oral English	58.2% *(1.00)*	27.9% *(0.91)*	8.8% *(0.60)*	5.1% *(0.40)*
Mathematics	72.9% *(0.87)*	22.5% *(0.86)*	2.0% *(0.30)*	2.6% *(0.32)*
Project work	62.6% *(1.22)*	26.0% *(1.03)*	5.0% *(0.49)*	6.5% *(0.55)*
Irish reading	49.8% *(1.18)*	33.2% *(1.01)*	12.4% *(0.77)*	4.6% *(0.42)*
Irish writing	48.2% *(1.09)*	34.3% *(1.00)*	12.8% *(0.80)*	4.7% *(0.44)*
Spoken/oral Irish	38.4% *(1.14)*	31.4% *(0.89)*	25.0% *(0.92)*	5.3% *(0.44)*

Standard error printed in italics.

Table 10: Percentage of parents in ordinary schools according to how often they praise their child's school achievements in different subjects

Putting the results in context

The greatest cause for concern in the results we have presented is that the decline in achievement in Irish Listening is sustained across nearly all Irish Listening objectives. Other data on *Irish Speaking* not presented here also show a dramatic decline in that aspect of Irish achievement. In general, performance in *all-Irish* schools has held up well, with no overall decline in Irish Listening and with no change in performance in relation to key objectives such as *General comprehension of speech*. This must be counted a considerable success for all Irish schools, given that the sector has grown so dramatically since 1985. A fuller discussion of the all-Irish results can be found in Harris et al (2006).

What caused the decline in achievement in Irish in ordinary schools?

It will be argued here that a combination of negative and challenging factors affecting pupil achievement in Irish in ordinary schools developed in the late 1980s and through the 1990s. These are now discussed under a number of headings below.

(1) Unsuitable teaching materials and methods

Central to the decline in achievement is the fact that the audio-visual curriculum and associated teaching materials (the *Nuachúrsaí*) used in the vast majority of schools in the period under consideration were unsuitable. Despite increasing dissatisfaction among teachers going back to the mid-1980s, these were not finally replaced until the revised curriculum, *Curaclam na Bunscoile* (NCCA, 1999c) was published. Dissatisfaction with the *Nuachúrsaí* had focussed on at least three issues over time: the difficulty level of the materials, the dated and unsuitable content of the lessons themselves, and the structural-linguistic/audio-visual teaching approach involved. All three of these criticisms have been supported by research findings (Harris, 1984,1996; Harris, Ó Néill, Uí Dhufaigh and Ó Súilleabháin, 1996; Harris and Murtagh, 1999). The strong evidence that a variety of other factors, a number of them discussed below, also contribute significantly to pupil achievement, however, makes it extremely unlikely that a change in methods and materials alone will solve the problem (Harris, 1983, 1984, 2002; Harris and Murtagh, 1987, 1988, 1999).

(2) Contraction of the core time devoted to Irish as a subject

Three separate national surveys between 1976 and 1985 showed that the amount of time per week spent on Irish varied from 5.6 to 5.1 hours. In the introduction to *Curaclam na Bunscoile* (NCCA, 1999c), however, the core ('minimum') time for Irish as a second language is specified as 3.5 hours. While there was some newspaper comment at the time to the effect that this represented a reduction in the amount of time for Irish, there seemed to be a general acceptance that time pressure in the curriculum for a number of years previously had already probably reduced the real time for Irish to something like that level. The contraction in core time for Irish is very likely to have contributed to the fall in standards documented here. As Johnstone (2002: 20) points out, 'in all countries 'time' is an important factor, but in some it is vitally important where there is very little exposure to the target language in society…'.

It is important to emphasise that the reduction in core time was a greater loss for Irish than was the corresponding reduction in core time for other subjects. This is because the use of Irish does not easily extend beyond the Irish slot without the special effort of the teacher. English reading, writing, and mathematics, for example, extend easily, naturally and by necessity into other areas of the curriculum all the time, without any specific action by the teacher. In many ordinary schools, the reduction in core time for Irish will have seriously undermined the only foothold the language had in the curriculum.

(3) Reduction in teaching through Irish outside the Irish lesson

Data from a number of studies, including the present one, show that teaching through Irish (outside the Irish lesson proper) is a very powerful factor determining achievement in the language (Harris, 1983; 1984; Harris and Murtagh, 1988). While only a minority of schools and classes may adopt this approach, that minority within the mainstream population of ordinary schools accounts for a very great absolute number of pupils. If this kind of Irish-medium teaching had increased during the 1985-2002 period it could have gone a considerable way to compensating for the effects of the decline in core time for Irish just described. It is clear from DES statistics, however, that what in reality has happened is the opposite – teaching through Irish declined significantly between 1985 and 2002.

(4) Unique role and changing attitudes of teachers

Through no fault of schools or teachers, Irish tends to be relatively 'sealed off' within ordinary schools compared to other subjects. Pupils have little or no interactive contact with the spoken language outside school. This relative isolation of Irish in school is accentuated by the role of parents who, as the data presented earlier shows, very often adopt a hands-off attitude to the language. The great majority of parents seldom or never speak Irish to their child, tend to praise achievements in Irish (particularly spoken Irish) much less often than they praise other subjects, and leave it up to the children to develop their own attitude to Irish.

As a consequence, Irish depends on the attitudes, efforts, and commitment of individual schools and teachers in a way that other subjects do not. By the same token, changes in teachers' attitudes, motivation, self-esteem, or professional satisfaction in teaching are also of greater significance in the case of Irish. Data from the survey of teachers (not presented in the present paper) show that there was a significant decrease between 1985 and 2002 in the percentage of pupils whose teachers derived satisfaction from teaching Irish. There were also significant declines in the percentage whose attitude to Irish being taught in primary school was favourable, and a significant increase in the percentage who felt that less time should be spent on Irish. Finally, there was a significant decline in the percentage who said that the amount of time and emphasis they devoted to Irish was determined by their own outlook and opinion.

(5) Growth in all-Irish schools

Analyses of the results of the Irish Listening Test in Harris et al (2006) discount the idea that the decline in ordinary school achievement in Irish could be *directly* due to the loss of high-Irish-potential pupils (or teachers) to all-Irish schools. While the loss of pupils and teachers with 'high-Irish-potential' had some effect, it was not large enough to explain *the scale of the decline* in pupil achievement in Irish in ordinary schools which we actually observed. But there are other *indirect* ways in which the growth in all-Irish schools might have had a negative effect on ordinary schools. For example, the absence of high-Irish-potential pupils from ordinary schools could be having a negative multiplier effect by changing the dynamics of classrooms and teaching. The absence of high-Irish-achievement pupils, or their presence in smaller numbers, removes a certain kind of vitality, stimulus and resource from the Irish class in ordinary schools.

(6) Institutional responsiveness: Issues of speed, scope and leadership

Because of the relative isolation of schools and teachers in relation to Irish, responsibility for the rapid identification of emerging system-wide problems, and for the formulation of an adequate response to them, rests more heavily on official institutions in the case of Irish than it would in the case of other school subjects. We have already mentioned the most obvious problem of official responsiveness during the period 1985-2002 – the delay in providing a new curriculum and materials for Irish. But another problematic aspect of official responsiveness is that its scope has been too narrowly defined. The official response, it is argued here, should have covered the full set of educational and language planning issues relevant to the decline in pupil achievement, including factors such as the time pressure on Irish, the decline in teaching through Irish, the relative lack of parental engagement with Irish in school, the deterioration in teacher satisfaction in teaching Irish, and even the lack of support for Irish outside the school.

(7) Language education policy and changing educational structures

One other issue is whether the major changes in educational administration nationally which took place in the 1980s and 1990s are connected in some way to the decline in achievement in Irish in ordinary schools. In 1985, both the Irish curriculum and the new Irish conversation courses which were then introduced had been developed by the inspectorate under the auspices of the DES. It was the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, however, which developed the present curriculum published in 1999. New Irish courses for ordinary schools were then produced by the commercial publishers, and a new statutory body, an *Chomhairle Um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta*, was assigned a range of important new functions in relation to Irish in education including the provision of materials in Irish for all-Irish and Gaeltacht schools. During this same period, the school inspectorate was radically reorganised as part of a major restructuring and re-examination of roles within the DES which had originated in the Strategic Management Initiative (Delivering Better Government: Strategic Management Initiative, 1996).

Without in any way questioning the general merits of these structural and institutional changes, it is worthwhile considering whether in every respect they were positive for Irish. As long as Irish was installed in the key decision-making environment of the DES, the language was guaranteed a high priority and enjoyed relatively little curricular competition. In addition, emerging problems could be detected early, decisions on a response could be taken quickly and the connections between the educational and language-maintenance aspects of problems were transparent. The location of these functions in the DES also provided a more visible official commitment and leadership in relation to the language, communicating in a direct way where ownership of, and responsibility for, the various problems and issues ultimately lay.

A long-term exercise in educational and language planning

An adequate response to the problems of declining pupil achievement levels and growing disenchantment among teachers can be built on the analysis just presented. The central issue is to acknowledge the complexity of the problem and to enlarge our existing definition of it. The second major requirement is to develop an adequate plan of action which is equal to the range of difficulties identified in the present study and in previous research. Ideally, this plan should cover not just Irish as a subject but the wider use of Irish in school and the supports available in the home and in the community. This exercise would involve research, development and creative work designed to provide solutions to the challenges presented by the real sociolinguistic situation in which schools operate. It would need to take account both of the educational aspects of the issue and the national aim of promoting bilingualism and the wider use of Irish. A language planning exercise of the kind proposed would be much more effective if explicit political agreement at a national level was secured in advance for its goals and implementation processes.

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4 Use of an Irish-English lexical categorisation task to examine children's homograph recognition as a function of language context and language background

Fiona Lyddy

Introduction

Homographs are polysemous words, words that are lexically identical but have different meanings. For example, the word 'bank' is a noun meaning 'financial institution' or 'riverside', and a verb meaning 'to deposit', 'to tilt' or 'to rely (on)'. English homographs may have different pronunciations as well as different meanings; for example, 'row', 'read', 'wind' and 'tear' each have two pronunciations and meanings. The fact that the same lexical representation comes to be associated with more that one pronunciation in proficient English reading reflects the 'orthographic depth' (Frost, Katz and Bentin, 1987) of the English language, that is the degree of irregularity in the representation of spoken sounds by writing. Phonological recoding, the process of mapping print to sound (e.g. see Share, 1995) is a critical aspect of reading development which has been shown to be complicated by two sets of factors; those relating to the phonological structure of the language and those relating to orthographic depth (see Seymour, Aro and Erskine, 2003; Ziegler and Goswami, 2005). Reading in English presents challenges in both regards (Goswami, 2005). The comparison of reading development across languages has shown that such factors are key predictors of the ease with which key reading skills are acquired by children. Seymour, Aro and Erskine (2003), for example, report large differences across European languages in the acquisition of early literacy skills, with detriments associated with deeper orthographies and higher syllabic complexity.

Interlingual, or cross-language, homographs bring further complications for the bilingual child who already has a deep-orthography language such as English to acquire. Many cross-language homographs share meaning; for example, the French/English 'table'. By contrast, noncognate interlexical homographs are words which are lexically identical in two languages but have different meanings and generally different pronunciations; for example, the French/English 'pain', the German/English 'Kind' and the

Irish/English ‘fear’ (man). Biliterate readers seem able to initiate the necessary mappings for the currently-active language without interference from the other language such that ambiguous items are often not noticed (although initial lexical access is likely to be language non-selective; e.g., see Dijkstra and Van Heuven, 2002). The currently active language mode (see Grosjean, 2001) may play a role. While frequency affects comprehension of the word, disambiguation depends to a large extent on the context in which the word is encountered. For example, Gerard and Scarborough (1989), found that word frequency in the currently active language rather than the overall frequency of use in Spanish/English predicted recognition of homographs. In this case, L2 knowledge did not impinge on L1 performance, although conflicting results have been reported (e.g. see review in Van Hell and Dijkstra, 2002).

Many tasks have employed homograph interpretation or priming measures in a lexical decision task, in which subjects must decide whether a visually presented letter string is a word or not. The primed meaning extracted from a homograph, by affecting lexical decision response latencies, is informative as regards the activated meaning in semantic memory. In the bilingual case, information regarding the relative activation of a bilingual’s languages can be inferred. There is now much evidence from such research to support the suggestion that initial access of words in a bilingual’s lexicons occurs in a language non-selective manner (e.g., van Hell and Dijkstra, 2002; Dijkstra, Grainger and Van Heuven, 1999). However, beyond initial access, a number of factors operate to influence the relative language mode in which a bilingual may operate. Van Hell and Dijkstra (2002) discuss the roles of (1) task demands and stimuli, (2) current task expectations and (3) relative language fluency. These factors essentially serve to provide the global and local context that may affect performance. The task demands and expectations provide local information about the current task context, suggesting whether a bilingual will need to operate through one or other or both of their languages. For example, if stimuli or instructions are presented in both languages, a relatively bilingual language mode is encouraged. Taking Grosjean’s (1997) idea of language mode as a continuum, the local context may ensure that both languages are active, though one may be relatively more dominant at a given point in time. By contrast, a task which operates exclusively through one language may elicit a monolingual mode, at one end of Grosjean’s continuum. Here, the language not currently in use could effectively be deactivated, until context dictates otherwise. The relative fluency of a bilingual’s languages represents a broader condition that may affect performance. Sensitivity to interference from L1 to L2 and L2 to L1 varies as a function of relative fluency, reflecting the ease with which one language attains dominance in a given context. Van Hell and Dijkstra (2002), employing trilingual participants, found effects of L2 on the dominant L1, in a task designed to elicit a monolingual (L1) language mode. However, L3 effects on L1 processing depended on a threshold being exceeded, such that weaker L3 skill did not induce effects on L1. They conclude that the magnitude of cross-linguistics effect is related to the relative language fluency, which may explain differences reported across studies. A weak L2 will not easily influence L1 processing in such contexts. These findings are incompatible with a strong interpretation of the language mode hypothesis. However, it may be that a language non-selective view accounts for the earlier, automatic, stages in processing while language mode accounts for the later processing associated with conscious control of language and awareness. In relation to homographs, this idea concurs with data showing that polarity of homographs (i.e. bias, or the degree to which one meaning dominates) affects tasks when meaning must be selected, but not initial access to meaning (e.g. Nievas and Justicia, 2004).

The Irish-English bilingual context will not provide a testing ground for such issues. However, such methods may serve another function; by providing an indirect index of language status in a bilingual whose languages are not equal and, in particular, where written and verbal exposure differs. The Irish language (as many minority languages) is dominated by the English language context. While the latest Census data recorded 1.57 million people as able to speak Irish, a large proportion of these are school age, and are exposed to Irish as a compulsory school subject. Of the total, 21.6% reported using the language every day; of these 77% were school-goers. Within Irish-speaking, or Gaeltacht, regions, Irish speakers represented 72.6% of the population, or 62,157 people. This represents a decline from 76.3% in the 1996 Census. Furthermore, the 2002 Census found that of Irish speakers in Gaeltacht regions, just 55.6% used the language daily. Within County Galway, 78% of Gaeltacht-dwellers speak Irish, amounting to over 21,000 people, with a further 6,000 Irish speakers in Galway City. Our sample of Gaeltacht children was drawn from a strongly-Irish area within this region. However, even here the language comes under further pressure when we consider written exposure. Irish-speaking adults in Gaeltacht regions are likely to experience English as their dominant written language, a pattern which has also been reported in other countries, for example, with Gaelic L1 speakers in Scotland (Gerhand, Deregowski and McAllister, 1995). Children receive increasing English print exposure as they advance through school. By secondary school, children in Irish-speaking areas, going to Irish-medium schools, receive much subject-specific tuition via English language textbooks. Responses to homograph stimuli may be useful in measuring the relative influence of the two languages under such circumstances.

Few studies have addressed explicit knowledge concerning homographs, and the extent to which this varies as a function of factors such as fluency and language context. The recognition of an interlingual homograph as being a homograph (that is, the realisation that it can be a word in both languages) requires access to semantic as well as orthographic representations, as knowledge of orthographic legalities would not be sufficient to identify the items as a word in both languages. While in a standard lexical decision task (i.e. decide if the presented string is a word), response times to homographs vary with task demands (e.g., Dijkstra, Van Jaarsveld and Ten Brinke, 1998); identification of an interlingual homograph may require more time, and generate more errors, than a monolingual task. Children, lacking mature metalinguistic awareness, may have particular difficulty in acknowledging the ambiguity in a homograph. If homographs are biased towards one language, we might find performance differences as a function of the status of that language (and fluency) as well as the current task context in which the bilingual is operating.

If Irish-English bilinguals are presented with an interlingual homograph such as TEACH - a written form that occurs in both Irish (meaning ‘house’) and English - it should be read as appropriate in the currently active language. Presented in the absence of context, or with both language modes active, frequency should influence interpretation. Here TEACH is more frequent in written Irish than in written English, and therefore the more frequent interpretation would prevail. However, for Irish-English processing, the pervasive influence of spoken and written English may place the Irish language mode at an immediate disadvantage, even for those whose community language is Irish. This effect might in particular be worth exploring in young readers who are just acquiring competence in both (written) languages and will encounter many such homographs among their early words (for example; ‘bean’ (woman), ‘fear’ (man), ‘rang’ (class)).

The current task encourages a bilingual language mode by presenting stimuli from both languages within the same task, but overall language context was manipulated such that participants completed the task through Irish or through English. The study aimed to examine bilingual children’s ability to categorise letter sequences as being Irish, English, homographs (i.e. both Irish and English) or non-words, as a function of two factors. Firstly, the effect of the language context in which the task was presented, that is, whether the task itself was encountered in Irish or English, was manipulated. Secondly, the language background of the participants was considered. Participants were children aged 11 to 12 years from Gaeltacht and non-Gaeltacht areas, with the Gaeltacht group sub-divided accordingly to whether the children reported speaking mainly Irish or English at home. The effects of these factors, language background and task context, as well as their interactions, are examined with regard to homograph reading in particular.

Method

Stimulus lists were constructed to present participants with Irish words, English words, homographs and non-words. Stimuli consisted of 3-5 letter sequences, of 1-2 syllables. English words were selected using the Kucera-Francis written frequencies (1967); most would have been known to children of this age, with a few more difficult items included. The Irish words were selected using the frequency counts from the Corpas Náisiúnta na Gaeilge (ITÉ, 2003), and matched on an item-by-item basis to the English stimuli controlling for letters and syllables. Selection of Irish words avoided diacritics (síneadh fada - used to indicate vowel length) and mutated forms (initial and other mutations occur in Irish with grammatical function). In this way, orthographic cues to stimulus categorisation were reduced. The homographs (words in both Irish and English) matched the Irish and English lists by number of letters and syllables, and were biased towards the Irish interpretation by written frequency. A final set of stimuli consisted of pronounceable non-words, which matched by number of letters and syllables and did not look like either English or Irish words. These should have been readily categorised as non-words by children with a reasonable level of reading ability. Performance here therefore provided a basic index of reading skill, and data of participants who scored below 75% on the non-word set were excluded from analysis. (Poorer performance would suggest a difficulty with written word discrimination or poor adherence to task instructions.) Availability of this response choice should also reduce guessing of Irish-words based on orthographic likelihood; that is children who were presented with an Irish word could categorise it as ‘neither’ if they did not recognise it as Irish.

While efforts were made to match the four stimulus types, comparison across these is not the main focus of the study; rather, it is the relative performances of the groups within stimulus types, as a function of context, that is key. While some comparison will be made below, the four stimulus sets are essentially different measures. The two monolingual lists come closest to a case for comparison, with matching for frequency as well as word length etc., but the English and Irish words cannot be said to be ‘equivalent’, and were selected using databases that may not afford direct comparison. The homographs, biased towards Irish, do not compare directly to the monolingual lists precisely because they are dual-language homographs. The non-word task represents a different process, if we consider lexical categorisation as a process of lexical decision ('is it a word or not?') requiring further language categorisation in the case of words ('if a word, is it Irish, English or both?').

A computerised lexical categorisation task was developed to present the task stimuli and collect the data. Stimuli appeared on the computer screen one at a time, in a quasi-random order, with each item remaining on screen until the child pressed a response key. For each item, the child categorised the word as 'Irish', 'English', 'both' or 'neither' by pressing one of four corresponding response keys on the computer. (Training and examples were provided.) Participants were instructed to make their choice 'as quickly as possible, trying not to make mistakes'. Each response was recorded and correct responses for each of the four stimulus types computed.

Analysis of data from 65 children, aged 11 to 12 years, is reported. There were three groups, which varied in language background. Thirty-nine children lived and attended school within the Connemara Gaeltacht. All were schooled through the medium of Irish. They formed two sub-groups based on exposure to English within the home; 20 used Irish as their main language at home, while 19 were exposed to English at home to a significant degree. These sub-groups are referred to a 'Gaeltacht-Irish' and 'Gaeltacht-English' respectively, below. None of these children had another language for communication within the home. A further 26 children who came from an English-speaking background are included for comparison. They were monolingual English speakers, and, like the majority of the Irish population, were exposed to the Irish language from a young age in school. This group lived in a town in South-East Ireland and is referred to below as the 'non-Gaeltacht' group. These children attended an English-medium school and were exposed to Irish largely through the compulsory elements of their school curriculum. While precise demographic matching was not possible, it was anticipated that related effects would be apparent across the measures taken in this study. Furthermore, by only selecting data of children who scored above 75% on the non-word measure, similarity between groups was facilitated.

The language context of the task was also manipulated. Participants completed the task through Irish or English, with children randomly assigned to conditions. Thus, all communication regarding the task (computer instructions, researchers' interactions etc.) was conducted through one language, Irish or English. The Irish language manipulation differed for the Gaeltacht and non-Gaeltacht groups, however, as the standard of Irish employed could not be the same in both cases. The non-Gaeltacht group received a simplified version of the context manipulation using materials similar to those used in their Irish class. (These children could not have been expected to follow Irish on-screen instructions for the computer task whereas the Gaeltacht children had no difficulty here). The language use of the researchers involved in data collection was appropriate to each region. For the non-Gaeltacht group, the researcher came from the local area. The Gaeltacht-based researcher had lived and worked there for many years. He was a fluent Irish speaker and spoke Irish daily. His language use and accent, while not native, were judged to be of an acceptable standard so as to facilitate the provision of the Irish language context for the Gaeltacht-based group. (The dominance of the English language is such that even subtle cues can be sufficient to trigger an English-language mode in Irish speakers.)

Results

The maximum number of correct responses was twenty for each of the four word types. Figure 1 summarises overall performance by group, showing the mean number of correct responses for the four stimulus types. Across the language groups, performance was best for English words, with no statistically significant differences between the groups. This may reflect a true advantage for English stimuli, given the dominance of the language, or it may be artefact of stimulus selection. Performances on the non-words are similar across the three language backgrounds and statistical analysis confirmed no differences between the groups on these measures. This is to be expected given that a 75% cut-off was employed to include data from this measure. For all groups, performance is worst on the homograph stimuli, demonstrating the difficulty in recognising the ambiguity inherent in these stimuli. Differences between the groups are apparent on the Irish word list and the homograph stimuli and it is here that context effects also emerge.

Looking at performance on the Irish words (Figure 1), the Gaeltacht groups suggest an advantage over the non-Gaeltacht group, an effect found to be statistically significant ($F(2,59) = 7.96$, $p \leq .01$). Post-hoc comparison revealed that the difference emerged from the Gaeltacht/ non-Gaeltacht contrast, with no significant difference between the two Gaeltacht sub-groups. The Gaeltacht groups' advantage on Irish words was found to be context sensitive, and was significantly larger in the Irish context ($F(2,59)=3.2$, $p \leq .05$). Irish word performance of the non-Gaeltacht group was not affected by task context.

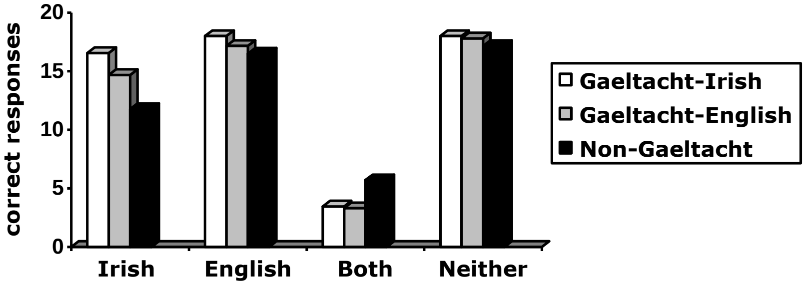

Figure 1: Correct responses for each stimulus type for the three language background groups

The non-Gaeltacht group performed significantly better than the Gaeltacht groups on the homograph stimuli. Performance on these stimuli was the poorest of all the stimulus types, for all groups (see Figure 1), as might be expected given the difficulty of such a task for children. Looking at correct responses here (i.e. recognising that a stimulus could be 'both') a clear advantage is seen for the non-Gaeltacht children. Put another way, the data suggest that these stimuli are less ambiguous for the bilingual children (see Figure 2). Though the graph may suggest an effect of context here, particularly as a function of English-language exposure, no statistically significant effect emerged.

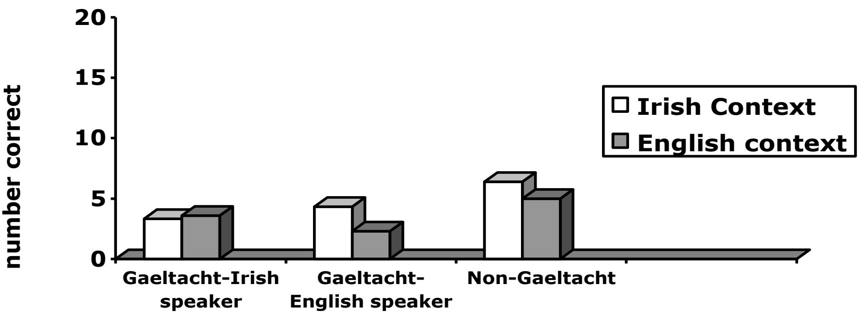

Figure 2: Correctly detected homographs by language background and context

We therefore know that the children generally made more errors on this measure than on the other measures, and that the Gaeltacht children made more errors that the non-Gaeltacht group. Of particular interest then is the type of error made on these stimuli, as a function of the language background of the child and the language context of the task. If a child is more likely to categorise a homograph stimulus (e.g. TEACH) as being Irish (i.e. to press the response key for 'Irish' rather than that for 'both'), for example, this would suggest that reading the word automatically activates the Irish representation. Bearing in mind that these homographs are biased towards the Irish interpretation, changes in performance as a function of the task context and language background will be informative as regards the current state of the child's processing language. Given the dominance of the English language, even for children within a strong Irish-speaking context, interpretation of these Irish-biased homographs may change with the task language (context), and with language background.

Errors made were therefore classified according to whether the child categorised the stimulus as Irish or English. Figure 3 shows that the Gaeltacht groups are more likely to interpret the homographs as Irish ($F(2,59)=14.8$, $p \leq .01$), and there is no statistically significant change in this effect as a function of context. There is no significant difference between the Gaeltacht groups' performance here, with 10 errors on average overall, while the non-Gaeltacht group produce 5.6 Irish errors, interpreting the homographs as English instead. Therefore, overall the children from both Gaeltacht backgrounds were more likely to err by interpreting the words as Irish, while the non-Gaeltacht children (who got more of homographs correct to begin with) produced more English errors. For this group, significantly more errors of the English type occurred within the English task context while context did not affect the Irish type errors (see Figure 3).

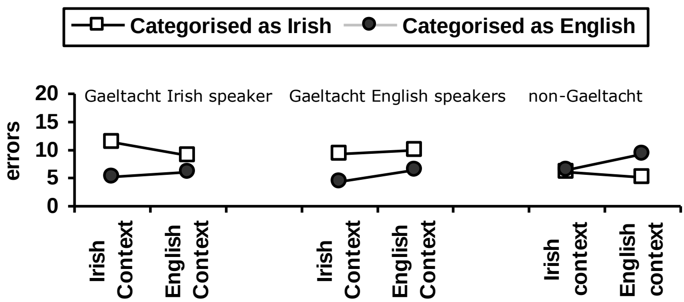

Figure 3: Errors made on the homograph words by language background and context

Conclusions

The patterns of performance on the homograph stimuli suggest that the Irish written language, for these Gaeltacht-based children, is not in as precarious a state as might be feared. Compared to the non-Gaeltacht group, the Gaeltacht groups make more errors on the homograph task, suggesting that they are less likely to view the homographs as being ambiguous. The Gaeltacht-based children are more likely to err by interpreting the words as Irish. This may reflect a general bias in favour of the Irish language, or responding in terms of the dominant homograph meaning, given that the stimuli used here were biased towards the Irish. Consideration of the changing language context is informative; given the pervasive influence of the English we might expect the dominant Irish-language interpretation of the homograph stimuli to be easily overthrown by context. However, this was found not to be the case. The Gaeltacht-based children are relatively unaffected by the overall task context and continue to respond based on dominant frequency, or dominant language, when the task is being carried out through the English. The non-Gaeltacht group, who produce fewer errors on the homograph stimuli overall, are affected by context, interpreting homographs as English when the context is congruent. In the Irish task context, errors are equally likely to be Irish as English for the non-Gaeltacht group, despite the stimulus loading towards the Irish interpretation.

The failure to recognise the homographs as homographs, that is, the failure to recognise the ambiguity in the stimuli, is not necessarily detrimental. After all, effective biliteracy depends on the ability to overlook ambiguity when words are shared over languages. The comparatively poor performance on the homograph measure for all children may reflect poor metalinguistic awareness, immature attentional control, or an important component of reading development that allows ambiguity to be overlooked. This would benefit not only bilingual reading but reading acquisition in a deep-orthography language, such as English, in which much ambiguity is encountered. Further analysis of responses to individual stimuli and replication of the study with children in other age groups, and with adults, may prove informative here.

The development of stimuli for this task was complicated by the relative dearth of resources for the Irish language as well as contrasting orthographic representations. It was difficult to select homograph stimuli that were suitable for use, and subject to the constraints outlined above. If alternative stimulus lists can be devised, it would be interesting to see the effect of varying homograph polarity, between Irish and English interpretation, on performance. Here, homographs were always biased towards Irish, to gauge the effect of the massively dominant English language. The analysis did not allow for examination of the relationship between the likely interpretation of an individual homograph and its frequencies in the two language, and this may also have proven informative.

Compared to the non-Gaeltacht group, the Gaeltacht groups performed better on the Irish words, an advantage augmented in the Irish task context. This finding has implications for comparable tasks and testing situations where performance might be maximised by adopting a favourable language mode. Interestingly, across the study, no significant differences emerged between the two Gaeltacht sub-groups. This sub-division had been an important consideration from the outset, as much reference is made in Gaeltacht areas to the differences in children's backgrounds and the potential effects on the Irish language. Census 2002 showed that 27% of those living in Gaeltacht regions do not speak Irish and that the lowest proportion of Irish speakers within the Gaeltacht occurs in the 25 to 44 age group (at 65%). Within County Galway, the regional average of 78% drops to 70.6% for this age group. Many parents within Gaeltacht regions do not speak the language, and some children with have significant English influence at home. In this context, it is striking that no differences emerged in the Gaeltacht sub-groups. This may reflect the strength of the language; that it is not suffering unduly from the influence of English at home, in this age group. It may be that this specific task is not sensitive to influences of language background which could emerge under other conditions. Or it may be that our assignment of children to groups on the basis of self-report was not a sensitive measure of home language exposure. (However, demands characteristics and political factors affect other sources of such information, such as parental surveys, and therefore perhaps groups could only have been established based on objective measures.) Alternatively, it may be that the measures were meaningful, and that language differences do not impact massively on children in this age group, for whom school-based exposure to Irish accounts for a large, and influential, proportion of their day. It is also worth noting that this sample was drawn from possibly the strongest Gaeltacht region in Ireland, and findings may not generalise beyond this context.

The apparent advantage for English words for all children must be considered in light of the design constraints outlined earlier. It may reflect a real advantage associated with English language dominance, or incomplete matching of the stimuli. As the primary focus here was performance on the homograph stimuli, the study was designed around their selection, and this took precedence over other considerations. The psycholinguistic resources available for the Irish language are sparse, therefore the extent of matching was constrained. Furthermore, contrasts between the languages mean that matching could only be approximated; in particular word type differed across categories. Ideally the lists might have been based on frequency-matching alone; but here we had to eliminate items with a diacritic (fada) and mutated forms, as these would be identifiable as Irish words based on those cues alone. Likewise simply translating items is problematic, as the length of the word can affect recognition, or provide cues to one language over another via syllable structure. Further data would therefore be required to explain why, in all groups, performance was superior for English words.

In summary, the tendency to interpret the words as Irish occurred in both the Irish and the English context for Gaeltacht children, suggesting that they continue to operate within an Irish language mode or to interpret the stimuli by dominant frequency, which favours Irish. By contrast the effect of the switch to the English context can be seen in the non-Gaeltacht group. These data suggest that the Gaeltacht-schooled children are not as susceptible to the English context as might be feared given the pervasive influence of English, and the written language in particular. The current research is encouraging with respect to the status of written Irish for Gaeltacht-schooled children but it also highlights the influence of language mode or context, in interaction with language background, in a word recognition task.

Acknowledgements

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5 Investigating Development in Writing in 9 to 11 year olds

Roger Beard, Andrew Burrell, Bronwen Swinnerton and Godfrey Pell

Introduction

The writing of primary school children in England is currently the focus of national concerns (e.g. HMI, 2000; Ofsted, 2005). The concerns are focused on the 'under-attainment' in writing of eleven-year olds in comparison with their attainment in reading. Such concerns also raise the issue of what comprises development in writing and how it is measured. Furthermore, this is an issue on which relatively little rigorous research has been done in the primary age range. This lack of research was pointed out during a recent ESRC-funded international seminar series, one of whose objectives was 'to identify aspects of pupil writing that are in need of further investigation'. In a consideration of the evidence base during the first seminar, it was argued that more needed to be done to investigate what constitutes progression and to conceptualise what that progression looks like (See http://www.ioe.ac.uk/schools/ecpe/ReconceptualisingWriting5-16/seminars.html, Seminar 1 transcript, para. 49).

Various measures have been used in studies of primary/elementary children's writing development in recent years. For example, large scale studies in the UK and the USA have found total text length (word count) to be a crude but valid measure of writing development (e.g. Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob, 1988; Chall, Jacobs and Baldwin, 1990; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman and Hemphill, 1991). Earlier quantitative studies in the USA have addressed development in different constituents of writing (e.g. Loban, 1963; Hunt 1965). Previous work in the UK has included an investigation of the 'creative' and 'factual' writing of 300 7 to 11 year-old children over six terms, focusing on word counts, vocabulary and syntactical structures (Harpin, 1976). A variety of measures have also been used to investigate the writing skills of pupils for whom English is an additional language (Cameron and Besser, 2004). Other studies have examined the occurrence of specific features, such as subordination in different genres of children's writing (Allison, Beard and Willcocks, 2002) and features of sentence structure in writing done in the national tests and public examinations of different phases of the education system (Hudson, 2004).

Limitations in previous studies

However, there are two important limitations in how these studies have investigated development in writing. Firstly, none has used repeat designs and standardised tasks which allow developments in specific features of writing to be rigorously investigated over a specific time-scale. Secondly, the measures that have been used focus more on general syntactical and lexical aspects and less on the specific features that characterise specific genres. This constrains the detail in which studies of development can be undertaken.

Some genres have been sufficiently studied to identify frequently occurring features that may form the basis of development studies: for example, in narrative, features of setting, character, main event and resolution (Harpin, 1976; Perera, 1984). This is far less true of the persuasive genre, despite its having been identified in authoritative publications on rhetoric as representing one of the fundamental aims of discourse (Kinneavy, 1971; 1991). According to Kinneavy, in persuasive writing, the main focus of the communication is on the audience and how the writing attempts to change their behaviour or beliefs. A similar view is put forward by more recent genre theorists in Australia (e.g. Martin, 1989). Kinneavy suggests that the main features of persuasive writing include the use of emotional appeals and pseudo-logic. These features may also be condensed into relatively short texts, perhaps with a broken layout and the use of typographical features that endorse the persuasive aspects, such as capitalisation and bold.

Research into the persuasive writing of primary children presents additional challenges, as it is a relatively recent part of the primary curriculum in England (see Beard, 2000 for discussions of research and inspection evidence). Little is known about how development in persuasion may be validly and reliably investigated.

The study reported here addresses these issues by analysing the writing produced in conditions that are standardised in task and time, thus providing for rigorous investigations of change and development, and by the use of specially developed instruments designed to capture features that characterise narrative and persuasive writing by primary children.

Research questions

The study is underpinned by two key research questions:

1. What features of written language are found in Year 5 narrative and persuasive writing?

2. How does the profile of features change when the same writing tasks are undertaken in Year 6?

The reported study is part of a larger, on-going, study whose quantitative phase is still in progress at the time of writing.

Sample

The data-set for the study comprises the writing of all the Year 5 (9 to 11) pupils (n=112; 60 boys and 52 girls) from five schools representing a range of socio-economic catchments in two LEAs in the North of England. The schools were identified through local professional networks. The web-site of the Office of Standards in Education (the central government agency that undertakes school inspections) was checked to ensure that the schools' pupil attainment reflected an appropriate range when they were last inspected. Compared with 'all schools', one of the schools was rated as 'well above average' in its standards achieved in English, three as 'average' and one as 'below average'. All five schools were reported as following a slightly adapted version of the National Literacy Strategy.

Data collection procedures and rating scale development

The initial data-set discussed in this paper comprises 448 scripts completed through the administration of a standardised instrument, the NFER *Literacy Impact* package (Twist and Brill, 2000). *Literacy Impact* includes two writing tests designed for use in the monitoring of progress of pupils in the 9 to 11 age range. There are also two reading tests whose use, because of space limitations, is not discussed in this paper. The reported study used *Literacy Impact* Writing Test B as a repeat-design instrument, administered in April when the children in Year 5 and a year later, when the children were in Year 6.

Literacy Impact

Writing Test B comprises two tasks: an imaginative narrative (30 minutes): a short story about a free gift from collecting cereal packet tokens; and a short persuasive task (10 minutes): an advertisement for a new dessert. Both tasks are supported with a teacher introduction set out in the Teachers' Guide. The test has construct validity from being developed specifically to assess 9 to 11 year olds' writing, concurrent validity from comprising tasks in line with the national curriculum assessment in England, and some ecological validity, in that both tasks use content deemed likely to appeal equally to boys and girls. The reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of *Literacy Impact* Writing Test B is reported as 0.87, considered to be suitably high for tests of this length and nature (Twist and Brill, 2000: 63--65).

In the Teachers' Guide, the assessment of the children's writing is based on a numeric scheme linked to the national test marking criteria at the time when *Literacy Impact* was being developed (1999). The scheme includes numeric ratings in three broad bands (equating to the national curriculum level descriptions in England for this age-range) for purpose; organisation; grammar, vocabulary and style; punctuation; and spelling. Although the scheme is insufficiently fine-grained to contribute to a developmental profile, *Literacy Impact* is one of the few standardised instruments currently available for use in assessing the writing of 9 to 11 year old children, making it appropriate for use in the study reported in this paper.

Recent work in this field has led to the identification of putative elements of narrative and persuasion that may be used to investigate development in writing (Wyatt-Smith, 1997; DfEE, 2000; DfES, 2002; QCA, 2003; Cameron and Besser, 2004). The latter study was of particular value for the study reported in this paper as it provides a number of rating scales that may be applied to the writing of 9 to 11 year olds and which were then modified to take account of age and sample differences. The scales include the following:

Text level: dichotomous entries for features of content, sub-topics, linking of ideas and genre features;

Sentence grammar: means per hundred words for use of subordination; mean size of clause slots (subjects, verb chains, objects, complements, adverbials);

Word level: agreements, articles; verb use and endings; vocabulary from general to specific; propositions, delexical verbs, word class errors; lexical gaps, comparative forms;

Technical accuracy: means per hundred words for (1) punctuation (full-stops and capital letters used in wrong places; missing full-stops and capital letters; commas used in wrong places; missing commas; apostrophes used in wrong places; missing apostrophes); (2) spelling errors; incorrect subject-verb agreement; noun-pronoun agreement; plural forms; articles used wrongly, missing articles.

In the study reported in this paper, the rating of the general linguistic features (sentence and word level and technical accuracy) of the scripts was done by a panel of two post-graduate students from a university linguistics department.

Rating scale development

While Cameron and Besser's work is of particular assistance in rating features of sentence grammar, word level and technical accuracy, additional work needed to be done in order to rate the text-level features analysed in this study. Dichotomous scales were derived from the sources listed above and extensively trialled and refined. The rating of the text-level features of the scripts was done by a panel of three experienced Year 6 teachers, one of whom was also a national test marker.

Inter-rater reliability

To check on levels of inter-reliability, an approach was used that was similar to that used by Cameron and Besser (2004). Several moderation trials were carried out on sets of ten randomly selected scripts, to refine the scales as well as to address inter-rater reliability. Each rater received the same three, randomly selected, scripts as part of a larger set of ten, without knowing which of the scripts were being used for the inter-rater check. After each trial, discrepancies were noted by the project leaders and discussed with each panel. Reliability across raters was calculated for each feature within the main categories of the scale by dividing the number of agreements by the number of ratings.

To check on the levels of reliability in the main assessment, each rater again received the same three, randomly selected, scripts as part of their final set of scripts, without knowing which of the scripts they rated were being used for the inter-rater check.

For the general linguistic features of the narrative task, the average agreement across all categories was 0.64. This is a little lower that that reported from a similar exercise by Cameron and Besser (0.72), although the former figure was somewhat depressed by very low agreement levels on some technical features (for example missing commas). Within the sentence level features, unacceptably low levels of agreement were found for subject noun phrases longer than one word, object noun phrases and number of phrases in the Adverbial slot. The findings in relation to these features are therefore being reported with caution. There is also some overlap here with the unacceptably low levels of agreement found by Cameron and Besser in relation to the length and number of words in the Adverbial slot. The scripts resulting from the persuasive task were not deemed long enough for a similar analysis of general linguistic features, as many scripts were less than 100 words in length.

For the text-level features of the narrative task, the average agreement across all categories was 0.85. The lowest agreement was 0.44, again for technical features (in this case 'Nature of spelling errors'). There were no unacceptably low levels of agreement.

For the text-level features of the persuasive task, the average agreement across all categories was 0.86, which is slightly higher than that reported by Cameron and Besser. The lowest agreement was 0.66, which was for 'Explanation of its appeal to the audience'. There were no unacceptably low levels of agreement.

Results

General linguistic features in narrative texts

T tests were applied to all the linguistic features of the two sets of scripts completed by the children in Year 5 and Year 6 respectively. The following significant differences were found in the narrative texts.

The texts were longer	($p < 0.01$).
There were more missing commas	($p < 0.01$).
There were fewer inverted commas in the wrong place	($p < 0.05$).
There were fewer spelling errors	($p < 0.05$).
There were more noun-pronoun errors	($p < 0.05$).
There were more non-finite clauses used for subordination	($p < 0.05$).

Differences between the following features approached significance and could conceivably reach significance in a replicated study with a larger sample.

There were more commas in the wrong place.
There were more other punctuation problems (noted by raters on respective scripts).
There were more instances of direct speech.
There were more words in direct speech.
There were more instances of reporting direct speech.
There were more nouns in Subject noun phrases.
There were more Subject noun phrases longer than one word.
There were more words in Verb phrases.

There were fewer commas missing in direct speech.
There were fewer full stops missing to close direct speech.
There were fewer prepositions in the wrong place.
There were fewer relative clauses in the Object slot.

There were fewer adverbial clauses.
There were fewer pronouns in Subject noun phrases.
There were fewer words in the Object slot.
There were fewer words in the Adverbial slot.
There were fewer subordinators.
There were fewer modals.

The significant results show the development in total text length (word count) found in previous studies. There was also evidence of development in some aspects of accuracy, especially spelling and the use of inverted commas, and the use of non-finite clauses used for subordination**.** The increase in the number of missing commas and noun-pronoun errors may at first appear partly to confound the above findings, although both could conceivably reflect increases in text length and structure not being combined with the necessary re-reading in a time-controlled task.

Text-level features in narrative texts

The rating sheet for the narrative task was designed to support the analysis of the writer's ability to construct a narrative. Many of the items are based on the features that are generally associated with narrative ('setting' etc.) but these were modified and extended after the review of the literature referred to earlier. Items were also added on whether there was evidence of planning and self-correction. Most, but not all, the data are dichotomous. For all those that are dichotomous, the options are 'Yes' or 'No', referring to whether the characteristic is present in the piece, with the exception of the first item, which asks whether the pupil has attended to the specified story prompt ('Accurate') or not ('Problems'). When the children were in Year 5, 70.3% of the scripts were rated as accurate whereas, when they were in Year 6, this had increased to 87.3% of the sample. The following comments address the positive differences that were found to be significant from the use of the chi-squared test.

Ability to write in style appropriate to audience and purpose

Table 1 below indicates that there was also an increase in the percentage of all the other items (2-8) which were concerned with the writer's ability to write in a style appropriate to audience and purpose.

	Item	Present in 2003	Present in 2004
	Narrative form is maintained (2)	86.5	90.9
Style is appropriate to audience and purpose	Awareness of reader (3)	71.2	83.6
	Clear evidence of purpose (attempts to engage reader) (4)	59.5	76.4
	Third person used consistently 5)	82.0	89.1
	Past tense used consistently (6)	82.9	90.9
Viewpoint	Key events portrayed from Alex's point of view (7)	85.6	93.6
	Viewpoint well controlled (8)	58.6	61.8

Table 1: Ability to write in style appropriate to audience and purpose (% of scripts)

Two features show most increase: awareness of reader (+12.4%) and clear evidence of purpose (+16.9%). The two features that increased least were the ability to maintain narrative form (+4.4%) and the ability to control viewpoint (+3.2%).

Ability to select and sequence information in the format of a story

As can be seen in Table 2, when the children were in Year 6, both dialogue and description were used slightly less frequently as strategies to elaborate on the setting of the narrative. These were the only two features within this section to show a decrease and warrant further analysis in the qualitative phase, especially to ascertain how far children shifted the emphasis in narrative settings from dialogue and description to action. The two features that increased most were the use of dialogue as a strategy used to elaborate on the resolution of the narrative (+18.4%) and the amount of narrative structure related to the main event (+16.7%). This may reflect an increase in writing maturity that will be further analysed in the qualitative phase.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Item</th><th>Present/ developed in 2003</th><th>Present/ developed in 2004</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Amount of narrative structure</td><td colspan="2">Setting (9)</td><td>22.5</td><td>34.5</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Character (10)</td><td>65.8</td><td>75.5</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Main event (11)</td><td>36.0</td><td>52.7</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Resolution (12)</td><td>45.9</td><td>55.5</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="12">Strategies used to elaborate narrative</td><td rowspan="3">Setting (13-15)</td><td>Action</td><td>31.5</td><td>40.0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dialogue</td><td>14.4</td><td>13.6</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description</td><td>27.0</td><td>24.5</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Character (16-18)</td><td>Action</td><td>68.5</td><td>80.0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dialogue</td><td>55.0</td><td>60.9</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description</td><td>65.8</td><td>71.8</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Main event (19-21)</td><td>Action</td><td>46.8</td><td>60.9</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dialogue</td><td>22.5</td><td>30.0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description</td><td>43.2</td><td>51.8</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Resolution (22-24)</td><td>Action</td><td>45.0</td><td>57.3</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dialogue</td><td>24.3</td><td>42.7</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description</td><td>50.5</td><td>55.5</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Plot resolution</td><td colspan="2">Is there a coherent ending? (25)</td><td>64.0</td><td>69.1</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Concluding comment linked to resolution (26)</td><td>53.2</td><td>54.5</td></tr>
</table>

Table 2: Ability to select and sequence information in the format of a story (% of scripts)

Ability to construct paragraphs

As can be seen in Table 3, when in Year 6, children were more likely to demonstrate the use of well-organised paragraphs. There was also a slight increase in the proportion whose opening paragraph established narrative purpose.

	Item	Present in 2003	Present in 2004
Ideas organised into paragraphs	Well organised paragraphs (27)	40.5	62.7
	Opening paragraph establishes narrative purpose (28)	80.2	88.2

Table 3: Ability to construct paragraphs (% of scripts)

The children were also more likely to use paragraphs in Year 6, as shown in Table 4.

	Item	Year	None	Many short	2-3	4-5
Nature of paragraphing	How many paragraphs does the writer use? (29)	2003	48.6	11.7	23.4	16.2

Table 4: Ability to construct paragraphs (% of scripts)

Ability to link narrative

Table 5 indicates that the feature that increased most within this section was the ability to use connectives to inject suspense into the narrative.

	Item	Present in 2003	Present in 2004
Use of connectives	Connectives that signal time (2 or more examples) (30)	41.4	47.3
	Connectives used to shift attention (1 or more examples) (31)	6.3	6.4
	Connectives used to inject suspense (1 or more examples) (32)	8.1	19.1

Table 5: Ability to link the narrative (% of scripts)

Ability to choose words that enhance the writing

As indicated in Table 6, there was a notable increase in the use of exclamations for impact in the Year 6 scripts. All of the features in this particular section increased with the exception of the use of repetitive structures.

	Item	Present in 2003	Present in 2004
Stylistic choices focus on narrative appeal	Exclamations used for impact (33)	40.5	60.0
	Questions used to draw the reader into events (34)	14.4	18.2
	Dialogue in different tenses (35)	40.5	48.6
	Some use of repetitive structures (36)	20.7	16.4
	Was information withheld to build suspense (37)	31.5	35.5
Vocabulary chosen for narrative impact on reader	Use of adventurous vocabulary adds interest to the writing (38)	36.9	51.8
	Verbs used to emphasise action, thoughts or feelings (39)	45.0	62.7

Table 6: Ability to choose words that enhance the writing (% of scripts)

The three features that increased most were the use of exclamations for impact (+19.5%), the use of verbs to emphasise action, thoughts or feelings (+17.7%) and the use of adventurous vocabulary to add interest to the writing (+14.9%).

Ability to plan and self-correct

As can be seen in Table 7, there was very limited evidence of planning. This might be due to the actual test design that does not include an explicit planning stage, unlike more recent national test writing assessments. Evidence of self-correction, editing and proof reading remained at a similar level.

	Present in 2003	**Present in 2004**
Planning (44)	0.0	2.7
Self correction/Editing/ Proof-reading (45)	82.9	84.5

Table 7: Ability to plan and self-correct (% of scripts)

Text-level features in persuasive texts

The rating sheet for the persuasive task was designed to support the analysis of the writer's ability to construct text for a persuasive purpose. The data, with the exception of the spelling errors, are dichotomous data and examine whether something is present or not, except for the first code which asks whether the 'Attention to task purpose' is 'accurate' or has 'problems'. In Year 5, 80% of the scripts were rated as accurate; in Year 6 this had increased to 90.1% of the sample.

Ability to write in a style appropriate to audience and purpose

Table 8 indicates that there was also an increase in the percentage of all the other items which were concerned with the writer's ability to write in a style appropriate to audience and purpose with the exception of writing with a consistent focus on persuasion.

Two features show most increase: advertisement form maintained (+12.1%) and use of bold type and/or capital letters to add emphasis (+11.6%).

	Item	**Present in 2003**	**Present in 2004**
Style appropriate to audience and purpose	Advertisement form is maintained (2)	63.6	75.7
	Addresses reader (3)	80.0	82.9
	Clear evidence of purpose (attempts to convince reader) (4)	80.9	85.6
	Consistent focus on persuasion (5)	81.8	80.2
	Simple present tense (6)	97.3	100.0
	Use of bold type and/or CAPITAL letters to add emphasis (7)	14.5	26.1
Viewpoint	Clear and consistent viewpoint established (8)	86.4	91.0
	Conversational relationship with audience (style/tone) (9)	74.5	77.5
	Content included to impress audience (10)	80.0	81.1
	Speaker’s knowledge is established/authoritative voice (11)	86.4	87.4

Table 8: Ability to write in a style appropriate to audience and purpose (% of scripts)

Ability to select and sequence information in the format of persuasive writing

Table 9 indicates that there was an increase in the percentage of all the items in this section apart from the item regarding the inclusion of the name of the product.

	Item		Present in 2003	Present in 2004
Attracting attention	Opening sentence/phrase (12)		75.5	77.5
	Nature of 'hook'	A little drama (13)	30.0	33.3
		A story (14)	34.5	40.5
		A problem in need of a solution (15)	2.7	3.6
The Information	Key information about the product	Is the information precise? (16)	75.2	86.5
		Is the information given relevant? (17)	80.7	86.5
	Overview of product with appropriate supporting detail	Name of product (18)	92.7	90.1
		Description of dessert's features (19)	91.8	98.2
		Nominated audience (20)	29.1	33.3
		Availability of product (21)	43.6	47.7
		Explanation of its appeal to the audience (22)	57.3	64.0
		A series of persuasive points (23)	57.3	71.2
		Development of above points by adding more detail (24)	51.8	69.4
The slogan	Memorable ('take home') message (25)		50.0	62.2
	Concluding appeal to the reader (26)		61.8	67.6
	Snappy summary of the information given (27)		20.9	33.3
The Small print	Inclusion of the small print (28)		5.5	8.1

Table 9: Ability to select and sequence information in the format of persuasive writing (% of scripts)

Five features increased more notably than the others. These were the development of persuasive points (+17.6%), the inclusion of a series of persuasive points (+13.9%), snappy summary of the information given (+12.4%), memorable (‘take home’) message (+12.2%) and the use of precise information (+11.3%).

Ability to construct paragraphs, use a variety of sentences and link ideas

Table 10 indicates that there were increases in the presence of all features in the Year 6 assessment, although the inclusion of an opening paragraph that established a persuasive purpose remained almost the same. The feature to record the most increase is the effective use of a variety of sentences (+11.3%). Notable increases were also observed for the coherent/ordered linking of ideas (+9.3%) and the use of a mixture of long and short sentences for effect (+8.7%).

	Item	**Present in 2003**	**Present in 2004**
Ability to construct paragraphs	Well organised paragraphs (29)	33.6	37.8
	Opening paragraph establishes persuasive purpose (30)	70.0	70.3
Ability to use a variety of sentences	Effective use is made of a variety of sentence types (31)	36.4	47.7
	Uses a mixture of long and short sentences for effect (32)	25.5	34.2
Ability to link ideas	Coherent/ordered linking of ideas (33)	65.5	74.8
	Mainly logical connectives (34)	50.9	56.8

Table 10: Ability to construct paragraphs, use a variety of sentences and link ideas (% of scripts)

Ability to choose words which enhance the writing

Table 11 indicates that there was an increase in the percentage of all the items in this section apart from the use of exaggeration, which decreased slightly.

	Item	**Present in 2003**	**Present in 2004**
Stylistic choices focus on persuasive appeal	Snappy slogan (35)	30.0	36.0
	Exaggeration (36)	59.1	58.6
	Intriguing question – to catch reader's attention (37)	15.5	22.5
	Adjectives/adverbs for emphasising (38)	85.5	91.9
	Wordplay (linguistic patterning, alliteration, figurative language) (39)	28.2	38.7
	Tempting description of the benefits of the product (40)	39.1	40.5
Vocabulary chosen for persuasive effect	Noun phrases (41)	81.8	91.0
	Adverbials (42)	49.1	56.8
	Verb phrases (43)	39.1	52.3

Table 11: Ability to choose words which enhance the writing (% of scripts)

The feature to record the most increase is the use of verb phrases (+13.2%). Notable increases were also observed for the use of word play (+10.5%) and the use of noun phrases (+9.2%).

Ability to plan and self-correct

There was very limited evidence of planning although there was evidence from most children of some editing, proof reading and self-correction, and this had improved by Year 6.

Section	**Present in 2003**	**Present in 2004**
Planning (48)	1.8	0.0
Editing/Proof reading/Self-correction (49)	70.0	85.6

Table 12: Ability to plan and self-correct (% of scripts)

An analysis of the text level features that were included in the specially developed rating instruments indicates that the vast majority of the item/codes showed increases in the Year 6 scripts, offering evidence of the instruments being sensitive enough to capture features of writing development that might not be shown in more general analyses.

The special demands of persuasive writing

The National Literacy Strategy, which the schools all followed at the time of the study, has sought to extend the range of genres taught at primary level. In previous years, narrative and description have been the predominant forms (Beard, 2000). However, in the Strategy, persuasive writing is not introduced until the Summer term of Year 4. This genre was probably relatively new to the children - especially when they first completed the persuasive task in the Spring Term of Year 5. The results for the persuasive task are encouraging, given that the children are only given a relatively short period of time in which to complete their writing in the *Literacy Impact* task, as their writing demonstrated that many were able to include structural and language features that are specific to persuasive writing. Furthermore, there was a notable increase in editing, proof reading and self-correction (+15.6%) in the Year 6 persuasive scripts. Interestingly, no such increases were observed in the narrative writing.

Conclusion

This study is, to the best of our knowledge, the first to have used a repeat design and standardised tasks that allow developments in specific constituents of primary school children's writing to be rigorously investigated over a specific time-scale. The study represents an attempt to investigate what constitutes progression in primary school children's writing in two contrasting genres and to conceptualise what progression looks like. The study has a number of limitations, particularly in the relatively small sample and in the rather arbitrary and one-off nature of the tasks undertaken by the children. However, some degree of arbitrariness may be inevitable if issues of development are to be investigated in cross-site research designs and in which aspects of change and development may be rigorously investigated. The specific details of the teaching that children experienced in the 12 months between the two sets of tasks was not studied, although schools reported that it was in line with the National Literacy Strategy. All the children had a change of teacher at the end of Year 6, making any 'teaching to the test', in terms of the content and format of *Literacy Impact*, very unlikely. However, Year 6 teachers from all five schools were consulted at the beginning of the data analysis and the results are being discussed with them.

The study has been concerned to identify what features of written language are found in Year 5 narrative and persuasive writing and to examine how the profile of features changes when the same writing tasks are undertaken in Year 6. A good deal of qualitative work is still to be completed on the data-set but the quantitative results indicate that, while there were some developments in features of sentence grammar, word-level features and technical accuracy, a more consistent and positive range of results were found in the text-level ratings. These results indicate the empirical gains that are possible when established applied linguistics concepts are used to inform new kinds of analysis.

Writing presents many challenges for children (Beard, 2000). Yet the results indicate that children are able to include many features of narrative and persuasive writing in their own written work and that the presence of these features increases over time. The study has also indicated how little is known about some aspects of development and how complex the study of writing development inevitably is. These issues represent important challenges to educators and policy makers when addressing national programmes of curriculum and assessment.

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6 Investigating beliefs about foreign language writing and composing strategy implementation. The effect of instruction and practice

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The study to be reported is part of a wider research programme aimed at investigating the dynamics of foreign language (L2) writing beliefs and strategies over time, as well as the relationship between the L2 learners' beliefs about L2 writing and their use of strategies while composing. For the wider project we have collected different sets of quantitative and qualitative data from three groups of university EFL learners in their third, fourth, and final year of a degree programme in English Studies at a Spanish university. In this paper we shall focus on the analysis of part of the data collected with the fourth year group and our aim will be to document possible changes in the students' beliefs system and in their L2 composing strategy deployment after completing an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course.

The rationale for our research focus can be linked to various tenets and empirical findings in three strands of research. First, we took into account previous empirical evidence in social cognitive psychology regarding the dynamic or developmental character of a person's belief system (Hofer and Pintrich, 2002; Schommer, 1994a, 1994b). Second, both in social cognitive psychology and in second language acquisition (SLA) studies it is assumed that educational experiences impact beliefs and strategy use (Elbaum, Berg and Dodd, 1993; Chamot, 2005; Gan, 2004; Mori, 1999a, b; Rubin, Chamot, Harris and Anderson, In press; Sakui and Gaies, 1999). We therefore decided to expand this line of research to an academic domain, foreign language writing, in which beliefs have hitherto been unexplored. Third, our focus on the impact of instruction on the dynamics of the L2 writer's strategy use is in line with the tenets of the post-process movement in writing research (cf. Atkinson, 2003; Kent, 1999) that see writing as situated practice (Juzwik, Curcic, Wolbers, Moxley, Dimling and Shankland, 2006), and research into writing strategies as the investigation of the manner in which these strategies are sociocognitively shaped. In line with these tenets, our study was intended as an attempt to understand the shaping of beliefs and the implementation of strategic behaviour as a function of participating in a given 'culture of practice' (Elbaum, Berg and Dodd, 1993).

Research Questions

Our global aim to investigate the dynamics of writing beliefs and strategies as a function of the instruction received was operationalised in terms of two specific research questions:

1. Is there any significant difference in the beliefs about L2 writing held by Spanish university students after a period of instruction aimed at helping them to become more able L2 writers?
2. Is there any significant different in the self-reported L2 writing strategies used by Spanish university students after a period of instruction aimed at helping them to become more able L2 writers?

Method

Participants

The student writers

Fifteen students took part in the study on a voluntary basis. They were informed of our research purposes and all of them signed a consent form. The student writers were enrolled in an EAP course that was a compulsory fourth year unit in a five-year degree in English Studies at a Spanish university. There were 4 men and 11 women, their mean age was 22, and all the participants were native speakers of Spanish except for one female student who was of Ukrainian origin although she has received her university education in Spain. Regarding their previous writing instruction, nine out of the fifteen informants had taken an option on writing in the first year in their degree studies. In addition, all the participants had taken three compulsory annual courses in English that included writing instruction.

The teacher

The teacher in our study had been teaching the EAP course for five years at the time of data collection. She is a native speaker of English and has more than 25 years of experience in EFL teaching in Spain, a high level of teacher training, and, importantly, more than 10 years of continuous involvement in several research projects on second language writing.

The EAP course

The main aim of the EAP course was to help students develop their academic reading and writing skills. The course was organised around three contact hours per week over 2 semesters (30 weeks in total) that were mainly devoted to (i) making students aware of the different dimensions of the process of text construction; (ii) modelling and practising the use of different writing strategies; (iii) analytic reading of academic texts; and (iv) preparation for peer review activities.

Regarding coursework, students were required to write various journals (3 per week over 20 weeks) and 3 term papers. According to the teacher's retrospective narrative (see next section), the aim of the journals was to help the students' writing fluency, and for them to write to communicate their own ideas, thoughts, or opinions. Students also had to produce three papers for assessment during the course, apart from other on-going course work. The first two assignments entailed passing through the stages of process writing whereas the third one (a reading-to-write task) was written under time constraints in an examination condition.

Design of the study, instruments and procedures

The design of the global research project of which the one reported here is a part was longitudinal in nature and it extended over a period of 8 months. For the wider project we have collected quantitative data obtained via written questionnaires on our two dependent variables (L2 writing beliefs and strategies) together with qualitative data provided by the students and the teacher. The students completed a retrospective open-ended questionnaire at the end of the instructional period, and the teacher provided us with two types of data: interview data and a retrospective narrative (completed at the end of the instructional period). Regarding the study reported here, in October 2006 (Time 1) we collected information via written questionnaires on the participants' beliefs about writing and about their writing strategy implementation. Five months later (Time 2) we administered the same questionnaires in order to evaluate the degree of change in both beliefs and strategies after having participated in the literacy experience afforded by the EAP course. In what follows, we shall focus on the data collected via these questionnaires although, when appropriate, the data analysis will be supplemented with insights from the qualitative data obtained from both the students and their teacher.

The Writing Beliefs Questionnaire

Thorough manual and computer searches carried out of the available empirical literature (both in the SLA field and in educational psychology) did not result in any available questionnaires on beliefs about L1 or L2 writing. This meant that questionnaire items had to be generated. To this end, a number of publications on beliefs and ways of measuring beliefs were surveyed in an attempt to provide a theoretical basis to our research.

We learnt that belief systems are thought to be multi-dimensional (Coterall, 1999; Hofer and Pintrich, 2002; Horwitz, 1987; Mori, 1999a, 1999b; Schommer,1994a, 1994b) and, accordingly, we set off to develop an inventory of statements that would tap various theoretical and pedagogical relevant dimensions of beliefs about second language writing. Following Wenden (1998, 1999), we opted for a questionnaire that included items about the 3 components of metacognitive knowledge (person, task and strategy), plus two further dimensions that were added because of their possible relevance in the context under study, i.e. beliefs about the writing teacher, on the one hand, and beliefs about the nature, uses and forms of feedback, on the other.

The questionnaire consisted of 50 items, of which 5 were open-ended statements (intended to tap the participants' beliefs about the role of the teacher) and the remaining 45 items were Likert-scale in type. Participants rated agreement or disagreement with these items on a 5-point scale, with 5 representing strong agreement, and 1 strong disagreement. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) obtained were .66 at Time 1 and .74 at Time 2, which, although moderate, were considered acceptable on account of what is considered the norm in social sciences.

The Writing Strategy Questionnaire

Writing strategy implementation was measured with a self-report questionnaire that was also constructed with a-priori categories. These were established on the basis of, first, a previously validated writing strategy questionnaire (Pétriz and Czarl, 2003), and, second, tenets in the cognitively-oriented research on writing processes and strategies, which the research team had recently reviewed (Author, 2002, In press).

Following Pétric and Czarl (2003), the writing strategy questionnaire tapped three dimensions of writing strategy implementation (before writing, while writing and after writing strategies), to which we added the fourth dimensions of strategies to make use of feedback. The questionnaire was made up of 45 items in which the participants rated their strategy implementation on a 5-point Likert-scale, with 1 representing 'Never true of me' and 5 'Always true of me'.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients obtained were .62 at the first administration and .55 at the second administration. When the same questionnaire was administered to 30 students, the reliability estimate obtained was .76.

Data analysis

Percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed on the quantitative data collected via the beliefs and strategies questionnaires. In addition, we conducted Hierarchical Cluster Analysis and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test on these data in order to provide an answer to our two research questions. Cluster Analysis is an exploratory data analysis tool whose aim is to classify objects or cases (in our case, individuals) into groups or clusters, thus showing strength of associations among the members of the same cluster. We conducted separate cluster analysis on the data from the two questionnaires at Time 1 and Time 2 in order to compare the internal structure of the group before and after the instruction. In addition, we conducted Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test (a non-parametric alternative to Student **t**-test) to compare the difference in means for the questionnaire items at Times 1 and 2 administrations.

An inductive, data-driven approach was applied to the analysis of the participants' answers to the 5 open-ended statements in the beliefs questionnaire, whereby coding categories were established and the resulting coding scheme systematically applied to the data.

Results

Results point to a clear influence of the literacy experience on the students' beliefs, on their strategy implementation, and also on the internal variation within the group.

Internal structure of the group

An examination of the dendograms (i.e. the graphical representation of the Cluster Analysis) reveals that the group of student writers became more homogeneous after the instructional period, as shown in the smaller number of significant clusters at Time 2. This was especially notable in the case of strategies, a finding that is coincidental with the results of the questionnaires since more statistically significant changes were observed in the case of strategies than in the case of beliefs, as we shall see next.

Beliefs

Statistically significant changes were observed regarding the participants' beliefs about themselves as writers (particularly self-efficacy beliefs), about the nature of L2 writing, and about the role of the teacher.

With respect to s*elf-efficacy beliefs*, our student writers finished their literacy experience with increased confidence in their ability to write complex academic texts (Item 1: 'I will learn to write complex academic texts this year'; *M*: Time 1=4/Time 2= 4.33; *SD*: T1=.534/T2= .617; $p \leq 0.05$), a finding that is further confirmed in the data obtained via the retrospective questionnaire, as seen in the following excerpts:

> (1) The course (…) shows you that if you make a little effort writing is not as scary as some people believe (13).
> (2) Writing is a task that can be done by everybody after a good training (7).
> (3) After doing this course I have realised that one can write quite better if one makes an effort (9).

Regarding their *beliefs about the nature of writing*, the participants appear to have started off with a set of assumptions according to which writing entails posing oneself problems at different levels of sophistication, including ideational, textual and audience concerns (*M*: Time 1=4.3/Time 2=4.2; *SD*: Time 1= .89/Time 2= 1.20), a finding that is consistent with their high score on the belief that writing is a problem-solving task and that 'being able to express oneself successfully in English is hard and takes a long time'. The EAP, however, exerted a statistically significant influence in reinforcing the students' perception of the problem-solving nature of composing (T1: *M*: 3.2; *SD*: 1.082; T2: *M*: 3.73; *SD*: 1.032; $p<0.02$). This finding was further confirmed both by the participants response to the item 'Writing in English means finding ways to solve a great variety of problems' (an item with which 66.7% of the participants reported agreement or strong agreement at Time 1 and 86.7 % at Time 2) and by the retrospective questionnaire data, as seen in these excerpts:

> (4)Writing is more complex than it may seem at first sight (2)
> (5) I thought that writing was easier than it is actually (4)

(6) Writing in English is a problem-solving task (7).
(7) Writing in English is a task which can take much time (3)

Beliefs about the role of the teacher also changed in a statistically significant manner, particularly regarding the students' perceptions of the teacher's response to their writing ('My teachers pay more attention to how I write than to what I write' (*M*: T1=3.46/T2=2.8; *SD*: T1=1.060/T2=1.082; $p \leq 0.03$). We interpret this change as the outcome of the feedback obtained throughout the course on account of the data provided by the Teacher in the Interview and Retrospective Questionnaire. Interestingly, the Teacher manifested how much she enjoyed responding to students as an interested reader. In her own words:

> (8) But the way this course is designed now, I have all these different pieces of work about different things that interest different people. I find it quite fascinating, it's quite interesting for me, as a teacher, to be reading this work and responding to it, not only as writing teacher but also as an interested reader.

The questionnaire included five open-ended statements that also tapped the participants' perceptions of the role of the teacher. According to these data, and in agreement with the quantitative data just reported, one of the main changes observed was an emphasis on 'correction' at Time 1,which changed to 'feedback' at Time 2. In addition, the participants' shifted from seeing the teacher as somebody mainly helping them with their texts (text-type conventions; structuring of ideas) to seeing the teacher's role as also including help with the actual process of composing

Although no statistically significant changes were observed regarding the participants' beliefs about the other two dimensions included in the questionnaire (beliefs about strategies and about feedback), it is worth commenting on some of the results obtained. Regarding *beliefs on strategies*, we were surprised to learn that our participants did not believe (either at Time 1 or Time 2) in the use of their L1 when writing in English, a finding that was consistent with their answers to those items in the strategy questionnaire that referred to the use of the L1 for planning, writing, or revision purposes, items with which they showed disagreement or strong disagreement. In addition, the participants reported agreement or strong agreement with those items in the beliefs questionnaire that referred to planning before starting to write, rereading as an integral part of the writing process, the need to rewrite one's own text several times before handing it in, and the advantages associated with the use of reference materials and models in the construction of their own texts.

Concerning *beliefs about feedback*, the participants expressed disagreement with the idea that only teachers can provide feedback and, accordingly, they indicated that they considered it helpful both to provide feedback on other students' writing (both at Time 1 and 2 over 85% stated agreement or strong disagreement with the item 'Providing feedback on the other students' essays helps me in the development of my own writing skills), and to receive feedback from their peers (100% of students agreed with the item 'Having my work evaluated by others is helpful', whereas over 60% disagreed with the item 'Having my work evaluated by others is scary'). Interestingly, when it came to equating the effectiveness of peer review comments with those provided by the teacher, 60% of the students reported agreement or strong agreement with the statement 'The feedback provided by other students in the classroom is as effective as the feedback provided by the teacher' at Time 2, this figure being just 46.6% at Time 1. Therefore, the work done during the EAP course appears to have led the student towards a more positive perception of the value of providing and receiving comments from their peers, a view also shared by the Teacher as we learn in this excerpt from the Interview:

> (9) The first time is very hard for them and very difficult, and they have a very hard time doing it because of this balance of protecting the other person and so on ... But I think from the moment when they receive the feedback from the other person in the class and they see how useful it is to them, then, they immediately get convinced about it. Yes, I think they do like it, more than like it, they find it very useful and very helpful.

The qualitative data provided by the teacher sheds further light on the kind of work done in preparation for peer review activities, a process that was guided and also included a strong metacognitive component, as we see in the next two excerpts:

> (10) I tell them what I think some of the advantages and disadvantages are of using peer feedback. Then I get them to use it and then I get them to reflect on it, to discuss in groups what they think about it and then finally to write a journal for me with their ideas about the advantages and disadvantages. Because of course from my point of view the advantages and disadvantages may be different from the ones that they perceive.

> (11) They have to decide how they respond to their peer feedback, what they accept and what they don't accept, and then they can argue that they don't accept the particular point that the peer makes

In addition to issues of peer review, the students expressed the belief that the teacher's feedback should not only focus on language, although 88.6% of participants at Time 2 manifested agreement or strong agreement with the belief that that teachers should always correct their English, whereas at Time 1 46% of the students were undecided about this item and 40% showed agreement. Finally, data showed that the student writers felt quite confident in their ability to make use of feedback for learning purposes.

Strategies

According to the quantitative data from the strategy questionnaire, statistically significant changes affected mainly revision strategies, although other interesting changes also took place. Thus, the students reported having learned to work cooperatively with others when writing and revising their texts (*M*: T1=2.4/T2=2.9; *SD*: T1=1.05/1.22; $p \leq 0.01$), as well as having come to appreciate the value of using models in constructing their L2 texts (13% of participants showed agreement with the relevant item at Time 1 and 53.4% at Time 2), a clear influence of the instructional intervention, in view of the Teacher's statements in her retrospective narrative and answers in the interview.

Regarding revision strategies, the students reported having learned the benefits of temporarily distancing themselves from their texts (*M*: T1=2.2/T2=3; *SD:* T1= .941/T2=.845; $p \leq 0.03$), and always revising with a purpose (particularly regarding whether or not 'the essay matches the requirements', an item with which 67% of participants agreed at Time 1 and 93.3% at Time 2), two indications of having developed monitoring and evaluation metacognitive strategies during the EAP course. In addition, the instruction received seems to have had an effect on the degree of sophistication of their approach to revision with clear changes having been observed regarding the dimensions of sentence structure and audience concerns. It can be inferred from their answers that these student writers had learned to be guided by high level concerns when approaching the revision of their texts, a finding that again can be explained by reference to the conditions afforded by the EAP course regarding the manner in which revision tasks were done, an example of which is presented in excerpt (12):

> (12) We look at revision techniques at different levels: reformulating sentences, revising ideas, and so on… and editing language as well so we look at revising from all points of view. Then I teach them different techniques and then I actually give them feedback and they ask for feedback from their peers as well. So, they have various forms of feedback in their revision process. So yes, explicitly and in practice, I present techniques of revision and then we carry out different kinds of revision.

The students' own views in the retrospective questionnaires shed further light on the effects of the instruction received on their use of strategies. First, our student writers reported that they had improved their use of planning strategies in the sense of having improved their ability to produce and organise ideas more clearly and efficiently, look at topics from different angles, produce counterarguments as well as arguments, and take into account audience concerns when planning. Second, the participants also made reference to their formulation strategies, i.e. those strategies that allow the writer to solve the various and numerous problems faced when trying to convert ideas into language. Thus, among other factors, our participants stated that the EAP course had helped them to improve the style and structure of their texts, cope better with language problems that arise, and develop arguments better.

Discussion

The ultimate aim of our study was to shed light on the influence of educational experiences on the students' beliefs about L2 writing and in their use of writing strategies. The quantitative and qualitative data collected allow us to provide a positive answer to the two research questions guiding the study since the literacy experience the student writers participated in did exert a clear influence on the two dimensions of L2 writing that constituted our research focus. Therefore, our data lend further support to previous research evidence (Elbaum, Berg and Dodd, 1993; Chamot, 2005; Gan, 2004; Mori, 1999; Rubin, Chamot, Harris and Anderson, In press; Sakui and Gaies, 1999) on the impact that educational experiences can have on the shaping of students' beliefs and in modifying their strategic behaviour.

Regarding beliefs, Mori (1999a: 410) expressed the view that 'learner beliefs are in part a function of experience and learning, suggesting that the nature of the learning experience could affect the formation of students beliefs'. We have suggested elsewhere (Author, 2006) that the literacy experience under analysis afforded optimal conditions for the observed increase in the students' self-efficacy beliefs, these conditions being related to various sources of self-efficacy suggested in social cognitive psychology (cf. Bandura, 1997), a field in which it is emphasised that 'self-efficacy beliefs are predictive of perceived responsibility because learners who believe they can self-regulate their learning processes are more likely to acknowledge responsibility for academic outcomes' (Zimmermann and Kitsantas, 2005: 400). Along the same lines, Gan (2004) also found that his students' perceptions of their confidence and abilities were significantly associated with learning achievement. Therefore, the increase in self-efficacy could have, in turn, positively influenced other aspects of the students' learning.

Another important outcome of the literacy experience analysed in our research was the change towards a more multi-dimensional model of writing on the part of the students, a change that we would suggest came about as a result of the students having been confronted with new views on what writing entails, together with their engagement in a type of writing practice that pushed students towards the pursuance of high level concerns, two conditions very much in line with the tenets of conceptual change in social cognitive psychology (see Limón, 2001).

The EAP programme also affected the participants' use of writing strategies. We must first note that our two data-collecting instruments (writing strategy and retrospective questionnaires) allowed us to capture different aspects of the change produced in the participants' strategic behaviour. Thus, whereas the writing beliefs questionnaire shed light on the participants' changes in the use of revision strategies, it was unable to uncover any changes regarding either planning or formulation strategies. The retrospective questionnaire data did shed light on these strategies. This supports previous empirical findings on how different instruments used to measure strategies might produce different data. Thus, Levine and Reves (1998) concluded from their study on reading and writing strategies that general strategies were similarly reported in their two instruments (think-aloud protocols and questionnaires), whereas more specific strategies were reported on differently in the two instruments. The researchers, however, were careful to point out that these differences could also be related to learner characteristics, such as proficiency, motivation, or attitudes.

At another level, the influence of the EAP on the students' use of strategies is worth discussing from a pedagogical point of view. Our contention would be that some of the factors identified in the relevant literature as conductive to success in strategy intervention programmes were present in the literacy experience under study. These conditions relate to the teacher and to the programme. Regarding the former, there is abundant empirical evidence (see Manchón, In press; Rubin et al. In press) to suggest that the level of teacher training is crucial in bringing about positive changes in the students' strategic behaviour. In this case, we are talking about a very experienced teacher-researcher, who thus possessed not only training, but also well-grounded epistemological beliefs about learning and teaching, and about the subject-matter taught. Regarding the actual programme, and in agreement with previous research findings, the duration of the EAP course, together with the inclusion of a strong metacognitive component, could be explanatory factors for the outcome of the instructional intervention.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis and discussion of results leads us to some general implications at the levels of research and pedagogy.

From the perspective of *research methodology*, four observations are pertinent. First, we would suggest that the study of writing as a situated practice requires data triangulation, and that these multiple data ought to be obtained from the various participants in the learning-teaching context under study. Second, there are benefits to be gained from engaging in longitudinal research on beliefs and strategies since this research design can help us capture the dynamics of beliefs and strategies over time. In this respect, McDonough (1999: 14) contended some time ago that 'work on strategies is hampered by the lack of a coherent theory of how strategies [...] are selected, invented and discarded in favour of better ones', a statement perfectly applicable to the field of writing strategies, a strand of research in which the majority of published studies are cross-sectional (see review in Author, In press). Third, as suggested by Levine and Reves (1998), there would be benefits in using multiple data-collecting instruments when researching writing strategies. Finally, a word of caution is necessary regarding our research instruments: we concede that the reliability estimates obtained were moderate and that further validation of the two questionnaires is a requirement.

Regarding *pedagogy*, this study offers further empirical evidence for the impact that educational experiences can have on the development of L2 learners' beliefs and strategies. We can conclude from our data that, as noted in previous research, for this impact to occur, certain requirements must be given regarding both the person in charge of the instructional intervention, and the actual instructional programme. To reiterate what we mentioned earlier, the degree of teacher training appears to be a crucial variable in the implementation of enabling and context-sensitive pedagogical practices, together with the duration of the instructional programme, and the inclusion of a metacognitive component.

Finally, the study also raises questions for further research. Sakui and Gaies (1999: 487) argued that a study of learner beliefs 'can lead to more effective instructional planning and implementation'. Therefore, a question for further research is to ascertain how the empirical data collected in this and similar studies can lead to more enabling teaching practices in instructed language contexts in which teachers must help students to improve their capacity to express themselves in writing in their second language. In addition, talking about L1 writing, White and Bruning (2005) have recently drawn our attention to the fact that 'beliefs in writing are a unique motivational process that is interrelated with other cognitive and behavioural processes in writing and further research is needed to determine how they are interrelated (White and Bruning, 2005: 187). Therefore, future researchers ought to shed light on linear or interactive nature of the relationship between beliefs and strategies.

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7 Transferability of argumentative writing competence from L2 to L1: Effects of overseas experience

Hiroe Kobayashi and Carol Rinnert

Introduction

It is commonly recognized that general writing competence exists across languages. That is, skilled writers in their first language (L1) have been found to be skilled writers in their second language (L2), and less skilled writers in their L1 tend to be less skilled in their L2 as well (Cumming, 1989; Hirose and Sasaki, 1994; Ito, 2004; Sasaki and Hirose, 1996). Moreover, this tendency appears to be at least partially separable from language proficiency level. Language proficiency has been found to correlate significantly with writing quality (Sasaki and Hirose, 1996) and there may be a 'threshold level' of L2 proficiency (Ito, 2004: 52) below which L2 writing competence cannot be developed. Nevertheless, high language proficiency does not necessarily result in advanced writing competence, which appears to develop somewhat independently from other language skills.[1]

One key aspect of writing competence is knowledge of genre, among which the most extensively researched is academic writing (see Swales, 1990 and Swales and Feak, 1994 for overviews of seminal studies). Within the genre of academic writing, the sub-genre of argumentative essays has been the focus of many studies. A number of researchers have noted that many of the rhetorical features of argumentative essays appear to be very similar across languages, including Chinese and English (Liu, 2005), English and Icelandic (Berman, 1994), and English and Japanese (Kubota, 1998; Hirose, 2003; Authors, 2004, 2005). Specific features identified in argumentative essays in all four of these languages include a three-part (introduction-body-conclusion) structure, a position statement (thesis), evidence (reasons and examples to support the position), and a conclusion presenting the essence of the argument or restating the thesis. Another important feature that was seen to make an argument more persuasive in English was the inclusion of a counterargument that anticipates potential opposition (Axelrod and Cooper, 2001; Liu, 2005; Smalley and Hank, 1982).

A number of studies have investigated the transfer of writing competence from L1 to L2 (e.g., Cumming, 1989; Hirose, 2003; Kobayashi, 2005; Kubota, 1998; Rinnert and Kobayashi 2005). Our previous study

(Authors, 2004, 2005) found evidence of positive transfer from novice writers' L1 (Japanese) high school writing training/experience in their L2 (English) opinion writing. Most notably, those who had received intensive L1 training tended to use a clear 3-part (introduction – body – conclusion) structure and include some mention of the other side of the argument in their L2 essays. At the same time, the study suggested that several interrelated factors may have affected the transfer of features from L1 to L2: (1) the nature of the L2 writing instruction, (2) development of an awareness of audience, and (3) individual writers' perceptions and preferences. Other factors that have been hypothesized to facilitate the transfer of writing proficiency from L1 to L2 include sufficient exposure and sufficient motivation (Cummins, 1980, 1991).

In contrast, only a few studies have looked at the reverse transfer of L2 to L1 (Berman, 1994; Eggington, 1987; Shi, 2003). Among them, Berman (1994) found that high school students instructed in features of argumentative writing in either their L1 (Icelandic) or L2 (English) were able to transfer that knowledge across languages. The transfer was most evident from their L2 to their L1, in which they presumably had no limitations in terms of language proficiency, whereas language proficiency was found to be a factor in the L1 to L2 transfer. Working with Japanese university students in Canada, Shi and Beckett (2002) found that the students (N = 23) changed their ways of organizing their L2 essays after one year of study in Canada, and that over half of them expected to transfer these rhetorical changes to their L1 academic writing after they returned to Japan, though it remained an open question whether their actual writing practices would match these perceptions once they returned to their L1 academic context.

This study attempts to address the issue of L2 to L1 transfer by focusing on specific effects of L2 English writing experience on L1 Japanese writing. The study is undertaken from a social cognitive (Flower, 1994), or socio-cognitive (Riazi, 1997; Villamail and de Guerrero, 1996), approach that conceives of writing as a primarily mental activity by an individual writer within a particular social context and recognizes the importance of writers' previous experiences and perceptions in constructing their own writing abilities and practices. The current study aims to build on our preceding studies with novice Japanese writers (Authors, 2004, 2005) in order to elucidate the nature of transferability of writing competence across languages. In particular, we examine the effects of more advanced Japanese writers' L2 (English) instruction/experience in overseas settings on the development of argumentative writing in L1 (Japanese). The following empirical research questions were addressed:

1. What rhetorical features of L2 writing acquired through training/experience are transferred to L1 argumentation texts?
2. How does such transfer differ among three groups of Japanese writers: those with no overseas L2 writing instruction/experience, those with one year of such experience, and those with extensive overseas experience?

Based on the results of the empirical analysis, together with insights gleaned from the interview data, a third, theoretical research question was also addressed:

3. What factors affect the uptake/transfer of L2 features to L1 writing?

Method

Using a qualitative case-study approach, the study compared L1 and L2 essay writing by three groups of Japanese writers (N = 25).[2] As explained above, the three groups were constituted of writers with varying amounts of L2 writing instruction and experience in overseas settings:

Group 1: No overseas writing instruction/experience in overseas settings (N=10)
Group 2: Two semesters university level instruction/experience in English-speaking countries (N=10)
Group 3: Three or more years post-graduate instruction/experience in English-speaking countries (N=5)

Group Profiles

Group 1 consisted of Japanese university students (7 females and 3 males) in their early 20s, majoring in various disciplines in the humanities or social sciences. Group 2 also comprised Japanese university students (all females) in their early to mid 20s, but they were mainly language majors. Five of them had studied in North America, two in Australia, two in the United Kingdom (U.K.), and one in New Zealand. Group 3 was made up of Japanese advanced graduate students and teachers (all females) in their 30s to early 40s with a variety of majors in the humanities and social sciences. Three had received academic training in the U.K. and two in North America (Canada and the U.S.); their overseas residence ranged from 3-½ to 14 years.

According to a computerized language proficiency test (CASEC),[3] Group 2 significantly outscored Group 1. Group 2 averaged 785 on the CASEC test and 537 in the TOEFL equivalent scores, as opposed to Group 1's mean of 708 and 507, respectively (significant differences at $p < .05$ according to independent *t*-tests). Group 3 was not asked to take the CASEC test, as it was assumed that they all had advanced English proficiency.

The three groups differed in terms of L1 and L2 writing background. While all groups had received L1 literacy training in elementary through secondary school, overall Groups 1 and 2 reportedly received more L1 training in high school than Group 3, particularly the special L1 essay training that was provide to prepare for university entrance examinations (8/10 for Group 1, 9/10 for Group 2, 2/5 for Group 3). Groups 1 and 2 also reported having written more L1 reports than Group 3 in Japanese universities, but members of both Group 1 (2/10) and Group 3 (2/5), as opposed to no members of Group 2, had written a graduation thesis in Japanese.

Regarding overall L2 writing training and experience, Group 3 exceeded the other two groups. In overseas settings, Group 3 wrote many more papers (as many as 30) than Group 2, and the length of their papers was much longer (up to 15,000 words). Almost all members of Group 3 (4/5) had written an English master's and/or doctoral thesis in English. However, in terms of L2 writing experience in Japanese universities, Groups 1 and 2 reported receiving much more L2 writing instruction than Group 3. None of the members of Group 1 had written a thesis in English, but a majority of those in Group 2 (7/10) and almost half of those in Group 3 (2/5) had written a graduation thesis in English.

Data Collection and Analysis

The sources of data for the study included background questionnaires reporting participants' writing experience in Japan and overseas; one L1 and one L2 essay; and in-depth follow-up interviews.

The essay task was based on two argumentation topics:

Topic 1: Should foreign language education begin in elementary school?
Topic 2: Should elderly people live with family?

The essay prompts, which were written in Japanese, specified a particular audience, an educational Japanese/Canadian publisher soliciting contributions for publication. As can be seen in the English translations in Appendix 1, they explicitly asked writers to take a position for or against the issue.

To control for any topic effect, the topics were alternated: half of the participants wrote on Topic 1 in Japanese and Topic 2 in English; the other half did the reverse. Everyone wrote in Japanese first. There was no time limit, and dictionaries were allowed. The writing sessions were videotaped, and the interviews were audiotaped. The semi-structured interviews, lasting 2 to 3 hours and conducted mainly in Japanese, asked about the construction of the texts and decisions made during the writing process, as well as the writers' perceptions of L1 and L2 writing and possible background influences.

The textual analysis of the L1 and L2 essays focused on argumentation structures, introductions and conclusions, as explained with the results below. The analysis of the interview data examined writers' choices, perceptions, and metalinguistic knowledge.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the average numbers (means and standard deviations) of total English words and Japanese characters used in the L1 and L2 essays written by the three groups. In both essays, Group 3 writers, with extensive overseas experience, wrote significantly longer essays than the students of Groups 2 and 1, who had only one year and no overseas experience, respectively ($p < .05$ according to post-ANOVA Scheffé tests). There was no significant difference between the latter two groups.

		CASEC			TOEFL Equiv	
Group 1 (N=10)		**708** (84)			**507** (33)	
Sub-group 1 (N=6)	**	656 (61)		**	486 (24)	
Sub-group 2 (N=4)		787 (35)	*		538 (14)	*
Group 2 (N=10)		**785** (50)			**537** (20)	

* $p < .05$, **$p < .01$

Table 1: L2 Proficiency Levels for Groups 1 and 2

The analysis of the L1 and L2 written essays revealed that writing features transferred from L2 writing training/experience to L1 argumentation texts included knowledge of counterargument and several elements of introductions and conclusions. However, the extent to which the three groups transferred these features was found to differ. The following subsections first present the findings of the textual analysis, interpreted in the light of the interview data, beginning with overall rhetorical patterns, then moving to counterarguments (CA) in the body of the argumentation essays, then introductions, and finally conclusions. The final two subsections address the research questions.

Overall Rhetorical Patterns

First, in response to the given tasks, all 25 participants created argumentation texts in their L1, and most of them (22/25) also did so in their L2, apart from three (two from Group 3 and one from Group 2) who wrote expository essays in English. Since those three expository essays were written on Topic 2, 'elderly people living with family,' the topic may in part be considered to affect these writers' approach to the task.

The overall structure of the argumentation texts was found to be the same across L1 and L2 writing: a statement of the writer's position (Pos), followed by pro-reasons/support (Pro) in the body and the position restated at the end. A counterargument (CA), usually but not always including a refutation (rf), was placed as a separate component of many essays, most often before the conclusion. Thus, the one most typical structural pattern in both languages can be abbreviated as Pos → Pro → CA + rf → Pos. On the other hand, the structure of the three exposition texts fell into the overall structure of thesis statement, explanation and restatement of the thesis.

Counterargument Components

Table 2 shows the breakdown of counterargument with refutation components created by group and language. Overall the Japanese essays contained counterargument components more often than the English essays did (48% and 31.5%, respectively). What stands out across the two languages is that writers in Groups 2 and 3 employed counterargument with refutation almost twice as often in L1 writing as in L2 (both with 60% in L1, 33% in L2), whereas Group 1 used it with the same frequency in both languages (30%).

	English words*	**Japanese characters***
Group 1	337.7 (124.2)	1136.9 (119.8)
Group 2	358.9 (57.8)	1137.3 (112.7)

Group 3	488.2 (69.2)	1409.2 (361.6)

**p* < .05

Table 2: Total English Words and Japanese Characters by Group

To take a closer look at the use of CA with refutation in both L1 and L2 writing, particularly by Group 2 students, we identified the frequency of the four possible distributional patterns, as shown below ('+' indicates presence of CA and '--' shows its absence). The analysis shows that four students did not use CA in L2 writing, but they did employ it in L1 writing.

	L1	**L2**	**Cases**
1.	--	--	3
2.	+	--	4
3.	--	+	1
4.	+	+	2

Table 3 summarizes Group 2 students' responses to the interview question of why they included a counterargument in their writing and what influenced their use of counterarguments. The interview data suggest that there is a strong relation between the use of counterarguments and the L1 and L2 writing instruction Group 2 students received in Japan and overseas. Out of the six students who employed CA in their L1 essays, two appeared to transfer the ability to create CA from L2 writing to L1. They clearly stated that they included a counterargument, following the ways they wrote English essays. One of these students explained that she repeatedly practiced essays including CA and refutation in English writing classes in both Japanese and North American universities. Though her first exposure to CA knowledge was in a non-writing class she took at a Japanese college, such L2 writing practice, according to her, helped her to acquire the ability to make a counterargument.

Group	**L1 Essays**	**L2 Essays**
G1	30% (3/10)	30% (3/10)
G2	60% (6/10)	33% (3/9)*

G3	60% (3/5)	33% (1/)*

* The number of argumentative essays was 9 for Group 2, and 3 for Group 3. Three expository essays were excluded from this analysis.

Table 3: Use of Counterargument with Refutation by Group

In the case of the other four students who used CA components, two reported that they transferred CA knowledge they had learned in their L2 writing classes, particularly at a Japanese university, to the construction of their L1 texts. According to them, they wrote a number of reports in English while staying in L2 academic contexts (New Zealand and Britain); however, they wrote essays consisting of mostly points and supporting details without counterarguments. Thus, one of them said, 'I know it's good to introduce some opinions of the other side, but I don't know how to refute them in English.' A lack of practice led them to feel insecure about the use of CA in their L2 writing. Nevertheless, being aware that including a counterargument can make their position more persuasive, they apparently applied that knowledge to their L1 writing. In the case of the other two students, they reportedly learned CA from both L1 and L2 writing instruction. One of these students was able to create it in her Japanese essay, but was unable to do so in her L2 essay because she was afraid of losing coherence. However, the other student was able to include CA in both her L1 and L2 essays; according to her, repeated practice of using CA in L1 and L2 writing helped her to employ it consistently in constructing the text in the two languages.

It appears that instruction and repeated practice/use play significant roles in developing the ability to present an opposing view and then arguing against it. This appears to hold true with Group 3 writers. Although the number of writers in Group 3 (N = 5) was too small to detect any discernable patterns, three writers included a counterargument in their L1 writing, reportedly to make their argument stronger, while two did not employ it. According to one writer who used it consistently in both L1 and L2 essays, she learned how to make a counterargument in her overseas study skills class and continued to use it in her L2 writing. On the other hand, another Group 3 writer who did not include CA in either her L1 or her L2 essay reported that she had never learned to make a counterargument even in L2 writing classes overseas. These cases indicate that even L2 writers who had stayed overseas for considerably long periods of time to pursue academic work would not necessarily know how to make a counterargument unless they were instructed.

Introduction Components

Six categories of introduction elements were identified in the two languages, as explained in Appendix 2. Table 4 presents the most frequently occurring of these elements in essay introductions by group. The most salient introduction pattern consisted of *background* and *position*, which was found in almost all L1 and L2 essays. What distinguished the three groups, however, was the use of *issue* and *clarification*. Nearly all writers of Group 3 used *issue* to show contrasting sides of a topic before taking a position across L1 and L2 writing (80% for L1; 100% for L2, Table 4). They also employed *clarification* to define particular terms they used in their own essays, for example, 'old people' or to clarify their own position (60% for L1; 33% for L2). By contrast, Groups 1 and 2 employed these two elements much less frequently in their L1 and L2 introductions, and instead used *general preview*, which broadly indicates what is to come in the body in terms of content and structure. That is, while including basic elements such as *background* and *position*, the introductions by Group 1 and 2 writers tended to be less specific than those of Group 3 in terms of contextualizing for a given topic and using well-defined key words. The preference of Groups 1 and 2 for general introductions, particularly in Japanese, appears to come from their perceptions of Japanese introductions, as reflected in comments like 'it does not need preview [of specific content] because it gets redundant or tedious.'

	L1	**L2**	**Most Influential Training**	**Perception (why / why not CA included)**
S2-1	--	+	L2	L1: Afraid of losing the balance /no appropriate place L2: To make the argument more persuasive
S2-2	+	+	L1 and L2	L1: Use "*ten*"* to show an opposing opinion L2: To make an argument more objective / persuasive
S2-3	--	--		L1: Not know how to refute/ avoid complication L2: Not know how to place it

S2-4	+	--	L1	L1: To show opposition makes my ideas clearer L2: Afraid of losing coherence in arguments
S2-5	+	///	L2	L1: Followed ways of writing English essays L2: Expository essay (little topic knowledge->not argue)
S2-6	+	--	L2	L1: To make an argument more persuasive L2: No confidence in refuting / No CA makes argument simpler and clearer
S2-7	--	--		L1: (couldn't make problem-statement into CA)** L2: No time for CA / my CA wasn't adequate
S2-8	+	+	L2	L1: Followed ways of writing English essays L2: To make the argument stronger/ persuasive
S2-9	--	--		L1: No space for CA/ It's in my mind L2: Didn't use it in my English writing
S2-10	+	--	L2	L1: To make my opinion more convincing L2: Couldn't turn an argument into CA (it was like problem-solution)-

+indicates presence of CA, whereas -- shows its absence.
/// means "Not applicable" because of exposition mode
*Corresponding to the third component in a *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* rhetorical pattern, a turn/digression/extended perspective
**The writer thought she included a counter-argument, but the analysis shows that she was just stating some problems of the other side.

Table 4: Use of CA and Reasons by Group 2 Students

The frequent use of *issue* and *clarification* across L1 and L2 writing by Group 3 can be attributed to the academic training they received in English-speaking educational contexts. Although the interview did not focus on why they had included these elements in their L1 and L2 introductions, the academic training they had received in their disciplinary fields in L2 educational settings most probably affected their use of these elements. When they write papers or articles in their disciplinary fields, they are usually expected to narrow down a topic before they start to write. Therefore, it is likely that they applied their habitual strategies of contextualizing a topic or limiting the scope of their argument to the writing of the L1 essays in this study.

In relation to the statement of *issue*, it is worth mentioning that two students in Group 1 included the element consistently in both L1 and L2 introductions. Apparently these students consciously applied the knowledge they had gained from their L2 writing class at a Japanese university when writing their L1 introductions. Since they were reportedly actively preparing to study in an English-speaking country at the time of the current research (they are in fact overseas at the time of this writing), they appeared eager to learn to adopt L2 writing features they could handle in their writing. Their *issue* statements were not as sophisticated as those of Group 3 writers; nevertheless, their awareness of the element was strong enough to include it in their L1 introductions.

Conclusion Components

Appendix 3 shows the most common conclusion elements identified in the essays, with explanations of each, and Table 5 shows the most salient elements of the conclusions by group. The most frequent pattern for conclusions, which was found in all L1 and L2 argumentation essays, comprised *position* restated or implied and *summary*, often including *extension/future concerns* in the case of L1 essays. One striking tendency shown in Table 5 was that whereas little difference was found between Groups 1 and 2 in employing *general preview*, the two groups differed particularly in the use of two elements: *specific summary*, which covers the specific content of points discussed in the body, and *extension/future concerns*, in which the writer goes one step further to relate a topic to a broader context or to future perspectives including suggestions. That is, in L2 essays, Group 2 students employed *specific summary* more often than their Group 1 counterparts (Group 2, 56%; Group 1, 20%); however, in their L1 essays they did not use *extension/future concerns* as often as Group 1 did, which showed a marked difference between the two groups (Group 2, 20%; Group 1, 90%).

Group	Preview	Issue	Clarification

	General #	Specific		
G1				
L1	50%	20%	20%	10%
L2	10%	20%	20%	0%
G2				
L1	60%	10%	20%	20%
L2*	33%	22%	11%	0%
G3				
L1	40%	20%	80%	60%
L2**	0%	0%	100%	33%

*No. of essays: 9, **No. of essays: 3
 # includes both general summary and procedural summary in this table.

Table 5: Salient Elements of Introductions by Group

The interview data suggest that the frequent use of *specific summary* and the infrequent use of *extension/future concerns* in the L1 conclusions written by Group 2 were due to their perceptions of L1 and L2 conclusions, which are summarized in Table 6. When asked in the interview, 'what aspects do you pay the most attention to when writing a conclusion in English and Japanese?,' many of them answered 'summarizing,' repeatedly using such phrases as 'putting ideas into one sentence,' 'rephrasing,' and 'with no new ideas.' These phrases echo what is emphasized about the characteristics of English conclusions in writing textbooks (e.g., Langan, 2000; Reid, 1988; Smalley and Hank, 1982). On the other hand, as shown in Table 6, four students viewed Japanese and English conclusions as being distinct from each other, clearly stating that a Japanese conclusion includes future perspectives or adds something more than a summary.[4] In spite of such views, only two followed their perceptions in constructing their L1 conclusions. Although a discrepancy often occurs between what writers believe and what they do, the interview data help to explain why Group 2 used *extension/future* much less often, but frequently used *summary* in L1 conclusions, suggesting that such a tendency was due to the transfer of knowledge about L2 conclusions to L1 writing.

Group	Summary		Extension/
	General #	Specific	Future
G1			
L1	80%	0%	90%

L2	50%	20%	20%
G2			
L1	70%	10%	20%
L2	33%	56%#	22%
G3			
L1	67%	0%	20%
L2**	33%	33%	67%

*No. of essays: 9, **No. of essays: 3

This percentage goes up to 60% if an expository essay is included.

Table 6: Salient Elements of Conclusions by Group

Transferred Features

With respect to the first research question, the features that we found to be transferred from L2 writing training/experience to L1 argumentation texts included the following: (1) overall argumentation structure, particularly placement of a position statement at the beginning and end of the essay; (2) inclusion of a counter-argument component within the body of the essay; (3) elaboration of the introduction to include not only a preview of the structure of the paper, but specification of both sides of the issue and clarification of the topic as well as definition of terms; and (4) suppression of extended or future perspectives in the conclusion. Although it was found that the first two of these features were emphasized in both L1 and L2 training, the interview data made it clear that for many of the participants, especially those with overseas training, the strongest influence came from their L2 training and experience.

Regarding the second research question, we found that transfer of features differed among the three groups of Japanese writers in several respects. First, although all three groups showed evidence of transfer of the overall structure (including a position statement at the beginning of the essay), those with no overseas L2 writing instruction/experience (Group 1) appeared to have been much less influenced in terms of the other features identified in the study. In particular, those with one year of overseas experience (Group 2) and those with extensive overseas experience (Group 3) both included more counterargument components than Group 1; they also tended not to include extended/future perspectives in their L1 conclusions, unlike most of the Group 1 writers. In addition, those with longer overseas experience (Group 3) provided much more extensive elaboration in their L1 introductions than the members of the other two groups, which reflected their extensive training and experience of writing in their specific academic disciplines. Overall, seven members of Group 1 reported more influence from their L1 experience/training; eight members of Group 2 perceived stronger influence from their L2; and three members of Group 3 said they were under stronger influence from their L2 training, as opposed to the other two, who said L1 and L2 exerted equal influence.

Contributing Factors

As for the third research question, the findings from the empirical analysis provide evidence that the transfer of features acquired through L2 training/experience to L1 writing is influenced by several factors: (1) the amount and content of L1 and L2 writing/experience, (2) language proficiency, (3) disciplinary knowledge/training, and (4) affective traits of individual writers (e.g., motivation). While our previous study (Authors, 2004, 2005) had identified the above factors (1) and (4) as affecting the transfer of features acquired through L1 instruction, particularly the feature of overall structural schema, to L2 writing, the present study clarified that these interrelated factors can also play a significant role in the reverse transfer of specific argumentation features from L2 to L1 writing. In the case of counterarguments, for example, writing instruction in either L1 or L2, or in both languages, is important in terms of providing knowledge. However, it is the amount of writing practice or experience that helps writers to convert the knowledge to the acquisition level, which makes the learned knowledge transferable across the languages. Thus, several writers in Groups 2 and 3 who had reached that level mostly through L2 writing training or through combined L1 and L2 training were consistent in constructing a counterargument and refuting it in both Japanese and English writing. This latter case, in particular, makes it evident that interaction between L1 and L2 training reinforces the acquisition of certain features.

Related to the amount of writing practice, the content of the instruction students receive also plays a role. The study clearly indicated that those who had not been taught to use counterarguments did not do so. According to the interview data, the instruction in overseas school settings appears to be diverse and locally situated. Some instruction, for example, may emphasize the importance of giving strong support reasons for a position stated, whereas some other instruction includes knowledge and practice of making a counterargument. Although the content provided may depend upon the academic level of students, unless such knowledge is taught, there seems to be little likelihood that students will use it across languages.

Language proficiency was also found to impact the transfer of features across languages. The present study revealed that using the writer's first language can make L2 knowledge transferable to L1 writing. As reported earlier, several Group 2 students did not include a counterargument in their L2 essay due to risk avoidance, lack of confidence and difficult formulation; however, they produced the CA structures in their L1 essays, most likely because the use of their first language would leave more mental capacity for them to cope with a cognitively challenging task (Berman, 1994), in addition to providing more language facility in terms of expression. The language factor could also be seen in the L2 writing of advanced English proficiency Group 3 writers, who were able to employ strategies flexibly.

As a third factor affecting transferability of writing features across languages, the present study added disciplinary knowledge/training. As already discussed, the two elements of *issue* and *clarification* that Group 3 writers used in their L1 introductions evidenced the transfer of knowledge they were likely to have acquired through higher levels of academic training and writing experience, particularly in their specialized areas.

Finally, affective factors such as motivation and judgment were also found to influence the transfer of writing features to L1 writing. This was evident among the Group 1 students who aspired to study overseas and were working hard toward that goal when the data collection took place, in that all three of them, in contrast to the other members of the group, reported stronger influence from L2 than from L1 writing instruction/experience. It was also seen among members of all three groups who exerted their own judgments, such as the Group 3 student who chose to define her audience as ordinary people for whom she decided an inductive approach, leading up to a statement of her position at the end, would be more reader-friendly than starting out with a position statement at the beginning.

All these factors can be represented schematically as shown in Figure 1.

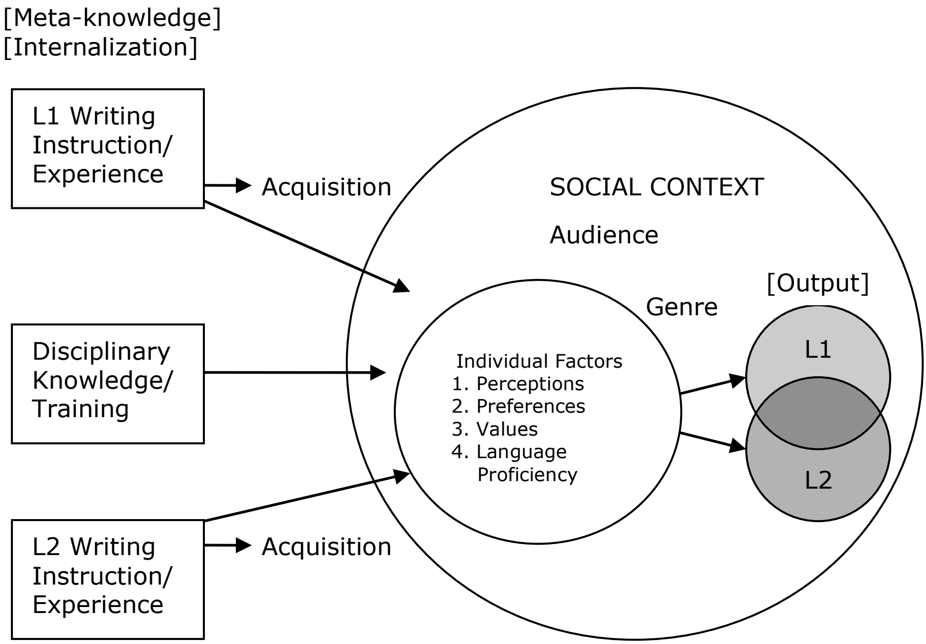

Figure 1: Factors affecting transferability of writing features across languages

The boxes on the left in Figure 1 represent the L1 and L2 writing training and experience, as well as the disciplinary knowledge interacting with it, that contribute to the writer's formulation and implementation of the writing task. As indicated above and beside the boxes, simple exposure to metaknowledge about writing is not enough; instead, sufficient writing practice and experience is required for the knowledge to become internalized, leading to acquisition. The arrows from the boxes point to a smaller circle, which represents the individual writer, whose perceptions are shaped by training/experience, but who can choose which features to uptake or transfer depending on the context of the writing, indicated by the larger circle. The context of the writing includes the social setting, audience and genre. The output from the writer is indicated by the darker, overlapping circles, representing L1 text and L2 text. The overlap between the circles, which represents the shared features of the L1 and L2 texts, can vary from almost entire overlap to little or none. For example, this study found that some constituent elements of introductions and conclusions differed between

Japanese and English texts. Even with the same overall structure in both L1 and L2 essays, what features writers chose to write for the introduction and conclusion of each apparently depended upon individual factors, such as their perceptions of L1 and L2 writing and also the contexts where the writers were situated.

In all, the findings of this qualitative study need to be viewed with caution because of the relatively small number of participants. Nevertheless, the study provided evidence that L2 writing training/practice that students have experienced in overseas educational settings may impact the transfer of writing features acquired through such writing practice to L1 writing. At the same time, the study also helped to clarify what specific features tend to transfer across languages and what features may be more language specific in argumentation writing.

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Notes

1 For example, Cummins (1980: 175) presents evidence that ‘cognitive/academic language proficiency’ is independent of ‘interpersonal communicative skills’ in both L1 and L2. Similarly, Cummins reviews a large number of studies of various kinds of what he terms ‘decontextualized language proficiency’ (1991: 84), including ‘verbal academic proficiency’ (1991: 74) ‘discourse proficiency’ (p. 83) ‘cognitive and literacy skills’ (1991: 78), and ‘writing expertise’ (1991: 85), to support the hypothesis of ‘interdependence’ (1991: 77) of such proficiency across languages.

2 The original number of participants was 28, but three were eliminated because their backgrounds differed radically from those of the other members of the groups to which they had been assigned.

3 The Computerized Assessment Systems for English Communication, developed by the Eiken (English STEP Test) administrators, is self-administered at the students’ own pace. The test contains four sections (vocabulary, idioms, listening, and dictation), and the results are reported in the form of a total numerical score (out of a possible 1000 points), a proficiency level, and TOEIC and TOEFL equivalent scores.

4 Three students in Group 1 made similar comments about Japanese conclusions. The remaining Group 1 members did not make any specific comments about differences between L1 and L2 conclusions, except either ‘putting ideas together’ (‘*matome’* in Japanese) or ‘stating the same opinion as in an introduction.’

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Appendix 1: Translations of Writing Prompts

Topic 1

A Japanese/Canadian educational publisher is soliciting essays on early foreign language education. There is controversy over this issue; some assert that it should begin at the elementary level, while some others argue against this idea. The publisher will feature this topic and is looking for essays from both points of view.
Please write about this issue, making your position clear, for or against, within about 60 minutes (though there is no fixed time limit). The length is about 12,000 Japanese characters/500 English words. Use of a dictionary is allowed.

Topic 2

A Japanese/Canadian educational publisher is soliciting essays on how elderly people should live. There is controversy over this issue; some assert that they should live with family, while some others argue against this idea. The publisher will feature this topic and is looking for essays from both points of view.
Please write about this issue, making your position clear, for or against, within about 60 minutes (though there is no fixed time limit). The length is about 12,000 Japanese characters/500 English words. Use of a dictionary is allowed.

Appendix 2: Most Common Elements of Introductions

Background (Bkgr)
  Presenting background (general/specific) to the topic
Position (Pos)
  Stating a position on one side of the argument
Preview
  Prev (introducing specific content of points to be discussed)
  Prev(G) (giving general overview of content, not specifics)
  Prev(prc) (pointing to structure, not content, of essay)
Clarification (Clarif)
  Limiting focus/topic, defining terms
Issue (Iss)
  Setting up contrasting sides of argument, general controversy
Criticism (Crit)
  Criticizing the writing prompt

Appendix 3: Most Common Elements of Conclusions

Position (Pos)
  (Re)stating position taken in argument
Summary (condensing main points of essay)
  Sum (specific content of points discussed)
  Sum(G) (whole/partial content in general terms)
  Sum(prc) (procedural: structure, not content)
Extension (Ext)
  Analyzing/interpreting content more deeply
Future concern (Fut)
  Going beyond content of the essay (e.g., future perspective or afterthought)

8 Altering the Sequence of Acquisition

Kent Hill

This paper investigates the validity of the main tenet of Processability Theory (Pienemann 1998, 2005), that is, the sequence and rate of language acquisition are unalterable. Processability Theory bases the sequence and rate of acquisition solely on the level of difficulty of morphological agreement rules. This paper argues that the result of basing instruction on morphological difficulty alone is overgeneralization of forms (i.e. overuse in incorrect contexts). The alternative theory presented in this paper, which is based on a sociocognitive approach to language development (Hill, 2006a), suggests the sequence is alterable if it is based on conceptual rather than morphological factors.

The two grammatical forms for this particular study were chosen because they are typically overgeneralized by L2 learners: the future tense form *will* and the present perfect aspect. The study involved sequencing instruction for both forms based on conceptual, rather than morphological, difficulty. This sequence is unidirectional from the present to the future and/or the past and the conceptualization sequence is dependent upon metonymic functions. The present perfect aspect and the *going to* future forms represent intermediary domains in the conceptualization sequence. The results of the study indicate significant reduction in overgeneralization with both forms. These findings cast doubt on morphological difficulty as the main determinant of sequences and rates of acquisition and support the sociocognitive claim that basing instruction on conceptual factors can lead to more accurate use of morphology.

Tomasello (2003) finds at least three reasons why morphological complexity is a weak link in the learning process: (1) it is typically expressed in phonologically reduced, unstressed, monosyllabic bits; (2) in some, though not all cases, it carries very little concrete semantic weight, for example, the English third-person *–s* agreement marker; and (3) many grammatical morphemes are plurifunctional in ways that make acquisition of the full range of uses in appropriate contexts extremely difficult.

Alternatively, a sociocognitive approach to language development maintains that the L2 sequence of acquisition involves interaction of more complex factors than morphology, i.e. through speaker-listener-object joint-attention frames analogical reasoning develops to link cognitive schematization processes to language input. A joint-attention frame involves triadic interaction mediated by an object in which two participants constantly monitor each other’s attention to it and themselves (Tomasello, 2003). Morphological difficulty is not inherently related to these schematization processes. Rather, distributional analysis of grammatical structure according to the perspectives found in different joint-attention frames offers a better method of measuring accuracy of use (Tomasello, 2003). In distributional analysis, syntactic categories are analogically defined by the occurrence or nonoccurrence of their members in different types of utterances (Croft, 2001). What is most salient to the learner in input is then matched to how the spatiotemporal event is schematicized.

Processability Theory (henceforth PT) developed from Lexical Functional Grammar. In an attempt to create a 'psychologically plausible' grammar that could explain L1 acquisition, Lexical Functional Grammar (Bresnan and Kaplan, 1982; Bresnan, 2001) reinterpreted the 'psychologically implausible' Transformational Grammar (Chomsky, 1965). The way Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG) did this was to do away with the deep structures and phrase structure rules of Transformational Grammar and replace them with equally implausible lexical-functional rules (i.e. *f*-structures and *c*-structures). Unfortunately, simply replacing one grammatical term for another, as LFG did, is insufficient. In order to make grammar 'psychologically' or cognitively plausible it needs to be explained in terms of underlying cognitive processes (e.g., schemata).

Pinker (1982) developed a theory of L1 acquisition based on LFG. Pienemann (1998) then quite possibly applied Pinker's L1 theory to L2 acquisition, calling it *Processability Theory*. More recently, a new version of PT published in 2005 focuses more on word order than morphological difficulty. However, the word order complexity construct appears unfalsifiable in that learners naturally progress from shorter to longer, more complex word-length utterances. Additionally, communication can continue to occur with incorrect word order utterances and word order has changed diachronically in English. Rather than correct word order as the measurement of acquisition, the ability to communicate one's intent should be measured.

LFG, and consequently, PT hold that ascribing tense-aspect agreement markers to verbs is an innate ability. This incorrect assumption and the effect it has had on SLA research has significantly contributed to the reason why SLA literature does not yet adequately explain how the L2 develops. In fact, without the proper development of joint-attention between a child and care-giver, proper social and language skills do not develop (Tomasello, 2003). This is a strong factor in the argument against innate language ability or universal grammar.

The following processing procedures and routines form the hierarchy that underlies PT:

1. Lemma access;

2. The category procedure;
3. The phrasal procedure;
4. The S-procedure;
5. The subordinate clause procedure.

Presumably, one stage is not acquirable prior to having attained the previous one. As Pinker (1982) points out, however, this is not always the case with L1 acquisition. It is possible for argument or phrasal structure to affect acquisition of tense-aspect inflection or agreement. In contrast to PT, Radical Construction Grammar did away with the second level in the hierarchy, i.e. category procedure (Croft, 2001). Furthermore, in most spoken analyses of language, the S-procedure has been replaced with the utterance. Further doubt about the validity of this sequence comes from children appearing to acquire spoken forms of subordinate clauses earlier than previously thought (Tomasello, 2003).

Overgeneralization

Sequencing instruction according to the level of morphological difficulty can be causing many learners to overgeneralize one particular form in the instructional sequence. Overgeneralization of these forms occurs because they are the most morphologically salient, but they are not the first forms to be semiotically linked from input to underlying cognitive schemata. Hence, if PT actually were based on the correct sequence of acquisition, problems with overgeneralization of forms would not occur.

We now turn to the LFG L1 theory of acquisition (Pinker, 1982) and then look at PT in more detail. Because they stay within the Lexical Functional/Transformational Grammar paradigm, they also unintentionally point out more inconsistencies with these theories, thereby providing the antithetical context for how a sociocognitive usage-based approach to language development, though influenced by PT, still represents a better alternative to it.

L1 Acquisition

A transformation-by-transformation acquisition theory makes a prediction about the order of acquisition of grammatical constructions: A construction derived by the application of a particular transformation should be mastered only after each of the transformations is mastered in isolation. This prediction could be the underlying source for the sequence of acquisition found in PT.

Pinker (1982; see also Tomasello, 2003), however, makes it very clear that the sequence of acquisition has to be based on something more complex than derivational factors. L1 child language data reveal that more complex derivations appear earlier than less complex ones. A sociocognitive approach by contrast maintains that this is the result of analogical distributional analysis of input. Indeed, argument structure (i.e. subject-verb-object agreement and tense-aspect markers) is necessarily complex because it represents the spatiotemporal perspective taken between participants in a joint-attention frame and it is these complex conceptualization processes that motivate the abstract system of grammar.

Pinker (1982) points out that transformational acquisition theories predict a class of overgeneralizations errors that no L1 learning child has been observed to make. This absence of error is related to the poverty of stimulus argument (i.e. that children learn to master forms prior to having had enough input to do so) and any cognitively plausible theory of language acquisition should explain why learners do not make these errors. With an overabundant wealth of stimulus (i.e. instruction sequenced on morphological difficulty), on the other hand, L2 learners very quickly begin to make overgeneralizations. Quite possibly, then, a lack of input is necessary for proper analogical reasoning and abstraction-making ability to develop. Development then becomes a part-for-whole process. In this sense, the 'poverty of stimulus' argument becomes a misnomer, because learners must constrain their infelicitous structure from an awareness of a minimal amount of preemption in the input. Lack of awareness of preemption in input reduces the ability to distinguish an analogical constraint process that then leads to overgeneralization of a form.

The erroneous predictions found in PT stem from its attempt to turn holistic cognitive processes into rules or a 'parameter-setting model.' Learners do not set parameters with morphology. Instead a sociocognitive approach theorizes that language develops according to a shared intersubjective perspective with their listener. Once a set of parameters is 'bootstrapped' into the grammar by semantic means, Pinker argues, the rules can be used in conjunction with further data to set the rest of the parameters in the grammar. A sociocognitive approach shuns rules and proposes that the link between meaning and form develops from usage, units of storage and basic cognitive functions (cf. metonymy, i.e. part-to-whole mapping).

Metonymy

Metonymy has recently been the subject of much interest in the field of cognitive linguistics (Croft, 1993; Kovecses and Radden, 1998; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibanez, and Diez Velasco, 2002). Metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain (Kovecses and Radden, 1998). For example, in the sentence I like the Picasso, the name Picasso metonymically represents the artist's work not the human being. The ubiquity of metonymy in language and its relation to grammar, however, are just beginning to be addressed in first language acquisition research. They have yet to be introduced to SLA research. A greater awareness of the role that metaphor plays in language learning has taken place in SLA (Cameron, 2003). Metaphor is closely related to metonymy.

A sociocognitive perspective to language development theorizes that it is these syntagmatic metonymic functions that also develop into grammatical schemata (e.g., SVO or anaphoric reference). Hence, making learners more aware of these schemata through tasks based on metonymic processes may result in more accurate use of morphology.

L2 Acquisition

PT (1998) does not imply a denial of the social dimension of learning; it merely separates the cognitive from the social aspect. In PT, the two aspects of learning have a degree of autonomy, each following its own internal logic. Although the two aspects of learning interact with each other, PT assumes that the internal logic of cognitive processes cannot be altered by social dynamics and vice versa. This first-generation cognitive revolution approach to form (i.e. based on the Cartesian separation of mind and body) has also negatively affected the effectiveness of SLA research (Hill, 2006b). Establishing the commensurability between cognitive and sociocultural factors in language learning is what more holistic sociocognitive approaches to language development endeavor to achieve.

PT attempts to provide a wider theoretical context for the *teachability hypothesis* (i.e. the stages of acquisition cannot be skipped through formal instruction and instruction will be beneficial if it focuses on structures from the 'next stage'). PT, however, contradicts itself here by stating that it is 'impossible' to predict how suppliance in obligatory contexts will develop in any given structure or learner (Pienemann, 1998). PT also exempts itself from the main tenet of LFG when it comes to studies on the acquisition of verbal morphology (i.e. the inclusion of semantics to make a grammar 'psychologically plausible') because they focus on the acquisition of tense from a semantic/pragmatic aspect, rather than on the form of morphological markers. Along these lines, the Zhang (2005) PT study of Chinese aspect acquisition does not occur according to the sequence found in PT and the reason is put down to conceptual factors.

In short, PT must do much more to be theoretically consistent. We now look at the sociocognitive perspective to development of the present perfect aspect and the *going to* future form.

Tense-Aspect

The following two studies imply that aspect develops *prior* to tense in the L1. Harner (cited in Tomasello, 2003) explains that within a joint-attention frame it is immediacy of intending action and uncertainty about it that are crucial components of a child's interpretation of future, e.g. *it's going to fall*. Antinucci and Miller (cited in Tomasello, 2003) found that L1 learners use past tense initially only for changes of state in which the end state is still perceptually present, i.e. with punctual or telic events, e.g. *it fell*. These findings are significant because they suggest that children's first conceptions of tense-aspect are aspectual. An understanding of tense then may develop from these initial conceptions in a part-to-whole or metonymical manner. This conceptualization sequence figures prominently in this present study because, contrastively, in L2 instruction tense is taught prior to aspect in the L2.

Present Tense and Progressive Aspect as Future

Bardovi-Harlig (2004) has stated that L2 learners overgeneralize the use of *will* for future up to 14 times more than that of a native speaker. When asked if introducing the present tense and progressive aspect uses for future before *will* could reduce overgeneralization of *will*'s use, Bardovi-Harlig (personal communication) responded that present tense and progressive aspect 'have their jobs to do' and therefore learners may not acquire their use for future at the same time.

This response raises some questions. For example, many languages do not have a future tense, and languages like these commonly use the present tense for future reference (e.g. Japanese). Thus, for any L2 learner of English whose L1 does not have a future tense, the use of the present tense for future should not develop into a problem with interference. Furthermore, using *will* for future would be that much more salient to such L2 learners and would weigh heavily in their distributional analysis of future forms, thereby quite possibly resulting in overgeneralization of its use.

The Similarity Between *Going to* and Present Perfect Aspect

This section argues for considering the *going to* future form as aspect not tense. The method in which it does so is to point out the similarity between *going to* and present perfect aspect. Perhaps the way they are most similar is that if present perfect aspect is understood as the result of a cause-and-effect action (e.g. *He has broken his nose*), then *going to* represents a high probability of a joint-attention focus on the same result occurring. Therefore, *going to* may be used significantly more with resultative verbs (e.g. *He's going to break his nose*).

The extension of the sequence of conceptualization may also be unidirectional (i.e. from present tense to *going to* and then *will*). In this sense, *going to* and present perfect aspect share a relationship to the present tense of relevance within a joint-attention frame, representing current meaning making for the future and past tense respectively. *Will* and the past tense, contrastively, are outside of joint attention and are therefore non-current meaning-making forms. *Going to* and present perfect aspect then represent intermediary metonymical domains in the unidirectional conceptualization process from the present to the future and/or past:

> It will fall -> **it is going to fall** -> it falls/is falling -> **it has fallen** -> it fell

The hypothesis this analysis presents is that for will acquisition to occur without overgeneralization it is first necessary to indicate how the conceptualization sequence of future is a unidirectional one from the present tense, to the progressive aspect, then going to and, finally, will.

The Sequence of Present Perfect Aspect

Non-native speakers often overgeneralize present perfect aspect for the past tense (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). As with *going to*, the initial point of conceptualization for the present perfect aspect begins with the present and extends unidirectionally from there. The sequence of perfect conceptualization then becomes: present tense, the resultative perfect, current relevance perfect, experiential perfect, durative perfect and, finally, past tense. Unfortunately, this metonymic sequential mapping process from schema to language is nowhere to be found in L2 instructional materials. In fact, although it is the last form to be conceptualized and acquired in L1, typical L2 materials start with the durative form (i.e. with *for* and *since*).

The Research Study

Most L2 language-learning materials sequence the future tense first with *will*, then *going to* and finally the present tense and progressive aspect uses. Likewise, present perfect aspect is often taught after the past tense beginning with the durative form using *for* and *since*, then experiential and current relevance forms, ending with the resultative (i.e. the main semantic construal). The effect of this form-to-meaning sequence based on morphological difficulty is that learners often significantly overgeneralize the most salient forms to be introduced (i.e. *will* with future tense and the durative or experiential perfect aspect for past tense).

A second hypothesis of this study, then, is that the reverse order will map conceptualization to grammaticalization processes (i.e. from within joint-attention or from meaning-to-form), thereby initiating constraint while reducing overgeneralization. In this study, the test group was taught future tense and present perfect aspect beginning with the semantics of the verbs and then the orders of the typical sequences of instruction were reversed (i.e. future tense: present tense, progressive, *going to* and *will*; present perfect aspect: resultative perfect, current relevance perfect, experiential perfect, durative perfect and past tense). A control group was also taught the same forms, but the sequences of instruction were not reversed.

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between the new sequence of instruction and overgeneralization?
2. Does the meaning-to-form sequence alter the sequence or rate of acquisition?
3. Can learners use present tense and progressive aspect for future use?

Research Hypotheses

1. Any reduction in overgeneralization is related to the sequence being based on conceptual rather than morphological factors.

2. Basing the revised sequence on metonymical grammaticalization processes aids in acquisition of forms.

The research framework was a quantified analysis of spoken data. To present, spoken data has not typically been quantified.

Method

Participants

The participants for this study were first-year Seigakuin University students from the fall semester of 2005. Seigakuin University is a small university in Saitama, Japan. The students were part of the Seigakuin English Program, which is a required course for first-year students. Classes met twice a week for one ninety-minute class. The test group came from the Child Studies department (i.e. child education) and the control group came from the Human Welfare department (i.e. social work). Classes were streamed into either A, B or C levels. Both groups came from B-level. Coming from B-level meant the participants had less exposure to the target language than the A-level and therefore less L1/L2 transfer should have previously taken place. Neither the present perfect aspect nor the future tense was part of the B-level syllabus, but students had probably encountered both in the previous six years of English education at junior and senior high school.

Though both classes participated in the pre/posttests and the treatment lessons, due to time constraints it was only possible to record five students from each group as they performed the spoken pre and posttests. Of the five students, three from each group completed all pre/posttests and treatments lessons.

Materials

The materials for the test group were specifically developed for this research to explicitly focus on the hypothesized conceptual sequences for present perfect aspect and *going to*. The materials were completed in one ninety-minute lesson. The materials used for the control group can be found in *Understanding and Using English Grammar* (*UUEG*, Schrampfer Azar, 1989), future tense (44--51), and present perfect aspect (28--35).

Assessment Materials

The assessment materials consisted of spoken pre/posttests for each form under investigation.

Procedure

In the first class, both groups of five students were recorded doing the future tense pretests. In the following class, the test group was administered the future tense treatment and the control group was taught from *UUEG*. In the class after that, participants were recorded doing the future tense posttest (i.e. the same test as the pretest).

In the following class, the same participants who attended were recorded as they did the present perfect aspect pretest. In the next class, the test group was administered the present perfect aspect treatment and the control group was taught using *UUEG*. In the final class, participants were recorded doing the present perfect aspect posttest. Therefore, the complete procedure required two sets of three classes or six classes in total.

Analysis

Analysis of the future tense spoken posttest required first transcribing the recorded data and then determining the degree to which participants chose will for future use in non-obligatory contexts. Each participant was shown a list of forty verbs, asked to choose any six, and to make future questions and responses using either present tense, progressive aspect, going to or will. The main measurement of analysis for this investigation was a paired-samples t-test of the means of both groups for the pre/posttest scores.

Future Results

The data indicate a significant reduction in the use of *will* in posttest for the test group, $t(35) = -3.37$, $p < .01$. Effect size: 0.75 (Cohen's d). Chart 1 shows the means of each of the two groups' posttest scores, indicating the use of *will* for future (the maximum is 6.0).

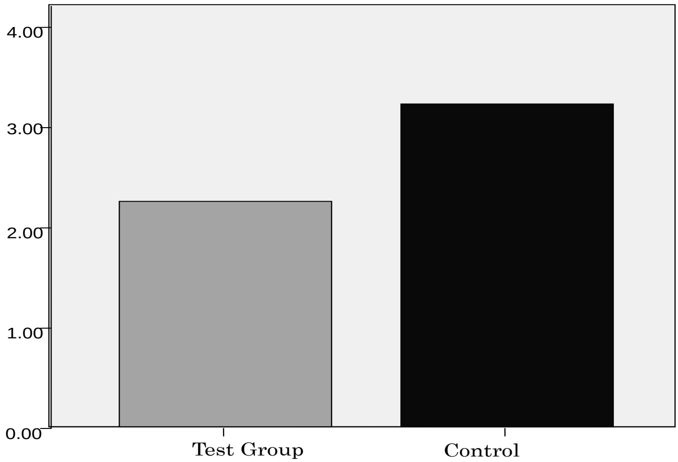

Chart 1: Means of the Test and Control Groups for *will* Use

The test group also showed significant increase in present tense and progressive aspect use for future tense. Chart 2 shows the results for each group according to whether they used present tense, progressive aspect, *going to*, or *will* to express future tense. The test group has a much more even distribution of use among the four choices, whereas the control group continues to rely heavily on, or overgeneralize, *will*.

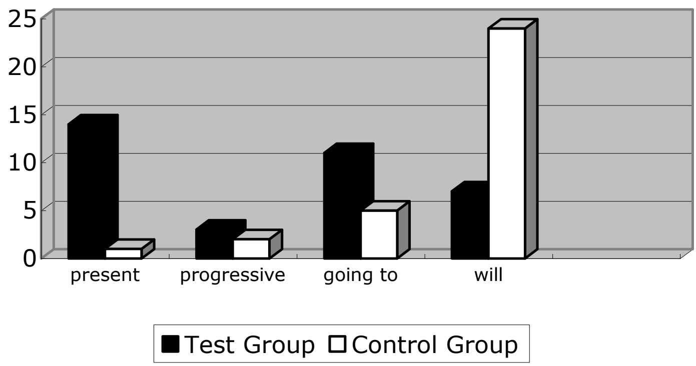

Chart 2: Test Group and Control Group Use of Future

Because the other forms of present tense were introduced prior to *will*, the test group chose to express future using the present tense and progressive aspect and significantly constrained their use of *will* for future tense. Their future tense production became more native speaker like. For example, this is an excerpt from transcripts for the control group (S = student):

S: *When will you study this weekend?*
S: *I will study this weekend.*
S: *He he will play basketball.*
S: *When will he play basketball?*
S: *When will you eat eat?*
S: *I will never eat.*
S: *Will you sleep now? No I won't. I will sleep in twenty minutes.*
S: *Look - it will sing.*
S: *I will sing.*
S: *What time will you swim? I will swim this evening*

And this is an excerpt from the test group:

S1: *When do you do you study?*
S1: *No I don't I study this weekend.*
S1: *He walk this afternoon.*
S1: *When does he walk?*
S1: *Do you play soccer now? Oh No I don't I play soccer in twenty minutes.*
S2: *Look - it…it is going to build a house.*
S2: *When is it going to have a uh going to build a house?*
S3: *What time does he eat a pizza?*
S3: *He eats he eats a pizza this evening.*

Perhaps the finding of most interest was that the use of present tense and progressive aspect for future is similar to interlanguage forms, for example, *I run tomorrow*. This is another indication that present tense and progressive aspect use for future more closely resembles the conceptualization-grammaticalization processes.

Present Perfect Results

Analysis of the present perfect spoken pre/posttest data involved asking an initial question that had an obligatory present perfect aspect response and then determining whether the participant replied to an obligatory past tense response follow-up question with either the past tense or present perfect aspect. The extent to which respondents overgeneralized present perfect aspect use in the obligatory past tense follow-up response was calculated. For example, the initial question may have been, Have you graduated high school? To which the respondent would reply, Yes, I have. The follow-up question then had an obligatory past tense response, When did you graduate? If the respondent replied with something like I have graduated last year then it was counted as overgeneralization.

Results again clearly indicate a significant reduction in the overgeneralization of present perfect aspect use, $t(26) = -2.75$, p. < .05. Posttest Effect Size: 1.34 (Cohen's d). Chart 3 depicts the means of the pre/posttests scores for the test and control groups.

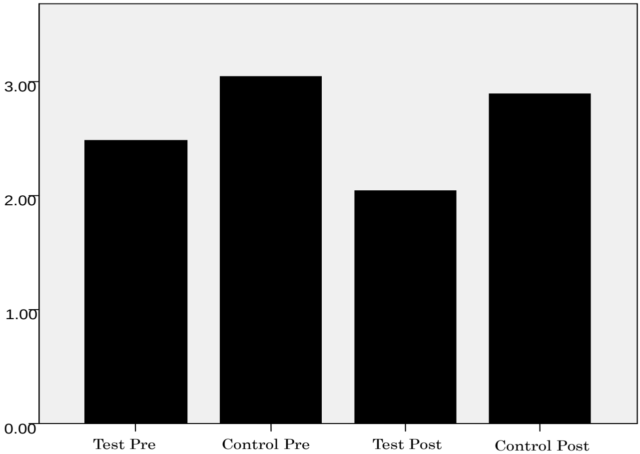

Chart 3: Means (total 6.0) of the Pre/Posttests Scores for the Test and Control Groups

Chart 4 further delineates present perfect aspect use between correct usage, incorrect usage and overgeneralization. The control group actually saw increases in overgeneralization and decreases in correct usage.

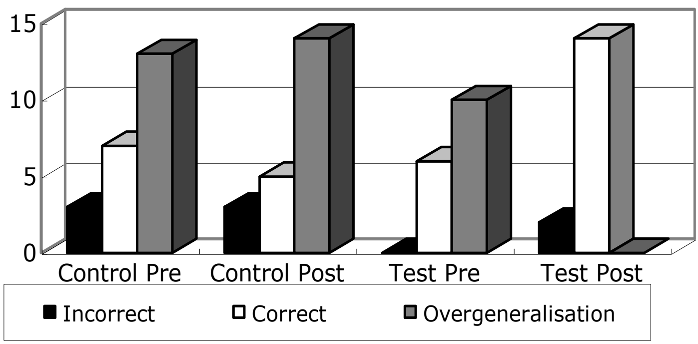

Chart 4: Incorrect Usage, Correct Usage and Overgeneralisation

The test group, on the other hand, saw significant improvement in correct usage as well as a complete elimination of overgeneralization of the form. By introducing the present perfect aspect prior to the past tense, learners' hypothesis testing of input was altered to initiate correct distributional analysis to constrain rather than overgeneralize perfect aspect's use. This is an excerpt from the control group posttest (T = teacher):

T: *Have you ever been to Tokyo Disneyland?*
S: *Yes I have.*
T: *When did you go?*
S: *I have I have been been to Tokyo Disneyland since two months ago.*
T: *Number two. Have you ever been in love?*
S: *Eh?*
T: *Have you ever been in love?*
S: *Yes I have.*
T: *When were you in love?*
S: *I have ever been in love four months ago.*

This is an excerpt from the test group:

T: *Have you been to Tokyo Disneyland?*
S: *Yes yes I have.*
T: *When did you go?*
S: *Oh I I have gone uh I went I went to Tokyo Disneyland October 31st.*
T: *Okay. And have you ever been in love?*
S: *Yes, I have.*
T: *When were you in love?*
S: *When I was umm when I was a junior high school student.*

Overgeneralization of forms also indicates of a lack of intersubjective development between participants. Sequencing instruction on conceptualization processes seems to assist in the orientation of participants' spatiotemporal joint-attention frames. The relationship between intersubjectivity and accuracy of use was not the focus of this study; however, the evidence of development of an intersubjective perspective between participants suggests that much of language develops co-constructively through dialogue.

Discussion

The results indicate that reversing the orders of instruction significantly reduced overgeneralization of both forms. This result suggests that morphological difficulty and conceptual difficulty are not equivalent. Past tense is not as morphologically difficult as present perfect aspect but introducing it in instruction prior to present perfect aspect may lead to the overgeneralization of present perfect for the past tense form. Thus, it is not morphological difficulty but lack of morphological saliency for the underlying cognitive schema that impedes development. Overgeneralization is also the result of an incorrect sequence of instruction or input. A sequence based on conceptual factors allows learners to use distributional analysis to initiate analogical or metonymical processes to constrain, rather than overgeneralize, forms. Learners also did not appear to have any interference problems with using the present tense and progressive aspect for future.

It appears that overgeneralization of perfect aspect is related to a lack of an understanding that lexical aspect (i.e. resultative) is its prototypical form as well as an inverted relationship between grammatical aspect, temporal adverbials and the past tense. This may also be related to the fact that Japanese is an agglutinative language whereas English is more analogical. However, because L2 learners do not have a clear conception of the resultative schema and the verbs it mainly occurs with, they are unaware it should be used with present perfect aspect and not the past tense. Then, because of the saliency of the experiential and durative perfects, each form is overgeneralized for past tense. Finally, because perfect aspect emerges prior to tense in L1 development as well as in the grammaticalization of languages (Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994), it merits introduction in instruction prior to the past tense.

Perhaps the reason results were significant was because basing the sequence on conceptual factors made it possible to define a separate perfect aspectual domain between the present and past tense. In this way, learners were able to metonymically link the schema to the present perfect morphology and constrain its use. If this was done with *going to*, it might meet with the same success; unfortunately, rather than as its own domain, presently *going to* is taught only in contrast to the other future form *will*. The remainder of this discussion involves a corpus analysis of tense-aspect in the British National Corpus (BNC; Aston and Burnard 1998).

Corpus Analysis of *Going to* and Perfect

A final hypothesis was deduced from the results of this study: if *going to* occurs with certain verbs and *will* occurs with other verbs then the inherent semantics of each might be further disambiguated. To follow up on this research-based hypothesis (i.e. from the classroom to the corpus), the BNC was analyzed for occurrences of *going to* and *will* as well as *have* with a participle (i.e. present perfect aspect). Of the top-twenty verbs, all three forms had six verbs in common: *make*, *see*, *come*, *take*, *find* and *give*.

Verbs Occurring in the Same Pairs of Forms

have/going to	going to/will	have/will
make	make	make
see	see	see
come	come	come
take	take	take
find	find	find
give	give	give
*say	*look	
*use	*need	
*put		
*change		
*tell		

Of note, however, *have/going to* have three more collocations in common than *will/going to*. Also, all of the *have/will* matches are shared by both *have/going to* and *will/going to*. This suggests that the *have* + *participle* and *going to* constructions have significantly more in common semantically (i.e. aspect) than *will* and *going to* (i.e. tense). Because of irregular past tense forms, it was not possible to analyze the top-twenty past tense verbs.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitations of the present study were the small number of participants and the brevity of the treatment. Additionally, it was not possible to observe a significant distinction between use of *will* and *going to*. This study also stopped short of studying the overgeneralization of the durative present perfect aspect form. Had it done so, perhaps similar patterns of overgeneralization and constraint would have been observed.

Further Research

Looking at the larger picture, the main area for further research is with metonymy and the role it plays in language development. Future research should attempt to determine whether tasks which involve learners with comprehending and producing metonymies leads to improved accuracy with grammar.

Within the context of the results of this study, further research is needed into the instruction of past participle and past tense morphology. For example, there are three possible past participles, i.e. -*ed*, -*en*, and the irregular past tense, and the differences between them and the verbs each occurs with needs to be further disambiguated. At present PT does not make a distinction between the different participles.

Conclusion

Whether the actual sequence and rate of development are alterable or not has yet to be determined. Although this study's results are only initial findings, they have shown that the sequence and rate are not necessarily set by morphological difficulty alone. Preliminary steps were taken in this study to investigate how sociocognitive factors (e.g. conceptualization and schematization in coordination with joint-attention frames) interact with tense-aspect development in the L2 to exhibit accurate use of morphology. A sociocognitive approach uses conceptual sequences to initiate analogical reasoning processes that construct and constrain the paradigmatic, syntagmatic and schematic categories of language.

At least within the small scope of this study, results indicate that grammar teaching is at present not being carried as this research suggests it develops in the learner. The reason present grammar teaching sequences are not in synch with the learner may be because of the current first-generation cognitive revolution domination in approaches to L2 grammar instruction that separate the cognitive elements of language from the social (cf. Chomsky, 1965; Bresnan and Kaplan, 1982). To rectify this, a sociocognitive approach to L2 language development also calls for a paradigm shift to second-generation cognitive and construction grammars which readily acknowledge that they need a firm sociocultural basis (Langacker, 1987; Croft, 2001).

In conclusion, L2 instruction sequences can benefit from becoming more in accord with psycholinguistic processes. Our understanding of the tense-aspect system is conceptually based and it has developed and been co-constructed through discourse. Finally, in contrast to PT, learning development is now commonly understood as being a non-linear process and it is based on the premise that the sequences and rates of development are alterable through the assistance of more highly developed peers.

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9 The uses of grammar: a corpus based investigation of the term 'grammatical' in the British Press

Richard Badger and Malcolm MacDonald

Introduction

Many academic linguists have commented on the problematic nature of public discourses about language (Bauer and Trudgill, 1998; Cameron, 1995; Cameron, 1997; Johnson, 2001; Milroy, 1997; Milroy, 2001). The discussions often focus on the print media because 'the influence of the Press, particularly the written Press, on language is well-known' (Ager, 2003: 87).

These comments are typically negative. For example Cameron reports that in 1995: 'the media were full of nonsensical assertions and ridiculous arguments about various aspects of language, from grammar in the national curriculum to the perils of 'political correctness' (Cameron, 1997: 163). Similarly, Rickford, a participant in the Ebonics debate, says:

> One of the lessons that struck me early on is the extent to which the media really do 'manufacture consent' (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) serving to promote mainstream 'facts' and interpretations, and to prevent dissenting information and viewpoints from reaching the public. (Rickford, 1999: 270)

One of the 'dissenting' voices here is that of (applied) linguists. The standard view from the linguistic community is uncompromising: 'If you want to know how language works you should ask a linguist and not someone who has used language successfully in the past' (Bauer and Trudgill 1998: xvi).

Indeed within the linguistic community there is fairly widespread disapproval of judgments about language made by anyone who is not a linguist. What should happen is that linguists produce objective descriptions which are then applied in discussion about language. Contributions from 'journalists, editors, poets and psychologists' (Bauer and Trudgill, 1998: xv--xvi) are unwelcome. Pinker, incidentally not recognized as a linguist by Bauer and Trudgill (1998), in the same vein, talks of 'an informal network of copy-editors, dictionary usage panellists, style manual and handbook writers, English teachers, essayists, columnists, and pundits' (Pinker, 1994: 372).

One factor underlying linguists’ concerns is the recognition of their authority. However, there are also epistemological issues in question, particularly the view that discourses about language must be descriptive rather than prescriptive. Condemnation of prescriptive discourse by the linguistic community is widespread. Fabb describes such practices as cultural debris (1994: 117) and Milroy says they are based on a myth (1998: 96). ‘Professional, scientific linguistics in the late twentieth century has nearly uniformly, and sometimes rather smugly, rejected prescriptivism’ (Woolard, 1998: 26).

However, the distinction is not unproblematic, at least for some linguists. So Cameron says: ‘One cannot in principle make an absolute distinction between describing and prescribing’ (1995: 49).

Indeed, many applied linguists have been involved in the development of standard languages, a process which would appear to be in part a form of prescriptivism, such as the work on Malay (Haji Omar, 1975), and genre approaches to writing in a second language (e.g. Hyland, 2002; e.g. Hyland, 2003; Martin and Rothery, 1986) are only one of many ideas in educational linguistics which has a prescriptive element. More broadly, one authoritative grammar (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan, 1999) sets out to describe ‘the linguistic patterns actually used by speakers and writers in the late twentieth century’ (1999: 4).

Nevertheless, the description which resulted from this will be used by at least some readers as a way of identifying prescriptive rules of use. In fact the focus on descriptions produced by linguists and then applied to evaluate the way language is used can be seen as an instance of linguistics applied in contrast with the applied linguistics view that it is less important to move to the ideal world where prescription has been eliminated than to examine the practices related to prescription. So Cameron uses the prescriptive/descriptive distinction as a way of ensuring that discourses about language ‘can be made more accountable to knowledge and to reason’ (1997: 165) whether in terms of the accuracy of what is being described or in examining why some groups are able to evaluate the language used by other groups. Explicitly prescriptive or purist ideologies of grammar often have ‘consequences for individual’ (Wardhaugh, 1993: 6) and ‘have damaging social and material consequences for numerous groups of individuals’ (Johnson, 2001: 600).

These judgments can serve as ways of discriminating against disadvantaged sections of society (Holborow, 1999; Milroy, 1999) and ethnic groupings, as seemed to happen in the Ebonics debate (Collins, 1999; Rickford, 1999; Ronkin and Karn, 1999).

We can identify two broad strands in investigations by linguistics of discourses about language produced non-linguists. Firstly there are investigations of particular kinds of putative authorities. So the authors of handbooks on English language were found to hang their prescriptions on 'the flimsy mantle of tradition' (Connatser, 2004: 264). Similarly Lee's (2006: 80) use of a corpus to evaluate the descriptions of grammar in English teaching books used in Hong Kong is a recent example of the many, largely negative, evaluations of grammar discourses in educational contexts.

Secondly we find issue based investigations of the media's discourse related to issues such as the role of grammar in the UK national curriculum (Bloor and Bourne, 1989; Cameron, 1995; Cameron and Bourne, 1988; Poulson, Radnor and Turner-Bisset, 1996) or the Ebonics debate in the USA (Collins, 1999; Heller, 1999; Rickford, 1999; Ronkin and Karn, 1999). This work provides insights into the way debates on these topics are constructed but examining what happens in the heat of the argument may not provide a complete picture of how the press treats grammar when it is not the focus of public concern. Here we adopt the complementary approach of examining the practices of the written media over a period of time to address the following questions:

1. What is the balance between descriptive and explicitly prescriptive uses of the term 'grammatical' in the print media?
2. Who makes the judgment that something is grammatical?
3. Whose grammar is being examined or judged?

Data collection

The data set for the study comprised a corpus of all articles containing the word 'grammatical' from the UK press over a period of about a year between 5 May 2004 and 4 June 2005 from the LexisNexis Executive Database (2006). In total there were five hundred articles containing approximately 360,000 words.

The term 'grammatical' was chosen as most likely to provide information addressing the research questions and also because, in the UK print media, the term 'grammar' is frequently used to describe a kind of school rather than as an aspect of language. The term ungrammatical was also rejected because it is rare, only appearing fifty times in the same period.

This data set covers the following categories of papers:

- quality e.g. *Guardian,*
- mid-market papers e.g. *Mail*
- popular e.g. *Sun,*
- local papers, e.g. *Western Mail*
- weekly journals e.g. *New Scientist*

These categories are taken from the LexisNexis database (2006). The term quality is preferred to broadsheet because of recent changes in the format of the newspapers in this category.

Data Analysis and Findings

This section addresses each research question in turn.

What is the balance between descriptive and explicitly prescriptive uses of the term grammatical in the UK print media?

The first kind of analysis was to identify explicitly prescriptive uses of 'grammatical' where the language used by an individual or group was explicitly condemned.

> In a separate letter, he wrote to Hackney's head of planning, Sue Foster, to complain about spelling and **grammatical** errors in the council's original letter (*Building Design* 6 May 2005) [our bold].

This produced a complementary category of descriptive uses where there was no explicit attempt to pass judgments.

> One is also astonished at how inept many ancient writing systems were at representing the spoken language. Just think of Linear B, used to write an archaic Greek, which spelt anthropos as 'a-to-ro-po' and spermon as 'pe-mo'. Or think of the earliest Sumerian texts, which, it seems, left out all the **grammatical** inflections - or do they represent another, earlier, unknown language? (*The Times Higher Education Supplement* 18 June 2004) [our bold].

There were also some uses where it was not possible to determine whether the use was prescriptive or descriptive, generally because examples of the language described as grammatical were not provided.

> In fairness to the duo, who fire **grammatical** bullets with the fluency of a fairground rifle, the recent victories over Estonia and Trinidad were achieved against poor opposition (*Sunday Mirror* 6 June 2005) [our bold].

The first instance of grammatical in all the articles in the corpus was classified as either prescriptive or descriptive by the researchers and a sample of fifty articles was independently coded by a colleague. The two sets of coding of the sample were the same in 96% of instances. In about two thirds of instances, 'grammatical' was used prescriptively.

Grammatical discourse	Frequency	%
Prescriptive	323	64.60
Descriptive	170	34.00
Undetermined	7	1.40
Total	**500**	**100**

Percentages are given to two decimal places.

Table 1: Prescriptive and descriptive uses of 'grammatical'

The way the term 'grammatical' is used is also indicated by the nouns to which it is linked. Table 2 gives the relative frequency of all overtly prescriptive and descriptive nouns used with 'grammatical' ten or more times. Prescriptive modifiers were four times as common as descriptive modifiers. The prescriptive 'error' accounted for a quarter overall of all instances but nouns that are not necessarily evaluative such as, 'English', 'term', 'structure' and 'construction' were relatively common.

This analysis confirms that overtly prescriptive discourses are much more frequent but that there are significant numbers of uses more consistent with descriptive ideologies. The high frequency of 'error' suggests that for some writers and readers grammar and error are very closely related concepts.

Prescriptive		Descriptive	
error	126	English	21
standards	25	term	12
rigour	24	construction	10
mistake	18	sense	10

In this table singular and plural forms of a noun are grouped together.

Table 2: Nouns modified by 'grammatical' ten or more times

Publications

The print media is not monolithic and there is considerable variation between different publications. Table three gives the number of publications that used 'grammatical' ten or more times in the period surveyed. These publications account for 280 or 56% occurrences of 'grammatical' in the corpus.

Publication	Prescriptive	Descriptive	Undetermined	Total
TES	14	40	2	56
Times	24	25	0	49
Guardian	21	22	0	43
Independent	29	6	0	35
Telegraph	22	5	0	27
Daily Post	23	1	0	24
Mail	14	2	1	17
Evening Standard	14	2	0	16
Express	8	5	0	13

TES=Times Educational supplement

Table 3: Publications using 'grammatical' more than ten times

Table three is dominated by the more serious daily newspapers, the *Times,* the *Guardian* etc. However the *Times Educational Supplement* (TES) is the most frequent user of 'grammatical'. This is particularly striking as this is a weekly publication but the figure is also a reflection of a regular feature called 'A Writer's Workshop'. This series of articles accounts for fifteen instances of 'grammatical' but even omitting this TES would have the second highest number of mentions in the corpus.

A second surprising feature is the appearance of the *Daily Post,* a local Liverpool publication. This is accounted for a regular feature in the *Daily Post* of advice to those seeking jobs. The following sentence appeared eighteen times in the data from the *Daily Post* in the corpus.

> Ask someone to check for spelling and grammatical errors.

While these special features help us to understand the relatively high frequency of uses of 'grammatical' in these publications, they are also indicative of the views of their editorial staff about the importance of different kinds of discourse about grammar.

The analysis of 'grammatical' in individual papers raised some issues related to the differences between daily and weekly publications. It is likely that daily publications play a more significant role in the public discourses related to grammar than weekly publications simply because they are more frequent. However, we can also use the data as an indication of the relative importance of grammar discourses to those publications. To compare the frequency that 'grammatical' appears per issue we would need to divide the figures for the daily papers by six. On this basis the *TES* is by far the publication most interested in grammar and, in general terms, grammar is as much as issue for papers such as the Guardian as for weekly publications such as the *Spectator* and the *Sunday Times*. However, the interest in grammar is minimal of the *Mail* and almost non-existent in the *Sun*.

Publication	**Prescriptive**	**Descriptive**	**?**	**Total**
TES	14.00	40.00	12.00	56.00
Sunday Times	5.00	4.00	0.00	9.00
Times	4.17	4.00	0.00	8.17
New Scientist	1.00	7.00	0.00	8.00
New Statesman	4.00	4.00	0.00	8.00
THES	2.00	6.00	0.00	8.00
Guardian	3.67	3.50	0.00	7.17
Observer	5.00	2.00	0.00	7.00
Independent on Sunday	2.00	3.00	1.00	6.00
Spectator	4.00	2.00	0.00	6.00

Figures are given per issue. ?=undetermined; TES=Times Educational Supplement; THES=Times Higher Educational Supplement.

Table 4: The ten publications using 'grammatical' most per issue

There were also differences between categories of publication use 'grammatical' differently. See table four. The quality press, which for these purposes at least includes the *Scotsman*, the *Herald* and the *Yorkshire Post* are more concerned with language than middle market papers such as the *Mail* and the *Express* and even more so than popular newspapers such as the Sun and the *Star*.

Most categories of publication favour prescriptive over descriptive uses of 'grammatical'. The exception is weekly publications where descriptive uses are more common. A major part of this is the way 'grammatical' is used in the *TES*. However, even if the *TES* is excluded descriptive uses are slightly more common. Both the *New Scientist* and the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* generally use 'grammatical' descriptively.

There is a difference between the quality, middle-market and popular press with the mid-market and popular papers engaging relatively more often in prescriptive discourse. However the quality press also uses 'grammatical' more prescriptively than descriptively. This preference is more clearly marked in the Sunday mid-market press where all instances are of prescriptive uses. Local papers mirrored the popular press. Overall the findings suggest that the more references a publication makes to grammar the more likely it is to adopt a descriptive rather than prescriptive discourse.

The use of 'grammatical' varies according to the section of the paper. The LexisNexis database (2006) identifies three sections: features; hard news; and sport news. In addition I have separated out from the features category leaders, obituaries, letters from readers and reviews because it seemed likely that they would display different patterns of use.

The results of the analysis are presented in table five. 'Grammatical' is particularly common in features, letters and reviews. In terms of the breakdown between prescriptive and descriptive ideologies, many of the figures reveal a split of roughly two thirds to one third in favour of prescriptive uses of 'grammatical'in line with the overall findings. There are some interesting variations with readers' letters, hard news and the small number of obituaries having about three quarters of instances of prescriptive uses and reviews making more use of the descriptive discourse. The particularly high figure for reviews is partly a result of the number of reviews of books either intended as course books for the teaching of languages or books on linguistics. There are also many instances where the grammar of authors is criticized, or less commonly, singled out for praise.

> However, the book is riddled with irritating misspellings and some basic grammatical mistakes; the result of lazy proof reading (*Screen Finance* 16 June 2004).

Publication	**n**	**P**	**D**	**?**	**Total**
Quality	8	130	68	0	198
%		65.66	34.34	0.00	100.00
Mid-market	2	25	7	1	33
%		75.76	21.21	3.03	100.00
Popular	3	11	0	1	12
%		91.67	0.00	8.33	100.00
Local	42	94	14	2	110
%		85.45	12.73	1.82	100.00
Weekly	21	42	69	2	113
%		37.17	61.06	1.77	100.00
Sunday Quality	5	15	12	1	28
%		53.57	42.86	3.57	100.00
Sunday mid-market	2	6	0	0	6
%		100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00

N= number of publications; P=prescriptive; D=descriptive; ?=undetermined; n= number of publications in each category. Percentages are given to two decimal points.
There were no instances of 'grammatical' in popular Sunday papers. Percentages are given to two decimal places.

Table 5: 'Grammatical' in categories of publication

Who makes the judgment that something is grammatical?

Our discussion thus far has assumed that the judgments about 'grammatical' are made by the publications. However, in particular articles these judgments are, initially at least, made by the journalists who write the articles and these journalists have the option of reporting the judgment as being made by someone else so the next analysis examined who was reported as making the judgments. Journalists are treated as making the judgment unless someone else is cited. In the following example about Arsene Wenger, the judgment is based on the journalist's own view of what counts as grammatical.

> Wenger appeared, sat on a dais before us, and answered all questions,

> fluently and intelligently. He made only one grammatical mistake, one all Brits make, when he said Arsenal has 'less tall men' (*New Statesman* 22 November 2004).

The next example is different.

> Just days later, the inspectorate was at it again, apologising for publishing a report on Broadmead nursery and infants in Croydon, south London, that was full of grammatical errors (*TES* 4 February 2005).

Here, the Inspectorate, OFSTED, is treated as the source (and target) of the grammaticality judgment. Table six provides the results of this analysis. It includes three general categories, individual, for named individuals, generic, for groups such as teachers, and institutional, for organizations such as universities. The general categories are used where the individual, group or institution appears fewer than five times in the corpus.

Section	**Pres**	**Des**	**?**	**Total**
feature	155	87	2	244
%	63.52	35.66	0.82	100.00
leader	5	3	0	8
%	62.50	37.50	0.00	100.00
letter	32	11	0	43
%	74.42	25.58	0.00	100.00
hard news	98	30	4	132
%	74.24	18.07	2.94	100.00
obituary	3	1	0	4
%	75.00	20.00	0.00	100.00
review	25	35	0	60
%	41.67	58.33	0.00	100.00
sport	5	3	1	9
%	55.55	33.33	11.11	100.00
Total	323	170	7	500
%	64.60	34.00	1.40	100

Pres=prescriptive; des=Descriptive; ? =undetermined.
Percentages are given to two decimal places.

Table 6: Uses of 'grammatical' in different sections of publications

The judgment is, despite Bauer & Trudgill's (1998: xvi) recommendation to appeal to linguists, most often made by the journalist themselves. This probably reflects a fairly widespread view that grammaticality judgments can be made by any competent user of a language and that no further warrant is required to support the argument. A similar rationale may account for the fact that newspaper readers are allowed to make judgements about grammaticality.

If writers are not relying on their own views or those of their readers, they turn not to linguists but to the educational establishment, exam boards and teachers. However, the most commonly named individual is the linguist, Richard Hudson. Against this it must be noted that all but one of these instances come from the 'Writer's Workshop' series of articles in the *TES*. The relatively high number of times that Alan Green appears relates to his representation of something said by Eric Djemba-Djemba and later criticized by Ofcom, the Broadcasting watchdog. The criticism of his grammaticality judgment or the alleged racism underlying it was newsworthy enough to appear at least once in most daily and Sunday papers. The next most commonly named judge is John Lister, of the plain English campaign. Linguists also do not appear as a generic grouping. Journalists do not naturally turn to linguists for their opinions on grammar.

Whose grammar is being examined or judged?

Table seven lists the groups whose language is typically being judged within the 322 examples of prescriptive discourse in the corpus. Named individuals who appear fewer than five times are grouped to give some sense of which groups are most often being judged. There were some ambiguities with the categorizations with some people falling into two categories. The four instances where David Beckham's language is judged ungrammatical count towards the category of sport but could have been classified under the less common (nine instances) heading of celebrity or possibly class. There are fifteen articles mentioning Eric Djemba-Djemba, a Cameroonian footballer, in the corpus and these are classified under the heading of sport. There is a racial element here, albeit one that the papers condemn. Such examples could have been treated them with the six instances under the heading of ethnic identify. This would have placed ethnic identity in sixth place, after education.

Source of grammaticality judgment	**P**	**D**	**?**	**Total**	**%**
Authors	5	1	0	6	1.20
John Lister	6	0	0	6	1.20
Institution	4	3	0	7	1.40
Teachers	2	5	0	7	1.40
Exam boards	6	3	0	9	1.80
Ofcom	15	0	0	15	3.00
Richard Hudson, Geoff Barnton	0	15	0	15	3.00
Named Individuals	11	12	1	24	4.80
Generic	25	15	1	41	8.20
Newspaper readers	37	11	0	48	9.60
Journalists	212	105	5	322	64.40
	323	170	7	500	100.00

Percentages are given to 2 decimal places. P=prescriptive; D=descriptive; ? =unclassified

Table 7: Who makes the judgment about grammaticality

Job seekers appear at the top of the list but differ from most of the other groups in the table in that generally the press is offering them rather unspecific advice about how best to apply for a vacancy rather than evaluating what they have already written.

> A spelling error or grammatical mistake will get your CV binned (*The Times* 4 November 2004).

The judgment of the other groups in the list is based on what they have written. For authors, grammaticality is generally used to make a comment about the language used.

> The novel is marred by occasional hanging clauses, by modern grammatical errors such as 'I was stood' and 'bored of' and by modern anachronisms such as 'novitiate' for 'novice'(*The Times* 19 Feb 2005).

More frequently the lack of instances of what is being described as grammatical suggests that the term is being used to indicate some unspecific concern about language.

> Truss's passionate bestseller itself teemed with solecisms and grammatical infelicities (*The Guardian* 29 Dec 2004).

With politicians one might expect that grammaticality would be used as a way of indicating disapproval on other grounds. However the evidence for this is not strong. The Independent's criticism of Tony Blair's use of 'I' as the complement of a preposition does not seem to have any immediate political implication though it might be part of a broader campaign against him.

> The PM committed a horrible grammatical gaffe in his internet diary. 'We've posted some footage of Gordon and I talking...' Gordon and me, please (*The Independent* 19 April 2005).

The two instances where Tony Blair's language is condemned come from *the Independent* and *Guardian*, not natural critics of the Labour Party, though equally not great supporters of many of Tony Blair's policies. The language of the then leader of the opposition Conservative Party, Michael Howard, is three times contrasted positively with that of the Labour party. For example

> Labour's new slogan 'Britain forward not back' is said to have come from The Simpsons' TV series, featuring Bill Clinton. However, campaign masterminds may also have plagiarised the Tories. A very similar catchphrase was coined by Michael Howard when he announced his bid for the party leadership, entitled 'we must look forward, not back', in October 2003 at the Saatchi Gallery. At least it was grammatical (*Evening Standard* 7 Feb 2005).

When journalists describe the language of other journalists as ungrammatical it is generally presented as a technical failure.

> But, as for the grammatical error of switching the Light Brigade's number from singular to plural, that would not get past our revise sub today. We are pleased to make this correction (*The Times* 23 Oct 2004).

The tone is less collegial when the judgment is made by a reader.

> What a pity the writer of your leading article 'Schools still fail to understand why reading matters' (15 December) wasn't taught the correct running order and placement of adverbs and adjectives. If he or she had been, The Independent wouldn't have committed to print such a

> gross grammatical anomaly as 'Many of them are not well trained enough in teaching' (*The Independent* 18 December 2004).

In an educational context grammaticality is often used as a technical term.

> Language teaching does not start early enough, and where languages are taught, often the teaching concentrates far too much on grammar and an insistence on grammatical perfection that stifles development and undermines confidence (*Yorkshire Post* 6 October 2004).

But it is also as an indication of something more generally being wrong with the way things are.

> Markers for the OCR examining board this summer were given explicit instructions to ignore grammatical shortcomings and concentrate only on 'the ideas expressed' (*Daily Mail* 25 November).

This is the standard use under the heading of sport.

> Nothing depressed me quite as much as the text message the England captain apparently sent to a mystery woman: 'Have a safe flight baby and I really wish we was in your bed now.' How much more refreshing, I thought, if Mr Justice Langley (or Julian, as perhaps his cleaning lady calls him and let's hope he's nice to her) had decreed that it was in the public interest to know that the world's most famous footballer, who by all accounts earns about a million pounds a minute just for breathing, is incapable of forming a grammatical sentence (*The Telegraph* 30 April 2005).

The language here is often robust.

> In the annals of stupid, Hal Sutton has broken new ground. You could say 'stupidity', but that would be grammatical. He can take his'n and lose to your'n or take your'n and lose to his'n (*The Times* 20 Sept 2004).

With these instances it is hard not to see grammaticality being used as a way of commenting on class origins. In addition, there are also instances of sophisticated uses of grammatical analysis.

> In a similar vein, it is impossible to ignore the deeper nuances of the grammatical habits of a man who wraps his modest achievements in the first person singular, yet who lapses into the plural when shortcomings are under discussion. Credit, it would seem, is something he is happy to take for himself; blame, however, is clearly something he thinks should be shared around (*Sunday Herald* 20 Feb 2005).

The instance where ethnicity is an issue mentioned above is exemplified in the following report.

> Media watchdog Ofcom criticised the comment made by Alan Green during an Arsenal vs. Manchester United game in March. He was commentating for BBC Radio Five Live when United's Cameroon international midfielder Eric Djemba-Djemba was seen remonstrating with the referee. Green suggested to listeners the player was saying 'me no cheat'. The BBC admitted the comment was ' ill judged' but said it was made in the heat of a live broadcast and was meant as irreverent banter. Ofcom, which received a complaint, said the incident broke its code on standards. 'We considered that the suggestion that a black player was incapable of speaking grammatical English was inappropriate, particularly given the drive to eradicate racist attitudes in football.' The BBC said Green had a well-known track record of campaigning against racism (*Daily Mail* October 2004).

While this is presented as a report of a condemnation of racist comments the paper takes the opportunity to repeat the racist comment, a practice adopted by several other papers.

What is being described as (un)grammatical?

The dangers of commenting on other people's language are recognized by journalists.

> An irrevocable tenet of Sod's Law is that anybody pompous enough to pontificate on the declining standards of English usage will commit a glaring grammatical or spelling gaffe that will utterly destroy his credibility and thus fatally undermine the entire argument (*Coventry Evening Telegraph* 17 June 2004).

This may go someway to explaining the fact that judgments about grammaticality are generally not accompanied by an example which would enable readers to challenge the judgment. Only 46% of instances of 'grammatical' were accompanies by examples, though this rises, slightly, to 49% for prescriptive uses of 'grammatical'.

The examples, when provided, were also interesting. Many reflect common concerns of prescriptive grammarians, such as the use of singular nouns with plural verbs, or the misuse of pronouns.

> The sort of logic which will never get he or any of his countrymen a job as a stand-up comedian in Dublin (*Belfast News* Letter 7 April 2005).

However, what is or is not grammatical is interpreted quite broadly. It includes punctuation.

> Why cant a more suitable site be found (*Liverpool Daily* Post 14 June 2004).

It is also used to criticize text and e-mail language.

> That's wot ur askin me (*The Express* 29 May 2004).

Pronunciation, or the written representation of pronunciation, is also treated as a part of grammar so John Prescott's grammatical shortcomings are illustrated by a missing 'h'.

> The Opposition's Euro policy was like going to McDonald's and asking for lobster thermidor. 'It would be nice to 'ave it but it's not on the menu,' cried Two Jags. Everyone roared (*Daily Mail* 10 June 2004).

As mentioned above slogans such as 'Britain forward not back' are also criticized for being ungrammatical. There is also one report where the insertion of an extra word is treated a being a question of grammar.

> An alcoholic who flouted a ban on drinking has escaped punishment because of a grammatical error implying he should always be drunk. Stephen Winstone, 38, from Aberporth, was made the subject of an anti-social behaviour order after a series of drunk and disorderly convictions in Pembrokeshire. He was again in court this week - but could not be charged with breaching the Asbo and jailed. Officials had written that

> Winstone was prohibited from NOT being drunk in a public place (*Western Mail* 24 March 2005).

All these examples suggest that for much of the print media, grammar can be used in ways that are similar to its use in linguistics but that it also serves as a more general term that can be used to describe most non-specific concerns about language.

Conclusion

Overtly prescriptive uses are represented twice as frequently as descriptive ideologies but in several of the quality papers, such as The Guardian and The Times, and even more for some weeklies, e.g. The TES and The New Scientist, descriptive views are equally, or even more, common than their prescriptive counterparts. There was also a tendency for prescriptive uses to be more common in the news sections and descriptive in reviews. Letters from readers were predominantly prescriptive.

Journalists rely largely on their own judgment when it comes to writing about grammar, though they also draw on insights from their readers. Linguists do not feature very much except in a special series of articles by Richard Hudson and Geoff Barnton, which suggests the most effective strategy for linguistics to get their message across is to write their own articles for publication.

There is little evidence in the corpus to suggest that grammar is regularly being used as a way of disguising discourse about class or ethnicity. There are instances where the language of people with working class origins, such as John Prescott and David Beckham, is negatively evaluated and so grammar is clearly still a resource available to journalists who wish to comment on such matters in a politically acceptable manner.

Finally, it is not always clear what the press media mean by grammar. Most instances of comments on grammar are not accompanied by examples of what is being described and this may reflect a lack of confidence by journalists in their own knowledge of what they term grammar.

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10 Voices of Youth and Discourses of Multilingualism and Citizenship

J. Byrd Clark

Introduction

What does it mean to be a multilingual and multicultural Canadian? This article explores the discourse of multilingualism and citizenship through the voices of four self-identified multi-generational Italian Canadian youth, Monica, Maverick, Grace and Anna Maria (all pseudonyms), participating in a pre-service university French course (designed for students who wish to become teachers of French) in Toronto, Canada. I use the term discourse here to represent language practices and social practices that individuals use to make sense of their actions or their social realities by expressing positions and representations (see Fairclough, 1995; Labrie, 2002), in other words, how individuals use their linguistic resources or different elements of a linguistic repertoire, in relation to societal norms through different interactions and contexts. It is through Monica, Maverick, Anna Maria and Grace's discourse that we can see the interplay and impact of language practices, ideologies, and identity (re)construction and negotiations. Their discourse conveys the problematic, ambiguous and contradictory notion of categories, labels and boundaries all the while revealing how hegemonic discourses and ideologies are at work.

Thus, within the context of debates around Canadian identity and the increased value of multilingualism and trans-national global identities, the main objective of this paper is to create spaces for the discussion of overlapping identities as a means to challenge/alter the status quo, putting forth the need to rethink the ways we look at languages and citizenship in relation to identity/ies, geographical locations, social practices and representations. These spaces have been salient in many debates and discussions on the discourse surrounding the negotiation of identities and whether 'real' 'symbolic' or 'imagined', they are never neutral or passive (see Keith and Pile, 1993; Giampapa, 2004), but play an active role in the discourse of multilingualism and citizenship. Thus the act of claiming identities and claiming the spaces of identity is a political one.

Drawing upon Gidden's (1984) terminology of the 'center' and the 'periphery', we can say that this political act means not only movement from the periphery (margins, exclusion) but also a reconfiguration of the center (inclusion) and/or establishment of other centers (creation of new spaces). The center is typically seen as a group of people who define and reproduce social, political, institutional, and linguistic norms and have access to symbolic capital and material resources (Labrie, 1999).

Regardless of the spatial metaphor one chooses to deploy (center/periphery, global/local, inside-out, position, location, third space, or majority/minority for that matter), there are no clear-cut dichotomies or separations of space in this work as the four participants' discursive practices overlap. They negotiate between, among and within these overlapping discursive spaces as well as represent multiple voices.

Methodology: A Critical Reflexive Sociolinguistic Ethnography and Discourse Analysis

My research, which complements and informs the theoretical positioning of this paper, is situated within a critical sociolinguistic ethnographic approach, incorporating discourse analysis and reflexivity. I draw upon critical ethnography as it connects and problematizes social and linguistic practices as part of larger socio-historical and political processes that shape and transform the positions that youth hold within multiple terrains (for example: home, school, friendship networks, and media representations). This approach further acknowledges the political nature of the research process and considers the researcher and research participants as affiliates in the co-construction of meaning.

A point of reflection on critical ethnographic research is to highlight one of its underlying philosophies, and that is the process of collaboration and co-construction of knowledge. Therefore, I cannot ask my participants to be and become reflexive of their language learning experiences and negotiation of identities without asking the same of myself, as a woman, a critical ethnographer and sociocultural researcher, a former teacher as well as a person of Italian origin. I use the term reflexivity as a means to look at one's own position and investment in the research; in other words, looking at and coming clean with one's own biases, uncertainties, and multiple identities. I draw upon critical ethnography because it allows me the possibilities of not only looking at the who, what, why, and where, but also a passage to uncover the ways in which meanings are constructed and what the consequences are for speakers as a result of their negotiation of identities and linguistic performances.

Like Fairclough (1995), I am interested in the dialectical relationship of language and social practice as well as the investigation of discourse as a social phenomena, connecting linguistic communicative acts and social processes, by examining the relationships between social structure, discourse pattern, power relations, and ideologies. Therefore, using a sociolinguistic critical ethnography combined with reflexivity and a discourse analysis opens up the discussion and permits us to see the multi-faceted, contradictory and complex representations of being and becoming a multilingual and multicultural Canadian citizen. It is important to underscore such an approach as it allows us to look at overlapping identities and discourses while at the same time create spaces to discuss fuzzy boundaries and ambiguous identities.

Theoretical Positioning

An important aspect of critical ethnography is to not only question theory but to build upon or rethink these theories, particularly when new situations occur. Below, I briefly discuss the theories offered by Bourdieu (1977; 1982; 1991) and Giddens (1984; 1991) that support and best represent both my analysis and findings.

Bourdieu (1982) argues that language as symbolic capital regulates people's access to different resources (political, linguistic, social, material). In this light, language is also seen as a tool through which groups of people collectively mobilize and establish linguistic communities as well as a means of creating shared symbols which members construct boundaries between the 'us' and 'them' and how these symbols are used through interaction to create the repertoire of identity.

Bourdieu's constructs of habitus, linguistic markets, and symbolic capital allow us to interpret how individuals interact within intersecting social spaces and provide conceptual tools for analyzing the discourse of language within these interactions. The linguistic market is one of the most powerful as every interaction has within it traces of the social structure that it expresses and helps to produce. Authenticity, legitimacy, and authority (Bourdieu, 1977) play key roles, that is to say, how someone looks as well as how someone sounds in defining a speaker's social positioning and linguistic repertoire hierarchization within a particular market.

According to Bourdieu, the process by which a language becomes more valued than another or other languages is produced in and imposed by institutions, which are markets in and of themselves. The most obvious and telling one is the field of education. Education as an institution plays a significant role in social identity construction and of unequal relations of power, while at the same time, it sets up and 'normalizes' a system of values, masking its concrete sources through hegemonic discourses to assure acceptance. Bourdieu (1977) calls this form of power as it relates to language 'symbolic power'.

This symbolic power is what Gramsci (1971) refers to as hegemony. In other words, the people at the 'center' (see Giddens, 1984; Labrie, 1999) have ensured or convinced others that their ways of doing things are natural, normal, right, universal, and objective for all participants even though it is the people at the center who eminently profit from doing things their way, while putting everyone else at a disadvantage (Bourdieu, 1982; Gramsci, 1971, also see Hobsbawn, 1990). This is what makes contestation and resistance so difficult, as it appears that education is visibly democratic, but as Apple (1982) reminds us schools allocate people and legitimate knowledge as well as legitimate people and allocate knowledge. Indeed, Bourdieu suggests that education has a monopoly in reproducing the linguistic market. However, Thompson (2005) and Van Zanten (2005) argue that spaces are created when new policies or new situations occur such as in this case: Italian Canadian youth training to become teachers of French.

On that note, it is important to mention Giddens (1984) and his theory of structuration, which examines the concept of 'action' or rather the dialectical relationship between structure and agency, which signifies that most action is meaningful (has a purpose) and individuals are constantly monitoring what they do and how others view them as well as in which discursive spaces they do things in. As such, Giddens perceives individuals as 'knowledgeable agents' who understand the world they live in and explain their action to others and themselves. He argues that agency is not about intended actions, but the 'capacity' or 'ability' to act given the existing structural constraints.

This is important because individuals have the capacity to create counter-hegemonic discourses through consciously making choices and acting upon those choices to negotiate their place within their world(s), as identity is not solely about where we come from, it is not merely a 'recovery of the past' but rather 'who we might become', and how representations of who we are bears upon how we represent ourselves (see Hall and du Gay, 1996).

A New Situation: Why Italian Canadians?

Upon observing pre-service university French courses, designed for students who wish to become teachers of French, I found that, strangely enough, a great number of students enrolled in these courses are Italian Canadians or of Italian origin. To date, very little research has looked at how and what kinds of decisions Italian Canadian youth make regarding French language learning or multilingualism. This is significant, as Italian Canadians represent one of the largest 'ethnic' communities in Toronto, as well as within the province of Ontario. According to the 2001 census, the highest concentration of Italian

Canadians is found in the province of Ontario (781,345) and in the city of Toronto itself (429,690). Even with the continuing immigration from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, Italians are listed as the seventh largest community group in Canada (Giampapa, 2004). Nevertheless, the specific position of youth of Italian origin is particularly illuminating given the historical links between Italians and francophones in Canada (latin based language, Catholic religion, etc.); French for them is situated ambiguously between a door to membership in an ethnolinguistic group and an additional language skill, of particular importance in Canada with regards to official bilingualism, to add to their repertoire.

Legitimating Languages and Citizens in Canada: A Multicultural Mosaic of Ideological Tensions

Over the past thirty-five years, Canada has been represented as an officially bilingual and multicultural country. Under the Official Languages Act (1969, 1988), the federal government mandated French and English as the two official languages of Canada signifying the two founding nations (Great Britain and France). However, to ensure that Canada would be viewed as everyone's country, this form of pluralism, under the Multicultural Act (1971, 1985), was quickly extended to include indigenous and immigrant groups in an attempt to maintain individual rights and give recognition of the specificity of the cultural and linguistic community to which one belongs. It is this perpetual image of a federally supported official bilingual French/English multicultural Canada that is represented to the outside world nevertheless, in reality things are much more complex, unequal, and contradictory. Recognizing difference can become problematic as a person may belong to several cultural and linguistic communities (Quell, 2000) and more importantly, not all groups are perfectly homogeneous (Marcellesi, 1979). That said, many individuals find themselves in a perpetual tension between self-chosen identities and others' attempts to position them differently. This tension between a dominant ideology of national homogeneity and actual heterogeneity has important implications for multilingual identities and social justice in liberal states (Blackledge, 2001), as we see this unfold in the upcoming analyses of Monica, Maverick, Grace and Anna Maria's discourse on language, ethnicity and citizenship.

Learning French in Ontario

Within the province of Ontario (where Toronto is located), there are three main options for acquiring French-English bilingualism (of course, there are always options within the options themselves). The first program is Core French, which is referred to as French as a Second Language. Core French (see Lapkin, 1998) generally begins in Grade One, where students are introduced to the language for 20 minutes a day, and through Grades Four-Eight, this is extended to 32 minutes a day. Students are required to take Core French until Grade 9 now, after that Core French becomes an optional subject. The second program is called Immersion (see Makropoulos, 1998), and this is equally referred to as French as a Second Language. However, immersion is categorized as a more intensive program where students are immersed in French for at least half of the school day, and have half of their school subjects taught to them exclusively in French. There are several types of immersion programs (early, middle, late as well as full or partial). The third option is l'école de langue française (see Labrie and Lamoureux, 2003), or a francophone school, where all subjects are taught in French. English is offered as a Core subject for approximately 50 minutes a day (this can vary). Each option produces its own possibilities and constraints all the while each program's goal is to teach French in a universal, objective, standardized way. Nevertheless, the distribution of resources (in this case, access to a certain kind of French) is unequal across and among the programs throughout different school boards and regions. For Ontarian schools, this raises concern of the emergence of a new understanding of language not as an index of identity in the service of building some kind of collectivity, but rather as a commodity with exchange value in the new globalized economy, as we shall see in the upcoming analyses.

Data Analysis and Findings

This analysis is based on the discourse of four self-identified multi-generational Italian Canadian teacher candidates (Monica, Maverick, Anna Maria, and Grace) participating in French teacher education program in Toronto, Canada. I have chosen to look at these four participants not only because they are highly articulate and reflective of their language learning experiences, but also because they represent multiple voices and multiple positions in the ways that they self-identify and locate themselves within the discourses of multilingualism and citizenship. By exploring the participants' everyday discourse and continued investment in French language acquisition, we can observe the impact of language and nationalist ideologies, parental influence, power of teacher-student relations through schooling, and the value of language(s) as a means to uphold, maintain, or gain access to upward social and economic mobility. Additionally, it permits us to see the multi-faceted, contradictory and complex representations and ways of being and becoming a multilingual and multicultural Canadian citizen.

Participants

Monica, Maverick, Anna Maria, and Grace are particularly interesting for a number of reasons. First of all, in terms of self-identification, they all locate themselves within the discourses of Italian Canadianness, however, how they locate themselves is very different. For example, Monica and Grace struggle with the contradictory nature of being Italian and Canadian at the same time, while Anna Maria and Maverick claim to be ‘half Italian’ relying more on their Canadian identities. Second, they are all invested in French language acquisition and wish to become teachers of French although the reasons why they are invested and how they came to be invested in French are also diverse (influence of family members, teachers, high grades, job opportunities, etc.). They have equally decided upon and were accepted to a prestigious pre-service university teacher education program, in the global multicultural urban landscape of Toronto. Third, they are all Canadian born, though multi-generational (1st and 2nd generation), in their early to mid twenties (22 to 24 years old) and have had diverse linguistic, cultural, and educational experiences. They also reside in different neighborhoods, with two of them actually residing in smaller cities outside the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Fourth, and most importantly, all of them have overlapping identities and discourses, and by that I mean they are included and excluded at different spaces and different times. They can be both members of the center and members of the periphery, if you will, although at varying degrees. Each of them has experienced and continue to experience different dimensions of constraints, opportunities, and outcomes, resulting in diverse levels of accessibility to symbolic and material resources.

Overlapping Themes

A number of overlapping themes emerged from the four participants’ discourse, which I obtained through discourse analysis of classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, identity narratives, and a focus group meeting. I conducted weekly observations of the participants in class for a period of six months (beginning in January 2006), and met with each of them for interviews, identity narratives, and a focus group. The interviews, focus group and identity narratives were transcribed and coded manually. In order to employ a collaborative and collective process in analyzing the participants’ words, I relied upon construct and face validity. In this paper, I draw primarily on the data from their interviews here. Four main themes emerged from the data: (1) French as a Symbolic Resource; (2) Conceptions of Canadianness/Canadianité; (3) Notions of Investment; and (4) Complexities and Ambiguities in Being and Becoming Canadian. Again, these themes are interconnected and highlight in particular how the participants desire to position themselves and how others position them in relation to Canadian citizenship and the development of linguistic repertoires.

French as a Symbolic Capital

In order to look at the role of language and see how it links to ideologies of the Canadian Nation-State as well as social identity construction, it is necessary to understand how the participants position themselves around the value of the French language. In this first passage, I have asked the participants to talk about why they are interested in teaching French. Here's what Anna Maria had to say:

Anna Maria: 'There's definitely an advantage if you speak French in Canada, you have a definite advantage in terms of getting gov't jobs, teaching jobs, business jobs, even when I open the newspaper and telemarketing jobs, a lot of them say, premium paid to bilingual representatives, and you know what, you get more money … in Canada, **that's what they want, they want French … but how many more people speak Cantonese?**

In this passage, Anna Maria highlights the economic value of French in Canada, and sheds lights on how the media as an institution contributes to perpetuating the discourse of official bilingualism, emphasizing how individuals who are bilingual will be paid more. However, we still do not know what kind of bilingual skills are needed in order to 'reap the advantages' described in the newspaper. Language, in this passage, particularly official French/English bilingualism, is seen as a tool, a very valuable and marketable tool. What is equally striking is the way Anna Maria refers to 'they' in her discourse ('that's what **they** want, **they** want French …'). Who is/are 'they'? Does the 'they' represent the people from the center, people who control the resources and the linguistic market(s)? In her final statement, she shifts her marketing position from the esteemed value of French to one of irony, reflecting the social reality in the city of Toronto (which has the 3rd largest Chinese population in the world), stating, 'they want French, but how many more people speak Cantonese?' She appears fully aware of the contradictory and complex nature of the linguistic market in regards to defining the value of languages, and whoever 'they' represent, these people are getting to make these decisions on whose linguistic skills and languages, for that matter, hold more worth. Recalling Bourdieu's discussion of linguistic markets (1982), it becomes clear that Anna Maria understands the competitive, dynamic, and unequal status of different linguistic capital.

Conceptions of Canadianness/ Canadianité

To further demonstrate the relationship between language, ethnic identity, and citizenship, I found Maverick's discourse particularly insightful. While Maverick's discourse is filled with both the ideologies of bilingualism and homogeneity in regards to a unified Canada, his heterogeneous position in self-identifying as an Italian Canadian allows him to shift and cross cultural and linguistic boundaries. However, in this particular passage his discourse on language is situated within an ideology that one needs language to tap into the culture.

Maverick: 'I believe in a unified Canada, I absolutely do…having gone to a francophone school and being part of a linguistic minority, I understand **these** people, and I think English and French should be mandatory for all schools and all kids…I mean I can get a job pretty much anywhere …learning languages is one way to become part of a community, and helps you to become a more culturally conscious person, it's important for development, especially for globalization, but I'm not even going to get started on that …Canadians, we're different, that's what we are.'

In this example, Maverick demonstrates a cultural affirmation of his francophone identity as well as an affinity for being part of a linguistic minority. Having attended a francophone school, he understands '**these** people'. What is particularly interesting here is the way Maverick refers to francophones as 'these people'. The use of this demonstrative conveys ambiguity. In one instance, he could be showing empathy and understanding of the socio-political and historical power struggles over resources of minority francophones outside Québec. On the other hand, his use of 'these people' infers they are one, bounded, homogeneous group all the while his own position of heterogeneity contradicts this. While Maverick's discourse reflects the dominant hegemonic discourses of how language is tied to the Nation-State, education, and ethnic group membership, it is also interesting that he chooses the word 'these' as if to distinguish or separate himself from 'these people' aware of his complex, heterogeneous position in this imagined homogeneous contradiction. However, in this passage, he upholds the ideology that language is one way to become part of a community (or to unify a nation) without considering that there may be those who equally study a language, but for whatever reason, are unable or unwilling to gain acceptance into a particular community. He also signals the importance of learning languages because of globalization (see Labrie, 2002). Maverick's discourse mirrors his social position as a linguistic broker, as someone who is recognized as a legitimate speaker of French and as an idealized bilingual Canadian with greater economic mobility ('I can get a job pretty much anywhere'). He echoes the dominant hegemonic discourse constructed in the belief that because he was granted successful integration and acceptance into a linguistic minority community, anyone else can do this too. It is through hegemonic processes and social reproduction (where groups of people who do not control the resources within a market are led to believe that the ways in which the market operates is universal and fixed) that those in power maintain the status quo (Giampapa, 2004). Lastly, he states, 'Canadians, we're different', emphasizing his conceptions of what a real Canadian is, one who speaks both monolingual French and monolingual English.

Why am I invested in French? Notions of Investment

Within the next sample, I look at the different discourses of language learning investment (Norton, 2000) and am reminded of Bourdieu's notion of habitus, particularly in regards to the impact of parental influence. Through habitus we learn what is expected of us, and what is not as well as what things we should value, and essentially, how we should be. This passage also reveals the attainment of cultural capital (in this case, educational credentials in French) in order to buy symbolic and material capital (in the form of prospects for a prestigious job).

Grace: 'Um, when my Mom saw that I did well in French she sort of pushed that, for me, she said, **you know it'll open a lot of doors** (opportunities) … I actually hated my French teacher when I was in Grade 9 … it was at a time when you get one percentage value for things … I've been y-know an A student … and I knew my percentage counted … **so I started performing for her**, so she would like me and when I started seeing good results, I thought, hmm, this isn't so bad … I kind of like it.'

In this passage, we can again observe overlapping discourses. In the beginning of the sample here, we can witness the hegemonic discourses and linguistic regimentation coming from the institution of the family and yet within the same passages, we hear the voice of an active agent who understands the world(s) she lives in and explains her actions to herself and others (Giddens, 1984). We can also see how Grace is aware of what is expected from her, how she must perform, and what she needs to do in order to: (1) please her family members; (2) earn recognition from a teacher in order to get high grades; (3) and gain access to upward social and economic mobility, even if it means having to perform.

In Grace's discourse, we actually witness her mother trying to sell language as a symbolic resource that will 'open a lot of doors' as it is the language that can lead to economic gains through jobs. This is interesting as Grace explained to me that her mother majored in Italian at university and speaks in Italian with her 'nonna' (Grace's maternal grandmother). Although this imposed linguistic position comes from her mother, Grace is fully aware of having to give an appropriate and acceptable performance in order to gain cultural capital (good grades from the 'hated' Grade 9 French teacher).

Complexities and Ambiguities: Who am I and where do I belong in the social world?

This last overlapping theme demonstrates the impact of the discourses of multilingualism and citizenship on social identity construction. More than anything, the passages shown here elucidate the different dimensions of constraints, opportunities, and ambiguities of overlapping social identities. Through the discourses, we see that while individuals want a sense of place, solidarity, and belonging, however where they belong or who they are is not so easily defined.

Anna Maria: 'Well you know when I'm with one side of the family, I'm one thing, and when I'm with the other side of the family, I'm another but at the same time I'm really not a part of either … I'm not really Sikh or Catholic. I could really adapt to either culture, but I just don't know which way to go…**so I guess the middle ground is the Canadian identity, cause it's neutral, like being Belgian, I have to be Belgian because I have these conflicting demands and expectations of me … It seems people will associate me with whatever they are.'**

Anna Maria: 'For teaching practicum, the kids were like, Miss are you from -- and I said No, ***je suis canadienne***. **They were like *No you can't be Canadian you don't look Canadian*, I said *what looks Canadian*?'**

Maverick: … I don't think anyone ever thinks anything when they see me … I'm like a chameleon, yeah (laughs) I kind of blend in …

These examples truly capture the negotiation of identities as well as the socially constructed and imposed notions of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) and habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) regarding ways of being, looking, sounding, etc. Maverick's social positioning as a 'chameleon' and valued linguistic capital allow him to move with much more ease through boundaries of language, nation, ethnicity, and race whereas Anna Maria's position here appears more constrained within these intersections. Anna Maria is caught between the throes of having to categorize herself juxtaposed the politics of identity in relation to Canadian multiculturalism as well as the wider societal aim to impose a fixed identity upon her. She describes the conflicting expectations and linguistic, cultural, and religious representations (i.e. Catholic=Italian; Sikh=East Indian) surrounding her, and yet, while confused, she rejects being categorized or having to label herself as one category or the other. Using humor, she challenges this discourse, and creates a space for herself through what she claims as the 'middle ground' being a Canadian, a Belgian, or learning French. Unlike Maverick who states 'I don't think anyone ever thinks anything when they see me', and that no one ever places him in categories, Anna Maria indicates 'people will associate me with whatever they are.' Additionally, she is positioned as a 'visible minority' (where Maverick is not) and that is brought to her attention very clearly while she conducts her teaching practicum with students at school who challenge her 'Canadianness' (what it means to be a 'legitimate' and 'authentic' Canadian). Through her discursive practices, Anna Maria aptly challenges the students' hegemonic images of what a Canadian 'looks' like. However, Anna Maria expresses anger in regards to her position, and at times, feels her multiple identities exclude her from belonging to either her Italian or East Indian culture. But this again relates to how discourses of culture and language are perpetuated throughout social institutions (family, media, and school) that act to produce and distribute resources of knowledge as homogeneous collectivities rather than reflect heterogeneous social realities. Although Anna Maria and Maverick are representative of different social class backgrounds with diverse cultural and linguistic experiences, both of their positions, varying in degrees of constraints and opportunities, do allow for the creation of new overlapping social spaces, where dominant discourses of official bilingualism and multiculturalism can be challenged and multiple voices can be heard, demonstrating that people do not fit neatly into social categories.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to demonstrate how four self-identified multi-generational Italian Canadian youth socially construct their identities and invest in language learning in an urban, globalized world while participating in a French teacher education program in Toronto, Canada. In doing so, I highlighted the different conceptions of what being Canadian, multilingual and multicultural means to these youth and the ways in which they position themselves vis-à-vis the acquisition of French as official language. While their discursive practices underpin different life experiences and negotiations of identities, they also produce an emerging discourse on the linguistic, cultural, economic, and symbolic value of French as well as positioning French/English bilingualism as an identity marker of what counts as a multilingual and multicultural Canadian citizen locally, globally, and trans-nationally.

Notes

1 The data discussed in this paper are drawn from a larger corpus collected for my on-going doctoral thesis, which is a two year critical sociolinguistic ethnography focusing on 10 self-identified Italian Canadian participants, employing multiple field methods (observations, interviews, journals, focus groups, popular culture sources including a documentary film) that investigates language learning investment in French as official language and the overlapping discourses of italianità, citizenship, multilingualism, and worldliness in Toronto, Canada and the GTA (the Greater Toronto Area).

2 The author would like to extend her sincere thanks to Normand Labrie on an earlier draft of this paper.

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11 Nursing across Cultures: the communicative needs of internationally educated nurses (IENs) working with older adults

Margaret Hearnden

While the issue of defining nurse shortage is not a straight forward one,[1] evidence suggests that there is a growing imbalance in many countries between supply and demand of nurses (Buchan and Calman, 2004); in many instances worldwide there are simply not enough. This nursing shortage is reflected across Canada, Britain, Australia and the US (Buchan, 2002). According to the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) the current shortage of nurses in Ontario, the most densely populated province in Canada, is estimated at 35,000 (CNO, 2005); and is expected to rise to 113,000 by 2016 (Munro, 2003). Canada, along with several other countries has therefore been turning to internationally educated nurses (IENs) to address these staffing issues (Batata, 2005; Hawthorne, 2001).[2]

In addition, Canada's population, as in many countries the world over, (ICN, 2006) is aging. In 2001 people over the age of 65 formed 12.64% of the population; by 2016 this figure is projected to rise to almost 16% (www.sustreport.org/signals/canpop_age.html). An increase in diagnostic ability through better medical technology and contemporary treatments means that people are living longer, placing increasing demands on the health care system, as clients[3] require more complex health care to address medical issues related to reaching a more advanced age than previous generations (WHO, 2004). Therefore, nurses are more likely to be working with populations who may be experiencing communication issues related to physiological or cognitive impairment related to the aging process. This has implications for all nurses, particularly for those working in a second language.

Since research into the experiences of IENs, especially from the nurses' viewpoint, is scant (Buchan, 2003; Xu and Chanyeong, 2005), the goal of the following study was to explore the sociolinguistic and sociocultural issues faced by IENs working with older adults, with the objective of identifying the strengths and weaknesses in current nursing education to prepare them in this regard, with a view to informing future policy, educational supports and curriculum design.

Internationally educated nurses (IENs) and English as a second language (ESL)

According to the 2001 Census conducted by Statistics Canada, immigrants form around 17% of the population of Canada, more than half of whom immigrate to Ontario. A sizeable proportion of this population is unable to fulfil their potential in terms of the skills they possess and the social contribution they could make by fully participating in the community, because of their lack of or limited proficiency in official language skills (Lochhead, 2003). Within the context of English speaking Canada, such a lack of or limited proficiency in English is a major indicator of economic and social disadvantage of immigrants (Boyd, 1992). Accessibility and availability of ESL programs are major issues of concern (Burnaby, 1992), impacting some newcomers' ability to participate in the language education needed to integrate into the workforce at a level commensurate with their employment prior to immigrating. In addition, the content and organization of courses do not always reflect the needs of the clients, focusing primarily on general language skills. Availability of ESL education linked to specific professions, such as nursing, is extremely limited (CCLB, 2002).

Statistics indicating the number of immigrants to Ontario who have nursing qualifications are unavailable, which means that it is unclear how many IENs either decide not to pursue a career in nursing or fail to do so because of systemic barriers such as 'obtaining educational upgrading, gaining language competence, passing the licence examination and becoming integrated into the workplace.' (Bauman et al., 2006: 5). However, it is estimated that around 40% of IENs fail to complete the process of becoming registered to nurse (i.e. information is available on how many begin the process), compared to only 10% of their Ontario RN counterparts. Nevertheless, nearly a quarter of new RN members in Ontario in 2004 (23.8%), were IENs, with RN IENs forming 11.5% of the RN workforce in Ontario. Since only 63.2% of new RN members in Ontario in that year were actually educated in the province, with another 13% coming from other Canadian provinces, it is clear that Ontario currently relies significantly on IENs. Further, despite the fact that in 2005 the actual number of new RN IEN members decreased, they still constituted 34% of new nurses since there was an actual increase in new members in Ontario (Bauman et al., 2006).

In spite of the significant numbers of IENs employed in the province, a Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) report (2002: iii) identifies access and barrier issues with regard to language requirements as matters of ongoing concern for these nurses. Based on research across Canada, the report outlines the 'real-life English language demands of the nursing profession' (2002: iii). It was found that the majority of language difficulties IENs have are associated with speaking and listening, with pronunciation a foremost concern. Communicating on the phone as well as writing and reading patient charts are also considered problematic. IENs are often familiar with the technical vocabulary of their profession but have difficulty with the idiomatic expressions used by clients. Some of those taking part in the research suggest culture is a greater challenge than language, both in terms of the workplace and the role of the nurse. Issues such as nonverbal communication, gender roles, cultural reference points, levels of formality and register and assertiveness, were all cited as providing major challenges to IENs. Current language assessment tools accepted by the CNO, such as TOEFL, were found to be inadequate for the needs of IENs and unreflective of the linguistic demands of nursing, with English programs specific to their needs largely unavailable. Although the CCLB has since introduced Canadian English Language Benchmarks Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN), with only six testing sites in place across the country it is not widely accessible. This means that the majority of IENs are reliant on incongruent language assessments to prove their linguistic competency in order to nurse in Ontario. Further, it remains unclear how IENs are to reach these benchmark levels set for entry into nursing, since most ESL education available to date only provides *general* English instruction to benchmark levels lower than those necessary for entering nursing. An exception is the Creating Access to Registered Employment (CARE) for nurses program, which does address the need for ESL instruction specific to nursing. New ESL initiatives are currently being incorporated into other Ontario upgrading and bridging programs, with some, such as a post diploma program at York University, being specifically targeted at IENs. However, such initiatives are in the early stages of development. It is likely that lack of sector specific language skills contributes to the current lower pass rate of IENs who take the Canadian Registered Nurses Exam compared to nurses educated in Ontario (48% and 92% respectively for first time writers),[4] and once in employment, IENs experience higher attrition rates than non-IEN staff (Jalili-Grenier and Chase, 1997).

Language and healthcare

At the point of care, the nurse looking after the patient must be able to build a positive and therapeutic environment that meets the needs of the patient, their families and their communities. Appropriate communication is critical since, ‘[d]espite the technological advances in diagnosis and treatments available to clients and their families, communication still remains the single most important, and sometimes underrated, dimension of nursing practice’ (Arnold and Underman Boggs, 2003: vi). Language not only plays a significant role in providing congruent care, research also indicates that language barriers negatively affect client satisfaction, and are a major factor which discourages certain populations from accessing healthcare (Bowen, 2001). Further, the chances of miscommunication leading to misdiagnosis are increased when the nurse and client speak a different language to each other. However, effective communication is more than producing grammatically accurate sentences; it involves being able to produce contextually appropriate language, as well as being able to understand the nuances of a given situation (Block, 2003). Pragmatic competency based on congruent sociolinguistic and sociocultural knowledge, are therefore key facets of appropriate nursing communication.

Communicating with older adults may require particular communicative competencies since some forms of cognitive decline are more common amongst older members of the population. For example, research indicates that 1 in 13 of the population in Canada over the age of 65 will be affected with some kind of dementia. Effective communication is a critical factor in 'the diagnosis of cognitive decline and rehabilitation' (de Bot and Makoni: 136).Communicating in a caring and compassionate manner which supports a client's self-respect and individuality, when someone is suffering from dementia is challenging enough when both client and nurse speak the same language, but may become more problematic when they do not. Studies also indicate that lack of communication between caregivers and the elderly (Jones and Jones, 1986), as well as patronising and altered communication known as 'elderspeak', are commonplace in elderly care facilities and have a negative impact on client care (Kemper and Harden, 1999).[5] While certain kinds of simplified speech may aid comprehension for those experiencing some forms of cognitive decline, 'the use of an inappropriate type of elderspeak can lead to a breakdown of communication or miscommunication leading to withdrawal due to feelings of inadequacy and decline on the part of elderly speakers' (de Bot and Makoni, 2005: 134). Another issue is the fact that registered nurses (RNs) and registered practical nurses (RPNs) who also have English as a second language, are reliant on learning contextually and culturally appropriate communication in the workplace from other members of staff, and therefore may imitate the pattern of speech of elderspeak, unwittingly learning an inappropriate and detrimental form of communication. Conversely, as Canada welcomes more and more newcomers, increasing numbers of elderly are coming from immigrant communities. In order to provide culturally congruent health care and to address the growing need of bilingual health care providers, it is essential that nurses with a broad range of linguistic skills be facilitated in entering and staying in the workforce.

Theoretical Framework

For the purposes of data analysis I have grounded my study in Sociocultural Theory (SCT), also using the analytical lenses provided by Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) and Feminist Theory. The context of healthcare provides particularly complex and often stressful situations within which nurses are required to communicate. To communicate successfully in another language, understanding the cultural concepts and belief systems with which it is encoded is essential (Danesi, 2003). However, the field of Second Language Acquisition has traditionally understood language learning in positivistic terms, exploring language either in isolation from culture and society or as an individual internal process usually in response to external (input) stimuli. Many researchers (Engeström, 1999; Lantolf, 2001) now believe that theories which separate language acquisition and language socialization may be too restrictive, in that they present an 'either or' scenario which does not reflect the fact that language can neither be separated from the sociocultural context nor from the language learner's personal history. SCT is a theoretical framework which takes a more holistic and integrative approach, in that it aims at avoiding this arbitrary division between the social and individual (Daniels, 2001). One of its most fundamental concepts of SCT is that the mind is mediated; that is to say, we do not act directly on the physical world, rather we rely on material and symbolic mediational tools which allow us to mediate our relationships with other people (Lantolf, 2001). The most important is language. English is a cultural artefact which the IEN must learn to understand and use appropriately to provide medically and culturally congruent health care. It is also an important factor in gaining access to the community of nursing. LPP is an analytical tool which aims at understanding learning in terms of a social practice and at viewing the processes through which new members of a community are (or are not) initiated into the wisdom and practices of the community (Lave and Wenger, 1991). It provides an apposite lens through which to explore the sociolinguistic and sociocultural barriers which may prevent IENs joining and remaining in the workforce. Since the nursing community worldwide is a predominantly female, it is not possible to examine the position of IENs without also viewing it as a paradigm of the position of women in society.

Methodology

Research questions

The goal of my study was to explore IEN educational experiences in terms of learning the language and culture relevant to nursing in Ontario. Critical to the study was my desire to find out *their* perspectives, predicated on the belief that by gaining an understanding of the needs and experiences IENs express themselves, we will have access to a critical (and currently largely missing) perspective on what supports can and should be provided to address the barriers discussed above. My research questions were: 1) What are the sociolinguistic and sociocultural needs of IENs working with older adults? 2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of educational opportunities for IENs, in terms of the sociolinguistic and sociocultural needs of nurses working with older adults?

The constraints I experienced undertaking this research required that I adopt an emergent research design, flexible enough to take into consideration the following: difficulties in recruitment, ethical concerns of research site administrations concerning observation of interaction between nurse and client, and gate keeping episodes related to my not being a member of the nursing community.

Participants and recruitment

Participants were recruited between January and December, 2005 from two long term care (LTC) facilities in Toronto (henceforth facilities A and B), from former Creating Access to Registered Employment (CARE) for nurses students involved in a Citizen and Immigration Canada funded pilot project to implement an ESL curriculum for nurses (with which I was involved as co-writer and course instructor), from former students from Mohawk College, Hamilton, where I assisted with a bridging program for IENs, from former CARE students now working in LTC, contacted by CARE on my behalf, from The Centre for Equity in Health Services (CEHS), and finally from one hospital in Oakville.

Facility A is a 350-bed long term care facility in Toronto, which has been open less than 5 years. Facility B is part of a health research centre in the north of Toronto, which includes a 472-bed nursing home and a 300-bed continuing care hospital facility. Recruitment from the hospital in Oakville was focused on the acute medical units which service high numbers of older adults. Participants at the LTC facilities and the hospital were recruited with the assistance of the administration and after ethical approval had been granted (in addition to approval already obtained from the University of Toronto). Former students and CEHS participants were contacted via a group email and list serve respectively, with no obligation to respond. Due to the difficulties experienced over several months in recruiting participants, it was formally agreed by the University of Toronto Ethics Committee that a small remuneration be offered for participating in the research. This took the form of either $20 in cash, or coffee shop gift certificates, depending on the advice of the institution.

In total, 29 participants from 12 different language backgrounds took part, including Bosnian, Chinese, Danish, English, Farsi, Hungarian, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog and Ukrainian.

Table 1 provides an overview of those involved.

Participant by type	**No.**
Registered Nurse (RN)* IEN nursing in Canada for *more than* 4 years	7
Registered Nurse (RN)* IEN nursing in Canada for l*ess than* 3 years	6
Registered Practical Nurse (RPN)* IEN nursing in Canada for *more than* 4 years	2
Registered Practical Nurse (RPN)* IEN nursing in Canada for *less than* 3 years	1
Non-IENs – RN and RPN nursing in Canada for *less than 3 years*	2
Student IENs	3
Clients in LTC	4
Family members of client in LTC	1
Nurse educators	3
Total	**29**

Note. *RN and RPN designation refers to licensing according to the CNO. 'Nursing' refers to time spent working when licensed and does not include periods spent in other employment, such as working as a health care aid (HCA).

Table 1: Research Participants

Nurse and student nurse participants ranged in age from 21 to 60 and were all female except one, reflecting the gender division in nursing in Ontario, where approximately 96% of nurses are female. Although the focus of the study was on the IEN experience, data were collected from non-IEN sources in order to add a valuable dimension to the research. It was important to identify which issues may be relevant to all new nursing graduates and which may have more pertinence to IENs.

Data collection procedures

Data were collected over a period of 9 months, from April to December 2005, whilst recruitment was still in progress. Table 2 outlines the sources of data collected.

Type of data collected	Source.	Number
Nurse/student nurse background questionnaires	All nurse/student-nurse participants	21
Weekly/bi-weekly telephone interviews	RN participant Wendy, working in long term care (NOT one of research sites)	10
Monthly short diary entries	RPN participant Marikit working at Facility A	4
Monthly 15-30 minute interviews	RPN participant Marikit working at Facility A	4
Single 15-30 minute interviews	All participants excluding Wendy and Marikit	27
Field notes	Observations of RPN participant Marikit during 1 two-hour period + 1 evening shift, Facility A	1

Table 2: Data collected

Interviews at the 3 research sites with nurse participants followed a semi-structured format and were held mostly during scheduled break times. Interviews with other participants were either conducted over the phone, or at a location convenient to the participant, such as a local library, coffee shop, their home or in the case of clients and the family member, in their private room in the facility itself. At the beginning of each interview, IEN participants were asked to complete a brief questionnaire in English, in order to provide relevant background information, such as country of origin, nursing education from their home country, and educational experiences relevant to nursing since coming to Ontario. All interviews were conducted in English and, with the full consent of participants, were audio-taped and later transcribed. Data were input into the qualitative analysis software NVivo to facilitate data analysis. I began by initially identifying overt and underlying themes, and then continued with an iterative process of analysis in order to find patterns, connections or differences within and across participants.

Summary of Findings

Several themes were echoed within and across participant data. Lack of vocabulary, both 'lay' and professional was a common theme. One IEN said that she initially had difficulty with the names of hospital equipment which meant she had to look for many things herself as she could not ask someone where an item was. Another issue was food, since what was being served in her LTC facility was not found in her home country of China (e.g. jelly, ginger ale). Participants articulated concerns about not being able to adequately describe a patient's situation, such as the quality or location of an injury; when documenting patient notes; 'I feel short in expressing what the real problem is' (Una, from Bosnia Herzegovina).[6] Understanding slang or idiomatic expressions used by clients was problematic. Such issues caused many IENs embarrassment and a feeling of shame as they felt that lack of such knowledge reflected badly on their ability to nurse and had a negative impact on whether they were taken seriously by colleagues and accepted as part of the professional community. Pronunciation was an issue for some, both in terms of making themselves understood as well as in understanding others. Limitations in sociocultural competency were expressed by the majority of IEN participants, such as how to deal with families in an appropriate way (e.g., understanding different conceptualisations of what 'family' means and how this relates to the nursing standards of confidentiality and accountability which are culturally defined concepts), making refusals in a culturally appropriate way (e.g., refusing gifts), what to say at care conferences (e.g., how to be assertive) and how to deal with verbal abuse:

> How do you empathise with a patient? What kind of words do you use? What do you say when someone's dying? Or if somebody walks in and attacks you verbally, what kind of things you can say? [ ] It's like [unclear] tricks, you know, how to refuse somebody, because if this is my normal language I could do it, but when I'm stressed and this happens then it's some, it is hard, and then it ruins your whole day. (Lulu, from Hungary)

The issue is not simply needing to know discrete items of vocabulary; it is also a question of knowing the appropriate functional and situational language. Further, some IENs faced a contradiction between the expectations of the nurse's role before coming to Canada and those of their current position. How one's role is defined influences one's expected pattern of communication. An example cited was the difference in interaction between nurses and doctors in Canada compared to elsewhere, which led to a fear of talking to doctors. Another worry was about answering the telephone due to a concern of not understanding. This led three out of sixteen of the practising IENs to actively choose LTC as their place of work as a perceived easier option than working in a hospital, going so far as choosing evening and night shifts to limit the opportunities of having to speak with other professionals and family members.

It was evident that IEN participants who took some kind of course or refresher program, of whatever duration, benefited to some degree. Such programs provide networking opportunities, chances to meet others in a similar position, and opportunities to speak English. Many IENs spoke of the support they had received from more experienced colleagues. Although some IEN participants were more critical of the language tests used for nurses than others, all agreed that they assess their general English skills and not those relevant to specific nursing situations. Some indicated that it is possible to pass the language tests yet still not be able to have sufficient language skills to function at the required entry level of nursing; 'When I finished the TOEFL test I could understand everything people said, but I couldn't talk' (Susan, from China).

There is a gap between most language instruction available and the sociolinguistic needs of IENs. None of the IENs I spoke with had had any kind of ESL instruction relating to the nursing profession, other than three who were involved in a CIC pilot project to test an integrated ESL and nursing curriculum. Most had had some general ESL instruction or had done courses on medical terminology, but that did not then enable them to know those words in 'lay person's' terms.

Of concern is that over half of IEN participants in the study said they had been subject to the intolerance. Lulu said she gets nervous when asked some information that she knows. She then has to check her notes; but because she checks, others treat her like she is 'stupid'. She, along with a quarter of the IENs interviewed felt that there was a lack of recognition of their prior experience by other colleagues, including those much younger and less experienced than they are.

Over a quarter of IEN participants stated that coming to Canada meant starting their lives again from scratch. Prior experience may not be recognised either officially, or by other members of staff. Tanya, from Russia, felt like her prior experience is not acknowledged and respected; ‘it’s really not a nice feeling to, like when people treat you like you don’t know nothing.’ Azar from Iran said; ‘I accept the rules of CNO [] But er, er, [ ] after 14 or 15 years working as a nurse, er it’s very difficult here to start from zero. They don’t accepting you, and your experience at all.’ Marikit, from the Philippines said; ‘because some of us nurses who came to Canada, most of us had also other jobs in other countries and we have been able to practice our profession in that country [ ] and then we came here, [ ] we [ ] have to get the lesser, lesser job, like the PSW.’

These findings raise the question as to whether or not such issues are the same for new nursing graduates educated in Ontario who have English as a first language. One of the non-IEN participants interviewed also expressed concerns when beginning to nurse, in terms of talking on the phone and conversing with doctors. However, unlike the IENs who typically took several months to feel more confident, she felt more secure after only a few weeks. In terms of sociocultural education, when asked about how they had been helped with understanding the culture of nursing in Ontario, in contrast to the IENs who felt they had been given no help, the non-IENs said that they had courses on working with diverse communities and the cultural issues which that may raise. Of major concern to IENs was the understanding of issues surrounding consent and confidentiality. For many, these concepts are hard to understand because they differ from culture to culture. Neither IEN nor non-IEN participants felt they were given sufficient assistance in dealing with palliative situations. One of the non-IENs said that she was dealing with grieving families from the first year of her education in her clinical practice, yet such issues were not addressed until the final year of her course. With a more limited vocabulary, such situations for many IENs are going to be far more challenging. Recognising that nurse education cannot prepare you for all situations nurses have to communicate in, generally the non-IENs felt well-prepared by their education whereas the IENs did not. In terms of working with older adults, both IENs and non-IENs said that general communication with different sections of the community was addressed, but that one has opt to do a special course if one wants to cover communicating with individuals with communication issues such as dementia.

Discussion

Findings of this study confirm those of the CCLB (2002) report and of Bauman et al. (2006), indicating that IENs may experience significant barriers relating to language proficiency, pragmatic flexibility and sociocultural competency when coming to work in Ontario. In many cases, educational supports to address these issues are inconsistent and inadequate. Further, provision to assist IENs once in the workplace depends on the institution and existing staff. Intolerance shown towards IENs has a detrimental effect on nurse confidence and self-esteem. Since some IENs actively seek work in long term care as a perceived easier option to the more demanding linguistic situation of hospitals, care of older adults is also implicated. Many IENs take up employment as support workers because of limited language skills. The implications of having carers with limited language proficiency working with clients who may have age related diminished capacity for communication is in need of further research. Conversely, as populations in Canada and elsewhere become more diverse, such diversity will be reflected in an aging client base. It will become increasingly important to have staff reflective of the cultures and language backgrounds of clients, in order to provide congruent nursing care. The IEN has an integral role in the provision of nursing through an ability to provide a rich blend of experience, knowledge, skills and cultural understanding relevant to providing health care for increasingly multicultural populations.

Limitations of study

Limited access to facilities due to ethical concerns impacted data collection. The hospital and Facility B would not allow access to clients, or observation of nurse/client interaction. Trying to find participants willing to take part in the study was problematic. The small sample size of the study makes generalizing these research findings difficult. Since participants did not have the metalanguage to be able to discuss language in discrete terms, this limited the amount of data I could collect concerning the specific language needs of nurses working with older adults, making my first research question difficult to answer. Observing only 1 IEN during her work was not sufficient to conclusively identify discrete points of language relevant to nursing older adults.

Concluding Remarks

Sociolinguistic and sociocultural educational opportunities need to be developed, with a shift in curriculum design to one predicated on the belief that ESL instruction specific to nursing is a critical component of IEN education. Development of support programs for IENs already in employment is essential. This study also indicates that it is critical to promote education for non-IEN staff which fosters understanding and respect for the skills and expertise IENs can offer to increasingly diverse populations.

Notes

1 There is no one figure considered worldwide to be the appropriate nurse to client ratio; this varies from country to country, with the average European ratios being 10 times that of some areas in Africa and South East Asia (Buchan and Calman, 2004). Another factor which makes identifying exact figures for nurse shortages difficult is the issue of how 'nurse' is defined (there is usually more than one category), as well as geographic and speciality distribution.

2 It should be noted that such recruitment measures may not necessarily be a matter of national policy, but rather the initiative of private agencies (Ross, Polsky and Sochalski, 2005).

3 The term 'client' is currently used in research and in the health care setting to refer to patients. I will therefore use both terms interchangeably in this paper.

4 The 48% cited includes out of province writers, as well as international nurses, since separate figures are unavailable for IENs. However, given that the demands of the nursing profession are similar across Canada, and that many of those 'out of province' nurses writing are Canadian educated, it seems likely that a greater proportion of the 52% who fail will be IENs, if 92% of Ontario educated RNs pass first time.

5 'Studies indicate that older adults react negatively to high pitch, short sentences, and slow speaking rate, characteristic of elderspeak' (Kemper and Harden, 1999: 667).

6 All names used are pseudonyms.

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12 Group project work in higher education: what it is and what it is not

Edward Bressan and V. Michael Cribb

Whilst the university is often viewed as a place where the individual and independent study are to be promoted, the rise in group work over the last few years in language learning contexts has often been seen as a means of fostering the skills and competencies required for effective teamwork and successful intercultural communication. Students learning a language are supposedly provided with authentic language practice by drawing on a range of social and pragmatic skills which cannot easily be acquired in teacher-centred contexts. In addition, group work, it is proposed, gives students an opportunity to work collaboratively in teams and prepare them for the workplace, developing the essential skills that employers will demand of them after they graduate. However group work is not without its problems, and concerns have been raised by students and researchers (Cathcart, Dixon-Dawson and Hall, 2006; Leki, 2001; Mutch, 1998) which suggest that it is not always the ideal environment in which learning is to take place. Students often find themselves disillusioned and disappointed with group work when expected roles and responsibilities fail to materialize, and they find themselves 'reluctant hosts and disappointed guests' as Cathcart, Dixon-Dawson and Hall suggest (2006). International students in higher education institutions may often value the opportunity to enter authentic communities of practice by undertaking group work with domestic students but as Leki (2001) has noted, they often find themselves excluded by these students who do not value their contribution to the group effort.

Concerns raised in a survey of students in 2004 at our own institution highlighted the negative attitudes that some students held toward the practice of group work; a fairly ubiquitous custom at the institution:

> The University is obsessed with group work assessments. What happens during one of these assignments does not reflect the real world of employment at all. The net result is lazy students get a free ride, and hardworking students have their overall mark adversely affected.
> We have to work in groups because the lecturers don't have time to mark individual pieces (as they themselves admit).
> (Student Satisfaction Survey, 2004)

Not only are students concerned with 'free-riding' and 'lazy students' but also in some cases they do not perceive group work as reflecting the real world and therefore its potential for providing employability skills. Mutch (1998) has suggested that mixed messages are being given to students and staff alike through the practice of group work:

> Group work… is perceived as being a good way of developing skills for employability. This is based in large part on assumptions about the way in which groups work in organizations. Much assessment in higher education is based on the notion that it is a direct preparation for and reflection of business practice… There is considerable doubt as to whether this notion is well founded. (Mutch, 1998)

Drawing on the results of the 2004 student satisfaction survey and after having received some complaints about group work from our own students, we decided to investigate the situation further. Initially we were interested in discovering the reasons for student dissatisfaction, but our research soon broadened into a wider examination of the nature and purpose of group work and the function that it serves. The areas which we were particularly interested in investigating were those that were raised by our students, namely, the authenticity of the learning experience, the group dynamics, the relevance to future employment and the perceived value of the activity. While we believe that group work is, and can be, a very positive experience for most students where real learning takes place, we need to be careful that mixed messages are not being sent out to students and educators alike as to the purpose of group work. Group work, we believe, has its limitations which reside in its lack of authenticity with regard to the workplace and the possibility of by-passing strategies that students use in order to circumvent the process. Provided that we understand these limitations and utilize group work as a means to an end then it can justly be promoted in higher education learning contexts.

We define group project work (or just group work in this paper) as any task assigned to three or more students which requires them to work as a team over an extended period of time (usually several weeks of a semester). The group work usually has an outcome at the end of this period, often in the form of a class presentation, report or both, which is normally assessed and forms part of the students' grade. This definition differentiates it from in-class group work where the team of students is formed and broken up within the lifespan of a single class, say, for a group discussion or negotiation task. According to our definition, whilst some work may be carried out in class initially, the team will be required to meet up outside of class on several occasions where supervision by the tutor is not possible.

Background

Research into group assessment practices in project work has traditionally focused on the problems and challenges that native speaker students typically encounter in standard educational settings. Typical classroom-related problems include conflict and communication breakdowns in self-managed groups, weaker students being carried by stronger ones, free riding, the difficulty of rewarding individual effort, and appropriate policing of groups (Bacon Stewart and Silver, 1999; Haller, Gallagher, Weldon and Felder, 2000). There has also been a focus on methods of managing groups and suggestions for good practice in this regard (Oakley, Felder, Brent, Elhajj, 2004). In addition, Mahenthirin and Rouse (2000) stress the importance of the composition of each group.

Specific studies into the difficulties that non-native speakers of English encounter when taking part in group assessment projects with native English speakers have been less numerous. Leki (2001) reports on a longitudinal study into the difficulties facing non-native students, Melles (2004) argues that the role of language and culture has been under-emphasised while De Vita (2002) investigates the effect that non-native speakers have on the overall performance of the group.

The relationship between group work in the academic context and the future employment prospects for students has also been documented. In an Australian study the importance that employers attach to teamplaying skills among graduates is emphasised (Crosling and Ward, 2002). Mutch (1998) assesses the generally held belief that group assessment practices provide an authentic preparation for teamwork in the workplace while Tarricone and Luca (2002) question the true significance of teamwork in the workplace. The importance of developing appropriate team building skills in successful workplaces is investigated in other studies (Manz et al, 1997; Vallas, 2003; Huusko, 2006).

The justifications for group project work

Students engaging in group assessment are said to gain transferable workplace skills in their groups. The model that is frequently invoked to justify this link is the project team that is typical of a matrix management structure in a company (Tarricone and Luca, 2002). The fact that students delegate roles within their groups and are able to draw on each others' strengths is provided as justification for the view that a genuine simulation of typical workplace interactions is taking place when student groups meet, plan and delegate work, and set deadlines.

Students working in groups are said to enjoy a deeper learning experience when they pool together their shared knowledge. In fact, De Vita (2002) has shown that the combined effort of each individual member of a group can raise the overall grade of each member of the group and the overall quality of the output is accordingly higher.

The social benefits of group work are also emphasised by lecturers and students in support of group assessment practices. In our study, a number of respondents highlighted the personal and academic benefits that they derived from being able to make friends through group work. It is for some the only method of meeting friends on campus.

It should also be mentioned that tutors do need to manage their ever-increasing workload judiciously and they can benefit from a reduced marking load when they receive fewer scripts. In fact, lecturers often 'do not have enough time to mark individual pieces' as the student quotation at the beginning of the paper suggests. Group assessment is therefore justified and justifiable on pragmatic grounds.

Methodology

The study took place at Oxford Brookes University in February 2006. Oxford Brookes is a large vocationally oriented university with approximately 19,000 students, of whom 20% are international. The students interviewed had all participated in group assessment tasks in semester one (Sep-Dec) of the 2005-6 academic year when they were enrolled in one of three modules: an undergraduate sociolinguistics module, an undergraduate business English module and a pre-sessional postgraduate academic English preparation module.

Initially students were asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding their attitude toward group work during the semester. On the basis of students' responses to this questionnaire, we attempted to select an equal number of students whom we deemed to be positively orientated toward group work and negatively orientated. Emails were sent out to students inviting them to participate in face-to-face semi-structured interviews with one of the researchers (in return for a £10 stipend). However, as the majority of students who volunteered for the research activity were positive respondents, it was not possible to achieve an equal balance of positive and negative respondents. In particular, some of the students who had expressed the greatest disillusionment with group work avoided either the initial questionnaire or the invitation to be interviewed and thus the opportunity to understand their predicament was lost. In the end, 12 students were selected for interviews and all duly attended within the following two weeks or so. Students were interviewed by the researcher who had taught them in class, either in the researcher's office or at a nearby classroom in privacy. Table 1 shows the student profiles:

Asian	non-native	7
European	non-native	3
British /American	native	2

Table 1: Student profiles

The interviews lasted approximately one hour and were semi-structured by a set of questions grouped into eight categories which were formulated from the initial questionnaire and discussion between the researchers. The questions we felt would adequately gauge the students' attitudes and beliefs toward group work and could realistically be covered in the time allotted for the interview. During the interviews, an attempt to address all of these categories was made although the interviewer was free to pursue other avenues of inquiry if necessary. The question categories are given below:

- **Overall impressions -** likes and dislikes of group work
- **Forming -** strategies and decisions taken in the early formation stages of the group
- **Storming -** overt conflict within the group and attempts to resolve conflict
- **Frustrations -** annoyances and irritations which were not overtly vented
- **Outcomes -** what students felt they brought to the group and what they learned
- **Relationships -** the importance of relationships within the group
- **Assessment -** how group work should be assessed
- **The value of group work**

Results

Overall Impression

Contrary to our fears and expectations, the results were generally positive and in some cases students were very appreciative of the opportunities to work in groups. However, while the vast majority of students interviewed subscribed to the use of group assessment, there were varying degrees of enthusiasm towards it. It was generally seen as a useful learning, social and vocational experience which defines learning at a contemporary institution in the UK.

This attitude does contrast with the findings of Leki in her 2001 study. Possible reasons include the fact that several of the students interviewed in our study were second year undergraduates who were more experienced group work participants. In Leki's study, in contrast, group project work was a new experience for her students. A further consideration is the fact that the types of experience that students view positively may clash with the tutor's or institution's beliefs. A successful experience may not always be an educationally rich one and vice versa.

It is also difficult to generalize on the basis of the opinions presented in our survey. Previous research has offered a variety of formulae which are said to be essential to underpin the effectiveness of group assessment work. We have found it difficult to relate to many of these formulae and would suggest that they might need to be revised or expunged. This paper will explore some of the more salient features of group assessment and focus on the issues that emerged from the interviews and the literature.

By-passing strategies

We asked our interviewees who had positive experiences to describe the work allocation within their group. It was striking to note that a number of students who claimed to have worked effectively in their groups were not fully engaging with the task as they were employing by-passing strategies. Typically, a group of 3 students would meet at the beginning, divide the task such as an essay into three and often not meet again until the task was due. In such situations interaction and hence the possibility of conflict is minimized, but little effective team work takes place.

Whilst all groups will need to divide tasks to some extent, whether in language learning settings or at the workplace, the extent to which this practice occurs can be detrimental to the benefits group work brings. In some cases, dividing up the work can be seen as a sign of maturity and cohesiveness in the group, particularly if members are confident of their position within the team and understand how other members work. However, in other cases a dividing work can reduce collaboration to such an extent that it cannot reliably be classed as group work at all.

Such experiences do serve a purpose for group work novices. The task could serve as an initiation to group work, an opportunity for students to reflect on its effectiveness and to build further bonds. It could also be a good warmer exercise, a precursor to more complex activities. One of our assumptions is that groups should be encouraged to work on more than one assignment because it is through repeated encounters and familiarization with one another's work that a level of trust, respect and reciprocity are developed.

Effective communities of practice do take time to thrive and often start off on precarious grounds. It is through continual interaction that the community can develop a more cohesive and powerful dynamic.

Conflict and storming

Conflict amongst members did occur in some groups but was not as significant as we had expected. Where it did exist, most of our interviewees indicated that it was either minor, or that they were able to manage it. Students did speak about differences of opinion, attitudes and behaviour but they felt that they were able to deal with them within the group. Group work theory would suggest that most groups go through the storming phase in which conflicts are raised and sometimes resolved. It is not clear that all groups did go through this phase.

Some respondents did talk about experiences in which conflict did occur, often when students needed to make consensual decisions. In many cases the conflict was positive as it helped the students to refine their approaches to the task and develop deeper layers of self-awareness. This was commented upon favorably by the students in the interviews and most reported that one of the benefits of group assessment for them is the fact that a combined effort can produce a better quality product by pooling together their talents, thus confirming de Vita's findings (2002).

There were other incidents mentioned by students, where conflicts erupted over the direction of the project which had less favorable outcomes. It seems that personality clashes as well as deep-seated prejudices were responsible for upsetting students. Where students whom we interviewed did not report any negative experiences we encouraged them to widen their focus to include other group assessment activities in which they were or had been involved. All students were aware of and able to talk about unfavorable experiences of group assessment, either through personal experience or from friends.

Cultural Exchanges - Asians and Europeans

Some of the misunderstandings that may have caused conflict between participants were ascribed to cultural differences. For example, some Japanese respondents felt that the Europeans were bossy while some of the Europeans considered the Japanese to be unforthcoming. However, on occasion students reported very positive cross-cultural exchanges and experiences. Overall, there is a lack of uniformity of views when it comes to cultural exchanges, but they do feature heavily in students' analyses of the workings of their groups. In addition, while some students preferred to work with members of their own culture, others preferred to work in multicultural groups and some were indifferent to the ethnic origin of other group members.

Cultural Exchanges - Asians and British

The international students, Asians and Europeans, experienced difficulties with the English students too. Indeed, a number of informants suggested that the English students did not take them seriously, that they ignored their contribution and crowded them out. (There are echoes of some of Leki's findings). The informants also suggested that English students were less interested in meeting as a group; that they saw the activity as a means to an end rather than a learning or team building process. This disappointed many international students who are more likely to share the tutor's and organization's views of group assessment - a valuable opportunity to meet and interact with a broader cultural mix of students.

Valuing others

In our interviews the students identified the following strengths within their groups: English language ability, presentation experience, business knowledge, experience of the UK education system, contacts within the business community. While all students believed they were able to bring some of the above to their group personally, they found it more difficult to spontaneously rattle off the strengths of their peers. When pressed, some students were able to acknowledge that others had superior language /writing skills and experience of studying business subjects, although they did not feel praised or rewarded by other peers.

Learning from others

Students more readily valued the interpersonal skills that are developed in group assessments than any knowledge that they are able to acquire from other students. It would seem that they do not regard each other as experts (Leki, 2001), but they do think that they learned other things. When asked what they felt they had learned from other members of their group our informants reported that they had gained insights into their own personalities, had experienced positive intercultural interactions and had enjoyed working with a range of students from different backgrounds. They also mentioned that they were able to learn about other nationalities and how they behave. This would be of use in the future when they are working in intercultural environments.

Socialization

One uncontroversial benefit that all students cited was the ability to make friends and in many cases build solid relationships. This is particularly significant with international students, some of whom found group project work the only way of meeting other students. The rather impersonal pick-and-choose modular approach to study makes it difficult for students to meet in class on a regular basis. In group assignments, by contrast, they are expected to meet regularly. Despite the fact that all students stated that they had difficulties finding the time to meet the other members of their group, often causing conflicts especially when team members failed to turn up, the students seemed to accept this as a normal occupational hazard.

Fairness

One of the frequently cited criticisms of group project work is the fear that marks will not be distributed equitably, that effort will not be rewarded fairly and that students may free-ride (Leki, 2001; Oakley, Felder, Brent, Elhajj, 2004, etc.). It has encouraged markers to try to devise mark allocation systems which aim to give an air of 'fairness' to the project by rewarding outstanding individual effort along with group effort, a difficult balancing act.

We were particularly keen to find out if our students had felt that they had benefited or had been defrauded by other members of the group.

Interestingly, there were practically no incidences in which students felt that such practices had occurred and students indicated resoundingly that marks had been allocated fairly, that effort had been rewarded appropriately and that each member of the group had contributed equitably to the project. Two students did identify projects in which they were left to do more work than others but they claimed to be happy to be doing this as they felt more in control in these instances. They categorically did not want to have marks deducted from their peers.

However, two Asian students did shed light on their vastly differing experiences with multicultural groups compared to British-dominated groups. The latter group work occurred in modules for which the researchers were not responsible and they only surfaced in the interviews in by-passing remarks. It was clear though from the comments and attitudes of the students that their experience of working alone as Asian students with all British partners was far from enjoyable:

> In beginning... I even feel they [British students] try to ignore me, that's quite uncomfortable
>
> [did they ignore you?] yeh they did yeh ... and then that made me nervous and y'know I couldn't say anything after that

Comments like these have been aired by other students not involved in our research and Leki (2001), as we have noted, found this to be an issue in the United States too, concluding that international students were being excluded by the home students from legitimate peripheral participation. We are currently investigating further the experience of international students in such an environment in an extension to our research on group work.

Discussion

Having looked at the results of our interviews, we would like to present here some ideas on what we think group work is and what it is not, based on our own observations and experience and the comments from the interviews.

A Good Preparation for the Workplace?

One often cited benefit of group work is that it could potentially provide language students with the socio-linguistic competencies to allow them to function in work-based settings, thus improving their employability. However, we believe that group work as it is normally implemented in higher education contexts falls short of this goal due to the lack of 'authenticity' in what it purports to represent. This lack of authenticity manifests itself in several ways. First, groups in language learning environments do not reflect communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Communities of practices in the 'real world' are enterprises which are created over time by human actors who share a sustained pursuit of the goals of these enterprises. Groups in university learning contexts, however, lack a lot of the characteristics of true communities of practice observed in the workplace. A key facet of authentic communities of practice is their situatedness, the idea that they exist in a real environment to achieve a purposeful goal. The actions and attitudes of the human actors in these communities have real consequences on their own lives and on those of others. Groups in language learning environments tend to lose a large degree of situatedness since they are not borne out of a need to exist but are themselves the reason why they exist. The goals they are set up to achieve do not normally represent real, life-changing goals (save for the very real goal of attaining a grade) and thus the actions of the group members hold less importance and the information less relevance. Groups in these environments tend to be formed easily and break up easily with little impact on people's lives. (The challenge to educators is how to make the group work in higher education more situated.)

Genuine communities of practice also tend to be built around 'experts' and 'novices' of varying degrees involving hierarchies where status and power take on real meaning. Novices enter the community as apprentices, or legitimate peripheral participants, and learn the practice from the expert, gradually taking on more and more of the practice and moving toward a central role (Lave and Wenger 1991). With groups in university settings, the participants enter the group as novices together and jointly move toward a more expert position. Even when a member genuinely does constitute more of an expert at the start through his or her knowledge of the subject or his or her experience in dealing with teams, we found that other members of the group often do not acknowledge this expertise or do not acknowledge its importance. In other words, the default assumption is that every one starts out on an equal footing and decision making and adoption of ideas is often a process of consensus.

Another characteristic of authentic communities of practice is the management of conflict. Teams are often observed going through 4 phases: forming, storming, norming and performing stages (Tuckman, 1965). The time required to pass through all four stages can be significantly large, up to two years in some cases, and not less than six months in most cases (Ray and Bronstein, 1995). In fact many teams break up before passing through the storming phase, a phase where conflict and disagreement come to the fore. In any event, genuinely getting through the forming stage where all the niceties of groups are played out can take several months. Bacon, Stewart and Silver (1999: 470) have suggested that 'optimal team longevity [in the workplace] far exceeds the longevity of a typical student team'. This leads to the obvious questions as to whether students in such a limited time frame and in many cases limited contact time can ever really be expected to have approached the storming phase let alone pass through it. In all the interviews with our students, it was clear that there was very little in the way of what might be termed 'genuine conflict', conflict which would enable deep-seated frustrations and disagreements to be aired and resolved. One student reports in the following quotation on how her group never experienced any conflict:

> actually I did not find a problem in our group... no disagreements [perfect harmony?] mm I think so yes
>
> I don't think so, no [all went smoothly?] yeh , [no point when felt frustrated, voice your anger?] no no

So groups appear to lack authenticity because they do not form what might be termed communities of practice. They lack situatedness, are not built around 'experts' and 'novices' and rarely enter the storming phase of the team life cycle. Given this shortcoming, one has to question whether students are being required to hone the social and pragmatic skills that would equip them for the workplace to the full in higher education group work. This opinion is echoed in the following student comment:

> [Is the group experience at Brookes an accurate indication of what would occur in the workplace?] Not at all. However, I developed confidence, met other people and learned things from people.

The 'Real Workplace'

In the workplace, team roles are often clearly identified. Project managers are appointed and in matrix structures teams are composed by collectively combining expertise from various departments. For example, in a software design team, the team would be composed of: a team leader, a programmer, a graphics designer, a subject matter expert, an interactive designer and a QA person etc.

This division of labour does not transfer comfortably to the academic environment. For example, in our group projects, leaders are not generally appointed by the tutor as it is up to the group to decide how their team should work. Appointing a leader would probably imply favoritism and this is a taboo in educational settings

Implications of Findings for Internationalization

While we agree with Leki (2001) that international students and faculty do need support, we have found that it is the domestic students who are in most need of initiation into the internationalized environment that is the modern university and workplace. Universities across Europe are attracting more international students, workplace teams are increasingly multicultural yet British students are turning away from learning modern languages. Our evidence suggests that the international students are getting much more out of group assessment work than British students and will therefore be better prepared for the globalised workforce.

On the issue of conflict, we agree that it is an inevitable learning experience. There is evidence that our students do learn from negative experiences. One student, when reflecting on the experience discovered that she would have liked to have met the group members more often and that she would do this next time. There is clear evidence that more frequent and complex group work experiences lead to better experiences and that students learn and refine their contributions each time.

Finally, it is clear that whatever difficulties students may encounter when working in groups on campus, they will be magnified in the more competitive and less inclusive work environment. Universities that pride themselves on their vocational relevance need to recognize this. Our advice is to toughen them up rather than molly coddle them.

Conclusion

To sum up, although the experience of group assessment was generally viewed positively by the students in our interviews, it falls short of some of its major aspirations due to the nature of the university environment. Groups in universities are not communities of practice in the true sense. They lack experts /novices, situatedness, staging (forming, storming etc), and true power relationships. However, groups in universities do benefit from the relational aspect of human interaction, managing and resolving conflict and logistical organization. Groups that aim for full and proper collaboration can develop inter-personal life skills provided that conflict that arises in the course of the collaboration is viewed as positive tension rather than negative tension.

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13 New concepts, new paradigms for English as an international language

Paul Roberts

Introduction

This paper is intended to be seen as part of the growing body of work around the world-wide use of English, most obviously documented by Graddol who, in a recent publication, suggests that there are probably no fewer than one billion people currently learning English, adding themselves to the already massive number of English users in all parts of the world (Graddol, 2006: 98--9).

There is no need to reiterate in full the well-rehearsed debate concerning the centrality or supremacy of the native-speaker myth and the native-speaker reality in this body of work. In outline, the anti-native-speaker argument goes thus: while native-speakerism continues to inform English language standards, English language learning materials and English teaching methodology, people learning and using English are being presented with unattainable goals and with cultural models which are imbued with linguistic or cultural imperialism (see, for example, Holliday, 2005).

In response to this, a certain amount of scholarship and research has been devoted to finding a way out of the practical and political difficulties, in the first instance by attempting to develop a new approach to language standards. Seidlhofer, for example, looks forward to a 'reconceptualisation' of English as a Lingua Franca which illuminates aspects of both the political and the practical issues, factors which she lists as follows:

> Questioning of the deference to hegemonic native-speaker norms in all contexts
> Emphasizing the legitimacy of variation in different communities of use
> Highlighting the need to pursue the attitudinal and linguistic implications of the global spread of English
> Acknowledging the need for description and codification.
> (Seidlhofer, 2004: 214)

Several scholars and researchers, Seidlhofer included, have taken up the challenge, then, to identify, characterise and describe this communication tool; some have done so speculatively, suggesting theoretical bases for further consideration; others have gathered data and begun to draw tentative conclusions about the nature of this kind of communication.

This paper first considers critically the work of some of these scholars and researchers and attempts, modestly, to point out how it may risk failure because, instead of reconceptualising English, it seems to rest too strongly on traditional concepts which cannot account for it and within paradigms which cannot contain it. The paper goes on to outline other work which rests on alternative concepts or which fits into alternative paradigms.

'A language variety' or 'a way of using English'

A large amount of the work around the world-wide use of English seeks to identify, to describe or to characterise an entity, the name of which may depend on a particular scholar or researcher, or on a particular way of considering the facts. The following names have all been used, some of them having received critical attention:

International English
World English
World Standard Spoken English
World Standard English
Global English.

These names, which are composed of an adjective + English, all seem to suggest that the object of study is an entity, a variety even. The underlying concept is, then, that 'a' language can be divided into varieties and that International or World or World Standard Spoken are, possibly, varieties of 'a' language called 'English'. As such, the variety might fit into one or more of several traditional paradigms, represented diagrammatically in the standard literature.

McArthur suggests, for example, that 'World English' might fit into the evolutionary paradigm as the most recent form of 'a' language which has progressed from Pre-Old English through Middle and Modern English (McArthur 1998, Chapter 4. See Table 1).

Pre-Old English
Old English
Middle English
Early Modern English
Modern English
World English

Table 1: World English in the evolutionary paradigm of Englishes, McArthur 1998, Chapter 4

Görlach uses a different paradigm, one which suggests a ripple effect or its opposite, what might be called a 'plughole' effect: a tension between centrifugal or centripetal forces where International English stands at the centre of an ever-fragmenting set of World Englishes (Görlach, 1988).

As well as attempts at grasping International (or Global or World) English as a variety within a paradigm of World Englishes, there have been several endeavours at identification, characterisation or description under an 'English as…..' label, most notably English as an International Language (EIL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and English as a World Language (EWL). These labels are intended, at least by some, to capture a use of English rather than a variety. The pedigree of such terms seems to lead back to the world of native-speaker dominated English Language Teaching, which invented the terms EFL and ESL to help people distinguish those English teachers involved in helping youngsters towards literacy and an appreciation of the literary canon, from those required to help people of any age to acquire an additional language. In other words, the F in EFL and the S in ESL refer to students, not to language. Similarly, the I in EIL and the W in EWL refer to the location of language users rather than to characteristics of language, although the situation does become blurred at times. The term ELF also seems mainly to refer to people using English but, again, there is occasionally some confusion.

The underlying concept of EIL, EWL and ELF is one, then, which concerns people rather than 'a' language, and the most frequently used paradigm into which to fit them is the one proposed by Kachru: users of English as an international or world language, or as a lingua franca, are situated somewhere in one or more of the three circles (Kachru, 1985).

The majority of scholars and researchers seem to agree that the users in question are located in the expanding circle: they are all people who do not live in contexts where English is a token of their national identity or where

English is institutionalised at national levels. Melchers and Shaw provide an overview (Melchers and Shaw 2003). As such, users of EIL, EWL or ELF are also cast into the familiar paradigm which separates speakers into the two categories of native and non-native, falling clearly into the latter.

Problems

Problems with International/World/Global English

The attempts to identify World/International/ Global English as a variety within the World Englishes paradigm seem to suggest one or two problems. Firstly there is the risk that any of these adjective+English terms might be taken to refer to a single, monolithic variety. Yet McArthur, for example, in suggesting that World English is already with us, turns out to be referring to something akin to traditional Standard English, spoken in different accents and used in international journalism, something he refers to as ‘a converging speech style and a World Standard in print form’ which ‘exist in the shape of e.g. The International Herald Tribune, The Economist, CNN and the BBC World Service.’ (McArthur, 2004: 10). Alternatively, he suggests that World English is ‘a standard variety common to the media, business, and what one is constrained to call, for want of a better phrase, a Western-educated international elite’ (McArthur, 1996: 14). In both cases, what is being referred to is, of course, something restricted rather than universal – ‘International Western-run media English’ perhaps, and ‘International Western élite English’. In both cases, World English might certainly be seen as the most recent form of ‘a’ language progressing through Middle English and Modern English, given that these terms are seen, by critical analysts such as Milroy, to refer to restricted codes, constructed for the purpose of creating an appropriate national language myth (Milroy, 2002). Neither case is likely to be satisfying to those endeavouring to detach English from its native-speakerist (Western), imperialist (Western-media and élite) fastness.

Other proponents of World English also run the risk of having their creations and constructions taken for a single, monolithic variety, if they do not suggest that this is indeed the case. Crystal, for example, envisages a future World Standard Spoken English (Crystal, 1997: 137) and Brutt-Griffler suggests, similarly, that there will be a new World English which will be the language of the world English speech community, the future result of convergence within a ‘composite culture’ sharing subjective knowledge, globally (Brutt-Griffler, 2002: 175--180). Whether there is such a thing as a

Global Community which is developing its own language norms is perhaps a matter for debate; for any resulting language norms to constitute a variety of English would, however, require more than just the convergence of diverse people. Authoritative scholars seem to agree that for a variety to qualify as such, it needs a degree of stability (Davies, 1989: 461), of fixing within geographical or sociocultural boundaries and with sensitivity to its history (Llamzon, 1983: 100--4) and institutionalisation (Platt, Weber and Ho, 1984: 2--3). Butler sums the criteria up in her 1997 article (Butler, 1997: 106).

For World English there are no such geographical boundaries while sociocultural boundaries will deliver different varieties of World English, not a universal one; there is no history and there is no likelihood of there being an internationally respected authority to which the task of institutionalisation might be attributed. Whether a stabilised variety will appear is debatable but doubtful.

The project to identify International, World or Global English as one variety, based on the concept of language varieties and set in the paradigm of World Englishes is not, then, likely to respond to the linguicist problem, if, indeed, it is even likely to come into existence.

Problems with English as an International Language/ English as a Lingua Franca

Turning from the 'variety' concept to the user-related concepts of 'English as…', the situation is no less problematic. Firstly, as has been hinted at, there is bound to be blurring at times, leading to the idea that the E in EIL, EWL and ELF is somehow different from the E in other 'English as..' formulations. If English as an International Language is intended to refer to the way in which people use English internationally, then this way may, as Seidlhofer suggests, be characterised in part by 'the most relied-upon and successfully employed grammatical constructions and lexical choices' (Seidlhofer, 2003: 18). It is a short step from the identification of characteristic forms to the concept that there is a particular variety in use internationally. Indeed, those writing on English as a Lingua Franca occasionally refer to 'Lingua Franca English', as if it were the same thing.

But even without this potential and sometimes actual confusion, the 'English as….' terms rest on concepts and fit into paradigms which may not reflect the reality of world-wide English use.

The people who are supposed to be users of EIL and ELF all belong to the Expanding Circle; the problem is that Kachru's circles are full of nationalities and refer, perhaps obliquely, to national institutions and practices.

Since Kachru created the circle diagram, the world and English have moved towards a situation where the neat division between circles is somewhat obfuscated: claims are being made for institutionalised English (institutionalised in educational or workplace settings, if not government agencies) in countries placed firmly in the Expanding Circle: cases have been made, for example, for Hungary, Denmark and Norway as ESL countries.

And while the circles refer to nationalities, EIL and ELF seem to refer to individuals: the individuals who use English as an International Language or as a Lingua Franca may well drift across the boundaries dividing the circles. To exclude people from the body of international users because of their nationality seems to be a contradiction. To include people merely because of their nationality is absurd. Bruthiaux has pointed out that the three-circle division of English users – based on nation-state boundaries, does not take into account variety within the boundaries and levels of proficiency in so-called Expanding Circle countries (Bruthiaux, 2003: 161).

Kachru himself has recently redrawn the circles in terms of proficiency, putting users with 'functional nativeness' in the inner circle and those with less proficiency in the outer regions (Kachru, 2004). This more recent, proficiency-based paradigm recalls Modiano's attempt at much the same thing (Modiano, 1999).

Similar contradictions and absurdities attend the anchoring of scholarship and research into EIL or ELF within the native-speaker/non-native speaker paradigm. According to several of those working in the area, qualification as an EIL or ELF user requires non-native speaker status. Lesznyák refers to, for example, Firth (1996), Meierkord (1996 and 1998) and Beneke (1991) and concludes that 'Lingua Franca is …… per definition mother tongue to none of the participants' (Lesznyák, 2002: 166).

But the dividing line between the two categories of native and non-native speaker has never been harder to draw: Ammon, for example, suggests that the terms non-native speaker and native speaker cover 'a continuum which can be subdivided and measured in numerous ways' (Ammon, 2003: 24). And even if the terms are accepted as rough guidelines, it is far from obvious that non-native users have a monopoly on the international use of English. Seidlhofer, while focusing her research attention on non-native speakers, nevertheless has agreed that ELF may include native as well as non-native users (Seidlhofer, 2004: 211) and Knapp agrees (Knapp, 2002: 220--221). The traditional concepts of language variety and language users divided according to their geography or learning history, the familiar historical, geographical or social paradigms and the much-used binary distinction between native and non-native users all risk failing to sustain or contain a vision of world-wide communication using English.

Other possibilities

Three solutions appear to be available at the moment, which rest neither on concepts of characterising, describing and identifying an entity within the 'World Englishes' paradigm nor on those separating users into national groups. All three possibilities seem to have some resonance with the current realities of English use.

Dehegemonising Standard English(es) – conceptualising English without a standard

Parakrama suggests this way forward: by being more accepting of so-called non-standard uses of English, the whole native-speakerist, linguicist discourse is resolved (Parakrama 1995). If Standard English ceases to be revered by the many and to be preserved as the domain of the powerful, then many of the motivations behind trying to codify other, international Englishes lose their momentum.

It may well be that 'reconceptualising' English follows this path by conferring respect onto non-standard forms; but by suggesting that so-called deviant forms conform to different standards, then the same problem of inclusion and exclusion remains. Bridger, cited by Berns in 2005, makes the point succinctly: 'codification enters the domain of standardization, and even the most description based corpus will not free us from the prescriptivism with which standardization is charged . . . even corpus-based codification settles into prescriptive instruction'. If, on the other hand, 'reconceptualising' leads to learners of English ignoring standards then, as Kandiah suggests in his introduction to Parakrama's work, discourse communities which do not recognise non-standard will simply 'other' those trying to promote it.

Still, Parakrama's suggestion seems to chime strongly with what is happening in native-speaker countries, referred to by Graddol as 'destandardisation': discourse communities which do not recognise Standard English are effectively breaking its hegemony and elevating 'uneducated' use to norm status, especially in the entertainment media (Graddol 1997, Chapter 5). A great deal of English used internationally also flaunts Standard English norms and may force itself on an otherwise standard-bearing community. Within Higher Education in the UK, for example, non-standard use of English among students of all nationalities may well be forcing itself on the more traditional academic discourse community.

Contriving new standards

Jenkins' well-known project involves identifying what she calls the 'lingua franca core' – the phonological items which are essential to maintain intelligibility when people from different language backgrounds speak together. Jenkins lays great emphasis on the processes of accommodation by which people seek to understand each other and suggests that language teaching pedagogy should strongly reflect this emphasis. When these processes fail, speakers need a fall-back position, represented by the core, which is to be contrived by a sort of default process: by identifying features which always lead to success in ELF interactions and leaving aside all those features of any variety of English which have no effect on success, a feature set can be contrived and then taught to everyone who wants to participate in lingua franca interactions (Jenkins, 2000).

In her 2002 paper, Seidlhofer looks at Ogden's Basic English and seems to appreciate its unnatural aspect while also suggesting that, like Jenkins' phonological core, it can represent a starting point from which users can explore English and combine communicative aims with pedagogic ones. She suggests that her work on English as a Lingua Franca may be combined with the establishment of a contrived, unnatural lexico-grammatical core (Seidlhofer, 2002). Using a contrived core may make sense both communicatively and pedagogically and may, in fact, simply be an honest and realistic way of approaching English in classrooms.

The use of a contrived pronunciation core is being experimented with and the results seem positive; the construction of a contrived lexico-grammatical core may be more difficult and there are several objections to the idea, along with many expressions of misunderstanding regarding Seidlhofer's work, leading her to publish 'ELF, what it is not' (Seidlhofer, 2006). Still, the construction of unnatural English for classroom use has a long and rich pedigree and a record of success easily as long as a parallel record of failure.

Focusing on people in communities of practice, rather than in national communities

Instead of attempting to identify one International English or to imply that a single international variety exists, or may come into existence and instead of focusing on a portion of English speakers who are restricted by their geographical location or acquisition history, it may make sense to deal with the world-wide use of English by identifying communities of practice and seeking to describe the way they use English. This seems to be the direction Widdowson is pointing in when he refers to different registers which are not owned by their users in the same way that varieties are (Widdowson, 2003). It is also the direction taken by Bruthiaux in his 2003 paper:

> The model should make it possible to represent speech practices based on patterns of interaction and communicative, not historical factors, and take as its premise the notion that shared linguistic knowledge and practices are generally of greater communicative consequence than national origin. (Bruthiaux, 2003: 175)

This allows a return to McArthur's World English, now recast as a CNN register. It may also provide the background to Mauranen's data gathering at Tampere (Mauranen 2003) and may also underlie the programmes in Teaching English as an International Language at a British University (see Tomlinson, 2006).

This third solution has the advantage of following a clear tradition and of being based in realities which are relatively easy to grasp and to define; it remains to be seen whether or not 'peripheral', non-Western communities of practice will emerge with their own norms which are not redolent of current linguicist attitudes and which present learners with feasible attainable goals.

All three solutions also lead neatly back to Seidlhofer's use of 'reconceptualisation', mentioned at the beginning of this paper: Parakrama's solution questions deference to hegemony, the 'contrived core' approach acknowledges the need for codification (but without recourse to the collection of language data on shaky bases) and a focus on communities of practice might emphasise the legitimacy of variation in different communities of use.

Conclusion

In this paper an attempt has been made to outline, very superficially, the kind of work taking place in reconceptualising English to better reflect its current status and use as a universal means of communication. Two main reconceptualisation endeavours, perceiving International/Global/World English as a variety and focusing on the way English is used internationally or as a Lingua Franca, have been considered as problematic, given their reliance on traditional concepts and paradigms. Three further reconceptualisation projects have also been briefly referred to, all of which depart from the basic notion of identifying, describing, characterising or standardising a geographical, historical or socio-cultural variety and from the traditional English-user paradigm. It has been suggested that these three projects are more likely to contain or capture the current world-wide use of English.

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From Applied Linguistics to Linguistics Applied: Issues, Practices, Trends

Edited by
Maeve Conrick and Martin Howard

From Applied Linguistics to Linguistics Applied is a collection of papers from the joint conference of the British Association for Applied Linguistics and the Irish Association of Applied Linguistics held at University College Cork in September 2006.

The papers in this volume reflect the continuing diversity of Applied Linguistics as a research field. Concern with the evolution of the discipline is apparent, notably in the ways in which the authors situate their contribution in relation to existing theories and practices or to emerging trends in their specific field of interest.

In the papers presented in this volume, the 'real-world' dimension of the field is apparent in the range and variety of contexts discussed, from educational settings to the media and healthcare. The variety of approaches which characterise the work of applied linguists is also evident in the range of theoretical positions adopted and the research practices brought to bear on the linguistic issues under discussion, including the perspectives of second language acquisition, sociocultural theory and discourse analysis.

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