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Foreword

It is a pleasure and an honor to be the editor for this volume of the Philippine ESL Journal. I am proud to present four research articles that provide varying and novel perspectives to the relatively conventional approaches and practices in language teaching. The first two articles examine various factors and resources learners use in specific language skills: speaking and writing. The last two articles present the merits of adapting new models or perspectives that consider the culture and personhood of both teachers and learners.

Ilyn Faminial's work on the role of the first language in group discussion provides empirical evidence for the reflections of students on their preferred languages in a multilingual setting when engaged in classroom tasks, providing interesting insights on the all-too-familiar "English only policy."

Considering the cognitive processes involved in ESL writing, Leah Gustilo's study comprehensively explores the different resources learners employ that influence their writing performance. Her research attempts to identify what characterize proficient and less proficient writers in a particular genre, the argumentative essay.

Appropriately situated in multicultural environments, Thao Quoc Tran and Sirinthorn Seepho's investigation on the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and EFL learners' perceptions towards the intercultural communicative language teaching (ICLT) model results in positive perceptions of students and encouraging insights for the language teachers adapting the model.

Finally, Jerry Smith's autoethnographic work offers a fresh Facilitator-Person (F-P) perspective for consideration, which is different from the two common views in ELT practice: the Teacher-Student (T-S) and Teacher-Learner (T-L) perspectives. He emphasizes the importance of awareness and reflection in shifting from the more traditional perspectives to an F-P perspective.

May these fruits of academic pursuits not only empower but also motivate us to shake and challenge existing notions and practices, for after all, seeking answers only leads to more questions. We thank all the authors and reviewers for their valuable contributions to this issue.

Happy reading!

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Language Role in Classroom Collaborative Learning Task: Multilingual Students' Use of Language in L2 Group Discussion

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Abstract

The study investigated the role of language in a collaborative learning task in an English class. As a primary instrument of interaction, language was maximally utilized by the respondents in performing a group discussion activity. Participated in by multilingual learners, the study explored the languages that they used in their conversations. Moreover, it gathered the respondents' justifications for preferring these languages while expressing personal views, negotiating ideas, and reconciling differences of opinion. Using a qualitative method of data gathering and analysis, the study ascertained the use of home languages, particularly Filipino and Cebuano, other than the required language which is English. The use of these languages existed in different conversation acts in the three identified stages of group discussion. Moreover, the learners identified these languages to be useful in attaining their goal as a group. While this paper acknowledges that the learners made positive impressions on the effectiveness of their native languages in an English activity, it also highlights the difficulty of the students in practicing their communication skills in their second language. This constructive regard by the students toward English is a tool for a more influential motivation in further developing their skills in the target language.

Keywords: multilingualism; collaborative learning task; second language; language role; home languages

Introduction

Teaching a second language has usually emphasized the need to develop proficiency in the target language. Hence, language teaching is informed by a methodology that requires meaningful engagement of learners. Learning a language becomes more developed when the received input is sufficient (Liddicoat, 2007). This means that when the learners begin to exhibit a relevant output, they are learning to grasp the new language they learned. Since demonstration of skills may further develop proficiency in the target language, it is therefore necessary that students be provided with activities that reinforce the target skills.

Teachers, more specifically those who are handling second language learners, ideally maximize the amount of input the learners can experience in the target language. Learners have to develop accuracy, fluency, and proficiency in order to manage learning. There should be a rich input and more opportunities for output. These standards sound ideal but seem to be problematic for both teachers and students.

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According to Liddicoat (2007), “the development of language proficiency requires a maximum exposure to the target language and maximum opportunities to use the target language meaningfully” (p. 2). While this appears to be helpful, this does not take place all the time. A relevant observation is the learners’ tendency to use more familiar languages, usually local languages, even in an English classroom. Opportunities may be present, but active participation is hardly gained because of the learners’ attitudes toward the task. Maesin, Mansor, Nayan, Osman, and Shafie (2012) assert that there are still students who are afraid to speak in English in verbal activities, more so in public places where more people could hear them. Moreover, it is frustrating to know that even university students are not confident in performing discussions in the language (Fushino as cited in Xue, 2013). Speaking skills, being the most transparent, are found to be the weakest. Nevertheless, the existence of local languages other than the target language has played significant functions in the completion of discussion tasks.

Howarth (2006) affirmed that speaking is the most stressful task for most language learners especially when there is a need for immediate response. Hence, they tend to consider their first language to immediately address the task. Learners admit that they find difficulties in gathering their thoughts and finding words in English that best represent the ideas that they intend to express. Moreover, when engaged in a group discussion, it seems to be an anticipated scenario that students initiate the activity using their native languages to facilitate the discussion despite the directive of the teacher to speak exclusively in the target language. Over the past several decades, this learning strategy for language practice has been beneficial for second language learners in providing diverse opportunities for first-hand experience of the target language, but the propensity to use the local language might be within the learners’ options to conduct communication among the group members. As Maesin et al. (2012) remark, students’ reluctance in speaking in English can be attributed to their lack of confidence. In fact, what hinders them from participating actively in speaking activities is their anxiety about using the conventions of English. Nonetheless, second language learners have a positive attitude toward cooperative learning task in English classrooms for they see it as a venue for improving their proficiency in English. However, they prefer learning collaboratively in an informal learning environment where they have full control over the product (Tiong & Yong, 2004). Hence, the students’ desire for developing their skills in English may be strong, but their apprehension about their oral abilities may prevent them from engaging actively in verbal activities expected in a group discussion task. From these perspectives, it can be said that in a classroom task which requires cooperation and negotiation, the use and existence of learners’ first languages seem to have practical functions in their performance in a second language classroom.

Liddicoat (2007) stresses that the development of language proficiency requires a maximum exposure to the target language. The provision of opportunities where students can use the language is absolutely helpful in reassuring the development of skills. Teachers, being concerned about the provision of sufficient avenues, are faced with bigger concerns on how to impose strictly the absolute use of the target language in classroom tasks. Linguistic condition plays a significant role in assuring complete motivation among the learners. Realistically though, the multiple languages available in the learners’ repertoire play an impact on their choice of language in different verbal activities. Ervin-Tripp (as cited in Grosjean, 1982) suggests that a speaker in any language community who engages in diverse social situations normally has a repertoire of speech alternatives which shift according to different situations. Clearly, learners have the tendency to prefer a more familiar language

within their repertoire when participating in verbal activities even if there is a directive from the teacher that English should be the language used in a cooperative task. As Grosjean (1982) further explains, the use of varied languages is affected by settings, participants, topics, and functions. These four factors account for the variety of codes an individual uses when faced with different circumstances. Particularly in a second language classroom setting, students are expected to shift from one language to another especially when they are with their classmates who speak the same language. Though they are skilled in switching codes, students understand clearly that speaking absolutely in the target language can equip them with skills that they can use in their future professions.

This shifting of language is highly recognized by intercultural language teaching and learning that seeks to develop proficiency in both the target language and the native language. Both the target language and the native language need to be supported and developed in the classrooms to help facilitate further learning. Language learning and culture are communicated, and according to Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, and Kohler (as cited in Liddicoat, 2007), the dialogue between the two is viewed to be helpful in developing the proficiency of the learners. This may mean that learners should be allowed to use their native language when performing the verbal activities to achieve a balanced development of both languages.

The nature of the balance between languages will vary from classroom to classroom depending on individual variables such as cognitive development, language proficiency, learning purpose, and personality, among others. However, there seem to be some basic dimensions for consideration which underlie the planning of language use in the classroom, which include language focus, modes of communication, degree of creativity, and most especially, the participants (Liddicoat, 2007). The learners, as the primary consideration, should be placed at the center of concern as to which language would be more needed in supporting the creation of meanings and creating an environment that legitimates learning. Learners may need to use their native language to engage in learning while teachers need to permit learners' own language for complex activities that require expressive talking such as when they are articulating their ideas and emotions. Hence, what drives the choice of a language in a learning task is the depth and richness of discussion and the learning that needs to be achieved.

In Nation's (2003) study of L1's role in learning L2, he found that in a classroom where students have the same first language, conversation activities which should be done in L2 were done in L1. He cited three reasons why learners prefer to use their L1: 1) it is a more natural language to use when they are with the same speakers; 2) it is more communicative and effective; and 3) it may prevent embarrassment for those who are not so proficient in L2. With these being said, it seems to forward a contention that L1 has positive effects on learning. Supported by the studies of Lameta-Tufuga (1994) and Knight (1996), Nation (2003) discusses relevant results of using L1 in L2 classroom activities. In the former study, it was found that students were engaged actively in a discussion activity prior to writing when they conducted the discussion in their L1 then later completed the writing task in L2. In the latter study, the students who did the preparatory task in L1 performed better when doing it in L2. Both studies conveyed the notion that L1 serves as a useful tool in facilitating L2 learning. Nevertheless, students have to be encouraged to overcome obstacles in learning L2. Another study that supports the use of L1 in an L2 context is the investigation of Nazary (2008), where the importance of L1 in L2 learning is acknowledged as a useful learning tool

in facilitating communication. The consideration of three different proficiency levels categorized as elementary, intermediate, and advanced showed relevant perceptions of students in the use of L1 in L2 learning. Although the study assumed students' positive attitude toward L1, it was revealed that most of them rejected the use of L1 in an L2 context. This can be attributed to the school's policy of exclusively using the target language in an L2 classroom. On the other hand, it can be significantly noted that the students' proficiency mattered in their attitude toward the use of L1. Specifically, among the three levels, the intermediate had a deeper negative attitude toward L1. This might be due to two reasons: first, they were not like grade school pupils with no choice except to use their L1; and second, they were not like the advanced students with qualified understanding of the function of L1 for enhancing fluency and accuracy. The results may mean that L1 becomes more useful to students with a beginning proficiency level or those who have little knowledge of the target language. As the proficiency increases, the use of L1 becomes an additional option.

One way of developing learners' interest in learning L2 is the provision for activities that maximize L2 use in the classroom. Dooly (2008) describes collaborative task as a whole process of learning rather than just a simple cooperation among the group members. As a classroom activity, students work together in reaching a goal. This entails responsibility and independence. To facilitate discussion, students need to work together and to be accountable for one another. In so doing, everyone needs to interact with the other members of the group. Communication is a primary instrument in building knowledge and eventually unity. In group tasks, interpersonal skills are usually prerequisites in accommodating new inputs. Collaborative learning greatly requires working together, building concepts as a team, changing ideas for better ones, and evolving together until a specific goal is achieved. All these will be made possible through the use of language. Language is an active participant in any collaborative work. It directs exchanges and negotiations within the group. For a more meaningful task, members are encouraged to take part in the conversation. Each member should be responsible for the necessary concepts to complete the task. It includes learning how to listen to comments, suggestions, opinions, agreements, disagreements, and criticisms from other members and eventually learning how to rethink personal biases and judgment on the issue at hand. Clearly, the use of language facilitates active participation among the members. Inadequate or inappropriate use of it will defeat the purpose.

It should be further emphasized that there should be proper prompting, supervision, and guide from the teachers. Students have to know their purpose in the group. Khon (as cited in Dooly, 2008) suggests that everyone in the group should know his/her role. Assigning each member for a discussion role can be an initial way to ensure active participation and compel them to move and do their part. Distributing tasks also showcases individual abilities. Dividing the labor can also teach learners to be more responsible.

However, interpersonal communication should not be confused with good language skills. Johnson and Johnson (as cited in Dooly, 2008) mention that "effective interpersonal communication means that group members communicate with each other on a regular basis, and are careful to ensure that their communication is clear and relevant"(p. 11).

The quality of communication in group discussion depends mainly on active conversation skills. Learners communicate effectively by asking questions, explaining and justifying opinions, elaborating suggestions, and reconciling differences. These are expected to occur within the period of discussion. Members of a supportive group tend to automate a

system that works best for them. Soller (2001) terms this as intelligent collaborative learning group and argues that assigning discussion role and imposing member's task may not guarantee an effective collaborative learning behavior of the members. The real measure of success in a group discussion is the degree of interaction among members. In Soller's (2001) study, she emphasizes that more effort needs to be done to ensure member involvement and participation in a collaborative task. To address this problem, she proposes a model of Intelligent Collaborative Learning System, which offers a system for a more effective learning conversation. The model initially determines the basic characteristics of the learning team in terms of participation, social grounding, performance analysis and group processing, application of active learning conversation skills, and promotive interaction. Upon employing the model, proper strategies that are best applied to the group can then be devised to facilitate the learning process. The study ultimately targets the identification of the method that is suited to the components of the learning group and eventually develops a structure which can become a basis for effective communication among the members of collaborative learning groups.

Group discussion gives the students a chance to practice critical thinking. Allowing them to talk means giving them a meaningful time to think for themselves and internalize the things around them. However, letting them do things in their own way may devalue the real purpose of such engagement if they start speaking without much substance. Walking them through the process can lead to the achievement of the goal of the activity. Ozer (2005) suggests that students have to be given the chance to practice a new language. For full participation, a smaller group is more ideal to ensure opportunity for practice.

Group work as a collaborative learning strategy in the classroom setting has established its countless benefits over the years. In the study of Maesin et al. (2010), they found that collaborative learning activities do help students enhance their speaking skills and reduce their apprehension toward speaking in a group discussion or any speaking activities inside their classroom. From their finding, it was also revealed that the students are familiar and feel comfortable working in groups (as in many collaborative activities) rather than speaking face-to-face with a new person or to be involved in personal interaction.

Similarly, group discussion is determined to be a meaningful instructional practice in L2 classrooms. The interviews of Li and Campbell (2008) showed that students, especially those with diverse cultural backgrounds, positively recognize group discussions as an avenue for improving their communication skills in English. Students' preference in doing group discussions in informal settings may introduce them to a new learning system. They tend to become conscious whenever the collaborative task becomes too formal. Hence, low participation is often observed whenever the teacher is monitoring directly and strictly the communication that occurs within the discussion group.

Group discussion is not only found to be a meaningful activity in English classrooms. Requena-Carrión, Alonzo-Atienza, Guerrero-Currieses, and Rodríguez-González (2010) consider collaborative learning as significant in engineering education. Their study centered on integrating group discussion after students had completed a class project. By engaging students in an integrated collaborative work, it provided them access to the project of their peers, analyze and comment critically their classmates' works, and enhance and develop writing and oral skills. Communication skills development as the primary goal of this initiative was seen positively as students got more engaged in giving feedbacks to their peers'

project. As a result, it was found that organizing students in groups and promoting communication among the members enhanced communication skills of the engineering students. This became more apparent in the final presentation of their output with a bigger audience where they confidently showcased their oral proficiency.

Putting all these briefly, collaborative learning tasks have proven their worth as a meaningful instructional procedure targeting the development of communication skills in both first and second languages. However, their effectiveness becomes too limited when students have low participation because of their negative behavior toward the use of English throughout the discussion. Fushino (as cited in Xue, 2013) conducted a study with 729 first-year university students in Japan and found that beliefs about L2 group work influence students' willingness to communicate in L2 group work via communication confidence. Students found themselves inadequate in speaking in English. This reluctance resulted in non-participation in the group discussion. As an effect, these students missed the opportunity to practice their skills in the target language, for they preferred not to speak at all. Those students in the group who were more fluent tended to dominate the discussion though, but then again, the opportunity was enjoyed by a few students who demonstrated more confidence than the others. In another study, Howarth (2006) interviewed students who were learning a second language. When asked about the biggest problem that they normally faced when speaking, learners generally admitted that they had great difficulty in trying to express what they wanted to say. Because they could not think immediately of the words that they needed to use, they tended not to speak at all. Similarly, according to Holmes (2004), researchers have attributed Asian students' lack of interest in participating in group activities to their inadequate language skills, the influence of their prior learning experiences, pedagogical differences, and their underdeveloped interpersonal communication skills.

Maesin et al. (2012) found that students are using language forms whenever they engage in a collaborative work. In their study of student's strategies as they take part in the group discussion, they found that the students employ language forms that help them to communicate effectively their ideas while performing the task. This strongly suggests that for the learners to be more engaged in any collaborative learning tasks, teachers should develop strategies that would help them maximize their presence in the group. Allowing the use of familiar languages during the preparatory task can be an effective way of ensuring active participation. It was also found that students particularly use language forms in different functions in group discussions. Some functions were identified as expressing an opinion, giving a suggestion, signaling a main point, soliciting response from others, expressing doubts, expressing agreement, expressing disagreement, making interruptions, and forming conclusions.

Most studies exploring the role of language in an English classroom have often considered the attitudes and preferences of the learners toward the use of the target language in performing activities in an L2 context (Nation, 2003; Nazary, 2008). Certainly, teachers' strict insistence of the idea of using only the target language to maximize learning opportunities has greatly influenced the students' preference in using the language, which seemingly overlooks the quality of participation. Undoubtedly, students' strong attachment to their L2 may be linked to a monolingual framework of teaching. In addition, the respondents, being bilinguals, were usually made to choose between two language options which may be different when there are more language alternates in multilingual cases. While the results of Nation's (2003) study support the existence of other languages in successfully performing an

L2 task, they briefly detailed how these languages were utilized specifically in the occurrences of the conversation acts. In studies involving learning activities that encourage participation such as a collaborative learning task, the emphasis is attributed mostly to the development of confidence to enable the students to enhance their speaking skills. Participation, being dependent on confidence in English proficiency, is frequently highlighted in studies considering collaborative tasks as a venue of the investigation (Li & Campbell, 2008; Maesin et al., 2010; Fushino as cited in Xue, 2013). In the studies of Howarth (2006) and Requena-Carrion et al. (2010), the positive effects of engaging students in collaborative tasks were found to be apparent. Students' communication skills were seen to have improved while they enjoyed working and learning with their peers at the same time.

While the aforementioned studies have contributed significantly in describing the usefulness of a collaborative learning task in developing communication skills, not much has been said about the distinctive role of languages that are assumed to have played a part in undertaking the task. The assumption that students may have used home languages in the different parts of the task other than the target language can be an interesting field of examination. Moreover, the limited supervision and instruction by the teacher while conducting a group task might have induced an initiative of utilizing a strategy that may largely involve the use of more than one language. By further examining the conduct of a collaborative learning task, the functions played by local languages can be viewed as tools in learning the target language. The involvement of a multilinguistically diversified group can provide a rich ground in investigating how students facilitate discussion and negotiate meaning, given the differences in language and culture.

Research Questions

Given this presumption, the present study attempts to investigate how the use of language facilitates communication in a group discussion in an ESL classroom. Additionally, the functions of language that the students use in expressing their ideas in different situations when engaged in a group discussion serve a significant point for examination. To specifically establish the study's objectives, the following questions were addressed:

1. Which languages do students use in accomplishing a group task?
2. How do students conduct the collaborative learning task? How do they utilize language in performing functions in the group discussion?
3. Why do students use the languages when engaged in group activities?

This paper aims to provide an explanation on how learners utilize language in performing group discussion activities in English. Having learned two or more languages before learning English as a language for academics, these learners are more exposed to a linguistic setting where almost all activities are predominantly performed in their native languages. Hence, this study attempts to investigate whether these learners are largely influenced by their first languages when engaged in a collaborative learning task. Group discussion, as a specific activity in finding out their use of language, was investigated to ascertain how language plays its role throughout the activity. Furthermore, it intends to show that language ultimately plays a significant role in the achievement of any task done collaboratively. Therefore, the use of language, may it be first or second, is highly valued to assure completion of the activity.

An understanding of an ESL learner's cultural background is expected to be more strengthened through the findings of this study. Although this paper does not strongly tolerate the learners' speaking of their own languages at all times in English classes, it argues that their native languages may help them fulfill the output expected of them. Moreover, it intends to furnish educators with the real scenario that students usually do whenever they carry out speaking tasks in English classrooms. Teacher awareness is expected to be more broadened upon learning that students could not completely disregard their own languages in verbal activities even in a language class. Ultimately, learners are encouraged to take opportunities in practicing their second language skills through classroom activities. Even so, being conscious of the reality in English classrooms can furnish the teachers with appropriate strategies and directives to fully motivate the learners to consider the use of the target language in whatever tasks they do in class, may they be supervised or unsupervised by their teachers.

Methodology

A qualitative method was employed in this study. To ensure the accuracy of the data, the study involved audio-recording of the students' actual activity while performing the task. Informal interviews involving selected participants were also used for additional information on the use of the identified languages in the collaborative learning task. Several considerations were cited in the following sub-parts to further explain how the aims of the study on describing and interpreting the role of language in a classroom collaborative task and explaining the justifications of preferring the languages used during a group discussion activity were pursued.

Participation of the Researcher

As the researcher, I acted as the class observer. The students were oriented that they were participating in the study. Being used to classroom observations as regularly occurring in the university, students did not show hesitations in participating actively in the collaborative learning task. Moreover, the orientation by their teacher was delivered in advance to prepare students for the conduct of the study. The orientation included only basic information about the purpose of the study to ensure the naturalness of the data. Everything was expected to be naturally occurring to not spoil the essence of the study. Hence, other details were just given on the particular meeting where students needed to actually perform the task.

Study Site

The study was conducted in a private tertiary institution in General Santos City, Philippines. The university caters to all types of learners provided that they passed the qualifying examination conducted before their entry in their first semester in college. As a recognized university in the city, students from other places within the province of South Cotabato and the nearby province of Sarangani are enrolled therein. This makes the linguistic setting of the school so diverse, considering the varied linguistic and cultural background of the students. Part of the academic requirements is the basic subjects in English communication which are usually obligatory for first and second year levels. Additional language courses are offered with components of speaking, reading, and writing for higher

years. Remedial courses in languages are also offered for those students under probationary status. The school greatly acknowledges the language diversity factor but strongly encourages the learners to speak English especially when they are in their English classes. Undeniably, teachers are aware that inadequacy in communication skills specifically in the target language is a long-standing issue in the classroom.

Participants

Forty-five freshman students from the colleges of Education, Engineering, and Arts and Sciences were involved in the study. They comprised one class under a basic English course (English Communication Skills II). This subject is a continuation of English I. The first subject in English centers more on the structure of the second language and deals primarily with parts of speech. English II, on the other hand, is a regular class that focuses on writing and speaking skills. This means that the students enrolled in this section are those who achieved favorable results in their entry examination in the university. As part of the admission procedure of the university called stanine (Standard Nine), they significantly obtained higher proficiency both in language and mathematical abilities. The class was purposely identified since it was the only class with groups coming from different colleges. Usually, first-year students are enrolled in block sections. Late enrollees are customarily grouped in an open class section. Hence, the composition of the respondents' group is heterogeneous in terms of their courses. Taking the advantage of this group's diversity, I personally considered them appropriate participants given that each program has specific qualifications in terms of communication skills indicated in the result of their qualifying exam. Engineering and Education are both board programs; thus, the students are assumed to have an advantage in academic works as compared to non-board programs like Arts and Sciences. Though the degree program does not determine success in academics, I found it meaningful to consider the class with an assumption that each group may exhibit different verbal abilities.

As for their linguistic background, all of them came from bilingual and multilingual families who spoke non-English languages at home. The participants were educated in English at school. For this reason, they were assumed to be both using their home languages and school language in varied verbal activities.

Data Collection

The respondents were grouped randomly by the teacher handling the subject to ensure an even distribution of participants in terms of their degree program. There were nine groups with five members each. All groups were composed of males and females. However, since the majority of the class was females, they outnumbered the males in the group. Nonetheless, gender was not part of the examination.

Prior to the conduct of the study, the class had a discussion on main and supporting details. Developing a paragraph employing the concept discussed in the previous meeting was the next activity. To address the study, the initial task required the group to have a verbal discussion about the issue at hand. Their discussion evolved on the issue of whether social networking activities do more good or harm, with the exact question posted as: "Does social media cause more harm than good?" The groups were expected to argue for one side by presenting reasons for supporting or opposing the issue. The identification of the topic was

agreed unanimously by the class. This was to make sure that the participants were aware of the topic, so they could engage productively in the discussion. The group discussion activity was conducted first before the writing activity derived from the group's opinions. This was where members contributed ideas through suggesting, commenting, agreeing, criticizing, etc. The group was given five minutes to exchange opinions and come up with a consensus. Before the activity initiated, the students were not told to speak strictly in English during the discussion phase. They were left responsible for how they would conduct the collaborative task. On the other hand, the use of English during class presentation and writing was emphasized by the teacher.

In this classroom-centered research, the data were collected using the qualitative tools including recording the actual scenario and interview. All the data gathered were audio-taped and then transcribed for analysis afterwards. The atmosphere was informal to allow the students to engage actively in the activity. Moreover, they were required to record their conversation as they conducted the group discussion. Hence, they were told beforehand to minimize noise for clear recording. Their outputs were all scored and recorded as class participation. This is to direct the students' motivation in finishing the task asked from them. Furthermore, the gathering of data was conducted in their English and occurred only once.

Additionally, the group facilitators were interviewed individually by the teacher after listening to the recordings. This was useful to accumulate additional information. Purposely, the interview conducted centered on questions asking the representatives of the groups of their reasons in using the languages noted from the recorded discussions. Questions were asked in the target language. Students were not particularly told of the language to use when answering the questions. Specifically, three major questions were asked during the interview. These were:

1. What languages do you use in your group?
2. Why do you choose that language in expressing your ideas?
3. How effective is the use of that language in achieving the goals of the group?

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study aimed at determining the language that students used when engaged in a collaborative learning task such as a group discussion. Moreover, it sought to gather reasons for preferring such language when performing functions in verbal classroom activities. Based on the methods employed during data gathering, inductive analysis was used in treating the data. Analysis was data-driven. Patton (1990) defines inductive analysis as "patterns, themes, and categories of analysis emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis" (p. 390). Systematically documenting the ongoing process of teaching—learning interactions in a contextualized setting, the study aimed to find emergent themes. Since the study attempted to determine the kind of language students used in a group discussion, and in particular find out the reasons for their language preference, it is more proper to treat the data the way they occurred naturally in the actual setting.

Results and Discussion

The classroom setting is not absolutely a natural situation for the learners, but they are expected to adapt the culture of the school (Purkey, 2000). As a separate learning environment, students are supposed to be using appropriate languages, most probably oriented between home languages and academic languages. However, some students exhibit more use of their native languages when talking to their friends even within the premise of the school. This is an expected phenomenon especially in a community with a diverse linguistic condition. Ervin-Tripp (as cited in Grosjean, 1982) suggests that a speaker in any language community who enters in diverse social situations normally has a repertoire of speech alternatives which shift with different situations. While language teachers are aware of this, the strong desire of equipping the second language learners with the necessary skills in the target language is translated to different classroom strategies that would effectively promote communication skills of the learners. Group discussion has proven its worth not only in developing critical thinking skills but also in being seen as an avenue where students can practice their oral skills as they engage actively in the task that requires them to negotiate ideas. Such concept is where the present study is anchored on. Language, as the primary tool for communication, is investigated in terms of its function in a collaborative task that learners perform in the classroom. English classrooms specifically offer a variety of activities that engage students in meaningful experiences that capture the realities of life. However, in reality teachers need to deal with how students utilize language when performing activities that require collaborating and interacting with their classmates.

The results show that students regard language as a primary tool in performing a classroom activity most especially in a collaborative learning task that necessitates them to exhibit oral skills. As observed from the gathered data, students do not limit the use of language to English only. Intentionally or unintentionally, the use of their home languages begins to exhibit as they initiate the activity in their English class. They used Cebuano, which is the major language in the locality; Filipino, as an official language; and English, as a required language in the classroom. These three languages appear frequently during the discussion. However, each has a particular function in the delivery of ideas, which will be addressed in the following part of this paper. The use of different languages in an English-speaking classroom activity tends to show that their native languages play a role in achieving a task.

Languages Used in the Collaborative Learning Task

Table 1

Languages used by students in a collaborative learning task

Stages of Group Discussion	Cebuano	Filipino	English
Planning/Preparatory			
Assigning group's facilitator task	√	√	√
Some housekeeping acts	√	√	√
Discussion Proper			
Leading and prompting of turns	√	√	√
Giving of statements of compliments	√	√	√
Polishing			
Consolidating members' shared ideas	√	√	√
Deciding on the final arguments of the group	√	√	√

Table 1 presents the languages that students use when performing the collaborative learning task in an L2 classroom activity. As shown above, languages such as Cebuano, Filipino, and English were utilized in conducting the task in all stages of group discussion. Specifically, the occurrence of these languages was observed to be alternately used by the students while assigning the group facilitator, doing housekeeping acts such as member orientation on the procedure of discussion, leading and prompting of turns, giving of statements of compliments, consolidating members' shared ideas, and deciding on the group's final arguments. It should be noted that Cebuano and Filipino are the participants' home languages, while English is considered as the target language.

Grosjean (1982) argues that a bilingual is a product of unique configuration of two languages that constantly interact with each other. The two linguistic systems allow a bilingual to function separately in any speaking engagement. Considering the idea embedded in this argument, it appears that the participants, being bilinguals or multilinguals, tend to have the advantage of activating the other linguistic system they possess whenever they encounter lapses in the current language being used. To further elucidate this notion, the language learners, being aware of their current linguistic environment (English class), know exactly the need to prefer English over other languages they know. However, circumstances like forgetting a particular term in the target language lead them to activate the other language to fill the lacking idea and eventually complete the sentence. The interviews can seemingly furnish evidence that the activation of the home languages tends to appear when the respondents find difficulties in expressing their thoughts in the target language. Let us take as examples these excerpts from the interview transcript.

Excerpt 1

It is difficult to speak in English. I cannot think sometimes right away of the English term so what I do is replace it with Cebuano words or Tagalog. It is easier to

Speak your thoughts for sometimes the words that come out from the mouth is not the same of the ideas you want to speak. You are thinking another thing but when you speak it, it is difficult to express because my English is limited. I know that it was hard and challenging to speak in English especially in explaining your side about the social networking sites that you sometimes feel there is lacking and there is many more you want to say about the problem but it is difficult to speak fluently in English. Ah, we used Cebuano when we cannot express in English but only follow up ideas. I mean after speaking my answers in English and I feel I do not deliver it well, I explain to my group mates in Cebuano but very short only because they might not okay with my speaking in Bisaya because it is English class.

In this study, it was shown that students compensate for their deficient skills in the target language by using their first languages. They often account their use of them (Filipino and Cebuano) as a remedy in addressing their limitations in English. Believing that their proficiency is better in their native languages, they seem to put more trust in using the language that they believe they are more proficient in than preferring English as the language of the subject. While some students are highlighting their deficiencies, it is good to know that they have maintained their positive attitude toward learning a second language.

In this next excerpt, the respondent's awareness of his defect in pronunciation is associated with his being a Cebuano speaker, but this does not stop him from improving his skills in English.

Excerpt 2

That is why I am studying well but I am not confident in speaking in English because my pronunciation according to my classmates is Cebuano, gahi daw (accented). But I don't mind them. I told them, "It's okay. Practice makes perfect."

The English language classroom may be an inappropriate place to use the native languages, yet it is widely observable especially in second language classrooms. Promoting the use of home languages in the classroom is a ceaseless issue especially in language classes where most teachers believe that students should only use the target language or it may defeat the purpose of the subject. However, this significant matter should be addressed logically as this calls for a consideration in the teaching of English.

Stages of Group Discussion

The data collected show that group discussions involved three major stages: Planning/Preparatory, Discussion Proper, and Polishing. The initial stage usually involved Planning/Preparatory, which centered mainly on discussing how the activity should be conducted. This included assigning the facilitator, which was typically carried out through assigning a member agreed upon by the group. What came after was the orientation by the facilitator to inform the group members how the sharing of opinions should run as they begin explaining their individual views about the topic at hand. Assigning a facilitator did not hinder role-swapping as the members played different roles. Some minor housekeeping acts were seen, but they were fairly classified as part of the planning stage. What seemed to be admirable about the group was their own initiative of employing order in the discussion by giving the lead to one person. It has to be noted that the teacher intentionally did not instruct

the students how they were going to go about the discussion; however, the teacher elaborated on the topic to ensure comprehension. In fact, in this excerpt, one participant commented on the limited directive that the teacher gave before the actual discussion initiated.

Excerpt 3

We only use Tagalog and Cebuano during the decision-making period in the group, like, who will be the facilitator, because Sir did not give instructions what to do in the group.

When everything was set, the group proceeded to the Discussion Proper. This time, the facilitator took the lead and gave the prompts for the sequence of the sharing. The start of a new segment was typically hinted by the facilitator. Statement of compliments was said first before calling the next speaker. Though it varied between sequences, the assigned facilitator mostly prompted the movement of the discussion.

Excerpt 4

Facilitator: Thank you for that wonderful comment about our topic, Ms. _____. Now we will proceed to Ms._____.

What followed after the sharing of individual views about the topic was the Polishing stage. This included consolidating all the members' ideas by reconciling differences. Noticeably, in the analysis of the group discussion transcript, the members tended to gather responses from the members with regard to their observations on the majority of answers. At this point, they discussed the possible consensus of the group on the stand they would take as they write the composition. Earlier on, they were instructed by the teacher that at the end of their discussion, they should be ready to report to the class the decision of the group. Observably though, very few clashes of opinion took place during the Polishing stage. It was totally free from disagreement and rejection of ideas and views. This appears to be the response to the usual move of the facilitator or some members not to impose the answer but to solicit further the opinions of the group.

Excerpt 5

Speaker 4: Thank you for your opinions. I really like your answers. So we have here different opinions about social media and guys should always remember that life is what we make it...

As soon as the group unanimously identified the answer to stand for, the discussion was closed.

Utilization of Language in Group Functions

Table 2

Purposes of using home languages and target language in performing functions in the group discussion

Languages	Functions
Home languages	Asking for clarification
Cebuano	Expressing doubt
Filipino	Calling for justification
	Addressing a clarification
	Giving a suggestion
	Expressing an agreement
	Confirming a favorable opinion
	Negating someone's opinion
	Mediating conflicting views
	Questioning opinions
	Reconciling differences in opinion
English	Stating individual opinions
	Expressing agreement supported by a personal view
	Explaining a disagreement
	Prompting sequence of discussion/turn-taking
	Initiating discussion such as restating the question
	Presenting the final arguments of the group

Table 2 identifies the purposes of using both home languages and target language in an L2 context. Specifically, students used Cebuano and Filipino in asking for clarification, expressing doubt, calling for justification, addressing a clarification, giving a suggestion, expressing an agreement, confirming a favorable opinion, negating someone's opinion, mediating conflicting views, questioning opinions, and reconciling differences in opinion. In contrast, the conversation acts for stating individual opinion, expressing agreement supported by a personal view, explaining a disagreement, prompting sequence of discussion/turn taking, and initiating discussion such as restating the question were more often done in English. The information presented above seems to offer a contention that native languages are utilized substantially by the students during the crucial phase of the discussion. Additionally, the functions enumerated in the table tend to inform the usefulness of the students' first languages in engaging actively in a task that requires communication. Likewise, the use of the target language is highly regarded to be relevant in all the stages of the discussion.

Finding out how the students conduct a collaborative learning task would lead us to the identification of their use of a language in doing group functions. Function is operationally referring to the conversation skills exhibited by the members of the group. Considering that the activity being studied involves speaking skills, it is appropriately necessary to investigate how language played a role in the conduct of the activity. In the

earlier findings, the languages that were found to be existing in the course of discussion were Filipino, Cebuano, and English. To ascertain the existence of other languages aside from the expected language, English, the stages that were earlier identified served as the point of consideration in identifying the utilization of the languages as they occurred in different group functions. The group discussion transcripts were coded using emergent conversation act. The conversation acts were used by Soller (2001) in her investigation of Intelligent Collaborative Learning System, where she developed the taxonomy of conversation acts to trace conversation skills. For a similar purpose, the conversation acts as codes in this current study were primarily based on the purpose of the utterance depending mainly on their occurrences in the actual data.

As the analysis of data revealed, conversation acts maintain greatly the progress of the group's discussion. The quality of communication depends mainly on the member's conversation skills from questioning, facilitating, and motivating meaningful ideas to enrich the views of the members. Soller (2001) stresses that the conversational skills of members contribute to active participation. Low participation may lead to dysfunctional relationships in the group. Language may serve as a barrier of communication though (Maesin et al., 2012). Hence, it should be properly used in any collaborative learning activity. Most ESL learners react to either their silence or incapacity to join in the class discussion. Some explain their failure in terms of their language problems (Al-Alawi, 2004). The current study tries to provide evidence on how language may facilitate success in group discussion.

The data collected clearly display the actual utilization of language in an English activity. Looking at the conversation acts, English was used predominantly by the members in addressing the issue. More specifically, the use of the target language was observed largely in expressing opinions about the topic. This took place particularly at the second phase of the Discussion Proper. In individually expressing their personal views on the topic, the students chiefly used English during the second phase, which involved expression of ideas, agreement or disagreement, giving of opinions, and prompting for the sequence.

Excerpt 6

For me social networking site is good because it is a modern tool to getting information about something. It is the best way to get fastest answers like wikis and your assignment in the Google. Moreover, the one way of communicating to a person which is close to you, which is in abroad or other place. (expressing an opinion)

Excerpt 7

Speaker 3: I don't think so that social media can cause more harm than good because it has a lot of advantages naman eh like communicating with other friends from far places. (expressing opinion and disagreement)

Speaker 1: You're right. I agree to that. Social media is not harmful. We all know that we have this freedom to express ourselves and emotions as long as we do not hurt the feelings of other people. By using social media or internet we can gain knowledge on how to interact to people even we don't know them, right?

Social media is good if we know individual limitations on how to use and interact with other people. (expressing agreement and opinion)

On the other hand, part of the opening phase of the discussion was observed to be done in English, specifically in the solicitation conversation act. This is where the facilitator delivers the opening statement in English, mentioning the question, then prompting the members to start the delivery of individual speeches. This is further illustrated below in Excerpt 8.

Excerpt 8

Facilitator 1: Good afternoon, guys. We will discuss the topic, “Do social media do more good than harm?”(opening)

Facilitator 2: Our topic in this group discussion is “Do social media cause more good than harm?” The members of the group will each give their comments about the topic. (leading/prompting)

Facilitator 3: Good afternoon, everyone. We are tasked to discuss the question, “Do social networking sites cause more harm or good?” So we will be needing your opinions. Let’s start with you. (leading/prompting)

Other languages such as Cebuano and Filipino were used mostly in the Polishing Stage, where the members begin to consolidate everyone’s ideas. Conversation acts like asking for clarification, expressing doubt that requires the speaker to justify his/her answer, addressing a clarification, giving a suggestion, expressing agreement or confirming, as well as negating or giving disagreement were evident at this stage. All these acts occurred just when the group was about to close the discussion stage, leading to the final answer of the group. The extensive use of Filipino or Cebuano transpired mostly during the finalization of the answers. While doing the consolidation of all the ideas expressed previously by all the members, the use of these languages became more extensive especially when a clash of opinions arose.

Excerpt 9

Speaker 3: I don’t think so that social media can cause more harm than good because it has a lot of advantages naman (also) eh like communicating with other friends from far places. (expressing opinion and disagreement)

Facilitator: Sure jud ka na walay harm? (Are you sure that there is no harm?) (expressing doubt)

Speaker 3: I mean kung sa kabuuan ba. Mas daghan man advantage kesa disadvantage. Dependeng lang man gud kung unsa imong intention sa pag gamit di ba?(expressing opinion in addressing a question)(What I mean is if it is entirely viewed. There is more advantage than disadvantage. But it depends mainly in your intention of using it, right?)

Speaker 1: Well, tama din naman yan. Kaso we need to have a common idea. (expressing agreement)(Well, that is also correct. But we need to have a common idea)

Speaker 2: Ok lang yan. Eh ganyan opinion nya. Anyway we’ll check pa kung ano mas marami na opinions diba? (expressing agreement, mediating)(But that is okay. That’s her opinion. Anyway we’ll check if what the majority of opinions says, right?)

Facilitator: Ok, siges next. (Okay, next please.)(prompting)

Speaker 4: For me, social media cause more harm than good for me because as we know. Media for us is popular but if you experience that your personal life gonna be an issue to the public and cannot be secure your security because of that social media.(expressing an opinion)

In this excerpt, for example, it is noticeable that there was a shift in language use from English to Cebuano/Filipino then back to English. Looking closely at the conversation acts that are performed in this part, there seems to be an arising conflict between the member's responses to the issue. Questioning the opinion of the other member was done in Filipino/Cebuano, as well as the justification of the concerned individual, support from other members, and mediating the emerging divergence of views. When going back to the sequence where another member expressed opinions, the language switched to English. This seems to suggest that the members attempted to arrest the possible conflict using a language that they believed to be familiar to all.

Another observation is the use of code switching in almost all stages of group discussion. Across all the conversation acts that occurred within the identified stages (Planning/Preparatory, Discussion Proper, Polishing), switching from English to Filipino to Cebuano was widely detected.

Excerpt 10

Speaker 1: Ako (I) agree that it has advantages. Pero (But) what you said earlier na (that) it helps us with our assignment, tama man pod (That's also correct), pero ang uban naga copy paste na nuon. (But others are doing copy-paste.)

Speaker 2: Pero (But) I think depende na sa estudyante yan diba (It depends on the students, right?). If you think it can help you get a better score.

Speaker 2: For me it causes more harm because it is also be ...it is also the cause of some Facebook users to post offensive things about each other or yung mga hackers ngayon katulad sa mag balita na gina-hack nila ang account ng isang user or mag post ng videos or scandals and dahil don nasisira yung image ng user kaya it causes more harm. (These hackers in recent news who are hacking the account of one user then post his videos or scandals are destroying the image of that user, so it causes more harm.)

Language Preferences in a Group Discussion as a Collaborative Learning Task

Group Processing

It was earlier mentioned that participants in a group discussion can be silent or active. Active participants are usually those members who have sufficient knowledge in the subject matter and are said to be equipped with skills in communication. Those members who prefer to be silent characters for reasons of reluctance to speak in the required language are limited in terms of conversation skills; hence, they choose silence over engagement. In collaborative learning, the goals correspond to each student's need to understand his team members' ideas, questions, explanations, and problem solutions (Soller, 2001). This therefore means that communication among the members helps achieve whatever goal the group needs to attain. The group is formed for a purpose. In the current study, the groups are directed to realize the output they need to produce after deliberating with the members. It clearly suggests them to engage in interaction.

Excerpt 11

Some of the members are afraid to talk because it is English. So the leader of our group told us that we can speak in any language. Then, my classmates participate in the discussion. But we speak in Cebuano also sometimes and Tagalog also so everybody in the group can contribute to the discussion. We just speak Cebuano and Tagalog during discussion to give everyone a chance to speak because they are silent. It is very effective because the members are contributing to the discussion. Others do not speak if it is pure English. We speak in Tagalog for it is easier to understand and we can automatically settle differences and agree for answers the group like.

Promoting interaction is what I saw as a common reason for the use of more familiar languages, particularly Filipino and Cebuano. Based on the above excerpt, the respondents' preference for their home languages is highly acceptable in instances where common understanding is highly needed. Allowing the members to choose freely a language where he/she could express substantially himself/herself is much more appreciated to address the goal of the group. Moreover, it is seen as a form of understanding or accommodating deficiencies of some members in verbal activities. The group is more directed to achieving the goal; thus, language role plays more like a bridge for communication than a tool in impressing the teacher.

Personal Assessment

Furthering the investigation of determining the reasons for language usage or choice in a group discussion task is the respondents' view of themselves as speakers of the language. Most of the time, comfort plays a huge impact on the choice of a language. Borlongan (2009) mentions that Filipino learners are more relaxed when speaking in Filipino. They perceive the language as more creative in expressing their thoughts and through the use of it, they can say exactly what they want to say. Certainty as one of the codes in the transcript is found to be present in the learners' compilation of reasons in using the language. In this excerpt, the learner has an impression of self-worth and certainly with his/her answers. The use of his/her own languages puts an imprint of better or correct response to the problem. There is visible confidence that what he/she will say would be more definite and unquestionable.

Excerpt 12

When I speak in Tagalog I feel that my answers are super complete and correct because I can express myself very well. If it is in Cebuano, I can say everything I want to say. I can tell them exact details with explanation and I can sense that they are understanding my sentence. Also, I see them interested with what I say because they are listening to me all the time. Maybe because we have mutual understanding. Of course yes because you can discuss longer and explain more your opinions. And the group will be happy because of your ideas.

Additionally, the preference for native languages over English is associated by the respondents to comfort. It means that they feel more at ease in the use of more familiar language/s. Evidently, ideas flow easily when languages like Filipino or Cebuano are used considering that they see themselves more proficient in these languages; hence, aside from the confidence that they get when these are used, they sense that they are well-versed with the languages and do not require tremendous thinking, considering that these are automatic and ready anytime these are needed. As evident in the excerpts below, most respondents found these languages easier compared with English. Such impression occurred repeatedly in the interviewees' responses.

Excerpt 13

It is difficult to speak in English. I cannot think sometimes right away of the English term so what I do is replace it with Cebuano words or Tagalog. It is easier to speak your thoughts for sometimes the words that come out from the mouth is not the same of the ideas you want to speak. We speak in Tagalog for it is easier to understand and we can automatically settle differences and agree for answers the group like. It is easier also for you don't need to think hard. Words just flow easily and you can say more about the topic.

The above excerpt suggests that these languages become alternatives or replacements whenever they are faced with difficulties in translating their thoughts in the target language which is English. Though it has an impact on the task that they need to accomplish, I believe the utilization of these languages can bring positive effects on bridging gaps and intensifying the communication of the members considering that they are all speakers of the language. Mutual understanding is more bound to occur because of familiarity.

Furthermore, the coded interview transcript clearly exposed the lack of confidence and skills of the students that led to their reluctance to speak in English. This is perhaps the driving force that separates the learners in developing personal strategies to equip them with ultimately developing their second language skills. Issues on lack of confidence have continued to haunt our educators and students for years. In fact, some even suggest that confidence needs to be developed first so that the development of communication skills will follow. Undeniably, this problem has long been existing in the language education scenario. Evidently, the students' awareness of what they still need to learn to become better speakers of the language can be an answer to their own problem.

Positive Appraisal on Second Language Learning

Borlongan (2009) mentions the effectiveness of bilingual education in the Philippines as it strongly penetrates the linguistic preferences of university students. In his study, the participants identified both Filipino and English as languages that they prefer in the different domains of language use and varied verbal activities. Filipino is more preferred in informal settings while English is used predominantly in formal settings. This sets the differences between Filipino as a home language and English as a school language. This seems to prove that students take setting and participants as considerations in choosing a more appropriate language of communication. In the current study though, home languages like Filipino and Cebuano extend even further in school domain. This is evident by the use of the participants

of their native languages when performing collaborative learning task. In the previous discussions, Filipino and Cebuano were utilized in the conversation acts in the three phases of group discussion (Planning/Preparatory, Discussion Proper, Polishing), ranging from minimum to maximum usage depending on the act that is performed. This tends to confirm that students cannot absolutely disregard the use of their native languages despite the fact that they are performing an activity in an English class. On the contrary, the use of these languages is not noted as a disadvantage in accomplishing the task in the target language.

As the analysis of coded data from the interview transcripts shows, the respondents indicated the significance of these languages in the attainment of the group's goals. The usefulness becomes more apparent when there is a need for them to reconcile ideas and accommodate members' views, as explained previously in the findings. The emphasis of the use of Filipino and Cebuano was highlighted during the length of the discussion activity. Nonetheless, the respondents expressed a high regard for the necessity of using English as a language in an English class. In the excerpt below, students indicated the use of English language in carrying out the activity.

Excerpt 14

English because it is in the English class and we are given a task to discuss about social networking sites. Most of my group mates speak in English when they express their ideas. Each one is asked to give opinions so we use English in answering the question. They can speak in Tagalog, English, and Cebuano. But we make it sure that we will gather our answers in English because it is an activity in English. I choose to use English during our group discussion but it was hard actually. I am shy with my English. However we see to it in our group that we speak in English because we are in an English class and so it is not difficult to translate our answers when we write the composition. Because it is in English class and activity given in the class that we need to do so English is the language we used.

From these responses, students demonstrated awareness of the supposed appropriate language to use in the English collaborative task. Considering the context of discussion, they found it more helpful had the discussion been done in English. The majority agreed to speak in the target languages before the initiation of the activity. However, as the discussion progressed, some members shifted from one language to another especially in instances where they encountered difficulties in expressing exactly their thoughts or finding a most appropriate word to complete the statement that they started. Most of the respondents were aware of the use of English in the group discussion task. This scenario was accommodated positively by the group, knowing that there was no instance that one member reprimanded a member who was speaking in Filipino or Cebuano. They appeared to tolerate such behavior. This is a sound evidence of acceptance of others' limitations, and perhaps being familiar with the languages that some members were using does not matter much in the continuity of the activity. However, as much as they are conscious aware of the most appropriate language, they cannot compromise the output that they need to accomplish at the end of the task. Hence, languages other than English are seen as a remedy to bridge communication in the group.

Additionally, the respondents' attempt to use English is surprisingly noticeable during the discussion period. In fact, it was identified in the earlier findings that in the Discussion

Proper phase, there is maximum use of English. Filipino and Cebuano were found to be alternative languages or supplementary tools in performing some conversation acts.

The table below summarizes the perceived effectiveness of the home languages as mentioned by the students' participants. It can be observed that students' preference in using familiar languages in conducting an activity in an L2 classroom has helped them sufficiently in performing a task that requires them to engage in speaking. As cited, the use of Cebuano and Filipino is deemed as a useful tool in executing communication in a collaborative learning group.

Table 3

Summary of the perceived effectiveness of the home languages used in the group discussion

Perceived effectiveness

Give comfort

Relieve anxiety

Make someone more relaxed

Assure certainty/exactness of the answers

Sound more convincing

Give more emphasis

Facilitate active participation

Encourage members to speak

Create a more engaging and enjoyable environment

Stimulate confidence and self-worth

Establish trust

Develop good relationship among the members

Show acceptance of one's limitation

Maintain unity among the members

Exhibit belongingness/membership

Offer equal opportunity

Provide chance to all members

Consider differences in opinions

Conclusion

As the study attempted to account the existence of language as a tool in a collaborative learning task, it was greatly established that language does not only function as an instrument in showcasing communication skills in the target language. Students' awareness of the significance of English does not prevent their use of their home languages. In a collaborative task such as a group discussion, it is inevitable that students, being second language learners, will utilize their first languages. While it is not tolerated in English classes, the investigation shows that students tend to compensate for their limitations in the second language through their native languages. However, as is evident in their positive attitude in using the target language, their conscious regard for working hard to improve in their L2 can be an effective motivation in acquiring optimal skills to communicate exclusively in English. Inhibiting them from using their first languages during a speaking activity may not be the best remedy,

for this may result in feelings of anxiety or even silence. Clearly, the strict implementation of the English-only policy in English classes is not ultimately practiced no matter how much the teacher imposes it. In addition, based on the learners' feedback in their use of these languages, it enables them to attain the team's goal. Thus, the effectiveness of these languages is highly esteemed by the learners themselves. Additionally, the use of Filipino and Cebuano is viewed by the learners as a means of empowering them more to actively take part in the activity.

Surprisingly though, the students' positive attitude toward their second language in their attempt to express personal views in English was observed. In fact, from the initial stage of Planning to the Polishing phase, conversation acts were performed almost outright in English. This appears to be a constructive indication of the learners' desire to upgrade themselves in terms of communicating in the target language. Moreover, their struggle in speaking spontaneously in English despite ungrammaticality and defective pronunciation is viewed to be a good starting point in further intensifying their desire to improve their English skills.

Group discussion as an interactive activity encourages the learners to develop their conversation skills. Through exchange of opinions, reconciliation of differences, and negotiation of meanings, students not only exhibit conversation skills but also learn to accommodate other learners' deficiencies in communicating in the target language.

Implications for Language Teaching

While it is ideal for activities in English classes to be conducted in English, teachers should not impose strictly the absolute use of English language. Preferably, language classes should provide opportunities for students to practice their communication skills in the target language. Considering that it is an environment that is intentionally created to furnish an avenue to nurture the skills learned through the study of the English structure, students must take the chance to maximize the advantage the class can offer. Teachers always work for the improvement of learners' skills. Hence, students must also find the activity pleasing for the betterment of their English proficiency. Training is what the learners can enjoy in English classes. On the other hand, teachers must acknowledge linguistic diversity among students. Living in a socially and linguistically varied condition may immensely influence learners' language options. As evidently shown in the results, students resort to using their native languages in a more spontaneous conversation. As much as the educators would want their students to prefer English in the classroom, it is undeniably observable that they cannot totally ignore the use of their own languages especially when they are in contact with participants using the same languages. Perhaps tolerance of the phenomenon would be a better solution as of this moment. For as long as students show positive attitudes toward learning and mastering their second language, it maybe acceptable to say that they can separately perceive the circumstances that demand them to prefer their home languages over English. Nonetheless, encouraging the learners to work harder with the consideration of their personal strategies in learning English would be more effective instead of imposing strictly the "English only policy" in the English classroom. As a final note, teachers must also set limitations in allowing students to speak in their native languages in English classes so that they will not assume that they can just speak freely whatever languages they prefer as this will defeat the purpose of engaging them in second language courses.

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Differences in Less Proficient and More Proficient ESL College Writing in the Philippine Setting

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Abstract

The present study aimed at characterizing what skilled or more proficient ESL college writing is in the Philippine setting through a contrastive analysis of three groups of variables identified from previous studies: resources, processes, and performance of ESL writers. Based on Chenoweth and Hayes' (2001; 2003) framework, the resource level variables are represented by linguistic and content knowledge, writing experience, and writing approach; the process variables are represented by *proposer* (idea generation), *translator* (idea encoding), *transcriber* (idea transcription), and *reviser* (idea revision/evaluation). Writing performance was represented by length of essay and writing fluency. Essay score, also a measure of writing performance, was used to group the writers into less proficient and more proficient writers. Means and standard deviations of the items were obtained. The internal consistencies for tests using scales were obtained using Cronbach's Alpha; for tests with right and wrong answers, Kuder Richardson #21 was used. Inter-rater agreement for essay scores was tested using Kendall's Tau coefficient of concordance. To compare the mean scores between the less proficient and more proficient writers, independent samples t-test was used. Results indicated that there are significant differences between the two proficiency groups in content knowledge, vocabulary, elaborative writing approach, school writing experience and confidence in writing, and in all the measures of text production processes. Due to methodological limitations, conclusions made in the present study are restricted to the sample under study and to the genre of writing selected (viz., argumentative essay).

Keywords: proficiency; cognitive process; ESL writing; writing performance; text production processes; writer's resources

Introduction

Writing is often viewed by many as the most difficult task compared to the three macro skills (listening, speaking, reading) because it relies on complex interrelated skills and (meta) cognitive abilities (DeGross, 1987; Devine, 1993; Devine, Railey, & Boshoff, 1993; Gustilo, 2010; Johnson, Mercado, & Acevedo, 2012; McCutchen, 2011; Schoonen et al., 2003; Zhang, 2008; Zhai, 2008). This is why the identification and description of the different factors that underlie L2 writing which characterize good or proficient writing have riveted the

attention of scholars from different disciplines such as second language acquisition (McCune, 2000; Wagner & Stanovich, 1996), writing instruction (Ferrari, Bouffard, & Rainville, 1998; McCormick, Busching, & Potter, 1992), writing assessment (Bacha, 2001; Gustilo & Magno, 2015; Kroll, 1998), cognitive psychology (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Galbraith, 2009), computational linguistics (Grant & Ginther, 2000; Gustilo, 2011; Reid, 1997), and discourse analysis (Aktas & Cortes, 2008; Loudermilk, 2007; Mei, 2007). The present study has identified three groups of variables for contrastive analysis: writers' resources, text production processes, and writing performance.

Many scholars have documented that the writers' resources and text production processes relate to their writing performance (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001, 2003; Tillema, van den Bergh, Rijlaarsdam, & Sanders, 2011). This interplay has been embodied in the writing model underpinned by the cognitive process framework (Becker, 2006; Flower & Hayes, 1983; Perl, 1978; Pianko, 1979). According to Galbraith (2009), psychological theories focusing on cognitive processes in writing center around two themes: (1) Writing is more than just expressing ideas into text; it is a process of discovering the thought and expressing it appropriately; and (2) Writers need to develop effective writing strategies as the convoluted interacting processes in the writers' mind put high demands on the writers' limited working memory (p. 2).

An important feature of the cognitive process framework (Flower & Hayes, 1980) is the view that writing is recursive and multilayered by nature. It debunked the traditional writing paradigm that views the different processes during writing as linearly sequenced. Planning, translating, and reviewing occur anytime during the composing process through a monitor which facilitates interplay among these processes and allows access to long-term memory and task environment. Long-term memory stores all the relevant knowledge pertaining to the task: linguistic knowledge, topic knowledge, audience expectations, and writing plans; while the task environment represents the writing assignment and the text written so far.

Another feature of the cognitive process model is its characterization of the clear divide between poor or novice writers and good or skilled writers. Research underpinned by cognitive process model was able to establish that good writers have an edge over poor writers when it comes to their knowledge resources. First, good writers have more topic knowledge. They know more about the content of the topic and can easily generate ideas as a product of their prior knowledge (Graham & Perry, 1993). Second, they know more about the different discourse conventions associated with different genres (McCormick et al., 1992). For example, they have a deeper grasp of the comparative organizational structures and more sophisticated aspects of text organization (Ferrari et al., 1998). Lastly, they have more linguistic knowledge (grammar, spelling, vocabulary, etc.). They are not interrupted by language-related problems (Gustilo, 2010; Zamel, 1982), and their increased linguistic experience enables them to be more fluent writers (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001).

In addition, as regards text production processes, unlike the poor writers, good writers have a rich network of goals (Flower & Hayes, 1981); they produce texts that meet reader expectations and employ a knowledge-transforming strategy (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987); they benefit from a complex metacognitive model of writing which enables them to be more aware of their audience and to write with a sense of communication;

they have more global planning strategies compared to novice writers (Humes, 1983); they view revising as a way to refine their compositions (Becker, 2006); they have more ideas generated, more organizational strategies, more ideas retrieved, and more evaluative strategies before transcribing their ideas (Castro, 2005). Writers who are more familiar with the topic generated more content during planning (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987).

As regards the good writers' quality of text, it has been documented that they produced highly-rated essays. Gustilo (2010) found that good writers produced highly-rated essays whether or not they employ global planning during the pre-writing stage. As for poor or novice writers, some studies have documented that they produced significantly shorter essays with more writing errors (Ferrari et al., 1998; He, 2010; He & Shi, 2012), while the good writers produced significantly longer and better essays on tasks in which they have more general or topic knowledge (He, 2010). In addition, proficient writers wrote more coherent texts than did the less proficient writers (McCutchen, 1986). They also produced quality first drafts and revisions (DeGross, 1987).

The cognitive process model has several versions (Becker, 2006; Galbraith, 2009; Kellogg, 1994; Kellogg, 2001). The model which is more relevant to the present study is the text production model, developed by Chenoweth and Hayes in 2001, which they further perfected in 2003. It represents the interactions among the resource level—the knowledge stored in the memory; the process level—the processes that are at work in accessing knowledge in the resource level; and the control level—the intentions of the writer that serve as bases for accessing and activating the resources and processes. Within the process level are two components: the external component (audience, the written text, materials used to draft the text) and the internal component, which has four processes: the *proposer*, which is responsible for generating ideas; the *translator*, which encodes ideas into strings of words and sentence structures; the *transcriber*, which translates linguistic strings into text; and the *reviser*, which evaluates and revises both the pre-linguistic ideas and written text (p. 15). The resources and processes in the internal component are accessed and activated according to the purposes and aims of the writer in the control level. The present study used Chenoweth and Hayes' model (2001; 2003) to identify variables representing the writers' resources and text production process, which were analyzed in order to shed light on the differences that distinguish good writers from bad writers.

Although the previous studies discussed above have already given us the characteristics of good and bad writers, other variables such as the factors of writing approaches and writing experience have not been well researched. In addition, there has not been much research on this area in the local university setting involving Filipino undergraduate students writing argumentative essays.

Research Questions

The present study aimed at investigating the differences between good and bad writing of college students by analyzing three groups of variables that have been identified from previous studies. Specifically, it sought to answer whether there are significant differences between the good and bad writers' resources (viz., linguistic knowledge, topic knowledge, writing approach, and writing background), text production processes (viz., idea generation, idea encoding, idea transcription, and idea revision), and writing performance (viz., length of essay and writing fluency).

Methods

Participants

The present study recruited 112 ESL college freshmen students from four English classes in a private institution in the Philippines. The sample is composed of Filipino students, 66 males and 46 females. The majority of students has been schooled since their preschool years in the Philippine schools whose medium of instruction in most subjects is English. The average number of years of English language learning of the students is 11 years.

Instruments and Data Sets

Writing proficiency diagnostic essay task. The students' writing ability was tested by asking them to write an argumentative essay regarding a controversial issue in the Philippines. They were asked to discuss three reasons in favor of their stand. Using Gustilo's (2013) six-point essay scoring guide, the essays were holistically rated by two raters who have doctoral degrees in Applied Linguistics and who have taught English for more than 10 years. The raters had a consensus that the selected scoring guide captures the elements usually focused on by evaluators in assessing essays written in English as a second language, namely: (1) Content—sound information, adequate and appropriate details; (2) Organization—skillfully arranged ideas in introduction, body, and conclusion; these ideas get their direction from the thesis statement in the introduction; (3) Effective and varied syntactic structures—making use of different sentence patterns; (4) Language use—appropriate choice of vocabulary and correct usage of the English grammar; and (5) Punctuation and mechanics—correct usage of capitalization, spelling, and punctuation rules. The rubric has a minimum score of 1 and a maximum score of 6. A trial rating was held for the raters to ensure that the ratings were not disparate. No essays were rated with 1 and 2; 24 essays were assigned a score of 5, and only 7 was given a score of 6; the majority of essays were assigned either a score of 3 or 4. The computed inter-rater reliability between raters was $\omega=.62$ ($p<.05$). The coefficient of concordance was positive and significant.

The 112 essays were divided into two groups. Those which scored 1–3 (described in the rubric as writing with very little proficiency, little proficiency, and developing proficiency) were considered less proficient (N=81); those which scored 4–6 (described in the rubric as writing with adequate proficiency, advanced proficiency, and highly advanced proficiency) were considered more proficient or good writers (N=31).

Topic knowledge test. A 15-item test with a multiple-choice format was constructed to measure students' background knowledge about the topic of the writing test. The computed Kuder Richardson #21 measuring internal consistency is .83.

Writing production processes scale. After the essay writing, students accomplished a survey regarding the different composing processes they had utilized while writing their essay. Gustilo and Magno's (2015) text production processes scale was adopted for the present study. The scale has 24 items which aimed at measuring text production processes of writers. The items were based on Chenoweth and Hayes' (2001; 2003) description of the process level of writing, which includes four factors: (1) idea generation, which measures students' strategies and sources of ideas and corresponds to Chenoweth and Hayes' *proposer*; (2) idea encoding, which corresponds to Chenoweth and Hayes' *translator*, and refers to

students' strategies in representing their ideas into English words and structures; (3) idea transcription, which represents Chenoweth and Hayes' *transcriber* and tells at what point the writers transcribe their ideas; (4) idea/text revision, which corresponds to Chenoweth and Hayes' *reviser*; it inquires as to whether writers evaluate or revise their texts while writing. The questionnaire has a four-point scale with the following responses: Not at All (1); Very Little (2); Somewhat (3); and To a Great Extent (4). The generated internal consistencies of four subscales ranged from .60 to .70 (see Table 1).

Writing experience survey. Using Gustilo's (2013) writing experience scale, the students accomplished a 12-item structured response format background questionnaire covering three subsets of items. The first subset covers questions that asked students to report about genre or rhetorical conventions they were exposed to in high school; the second subset asks their writing experience in high school; and the third subset their confidence level based on their writing experience. Using data from the present study, internal consistencies ranged from .59 to .89 (see Table 1).

Linguistic knowledge test. Gustilo and Magno's (2015) linguistic tests (grammar, vocabulary, and spelling), which were based on Schoonen et al.'s (2003), were administered to measure linguistic knowledge. Some students aced the tests in 20–30 minutes; others finished them in 40 minutes. First, the students answered a 72-item test that measured their productive grammar skills. Students had to supply the correct forms of the different parts of speech in the English Language and write the correct sentence structures. Using data from the present study, the internal consistency of the test items is .87.

Next, students were tested in their vocabulary knowledge using a 60-item test. The vocabulary items were drawn from freshmen college textbooks. Students had to choose from three or four options. Using data from the present study, the reliability score for vocabulary test is .87.

Lastly, the spelling test consists of 85 items in multiple choice format which measures the students' receptive knowledge in L2 spelling. The students ticked the correct spelling from four choices. Based on the present data, the internal reliability alpha for spelling test is .88.

Writing approach survey. The present study adopted Lavelle and Zuercher's (2001) 74-item scale that measures college writing approaches comprising five subscales: Elaborative, Low Self-efficacy, Reflective-Revision, Spontaneous-Impulsive, and Procedural. The students had to respond to a four-point Likert scale by ticking one of the columns which are labelled Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (3), and Strongly Disagree (1). Its reliability estimates ranged from 0.66 to 0.85.

Overall, the measures of linguistic knowledge, content knowledge, writing experience, and writing approach were grouped under writer's resources (e.g., resource level in Chenoweth and Hayes' 2001, 2003 models). Idea generation, idea encoding, idea transcription, and idea/text revision compose the text production processes (e.g., process level in Chenoweth and Hayes' 2001, 2003 model). Length of essay (total number of written words) and fluency rate (words written per minute) were grouped as measures of writing performance. Essay score was another measure of writing performance. In the present study, following McNamara, Crossley, and McCarthy's (2010) approach, it was used to divide the

group into groups of writers: the less proficient (bad writers) and the more proficient (good) writers.

Procedure

The tests were administered during the English classes by participating teachers within a period of two weeks. First, the diagnostic essay writing test was administered on the first week of the 13-week English course. This is a required test prescribed in the course's syllabus, which is aimed at assessing students' weaknesses and areas to improve on in writing academic essays. The students were informed that their diagnostic writing test result would determine whether or not they would be sent to the English Language Laboratory tutorial sessions aimed at helping them improve on their weak areas. Since most students were unwilling to spend additional hours in the writing laboratory, they did not treat this task lightly. The topic familiarity test that measures content knowledge was administered prior to the essay writing test. Then after the diagnostic essay writing, a retrospective survey on the students' text production processes was administered. The linguistic tests, writing background survey, and writing approach survey were administered on the second week of the course.

Data Analyses

The means and standard deviations were obtained for fluency rate, length of essay, linguistic tests, content knowledge test, and measures of writing approach and writing background. The internal consistencies for tests using scales were obtained using Cronbach's Alpha; for tests with right and wrong answers, Kuder Richardson #21 was used. Inter-rater agreement for essay scores was tested using Kendall's Tau coefficient of concordance. To compare the mean scores between the less proficient and more proficient writers, independent samples t-test was used.

Results

Descriptive statistics of the variables under study indicate that, on the whole, the participants of the study are familiar with the topic of the essay and have a fairly good linguistic knowledge stored in their long-term memory as indicated by considerably high mean values in the aforementioned measures (i.e., for vocabulary, $M=41.12$; for spelling, $M=76.04$; for grammar, $M=44.31$; for content knowledge, $M=31.00$; see Table 1). However, there is a large variation among the scores obtained for the knowledge tests ($SD=3.95$ to 7.25). Acceptable internal consistencies were obtained for the tests and scales except for some of the subscales of writing approach, writing background, and text production scales. The low reliability results of some subscales (see right panel of Table 1) may be explained by the low mean scores (Sasaki & Hirose, 1996) and fewer items of the subscales (Wells & Wollack, 2003).

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Reliability of Measures of Variables under Study

	Valid N	M	SD	Reliability
Writer's Performance				
Length of essay	112	306.42	99.23	
Fluency rate	112	10.88	3.77	
Writer's Resources				
Content Knowledge: (40 items)	112	31.00	3.95	.61
Linguistic Knowledge				
Vocabulary (60 items)	112	41.12	5.23	.87
Spelling (85 items)	112	76.04	7.25	.88
Grammar (72 items)	112	44.31	7.15	.87
Writing Approach				
Elaborative	112	2.93	0.32	.85
Low self-efficacy	112	2.84	0.26	.47
Reflective-revision	112	2.82	0.24	.47
Spontaneous-impulsive	112	2.67	0.29	.63
Procedural	112	2.96	0.34	.68
Writing Background				
School writing	112	2.91	0.44	.69
Personal writing	112	1.95	0.69	.59
Confidence	112	2.56	0.70	.89
Writer's Text Production Process				
Idea generation	112	3.22	0.38	.60
Idea encoding	112	3.11	0.49	.70
Idea transcription	112	2.73	0.47	.63
Idea/text revision	112	3.07	0.55	.70

In order to determine whether there are significant differences in the mean scores of students from less proficient and more proficient groups, an independent samples t-test was used. The homogeneity of variances and the normality assumptions that warranted the use of T-Test are satisfied. Results showed that the mean scores of more proficient writers were significantly ($p < 0.005$) higher than the mean scores of less proficient groups in length of essay, fluency rate, vocabulary, content knowledge, elaborative writing approach, school writing, confidence in writing, and in all measures of text production processes as represented in Table 2.

Table 2

Means and sig (2-tailed) of T-Test for equality of means of variables across two groups

Variables Group	Proficiency	N	Mean	<i>p</i>
Length of Essay	highly proficient	31	387.65	0.00*
	less proficient	81	275.33	
Fluency Rate	highly proficient	31	12.78	0.00*
	less proficient	81	10.16	
Vocabulary	highly proficient	31	44.61	0.00*
	less proficient	81	39.78	
Content Knowledge	highly proficient	31	35.13	0.00*
	less proficient	81	29.42	
Spelling	highly proficient	31	77.32	0.24
	less proficient	81	75.54	
Grammar	highly proficient	31	46.16	0.09
	less proficient	81	43.60	
Elaborative Approach	highly proficient	31	71.23	0.01*
	less proficient	81	66.02	
Low Self Efficacy Approach	highly proficient	31	39.94	0.75
	less proficient	81	39.69	
Reflective Approach	highly proficient	31	37.48	0.09
	less proficient	81	36.31	
Spontaneous Approach	highly proficient	31	38.84	0.06

	less proficient	81	40.53	
Procedural Approach				0.71
	highly proficient	31	29.81	
	less proficient	81	29.54	
School writing				0.01*
	highly proficient	31	18.42	
	less proficient	81	17.07	
Personal Writing				0.35
	highly proficient	31	2.05	
	less proficient	81	1.91	
Confidence in Writing				0.00*
	highly proficient	31	8.65	
	less proficient	81	7.30	
Idea Generation				0.00*
	highly proficient	31	13.29	
	less proficient	81	12.01	
Idea Encoding				0.03*
	highly proficient	31	13.10	
	less proficient	81	12.21	
Idea Revision/Evaluation				0.04*
	highly proficient	31	13.26	
	less proficient	81	12.30	
Idea Transcription				0.03*
	highly proficient	31	4.81	
	less proficient	81	5.28	

In almost all writing contexts, good writing is appreciated and bad writing is despised. Good writers are rewarded by the success they get in acing written examinations, while bad writers seem to be penalized by their getting low evaluations and failing marks. The present study focused on characterizing good/more proficient ESL student writers vis-a-vis less proficient/bad ESL student writers who wrote an argumentative essay in their English class by identifying variables in which they significantly differ. The present investigation is motivated by the importance of understanding what skilled or proficient college writing is in the Philippine setting. Results show that there is a significant difference between the two groups of writers, extending previous research findings underpinned by the cognitive process framework that there are differences between less and more proficient writers (Castro, 2005; Ferrari et al., 1998; McCutchen, Francis, & Kerr, 1997). These differences are in terms of knowledge stored in their memory, the production processes they activate, and performance in writing.

Differences in resource level variables. The resource variables (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001, 2003) identified in the present study are content knowledge, linguistic knowledge, writing approach, and writing experience. The present findings affirm that good or more proficient writers hold extensive vocabulary and topic knowledge. It can be implied that lack of topic familiarity and insufficient vocabulary may have constrained the less proficient writers and made it difficult for them to construct quality texts. A plethora of research has already documented the role of content knowledge in writing (Deane et al., 2008; McCutchen, 2011). Tedick (1988) and He (2010) linked topic knowledge to the quality of essays written by adult ESL writers. Abundant evidence also attested to the centrality of linguistic knowledge in the development of writing skills (McCutchen, 1996; Tedick, 1988). Linguistic knowledge involves mastery of spelling, grammar, genre conventions, and other linguistic aspects. In the present study, of the three linguistic knowledge measures, only vocabulary has a significant difference in the mean scores. This implies that both good and bad writers under study were not constrained by spelling and grammar issues—a finding which is a logical one since the students who were recruited in the present study are college students and the length of their language instruction in Philippine schools has already given them considerable mastery of spelling and grammar of the English language.

In addition to linguistic and content knowledge, an interesting finding in the present study is that good writers possess an elaborative writing approach. They consider writing as a deep personal investment and a tool for one's learning, employing visualization, and thinking outside the box (Lavelle, 1997). This finding confirms Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) knowledge-transforming strategy, which is associated with more expert writers who develop elaborate representations that guide the writers during the production of text.

Moreover, unlike the less proficient writers, good writers report more experiences in school writing and confidence in their perceived skills in writing. Sasaki and Hirose (1996) have documented that writing experience is one of the explanatory variables that predict essay scores. Gustilo (2013) has noted that there is a significant correlation between writing experience and essay scores. Although these two studies have indicated that writing experience relates to essay scores, it has not been established that more experiences and confidence in writing are characteristics of good writers. The present study has provided a novel empirical evidence that writing background, indeed, demarcates less proficient and more proficient writers.

Differences in process level variables. Process level variables are represented by idea generation, idea encoding, idea transcription, and idea revision/evaluation (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001, 2003; Gustilo, 2013). Results of the present study indicated that there are significant differences between the mean scores of less proficient and more proficient writers in all the text production processes. Idea generation involves production of linguistic message or ideas which are translated into written text by the *translator* facility in the writers' memory. Previous findings have established that these processes are influenced by knowledge resources of the writers (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001, 2003). Those who have greater familiarity with the topic and those who have a good command of the language showcase fluency in idea generation and in idea encoding. Such finding was confirmed by the more proficient writers in the present study. In addition, the more proficient writers report more revising activities and fluency in transcribing the translated ideas into written text. If

follows, therefore, that the less proficient writers lack fluency in the four text production processes.

Differences in writing performance. Following previous studies that identified fluency rate and length of essay as measures of writing performance in addition to essay scores (Ferrari et al., 1998; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001, 2003; McNamara et al., 2010), the present study compared the length of text and fluency rate of less proficient and more proficient ESL writers. Significant differences in the two measures were found. More proficient writers have longer essays as attested to by the number of words they have written. On the average, their essays have over 100 words more than the essays of the less proficient writers. They wrote 13 words per minute, while the less proficient wrote 10 words per minute. Once again, their writing fluency in terms of production time and produced words may be linked to the great store of knowledge resources and fluency in text production processes previously discussed (McCutchen, 2011; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2013).

Based on the present and previous findings discussed in this study, a profile of more proficient writing by undergraduate students in a Filipino university setting under study, which is underpinned by the cognitive process model framework, can be theorized and summarized. More proficient writers have a good store of resources, which lend support to their production of better and longer essays. First, they possess topic familiarity and a wide reservoir of linguistic knowledge in the resource level, which enable the internal mechanisms in the process level to retrieve information more easily that fulfills their purposes (in the control level) from long-term memory and organize these retrieved information into effective structures. The generation of ideas by the *proposer*, the encoding of these ideas into lexical and syntactical structures by the *translator*, and the evaluation of the acceptability of these structures based on the writer's goals by the *reviser* may be more automatic because of their wide store of knowledge in the long-term memory (Kellogg, 1988; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001). In addition, more proficient writers are indebted to their writing experiences. Their writing background provides them familiarity to discourse and genre conventions, enabling them to structure tasks that adhere to the conventions of academic writing. As an expected result of their writing experience, they have gained higher confidence level, which may facilitate smooth processing of relevant ideas in their memory. Lastly, embedded in their resource level is an elaborative approach—a deep writing approach—which views writing as a deep personal investment and a tool for one's learning.

Research should investigate the relative contribution of the different variables which characterize skilled or proficient writing by adding psychological factors (e.g., motivation, anxiety) and social factors (e.g., language exposure) in order to arrive at a full-construct representation of writing performance and a more comprehensive inventory of factors that characterize good writing. This entails enlarging the theoretical underpinning of writing framework to weave a model for writing that is informed by research in cognitive literature, instruction, language assessment, educational psychology, and other related disciplines.

While there is so much to rejoice on these findings regarding Filipino college writing in the genre of argumentative essay, writing instruction has other things to reckon with. Implementing an integrative teaching model that enriches students' resources and text production processes is one. Writing instruction could benefit from not only teaching effective composing strategies (e.g., planning, evaluating, revising) but also from enlarging the different types of knowledge needed in composing (Victori, 2002) the content, structure,

and organization of texts. Students should be made aware that their prior knowledge on the topic can facilitate smooth production of quality essays and that they should take serious effort in enhancing their linguistic knowledge. In addition, they should not underestimate the role of writing background experience—a resource that enables students to gain expertise as a result of more practice and exposure to genre and rhetorical conventions. Finally, students would benefit from adopting a deep approach to writing which views it as a tool for one's own learning; such approach enables students to have a more reflective and elaborate engagement during the writing process.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sample highly-rated essay by a more proficient writer (rated 5 according to the rubric used)

Time started: 12:00 PM

Time finished: 12:35 PM

Total no. of words: 510

Fluency rate: 15 words per minute.

There's a right time for K-12

The Kindergarten to 12, more popularly known as the K-12, is a new implementation of the Department of Education which includes adding two more years in the total number of school years. The program aims at enhancing the abilities of students in their fields of specialization. Moreover, it aims at meeting the increasing demand for a more efficient and effective manpower. The idea of implementing the K-12 comes from imitating the education system of other, especially those belonging to the first-world category. The program was implemented in June 2012, the opening of classes for the academic year 2012-13. Although K-12 can be a better start of enhancing one's potential towards contributing to the nation-building, the implementation of the program will create more problems. K-12 should not have been implemented for various reasons.

First, the country has used to a 10-year education system for the past decades: six years in elementary and four years in high school. There will be a greater need in adjusting to the new education system in the country. Moreover, it is possible that there might have only a negligible change in the learning process of the students since the problem in education does not lie on the education system itself, but on the lack of resources for teaching.

Second, implementation of K-12 will just result in a greater problem involving lack of classroom, chairs, and teachers most especially. There are still schools in the country that still need more classrooms, chairs and teachers for a more conducive learning environment. The government could have focused first on these problems before engaging the country into a new education system. The problems may have been due to the insufficient budget allotted for education.

Lastly, a big percentage of the Filipinos are still below the poverty line; hence, they cannot afford to go to school. Adding more years in school will require greater budget allotment for education. These people below the poverty line sometimes can only afford to go on the primary school level; or worse, do not experience education at all. Adding more years will just be nonsense if majority of the population most especially in the rural areas cannot even afford to step at the high school level.

Students need not be exposed to school works for more number of years. In addition, the Philippines does not need to level itself to progressive countries by simply implementing K-12. The amount of learning and knowledge that one acquires is not tested by how long the student stayed in school but by how dedicated the student is in learning and acquiring knowledge. The government has the freedom to implement it, but not now. The country is not yet ready for adjustments. First things must come first—problems on lack of resources must be the first priority, followed by decreasing the number of Filipinos living below the poverty line. By the time these problems are all alleviated, if not abolished, the K-12 can be more effectively implemented. There is always a right time for everything.

Gloss: The raters unanimously rated the above paper with a grade of 5, which is described as REASONABLY ADVANCED PROFICIENCY according to Gustilo's (2013) holistic scoring rubric. The paper has the following plus points:

The paper addresses the prompt specifically with a reasonably argued and elaborated content. It has considerable amount of relevant supporting details, showing that the writer possesses a good deal of knowledge about the topic despite the limitation that it is a diagnostic timed essay with no opportunity to consult any resources. The paper too is well organized with introduction, three body paragraphs, and conclusion and a clear thesis statement situated in the introduction. The only weakness of this paper is that it contains a few lapses in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics and a few weak supporting details used in argumentation. The essay has 512 words, which was produced in 35 minutes with the fluency rate of 15 words per minute.

Appendix B: Sample low-rated essay by a less proficient writer (rated 3 according to the rubric used)

Writing time: 11:45-12:20

Total words: 319

Time spent: 35 minutes

Fluency rate: 9 words per minute

The k-12 education in the Philippines had been a subject of much debate over the past years. There were people who were in favour as well as people who were not. However, it has already been decided that this year, the Department of Education in the Philippines will implement curricular structuring known as the k-12 program. The program has its own pros and cons; therefore, it is simply inevitable to not have a perfect 100% agree to it.

Personally, I definitely agree to the program, so I would like to persuade and convince people my point of view about it. The Philippines is a very 'open' country. It would basically crumble without the help of OFWs and other neighbouring countries. If we, or the country,

would want to send out people of our own, wouldn't we want them to be the best that they could be? Not to mention that Filipinos are naturally good English compared to other Asian countries. It would be such a waste if our people wouldn't be able to maximize this very advantageous skill. Another good reason to implement the program is to give Filipinos a stronger foundation in basic education. Because of lack of sufficient funds, most poverty-stricken people aren't able to enter university. What most are left with is merely a 'k-10' high school diploma. At 16 or 17 yrs of age with only 10 years of basic education, who or what would hire them? The k-12 program is actually one of the best ways to further cultivate the minds of Filipinos who are not able to afford university. Plus, if the rule was implemented, high school graduates would most likely leave school at the ripe age of 18-19 yrs old, the legally adult age to start working. It would just rest on the student's hands whether or not to pursue university. They could even earn money for college if they want to.

Gloss: The raters unanimously rated the above essay with a rate of 3, which is described under DEVELOPING PROFICIENCY. The writer wrote the essay with the fluency rate of nine words per minute. This essay was rated 3 because the writer has inadequate supporting details to elaborate its points showing little knowledge about the topic. The essay did not meet the minimum number of words asked in the writing prompt which is 500 words. It contains a number of weak constructions and punctuation and mechanics errors. Clearly, the essay shows limited organization as it contains only two paragraphs. The first paragraph is obviously the introduction with a thesis statement. The second paragraph contains the arguments. The essay has no conclusion paragraph.

Appendix C: Sample linguistic test items:

Vocabulary test: Encircle the letter of the word whose meaning corresponds to the meaning of the italicized word in the sentence.

1. The government is expected to implement *drastic* changes in the implementation of policies.
 - a. very noticeable
 - b. something dreary
 - c. very annoying
 - d. something ordinary

2. Rene's compulsive behaviour stigmatizes him as a tough person.
 - a. exciting
 - b. boring

- c. constrasting
- d. compelling

Grammar Test: Verb forms. Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb in parentheses. Add the necessary helping verbs.

1. Do you know that man (sit) in the brown leather chair?
2. I arrived here in August 2015. By August 2020, I (be) here for ten years.

Spelling test: Tick the correct spelling of the italicized word.

1. The *committee* is working on the program.
 - a. comittee
 - b. committee
 - c. comitee
 - d. coumittee
2. There is no special *ocassion* today.
 - a. ocaision
 - b. occassion
 - d. occasion
 - d. ocsion.

Appendix D. Sample Topic knowledge test. Encircle the letter of the correct answer to the given question.

1. K-12 educational system is adopted in the Philippines in order to provide
 - a. provide sufficient time for mastery of concepts and skills,
 - b. develop lifelong learners
 - c. prepare graduates for tertiary education, middle-level skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship.
 - d. all of the above
 - e. none of the above
2. One of the reasons why our government adopted the K-12 system is because...

- a. Philippines is the only country in the world with a 10-year basic education.
- b. Philippines is one of only three nations in the world with a 10-year basic education.
- c. K-12 education system makes the student more intelligent.
- d. none of the above.

About the Author

Leah Espada Gustilo, Ph.D. is an associate professor in the Department of English Applied Linguistics, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines, where she teaches English Communication and other courses in the undergraduate and graduate programs. She has published articles on contrastive rhetoric, Philippine English, online self-presentation, and ESL writing and assessment in reputable journals. She has presented her research works in Asia and in USA. She is also actively engaged in assessment and impact evaluation research projects commissioned by local and international agencies. She is the chief editor of the Philippine ESL Journal, an article editor in SAGE Open publications, and a reviewer in several international journals. In 2005, Dr. Leah Gustilo and her husband founded CBC Integrated school, a school for basic education, in which she continues to serve as a consultant gratis—a part of her service to God and the community.
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Intercultural Language Education: EFL Learners' Perceptions Toward Intercultural Language Communicative Teaching

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Abstract

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been identified as one of the key competencies for ESL/EFL learners to function appropriately and effectively in multicultural situations. However, there are a limited number of instructional models that include the intercultural content in English language teaching in order to educate EFL learners to become intercultural speakers. This study, part of a fifteen-month project, aims to explore the EFL learners' perceptions towards intercultural communicative language teaching (ICLT) model which is developed to facilitate the EFL learners' ICC in the context of Vietnam. This study involved forty-seven EFL learners who were learning General English at a foreign language center in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Three research instruments, namely questionnaire, learners' diary, and semi-structured group interview were employed to gather data. The preliminary findings revealed that the EFL learners' perceptions towards ICLT were positively changed, and each teaching step in the ICLT model played a vital role in fostering the learners' ICC development. This study sheds light to the implementation of intercultural language teaching in the EFL context of Vietnam and other similar contexts.

Keywords: intercultural communicative language teaching (ICLT) model, intercultural communicative competence (ICC), EFL learners

Introduction

Within the context of global village, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has become an indispensable ability for successful intercultural communication, resulting in redefining one of the ultimate goals in English language education which is to educate ESL/EFL learners to become intercultural speakers who can interact or communicate appropriately and effectively with others from different linguistic and cultural milieus,

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instead of training them to be native-like competent (e.g., Byram, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1999; Deardoff, 2009; Fantini, 2000; Lázár et al., 2007). Accordingly, the intercultural language approach aims to present ESL/EFL learners with cultural differences which help them to be interculturally aware of their own culture and others' cultures to appreciate and respect them. In addition, learners should be equipped with the knowledge of intercultural communication and the ability to use it effectively in order to bridge cultural differences and achieve more harmonious, productive relations (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2012).

The concept of ICC has been defined differently by various scholars (e.g., Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Byram, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1999; Fantini, 2001; Lustig & Koester, 2003; Sercu, 2005; Sinicrope et al., 2007; Wiseman, 2002), resulting in the confusion in addressing the same issue. However, in this project, ICC can be understood in the following terms, adapted from different scholars (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2001; Sinicrope et al., 2007): ICC is the ability which enables one to effectively and appropriately interact in a language other than one's native language with others from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It consists of language competence (linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence) and intercultural competence (attitudes, knowledge, skills, and awareness) that help one to be able to successfully integrate in a multicultural society.

Nevertheless, the role of culture and intercultural communication in English language education has not always been well acknowledged. Gonen and Saglam (2012) point out that "teachers in different classrooms in different parts of the world still ignore the importance of teaching culture as a part of language study" (p. 26). That is, teachers endeavor to promote only their learners' language proficiency instead of endowing them with ICC in order to function effectively and appropriately in multicultural situations. In the context of Vietnam, intercultural language teaching is not also a current practice in English language education since the integration of culture in ELT is usually ignored. Such situations can lead to the phenomenon that EFL learners may have the tools for fluency, but they may not be effective and appropriate interactants in multicultural situations.

Although there have been different studies which attempt to include intercultural content into language education, it can be observed that the most common focus of studies is the application of information and communications technology (ICT) such as computer, the Internet, video and other technologies to promote the acquisition of IC/ICC (e.g., Garretts-Rucks, 2010; O'Neil, 2008; Wang & Coleman, 2009). Other three common points of study are the use of new approaches in IC/ICC development (e.g., Gómez, 2012; Nakano et al., 2011), the contexts of ICC promotion (e.g., Pierson, 2010; Ottoson, 2013), and the characteristics/difficulties/ challenges/factors in intercultural communication (e.g., Alexandru, 2012; Moloney, 2007). However, not much research has been reported on the conduct of an action research to explore the EFL learners' perceptions towards intercultural language teaching in the Vietnamese context. In addition, the concept of ICC is still unfamiliar to most researchers as well as educators in Vietnam, and not many studies have been, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, found in the literature on the promotion of learners' ICC. For example, two available previous studies include one empirical research by Bui (2012) which used the free Telecollaboration 2.0 for online intercultural exchanges in order to enhance the learners' ICC in the context of English language education in Vietnam, and the other theoretical paper by Nguyen (2007) which showed a gap to be filled regarding

the development of EFL learners' ICC. No other research has been reported on conducting action research on the integration of intercultural teaching into ELT in order to enhance the learners' ICC in context. Therefore, this research, which is a part of a fifteen-month project, aims to investigate the EFL learners' perceptions towards intercultural communicative language (ICLT) by using the ICLT model. This model has been developed to facilitate the development of EFL learners' ICC. The following research questions were formed:

1. What are EFL learners' perceptions towards ICLT?
2. What are their attitudes towards the teaching steps in the ICLT model?

Methodology

Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching Model

Prior to the experiment, an ICLT model was developed to facilitate the EFL learners' ICC development.

The ICLT model is an ongoing process of ICC acquisition. There are three parts (Figure 1): Language-Culture, the main training process (*Input-Notice-Practice-Output*), and the ICC, which are systematically integrated. The second part is the main part, consisting of four teaching steps to facilitate the learners' ICC development, and each step reflects the step of knowledge scaffolding and constructing process to facilitate the learners' ICC development.

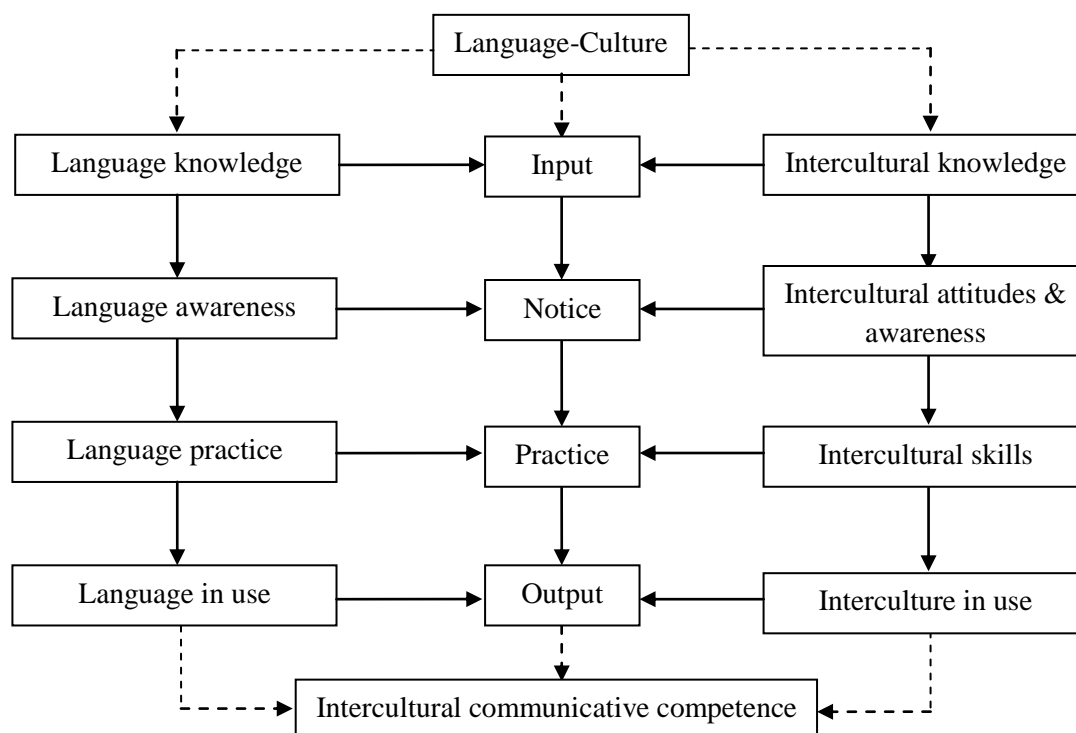


Figure 1. ICLT model

Language-Culture: This reflects the view of language and culture which are closely intertwined, and it is the foundation for the ICLT model.

Input: This teaching step is aimed at providing learners with language knowledge and intercultural knowledge by exposing learners to a wide range of authentic texts and sources (oral, written, and visual) about language and different cultures. The theory of Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985) is embedded in this teaching step to increase the learners' motivation by exposing them to comprehensible input that is understandable but one step beyond their understanding.

Notice: Based on their previous knowledge of language and intercultural, learners are encouraged to notice and make comparisons between unfamiliar features with known ones. In addition, learners discuss the reasons for language and intercultural features as well as their personal response to those language and intercultural features. This teaching step, which is the next step of knowledge scaffolding and constructing process, utilizes the theory of Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1995; 2001) to help raise the learners' language and intercultural awareness and adjust their intercultural attitudes by exposing them to more authentic learning tasks/ activities so that they can attend to and notice unknown features of the input.

Practice: Learners have a variety of opportunities to practice short, supported and guided communicative tasks about the elements of the new knowledge learned from the two previous teaching steps. Moreover, they have chances to practice using intercultural language strategies for communication in accordance to their language and cultural needs. The theory of Long's Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1985; 1996) is employed in this teaching step to foster the learners' ICC development by assisting them to make use of their previous comprehensible input to enhance their language skills (e.g., speaking, listening, reading, and reading) and intercultural skills (e.g., abilities to interpret the meanings in the target culture and relate them to one's own and to interact with people from different cultures).

Output: At this stage, learners are able to produce the earlier input features and reflect on their effectiveness and appropriateness. Furthermore, learners are able to explore further in the new language and intercultural features by trying out new forms, expressions, or strategies derived from the earlier inputs in actual language use through language and intercultural tasks (e.g., project, drama, presentation, among others). The underlying learning theory is the theory of Swain's Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1995; 2000) which aims to raise the learners' awareness of a gap in his/her learning process. This may trigger a new input for another process of the ICLT model as learners' output is a process rather than a product of their ICC learning.

Intercultural communicative competence: The ultimate goal of ICLT is to help learners become intercultural speakers with ICC who can interact effectively and appropriately with others from different cultures.

Within this ICLT model (Figure 1), the arrows among the components indicate the sequence of the process, and the dotted arrows depict the interrelationship among the main part, the foundation and the ultimate goal of the ICLT process.

Research setting

This project was carried out at SEAMEO RETRAC, a Foreign Language Center in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, which provides a variety of language training programs for elementary to advanced levels. This center had seventy-seven English language teachers from not only native English-speaking countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America but also from non-native English-speaking countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines, and South Korea. All these teachers held university and/or postgraduate degrees and internationally recognized TESOL qualifications. The Vietnamese teachers of English and foreign teachers of English were scheduled to share the class time of each group in accordance to the level of the class.

Course design

The course lasting over a period of thirteen weeks was taught by a Vietnamese teacher of English (the researcher), who met the class twice a week, and a foreign teacher of English, who met the class once a week. Each session lasted for two hours; hence, the total number of teaching hours for the whole course was seventy-six, including seventy-two in-class teaching hours and four end-of-course assessment hours. The seventy-six hour course was divided into two parts. The first part involved the lessons taught by the researcher (70% of teaching time) and a foreign teacher of English (30% of teaching time). The second part was the end-of-course assessment (four hours) done by the teachers other than those in charge of teaching the course.

Participants

The participants were forty-seven EFL learners from three elementary classes who were learning General English at SEAMEO RETRAC in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. As can be seen from Table 1, there was just over half (53.2%) of the participants aged under 20, i.e., the participants were quite young. Additionally, around three-fifths (61.6%) of the participants were university students. That is why nearly seven in ten (68.1%) of the participants had other high level qualifications or certificates (e.g., high school baccalaureate) other than bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees. Furthermore, the majority (78.7%) of the participants had previously studied English for over five years. Just over a third (34%) of the participants reported that they had been abroad, and only a very small number (4.3%) of the participants had taken an intercultural course before. Detailed information on the participants is as follows:

Table 1

Research participants' general information

		f	%
Gender	Male	16	34.0
	Female	31	66.0
Age	Under 20	25	53.2
	21-30	18	38.3
	31-40	4	8.5

	Over 40	0	0.0
	Office worker	10	21.4
Job	University	29	61.6
	Student		
	School student	5	10.6
	Other	3	6.4
Higher degrees	Bachelor's	14	29.8
	Master's	1	2.1
	Doctorate	0	0.0
	Others	32	68.1
Number of years' learning English	Under 1	1	2.1
	1 – under 3	1	2.1
	3 – 5	8	17.0
	Over 5	37	78.7
Have been abroad	Yes	16	34.0
	No	31	66.0
Have taken an intercultural course	Yes	2	4.3
	No	45	95.7

Textbook

The *Four Corners* textbook level 2, which is part of *Four Corners* series by Cambridge University Press (Richards & Bohlke, 2012), was used in this project. This English textbook is comprised of twelve units, yet for the first stage of the two in the elementary level in the General English program, only six topics from Unit One to Unit Six were covered. Apart from the core elements in the course syllabus designed by SEAMEO RETRAC, additional elements of intercultural content (3 intercultural themes: *Concept of beauty in different countries* for Unit 2, *Food and drink in different countries* for Unit 4, and *Body language in different countries* for Unit 6) were integrated into the language content.

Research instruments

This study utilized three research instruments: questionnaire, learner's diary, and semi-structured interview in order to collect the data. The questionnaire employed to obtain the information about the EFL learners' perceptions of the ICLT before and after the course included two main parts: background and questionnaire content. The former asked about the learners' personal information, and the latter included 15 items designed with a five-point scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). The total reliability of pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire, calculated by Cronbach, was .84 and .86, respectively. The *learners' diary* was designed in terms of guide questions (11 questions) addressing two issues: perceptions regarding ICLT and effectiveness of the ICLT model. The semi-structured group interview with seven questions was employed to get in-depth information about the participants' reflections on the teaching steps of the ICLT model.

Data collection and analysis

The data collection was conducted within three stages: before, while, and after the implementation of the ICLT model. A questionnaire was administered to forty-seven

participants in three classes before and at the end of the course. During the course, forty-seven participants were required to write their reflection on their perceptions of ICLT in a diary three times after three ICC units. After the course, however, fifteen participants (around 32% of the population) were chosen based on their willingness for the semi-structured group interview. The participants were allowed to use their mother tongue to answer the questionnaires, write their reflection, and answer the questions in the interviews so that they did not encounter any difficulty due to language proficiency.

With respect to the data analysis, the statistical methods (descriptive statistics: frequency, mean and standard deviation; inferential statistics: paired-sample *t*-test) were employed to analyze the quantitative data generated from the questionnaires. Meanwhile, the content analysis was utilized to analyze the qualitative data collected from learners' diaries (141 entries) and interviews. The codes for diary were DT1, DT2, and DT3 for the first topic, second topic, and third topic, respectively, and those for interviewees were L1, L2, and so on. In order to ensure validity and reliability, all the research instruments were piloted before the main study. Furthermore, double-coding was employed in order to check and increase the reliability of the content analysis. Two methods for double-coding are intra-coder and inter-coder. For the intra-coding, the researcher chose three pieces of text from the interview items which had already been coded to recode them. The researcher checked the reliability which was set over 65%. Concerning the inter-coding, the researcher had two experts as inter-coders to recode three pieces of text from the open-ended items. The two inter-coders and the researcher had to reach to an agreement level of reliability (over 65%). As the interview transcriptions were in the participants' mother tongue, the researcher had to translate all the transcriptions into English. The researcher then asked one teacher of English to double-check the accuracy of the translated version.

Results

EFL Learners' perceptions of Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching

With respect to the quantitative data collected from the questionnaire, it can be seen that in Table 2 the mean score of the EFL learners' perceptions of ICLT before the course was 3.35 (out of 5). This means that the learners' perceptions of ICLT were quite positive, although they had never taken any (inter)cultural course before. After a thirteen week course, the mean score of the learners' perceptions of ICLT was 4.15 (out of 5), which indicates that there was a significant difference in the learners' perceptions of ICLT ($t = -10.588$; $p = .000$). Accordingly, it can be concluded that learners felt more positive about ICLT after their course as their perceptions of ICLT changed significantly.

Table 2

EFL learners' perceptions of ICLT (Paired samples t-test)

Items	t	Sig.	\bar{X} (SD) (N=47)	
			Before	After
15 items	-10.588	.000	3.35 (.54)	4.15 (.29)

$p \leq .05$

Specifically, Table 3 shows that before the course, many learners, on the one hand, did not believe in the importance, usefulness, need, necessity ($i1 = 29.9\%$; $i2 = 25.5\%$; $i3 =$

17%; i4 = 17.0%; i5 = 19.1%), and the roles (i8 = 17.0%; i10 = 19.1%) of the integration of foreign cultures into English language teaching; so they assumed that it was not really necessary for them to acquire knowledge of foreign cultures (i11 = 14.9%) and strategies for intercultural communication in English language classes (i15 = 25.5%).

There was, on the other hand, a substantial percentage of the participants who were unsure of the roles of the integration of foreign cultures into English language teaching. Nearly half of the learners were unclear whether there should be a strong focus on foreign cultures in English language classes (i3 = 46.8%), and whether it was important to integrate foreign cultures into English language classes (i4 = 42.6%). More remarkably, learners were still unaware of the elements of the IC, which consists of knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and skills. That is why they were uncertain if it was necessary and important for them to have knowledge of foreign cultures (i7 = 44.7%; i13 = 40.4%), to develop their curiosity, openness, and readiness to learn about foreign cultures (i10 = 38.3%), to raise their awareness of foreign cultures (i14 = 38.3%), and to be taught how to communicate with people from different countries effectively and appropriately (i13 = 42.6%). Consequently, they were confused as to whether they should learn both LC and IC simultaneously in English language classes or not (i15 = 42.6%).

Table 3

EFL learners' perceptions of ICLT

Items	Pre- (N=47) - F (%)			Post- (N=47) - F (%)		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
i1. Integrating foreign cultures into English language classes interests learners to learn English.	14 (29.8)	11 (23.4)	22 (46.8)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.3)	45 (95.7)
i2. It is useful to integrate foreign cultures into English language classes.	12 (25.5)	11 (23.4)	24 (51.1)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.3)	45 (95.7)
i3. There should be a strong focus on foreign cultures in English language classes.	8 (17.0)	22 (46.8)	17 (36.2)	2 (4.3)	7 (14.9)	38 (80.8)
i4. Integrating foreign cultures into English language classes is important.	8 (17.0)	20 (42.6)	19 (40.4)	1 (2.1)	4 (8.5)	42 (89.4)
i5. There is a need to integrate foreign cultures into English language classes.	9 (19.1)	14 (29.8)	24 (51.1)	0 (0.0)	3 (6.4)	44 (93.6)
i6. Learners should develop both language competence and intercultural competence in English language classes.	3 (6.4)	20 (42.6)	24 (51.1)	1 (2.1)	3 (6.4)	43 (91.5)
i7. It is important for learners to learn about foreign cultures in English language classes.	5 (10.6)	21 (44.7)	21 (44.7)	0 (0.0)	4 (8.5)	43 (91.5)
i8. Learning about foreign cultures in English language classes helps learners to understand more about their own culture.	7 (14.9)	16 (34.0)	24 (51.1)	1 (2.1)	4 (8.5)	42 (89.4)
i9. Learners should develop positive attitudes toward foreign cultures in English language classes.	8 (17.0)	14 (29.8)	25 (53.2)	0 (0.0)	5 (10.6)	42 (89.4)
i10. In English language classes, it is necessary to develop learners' curiosity, openness, and readiness to learn about foreign cultures.	9 (19.1)	18 (38.3)	20 (42.6)	0 (0.0)	3 (6.4)	44 (93.6)
i11. Knowledge of foreign cultures	7 (14.9)	15 (31.9)	25 (53.2)	0 (0.0)	8 (17.0)	39 (83.0)

should be included in English language classes.

i12. In English language classes, learners should be taught how to communicate with people from different countries effectively and appropriately.	4 (8.5)	20 (42.6)	23 (48.9)	0 (0.0)	5 (10.6)	42 (89.4)
i13. It is necessary to provide learners with knowledge of foreign cultures in English language classes.	3 (6.4)	19 (40.4)	25 (53.2)	1 (2.1)	11 (23.4)	35 (74.5)
i14. Raising learners' awareness of foreign cultures in English language classes is important.	4 (8.5)	18 (38.3)	25 (53.2)	0 (0.0)	6 (12.8)	41 (87.2)
i15. Strategies for intercultural communication should be taught to learners in English language classes.	12 (25.5)	14 (29.8)	21 (44.7)	0 (0.0)	5 (10.6)	42 (89.4)

After a thirteen-week course, there was a noticeable change in the learners' perceptions of ICLT since there was a very large number of the learners who believed in the importance, necessity and the roles (i1 = 95.7%; i2 = 95.7%; i3 = 80.8%; i4 = 89.4%; i5 = 93.6%; i6 = 91.5%) of the integration of foreign cultures into English language teaching, and were well aware of the IC components (i7 = 91.5%; i8 = 89.4%; i9 = 89.4%; i10 = 93.6%; i11 = 89.4%; i12 = 89.4%; i13 = 74.5%; i14 = 87.2%; i15 = 89.4%). However, there was still a small number of learners who remained unclear whether the integration of foreign cultures into English language teaching was important and necessary or not. Also, some learners had neutral opinions whether they should be provided with knowledge of foreign cultures while learning English (i11 = 17%; i13 = 23.4%). Around one tenth of the learners were not for or against learning strategies for intercultural communication (i15 = 10.6%; i12 = 10.6%), and adjusting their attitudes toward foreign cultures in English classes (i9 = 10.6%). In addition, some others still wondered if their awareness of the importance of foreign cultures in English classes should be raised or not (i14 = 12.8%). This means that this ICC course did not help change those participants' perceptions of ICLT.

When it comes to the data obtained from the diaries and interviews, there was strong evidence of a positive change in the EFL learners' perceptions of ICLT. As for the data from the diaries, there were three sets of diary data which were generated from the participants' reflections written during the course. It is noticeable that a large proportion of participants had positive perceptions of ICLT as they believed in the importance, necessity, and the roles of integrating foreign cultures into English language teaching. For example, they made the following comments:

After this lesson, I understand more about different cultures, especially how people from different cultures have different concepts of beauty.... I think learning foreign cultures is very necessary and important in learning English (DT1/17).

It is necessary and important because I learn culture through learning English (DT1/39).

Many participants also added that learning about culture in English classes "should be a part of English language learning" (DT1/24), and "it is necessary for everyone nowadays because we live in a multicultural world" (DT1/45).

Furthermore, some participants said that including foreign cultures in English lessons could increase the learning mood in classrooms as teaching foreign cultures in English

language classes “motivates learners to learn” (DT2/26), and “attracts learners' attention more” (DT2/9) because the lessons were fun and enjoyable. They commented:

The integration of cultures into English lessons makes the lessons more interesting and enjoyable because we can discover interesting things of other cultures through learning English (DT1/23).

This is a very fun way to learn both English and culture because through learning English, we can learn more about other cultures; it is kind of boring if we learn English only (DT1/30).

Apart from the abovementioned ideas, some participants highlighted the value of learning about foreign cultures in English lessons. Two such examples are as follows:

Learning different cultures helps us to be a good person and know how to communicate better with foreigners.... It helps us to know how to respect other people and avoid misunderstanding (DT2/44).

Learning about other cultures helps to eliminate the racial discrimination, understand more about other cultures, helps people to come closer, and equip me with more knowledge so that I will be able to live, study and work with foreigners, and travel to their countries (DT2/8).

Similarly, many participants mentioned that they could “understand more about the world not only the language itself” (DT3/24) when foreign cultures were integrated into language classes, and that learning about other cultures in English language classes could deepen their understanding of their own culture and help them gain more intercultural knowledge, adjust their intercultural attitudes, raise their intercultural awareness, and improve their intercultural skills.

...it gives us information of cultural differences in concepts of beauty from different cultures... learning about other cultures can help to understand more about my own culture (DT3/36).

Because this topic widens my knowledge of concepts of beauty that I have not known before. Through such a topic, I know more about other cultures and I am confident when talking to foreigners.... When we understand about cultural differences, we tend to be friendlier to others. This makes the relationship among people better and better (DT1/39).

Nevertheless, some participants did not comment on this issue in the diary data even though they spelled out their opinions on other issues, such as their ICC improvement and supportive factors and constraints on the development of learners' ICC. This makes it difficult to determine their perceptions of ICLT.

Concerning the data from the interviews, the findings were found similar to the results obtained from the diary data. However, it was also found that a number of those interviewed shared their beliefs that it was necessary and interesting to learn different cultures in English lessons “because when we learn a language, it is advisable to learn its culture. Now English is an international language, it is better to learn many cultures” (L1),

and “it is useful and applicable in real life” (L5). They believed that “both language content and cultural content support each other: learning English through learning culture and vice versa” (L9).

Many other interviewees were eager to learn about culture included in English lessons although this type of lesson was new to them. One of the many examples is:

This is very new to me, and it arouses my curiosity to learn more about both culture and language (L15).

Moreover, apart from motivating learners and making them more active, learning different cultures could help them understand some special features of other cultures such as slang and body language. Some interviewees stated:

The class is more active because of interesting lessons. It helps us to understand the underlying messages in other cultures such as body language (L14).

It motivates learners to learn more. We can learn some slangs or body language from different cultures so that we can communicate better with foreigners (L15).

EFL Learners’ Attitudes toward Teaching Steps in the ICLT Model

The findings obtained from the diaries and interviews about the teaching procedure within the ICLT model: *Input–Notice–Practice–Output* are as follows:

The teaching step: *Input*

This is the first teaching step in the ICLT model, and it aimed to provide learners with intercultural knowledge; yet, it was not the learners’ favorite teaching step. Some participants commented in their diaries that this teaching step was “motivate[ing] learners' learning” (DT2/6), and it used pictures and video clips to help them to understand difficult concepts and improve their English vocabulary as well as knowledge of culture.

Using many pictures helps me to understand the concepts of beauty more easily and remember vocabulary longer (DT1/15).

...using interesting video clips to illustrate body languages from different countries (DT3/32).

Agreeing with the above finding, some of those interviewed expressed similar ideas on this teaching step:

This step arouses learners’ interest and curiosity thanks to informative and vivid content (L6).

It is easy to understand the lessons because they contain images and video clips to support my learning English vocabulary and illustrate different aspects of cultures (L11).

Reflecting on the reasons for the learners’ dislike, it seems that some learners (e.g., DT2/11; DT2/34) felt that the teaching step *Input* did not expand knowledge much outside the

materials, nor did it give them sufficient details. Therefore, one suggested “there should be deeper knowledge about the cultural topic” (DT1/7).

On the contrary, some interviewees complained about this teaching step in terms of the intercultural material. One said “I don’t like the input because some cultural information is quite difficult to remember” (L13), and the other stated “I don’t like input because it is quite long” (L4). However, one recommended “[t]here should be more video clips so that the lessons will be more interesting” (L7).

The teaching step: *Notice*

The findings revealed that this teaching step, which was to adjust the learners’ intercultural attitudes and raise their intercultural awareness, played an important role in enhancing their understanding of English and culture, but only some respondents enjoyed it as this teaching step “helps to raise awareness of cultural difference and change [their] attitudes toward other cultures (DT3/43). More examples are:

This step helps me to use previous knowledge to compare with the new one and consolidate English knowledge. It also helps me to reflect on my culture so that I understand cultural differences more (DT1/39).

This step helps me to deepen my previous understanding and give more useful knowledge for communicating with others and avoiding disagreement when talking to people from different countries (L16).

However, many informants admitted that although this teaching step was important and helpful, it was not their favorite. They explained that this teaching step “is abstract” (e.g., DT1/37; DT2/3; L14; L9) and “quite difficult” (e.g., DT3/7; L14) to follow because they needed to reflect on their previous knowledge.

The teaching step: *Practice*

The teaching step *Practice*, whose aim is to improve learners’ intercultural skills, was very popular because of the various benefits it offered to learners. Many participants mentioned that this teaching step was useful because it helped them to understand the lessons more easily and quickly, and it made the lessons more interesting and interactive. Some examples are:

We practice in English to role-play in situations that may occur in the reality. This is useful and interesting. It helps me to learn the lesson more quickly and easily (DT1/4).

This makes me understand the lesson more easily. This step makes the lesson more interesting and interactive (DT3/37).

More specifically, some diary respondents stated that the teaching step *Practice* helped them practice and understand better how to use intercultural strategies in intercultural communication.

...it helps me to understand more how to use strategies in communication (DT2/21).

We can practice the strategies of intercultural communication that we may encounter in real life (DT3/13).

The findings from the group interviews corroborated the above-mentioned evidence. Many interviewees stated that they could practice how to use useful strategies to talk with foreigners in intercultural situations.

In this step, it is quite fun because we can role-play in English and learn useful strategies for intercultural communication (L1).

This step is necessary because it gives me a chance to practice what may happen in real life. Moreover, there are useful strategies to say in English for intercultural communication (L6).

It supplies me with useful strategies to communicate well with foreigners (L12).

However, this teaching step also had its drawbacks about which learners complained. Some participants commented “[t]hey need more time to practice” (DT1/24), and suggested that “there should be more time to practice” (L2), and “[t]here should be more time to practice and more activities for this part” (L13).

The teaching step: *Output*

A large number of diary informants commented that they liked the teaching step *Output* best, whose purpose was to give learners opportunities to produce the earlier input features and reflect on their correctness and appropriateness, because “it helps [them] to have an overall look at the lesson [they] have just learned” (DT1/6), and “it improves [their] English skills by using it to express cultural content and it is a chance to share and learn from” (DT1/24). They also reported that this teaching step made the class “active and fun, so everyone likes speaking English” (DT2/10) and made the lesson “more interesting and the learning is more meaningful and fun” (DT2/3). In addition, some of the diary participants added that this teaching step “improves our creativity in [their] lesson” (DT3/3), “it improves my English skills by using it to express cultural content, and it is a chance to share and learn from other friends” (DT3/36), and “it helps people to be open and the class is enjoyable” (DT3/20).

Many interviewees expressed similar ideas. They pointed out the effectiveness of the teaching step *Output*.

I like the output best because this step helps us to reflect on what we have learned. By doing this, we learn ICC more effectively (L2).

I like the output because three previous steps prepare us to do the last one. We can use knowledge and what we have learned and may look for some information beyond the lesson (L10).

This step is quite interesting because it motivates us to explore more about English and other cultures (L9).

Nevertheless, some of the interviewees suggested how this step could be made more effective. They recommended “there should be more time and activities for class discussion. Maybe the teacher can ask learners to prepare the task at home to present it in the following class” (L2), and “the time for this step should be longer, so we can have more time to prepare for class discussion as well as information search” (L2).

Nevertheless, although most participants expressed greater interest in one or two of the teaching steps, a few ones stated that they liked all of the teaching steps because “they are equally important. Each step has its own things to learn” (L6), and “the arrangement of four steps is logical and easy to follow” (L8).

To summarize, the findings indicate the strengths and weaknesses of each teaching step (*Input–Notice–Practice–Output*) in the ICLT model. It is clear that the least favorite teaching step was *Notice*, in spite of its importance and necessity, while learners liked *Output* the most inasmuch as it was helpful in improving their ICC.

Discussion

The findings from the triangulated data analysis indicated that, in general, EFL learners’ perceptions toward ICLT changed positively over a thirteen-week course. This means that the ICC course had positive impact on learners’ perceptions in the use of intercultural content in English language classes. One of the possible explanations for this might be that EFL learners realized the benefits of learning intercultural content while learning English. During the course, they learned about different cultures and intercultural communication strategies which may be useful for their current or later job, travel or overseas study, especially as they learned intercultural content through learning English and vice versa. Therefore, it may be inferred that EFL learners believed that having intercultural communicative competence is critically important for them in order to ‘function effectively and appropriately with people from another language culture background in multicultural contexts’ (e.g., Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2001; Lustig & Koester, 2003; Sinicrope et al., 2007). This finding is also in line with that of Risner’s (2011) who conducted a research on developing IC through blended learning within a two-week China Retailing Model which was integrated in an undergraduate business course to develop learners’ IC. The results revealed that learners had positive change in their attitudes toward the intercultural learning.

As can be seen, there was a very interesting finding from the quantitative data about the EFL learners’ perceptions ($\bar{x} = 3.35$ out of 5) toward the teaching of intercultural content in EFL class at the beginning of the ICC course. The students have positive thoughts about intercultural language teaching, i.e., they acknowledged the important roles of learning various cultures in learning English although they had never attended an ICC course before. This finding can be related to the fact that many EFL learners were aware that English is currently used as a communication tool, a *Lingua franca*, and an international language around the world; and they had experienced cultural difference as around one third (34%) of learners had been abroad; hence, they realized that English is an efficient and effective tool in the process of global integration and development as stated by Vietnam National Assembly (1998, 2005, 2009). Being competent in one’s own language and culture is not enough in the process of globalization. However, this finding is inconsistent with that found by Schenker (2012) who carried out a study on IC and cultural learning through telecollaboration in a six-

week project. The results indicated that students were not able to develop great interest in learning foreign cultures while learning intercultural language class as their interest was already at a very high level before the course. It may be concluded from the findings that if the learners' interest in learning intercultural language is at a high level, they do not develop their interest more, and vice versa.

Noticeably, the triangulated data analysis further revealed that the EFL learners were found to have strong belief in the importance, need, necessity and significance of learning intercultural content in English language classes. They supposed that the inclusion of the different cultures in English language teaching motivated them and attracted their attention to learn more English and culture, and that it was useful and applicable in their life. They also became aware that learning culture should be a part of English language learning. Participants benefitted from learning foreign cultures while learning English. In addition, it may be that the teaching activities and learning materials and tasks supported their learning process of intercultural language as pointed out by Griffin and Robertson (2014) that "the teacher promotes higher learner engagement by presenting activities that stimulate interest, curiosity and inquiry" (p. 145) and by Proske, Körndle and Narciss (2012) that learning material and tasks "can help learners to reach a learning goal" (p. 1607). This result seems to be in agreement with Wang and Coleman's (2009) research on internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education. The authors discovered that students believed intercultural learning was an important aspect of their intercultural language class.

It was, moreover, found that EFL learners were aware that they could improve their intercultural communication through this ICC course in terms of intercultural knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and skills. EFL learners also recognized that learning about other cultures could also help them understand more about their own culture. Such findings are supported by the ideas supposing that in language classes where intercultural understanding is one of the goals, learners become more aware of their own culture and more knowledgeable about the foreign cultures (Chastain, 1988), and that the main aims of teaching interculture are "to increase students' awareness and to develop their interest in the target culture and their own, helping them to make comparisons among cultures" (Tavares & Cavalcanti, 1996, p. 19).

However, the results also indicated that some learners had neutral and negative attitudes regarding the incorporation of intercultural content in English language classes. In other words, they did not believe that learning different cultures in learning English could widen their intercultural knowledge, adjust their intercultural attitudes, raise their intercultural awareness, and improve their intercultural skills. It is difficult to explain this result, but it might be that those EFL learners were not interested in learning cultures in an English language class due to their poor English language proficiency; hence, they wanted to focus on learning only English. Another possible explanation for this might be that those learners believed that English is now an international language; because 'such language belongs to no single culture, then it would seem that it is not necessary for language learners to acquire knowledge about the culture of those who speak it' (McKay, 2000, p. 7). Accordingly, these findings may suggest that those EFL learners developed their English language proficiency only, which might cause them to use English inappropriately and lead them to culture shock, misunderstandings, and communication breakdown in multicultural situations due to their lack of IC.

With respect to the teaching procedure within the ICLT model, the findings showed that learners liked the teaching step *Input* because it motivated and aroused their interest and curiosity with the use of vivid pictures and video clips to illustrate different aspects of culture. However, some of the learners disliked this teaching step, because some of the information was hard to remember and difficult to understand; they suggested that there should be more video clips and pictures for this step. As regards the teaching step *Notice*, learners liked this step as it played important roles in fostering their understanding of English and cultural differences; however, for some learners, it was their least favorite teaching step because the lesson content was quite abstract and rather hard to understand. A possible explanation for this may be that although learners realized the importance of this teaching step, they lacked previous knowledge of language and intercultural. Consequently, they found it difficult to link the new knowledge with their existing knowledge, and consequently experienced problems in proceeding with the learning activities that followed.

Learners enjoyed the teaching step *Practice* because it made the lesson useful, interesting, and interactive. Nevertheless, there were two drawbacks which were the time and activity constraints. It seems that there was not enough time for the learners to practice, and that the activities were not varied enough. It may be that learners would have preferred learning activities that were more pertinent to their learning needs, and that the teaching step was learner-centered (Blumberg, 2008), so learners were fully engaged in the learning process. However, learners may have wanted more time and opportunity to practice what they had previously learned.

The step teaching step *Output* made the class active and fun, and it helped learners to improve their creativity as well as ICC. Nonetheless, related to one of the drawbacks found in the teaching step *Practice*, learners also complained about the time constraints. This finding further supports the explanations discussed above that this teaching step was learner-centered, so the learners were fully engaged in learning activities that were less controlled by the teacher. In addition, this finding could be explained by the fact that this teaching step consisted of different activities, such as oral presentations and mini-projects which were new to learners, so they triggered learners' learning engagement to get involved actively in the learning activities.

Conclusion

The study, in general, showed that the EFL learners' perceptions of ICLT were positive after a thirteen-week course as they were aware of ICC and the importance of ICLT. Moreover, learners had positive attitudes towards all the teaching steps as they believed that all the teaching steps in the ICLT model were equally important, and each teaching step was part of the ICLT model whose main aim was to help them become intercultural speakers with ICC and be able to interact effectively and appropriately with others from different cultures. The preliminary results of this study revealed that the ICLT model can assist in changing EFL learners' perceptions toward ICLT. Nevertheless, this is the first step in using the ICLT model to educate learners to become intercultural speakers who can function appropriately and effectively in multicultural situations.

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Three TESOL Perspectives: A Proposed Shift in Paradigms

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Abstract

This paper is an autoethnographic study and analysis of related literature, integrated with the reflections of an English language teacher of thirteen years and a teacher-trainer of nine years, where I present two teaching perspectives gleaned from available literature and observed from approximately 400 native and non-native English language teachers and teacher trainees from various locations and backgrounds over the years. Two broad English language teaching perspectives emerged and were commonly observed; classified as Teacher-Student, and Teacher-Learner perspectives. A third perspective, Facilitator-People, a construct presented as an ideal perspective from which English language teachers can regard their English language students, and is proposed as a model for all language teaching environments.

Keywords: TESOL; teaching English; English language learning; perspectives; language users; ELT; ELL; EL

Introduction

I have been an English language teacher for thirteen years and a teacher trainer for nine years. My career has progressed into more formal training environments as a formal Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) trainer and as a teacher-trainer in both offline and online settings within various organizations. As a result, I have been exposed to approximately 400 native and non-native English language teachers or teacher-trainees, from a variety of countries and backgrounds. During this time, it became apparent to me that there were two predominant teaching perspectives rooted in traditionalism and methodology, held by teachers and teacher-trainees that appeared to be lacking in efficacy. This observation was furthered when I would engage in conversations and or interviews with students of those teachers with such perspectives, who would make such comments as “My teacher talks too much”; “She focuses on the book”; “He doesn’t teach like you”; “She doesn’t let me talk”; “I’m not satisfied with my teacher”; “I didn’t get anything from the class” or, “My teacher isn’t helping me.” Additionally, as I would read through available literature, I began to see an absence of comments for the person seeking to acquire the language.

As a result, I began to develop a teaching perspective that seemed to satisfy those in my classes because I was treating them with mutual respect instead of expecting them to respect me as a teacher; feedback, instead of teaching; courtesy, as opposed to direct-imperative statements; kindness, instead of demands; empathy, instead of sympathy; and

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showing concern for their needs, as opposed to simply discovering their needs. I began to hear such comments as: “I really enjoyed your class”; “This was an excellent class”; “This was the best class I have ever had”; “I like your teaching style”; or “I learned a lot in your class” from my students. Additionally, many of my students would refuse to go to another teacher and/or want to enroll in my classes. I then realized that unless change was implemented in the English language teaching environment, our credibility as legitimate teachers and our very career field were in jeopardy. I concluded that the current perspectives widely held by many English language teachers and trainees I encountered needed to be modified in order for us as language teachers and the career field in general to recover from inadequacy in the eyes of our students. Thus, I began to promote change in the generally observable attitudes and or beliefs (i.e. perspectives) held by teachers and trainees toward English language teaching in those I encountered, for the sake of the very people we are paid to help.

Through trial and error, study, conversations with my peers, and refinement, I began to formulate an ideal English language teaching perspective that would provide an environment more conducive to language acquisition, the very thing our students need to be successful in their English language goals. Whether, taking English proficiency exams, whether for academic or business purposes, or whether for conversational and or participatory purposes, the people we enjoin in classrooms simply need to acquire the language to succeed. They do not need rigid, traditional classroom environments, nor do they need rigid and now-insufficient methods; rather, they need someone to help them acquire the language.

One change in my thinking was a new view of students, that incorporated the terms “people” and “customers” that rippled into my discussions with and training of language teachers. A simple change in terminology helped teachers realize that the people they were teaching were paying for our professional service. My efforts were therefore directed toward creating an awareness of the humanity, human needs, and the business setting we are in as language teachers in the ELT environment. Based on observations during a two-year period at U-Talk in Summit, Online English Language Center, a noticeable decrease in student-customer complaints, an increase in compliments of teacher classroom performance, and overall satisfaction by our clients of our service ensued. Another change I implemented was continual reflection on my classroom practices which flowed into my teacher-training, where language teachers are presented with traditional teaching and method-teaching models, and their shortcomings as they relate to this new ELT perspective. Thus, in short, a change took place from viewing students as *students* and learners and *learners* to viewing them as *people* with human needs and as *customers* in a business environment.

This paper represents an autoethnographic study. Specifically, "a phenomenological study using autoethnography to highlight the existential shifts in my cultural understanding" (Pitard, 2016, p. 1); basically an accepted and legitimate form of study; a reflection of my experiences. Admittedly, this is not an empirical study, but a qualitative study based on direct contact, analysis of the literature, experience, as well as reflection. Kumaravadivelu (2003) terms this teacher the “reflective practitioner” who “constantly attempts to maximize their learning potential and that of their learners through classroom-oriented action research and problem-solving activities” (p. 11). I also agree with the comments made by Davies and Elder (2004, p. 619) and also Kumaravadivelu (2003, pp. 8-9) that reflect a distancing from the

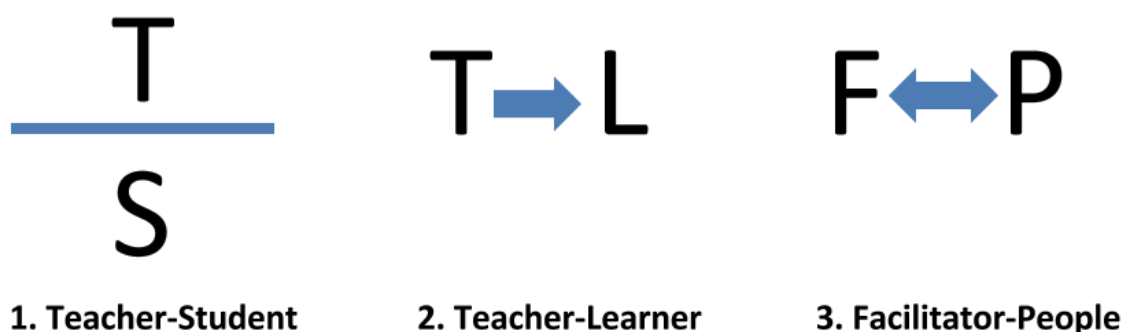
“privileges” of empirical research that creates teachers who are little more than “passive technicians” whose role is to simply follow the “professional knowledge base” and “generalized, pre-packaged solutions in the shape of teaching materials and strategies...” without being accepted as experts in the field in their own right.

Therefore, with my newly-found freedom as a reflective practitioner who had the ability to add to the language-teaching body of knowledge (along with the privileged empirical data), with my ability to observe both teacher and student responses, read the literature, conduct my own mini-researches, converse with and interview people, I present observations and related literature to discuss two perspectives I have commonly seen in the ELT environment, while presenting a third perspective. I then address how teacher-training can facilitate a shift in perspectives among language teachers and create reformation in the ELT industry. To reiterate, I am not promoting another method or approach, but a way of regarding our students that will create a more conducive environment for language acquisition.

Working Paradigm of This Paper

Two general categories of existing ELT perspectives can be formulated as bases for teacher approaches to the ELT classroom environment; and one new perspective being proposed in this paper. Figure 1 represents these three perspectives.

Figure 1 | Three Teaching Perspectives in English Language Teaching



Perspective 1. Teacher-Student (T-S)

From the T-S perspective, the student is viewed by the teacher as someone who is studying the language; the student is a student of language and as such is expected to learn *about* the language. This perspective tends to be more common with language teachers who have little to no experience or training and can be related to a traditional mindset encountered in their own apprenticeship of observation (Bejou, 2005; Lomas, 2007). Here, traditional classroom practices are exhibited in the form of lined and rowed desks, the teacher standing at the front of the class, all eyes required to be on the teacher, students engaged in note-taking, right and wrong answers; and an air of authority about the teachers. Language teachers with this perspective tend to view students as passive recipients of grammar rules, who need pronunciation points, who require lists of vocabulary, and whose job is to listen to what the teacher tells them; more of a rote classroom environment (Bullock, 2011; Krashen,

1982; Nazzal, 2014; Nunan, 2013; Schrader, 2013). There is also a tendency on the part of the teacher to make directive statements such as “Open your books”; “Read this”; “Do this exercise”; “Say it like this...”; “Don't say it like that...”; “You have to...” et cetera.

With a T-S perspective, language teachers tend to do most of the talking during class time, as they may see themselves as having the information the students need to progress. This may cultivate language teachers who see themselves more in the job of curriculum transmission or *disseminators* of knowledge, who control the learning process (Kuzborska 2011; Nunan, 2013; Raths & McAninch 2003; Shower, Gilmore, & Banks-Joseph 2009; Teaching Practices, 2009). Here, the idea appears to be that students need to *study* more about the language in order to become more proficient at it.

In that respect, the English language classroom becomes an English class, not much different than a math, science, or history class in high school. In math class, students must remember the formulas: $x + y = z$; in science class, they must remember that water freezes at 0 degrees Celsius and boils at 100 degrees, at sea level; in history class, they must remember that NATO was formed in 1949, and the like, in order to successfully complete tasks, quizzes, tests, and or exams to demonstrate subject-matter proficiency, get a good grade, and proceed to the next level.

Much the same, English in the T-S environment becomes a series of formulas to be remembered such as $S + V + O =$ a proper sentence, or that we must use an article before a countable noun in order to successfully complete tasks, quizzes, tests, and or exams to demonstrate English proficiency, get a good grade, and proceed to the next level. In that respect, the English class from this perspective, much to the chagrin of the students, becomes nothing more than a subject to be studied and passed. The measure of success tends to be test scores. And, little, if any, class time is given over to actually acquiring the language. The T-S language teacher seems to be more comfortable within the confines of predictable lessons which enables them more control but is often absent of taking advantage of teachable moments. Students tend to view this teacher as the owner of the class while their own role is to respond to prompts and follow the language teacher's lead.

The T-S perspective also creates a kind of, what I call, *trauma* in the students. In this classroom environment, they learn that mistakes are wrong, that there is a right and wrong way to say something, a correct or incorrect way of constructing sentences, and or no gray areas in English: the results of a prescriptive mindset. In addition, error correction may also encourage a strategy where mistake avoidance overrides acquisition (Krashen, 1982) which destroys fluency. Therefore, outside of the classroom, the students hesitate to speak or interact in the very environment they are supposed to be being prepared for by the very person they have come to and paid for assistance with it. Eaton (2010) puts it quite well in stating, that “the focus in language education in the twenty-first century is no longer on grammar, memorization and learning from rote, but rather using language and cultural knowledge as a means to communicate and connect to others around the globe” (p. 5). Hence, I theorize, why in many T-S-oriented EL classrooms today, can be heard the all-too-familiar statement, “I hate English!” Students want to *use* the language, not study it, and the T-S perspective views the student as one who is studying English.

Perspective 2. Teacher-Learner (T-L)

From the T-L perspective the student is viewed as a learner who is learning how to use the language, who would benefit from methods designed to aid them toward that end. The T-L perspective-led classroom is exhibited by such elements as an often friendly and warm language teacher, plenty of lessons, and plenty of activities designed to provide the learners with generous amounts of opportunities to use the language in the class while under the supervision of the teacher. Often, the language teachers I have encountered with the T-L perspective have had exposure to linguistics, education, or English majors, and or have had advanced TESOL or other language teacher/teaching education or training with a working knowledge of the subject of language learning. This is because teaching from the T-L perspective involves the use of learned approaches or methodologies such as the Natural Method, the Communicative Approach, Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response, Computer Assisted Language Learning, and the like, which tend to be less traditional and are more interactive in nature. Although the T-L perspective is less traditional, it is an approach/method-centered classroom based on lesson completion, where the ELT takes either a prescribed or non-prescribed curriculum and applies a language teaching method or methods, as in the case of principled eclecticism (Mellow, 2002; Taylor, n.d.) in order to present the material in a way that the teacher believes is necessary for the learners to learn. This may or may not include what the ELLs may actually need, and may very well be hit or miss if not fail in that regard (Cummins & Davison, 2007; Eaton, 2010; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2011; Norouzian, 2013; Stanley, 2013; Xiao-yun, Zhi-yang, & Peixing, 2007).

The language teachers I have encountered with a T-L perspective also tend to spend more time in preparation of lessons on topics that they believe the students will benefit from based on learner feedback and or informal needs assessments. Often, these lessons are taken from books, or these days the books provide the lessons and material. These books follow the authors' curricular views of how people learn a language and are often in-line with modern language learning theories. Students within this perspective are viewed as *learners* or *language learners*, a reflection of modern terminology. The classroom is often arranged in a methodology-prescribed order to achieve maximum learning, and arranged or decorated with the same ideas in mind. Activities in the T-L classroom will likely include grammar lessons embedded into a communicative-style approach with tasks matching the same ideology; right and wrong ways of saying things; learning predictable and or categorized idioms; where the teacher provides categorized or contextual vocabulary lists, reviews and practices pronunciation points with learners, and or shows learners common grammar rules. Students may be put into groups or pairs so that they can more readily rehearse and or practice the lesson material in a less stressful manner.

This T-L perspective on the surface does not appear problematic, and may in fact appear to be ideal to some readers. However, the T-L perspective facilitates a prescriptive language teaching environment of what *should be said*, and where lesson completion is the goal of the ELT. Learners are indeed learning to communicate in the language but are not being primed for language acquisition. For example, many learners regularly undergo a question and answer series at some point in their classes as part of their communicatively-styled English class, but are not often involved in *question formation*, as might be encountered and even expected in conversations outside of the classroom. The T-L

perspective also tends to reinforce the view that students are learners of the language as opposed to acquirers of the language who intend to use English to accomplish their own individual objectives.

Learners, on the other hand, learn English; meaning they are taught the English that is meant to assist them in generally rehearsed settings such as at a restaurant, going to a movie, talking to your boss, et cetera. These learners are trained through the communicative rehearsal of prescribed grammar patterns, forms, collocations, and or contexts to be drawn upon when needed. This routine is different than language acquisition which involves the ability to use the language in a variety of unrehearsed settings because the language has been *picked up* by the user.

Communicative-style activities of the T-L perspective focus on using the language in certain contexts and under certain (ideal) conditions (such as the classroom environment, or when people speak the same words outside the classroom), while language acquisition activities create a competence within the learner to communicate in a variety of situations. The T-L perspective classroom does not prepare learners to use the language in an *everyday* capacity, but rather teach learners the language as a way to communicate in specific settings. These kinds of classes are approach/method-centered by nature in the sense that the language teachers tend to follow preconceived, generalized patterns and activities that they believe the learners might benefit from.

Richards and Renandya (2002) define a method as "an overall plan for systematic presentation of language based on a selected approach" (p. 9). Nunan (2013) helps to relate this limitation to a communicative methodology by saying:

“They [language learners] learn how to communicate in model and predictable situations, but they don’t learn how to respond appropriately in novel and authentic communicative situations. Such a drill-based pedagogical culture is most commonly associated with audiolingualism, and, although audiolingualism is supposedly dead and buried, the drill-based culture is very much alive and well, as is evident in most so-called communicative curricula”(p. 69)

Some literature also discusses the weaknesses of other *communicatively-intended* methods such as the Natural Approach as being teacher-centered, unchallenging, with student roles of “absorbing” the material (Taber, n.d) and prohibits the use of relevant and interesting topics (Krashen, 1982). Richards and Renandya (2002) make similar observations in saying that "Methods [themselves] are too prescriptive"; that they "assume too much about a context before the context has even been identified"; and that they are "overgeneralized in their potential application to practical situations" (p. 10). According to Nunan (2013), a basic principle for these communicative-type approaches is meant to “develop the ability to use language to get things done” (p. 18), which is the concept behind Perspective 3 (Figure 1): to recover this basic principle through via new paradigm. Cummins and Davison (2007) discuss a “one-size-fits-all approach and ethnographic accounts in English language teaching [that] show an inherent difficulty when trying to use uniform policies, abstract theories, and packaged methodologies, and make mention of a collaborative process between policy and practice that is ‘co-constructed’ through ‘dialogue and equitable exchange’” (p. 11). Xiao-yun, Zhi-yang, and Peixing (2007) explain that

“Through trial and error, people have realized no single method seems good enough to be universally accepted as best. In teaching practice, many have come to favor of eclecticism, which generally holds that although no single ELT method can meet all teaching and learning needs, many ELT methods have valuable insights into ELT that should be drawn on” (p. 2).

Although Kumaravadivelu (2011) indicates that there should be a change in operating principles, my assertion, however, is that there must be a change in perspective by language teachers in how they view the very people they are teaching, not what method facilitates language acquisition best - that comes after. Indeed, is there any one best method or approach? According to Kumaravadivelu (1992, p. 41, as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2011):

“We cannot prepare teachers to tackle so many unpredictable needs, wants and situations; we can only help them develop a capacity to generate varied and situation - specific ideas within a general framework that makes sense in terms of current pedagogical and theoretical knowledge” (p. 19).

Therefore, if we proceed from a paradigm that respects the student and sees them as fellow humans with hopes and dreams and goals, we will be in a better position to aid them in accomplishing these goals. As a result, the teacher might be more inclined to accept such ideas as “macrostrategies” that maximize learning opportunities by creating learning opportunities and utilize learning opportunities created by learners, or “microstrategies” - location-specific classroom techniques generated by teachers informed by macrostrategies (Kumaravadivelu, 2011, p. 20).

What I am proposing is a view of the person learning the language, the person trying to acquire the language, the person the methodologies are being used on. Davies and Elder (2004) come close to this idea by stating, "An alternative starting point for the development of language teaching methods is to view language essentially as social practice, and the goal of language teaching as engendering the learner's competence to communicate in the target language. Communication is viewed as social interaction and therefore dynamic and influenced by the cultural context, rather than being a fixed linguistic system existing in a vacuum" (p. 608). Weideman (2001) also brushes on the idea in saying that "[i]n the same way that a plant draws nourishment from the soil, language teaching methods find their roots in beliefs about language learning" (p. 4).

Confusion could arise as readers may be asking what the difference is between a humanistic approach or a principled eclectic approach and the F-P perspective. Simply stated, approaches have to do with how the teacher conducts the class, whereas, a perspective, in this case the F-P perspective, is a view, a paradigm if you will, of the student, that guides what the teachers see when they prepare their lessons and what the teachers see when they enter the classroom. That being the case, the language teacher will view the students as language learners and impose approaches in line with this perspective. Thus, a perspective is the foundation from which the teacher regards interaction with the students; whether from a traditional T-S perspective, a more modern but worn-out T-L perspective, or an F-P perspective.

Perspective 3. Facilitator-Person (F-P)

From the F-P perspective, the student is seen as a *person* (as opposed to a *student* or *learner*) trying to acquire the language they need in order to participate more fully in their target language environment (TLE). This perspective emerged in response to my observations of the many frustrated people trying to acquire English (and at times, frustrated academy owners, school administrators, and other organization managers). From this perspective, the language teacher takes on the role of a *facilitator* working in collaboration with people who seek their professional service. The TLE can be different for each person in class, therefore the class cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach such as can be found in the T-L and T-S perspectives. In both cases, there appears to be a tendency to miss the purpose of the English language class; that being, to have a stake in and help fellow humans, people, and customers, achieve their English language goals. That is not meant to demean language teachers who have a T-S or T-L perspective, but an effort to create an awareness within the minds of ELT readers of how our students might be viewed, and respond accordingly. This paradigm involves thinking outside of the box where the EL student is seen as an equal to the teacher, not a subordinate. Here, the teacher and language user view each other with mutual respect, young or old; where courtesy, consideration, and collaboration prepare the class members for life and or success in their TLE. In this environment, directive utterances such as “Turn in your book to...” could be accomplished in a more courteous and mutually respectful manner such as “Let's turn in our books to...” in order to (a) treat the learners as equals, (b) model polite behavior; and (c) speaking politeness, where we also consider the feelings of others.

Language user TLE goals can range from being able to converse in the language, to travel, to being able to understand movies in English, to achieving successful scores on English proficiency exams, and the like. Goals are generally referenced against the sorts of things learners want to do with the language outside the classroom. The F-P perspective is therefore inherently individualized in how it views the language users in a class. Nunan (2013, p. 37) elaborates on this comment by explaining “typical goal statements” of second language learners include: developing the skills necessary to take part in academic study, obtaining sufficient oral and written skills to obtain a promotion from unskilled worker to site supervisor, communicating socially in the target language, developing the survival skills necessary to obtain goods and services; and reading the literature of the target culture. Success in any of these goals, however, is anchored on the person's acquisition of the language. Language acquisition as defined by Krashen (1982, p. 10) means simply “picking up a language”. The F-P classroom therefore is one where English is viewed as a tool of communication in a global community, a language as opposed to a subject or lesson goal; where there are multiple possible ways of communicating a message (descriptive language teaching); where there are gray areas in communication, and people are developing their use of the language in the setting they are aiming for, i.e. they are not language learners per se, but learning to be language users in a specific TLE. Thus, activities would naturally include those that are designed to facilitate the person's ability to use the language in a real environment outside the classroom for “real-world” tasks (Nunan, 2013, p. 18), which means “[p]roviding optimal input in the classroom in order to foster the development of L2 fluency” (Mac-Gowan-Gilhooly, 1991, p. 75).

Here, language teachers are not relegated to curriculum transmission or passive technicians as discussed previously, but rather they become *facilitators* of English acquisition; informal, casual, friendly, amicable, aware, empathetic, concerned, eclectic,

reflexive, and collaborating with the persons they are having class with. The objective from the F-P perspective is not to complete a lesson, but to utilize lessons to facilitate language acquisition. Thus, from the F-P perspective, language teachers do not *teach* lessons, but *use* them to help people acquire the language they need, as opposed to predetermined lessons from a T-S perspective or methodology-based lessons from a T-L perspective. Whether the lesson is completed or not is not the determining factor for success in an F-P class, but whether the takeaway received for each class member was applicable to their needs. Here, formalized exercises, quizzes, tests, or exams, do not verify acquisition; instead successful interaction, successful communication or comprehension in the TLE demonstrates success. Vocabulary is acquired in use, not by context; as it is being used in the course of an everyday conversation or activity relative to that person's TLE. Here, individualized feedback is the key (Norouzian, 2013); much the same as a pencil sharpener sharpens a pencil: the pencil gets dull from use (successful or failed interactions) and needs the feedback from the sharpener (the teacher) to refine the tip. There are no right or wrong answers in the F-P perspective, only replies to questions, and only personal expressions that could be improved upon. For example, if I do not have a favorite movie, I am able to express that, and the teacher can help me express it in a more realistic way. How often have I encountered students in EL classes who feel they must answer a question in a generically positive manner that does not reflect their true feelings or thoughts; as have many ELT readers.

This coincides with what Richards and Renandya (2002) call "meaningful learning", that "lead[s] toward better long-term retention than rote learning" (p. 12). With the F-P perspective, "the class becomes contextual, actual, and applicable" (Richards & Renandya, 2002,) to the needs of the user to "achieve language use rather than only language usage" and thereby be able to use what took place in the classroom in "unrehearsed contexts in the real world" (p.13). This, in contrast to the highly-structured lessons of language teachers with a Teacher-Student perspective, and the methodologically-based lessons of those with a Teacher-Learner perspective, that take away opportunities for user autonomy in various settings outside of the classroom (Nunan, 2013); and forsake the accompanying "eclectic approaches" (Cassady, n.d, p. 1; Taber n.d., p. 34) that may be necessary to accomplish this autonomy.

The Facilitator-Person perspective is aimed at creating these autonomy-facilitating opportunities through meaningful dialogue *with* the user, rather than *to* the user, as in traditional or approach/method-oriented methodologies. Nunan (2013) expresses it as "encouraging creative language use" in the classroom by giving members "structured opportunities to use the language that they have been practicing in new and unexpected ways" which reflect "the world outside the classroom" (p. 70). In much the same way, my teacher training involves getting teachers to simply *engage* their learners rather than simply *teaching* them, so that teachers may interact with class members using the class time in ways that are more natural; by not announcing what the next part of the lesson will be for example, but rather transitioning through the lesson as if it were a natural course between familiar parties, making it conversational.

The role of the teacher here is seen to create opportunities for the EL users to develop language skills that will serve them in real and unexpected situations. This is in contrast to the traditional T-S perspective, and approach/method-centered, T-L perspective. The teacher with an F-P perspective creates an interactive classroom combined with teacher observation of the user's English and provides feedback; classroom activities are adjusted to the individual user and their progression and or needs. Here, English language is used in a

realistic, descriptive, and conversational manner. The teacher is the curriculum developer who takes the material and creates a shared-goals-centered classroom; whose role is to work with the users to target the goals of the individual EL user.

However, according to Mac-Gowan-Gilhooly (1991) “in most language classrooms, language exposure is artificial (contrived, practiced, grammatically sequenced), limited, and anxiety arousing” (p. 75) which is contrary to the time-tested Monitor Hypothesis of Krashen that proposes: language acquisition is the result of input that is comprehensible, interesting, relevant, and not grammatically sequenced, in a low anxiety setting (Krashen, 1982). The Facilitator-Person perspective also utilizes the teachable moment that arises on a case-by-case basis where the learner needs to “carry out tasks” or respond to an “impromptu stimulus” (Dutro & Moran, 2002); that are not scripted or prepared for in ELT curricula. These moments, “[utilize] opportunities as they present themselves to use precise language to fill a specific, unanticipated need for a word or a way to express a thought or idea” (Dutro & Moran, 2002, p. 5; Nunan, 2013, p. 70). Tarone (2005) equates this preparation to the difference between fish in fish bowls that are kept and fed, and fish in open water that learn to survive. To put the fish from the fish bowl into the open water would almost certainly be a death sentence. Similarly, the ELLs who participate in traditional classrooms and methodically communicative classrooms are not being prepared for these unexpected stimuli; not being prepared to survive in their individual TLE. Eaton (2010) states, “Students are as hungry as they ever were to be guided, coached and mentored” (p. 16). And, it is upon this idea that the F-P perspective came to be. It is this difference between English class, English language class, and English language acquisition opportunity time.

How Can We Change ELT Perspectives to F-P?

Create an awareness.

First, unless we know what we are doing as language teachers, we cannot make changes. Therefore, the first step in my teacher training is to create an awareness within the language teacher, as supported by a number of authors (Davis & Andrzejewski, 2009; Farrell & Ives, 2014; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Kuzborska, 2011; Leitch & Day, 2000; Loughram, 2002; Magno, 2009; Raths & McAninch, 2003; Weideman, 2001). If language teachers are made aware of their perspectives, they can also be made aware of the practices that are contrary to the F-P perspective. However, this is not an easy task as in many cases. The apprenticeship of observation has helped engrain their perspectives into their beliefs of how language classes should operate (Bullock, 2011). Furthermore, it is somewhat difficult to accept by some (Bejou, 2005; Lomas, 2007). Therefore, ample reinforcement of a new perspective and its benefits to the language class members is a necessary part of training. Relative to creating awareness, one of the first points I raise in my discussions with language teachers, is their view of students. The typical view tends to be that of a stereotypical student: a passive recipient of information. However, once these teachers are made aware of the humanity, common needs, and consumer nature of students, their paradigms can be shifted.

Reflect on current practices.

The next practice I use to help create a shift in paradigms is reflection; reflection on the language teachers' current practices (if they are active and or experienced language teachers). First, by asking them why we do what we do, it stimulates inquiry and dialogue

(either external or internal) that can be directed toward the F-P perspective. Another way I facilitate reflection is by showing language teachers why simply having a class called a *class* can be intimidating for learners and is echoed by Krashen (1982). Just having class can already negatively impact the members of the class. Therefore, I suggest not dwelling on it, or emphasizing it through T-S or T-L perspectives, and or trying to even avoid calling it a class when possible to help reduce that tension associated with the formality of language classes. Children for example, pick up their first language through interaction with the speakers around them. You do not see children sitting in a park for example, discussing subject pronouns versus object pronouns, having a grammar *class*. What you do see is children using the language to accomplish their goals of getting the ball, throwing the ball, catching the ball, chasing the one who has the ball, etc. This is the essence of my teacher training toward the Facilitator-Person perspective: for teachers to be able to use their materials and utilize them in such a way as to create an environment that prepares people for the outside world of their TLE. Toward that end, Krashen (1982) states it more precisely:

“[T]he role of the second or foreign language classroom is to bring a student to a point where he can begin to use the outside world for further second language acquisition... this means we have to provide students with enough comprehensible input to bring their second language competence to the point where they can begin to understand language ‘heard on the outside’, read, and participate in conversations” (pp. 160- 161).

Conclusion

Many writers tend to focus on methodology and or approaches. However, this paper was not written to entertain more discussion of such topics. Indeed, the field of language teaching and linguistics is filled with them (Davies & Elder, 2004), and are often ineffective (Cushing-Leubner, 2014). To my knowledge, there is little literature discussing such an F-P perspective or anything similar to it. From an analysis of related literature, the closest I have encountered are discussions of humanistic approaches and principled eclecticism. Therefore, this paper is unique, in that I present my observations of common teacher views rather than a study of methods they are using. In that sense, the ethnographic nature of this paper is a must. I wrote this paper to propose a paradigm shift in how language teachers view their students. A shift in paradigms will effectively motivate teachers to focus on helping people (Davies & Elder, 2004).

While I realize that much of this paper is theoretical and lacking in empirical data, it is however based on real observations, real interactions, real conversations, real discussions with peers, reflections, and as shown, in-line with related literature on the subject of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). With reference to the empirical data that readers may seek for my proposed paradigm shift, I offer a quote from Richards and Renandya (2002): "We have now discovered that something as artful and intuitive as language pedagogy cannot ever be so clearly verified by empirical validation" (p. 10). Nevertheless, this paper does offer a springboard for several possible quantitative researches. In short, this work is by no means exhaustive. It is, rather an analysis of the trends that can be identified based on current research. My intention is to stimulate discussion, provoke thought, and generate reflective responses. It is worth stating that one assumption underpinning this research is that students, and their needs, hopes, and aspirations must be kept at the heart of language learning and education (Eaton, 2010).

There may be some discussion of how one might implement a Facilitator-Person perspective in large group classes, but it does provide a foundation from which the classroom teacher could build on. Nevertheless, it is a perspective that is sorely needed within the realm of English language teaching that is governed by theories, quantitative data and methodology. Let's bring back the humanity of language teaching instead of continuing on in a sterile scientific progress. After all, we do teach people. If we rely solely on methodologies, then those too will become prescriptive in nature, if not already. Therefore, a Facilitator-Person perspective permits a more eclectic and adaptable perspective in English language teaching that utilizes all means available to prepare people to function in their specific TLE. The idea of language teaching is not simply to impart language knowledge to the students nor is it to complete lessons, but rather to incorporate language into their (current or future) everyday use within their TLE.

The field of TESOL has become inundated with theories, approaches, and methodologies which all basically appear to be overlapping while neglecting the point: that the language user will acquire the language as he/she is able to receive it in natural settings of comprehensibility, relevance, safety, and comfort. The language teacher's role therefore is not to *teach* students as in a Teacher-Student perspective; nor is it to *teach* learners from a Teacher-Learner perspective; but the role of the ELT is one of a facilitator who helps prepare a person for their specific, individual target language environment (TLE): a Facilitator-Person perspective.

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