ISSN (Online): 2458-9918

TOJELT

Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching

A Triannual Peer-Reviewed Journal of Research in English Language Teaching

Volume: 1 Issue: 2 May 2016

TOJELT
Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching
www.tojelt.com

Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching

INDEXED IN:

-MLA

-Türk Eğitim İndeksi

-Google Scholar

-Academia

-ResearchGate

-

The Journal is also under indexing process in a number of educational indexes.

E-ISSN: 2458-9918

Contact Addresses:

Home page: http// www.tojelt.com.

Emails: elt.tojelt@gmail.com , editor@tojelt.com

Owner of the Journal

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Selçuk AKDEMİR

Postal address:

1- Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University, Faculty of Letters, Department of English Language Literature, Ağrı-Turkey.
-

Editorial & Advisory Board Members

Editorial & Technical Office

* In alphabetical order

TOJELT, Vol: 1 Issue: 2 Year: 2016

CONTENTS **Page**

Editors' Message

Dear Readers,

The second issue of Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (TOJELT) has been released with remarkable content. Dr. Yilin Sun contributed this issue with her keynote speech at the TESOL 2015 Convention. In addition to the invited article, four articles and a book review have been published with the meticulous collaboration of the editors, advisory board members and the referees. In the commentary article section, Dr. Setiono Sugiharto commented on an invited article by Cho & Krashen (2016. Also, Dr. Stephen Krashen replied the comments of Dr. Sugiharto.

We sincerely thank all of the members of our team and the external referees for their efforts that increase the quality of TOJELT and hope that TOJELT will be a leading international journal.

With regards,

Dr. Ahmet Selçuk AKDEMİR & Dr. Ali DİNCER

Editors-in-Chief of TOJELT

TOJELT Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching
A Triannual Peer-Reviewed Journal of Research in English Language Teaching
Journal Homepage: http://www.tojelt.com

Year:2016 Volume:1 Issue:2 Pages:43-56

Invited Article

Building Bridges, Crossing Borders: Journey to a Better Future for TESOL

Yilin Sun
South Seattle College
Seattle / USA
yilsuntesol@gmail.com

Recommended citation: Yilin, S. (2016). Building bridges, crossing borders: Journey to a better future for TESOL. *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (TOJELT), 1*(2), 43-56.

Submission history
Invited:
23 January 2016
Received:
25 April 2016
Corresponding author:
yilsuntesol@gmail.com

E-ISSN: 2458-9918

Abstract: This paper stems from the presidential keynote speech I gave at the 2015 TESOL International Convention with in Toronto, Canada last year. The theme for the 2015 TESOL International Convention was "Crossing Borders, Building Bridges."

Keywords: *2015 TESOL International Convention, Crossing Borders, Building Bridges*

1. Introduction

This paper stems from the presidential keynote speech I gave at the 2015 TESOL International Convention with in Toronto, Canada last year. The theme for the 2015 TESOL International Convention was "Crossing Boarders, Building Bridges." This theme has a very special meaning to me on several levels. I would like to share some of this with you. Perhaps some of you may have had similar experiences.

As I stated above, the 2015 convention theme was special to me. It is special because it was exactly 30 years ago, back in 1985 when I made the decision to leave my homeland and travel to a new land. My adventure started when I left the familiar surroundings in China and crossed across the ocean to North America to pursue a young EFL teacher's dreams. My dream was that I wanted to become the best ELT educator imaginable and to earn my graduate degree in TESOL and Applied Linguistics from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)/University of Toronto in Canada; one of the most prestigious universities in the world.

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) is one of the leading institutions in the field of ELT in the world. This is where many well-known ELT scholars have studied and taught; some names that may be familiar are H.H. David Stern, Jim Cummins, Merrill Swain, Michael Canale, J.P.B. Allen, Dale Willows, Roger Simon, Ester Gava, Michael Connelly, Alister Pennycook, Alister Cummins, Bonnie Norton, Ryuko Kubota, Brian Morgan, and Angel Lin, to name a few.

Arriving in a new strange land as a young foreign Visa student, I experienced cultural shock and had to adjust my life in many ways. I lived and worked with other immigrants and experienced firsthand the challenges and struggles that many immigrant English learners face. With personal commitment and dedication I managed to work at accomplishing my goals. During this time I met, studied with other ELT scholars and professors; several who are well-known. The rigorous academic environment and stimulating conversations with my peers like Alistair Pennycook, Alister Cummins, Bonnie Norton, Ryuko Kubota and Angel Lin provided me a solid base to grow and the opportunity to work with other educators with similar interests. The guidance and support from my professors and peers inspired me during my graduate school years. It was their support and inspiration along with my dedication and good study strategies that led me to achieve my goal and the honor of being the first graduate student from mainland China to receive a Ph.D. from OISE/University of Toronto.

My life and work experience in Toronto marked the beginning of my professional journey as a TESOLer. Today, I teach future teachers and adult English language learners. I have also had the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors of TESOL International Association as President. I have been serving TESOL with professionals whose work I read and respect. Who could have imagined that 30 years after coming to Canada, this shy, young EFL teacher from China would be standing here today delivering the presidential plenary at the TESOL 2015 International Convention.

My story is just one of many stories about the journey of non-native English speaking ELT professionals who cross borders and build bridges. Being involved in TESOL for all these years is rewarding; together, with all of you and future new teachers we are all making a difference in our professional lives, we are writing a new page in TESOL history and most important ... we are teaching the world how to communicate with each other better.

2. Journey for TESOL both as the Association and as the Field in the Past 50 Years

Beyond the personal level, at the TESOL Association's level, the 2015 convention was the first one that the TESOL International Convention was held outside the United States since 2000. This year's convention "crossed" the international border between the United States and Canada. By crossing borders, we can examine differences and challenges in ELT while exploring new opportunities for development, constructive transformations and collaborations. Change is made possible not only through crossing borders, but also building bridges. The development of the TESOL International Association reflects the importance of building bridges. By building bridges over time, TESOL has grown from a solely US-based organization with 104 members 49 years ago to where we are now, the largest international association with close to 13,000 members and 117 affiliates representing 156 countries worldwide.

Over the last 50 years, the TESOL professional field has also witnessed drastic changes in teaching approaches, research, and material development. *In terms of teaching approaches, the field has evolved from solely using traditional grammar translation methods to communicative language teaching approaches where the focus of language teaching is on meaningful language use in a broad context, to where we are now: the 21st century is what Kumaravadivelu (2001, 2006), Brown (1994, 2007), and Richards and Rodgers (2001) referred as the "Post-Method Era" in which the ELT discussions are more focused on eclectic approaches rather than on a single method or approach. Brown (1994) called it enlightened eclecticism. Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Mellow (2002) have used the term principled eclecticism to describe a coherent and pluralistic approach to language teaching and learning (Sun, 2014, p.8-9).*

Here are the main characteristics of principled eclecticism:

- *Maximize learning opportunities*
- *Facilitate negotiated interaction*
- *Encourage learner autonomy*
- *Increase language awareness (tolerant of learner errors)*
- *Activate self-discovery (utilize learning and communication strategies)*
- *Contextualize language input*
- *Integrate language skills*
- *Ensure social relevance (a means for self-empowerment and expression)*
- *Raise cultural consciousness (goal, purpose of teaching / learning)*

(Kumaravadivelu, 1994)

Even though some may argue that teachers still talk about methods, the scope and perspectives are no longer just focusing on one method or a single technique but a rich repertoire of different methods and techniques that teachers can pick and choose based on the needs of their learners. So the point here is that we should not assume that earlier methods are limited and contemporary approaches are advanced when in fact each has its own pros and cons and how and when to use them may well be based on the teaching context and the needs of learners and the program.

Today the concept of World Englishes is no longer "foreign" in the TESOL field. It is widely acknowledged that the relationship between language and power is a fundamental aspect in English Language teaching. Numerous research projects and studies have been conducted to examine the theoretical, methodological, pedagogical, ideological, and power-related issues of world Englishes: varieties of English used in diverse sociolinguistic contexts. The scholars in this field have critically examined theoretical and methodological frameworks of language use based on monolingual and monocultural frameworks of linguistic science and replaced them with frameworks that are faithful to multilingualism and language variation (Bhatt, 2001). This conceptual shift provides a "pluricentric" view of English, which represents diverse sociolinguistic histories, multicultural identities, multiple norms of use and acquisition, and distinct contexts of functions (Bhatt, 2001). The implications of this shift for learning and teaching World Englishes are important as language policy makers, educators and curriculum writers from different regions of the world can take charge and determine the kind of English or Englishes to learn/teach based on the regions' and country's social, political and economic needs. Accordingly, trends, innovations, and challenges in language teaching confronted by the world both affect, and are affected by the local English language education reforms, such as reforms in Asia, Latin America, Europe, Middle East, South Africa and many parts of the world.

The last 50 years have marked a significant transformation in the field of TESOL. Can you imagine what our field will be like in the next 50 years? Can you imagine what the TESOL International Association will be like in 50 years?

Because it may be difficult to answer these questions, I invited 2 groups of TESOL members to share their thoughts and answers to these questions. One group consisted of TESOL leaders and the other consists of active TESOL members including global members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The rationale for this study is that next year, we'll celebrate TESOL's 50th anniversary in 2016. TESOL has grown so strong in the first 50 years. In another 50 years, it will be TESOL's

Centennial celebration. We should be prepared for opportunities and challenges that the future presents.

I'm very grateful for their valuable insights. This is only a small sample, but once you hear what they have to say, I hope you'll begin to think about the future of our profession and the TESOL Association, as well as what we should do to build a better future for ourselves and for TESOL both as a field and as an Association. Let's look at the responses to the first question.

Question 1: What do you predict will happen in the field of TESOL in 50 years?

Here are two initial replies to this challenging question.

"Great questions! I'll try to respond, knowing that I'll be 120 years old! And you will have a 50 year old grandchild in 50 years!"

"Not easy questions, at all. 50 years from now I worry about the earth as our home and can only hope that all teachers, regardless of their background, will be focusing on topics and themes that allow students to explore ways of better preserving whatever we have, assuming we can indeed challenge the word "irreversible".

Based on the rich and varied responses from the study, beyond the initial replies, I detected the following three trends.

Trend 1: English will change continuously, and expand exponentially as a global lingua franca, especially in EFL contexts. More new varieties will emerge.

Many participants indicated that there will be an unprecedented Increase in Global demand for English as the TESOL field will continue to be strong and in demand in the next 50 years. As a result, ELT will be part of all children's and adults' curricula. TESOL will be even more critically important, since there is no way that countries are going to be able to meet the need for appropriately-trained teachers and many Ministries and schools will turn to TESOL organizations (including local affiliates) to assist them in this regard. TESOL will need to take a leading role in helping Ministries and districts and schools to plan for this and to provide interim solutions on a regular basis. We have often been viewed as marginalized, especially in the United States, but that is not the case in the international sphere. As English becomes increasingly a global language, TESOL will also need to find ways to represent a much wider range of ELT contexts.

On the other hand, *"English will meet challenges because other languages will emerge as eminent in the field with the economic development in those countries, e.g., Russian and Chinese will probably compete for the position that English currently occupies in the world."*

Trend 2: Increase and change will result in an expanded global landscape of diversified English language uses, diversified contexts and diversified language users.

Everyone will be challenged to respond to changes. Approaches, content, and mindset will need to adapt to the diversified landscape in the ELT world. TESOL professionals will also be experts in content areas. One respondent stated *"All teachers in all schools will have some TESOL training in order to provide the best educational experience possible to English language learners."*

In the future, the conventional way of learning may also change as *"Students can drop out any time and re-sequence their learning process."* And *"There will be much less geographic difference from country to country, region to region in term of learning resources."*

In summary, approaches, content, mindset and models will all need to adapt to the diversified landscape in the ELT world. Such frameworks as Kumaravadivelu's post-method pedagogy of particularity, practicality and possibility or Tudor's ecological approach, where teachers and other stakeholders negotiate with glocal needs and challenges at multiple levels, are beginning to emerge with promising effect. And research will better pinpoint ingredients for success, including more accurate specification of contextual variables leading to successful learning, making learning faster and more efficient.

Trend 3: Highly advanced technology in ELT.

Who, 50 years ago, would have predicted the impact of digital technology on language learning? In the next 50 years, digital technologies may lead to more individualized language instruction, through online models, either stand alone or hybrid. A lot of instruction will be delivered on small mobile devices or on wearable computers. Online instruction & connected learning will be the dominant features of language instruction. As several participants stated, *"Technology will dominate our lives and will be well interwoven into our classroom practices."*

"Students will be pretty much on their own in deciding what to learn and how to learn it. Much the same as we order take-out food online today, they will be able to 'order'online what they want to learn (most likely in the form of modules), and sequence them any way as they prefer." Their choices will be much less limited by where they live or what kinds of family they come from. They will also be able to add to the selected modules or chip away content from the selected modules. "Instructors will teach less, but consult and facilitate more. Students can drop out any time and re-sequence their learning process. They can also fire their instructor if they are not satisfied with what they are taught or the way they are taught. They can also learn from each other since everyone in the learning community is both a learner and a teacher. The same will be true with assessment. Students can assess each other against the standards created either by the leaders in the field or peers in the learning community."

Participants also indicated that ELT educators around world will have easier access to professional development activities as *"The phone will perform translation and serve as a learning platform," and "The plenary speaker will come into your school or living room via hologram."*

On the other hand, there will also be challenges with the impact of highly advanced technology in the ELT field. One respondent indicated that *"Automated translation will eliminate some of the motivation for people to learn new languages."* With this comes an added responsibility for all ELT educators. That is to better understand what is pedagogically sound and what is not viable in the learning spectrum in the highly digitized world.

An important point to keep in mind is that we should never ever diminish the essential importance of human, real-live, face-to-face social interaction among students and among professionals.

The first question focused on the major trends in the ELT field in the next 50 years. The second question centered on the directions for the TESOL Association and its affiliates in the next 50 years.

Question 2. What will the TESOL International Association look like in 50 years?

Based on the responses from the participants, three themes stood out from the survey.

Theme 1: TESOL will play an even stronger leadership role in the global ELT field

The participants indicated that 50 years from now, the Association will leave its mark on every aspect of the future of the profession. It will closely follow, lead and spearhead megatrends in the profession.

TESOL International Association will function comprehensively and globally, not only in teaching, but also in research, teacher education, advocacy, professionalism, assessment and material development. It may still be based in the US for historical reasons but will be present and influential all around the world.

"TESOL will have two or three times as many members, more from K-12 system and business sectors. An increased number of English learners in the world will lead to a greater demand for professional development. That professional development will come from TESOL." As a way to respond to such increasing needs, TESOL will offer diverse forms/novel ways of PD - in person, online, or via hologram.

TESOL will host its conferences in multiple locations around the world in conjunction with affiliates outside America. TESOL will offer its products and services not only to support professionals, but also governments, by providing accreditation, standards, expert teams, assessment tools, and learning materials.

Theme 2: Affiliates will be critical in supporting "the mother ship" to address needs 'glocally'.

Given the likelihood that the majority of ELT professionals will live outside North America, and given the global increase and diversification of the profession, the TESOL International Association will become much more global.

"TESOL will have at least 70% of the affiliates outside the US." Right now there are 50% of the affiliates outside US. *"The affiliates will mature and play more central roles in supporting and directing the mother ship."*

"TESOL International Association will truly become international, US issues and concerns will be one – among many – sub-layers of TESOL as opposed to "half" of its focus."

"The premier TESOL International Association annual convention will not be a single event, but rather a series of conventions that are held on multiple continents with many more opportunities for members living outside of North America to participate."

Theme 3: TESOL will expand its strong partnerships with multiple organizations worldwide.

TESOL will build bridges with other organizations that have so much to say to us. TESOL will make connections with other disciplinary areas and enhance language competency for teachers and students in other disciplinary areas. TESOL will offer services to MOEs and other professional sectors in different countries. *"TESOL will no longer be a TESOL-only association. It will become the TESOL Plus Association, doing business outside the box."*

I was very inspired by the insightful predictions these leaders and fellow TESOL colleagues outlined about the future of TESOL as a field and as an Association. The three trends

and three themes generated from the survey will give us a lot of food for thought. To build a better future for TESOL and to get ready for the changes in the next 50 years, TESOL professionals need to stay strong and competitive. We need to have commitment and more importantly we need to have effective strategies.

Over time, I have come up with eight strategies from several studies I conducted. I'd like to share them with you in this article, so you can begin building bridges to the TESOL future, whether 50 years from now or 5 years from now.

Strategy 1: Value the Changing Perspectives on ELT. About 50 years ago the ELT field started to see changes in our views of English language learning; this has become more evident over the last 20 years. The old term of ESL has been changed to ELL or EAL (English as an Additional Language) as ELT educators recognize that many learners know more than two languages and English is not their second language anymore. Code-switching was seen as language errors; but now has been recognized as a valuable bilingual and translanguaging resource. An accent instead of being viewed as deficiency now reflects identity. Today standardized assessments utilize different accents in their listening comprehension tests. The purpose of English learning has moved away from mimicking "inner circle" speakers as closely as possible to successful use of skills and strategies to be effective and competent communicators for a globalized workforce.

Strategy 2: Embrace Changes in Goals of English Teaching and Learning. One key strategy, in building bridges for a better future for the profession is a rethinking of the educational goals: the "why" of English education. In the 21st Century, the goals of ELT have changes from focusing solely on developing lang. skills and mimicking NESs to fostering a sense of social responsibilities in students.

Today, more educators are realizing that ELT cannot be considered successful when students do not know about global issues or care about societal problems, or worse yet, in the future use the language skills they have learned for destructive activities such as participating in global crime networks or damaging the environment (Brown, 1994, 2007; Cates, 1997; Sun 2014).

With the awareness of the importance of producing responsible citizens for society, teachers now have well recognized that teaching English is not simply to prepare students to imitate native English speakers as language learners but to produce fully competent language users, critical thinkers, and constructive social change agents as Crystal (1997, 2004), Cook (2002), Brown (2007) and Cummins (2000) noted.

Strategy 3: Integrate 21st Century Teaching/Learning Approaches. In recent years more schools have placed the 7C skills, outlined by Fidel and Trilling in their book 21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times (2009), at the center of learning. The seven Cs being: Critical thinking & problem solving; Creativity & innovation; Collaboration, teamwork, & leadership; Cross-cultural understanding; Communication and media literacy; Computing and ICT literacy; and Career and learning self-reliance. In addition to the seven 21st century skills, the ELT field nowadays is also referred as the Post methods Era where the focus of teaching is on eclecticism (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006, Brown, 2007, Larsen-Freeman, 2000 and Mellow, 2000). Eclecticism involves the use of a variety of language learning activities, each of which may have very different characteristics and may be motivated by different underlying

assumptions. Some "hot topics" nowadays are Common Core, 'Glocalization', standards, pathways, ESP/EAP, flipped classes, project-based learning, IDEA (Integrated Digital English Acceleration), and content and technology integration to address "glocal" needs in language teaching and learning.

Strategy 4: Understand Changes in Research Approaches. The research field has witnessed significant transformation over the last 20 years. ELT research studies have moved from a sole focus on the designs and methods of quantitative empirical research to the inclusion of qualitative and other alternative approaches; with designs that incorporate both quantitative and qualitative elements. Today we see more mixed method studies and the field as a whole has also become more open to hermeneutic (non-empirical interpretive) inquiry, for example, historical studies. New alterative theories and perspectives have emerged from research; these can be seen in SLA, SLW and ESP studies.

Take the ESP research development for example, from early 60s to 80s, most research studies were under the influence of four major theoretical roots. Studies on Grammar & Technical English (e.g., Lackstrom,Selinker,Trimble, 1972) and Rhetorical Functions (e.g., Selinker, Tarone,&Hanzeli, 1981) could be traced back to Linguistics roots. Studies like Local knowledge by Geetz, 1973, could be under the Interpretive Anthropology roots. Studies on Skills & Schemata Development (e.g.,Widdowson, 1983) belonged to Cognitive/Psychological roots, and Teaching Communicative Use of English, Learner-centered approach (e.g., Allan, Widdowson, 74; Ewer & Huges-Davies, 71-72, Hutchinson & Waters, 87) were influenced by the Eclective linguistic, Psychological,& Social psychological roots.

More recent ESP research studies have brought in new approaches and perspectives, such as Identity Studies (e.g. Belcher & Lukkarila, 2011) and Critical Ethnographic studies (e.g., Starfield, 2011, Lillis,2008) were influenced by Critical pedagogy and Post-structuralist approaches. Studies on broad scope of Needs Analysis/Assessment (e.g., Belcher, 2006; Johns & Makalela, 2011, and Global Language Use (e.g., Mauranen, 2011) brought in Social-cultural roots. Corpus Studies (e.g., L Flowerdew, 2011, Kandil & Belcher, 2011) were under the Linguistics roots. Studies on Genre Analysis/ Discourse Analysis (e.g., Swales, Flowerdew, J. 2011; Hyland, 2011, Paltridge & Wang, 2011, to name a few, added new insights into Disciplinary Specificity and Cognitive/linguistic Discourse approaches. Today, ESP studies have developed an infrastructure involving professional journals, book publications, conferences, groups within professional organizations, and academic programs in higher education. It has expanded its reach from North America and Europe to throughout the world in the last few decades.

ESP research is a reflection of what has been going on in the ELT research field. The hot topic these days in the field of research is on research to praxis and using research to inform instruction and bridge the gap between research and practice. Researchers need to understand what has been going on in the classroom while practitioners need to engage in action research and use research findings to inform instruction. This is especially the case in the ELT field.

Strategy 5: Expand the dimension of Communicative Competence. Recent research publications illustrate the expanding framework of communicative competence. *Some scholars have introduced their new way of looking at SLA as 'multi-competence' (Cook, 2009). Others (Byram, 1997, Corbett, 2003, Kohn, 2013), focused on the importance of Intercultural communicative competence (ICC).*

According to Cook (2012, para 1-2),

> *Multi-competence…presents a view of second language acquisition (SLA) based on the second language (L2) user as a whole person rather than on the monolingual native speaker… It changes the angle from which second language acquisition is viewed. It constitutes a bilingual 'wholistic' interpretation of bilingualism as opposed to a monolingual 'fractional' interpretation of bilingualism, in Grosjean's (2009)'s terms).*

Another dimension of the expansion of the communicative competence framework is the discussions on intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, 2009; Corbett, 2003; Kohn, 2013). Those with intercultural communicative competence are able to effectively communicate with interlocutors from other cultures in appropriate ways. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) requires:

Openness and respect: the ability and readiness to regard other people's values, customs and practices as worthwhile in their own right and not merely as different from the norm and willingness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own,

Empathy and suspension of judgment: the ability and willingness to understand, acknowledge and accept different behaviors and ways of thinking, the existence of opinions or behavior that one does not necessarily agree with,

Sensitivity and flexibility: the ability and willingness to adapt and to deal appropriately with the feelings and ways of thinking of other persons, and the awareness and responsiveness to other people's behaviors and ways of thinking, and

Knowledge and application of critical cultural awareness: knowledge and critical awareness of social groups, values and cultural practices in one's own and in one's target culture, and the ability to apply and act effectively using that knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction. (Byram, 1997, 2009; Corbett, 2003; Kohn, 2013)

These traits and abilities are more important for successful intercultural communication than the native English speakers' (NES) norms of communication (Sun, 2014, p. 9-10). The implication here is that when teaching intercultural communicative competence, teachers need to teach both local and international cultures. The goal is to produce effective language users who use English as a global lingua Franca, not simply learners who mimic the language and culture of the 'inner- circle' countries.

Strategy 6: Teach and Learn in a 21st Century Context. There are rapid changes in the skill set needed to compete in today's workforce; technology, globalization, workplace, demographics, and personal competence, risk and responsibility headline these changes. Individual performance is evaluated on leadership ability, work collaboratively with others, and problem solving skills. In a globalized world, it is just as common to form a team of four people from four different continents as it is from four departments of an institution. The implication is that ELT educators need to be aware of the changing forces, so we can prepare students with 21st century skills along with language and cultural competency for them to succeed in the competitive globalized workforce.

Strategy 7: Apply Macro-strategies to Enhance Assessment. Many schools have implemented standards-based assessment programs, which measure the success based on student learning (achievement of standards) rather than on compliance with rules. Assessment can't be one size fits all. Effective assessment needs to implement theory-based, researched-informed macrostrategies.

Here are some of the macrostrategies to be kept in mind: Assessment needs to be used as a multipurpose instructional tool. It should provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their skills in communicative and authentic tasks. The purpose of assessment is to engage students in monitoring their learning progress and process as well as cultivating a positive washback. The assessment information and date need to be utilized systematically to identify existing and emerging needs of the students and provide a clear indication of progress and achievement that students have made over the course of their learning. Linda Darling-Hammond, et al (2002) advocated that the reform of assessment of students learning needs "top-down support for bottom-up reform." Once this happens, educators will be empowered to apply macro-strategies to enhance assessment. The assessment tools should be designed to engage students in active learning and demonstrate their skills in real-world performance-based projects.

Strategy 8: Be ready for rapid development and integration of Information technology in ELT. Rapid developments in technology, use of cell phones and multimedia devices have opened endless possibilities for English teachers to access information. The Internet, YouTube, Web.2.0, e-books have helped teachers prepare lessons and classroom activities. With ready-made materials with the stroke of a key it is possible to bring real-life into the classroom. Appropriate integration of technology in the classroom encourages students to use language in different ways and brings real world issues into the classroom. Learners from different parts of the world can get connected and exchange ideas. Many students may know more than their teachers about how to use technology, and yet they need proper guidance from the teachers on how to select, analyze, and utilize the right information to achieve their learning goals.

3. Our Responsibilities in Building a Better Future for TESOL

In the 21st Century classroom, teachers have multiple roles and responsibilities as facilitators of student learning and creators of a productive classroom environment in which students can develop the skills they will need for the 21st century workforce. Many teachers integrate content-based, project-based approaches; and changes in classrooms such as co-teaching; team-teaching and collaboration with other teachers have shown advantages. These innovative approaches are providing educators with excellent resources and opportunities. Teachers need to embrace new ideas to effectively teach in our ever-changing societies. This also prepares teachers to be reflective practitioners and constructive social agents in the world of globalizing the English language (Sun, 2014). It's more important than ever that teacher receive real institutional support with funding and time to attend professional development activities.

While teachers can make a difference in students' lives in the classroom, teachers can also make a difference in our own professional lives and make professional organizations better in serving us, our colleagues, and communities. With the rapid changes in the ELT field, to build a better future for TESOL, TESOL educators are expected to engage in continuous professional development activities in order to keep current on trends, research, development, and practices as well as to remain effective and competitive. We need to go the extra mile and improve professionally. Act now!

Some of the things that we can start as ELT educators is to leave our personal/professional comfort zones and start embracing some of the new ideas and perspectives. I encourage teachers make more border crossing acts and venture into areas that we are not familiar. Try reaching out to colleagues; most have not talked to other teachers and don't know much about other places. You could be pleasantly surprised to find out how much you have in common with another teacher form half way around the world. The more border-crossing acts we engage in, the better the teaching and learning environment we will be able to create.

As ELT professionals, some of the things we need to embrace include:

- Maximize opportunities for ourselves as professionals- (gain institutional support; mentor newer/younger professionals and learn from each other).
- Engage in and critically reflect new ways of teaching /research (implement 7Cs and multicultural/multilingual perspectives).
- Advocate for social justice, equality, and professionalism in the field and in the Association. Today poverty among school children is still a serious issue that we must address..
- Utilize professional development and leadership opportunities as well as get involved with volunteer opportunities.
- Help TESOL International Association build more bridges and collaborations with other like-minded professional organizations and NGOs. Reach out to non-TESOL members and let them know about TESOL and your local ELT organizations.

There have been positive changes in the past 50 years. The awareness of "World Englishes" and "English as an International Lingua franca" is here. The roles of non-native English-speaking teachers in the TESOL field, the mission of English language learning, and the global English teaching /learning community, and recognition of intercultural communication competence has evolved. All the positive changes did not occur by happenstance. *This progress has been achieved through the concerted effort of all involved individuals who care about the profession, the Association, the students, and the equality of all TESOL professionals in the education system. The stronger the professional association, the louder the voices can be heard at different policy-making levels. Also, the more publications there are from ELT professionals on research and teaching practice in the ELT field, the better the awareness and opportunities that can be created for teachers and for learners (Sun, 2014,p.15).*

I began this article by telling you about a shy, young EFL teacher who crossed the ocean from China to Toronto, Canada 30 years ago. She never envisioned far into her future much less that of TESOL. But in retrospect, this teacher encourages you to start today to envision your future as a TESOL leader and innovator.

May I conclude by reminding you to embrace changes in the next 50 years, the mission to improve ELT for all learners must continue and the mission to help TESOL International Association build a better future is a must? We need all TESOL teachers to become more engaged in the Association; a good starting place is within your Interest Sections and with your affiliates.

The future of TESOL both as the Association and as the field is in the hands of all of us: diverse, complicated, and multifaceted and of course … "glocal." Let's work together, cross

more borders and build more bridges so we can co-construct a stronger global TESOL Community in the next 50 years! Thank you very much!

References

Allen, J. P. B. & Widdowson, H.G. (1974). Teaching the communicative use of English in *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching* (IRAL). *12* (1-4).

Belcher, D., & Lukkarila, L. (2011). Identity in the ESP context. In D. Belcher, A. Johns, & B. Paltridge (Eds.), *New directions for English for specific purposes research.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Belcher, D. (2006). English for specific purposes teaching to perceived needs and imagined futures in worlds of work, study, and everyday life. *TESOL Quarterly*, *40*(1), 133–156.

Bhatt, R.M. (2001). World Englishes. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 30*, 527-550.

Brown, H. D. (2007). *Teaching by principles.* New York, New York: Pearson Longman.

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M. (2009). The intercultural speaker and pedagogy of foreign language education. In D. K. Deardorff (Ed.) *The Sage handbook of intercultural competence* (pp. 321-332). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Corbett, J. (2003). *An Intercultural Approach to English Language Teaching.* Multilingual Matters.

Cook, V. (2012). Multi-competence. Retrieved from http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/Writings/Papers/MCentry.htm

Darling-Hammond, L. et al (2002). Building instructional quality: Inside-out, bottom-up, and top-down perspectives on San Diego's school reform, unpublished manuscript for AERA annual meeting. Page:3 Retrieved from https://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/InProgress/SDCS- Reform-AERAdraft.pdf

Ewer, J. R. & Hughes-Davies, E. (1971). Further notes on developing an English programme for students of science and technology. *English Language Teaching*, 26, 3, 269-273.

Flowerdew, L. (2011). ESP and Corpus Studies. In D. Belcher, A. Johns, & B. Paltridge (Eds.), *New directions for English for specific purposes research*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 222-251.

Flowerdew, J. (2011). Reconciling contrasting approaches to genre analysis: The whole can equal more than the sum of the parts. In D. Belcher, A. Johns, & B. Paltridge (Eds.), *New directions for English for specific purposes research.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.119-144.

Flowerdew, J. (2000). Discourse community, legitimate peripheral participation, and the nonnative-English-speaking scholar. *TESOL Quarterly* 34. 127-150.

Geertz, C. (1973). *Local knowledge: Foreign essays in interpretive anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.

Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1983). ESP at the crossroads. In Swales (ed.) (1988) *Episode in ESP: A sources and reference book on the development of English for Science and Technology.* New York: Prentice-Hall. (pp. 174-87).

Hyland, K. (2011). Disciplinary specificity: Discourse, Context, and ESP. In D. Belcher, A. Johns, & B. Paltridge (Eds.), New directions in English for Specific Purposes Research. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 6-24.

Johns, A. & Makalela, L (2011). Needs analysis, critical ethnography, and context: Perspectives from the client and the consultant. In D. Belcher, A. M. Johns & B. Paltridge (eds), *New directions for English for specific purposes research.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Kandil, M., & Belcher, D. (2011). ESP and corpus-informed critical discourse analysis. In D. Belcher, Johns, & B. Paltridge (Eds.), *New directions in English for specific purposes research.* Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 94-117.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Towards a postmethod pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(4), 537-560. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3588427

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching: From method to postmethod.*New York, NY: Routledge.

Kohn, K. (2013, March 15). Intercultural communicative competence: An English as a lingua franca perspective [PowerPoint]. *TESOL Arabia*, 14-16 March 2013. Available at http://www.sprachlernmedien.de/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Kohn-2013_ICC-an-ELFperspective_TESOL-Arabia_STZ.pdf

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press

Mellow, J. D. (2002). Towards principled eclecticism in language teaching: The two dimensional model and the centring principle. *TESL-EJ, 5(4), 1-19.* Retrieved from http://tesl-ej.org/ej20/a1.html

Lillis, T. (2008). Ethnography as Method, Methodology, and "Deep Theorizing": Closing the Gap Between Text and Context in Academic Writing Research. *Written Communication*, *25*(3), 353-388.

Mauranen, A. (2011). English as the Lingua Franca of the Academic World. In Belcher, Diane, Johns, Ann. M., Paltridge, Brian (eds). *New Directions in English for Specific Purposes Research.* Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 94-117.

Mellow, J. D. (2002). Towards principled eclecticism in language teaching: The two dimensional model and the centring principle. *TESL-EJ, 5(4), 1-19*. Retrieved from http://tesl-ej.org/ej20/a1.html

Paltridge, B. & Wang, W. (2011). Contextualizing ESP research: media discourses in China and Australia. In D. Belcher, A. Johns, & B. Paltridge (Eds.), *New directions in English for Specific Purposes Research.* Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 94-117.

Selinker, L., Lackstrom, J. & Trimble, L. (1972). Grammar and technical English, *English Teaching Forum,* Sept.-Oct. 1972, 3–14.

Selinker, L., Tarone, E., & Hanzeli, V. (Eds.). (1981). *English for academic and technical purposes: Studies in honor of Louis Trimble.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Starfield, S. (2011). Doing critical ethnographic research into academic writing: The theory of the methodology. In D. Belcher, A. M. Johns & B. Paltridge (eds), *New directions for English for specific purposes research.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Sun, Y. (2014). Major trends in the global ELT field: A Non-Native English-Speaking Professional's Perspective. *Language Education in Asia, 5(1),* 1-19.

Swales, J. M. 2004. *Research genres: explorations and applications.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Widdowson, H. (1983). *Learning purpose and language use*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bio: Yilin Sun, Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics/Curriculum and Instruction from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, Canada. She has served as president of TESOL International Association (2013-2016). This is the first time in TESOL's 50 years history that an Asian female NNEST professional who has been elected as president of TESOL International Association, the largest professional association of its kind in the world. She has also served as Chair of the TESOL Affiliate Leadership Council (2007), president of Washington Association for the Education of Speakers of Other Languages (WAESOL, 2003, 2007), a Fulbright Senior Scholar (2011–12), and an English language specialist for the U.S. Department of State since 2009. Yilin currently teaches at South Seattle College in Seattle, USA, who has more than 28 years of experience in the field of TESOL as an MA-TESL teacher trainer, researcher, classroom teacher, and program leader with a variety of higher educational institutions in China, Canada and the United States. Yilin is the author and coauthor of books, book chapters, and research papers in refereed professional journals. She also serves on several Editorial Boards of ELT journals including Journal of Language Education in Asia. Over the years, Yilin has presented frequently at national and international conferences as a keynote or a featured speaker.

TOJELT Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching
A Triannual Peer-Reviewed Journal of Research in English Language Teaching
Journal Homepage: http://www.tojelt.com

Year:2016 Volume:1 Issue:2 Pages:57-65

Is It Language Learning Anxiety and/or Attitude of University Students That Determines Their Academic Success?[1]

Kağan Büyükkarcı
Sinop University
The Department of English Language Teaching
kbuyukkarci@sinop.edu.tr

Recommended citation: Büyükkarcı, K. (2016). Is it language learning anxiety and/or attitude of university students that determines their academic success? *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (TOJELT), 1*(2), 57-65.

Submission history
Received:
29 November 2015
Resubmitted:
10 January 2016
Final version:
15 January 2016
Corresponding author:
kbuyukkarci@sinop.edu.tr

E-ISSN: 2458-9918

Abstract: The psychological factors affecting foreign language learning have long been the one the main interests of researchers. It is because the learners' views, feelings, self-confidence, motivation, and so forth have undoubtedly great importance on their language learning processes. The present study examined the effects of foreign language learning anxiety and language learning attitude in predicting academic achievement of pre-service freshmen students. Also, the relation between attitude and anxiety was also sought in this study. Participants included 106 freshmen students in a state university in Turkey. Quantitative data were collected by one anxiety scale and one attitude questionnaire, and the qualitative data were collected through a free writing activity to the given questions. The quantitative results showed that there is no significant relationship between students' anxiety and their attitude. It has also been found that their academic achievement is not affected from their anxiety and attitude. Qualitative findings have revealed that although many students have positive attitudes towards learning English they do not want to learn it due to some reasons (learned helplessness, past experiences with English, previous teachers, etc).

Keywords: *language learning anxiety, attitude, academic success*

1. Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language is a long and challenging process for learners. Students' success and academic achievement in learning this new language depend on many internal and external factors. The quality of language education, teacher, and curriculum can be considered as some of the external factors in language learning. Internal factors, such as anxiety, attitude, and self-confidence exert a distinctive influence on university students' individual success at their foreign language courses, and therefore it is important to reveal these internal factors. Among these, foreign language learning anxiety and language attitude have gained more attention because it is important to foster positive attitudes to foreign language learning (Zefran, 2015) and to have low or no language learning anxiety.

Language anxiety can be considered as the feeling of worry, nervousness, or fear when learning a foreign language. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) described anxiety as "subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with an arousal of the

[1] This study is an extended version of the paper presented in The Self in Language Learning Conference (SiLL) 2015.

autonomic nervous system" (p.125). There are many studies in which anxiety has been considered as one of the most important affective factors that influence second language learning (Cheng, Horwitz and Shallert, 1999; Dalkılıc, 2001; Lucas, Miraflores and Go, 2011). In their study, for example, Batumlu and Erdem (2001) found that there was a significant negative relationship between students' foreign language anxiety and their English achievement at the significance level of 0.45. Sener (2015), similarly, found in her study that "while the speaking scores are falling, the anxiety levels are rising. This might be due to the fact that more anxious students cannot express themselves freely and inevitably they score lower points" (p.886).

Due to the fact that English is not their mother language, another important internal factor in language learning is certainly the attitude towards this new language (İnal, Evin & Saracaoglu, 2004). Attitudes are cognitive and affecting; that is, they are related to thoughts as well as to feelings and emotions. "Attitudes govern how one approaches learning, creating positive attitudes towards English as a foreign language which in the case of language requires exposure to a different culture and also to the difficult task of mastering a foreign language" (Elyildirim & Ashton, 2006: p.2). The relationship between achievement in language learning and attitude towards the new language has drawn the attention of many researchers (Bain, McCallum, Bell, Cochran, and Sawyer, 2010; Fuligni, 1997; İnal, Evin &Saracaoglu, 2004). Rukh (2014) concluded in his study that students have positive attitudes towards learning English in association with achievement. In another study Al samadeni and Ibnian (2015) found that "students with high GPAs have the highest positive attitudes towards learning English, followed by the medium GPA students and finally the low GPA students" (p. 92).

There are also many studies focusing on the correlation between language learning attitude and language anxiety. Hussain, Shahid and Zaman (2011), for example, found a negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and students' attitude towards English. Female students had a positive attitude toward English and less anxiety. Also, rural students were found to have a higher anxiety level and low attitude towards English. Similarly, Liu and Chen (2013), in their study, found that students who had a higher level of positive attitudes had significantly lower anxiety.

Since attitudes and foreign language anxiety may have a negative or positive influence on foreign language achievement, it is important to explore the connection between foreign language anxiety and attitude, as well as discovering the correlations of these two factors with foreign language achievement. For this reason, the main aim of the study was to identify non-English major freshmen students' attitudes towards EFL courses and their anxiety levels. Also, this study aimed to discover the relationship between attitude and foreign language anxiety, and if these two factors have any effect on students' language achievements. Last purpose of the current study was to find the possible reasons of attitude, anxiety and fail in English achievement.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

Participants in this study were selected using convenient sampling technique. They were 107 non-English major students of classroom education department at Sinop University. Their ages ranged from 18 to 23 (29 males and 78 males), and they were mainly freshmen students, only 10 of them were sophomore students taking this course (Foreign language II) second time. All the students had taken English courses from 7 to10 years before taking freshmen English course in 2015-2016 academic year. 42 of the students wanted to take part only in the qualitative

part of the study. The rest of the students (n: 65) voluntarily took part in both quantitative and qualitative parts of the study.

2.2. Data Collection Tools and Procedures

In this study, two different data set were collected first of which was quantitative and the other qualitative data. One scale and one questionnaire were used for collecting quantitative data. The first one was "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)" developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). The FLCAS has 33 items which are scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).The original version of this scale was first translated into Turkish, and then was controlled by Turkish Language experts of the department of Turkish Language. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the FLCAS was .94, which means Turkish version the scale was highly reliable in terms of its internal consistency.

The other data collection tool for was the language learning attitude questionnaire (LLAQ). It consisted of 14 items which are scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the LLAQ was .71, which means Turkish version the scale was satisfactorily reliable in terms of its internal consistency.

For collecting qualitative data, students were given three open-ended questions, and they are asked to answer those questions (Free-writing activity). The questions were: 1- *Do you have any kind of personal desire to learn English? 2-Is there any reason (such as career planning, family, etc.) that fosters you learn English? 3- Do you feel anxious while learning English? If yes, give specific examples of your anxiety.* They were told not to write their names or any kind of information about them to make the students more comfortable in explaining their real feelings about learning English. This data were analyzed through content analysis.

Data collection procedures were completed in different steps. Firstly, students were asked to complete FLCAS and LLAQ, which took 40-50 minutes. The following week, they were given the open-ended questions to answer, and they completed the questions in 30 minutes. Their final exam grades were used to find out students' academic achievement. These exam results were used in the analysis to see if students' attitude or anxiety levels had any effects on their academic achievements. This pen and paper exam consisted of different sections (1- a reading passage and related questions about this passage, 2- fill in the blanks with the correct words, 3- a short writing activity about a given topic). If a student got 50 in this exam, s/he was accepted as successful in the analysis.

3. Data Analysis

In this part, quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed separately. First the FLCAS and questionnaire results, as parts of quantitative data, and then the qualitative data will be presented.

3.1. Quantitative Data Results

Cross tabulation results of the successful and unsuccessful students and their relation with their language learning attitude are presented in the first table.

Table 1. Cross Tabulation Results in terms of Gender and Students' Attitudes

		Attitude			**Total**
		Low	*Average*	*High*	
Gender	Female	3	42	1	46
	Male	0	19	0	19
Total		3	61	1	65

In the table above, three female students have low attitudes, and only one of them has high attitudes towards learning English. Besides, most of the female students (n: 42) have average attitudes. All male students, similarly, have average levels of attitudes towards learning English. The next table (Table 2) gives the results of the relation between the successful and unsuccessful students and their attitudes towards English.

Table 2. Cross Tabulation Results in terms of Student' Grades and Students' Attitude

		Attitude			**Total**
		Low	*Average*	*High*	
Achievement	Successful	2	32	0	34
	Unsuccessful	1	29	1	31
Total		3	61	1	65

In Table 2, it can be seen that only two of the successful students and one unsuccessful student have low attitude, and similar to gender, almost all students have average levels of attitudes towards learning English. In Table 3 below, the results of gender and students' anxiety levels are given.

Table 3. Cross Tabulation Results in terms of Gender and Students' Anxiety

		Anxiety			**Total**
		Low	*Average*	*High*	
Gender	Female	1	44	1	46
	Male	1	18	0	19
Total		2	62	1	65

As can be seen in table 3 above, one female and one male student have low and only one female has high anxiety. Almost all of the students have average level of foreign language learning anxiety. In Table 4 below, the relationship between students' grades and their anxiety levels are presented.

Table 4. Cross Tabulation Results in terms of Student Achievement and Anxiety

		Attitude			**Total**
		Low	*Average*	*High*	
Achievement	Successful	2	31	1	34
	Unsuccessful	0	31	0	31
Total		3	2	62	1

In Table 4, only two successful students have low anxiety, and one of them have high level of anxiety. On the other hand, all unsuccessful students have average levels of foreign language anxiety. Table 5 below presents the t-test results of students gender, attitude and anxiety levels.

Table 5. Independent Samples T-Test Results of Attitude and Anxiety in Terms of Gender

Gender		**N**	**X**	**S**	**p**
Attitude	Female	46	1,9565	,29488	,525
	Male	19	2,0000	,00000	
Anxiety	Female	46	2,0000	,21082	,376
	Male	19	1,9474	,22942	

Firstly, in terms of language learning attitude, female (x=1.95) and male students (x=2.00) means do not show a statistically significant difference (p=.525). Although male students' anxiety levels (x=1.94) are slightly lower than the female students' anxiety levels (x=2.00), there is no statistically significant relationship between the anxiety levels.

Table 6. Independent Samples T-Test Results of Attitude and Anxiety in Terms of Students' Achievement

Gender		**N**	**X**	**S**	**p**
Attitude	Female	34	1,9412	,23883	,344
	Male	31	2,0000	,25820	
Anxiety	Female	34	1,9706	,30003	,587
	Male	31	2,0000	,00000	

As can be seen above, the attitudes of successful (x=1.94) and unsuccessful students (x=2.00) do not show a statistically significant relationship (p=.344). Similarly, there is no significant difference (p=.587) between the mean scores of successful (x=1.97) and unsuccessful students (x=2.00) in terms of foreign language classroom anxiety.

Table 7 Correlation between Foreign Language Anxiety and Attitude towards English

		anxiety	**attitude**
anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	-,009
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,943
	N	65	65
attitude	Pearson Correlation	-,009	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,943	
	N	65	65

As can be seen from Table 7, there is no significant correlation between students' foreign language anxiety and their attitude towards learning English. Therefore, it can be said that if students have better attitudes for English, it does not mean that they have higher or lower anxiety, or vice versa.

3.2. Qualitative Data Results

Qualitative data were separated into two parts: attitude towards English and foreign language anxiety. These two parts were analyzed in two different sections: internal and external reasons for positive/negative attitudes and anxiety.

a- Attitudes towards learning English

In the analysis, 95.32 % of the students (n=102) stated that they have positive attitudes and desire to learn English. 29.9 % of these students had internal reasons for learning English such as "personal improvement and feeling happy to learn and speak another language". For example one student in his answers stated:

S1: …I surely have positive attitude and desire to learn English because a new language can bring me many things. Also, I will be different from other people and friends if I can speak English with a tourist…

Another student similarly wrote:

S2: I want to learn English because I wanted to be respected more by learning a new language…

30 % of the students, who stated positive attitudes towards learning English, had many external reasons for learning English. In his answer, a student wrote:

S3: I need to learn English for my professional career. I would like to go abroad (may be in ERASMUS program, for example) and communicate on my own…

Many other students said in their answers that they may need in English in their future schools because they can be classroom teachers in very far and small villages where there is no other English teacher, and they may have to teach this language to their students.

On the other hand, 4.6 % of the participant stated that they do not want to learn English or any other foreign language. 2.8 % of these students had internal reasons such as *learned helplessness, past experiences, etc.* For example a female student stated:

S4: I have been learning English for nine years but I could never learn it up to now, an d I do not believe I can learn it from now on…Also, in high school my English teacher made fun of me, once, since then I do not want to learn it anymore… I would not be here if I did not have to…

All these qualitative data and their analysis indicate that although most of the students have positive attitudes towards learning English, there some internal and external reasons that retards students' learning process. Besides, these reasons may also prevent students to have high motivation or higher attitudes towards learning English.

b- Foreign language Anxiety:

Qualitative analysis of foreign language anxiety showed that 70.09 % of the students (n=75) feel anxious while learning English. 54 students' (50.43%) answers reveals that they have anxiety due to internal reasons such as *not believing in himself/herself, feeling shy, not feeling secure, etc.* one of the students, for example, stated that:

S5: Although I try a lot to learn English (taking courses at school, studying at home), I still have the idea of being unsuccessful. Especially, in the exams, I feel much more anxious…

As above, another student stated her similar anxiety as:

S6: yes, I feel anxious in the classroom, Also, I feel like I will forget the answer or I will misunderstand the question, or I will give a wrong answer…

Besides internal reasons that cause anxiety, 13 students stated that there are some external factors that make them feel anxious while learning English such as *worrying about the reaction of teacher/friends if s/he answers the questions wrong, fear of being made fun of by their friends even if they know the correct answer, etc.* This anxiety may be seen in different ways such as fast heartbeat, sweating, shaking hands and legs unconsciously, breathing faster than normal, etc. In a student's answer, we can see such effects:

S7: I always feel frozen whenever I am asked a question in English although I know the correct answer… my voice lowers and lowers…

Other students (n=32) stated that they do not feel anxious while learning English. However, almost of them stated some kind of anxiety in their following sentences as in the example below:

S8: No, I do not feel anxious, but when I do not study enough I feel anxious. Also, I worry about my pronunciation…

As in the examples above, most students seem to have some kind of foreign language anxiety, although they do not have a high anxiety level. Only few students who have high self-confidence and whose English levels are higher than his friends do not have foreign language anxiety.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The first aim of the current study was to show the non-English major students' attitudes towards English and their foreign language anxiety levels. Based on the above findings of this sample group of university students, it can be said that although almost half of the students were not successful in learning English, most of these students have average level of positive attitudes towards learning English.

Another purpose of this study was to discover the relationship between students' attitudes and their foreign language anxiety levels. In Zefran's (2015) study, students were found to have high levels of anxiety and "alarmingly negative attitudes towards EFL courses and teachers" (p.167). According to the current results, in contrast, there is no significant correlation between these two internal factors in learning English. Namely, having average or higher attitudes towards English does not lower students' anxiety levels, or, even if a student have high level of foreign

language anxiety, s/he does not have to have really low levels of attitudes towards learning English. Contrary to Tran and Duong's study (2013), academic achievement or failure does not change the attitudes of students towards learning English and vice versa. In their study Awan, Azher, Anvar and Naz (2010) found that language anxiety and academic achievement are negatively related to each other. However in this present study, there is no significant difference between academic achievement and students' foreign language anxiety. Almost all of the students in this study, whether successful or not, had average levels of foreign language anxiety. Therefore, we can clearly state that being successful does not necessarily lower the anxiety levels of the students, and also, being unsuccessful in learning English does not always increase students anxiety levels.

Last aim was to discover the possible reasons of students' attitudes, anxiety and academic achievements/fails. Firstly, analysis of the qualitative data indicates that students' having average levels of positive attitudes towards learning English is a sign of awareness of the importance of English in this fast globalizing world. In new Turkish education system, English courses begin at second grade, and in some schools there are no English teachers, which mean, as the future classroom teachers, they need to know and teach English in their classes. Also, they want to learn English because they want to go abroad for different purposes such as education, travel, work, etc.

Second finding was that most students had still average levels of foreign language anxiety although they have been learning English for more that 7-8 years. In their answers, they gave different reasons for having this anxiety. Some stated that they are afraid of being unsuccessful no matter how hard they try because they always got very low grades in English before being a university student. Seligman and his colleagues called this psychological event as "learned helplessness" (Natalie, 2015). Another reason for having anxiety was the past experiences with English teachers and classmates. Some students stated their English teachers and classmates made fun of them while trying to answer the question in English. Since then, they always feel anxious and stressed whenever they are asked a question, and they do not want to participate in English courses even if they know the correct answers.

In continuing efforts to increase our knowledge in this important psychological domain, it is necessary for future studies to replicate these results with non-English major students. Also, it is important to consider other factors such as learned helplessness, past experiences, teacher-students or student-student relations that may possibly create positive attitudes and that decrease the foreign language anxiety levels of the students.

References

Al samadeni, H. A. & Ibnian, S. S. (2015). The relationship between Saudi EFL students' attitudes towards learning English and their academic achievement. *International Journal of Education and Social Science, 2* (1), 92-102.

Awan, R. N, Azher, M., Anvar, M. N. & Naz, A. (2010). An investigation of foreign language anxiety and its relationship with students' achievement. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning, 7* (11), 33-40.

Bain, S. K., McCallum, R. S., Bell, S. M., Cochran, J. L., & Sawyer, S. C. (2010). Foreign language learning aptitudes, attitudes, attributions, and achievement of postsecondary students identified as gifted. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 22,* 130–156.

Cheng, Y., Horwitz, E. K., & Shallert, D. L. (1999). Language anxiety: differentiating writing and speaking components. *Language Learning, 49* (3), 417-446.

Dalkilic, N. (2001). *An investigation into the role of anxiety in second language learning.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Adana: Çukurova University .

Elyildirim, S. & Ashton, S. (2006). Creating positive attitudes towards English as a foreign language. *English Teaching Forum, 4*, 2-21. Retrieved from http://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/06-44-4-b.pdf

Fuligni, A. J. (1997). The academic achievement of adolescents from immigrant families: the role of family background, attitudes, and behavior. *Child Development, 68,* 351–363. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.1997.tb01944.x

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *Modern Language Journal 70* (2): 125–132. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-781.1986.tb05256.x

Hussain, M. A., Shahid, S. & Zaman, A. (2011). Anxiety and attitude of secondary school students towards foreign language learning. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 29,* 583-590.

İnal S., E., İlke & Saracaloğlu, A. S. (2004). *The relationship between students' attitudes toward foreign language and foreign language achievement*. (Paper Presentation) First International Conference Dokuz Eylül University Buca Faculty of Education, İzmir.

Liu, H. & Chen, T. (2013). Foreign language anxiety in young learners: how it relates to multiple intelligences, learner attitudes, and perceived competence. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 4* (5), 932-938.

Lucas, R. I., Miraflores, E. & Go, D. (2011). English language learning anxiety among foreign language learners in the Philippines. *Philippine ESL Journal, 7*, 94-119.

Natalie, B. (2015). H*ow Seligman's learned helplessness theory applies to human depression and stress*. Online document. Retrieved from http://study.com/academy/lesson/how-seligmans-learned-helplessness-theory-applies-to-human-depression-and-stress.html

Rukh, S. (2014). Students' attitude towards English language learning and academic achievement: a case of business students in Punjab. *European Academic Research, 2* (4), 5596-5612.

Şener, S. (2015). Foreign language learning anxiety and achievement: a case study of the students studying at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University. *Turkish Studies - International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic Volume 10*/3, Winter, 875-890, ISSN: 1308-2140.

Tran, T. Q. & Duong, T. M. (2013). The attitudes towards English language learning and use of self-regulated learning strategies among college non-English majors. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 3* (7), 1-8.

Zefran, M. (2015). Students' attitudes towards their EFL lessons and teachers: their retrospective study. *The Journal of Elementary Education, 8* (1-2), 167-181.

TOJELT Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching
A Triannual Peer-Reviewed Journal of Research in English Language Teaching
Journal Homepage: http://www.tojelt.com

Year:2016 Volume:1 Issue:2 Pages:66-74

Revisiting Language Learning Through the Self: Discovery Learning in the 21st Century[1]

Dönercan Dönük
Mersin University
The Department of English Language Teaching
donercandonuk@gmail.com

Recommended citation: Dönük, D. (2016). Revisiting language learning through the self: Discovery learning in the 21st century. *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (TOJELT), 1*(2), 66-74.

Submission history
Received:
29 December 2015
Resubmitted:
02 March 2016
Final version:
04 April 2016
Corresponding author:
donercandonuk@gmail.com

E-ISSN: 2458-9918

Abstract: In such countries as Turkey, where EFL (English as a Foreign Language) is the basic language teaching policy, the incorporation of grammar into language teaching has proven to be a must. However, to eliminate the concerns that revitalizing grammar in language classrooms might be resuming to traditional classrooms, the methodology to be adopted seems to be of vital importance. This paper aims to characterize a corpus based discovery learning procedure, in which learners are subjected to specific questions and experiences in such a fashion as to discover a given concept. This study offers a procedure that uses the Corpus in the classroom to teach a pre-determined grammar focus item.Unlike traditional ways, with this approach, learning can be facilitated through a specific teaching methodology, arousing a curiosity as well as posing a challenge. Thus, while the language focus is not limited to a discreet grammatical item, it is presented in a context, mainly sketched by corpus linguistics.The course methodology suggested in this article could inspire new insights into teaching lexico-grammar in EFL contexts by utilizing the facilities of ICT (Information and Communications Technology).

Keywords: *ICT, discovery learning, self, language learning, corpus*

1. Introduction

English language teaching has witnessed a wide range of variations as for the importance of grammar and the mode of its delivery in the learning environments. In addition to the clash of heads over the methodology of teaching this basic language component, the fashion it is dealt with has displayed different trends from period to period in line with the considerations employed in its vitality.

In such countries as Turkey, where EFL (English as a Foreign Language) is the basic language teaching policy, the incorporation of grammar into language teaching has proven to be a must (Larsen-Freeman, 2001; Borg & Burns, 2008 among others), and innovative language teaching methodologies accommodate grammar as a vital part of language learning, relying on the findings of SLA (Second Language Acquisition) research (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Lightbown, 2000; Mitchell, 2000; Doughty, 2001; Ellis, 2001; Pica, 2005). As a step towards such a new attitude towards grammar, Conrad (2000) states that in the last decades of the 20th century, exciting improvements occurred in terms of grammar teaching, and most of the ESL

[1] This study is an extended version of the paper presented in The Self in Language Learning Conference (SiLL) 2015.

grammarians would agree that by the end of the 20th century, besides other factors, corpus linguistics also changed grammar research drastically.

However, to eliminate the concerns that revitalizing grammar in language classrooms might be resuming to traditional classrooms, the methodology accompanied by the techniques and materials to be adopted is of fundamental significance. In this respect, to revolutionize the notion of grammar, this paper aims to characterize a corpus based discovery learning in an advanced language class, in which grammar instruction takes place inductively. While the learning is centralized on discourse approaches, corpus is used for all forms of language pedagogy in a meaningful context, practiced through the receptive and productive skills (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2005). The assumption is that through discovery learning, the language focus is not limited to a discreet focus of grammar item as focus on forms; on the contrary, it is presented in a context drawn from a corpus, mainly sketched by corpus linguistics norms (Biber & Conrad, 2001). The course methodology suggested in this article could inspire new insights into teaching lexico-grammar in EFL contexts by utilizing the facilities of ICT (Information and Communications Technology).

2. From The Corpus Theoretical to The Corpus Applied

Despite the abundance of research and related articles on the availability of corpus for reference purposes in the fields of grammar and vocabulary, the actual classroom procedures do not take place in corpus based studies. Most of the descriptive work, and those giving a detailed account of the possible usages of a 'search' item are restricted to theory to a large extent, and in most cases, they cannot serve as a source for the need of practitioners who wish to adopt an innovative methodology for teaching a language, particularly grammar. The corpus offers massive data for lexico-grammar, the interface between the lexicon and grammar, and some evidence for the actual usage of grammar in context. Therefore, what is left to the practitioners is to master the raw data for the interpretation and utilization.

Conrad (2005) defines corpus as a "large, principled collection of naturally occurring texts that is stored in electronic form". Besides, she explains 'naturally occurring' as the production of the texts by users of the language for a communicative aim, unlike the texts that have been created for studying or teaching. This shows that the emergence and frequency of a search item in a corpus shows a lot as to its actual place, frequency and value in a language. Any search in order to have access to the concordance data occurring in the form of phrases or patterns would display a substantial lot of knowledge for the function of one particular word or phrase in a context, also suggesting invaluable information as to the other uses, not generally included in EFL course books and related materials. In this way, what concordances supply for the requirements of that specific language sometimes prove to generate outcomes that rarely or never come to the conscious attention of the language users, teachers, learners or curriculum designers. Therefore, it can be said that a comprehensive corpus is a tool to be exploited by language teaching methodology, without which the learning of a language in the real sense would not be a matter of claim.

To Conrad (2005), central to the definite philosophical principle is that language study is taught through experimental work in the first place, and for this reason, language descriptions and theories should be grounded on observations of language behavior. In this sense, corpus linguistics has made contributions to second language teaching since it puts on the experimental work of the enormous data bases of the language. Considering what corpus offers in terms of the context, Jolly and Bolitho (2011) state that thanks to corpus analysis, it has become possible for

language learners to see the big picture at the text and discourse level. In the same vein, Byrd (2005) states that a discourse based point of view focuses on meaning and communication in the first place, and it derives structure from the communication types for the learners.

Discovery learning and teaching as a pathway to inductive instruction refers to a type of curriculum in which learners are subjected to specific questions and experiences in such a fashion as to "discover" for themselves and the concepts intended (Hammer, 1997). In this way, discovery learning arouses the curiosity in the learner's mind while also posing a challenge, which is one of the most effective paradigms of learning. Castronova (2002) states that discovery learning is an approach to learning that can be facilitated through specific teaching methodology and guided strategies of learning. Therefore, it can be said that for the learning to become meaningful, teachers are supposed to involve the students in this process. This makes the learning exciting, and the learnt part permanent as is suggested by Santamaria Garcia (1995), which highlights the possible contribution of the concordances to the retention levels of the students. Moreover, Chambers (2005) emphasizes that studying through corpora and concordancing take place in a language learning environment since they lead to learner autonomy and discovery learning.

Despite the availability of corpus based descriptions of linguistic items, the steps to be followed in the classroom remain limited, and this article aims to contribute to this restricted field. With this view, as the entity of focus, "If Clauses", one of the parametric variations from the cross-linguistic point of view, have been selected, for they are known to pose a challenge for EFL learners (Girgin, 2011). Therefore, this paper is centered on teaching these structures through the concordance data by using discovery learning as a classroom application.

3. The Classroom Procedure

Corpus as a practical and contemporary utility for teachers requires a cautiously selected teaching fashion for fruitful results. Therefore, being able to take the sequential steps contributes to the pedagogical content knowledge of a teacher, a cornerstone for teacher competency. The procedure is based on DDL (Data-Driven Learning), the use of computer-produced concordancers (Johns,1991) to discover formulaic expressions and syntactic regularities though it seems to be appropriate for the proficient learner, the lower-level proficiency remaining doubtful (Barbieri & Eckhardt, 2007). The classroom procedure designed in this article as a sample application aims to help teachers, who wish to work with the Corpus, gain insight into the use of this tool for a revolutionized grammar teaching.

1- Prior to the classroom application, the teacher goes through the corpora to find the right context for the teaching process, for it provides data to reach the language with its components instead of a language in isolated forms. Ellis (2008) highlights the vitality of formulaic parts of language in early language acquisition, and adds that a notional functional approach can function as a perfect tool for the teaching of such chains; however, for a language syllabus to be considered as complete, the improvement of formulaic phrases and rule-based knowledge needs to be supplied. In order to fulfill this need, the teacher does some search on the corpus to find out the distribution of the lexico-grammar item according to the sections and sub sections of the corpus. This search helps observe the frequency of the focus entity in different fields of discourse, which will lead the teacher to decide what discourse fragment is to be given more weight while designing the syllabus.

2- As the next step, the teacher examines the concordance data (Johns, 1991), and selects the appropriate sentences to bring to the attention of the learners in a context. The purpose of this preliminary work, unlike most users practice, is not to display the outcome of the corpus before the learners' eyes, but to select and accumulate the lot to be used as course material for the elimination of the possible pitfalls the learners might encounter on the way.
Being the conscious participant of the learning-teaching process, the teacher picks fragments of discourse in line with the level of the learners. The aim is to eradicate the challenge of new words that prevents the observation of the grammar data. No simplification of the course material is advisable at this phase since the corpus provides the authentic segment of the language, which is desirable for a good source of input. A slight challenge made for the learner as for the comprehensibility of the input (Krashen, 1985) could serve as a drive since learning is not simply comprehending, but it is also striking a balance between the input and the intake, and the challenge is the pulling force of the learning experience. Moreover, since each search item is embedded in a context, if a need arises, the learning can progress through the discourse the corpus fragment is extracted from by clicking on the node.

3- The teacher designs a mini-corpus, based on the uses of "If" to bring to the conscious attention of advanced learners of English. This procedure aims to achieve the chance to probe the behavior of words and describe the use of that word in its real form. In this part of the course, the teacher supplies input through one of the receptive skills to imply that "If Clauses" will be the focus of the study. In line with the philosophy of inductive teaching, the learners are expected to infer that conditional sentences are on the agenda of the teacher.
To Conrad (1999), corpus-based research eases the analysis of several characteristics of a feature in order that we can achieve a more complete perception of its use. Relying on this view, as the next step, the teacher projects the corpus on the screen while the learners are directed to observe through some sentences that lead to the functional occurrence of "If Clauses". The rationale behind this is that when learners encounter different functions under the same form, they see the actual and authentic use, free-standing although composed for a particular audience (O'Keeffe et al., 2007).

4- Then, the teacher reads the sentences from the mini corpus and asks the students to examine them carefully. For the new words, dictionaries are allowed, and when necessary, the teacher helps the students with meaning accommodation. After the overall examination, the students are grouped to work together and an activity paper including the study at Table 1 is handed out.

Table 1
Activity to discover the uses of "If" substitutes in the corpus

If 1 : If	Eğer
If 2: In case	Olursa diye/ Olması halinde
If (So) 3: Under the circumstances	Şayet öyle ise
If 4: Only If/ On condition that	Şayet
If 5: For the possibility that	Eğer
If 6: It is impossible now	Olsa idi
If 7: It is impossible/luckily	Olsa idi

5- The teacher directs the students to focus on the meaning supplied in Table 1 and to match these expressions with the suitable sentences drawn from any corpus that can serve for language teaching. The aim is to let the students discover that one form, in this case, "if" has different functions, and the shades of meaning is constructed through the other phrases in the sentence, even in the context for one form. The students are expected to make a link between the given meaning and the sentence including "If". In this way, the teacher prepares the whole course procedure, but does not interfere with the discovery process which leaves the learners on their own "selves". The teacher role has been identified to be moderator and facilitator (Richards, 2005) while the learner role as active participant, who is responsible for the autonomous, constructivist "self" learning.

6- Having accomplished the matching and provided the right answers, the teacher tells the students to replace "if" in each sentence with the expression given in Table 1, and to read the meaning once more. In this way, meaning variations can be observed, which confirms the fact that one form can potentially represent many meanings, and that these meaning constructions are supplied through other members such as tenses, modals, time expressions in the sentence, not solely by the grammatical item in its own right.
Ex.1. If you touch this button, the door opens instantly
When you touch this button, the door opens instantly.

7- As the final step, the teacher arranges the students in groups so that they can focus on the patterning and regularities (Meunier, 2002) in the mini Corpus, and they can reach a consensus over the syntactic description of each use. The purpose of this step is to have the students gain awareness that "If Clauses" are not restricted only to the tenses and time expressions as it is traditionally included in the grammar books; on the contrary, the wide array of usages in different sections of language pinpoints that the shadowed functions, lying in the interface between syntax and semantics exist there, and it is left to the PCK (Pedagogical Content Knowledge) (Shulman, 1986) of the language teacher to unearth such constructions. In this way, students are encouraged to use the corpus for the real functions of a language item in addition to those defined in grammar books. Having rounded up the meaning-based studies, the teacher directs the students to group the sentence clusters under the common functions (See Table 1), and lets them write possible syntactic patterns required for each group. The basic aim of this work is to let the learners see that a grammar item with different functions varies in structure.

4. Conclusion and Implications

The procedure mentioned in this paper aims to sketch a classroom application for the new generation teachers who teach digital natives (Prensky, 2001) by using innovative tools. Unlike traditional teachers, these contemporary teachers act like competent drivers, who take their passengers to the other side of the river, after which time the commuters become aware that they have gone ashore. This "Invisible Bridge" metaphor can be applied to formal education systems, in which learners learn without their conscious knowledge for some time, after which they place this meta-linguistic knowledge as the rules of grammar and use it to edit their productive skills. The important point at this stage is to evoke the interest of the students, who actually tend to have an inquisitive mind in the early years of their learning experiences, either getting dull or disappearing totally as they grow up. However, it is a fact that through the use of questioning, the

core value of inquiry-based pedagogy puts stress on the discovery learning and the development of learners' cognitive skills and metacognitive strategies. (Lee, 2014). Additionally, through exploring and problem solving, students take on an active role to create, integrate, and generalize knowledge (Castronova, 2002). If learners are considered to have these features, corpus-based studies make a perfect match for their learning styles.

As for the advantages of the corpus; firstly, it can be said that the teaching and learning process becomes enjoyable for both parties. For the learners, this type of learning arouses curiosity since discovering something new lies in the very heart of human beings, which calls for the effort to find out the new information. In addition, "when you do your best for something, you try to own and keep it" philosophy creates learners who assume the ownership and responsibility of their own learning. Secondly, students improve their cognitive and research skills as well as the knowledge about grammar. Thirdly, students incidentally learn (Read, 2004) new words they coincide while going through the corpus data, which provides them with rich materials unlike those in traditional sources. Thus, the onset for learning one specific item has its extra gains with many new words in a context. The final benefit for the learners is the access to the information about the morpho-syntax; namely, lexical patterns included in practical and accessible materials. Moreover, thanks to the word frequency lists, enquiry across different corpora, different varieties and different contexts of use is facilitated (O'Keeffe et al. 2007)

The advantages of the corpus for the teachers is countless. Firstly, it eases the teacher's job. Corpus exploits the opportunities of technology, and teachers have the chance to have access to a great deal of concordance data from different walks of life (spoken, written, academic, formal, and informal) with just one click. Sinclair (1996) points out that extensive compilations of language texts in digital form have been accessible to academicians for almost forty years, and a perspective of language form that has not been available before is offered with the corpus. Besides, the authentic language in a context is like a plant with its roots, which means the language plant can be stored and kept in the mind for a long time. The authentic material also presents some usages not normally mentioned in grammar books (See Table 1), for the corpus includes contemporary language portions, which can be obtained by extracting the concordance data. Secondly, when teachers work under the light of the data from the corpus, they can eliminate the word clutter they have to use to describe and explain a grammar item. A traditional teacher is supposed to use the terminology about grammar, "If Clauses" for instance, to raise the consciousness level of the learners (See Fig. 1).

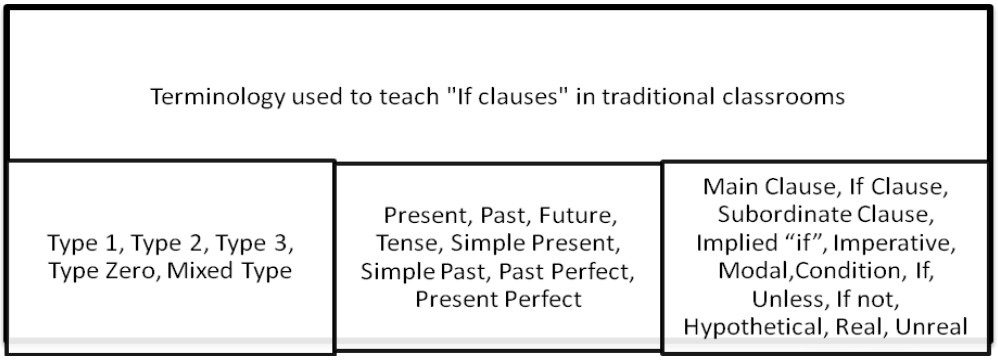

Figure 1. Terminology used to teach If Clauses

Therefore, students talk about "If Clauses", but they cannot apply them, for they have learnt a lot of features about "If Clauses" except how they can be used accurately with the right style and register. In other words, they can tell all the recipes of a cook book by heart; however, they cannot cook a single meal and serve it to the table. On the other hand, seeing many examples of the same item in a corpus clears the path for more accuracy and productivity since this type of learning penetrates into the unconscious mind of the learner before the teacher voices the rules as the final step of the inductive instruction.

Teachers can make use of the corpus ideally once they get used to utilizing this tool during their teaching. For this to realize, teachers should have a contrastive point of view, which helps them discover the variations across languages. With this outlook to the corpus, it becomes possible to interpret the data offered, and this shapes the material the teacher brings to the conscious attention of the learners as suggested by Meunier (2002), which remarks that learning from the corpus is especially appropriate for consciousness-raising activities, mainly in the fields of lexis or lexico-grammar.

Additionally, teachers should keep the mother tongue on the agenda, for different functions of the same form can be disclosed with the help of one's native language. When two languages are compared and contrasted by resorting to translation, the whole picture can be seen as for the differences of use. Besides, teachers should consider teaching as a problem solving phenomenon, and think that the more they are involved in this process, the better solutions they can create.

In conclusion, this article highlights the current delivery modes of grammar, and it suggests that instead of resorting to the tools provided by the traditional teachers, contemporary teachers could initiate learning environments through the learner's self by means of discovery learning. The right tool for such a procedure is the corpus, which offers a great deal of spoken and written discourse to the teaching and learning environment. Sinclair (1996) states that a teacher needs a modest adaptation to the practices included in obtaining information from the corpus, most vitally, training and experience in how to evaluate this information. This orientation could be accomplished at ITE (Initial Teacher Education) programs by integrating corpus linguistics and its implications into the curriculum for the future teachers who have a good computer literacy. Besides, INSET (In Service Teacher Training) platforms are ideal environments for teachers' orientation towards utilizing and evaluating the language corpora while teaching English.

References

Barbieri, F., & Eckhardt, S. E. (2007). Applying corpus-based findings to form-focused instruction: The case of reported speech. *Language Teaching Research*, *11*(3), 319-346.

Biber, D., & Conrad, S. (2001). Quantitative corpus-based research: Much more than bean counting. *TESOL quarterly*, 331-336.

Borg, S., & Burns, A. (2008). Integrating grammar in adult TESOL classrooms. *Applied Linguistics*, *29*(3), 456-482.

Byrd, P. (2005). Instructed grammar. *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*, *1*, 545-562.

Castronova, J. A. (2002). Discovery learning for the 21st century: What is it and how does it compare to traditional learning in effectiveness in the 21st century. *Action Research Exchange*, *1*(1), 1-12.

Celce-Murcia, M., & Olshtain, E. (2005). Discourse-based approaches: A new framework for second language teaching and learning. *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*, 729-741.

Chambers, A. (2005). Integrating corpus consultation in language studies. Language Learning and Technology, 9 (2), 111-125.

Conrad, S. M. (1999). The importance of corpus-based research for language teachers. *System*, *27*(1), 1-18.

Conrad, S. (2000). Will Corpus Linguistics Revolutionize Grammar Teaching in the 21st Century? *TESOL Quarterly*, *34*(3), 548-560.

Conrad, S. (2005). Corpus linguistics and L2 teaching. *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*, 393-409.

Doughty, C. (2001). Cognitive underpinnings of focus on form. *Cognition and second language instruction*, 206-257.

Doughty, C., & Williams, J. (1998). Pedagogical choices in focus on form. *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition*, 197-261.

Ellis, R. (2001). *Form-focused instruction and second language learning: Language learning monograph*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Ellis, R. (2008). Explicit knowledge and second language learning and pedagogy. In *Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 1901-1911). Springer US.

Girgin, E. G. (2011). Enhancing Classroom Language Learning: The Challenges for Teachers, Trainers and Managers. Proceedings of EAQUALS Conference, Prague.

Hammer, D. (1997). Discovery learning and discovery teaching. *Cognition and instruction*, *15*(4), 485-529.

Johns, T. (1991) Should you be persuaded: two examples of data-driven learning. In: Johns, T. and King, P. (eds.), Classroom concordancing. (English language research journal, 4), 1-16.

Jolly, D., & Bolitho, R. (2011). A framework for materials writing. In B. Tomlinson (Eds.) *Materials development in language teaching* (90-115), Cambridge University Press.

Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2001). Teaching grammar. In M. Cele-Murcia (Ed.) *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (pp. 251-266). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Lee, H. Y. (2014). Inquiry-based Teaching in Second and Foreign Language Pedagogy. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *5*(6), 1236-1244.

Lightbown, P. M. (2000). Anniversary article. Classroom SLA research and second language teaching. *Applied linguistics*, *21*(4), 431-462.

Meunier, F. (2002). The pedagogical value 0f native and learner corpora in EFL grammar teaching. *Computer learner corpora, second language acquisition and foreign language teaching*, *6*, 119.

Mitchell, R. (2000). Anniversary article. Applied linguistics and evidence-based classroom practice: the case of foreign language grammar pedagogy. *Applied Linguistics*, *21*(3), 281-303.

O'Keeffe, A., McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (2007). *From corpus to classroom: Language use and language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Pica, T. (2005). Classroom learning, teaching, and research: A task-based perspective. *The Modern Language Journal*, *89*(3), 339-352.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants part 1. *On the horizon*, *9*(5), 1-6.

Read, J. (2004). 7. Research in Teaching Vocabulary. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *24*, 146-161.

Richards, J. C. (2005). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge University Press.

Santamaría Garcia, C. (1995). Corpora for English Language Teaching and Learning. *EUIVI de Guadalajara, Encuentro*, 190-199.

Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational researcher*, 4-14.

Sinclair, J. M. (1996). The empty lexicon. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, *1*(1), 99-119.

TOJELT Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching
A Triannual Peer-Reviewed Journal of Research in English Language Teaching
Journal Homepage: http://www.tojelt.com

Year:2016 Volume:1 Issue:2 Pages:75-84

Interrogating the Teaching and Learning of English in Nigeria: Still in Search of an Enabling Principle

Kingsley Oluchi Ugwuanyi
University of Nigeria, Nsukka–Nigeria
Department of English and Literary Studies
kingsley.ugwuanyi@unn.edu.ng

Mathias Okey Chukwu
Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu–Nigeria
Department of English and Literary Studies
okweymathias6@gmail.com

Recommended citation: Ugwuanyi, K. O. & Chukwu, M. O. (2016). interrogating the teaching and learning of English in Nigeria: Still in search of an enabling principle. *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (TOJELT), 1*(2), 75-84.

Submission history
Received:
11 February 2016
Resubmitted:
04 April 2016
Final version:
13 April 2016
Corresponding author:
kingsley.ugwuanyi@unn.edu.ng

E-ISSN: 2458-9918

Abstract: With the understanding that effective communication is the central goal in any second language situation, this paper examines how best to achieve this in the light of the current curriculum for the teaching of English in Nigeria. The way the English language is taught at all the levels of education in Nigeria leaves a lot to be desired, and therefore does not hold a promise of actualising the very end of language teaching and learning, which is the development of learners' communicative competence. The teaching and learning of English in Nigeria today is largely grammar-based, so that learners only take grammar lessons, leaving out the colour of language, which is literature. If literature is the colour of its language, teaching any language without its literature is teaching a bleached language. Any language teaching method that adopts this antiseptic learning of the target language may not achieve much, as literature presents the best examples or manifestations of language use, and would serve as a veritable point of encounter with the language. The position of this work is that the divorce between 'language' and 'literature' in our educational curriculum is an anathema.

Keywords: *Second language teaching, communicative competence, teaching method(s), grammar, English in Nigeria*

1. Introduction

It has been argued that structural, grammar-based approaches to language teaching promise little in terms of helping the learners to achieve the desired proficiency in the target language, for it seeks to impart 'decontextualised global competence' (Mohammed, 1995, p. 143). This is so in that grammar-based approaches to language teaching are not linguistically and

functionally realistic (Kachru, 1988). Concerning teaching English in Nigeria, Akwanya (2007b) proposes that any acceptable approach to language teaching and learning has got to be the one which can 'ensure mastery, awaken all the individual's energies, and lay open before the learner the full resources of this language for exploitation in the task of self-construction, in the project of living, of selfhood' (p. 26).

The advantages inherent in any language teaching approach modelled on the above language teaching philosophy are obvious, one of which is that the learner is immersed in the target language. This is the central idea of this work, and underscores the high premium literature is to play in such approach to teaching and learning in an L2 situation. For we read from Hall (2005) that the movement which emphasises language learners doing things with the language in authentic contexts has led to an important revival of the fortunes of literature in second language learning. In other words, Hall proposes that the reading of literary texts can offer L2 learners that rare authentic context. The task this work sets out to examine, therefore, is to show how the reading of literature can serve as comprehensible input for learners of a second language.

2. Grammar and communicative competence

The place/role of grammar in a communicative approach to language teaching has been a controversy. Though said in different ways, most Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) experts agree that grammar should serve a role different from what grammar-based approaches to language teaching assign to it. For Shehadeh (2005),

> *…most language learners taught by methods that emphasize mastery of grammar [alone] do not achieve an acceptable level of competency in the target language. Language learning in the classroom is usually based on the belief that language is a system of wordings governed by a grammar and a lexicon* (, p. 13).

The first statement in the above quotation touches upon the heart of this study. The reasons are obvious. Even in the very formulation of the concept of communicative competence, Hymes (1972) remarked that he was introducing the concept because the notion of competence expounded by Chomsky was both theoretically and practically inadequate. In the same vein, grammar and its study are insufficient to instil in the learner the rounded knowledge to communicate competently in the target language. The present researchers are not alone in this opinion – Leech and Svartvik (2002) have shown why the teaching of grammar alone is now being frowned at, especially within any communicative approach. This is because the sentences simulated in the grammar class to demonstrate certain grammatical facts are devoid of their authenticating discourse context; they are simply synthetic.

Halliday (2004) also criticises the kind of sentences grammarians analyse. He argues that, most times, grammarians are much more interested in the grammaticalness of the sentences they use than on their communicative values in context, or 'real-life discourse.' He says that such sentences are always 'idealised' and 'isolated'. Using the analogy of a building, he points out that analysing just such abstract sentences without due consideration for other 'several important

aspects of the meaning involved' is 'like describing a house as a construction of bricks, without recognising the walls and the rooms as immediate structural units' (p. 310).

This has been one of the major criticisms levelled against grammar-based approaches to second language learning. This argument notwithstanding, many scholars (Hodges & Whitten, 1982; Khansir, 2012; Oji, 2001; Quirk & Greenbaum, 2004; Rutherford, 2014; and Waldhorn & Zeiger, 2001) still think that the study of grammatical rules and codes is second to nothing in any language learning environment. But the stance that the study of the grammatical rules is all that is important to achieve the needed competence has been widely criticised. Edwards and Csizer (2004, p. 16) have written that '...language learning exceeds the limits of memorizing vocabulary items and grammar rules,' and for them, such works that place highest premium on grammar 'usually fail to provide the necessary and appropriate input in speech acts, and the material they do present often differs from real life speech'. This is what Paulston (1992) refers to as what happens in the artificial world of language classrooms.

It is in the light of the above that this study seeks to further assess the view that the grammar learned by students in second language classrooms is rather too artificial to give them what linguistic knowledge they need to communicate effectively. To give a preliminary stance, at no point would this study argue that these grammatical rules are outright unnecessary. But '...if it is only within the system that the rules are to be found, what rule can there be to guide the actualization of the possible, since there is no limit to the actualization, since the infinite is by that reason not subject to systemic rules?" (Akwanya, 2007a, pp. 1-2).

The disturbing question following up the above is: how are these 'systemic rules' sufficient in our teaching of language use, especially to L2 speakers? It is known that the processes and conditions of acquiring a first (or native) language are quite different from those of a second language. Even where two languages have equal status, Aitchison (2003) has admonished that it is unthinkable to judge one language by the standards of another. But this notwithstanding, before an L2 speaker achieves a near-native speaker competence, some ways of acquisition in an L1 environment may be adopted. To this end, Canale and Swain (1980) argue that:

> *...effective second language learning takes place if emphasis is put from the beginning on getting one's meaning across, and not on the grammaticalness and appropriateness of one's utterances…. It is quite reasonable to assume that since in acquiring a first language the child seems to focus more on being understood than on speaking grammatically, then second language acquisition might be allowed to proceed in this manner* (p. 10).

While this is not the central argument here, it queries further the sufficiency of the grammar taught in class in giving second language learners what they need to become effective and mature users of the language. And if it is found insufficient, the question then arises: what is the place of grammar in L2 teaching and learning? Should it be completely discarded or be assigned its rightful role? This point shall be revisited below.

At this point, it is important to take a cursory look at the concepts of learning and acquisition. These two concepts are central in language teaching and learning. Many Second Language Teaching (SLT) scholars have come to agree that the two can be used for both first and second language situations, and there appears to be common approval for that. But while that position may still hold, it does appear safer to follow Krashen to believe that these two processes involve different conditions and also yield different results. According to Krashen (1982), learning is conscious, while acquisition takes 'a fairly predictable natural order, and this occurs when we receive comprehensible input' (pp. 86-87). It is against this background that many scholars have argued that children *acquire* their mother tongue, while second language users *learn* the language. One can only agree with this proposition if this difference is established on the basis of how competence is developed, rather than on the status of the language. If that differentiation is anything to go by, it means that acquisition is impossible in a second language environment. But from Krashen's model, there is enough evidence to believe otherwise. From any of the divides, opinions are the same that what engenders acquisition is de-emphasis on conscious learning, and that learning takes place by picking up (and sometimes, memorising) the rules of a language. But he says that a very important point that also needs to be stated is that learning does not 'turn into' acquisition. He adds that language learners can learn a rule without acquiring that rule. Most of the usage errors in L2 situations do not emanate from problems in learning, but in acquisition. This is because learning a rule does not always mean being able to use it in performance, and those who utilize conscious rules during conversation always take too much time to speak and have a hesitant style which is often too boring to listen to. This is a major drawback of the learning process.

According to Krashen, grammar (a term he uses as a synonym for 'conscious learning') has two possible roles in the second language teaching and learning programme. The first is that conscious learning can act as an editor by correcting the errors, or rather what the performer perceives to be errors, in the output of the acquired system. He notes that this can happen before or after the sentence is spoken, implying that this correction is not as important as acquiring the structure of–and making use of–the language. The place for monitor use is always in writing and prepared speech; but when it is often used in normal conversations, the result is always the hesitant style mentioned above. Again, one must also know when rules can be used, which rules should be used, and what effects monitor use has. The second role of grammar is its teaching as a subject-matter, which can result in acquisition when and because the target language is used as a medium of instruction. This second role therefore may help to provide modest comprehensible input for acquisition.

The issue has been whether rules should be given directly (deductive), or whether students should be asked or made to figure out the rules for themselves (inductive). From the argument presented so far, there are compelling reasons to argue that the teaching and learning of grammar is not enough, and does not lead to acquisition – the only condition that guarantees communicative competence. This does not mean, however, that 'there is no room at all for conscious learning. Conscious learning does have a role, but it is no longer the lead actor in the

play' (Krashen, 1982.) In fact, there is no model of communicative competence that neglects the place of grammar completely. Littlewood (1985) says that communicative language use is only possible by virtue of the grammatical system and its creative potential. To lend credence to this still, Widdowson (1990, p. 40) adds that 'a proper understanding of the concept of communicative competence would have revealed that it gives no endorsement for the neglect of grammar.'

3. Literature as comprehensible input in SLT

There is enough evidence to believe that every language (especially those already codified and with written forms) has its literature. And the literature of any language is part of and emanates from that language. In fact, literature cannot be except as language. Following Aristotle, many have come to agree that the art form which imitates by means of language alone is literature. If this is so, it is difficult, if not impossible, to divorce literature from language. Even in language teaching and learning, literature should be given a central role because of its communicative values. This position has been canvassed by many (Akwanya, 2005; Al-Darwish & Shuqair, 2015; Rai, 2012; and Shazu, 2014), for the projection of any curriculum of education that erects a demarcating wall between language and literature is inimical to the very purpose it is designed to serve, in that it helps neither the learning of the foreign language nor the mother tongue.

The point we want to establish here is that works of literature can expose second language learners to some kind of linguistic structures, which would in turn serve as 'comprehensible input' in the learning process. The comprehensible input, for Krashen, is to comprise both the known and the new, which indeed becomes known after it has been encountered in a learning experience that is continuously progressive. As it is, no matter how culturally different a literary text is, the reader finds certain aspects of the text familiar (at least the fact that the characters are humans, or behave as humans). This becomes a point of beginning in understanding the actions of the characters which are themselves creations of language, the language of emergence, the target language. Hence the learning of the story goes with the learning of the language structure, and indeed the necessity that accounts for every of the expressions. Hence, as cited in Otagburuagu (2007), Williams says that:

> *Literature in a first or a second language confronts the student with various operations of language and the need to elucidate its meaning. Since literature organises language in the most exemplary fashion, the second language learner must be aware of the importance of applying the language of literature as a model for his own use. The teaching of literature has the practical value of enabling the student to learn about the second language as well as use it* (pp. 195-196).

The confrontation of language with the students at the point where language makes a demand on them to ponder on the 'various operations of language and the need to elucidate its meaning' is a clear pointer that textbook grammar alone lacks the enabling capacity for that

which it sets out to do, for to learn grammar outside the site of meaning is to learn rules only, yet every instantiation of language is a search for meaning. In Adichie's *Americanah* (2013), for instance, we read of such expressions as: 'Sometimes not believing herself' (p. 15) and 'Her first love, her first lover, the only person with whom she had never felt the need to explain herself' (p. 17). These are the kinds of expressions that may never pass as examples of sentence in a grammar class, but which, nevertheless, have been so used in the text. And as part of a discourse, their full meaning and, indeed grammaticalness, are to be recuperated from the discourse to which they are only a part. This is practical encounter with language; it is grammar at its best, since thought and speech take place as discourse, and not as sentence.

So many scholars (e.g., Akwanya, 2005) have written that literature demonstrates classic models of language which learners of a language can draw from. Thus Akwanya (2005, p. 28) posits that 'literature is unique among the works of language to the extent that it may be studied simply as language.' It is in literature that one can see all the possible structures and linguistic patterns that a given language permits. One of the reasons for this is that to be efficient in a language, one needs to acquire much more than the knowledge of the structures of the language. Language use entails some knowledge of the social milieu, cultural values and habits of thought of the language community of the target language. Concerning this, Carpio and Carpio (2015) allude said that knowing and speaking a second language can imply change of behaviour, for instance, the modification of certain attitudes to perception of others as well as our exterior environment; and that learning another language may imply expanding our horizons and enriching ourselves. It also implies respect for cultural and linguistic diversity.

It follows, therefore, that every correct language use entails a correct attitude to and in the language. It is not probable that the learners of a second or foreign language can acquire all of these simply by the study of grammar in classrooms. If an effort must be made to imbibe such elements of the value system embedded in the target language, and which fixes its grammar and meaning, recourse should be made to authentic texts such as literature, which have the potential of exposing the reader to those elements inscribed in them. In studying literature in order to tap these communicative values inherent in them, emphasis should not only be placed on literariness, but on communicative or linguistic features. In fact, some have suggested that where the reading of literature is for the purpose of language learning, literariness should be sacrificed at the altar of discovering the linguistic features being sought for. While one may not completely agree with that, it has to be emphasised here that reading literary texts with the mind of developing some level of communicative competence has proved helpful.

Most scholars agree that for language learning to take place, there must be direct encounter with the language. O'Connor (1989) says that one must listen to English on the radio, on tapes and other records to be able to have some kind of direct access to [or encounter with] the language. Though he said this in reference to acquiring the sound patterns of language, it is indubitable that direct encounter with the language is essential for acquisition to take place. This is the argument advanced by Krashen (1982). Attentiveness to more advanced users has also been suggested. But besides all these noble practices and efforts, some exposure to the language

through the reading of literary texts stands out. In a foreword to a book, Akwanya (2010, p. viii) remarked that 'awareness of… linguistic practices [like making good compositions] can only come from sustained contact with language, especially through reading.' He argues further that close attention to the content, the clause structure, sentence patterns, word order, the variety of vocabulary, the punctuation practices, and to some other linguistic features of the material one is reading is bound to pay off when one is faced with one's own essay writing tasks. Such other structures like idiomatic collocations, phrasal verbs, vocabulary development, grammatical structures and parts of speech, reading skills, discourse strategies etc can be acquired through the reading of literature. Very importantly, the reading of dramatic literature in particular helps one to develop discourse competence, and indeed, there is no doubt that much more communicative features abound in literature, if it is critically linguistically read.

Each of the genres of literature has some peculiar behaviour necessary for mature language use we can learn from them. Apart from the example above, it is obvious that one can learn economy of words by reading poems. As Akindele and Adegbite (1999) rightly observe, the development of the four basic language skills of speaking, reading, listening and writing is enhanced by the components of the three academic components of literature – prose, drama and poetry. So all the genres of literature are resourceful in the business of helping to develop communicative competence, even if they do not do so equally.

The point that exposing the learner to the situations that enable acquisition to take place is more effective has already been made. For acquisition (which is the condition needed for active competence to develop) to take place, SLT has got to move beyond grammar, the first phase of language teaching. On this, Akwanya (2005, p. 327) says that 'language teaching in the school system is one phase of language leaning. Probably the more important phase is the non-formal aspect of language learning by direct encounter with the language.' And this encounter should ideally take place by reading literature, for literature is where one reads language in one of its purest forms.

In a second language environment like ours, another issue would definitely arise. What kind of literary material is to be read? Some have argued that literary texts produced by the second language culture can be used, while some others believe that for English to be learnt from its natural habitat, recourse should be made to literary texts published in countries like the UK and the US, where English is the first language. In whichever side of the coin one follows, what may be more important is to take seriously Otagburuagu's counsel wherein he posits that to '…achieve results, the teacher must ensure that he recommends and uses only standard works of literature in the language programme. The work of literature must contain the right samples of language which the teacher wants to teach and which is of interest to the class' (2007, p. 197). This is also the position of Kramsch (1985): that the works to be selected for use for situations like this should be such that can be used to illustrate grammatical rules and enrich reader's vocabulary and the general knowledge of the target language.

4. Conclusion

The strength of literature is its being as discourse, and as such, its capacity to activate all the powers of language to create, to designate, and even to think and represent thought to itself in meditation. This is what makes reading an encounter with language, where structure interweaves with meaning as products of thought and the reader's attempt to reach understanding is also his participation in the process of meaning making and his learning of the language as a habit of thought. Akwanya (2007b) has reported that this was the system obtainable in the 60s in Nigeria, and which had to give way to the current disintegrated curriculum. For whatever reason the old curriculum had to be abandoned, it is now clear that it does not favour English language teaching and learning in Nigeria, especially now that there is a general outcry over the falling standards of English both in public discourse and public examinations like Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) (Oji, 2001; Eyisi, 2004; Baldeh, 1990; and Akwanya, 2007b).

Until Nigeria's educational curriculum changes and returns to the practice of teaching English through literature at all levels, the lost glory may be difficult to be restored, other efforts of the stakeholders notwithstanding. Our position in this paper is an inclusive one. We agree that grammar is essential in teaching language in a second language situation like ours. But we are convinced that to teach any language as a second language without its literary and, perhaps, other authentic texts, is a patently impaired practice, limited in its capacity to impact. Matter-of-factly, the sentences usually simulated to illustrate grammatical categories in class have been found to be quite simplistic and far less rigorous than sentences picked from literary texts. One implication of this is that analysing such sentences from a discourse appears to demand, from the students, certain skills and knowledge which their mastery in analysing abstract sentences can't supply, and this borders heavily on competence.

References

Adichie, C. (2013). *Americanah*. Lagos: Kachifo.

Aitchison, J. (2003). *Teach yourself linguistics*. London: Hodder.

Akindele, F. & Wale, A. (1999). *The sociology and politics of English in Nigeria: An introduction.* Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.

Akwanya, A.N. (2005). *Language and habits of thought* (3rd edn). Enugu: New Generation Books.

Akwanya, A.N. (2007a). *Semantics and discourse: Theories of meaning and textual analysis* (Revised edn). Enugu: Acena.

Akwanya, A.N. (2007b). *English language learning in Nigeria: In search of an enabling principle*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press.

Akwanya, A.N. (2010). Foreword. In P. A. Ezema, *Strategies for writing effective essays: A guide in essay writing for students in secondary and tertiary institutions*. Enugu: Snaap Press.

Al-Darwish, S. H. & Shuqair, K. M. (2015). The use of literature in an EFL classroom. *British Journal of Education*, 3(7), 71–82.

Baldeh, F. (1990). *Better English language learning and teaching*. Nsukka: Fulladu.

Canale, M. & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1 (1), 1-47.

Carpio, K. D. & Carpio, P. D. (2015). The importance of considering students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds: Languages are friends, not enemies! *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6(3), 467-474.

Edwards, M. & Csizer, K. (2004). Developing pragmatic competence in the EFL classroom. *English Teaching Forum*, 16 – 21.

Eyisi, J. (2004). *Common errors in the use of English*. Second Edition. Onitsha: African First Publishers.

Hall, G. (2005). *Literature in language education.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Halliday, M.A.K. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar* (3rd edn). Revised by M. I. M. Matthiessen. London: Hodder.

Hodges, J. C. & Whitten, M. E. (1982). *Harbrace college handbook.* New York: Harcourt Brace.

Hymes, Dell (1972). On communicative competence. In J.B. Pride and J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics*: *Selected readings.* Harmondsworth: Pengiun.

Kachru, B. (1988). ESP and non-native varieties of English: Towards a shift in paradigm. In Dick Chamberlain and Robert J. Baumgardner (eds.), *ESP in the classroom: Practice and evaluation.* Oxford: Modern English Publications, 9-28.

Khansir, A. A. (2012). Error analysis and second language acquisition. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(5), 1027-1032.

Kramsch, C. (1985). Literary texts in the classroom: A discourse. *Modern Language Journal, 69* (4), 356-366.

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Leech, G & Svartvik, J. (2002). *A communicative grammar of English*. (3rd edn). London: Pearson.

Littlewood, W. (1985). Learning grammar. *Institute of Language in Education Journal, 1*(1), 40-48.

Mohammed, A (1995). Communicative competence acquisition in infelicitous environments: The problem with SSS English in Nigeria. In Ayo Bamgbose, Ayo Banjo and Andrew Thomas (Eds.), *New Englishes: A West African perspective*. Ibadan: Mosuro, 130-152.

O'Connor, J. D. (1989). *Better English pronunciation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oji, N. (2001). *English grammar for advanced students* (New edn). Obosi: Pacific.

Otagburuagu, E. J. (2007). Literature in language teaching. In E. J. Otagburuagu, T. Y. Obah, S. M. Onuigbo and R. I. Okorji (Eds.), *Teaching English language skills*. Nsukka: Anyi-P and Sons Printing Press, 194-198.

Paulston, B. C. (1992). *Linguistic and communicative competence: Topics in ESL*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Quirk, R. & Greenbaum, S. (2004). *A university grammar of English*. New Delhi: Pearson.

Rai, A. (2012). Use of literature in teaching English. *International Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 3(3), 71–80.

Richards, J. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rutherford, W. E. (2014). Second language grammar: learning and teaching. London: Routledge.

Shazu, R.I. (2014). Use of literature in language teaching and learning: A critical assessment. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(7), 29–35.

Shehadeh, A. (2005). Task-based language learning and teaching: Theories and applications. In Corony Edwards and Jane Willis (Eds). *Teachers exploring tasks in English Language teaching*. New York: Palgrave, 13-30.

Waldhorn, A. & Zeiger, A. (2001). *English made simple: A complete step-by-step guide to better language skills*. New York: Doubleday.

Widdowson, H. G. (1990). *Aspects of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

TOJELT Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching
A Triannual Peer-Reviewed Journal of Research in English Language Teaching
Journal Homepage: http://www.tojelt.com

Year:2016 Volume:1 Issue:2 Pages:85-100

Turkish EFL Teachers' and Administrators' Perceptions of Short Teacher Training Courses: The Case of CELTA

Mine Gulcan
Sevgi K-12 Schools
National Ministry of Education
mine.gulcan@gmail.com

Yesim Kesli Dollar
Department of English Language Education
Bahcesehir University
yesimkeslidollar@gmail.com

Recommended citation: Gulcan, M & Kesli Dollar, Y. (2016). Turkish EFL Teachers' and Administrators' Perceptions of Short Teacher Training Courses: The Case of CELTA. *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (TOJELT), 1*(2), 85-100.

Submission history
Received:
07 April 2016
Resubmitted:
03 April 2016
Final version:
04 May 2016
Corresponding author:
yesimkeslidollar@gmail.com

E-ISSN: 2458-9918

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the applicability of Certificate of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) in the Turkish context and the necessity for Turkish teachers to obtain it. For this qualitative study, the data was collected by means of three tools: A CELTA survey, semi-structured interviews with teachers and the administrators and classroom observations in order to validate the data. The findings suggest that teachers are glad to take it; they admit that it contributed to them in many ways. However, they agree that it is nearly impossible to apply all the CELTA techniques in their classrooms. From the employers' perspectives, it can be inferred that CELTA is an efficient tool for professional development,but it is not must.

Keywords: *Certificate of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA), English Language Teaching (ELT), Professional Development, Turkish Context, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)*

1. Introduction

1.1. The problem

The CELTA "is an initial qualification for people with little or no previous teaching experience" (Green, 2005, p.7). This short teacher training programme combines theory through input sessions and practice through teaching practices of each trainee (Cambridge English, 2013). Upon the successful completion of the course, newly qualified EFL teachers obtain the opportunity to teach English at private language schools around the world. Depending on the countries' regulations, these teachers can teach at various institutions, such as universities. In the Turkish context, it is not recognized as a teaching qualification for Turkish teachers to teach English at public schools, but required for native or native-like teachers to be employed at private K-12 schools or universities. The effectiveness of this certificate in classrooms and in teaching

job applications from Turkish EFL teachers / instructors is a topic to be enlightened, which inspired this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate if a CELTA course is important and effective within Turkish context.

1.2. Importance of the problem

CELTA is considered as an introductory course to teaching for people who have little or no teaching experience prior to the course. The most significant aspect of the CELTA is in fact what makes it appealing to people who consider teaching as career: it is short and practical. The duration of the course varies between 4 to 6 weeks depending on the mode of the course (full-time or part-time) and it is mostly skills-based, promoting communicative language teaching. With the latter feature, it is seen as a 'survival training' for teachers (Roberts, 1998). Without a doubt, these two are the concepts that fuel the selling power of this course and it attracts many candidates around the world. Gradually, the demand for this course is rising. In addition to the reputation of this qualification, opportunities it provides its graduates are huge: the qualification is recognized internationally, which entails that CELTA holders can work as EFL teachers around the world. Many candidates see this course as an important investment even solely for this opportunity.

1.3. Relevant scholarship

In the existing literature, one can find studies about the process of CELTA course and its students. There are very reputable studies which take CELTA students, its tutors and its syllabus in the centre (Brandt, 2007; Brandt, 2010; Borg, 2002; Roberts, 1998). However, there are only few studies which take CELTA graduates as the basis: Green's (2005) study, O'Connor's (2011) study and Sag's (2013) study will be focused in this section.

A small study conducted by Green (2005) is the pioneer in this area. The purpose of his study was to track the careers of CELTA graduates when the course was done. He tried to find out what happened to people after CELTA, what impact CELTA had on their careers and what insights their reviews could give the CELTA organizers about the design of the course. 478 CELTA graduates and students from all around the world returned the questionnaire that Green had distributed. Based only on the questionnaire, Green came up with the results that employment rate after the CELTA was very high. 83% of UK and 88% of overseas CELTA graduates found a teaching job after the course. Of these people, 69% of them worked at a private language school as their first workplace. As for the impact of the course, most of the participants agreed that the CELTA played an important role in opening career opportunities. Almost half of the participants stated that "the CELTA gave them confidence in their work" (Green, 2005, p. 10). However, non-native speakers said that CELTA on its own was not adequate to find a teaching job anywhere besides their countries, especially compared to the condition of native speakers. Finally, Green's study discussed what CELTA graduates thought about the course. Most of the comments made about the course were positive although there were comments about requesting more focus on young learners in the course, which was later introduced in the form of a separate course as Young Learner (YL) Extension to CELTA (Green, 2005).

Participants, native speakers without previous degree in teaching, in O'Connor's (2011) research shared the same concern about teaching young learners after the CELTA, as well. The aim of the study was to find out how a skills-based training like CELTA functioned in a transition into the teaching profession. The study was conducted with 80 CELTA graduates, who completed

the questionnaire about their personal, educational and professional background as well as their teaching attitudes. Then, 11 of them kept e-mail journal about their experiences in their actual classrooms and their workplaces. O'Connor (2011) reached these conclusions: CELTA graduates were struggling with the teaching context, such as teaching young learners and unfamiliar teaching environment. According to the study, having to work with children caused anxiety in great amount as the training did not equip its students with necessary skills to teach very young learners. Also, CELTA holders mentioned job security issues; they felt insecure in their workplaces, especially in a foreign country. In relation to that, culture shock was one of the problems of those who were teaching in a foreign country. Either having too high expectations or having no expectations whatsoever eventually caused traumatic teaching experiences. On the other hand, the most important possibility that O'Connor (2011) found in her research was that the CELTA course boosted confidence in newly-qualified teachers. Their skills-based training helped them survive in their first teaching job after the CELTA.

As for the main research question of O'Connor's (2011) study, which was about the relationship between the CELTA course and the CELTA holders' transition into teaching, it was proved that as long as newly-qualified teachers were in their comfort zone of context which was quite similar to the one posed by the CELTA course – motivated adult learners, small number of groups, positive teaching and learning environment-, they felt secure and reflected what had been taught at the course. However, when they were thrown into different teaching context, teachers did not know what to do. For O'Connor (2011), this could be attributed to a lack of pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge of teachers.

The only study that was conducted with Turkish EFL teachers who took CELTA belongs to Sag (2013). She took them as subjects to discuss the discrepancies between native English speaker teacher (NEST) and non-native English speaker teacher (NNEST). She studied "the self-perceptions of non-native English speaker teachers on a CELTA in Turkey" (Sag, 2013) as well as how these teachers' experiences of CELTA influenced their self-perception in a NEST and NNEST-mixed teaching atmosphere and if they experienced any strengths and shortcomings of being a non-native EFL teacher. The participants were 4 Turkish EFL teachers who took CELTA in Turkey and worked as EFL teachers in Turkey. This qualitative research was based on the data collected via Facebook messaging. According to the results she obtained by semi-structured interview responses, CELTA graduates were content to be teachers in general, but they complained being less privileged than native English speaker EFL teachers in terms of salary, level of qualification and job opportunities. The participants agreed that collaborative learning and teaching helped them establish self-confidence and eliminate a possible disadvantage of being a non-native speaker EFL teacher.

Other than these studies, Borg (2002) partially dealt with CELTA holder teachers experiences after the course. The study focused on 6 CELTA students and then newly qualified teachers depicting their beliefs, experiences and reflections in and after the course. In the post-course questionnaires and e-mails, among 3 participants, 2 of them admitted that they needed more teaching practice in the course. They both were content about the programme and techniques they learnt.

1.4. Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate if a CELTA course is important and effective within the Turkish context. The following questions have been formed for this research:

1. Is CELTA applicable to the Turkish context? If so, how do TESOL teachers apply CELTA techniques in their own classrooms?

2. Do EFL teachers notice any personal or contextual change in themselves after taking CELTA?

3. What is the employers' perspective about CELTA when hiring an EFL teacher?.

2. Method

This study aimed to find out about the efficiency of the CELTA in the Turkish private K-12 school and university preparation year context. For this purpose, the qualitative data from teacher interviews and observations were evaluated along with the data from a teacher questionnaire to come up with the best answers to the research questions. As a result of searching for the most comprehensive answers, a qualitative case study research design was adopted.

Qualitative research "provides contextual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue", according to Mack et al. (2005, p. 1). A more in-depth analysis of a specific phenomenon can be possible with qualitative data. Two of the qualitative research methods were applied in this study: in-depth interviews and participation observation. Audio recording and field notes were the forms that generated the qualitative data in this research. The CELTA questionnaire was used to reinforce the data achieved by two means of data collection instruments. For Anderson (as cited in Noor, 2008), case studies deal with how and why things happen, explaining the differences between "contextual plans and what is really occurring". This study tried to investigate the differences between the teaching practices in CELTA and teaching practices at the CELTA holders' real classrooms. Also, Anderson (as cited in Noor, 2008) defines case studies as methods to explain a particular issue, rather than the functioning of a whole organization. As for this study, the scope of it was restricted to Turkish CELTA holders, specifically Turkish CELTA graduates who worked at private K-12 schools and universities. In terms of both criteria, this research can be defined as a qualitative case study.

This study involved methodological triangulation in that it sought correspondence among the results from three different instruments, particularly from the last section of the survey and classroom observation. Also, the CELTA questionnaire was followed by semi-structured teacher interviews so that the flexible form of the interview could unfold more information where the rigid structured questionnaires could not. Furthermore, classroom observation was expected to illustrate points that interviewees were not willing to share or that were underestimated by the study or the factors that were outside of the scope of this study. Therefore, each method inevitably overlapped but without even one, an accurate picture of the situation could not have been reached.

2.1. Setting

This study took place in the natural settings of the participants. The survey was distributed and completed online. For the next steps of the study, the researcher visited the teachers' and administrators' institutions, which included both K-12 schools and schools of languages at the universities. As for the observation stage, the researcher attended the actual classes of the participant teachers in their workplace. Hence, the researcher had the chances to observe 5th grade classes in 2 different private K-12 schools. Also, in one private university, B1 and B2 level English classes with young adults were observed. The student groupings were based on The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and internal examinations.

2.2. Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 41 Turkish teachers and instructors at Turkish schools and universities who attended a CELTA course in or out of Turkey. No gender and age restrictions were sought. In order to find as many participants as possible, the link of the online questionnaire was emailed to all the CELTA course providers in Turkey. As an example of snowball sampling, the participants of the questionnaire shared the link with their friends so that the number of participants increased. As for the participant sampling for interview and observation procedure, purposive sampling method was followed. Purposive sampling is defined as "grouping participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question" (Mack et al., 2005, p. 5). Sample size mostly depended on time and resources available and suitability of participants' schedules.

First two parts of the teacher survey (CELTA questionnaire) focused on personal and occupational information about participant EFL teachers. From the data achieved, it can be stated that more than 75% of the CELTA graduates were female (31 people in number) and 25% were male. More than 90% of them were between ages 25 and 44. The year that they took the CELTA course varied between 2005 and 2014. That proves this course has been and is still increasing its popularity. Participants completed their course in various cities in and out of Turkey. 63% of them completed the course on full-time mode whereas 37% completed on part-time mode.

When examining educational background of the participants, it was seen that most of them (70.73%) were holding an undergraduate diploma when they took the CELTA course. 24.39% also pursued a postgraduate degree prior to the course. That is to say, a huge majority of the subjects gained a higher education degree at the time of starting their CELTA course. Of 36 participants, the majority studied English Language and Literature (11 people). Next highly studied degree was English Language Teaching by 9 people followed by American Culture and Literature with 6 people. When asked if the participants were involved in any kinds of studies after completing CELTA, 18 of them (38.29%) stated they did not take any course after the CELTA. The majority of the participants by 85.36% were not taking any teacher training courses at the moment whereas 14.63% of the participants were still enrolled in a teacher training programme.

As for employment histories of the participants, it was indicated that 30 of 41 people were already employed in the teaching sector at the time of completing the course. Of 37 participants who gave away details of their current employment, it can be understood that all of them are working in Turkey. 21 of them were working as instructors at schools of languages at Turkish universities. 15 participants were working as EFL teachers; 11 of them were working at private or public K-12 schools and 4 of them were working at language schools. One of the other sector employees stated that she was working as a specialist in foreign affairs office.

5 of the participants who completed the survey and agreed to answer in-depth questions about this issue were interviewed.

As for the observation, of these interview participants were observed as one of them was not teaching any classes during the class observation stage of the study.

2.3. Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

In order to generate a general profile of the CELTA graduate teachers, a survey was conducted. The survey used was adapted by O'Connor (2011) for teachers. O'Connor (2011) explained the aim of this survey as "to gather data that will provide a broader picture of the impact of initial skills-based training in English language teaching" (p. 123-124). The reason why this survey was used in this study was because the aim of the study and what the survey was expected to measure overlapped with those aspects of O'Connor's (2011) study. Moreover, this survey was believed to present some solid and important quantitative data about CELTA holders.

The survey consisted of four parts: The first part of the survey had some personal questions about the participants, such as gender, age range and details of the CELTA course they had attended. The second part of the survey was about the educational background of the participants. Part Three was to discover employment details of the participants. The final part, Part Four, was where the participants were asked to rate some statements about teaching by taking their own beliefs and thoughts into consideration. This part of the survey was of a Likert-type which enabled the participants to choose the most suitable option in response to the specific statements. Those statements were about their general attitude towards the CELTA course, its methodology and techniques. Also, there were statements about self-esteem which required the participants to compare themselves as teachers before and after the CELTA course.

Based on the survey questions, 13 open ended questions were prepared for the semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the participant EFL teachers who completed the CELTA questionnaire. These open-ended questions enabled teachers who are currently working as EFL teachers to make judgements about themselves after completing their CELTA courses. Also, they were required to make comments on the CELTA programme to depict the parts of this training which seem to work meet the requirements of the Turkish context and those which do not work (See Appendix A for interview questions).

Another set of 13 semi-structured interview questions were prepared for the administrators to answer (See Appendix B). These questions would reveal what the administrators who hired EFL teachers actually thought about the CELTA and its outcome.

As the final part of the data collection procedure, classroom observations were held, two whole class hour per participant teacher, in total 10 hours. The classroom observation form (See appendix C) was created to fully cover the aim of this study. During the observation, class management, adopted language approach and a variety of CELTA techniques, such as use of concept checking questions, feedback and error correction were under focus. In order to leave adequate space for comments, field notes type of observation procedure was adopted. Richards and Farrell (2005) describe field notes as "brief descriptions in note form of key events that occurred throughout the lesson" (p.89). This kind of observation procedure gives the observer the flexibility to focus and comment on various points. In particular, teachers who answered the open ended interview questions about their practices of CELTA techniques were observed to see if their answers were consistent.

2.4. Data Analysis Procedure

For this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were achieved. The quantitative data was supplementary in that it would help to explain the case from the qualitative research framework.

After the administration of the survey, the participants' ratings for the multiple-choice questions were added up and the mean scores were calculated. For the open-ended questions in the survey, the most recurring items (in the form of ideas or phrases) were detected and categorized. As for the qualitative data obtained from interviews, all the audio records were transcribed and translated into English. In the transcripts, the most recurring words /sentences were selected to be grouped into thematic units. Then, this data were interpreted through pattern coding based on the framework suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (2003). After the initial step of open coding, with the careful examination of existing data, the most recurring patterns (especially the ones that each participant mentioned) were identified as subthemes. Taking these themes into consideration, categorization of the data was followed. Main categories were arranged according to their level of relevance to the research questions whereas subcategories were elaborated on to support the main findings. Similarly, field notes taken during observations were organized and grouped. All observation notes were compared with the other collected data as well as themes and finally interpreted.

3. Results

3.1. Findings about the Applicability and Practicability of CELTA in the Turkish Context

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as underpinned by the CELTA course according to O'Connor (2011), student participation, pair and group activities are important elements for participant teachers. Approximately 63% of the teachers and instructors think that CLT is very much important in their classrooms. Being one of the best ways to practice CLT, pair and group work activities are equally important for them. This is confirmed by the classroom observation made. During those observations, the teachers tried to practice these activities as much as they could whether in the form of letting students check their answers in pairs or grouping students to perform a task such as completing a worksheet.

However, participant teachers acknowledged difficulties of practicing pair and group works within the classroom. One of the difficulties that half of the teachers and instructors that were interviewed stated repetitively was that Turkish student profile was not suitable for this kind of communicative activities. They told that when they tried to apply a pair or group work, students thought that they could talk to their peers freely without dealing too much with the activity. The reason that participants came up with was that Turkish education system does not give students much opportunity to involve in pair or group work to complete a task. The exam-based system forces students to sit down, listen to the teacher and complete written activities or tests individually. About this issue, one of the instructors made the following comment:

> Turkish students come to university having studied and passed the exam [the university entrance exam] and prior to the university, they have already been accustomed to being passive listeners during all the courses. When communicative activities are adopted, students regard the situation as an authority gap, which leads to problems in classroom management. (EFL I2)

Another point mentioned in the interviews was the difficulty of monitoring students during pair and group work activities because of large class sizes. Generally, interviewees revealed that CELTA techniques could be practiced in the lesson when they were appropriate. The point that they all agreed was that practicing such techniques mostly depended on many

variables, such as student profile, group profile, motivation, the attitude of students towards the lesson and lesson objectives.

As for the techniques to be elaborated on in the questionnaire, lesson planning and delivering a lesson in stages constituted two of the main objectives of the CELTA course, which were assessed by their outcomes at teaching practices. More than half of the teachers (by 58.53%) agreed that their lessons generally followed stages, such as presentation, practice, and produce.. In the classrooms observed, either there was no warm-up or no time left for freer practice activities at the end of lessons.

Although EFL teachers concurred that they used concept checking questions to explain language points in the CELTA questionnaire (53.65%), 3 of the teachers interviewed and observed hardly ever applied concept checking questions (CCQs) and instruction checking questions (ICQs). Apart from the necessity of preparing these questions before lessons which causes extra work for EFL teachers, both CCQs and ICQs were seen as threats to students' presence in the classroom by the instructors. Below are the comments made by the participants:

> CCQs and especially ICQs pretend students are idiots. Activities are always the same. Students already know what to do. (EFL Instructor 1, personal communication, February 13, 2015)
>
> CCQs and ICQs are ridiculous. They are threats to 'coolness' of students. No matter how well you explain an activity or a language point, a student is going to ask their friends who sit next to them [in their native language]. (EFL Instructor 2, personal communication, February 13, 2015)

In the classroom observations, few incidents of concept checking questions were seen. However, they did not seem to work for students. Students kept asking the person next to them what the teacher was talking about, inevitably in Turkish.

Approximately 51% of the teachers believed that they provided accurate and appropriate models of language in their classrooms. 24 EFL teachers also strongly agreed that they were able to clarify forms of language to their students. These statements were confirmed in classroom observation sessions.

The answers about teaching word and sentence stress, intonation and pronunciation were diverse. 14 EFL teachers indicated that teaching word and sentence stress as well as intonation were important in their lessons. However, results were not significant; there were also EFL teachers and instructors who thought that these aspects of language were not of importance.

The CELTA course covers effective use of course books; giving teacher trainees' self-confidence and methods about adapting a course book according to learner needs and desires. In response to the related question in the survey, majority of the participants (41.46%) agreed that they used various course books confidently in their English lessons. 39% of them strongly agreed that statement whereas 17% of them did not have an exact idea about it. In the observed lessons of EFL teachers, no proper course book was used: either worksheets or learner packs were utilized.

As for another technique to focus on, error correction is an essential part of input sessions and teaching practice in this short teacher training course. In the teacher survey, both spoken and written error correction were addressed. The same number of participants (22) agreed that they could identify spoken and written errors and provide students with remedial activities to correct these errors. However, more participants (18) were confident that they could identify written errors and treat them than participants who could identify spoken errors (14). During the whole observation period, various techniques of error correction were seen.

When asked about the techniques that they wished to learn, teachers' answers differed widely. Although they were satisfied with the content of the course overall, they admitted they wished to learn about following topics more: teaching grammar, testing and assessment, teaching academic writing and classroom management. Another topic that was expected to be covered was teaching young learners. Though young learner extension to CELTA was brought up, a teacher remarked that in order to take that extension they had to pass CELTA and added that it did not make sense why a teacher wanting to teach young learners would be obliged to take a course that was meant to be for adult learners initially.

Participant teachers acknowledged that the CELTA course had both strong and weak spots. They expressed their satisfaction in terms of encouraging team work and collegiality among teacher trainees in the course. Experienced teachers said that with the help of the course, they were able to understand the notion behind the techniques they were already practicing. Two of the EFL teachers explained that supportive, inspiring and experienced tutors were one of the strong points of the course. Having both theoretical and practical knowledge within the same course was the strength of CELTA. On the other hand, teachers discussed the points that made them suffer during the course. Foremost of them was the intensity of it, which caused a huge pressure upon the teacher trainees. Some of the teachers who were interviewed took the course on part-time mode; still all of them wished that the course took longer but less intensive.

Considering the applicability and practicability of the CELTA course, participant teachers seemed to have concerns about it. Each teacher focused on different aspects of the Turkish context and CELTA methodology. One of the points that interviewees mentioned was the workload of teachers. In CELTA course, each lesson has to be planned and delivered carefully. However, in a K-12 school, with 24 up to 30 hours of teaching per week, it is impossible to plan each lesson, which eventually leads teachers to stick to the course book only. Even if teachers want to include more activities that will address students' needs, they can hardly ever do extra-curricular activities due to time limitations.

Another point made was the assessment of students. One of the participant teachers drew attention to this issue by highlighting the discrepancies between CELTA and Turkish education system. In the CELTA course, the assessment is based on the process, but in Turkey, especially in K-12 schools, students are assessed based on the scores in exams. When students finally reach university level, they have already got used to exam-based teaching in their schools and they want to carry on the way they were taught before. Therefore, as the participant instructors complained, these Turkish students whose goal is to score high in any upcoming exam do not enjoy or understand the way that CELTA is imposing.

Also, teachers mentioned that in the CELTA course, a perfect classroom environment was presented. In their teaching practices at the course, their classrooms consisted of maximum 15 people, all motivated and aware of their purpose to learn English. However, in K-12 and schools of language at universities, student profile rarely matches the description above. Classrooms have more students in number, not very motivated and more apt to speak in L1. In these circumstances, teachers confessed that it was very difficult to apply communicative techniques in that it was harder to monitor, motivate and control students.

Considering all the conflicts above, it is possible to claim that teachers apply techniques from the course, which was also agreed by the participants, as approximately 61% of them concurs the teaching strategies suggested on their CELTA course were useful in their English

classrooms, but adopting the whole structure of the course was very difficult, infering from the teacher interviews.

3.2. Findings about the Possible Changes in EFL Teachers after CELTA from Their Perspectives

Approximately 46% of the teachers marked the statement that their CELTA course played a very big role in helping them to be an efficient teacher whereas almost 49% of them stated that the course helped them a fair amount. To sum up, 39 of 41 participants think their CELTA course has helped them to be a more efficient teacher after all. Likewise, nearly 53% of the participants shared the thought that their CELTA course prepared them for their first teaching post after the course fairly well and 45% of them thought it prepared them fully. Out of 41 participants, there was only 1 participant who thought their CELTA course did not prepare them for the next teaching post at all.

All of the teachers that were interviewed agreed that the CELTA course boosted their self-confidence as a teacher. In the face-to-face interviews, teachers were asked if the CELTA course helped them overcome the difficulties that they encountered. Three of the teachers stated that it helped them while dealing with some difficulties, causing them to abandon their habits. For instance, one teacher stated that she reduced teacher talking time (TTT) and avoided unnecessary repetitions. One teacher admitted CELTA helped her pay attention to time management and lesson planning. Another teacher stated this course helped her in adapting herself to new teaching contexts. It took less time for her to get used to different teaching methods (she used to teach English using ESL course books, but at the time she was teaching English using English novels). Besides, she acknowledged that she became more confident and comfortable in lesson planning and material preparation. It is obvious that through the provision of theoretical and practical knowledge, CELTA course is useful in reflecting what EFL teachers' insufficiencies are.

Considering the language teaching method adopted, teachers were required to answer the question about comparing their teaching styles before and after the CELTA course. All of them agreed that more communicative activities were now included.

Academically, teachers brought up applying some techniques they learnt in the course that they had not even heard of. As for the social changes in teachers, all of the interviewees agreed on the idea that this course made them more collaborative as it encouraged team work. They liked that they could see and learn from the experiences of other teachers' with different backgrounds. Teachers were also asked about their previous and current employers' approaches to them and whether they felt privileged as CELTA graduates. Responses to this question were various. Depending on the institutions they were at, some of the participants received a raise or promotion, but some did not. On the other hand, the conditions of instructors at the private foundation university are different. They admitted that the certificate helped them before taking the job and while working as an EFL instructor. Apparently, at the university level, teacher training certificates like CELTA is more appreciated and supported financially and professionally. However, at K-12 level schools, either teacher training certificates like CELTA are not known or they are not valued.

It is worth mentioning that the personal and contextual changes that EFL teachers and instructors noticed before and after the course depended on their declarations. There is no evidence of these participants' beliefs and tendencies before the CELTA course; therefore, an objective comparison between their pre-CELTA and post-CELTA attitudes cannot be made.

Briefly, teachers noticed changes in themselves in many aspects. It boosted their self-confidence, helped them see and treat their errors in teaching, enabled them to learn more about practical strategies and find out more about other teachers' experiences, all of which seemed to make positive contributions to these teachers.

3.3. Findings about the Necessity of Taking CELTA from Employers' Perspectives

Discussing the impact of CELTA course on EFL teachers and how short teacher training courses like CELTA contributed to teaching styles of teachers, participants recognized their contributions in many ways emphasizing the nature of the course which brought theory and practice together. Also, they admitted that as the first step of the teaching profession, it provided EFL teacher candidates an insight into teaching. This discussion brought about some criticism, as well. The common concern among the administrators was that EFL teachers should not only depend on what were taught in the course.

Participant administrators were asked about benefits and advantages of the short teacher training courses, especially of CELTA. Each participant pointed to a different benefit of the course such as receiving input, opportunity to practice teaching, improving awareness, developing lesson planning skills and adopting various activities according to learners' profiles. Apart from the benefits of these courses, possible negative effects of them were also discussed. One commonly mentioned problem was that CELTA created an illusion about teaching skills of teacher candidates and whoever completed it assumed that they have became EFL teachers. Some of the participants admitted that they had the chance to observe teachers during their regular teaching hours. They were asked if teachers with CELTA certificate could reflect its methodology to their actual lessons, if so, to what extent they were observable. All of the participants who observed those teachers agreed that those teachers' lessons included some features of the CELTA training.

Building on these points, administrators were asked to compare EFL teachers with CELTA certificate and EFL teachers without it. All of the responses were in favour of CELTA-holding EFL teachers. Their superiority relates to a variety of features. Some of them were explained by the participants as such: CELTA holders were more creative, better at lesson planning and staging, adapting suitable activities to their classes, better at understanding learners' needs, probably the foremost of all was that they had more awareness and better insight into teaching. Participant administrators were required to evaluate the contribution of CELTA holding teachers to their institutions. Although this contribution was considered as results of individual efforts of these teachers, changing the perception of English language learning in learners' minds could be regarded as the most important of them.

The participant directors made comments on the CELTA courses in Turkey and their functionality in the Turkish context. First of all, the reason why the CELTA course became so popular in Turkey and among Turkish EFL teachers and teacher trainees was asked. Each participant explained in different ways. Head of the foreign languages department at private K-12 schools think that CELTA is useful for professional development and they prefer teachers with CELTA. This is the reason why teacher candidates are eager to take it. Also, they provide easy access to teaching. It was mentioned that the number of CELTA holder teachers has been increasing; accordingly the perception of CELTA by EFL teachers and teacher trainees is

changing as well. It was stated that CELTA was converted into a key element for EFL teachers in order to be employed at school with better opportunities and benefits.

Lastly, participants were requested to share their opinions about the position of CELTA in the Turkish context. This question also shed light on the topic about the applicability of CELTA methodology in Turkish CELTA graduates' classrooms. Even if CELTA was not addressed in the legislation of MEB (Ministry of National Education) it brought unity in teaching because it had international recognition, as one of the participants explained. As another director claimed, CELTA was like a "free pass" for teachers. She added that when teachers had this certificate, the doors of many schools were open to them regardless of their being native or non-native teachers.

4. Discussion

As a result of carefully examined data, it can be said that the applicability of CELTA methodology is quite limited. EFL teachers were able to practice some of the techniques that they learnt at their course; however, they admitted that applying all the techniques in their own classrooms was almost impossible. One of the reasons why this seemed impossible to the teachers was that the context was completely different from the one at the CELTA course.

Considering all the findings, EFL teachers / instructors in this study encountered many obstacles in their actual classrooms that were not an issue at their CELTA courses. Some of these issues were motivating reluctant students, dealing with a high number of students in one classroom, administrative duties to complete, the obligation to assess students and preparing them for big scale exams. Besides, not many of them taught adults after the course, there were many teachers who teach young learners and young adults after CELTA, which made the transition process even harder. The change of context was discussed by O'Connor (2011) as well. She claims that when newly qualified teachers encounter different teaching situations, such as teaching young learners, they "revert to using teaching models from their own school days" (p. 253). This was also mentioned by one of the directors by indicating that when the classroom at the CELTA course and their own classrooms where they work did not match, teachers had a tendency to leave what they learnt at the course and start to teach like how their own EFL teachers taught at their high school.

Because there is no previous research on the applicability and suitability of CELTA course in the Turkish context similar to this one, the results of this study cannot be compared or contrasted with any research conducted in Turkey. Instead, practice of Communicative Language Teaching, the framework of CELTA, in Turkish K12 schools was investigated by several researchers. For instance, Bal (2006) came to the conclusion that due to excessive lesson burden and the setting at their schools, EFL teachers faced some constraints in the application of CLT. One of them was that due to large class sizes, teachers had to deal with classroom management issues. Likewise, in Ozsevik's (2010) study, constraints to use CLT in Turkish classes were elaborated on based on participant teachers' statements. The results achieved were categorized under four titles: Teacher-related difficulties, student-related difficulties, difficulties and challenges related to the educational system and CLT-related difficulties. This study and Ozsevik's study showed resemblance in that both studies reached the same conclusion that due to many constraints led by large class sizes along with the exam-focused student profile, the practice of CELTA methodology, or rather CLT, was extremely limited.

It seems that as long as the threat of an exam at the end of a learning process is there, students' common goal is to score high in that particular exam and aim of learning English to communicate is ignored. The assessment system should be revised in order to get students fully

perform in English. Otherwise, adapting CELTA methodology does not go beyond practicing a couple of techniques in the EFL classrooms. Additionally, it was observed that EFL teachers / instructors felt self-confident right after CELTA. The course boosted their self-confidence in that surviving such an intensive programme and being able to put theory into practice in the course made them satisfied with the training.

As for the personal change, all the participants emphasized how CELTA strengthened team work. The sense of collegiality and bond among fellow EFL teachers were established thanks to this course. This was also expressed by the participants of O'Connor's (2011) study. They emphasized the positive atmosphere in the workplace and collaboration between colleagues eased the jobs of these EFL teachers, especially in their transition period. She indicates that support from workplace and colleagues help teachers to develop socially and professionally. Unlike Sag's (2013) study, the participant teachers stated having a full confidence in themselves about the language competence. Sag evaluated this handicap as a factor to decrease self-confidence as the focus of Sag's study where NNESTs might have felt that way under the influence of the inevitable comparison they were most probably making between themselves and the NESTs, but the participants in this study expressed confidence related to language competence, which was proved by the teacher survey.

Finally, not only EFL teachers but also administrators found CELTA useful. They agreed that EFL teachers should not rely only on what they were taught at the course. CELTA is a good step to start, but this process is never ending. There is no doubt that CELTA contributes to prospective or current EFL teachers a great deal, yet this should be followed by more in-depth training or education in their weaknesses in teaching, or in response to the need they fell to improve themselves professionally.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the general perception of CELTA in Turkey, particularly the applicability and suitability in the Turkish context, how this short teacher training course influence EFL teachers after completing it and if CELTA has any impact on employers in an EFL teaching job application. That is to say, it provides a general image of CELTA journey in Turkey from its graduates and from experts in ELT. The analysis of all the data demonstrates that CELTA is a favourable starting-point in ELT and is regarded as an advantage by employers and its holders. However, the CELTA graduates cannot fully practice CELTA methodology in their classrooms due to some institutional and curricular constraints. These constraints either derive from the policies of institutions, such as too much lesson burden of EFL teachers, which make the preparation and application harder; tight syllabi so that EFL teachers / instructors should make an extra effort to keep up with daily schedule and omit communicative activities that they were taught at CELTA; or more generally, from the policies of the Turkish education system. It sets the goals based on the success at exams. The achievements of students in English are measured with written exams, which enable students to shift their focus on how to score high at these exams rather than how to communicate successfully.

In short, general perception of CELTA in Turkey is positive from EFL teachers' and instructors' points of view as well as administrators' points of view. However, there is a dilemma in that EFL teachers / instructors value this certificate programme more than the administrators. Teachers believe that CELTA helps them find and secure a job, but administrators regard it as a

plus in terms of professional development. In this respect, this study demonstrates a divergence of the perception of CELTA from two sides of education.

References

Bal, S. M. (2006). *Teachers' perceptions of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Turkish EFL setting theory vs. practices* (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from http://library.cu.edu.tr/tezler/6326.pdf

Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen., SK (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods*. MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Borg, M. (2002). *Learning to teach: CELTA trainees' beliefs, experiences and reflections* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Leeds). Retrieved from http://core.kmi.open.ac.uk/download/pdf/43296.pdf

Brandt, C. (2007). Allowing for learning: a critical issue for TESOL certificate course tutors. *English Language Teacher Education and Development, 10*, 1-9.

Brandt, C. (2010). Competition and collaboration in initial teacher education in TESOL: A case of a classic double bind. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly Special Issue on English Language Teacher Education and Development September 2010, 12*(3), 8-39.

Cambridge English. (2010). *CELTA syllabus* [online]. Retrieved January 7, 2015 from http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/21816-celta-syllbus.pdf

Cambridge English (2013). *CELTA brochure* [online]. Retrieved December 3, 2014 from http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/celta-brochure-2013.pdf

Green, T. (2005). Staying in touch: Tracking the career paths of CELTA graduates. *Research Notes, 19*, 7-11.

Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K. M., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative research methods: a data collector's field guide* (p. 1-12). United States: Family Health International.

Noor, K. B. (2008). Case study: A strategic research methodology. *American journal of applied sciences, 5*(11), 1602-1604.

O'Connor, B. (2011). *Life after CELTA: a precarious transition into English language teaching* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30043936/oconnor-thesis-2011.pdf

Ozsevik, Z. (2010). *The use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): Turkish EFL teachers' perceived difficulties in implementing CLT in Turkey* (MA Thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) Retrieved from https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/16211/Ozsevik_Zekariya.pdf

Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Roberts, J. (1998). *Language teacher education*. London: Arnold.

Sag, Z. (2013). *An exploration of the self-perception of NNEST participants on a CELTA course in Turkey* (MA Thesis,University of Brighton). Retrieved from https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/TezGoster?key=7d53ed97e31a8bd371e73aaa5a809ca2ecc06bf66bdcd36bff36a4d4cf8fc02cf1cfc25a4a2360ec5613dd79a4d0aa82

Appendix A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH CELTA HOLDER EFL TEACHERS

1. After your CELTA course, did you feel supported by the institution that you took CELTA at and/or by the institution that you worked at?
2. Did your CELTA course help you to overcome difficulties that you have encountered after this training? How?
3. Could you describe how confident you felt about class management after CELTA?
4. Could you explain what language approach you adopted in your classroom before and after CELTA course?
5. Did your CELTA training make you a more confident teacher generally?
6. Did you find any dilemmas and / or similarities between the mentalities of British context and Turkish context?
7. Considering a random lesson that you have taught, to what extent could you apply CELTA techniques?
8. What kind of changes did you see in yourself as a teacher before and after CELTA course? Please explain professionally, socially and academically.
9. From the perspective of a CELTA graduate, what are the strengths and shortcomings of this short teacher training course?
10. How were your previous and current employers' approaches to you as a CELTA graduate? Do you think this certificate put you ahead of other teachers?
11. What was the reason of taking a CELTA course? Did it fulfil any of your expectations?
12. Are there any topics that you wish to have been taught at the CELTA course?
13. Are there any aspects of the CELTA course that you do not think useful while teaching?

Appendix B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH ADMINISTRATORS

1. How many CELTA graduates have you hired until now? How many of them are still working at your institution?
2. How do you think short teacher training courses like CELTA contribute to teaching styles of teachers?
3. What sorts of benefits and threats do short teacher training courses provide for teachers?
4. Does your institution provide any in-service teacher training courses for its teachers?
5. What are your thoughts on the place of CELTA in the Turkish context?
6. Why do you think CELTA courses became popular amongst teachers and institutions?
7. Describe a perfect CV for the teaching position in your institution.
8. Do the passing grades of CELTA graduates (Pass, Merit or Distinction) matter to you?
9. What are the discrepancies between a CELTA graduate and a non-CELTA graduate?
10. How do teachers who did CELTA contribute to your institution?
11. Is a CELTA certificate preferable when hiring teachers? Why?
12. Do you have a chance to observe teachers who did CELTA in their classrooms? If you did, how do they practice CELTA methodology?
13. How close is the mentality of CELTA to your institution's teaching policy?

Appendix C
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM

Instructor:	**Date:**
Course No.:	**Time:**
Course Title:	**Course Level:**
Reviewer:	**No. Students:**

PART 1
Classroom Management

Part 2
Language Approach

- **Pair and Group Work**
- **Student Participation**
- **Lesson Planning, Stages and Material Preparation**
- **Use of Concept Check Questions and Instruction Check Questions**
- **Teacher's Model of Language**
- **Focus on Pronunciation and Intonation**
- **Variety of Activities**
- **Use of Coursebook**
- **Feedback and Error Correction**

Part 3
Other Notes

TOJELT Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching
A Triannual Peer-Reviewed Journal of Research in English Language Teaching
Journal Homepage: http://www.tojelt.com

Year:2016 Volume:1 Issue:2 Pages:101-104

Comprehensible Input as Sociocognitive Alignment: A Response to Cho and Krashen (2016)

Setiono Sugiharto
Catholic University, Jakarta, Indonesia
Faculty of Education and Language, Atma Jaya
setiono.sugiharto@gmail.com

Recommended citation: Sugiharto, S. (2016). Comprehensible input as sociocognitive alignment: A response to Cho and Krashen (2016). *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (TOJELT), 1*(2), 101-104.

Submission history
Received:
26 April 2016
Final version:
02 May 2016
Corresponding author:
setiono.sugiharto@gmail.com

E-ISSN: 2458-9918

Abstract: A plethora of studies on how language is acquired through comprehensible inputs has generated valuable insights into language acquisition theory. Many of these studies have confirmed that humans acquire language in one way – through reading and listening. In particular, a recent study by Cho and Krashen (2016) published in this journal further confirms that the exposure to input (i.e. in the form of pleasure reading) is beneficial for attaining advanced level of language development both in a foreign and second language. While insightful, this study is highly descriptive and lacks explanatory power. In addition, it treats successful acquisition as a result of the sole contribution of mind; that is, acquisition is seen as internally driven and resides in intellectu. Thus, we need to go beyond this description. In this article, I will provide more explanation to their descriptive exposition by showing that the acquisition of both first and second language is a gradual result of "sociocognitive alignment' (Atkinson, 2010). This is to say that multifaceted sociomaterial aspects, other than cognition, play a key role and immensely contributes to successful acquisition of language.

Keywords:*comprehensible inputs, acquisition, language development, sociocognitive alignment*

1. Introduction

In second language acquisition scholarship, Krashen's Inputs Hypothesis or the the Comprehension Hypothesis (henceforth CH), as he now prefers to call it (Krashen, 2004) is ineluctably a hypothesis that has withstood the test of time, despite harsh criticisms leveled against it. It is no exaggeration to say that current literature in second language has borrowed insights generated from Krashen's erudite works. CH, as Krashen (2004) argues, constitutes "the core of current language acquisition theory" (p. 21).

A recent study by Cho and Krashen (2016) published in this journal is clearly an expansion of empirical supports for this hypothesis. Presenting six case histories of second language acquirers hailing from different linguistic and culutral backgorunds, they concluded that long term pleasure reading and self-selected voluntary reading is the strongest predictor of success for achieving advanced level in a second and foreign language, thus buttressing Krashen's (2004) core hypothesis, the Comprehension Hypothesis.

In this article, I will argue that Cho and Krashen's (2016) study, while revealing, is too descriptive and lacks explanatory power in accounting for the success of language acquirers' efforts to advance their language ability. More centrally, their approach to describing the case histories of the six language acquirers in their study is implicitly cognitivist in nature, seemingly disregarding the role of sociomaterial aspects that also contributes to language acquisition. Ironically, while Cho and Krashen credits self-selected books and library as central to ensuring acquisition to take place, their description stops short in further exploring the relationship between these sociomaterial components and language development.

2. Comprehensible Inputsas Sociocognitive Alignment

Cho and Krashen's (2016) recent study has helped throw light into what we need to do to accelerate language acquirers' efforts to boost their language development in both their second and foreign language. Based on the six case histories they reported, they argue that long-term pleasure reading is vital for language improvement if the following conditions are to be met: (1) reading experiences in the form of sustained silent reading class, reading a book in English, learning about the power of reading in an academic class, (2) plenty of access to books, (3) time and place to read regularly, (4) self-selected and narrow reading, and (5) no tests exercises, and no rewards for reading.

Cho and Krashen did mention the role of sociomaterial aspects such as prior reading experiences, books and library as central to the advancement of language development. It is these aspects that, they claim, can establish "a long term reading habit" (p. 7), a claim consistent with the CH. Nevertheless, the fact that these sociomaterial environments contribute to language development (i.e. in developing a long-term pleasure reading habit) remains underexplored in their article.

Using Atkinson's (2010) basic principles of sociocognition especially those of adaptivity and alignment, I shall provide accounts as to why the language acquires reported in Cho and Krashen's study succeeded in maintaining their pleasure reading habit, and hence improving their language development.

First, the six language acquirers in Cho and Krashen's study have an adept skill in coordinating and integrating sociomaterials in their surroundings. They can adaptively vary their prior reading experiences, reading habits, efforts to get easy access to books and library, and their understanding about the power of reading in accordance to their own expectations of success in acquiring their second language. This suggests that they have developed the "adaptive functionality" (Atkinson, 2010). They are able to relate, integrate, articulate, and contextualize their surrounding vicinity (e.g. by self-selecting books that fit their interest), and internalize them to accomplish their goal –to be an autonomous language acquirers – the eventual goal of language acquisition (Krashen, 2004). Yet as Cho and Krashen are fully engrossed in *acquisition* (It is well-established in the SLA literature that Krashen consistently distinguishes acquisition from learning) at the expanse of *learning*, they greatly miss the contributions of the latter to language acquisition processes.

However, if we shift our perspectives from the notion of learning as merely a cognitive activity taking place in individual student (i.e. how learning a certain grammatical element can

help students acquire it?), to the notion of learning as relational, experiential, participatory and as always embedded in a social action (Atkinson, 2010), then we begin to realize the merits of *learning* in foreign and second language acquisition processes.

Secondly, these language acquirers did not feel complacent with their current literacy ability, but endeavored to continuously align and coordinate their competence to ecosocial elements they encounter in their daily life. Under this alignment principle, it is plausible that the rapid development of the people reported in Cho and Krashen's case histories is due to their coordinated interaction to other semiotic resources (e.g. pictures, symbols, and imagery) other than linguistic codes. Alignment here is defined by Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino, and Okada (2007) as "the complex means by which human beings effect coordinated interaction, and maintain that interaction in dynamically adaptive ways" (p. 169). This principle also implies that learning is an activity where a learner engages in a complex and multimodal environments. Linguistic element is just one of this modality; others being sounds, symbols, imagery, and pictures. While Cho and Krashen did highlight the centrality of non-human environments mainly books, libraries and time for reading, they did not disentangle the close alignment of these to the way their reported language acquirers attain advanced level of literacy competence.

From the merging of both social and cognitive perspective, it is clear then that the success of the people in reading in second language reported in Cho and Krashen is not only due to their gradually developing competence, but also due to their adeptness in adapting and aligning this competence to their sociomaterial environments. It is this socicognitive aspect that their article misses.

3. Concluding Remarks: Being Trappedin the Cognitivist Paradigm

Nishino and Atkinson (2015) assert, "Mainstream approaches to SLA are highly cognitivist..." (p. 38). Krashen's works in general and Cho and Krashen's study (2016) in particular reflect this assertion. It is evident that despite a frequent mention of sociomaterial components, mainly books and libraries, in Krashen previous works and in Cho and Krashen (2016) study, the roles of these sociomaterial environments are never explored. It seems that these sociomaterial aspects are in an alignment with cognition and serve only as an ancillary means to attain autonomous acquisition, rather than as the central factors by themselves.

Needles to say, Cho and Krashen's study (2016) and many more of Krashens' works in the field of second language acquisition(SLA) need to be lauded for valuable insights they have generated and have contributed to the field. Yet, most of their studies tend to be highly descriptive in nature and lack explanatory power. While most of their contemporary studies in SLA feverishly champion the benefits and power of books, these studies often fail to explore the connection between students' cognitive ability and the sociomaterial environments which ironically they acknowledge as playing a pivotal role in accelerating students' first and second language development. It seems that Krashen, and probably his zealous followers are being trapped in the Cognitivist Paradigm, which makes them indifferent to explore the role of social variables in their studies.

References

Atkinson, D. (2010). Extended, embodied cognition and second language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 31, 599-622.

Atkinson, D., Churchill, E., Nishino, T., & Okada, H. (2007). Aligment and interaction in a sociocognitive approach to second language acquisition. *Modern Language Journal*, 91, 169-188.

Cho, K.S. & Krashen, S. (2016). What does it take to develop a long-term pleasure reading habit? *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching*, *1*(1), 1-9.

Krashen, S. (2004). Applying the comprehension hypothesis: Some suggestions. *The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 1(1),21, 29.

Nishino, T. & Atkinson, D. (2015). Second language writing and sociocognitve alignment. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 27, 37-54.

Bio: Setiono Sugiharto is an associate professor of English at the Faculty of Education and Language, Atma Jaya Catholic University Jakarta, Indonesia. His writings have been published in *The Journal of ASIA TEFL,International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching,The Routledge Handbook of Educational Linguistics,* and *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*.

TOJELT Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching
A Triannual Peer-Reviewed Journal of Research in English Language Teaching
Journal Homepage: http://www.tojelt.com

Year:2016 Volume:1 Issue:2 Pages:105

Response to Sugiharto, "Comprehensible input as social alignment."

Stephen Krashen
University of Southern California- USA
Rossier School of Education (Emeritus)
skrashen@yahoo.com

Recommended citation: Krashen, S. (20016). Response to Sugiharto, "Comprehensible input as social alignment." *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (TOJELT), 1*(2), 105.

Submission history
Received:
30 April 2016
Corresponding author:
skrashen@yahoo.com

E-ISSN: 2458-9918

It is true that my work and the work of my associates has focused mainly on the cognitive aspects of language aquisition. But it is not true that we have ignored non-cognitive variables. Our papers have discussed the role of poverty, the importance of access to reading material, the role of librarians, the role of parents, the function of interaction, club membership, personality, technology, etc.

1. Response to Sugiharto, "Comprehensible input as social alignment."

It is true that my work and the work of my associates has focused mainly on the cognitive aspects of language aquisition. But it is not true that we have ignored non-cognitive variables. Our papers have discussed the role of poverty, the importance of access to reading material, the role of librarians, the role of parents, the function of interaction, club membership, personality, technology, etc. They have gone well beyond merely "mentioning ... sociomaterial components." Please do not generalize my interests from a single paper. Many of my papers and books are available for free at: sdkrashen.com.

My impression is that many of those who focus on social aspects of language acquisition ignore the cognitive aspects, not just in one or two papers but in all their work.

It is also not true that our studies are "highly descriptive in nature and lack explanatory power." The standard definition of explanatory power is "the ability of a hypothesis or theory to effectively explain the subject matter it pertains to." (e.g. Dekkers, 2015, p. 65). All of our studies are designed to test central hypotheses in language acquisition theory and the hypotheses have done a good job in explaining many phenomena in language acquisition. All description contributes to hypothesis testing.

Reference

Dekkers, R. (2015). *Applied systems theory*. Springer International Publishing: Switzerland.

TOJELT Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching
A Triannual Peer-Reviewed Journal of Research in English Language Teaching
Journal Homepage: http://www.tojelt.com

Year:2016 Volume:1 Issue:2 Pages:106-108

Book Review
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Teaching like Our Students 'Lives Matter

ISBN: 978-1-78052-030-8
ISSN: 2041-272X (Series)

Behnam Noormohammadi
Islamic Azad University (IAU) - Iran
English Department, Torbat-e- Heydarieh Branch
Behnam_noormohammadi@yahoo.com

Khalil Motallebzadeh
Islamic Azad University (IAU) - Iran
English Department, Torbat-e- Heydarieh Branch
k.motalleb@iautorbat.ac.ir

Recommended citation: Noormohammadi, B. & Motallebzadeh, K. (2016). Book review: Culturally responsive pedagogy: Teaching like our students' lives matter. *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (TOJELT), 1*(2), 106-108.

Submission history
Received:
01 January 2016
Final version:
01 April 2016
Corresponding author:
Behnam_noormohammadi@yahoo.com

E-ISSN: 2458-9918

The book clarifies the key concepts and issues that language teachers, language learners, administrators, and language test experts are faced with. It was written to provide a connection between the theories of culturally responsive pedagogy with practicalities of this pedagogy. It covers our language teacher-students' questions about how to 'deal with' culturally responsive pedagogy. It provides not only a set of tools or methods for teaching language but also an amalgamation of theory, research, and a conceptual structure for dealing with cultural responsiveness to students.

Citation of the reviewed book: Taylor, S. V & Sobel, D. M. (2011). *Culturally responsive pedagogy: Teaching like our students' lives matter.* UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited Howard House.

1. Book Review

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Teaching like Our Students' Lives Matter clarifies the key concepts and issues that language teachers, language learners, administrators, and language test experts are faced with. The book was written to provide a connection between the theories of culturally responsive pedagogy with practicalities of this pedagogy. It covers our language teacher-students' questions about how to 'deal with' culturally responsive pedagogy. It provides not only a set of tools or methods for teaching language but also an amalgamation of theory, research, and a conceptual structure for dealing with cultural responsiveness to students. The book is somehow suitable for pre-service and experienced language teachers who would like to

be effective when they teach culturally and linguistically diverse students and want to take all language learners into consideration.

The book consists of 11 chapters. In chapter one, *Current Challenges and Frameworks*, the authors discuss a changing world for education, the demographics of U.S. educational context, standards and structures for supporting teacher effectiveness with all students, including language students, conceptual framework of culturally responsive teaching, social justice in education, multicultural education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and culturally responsive pedagogy. In chapter two, *Theoretical Frameworks and Research*, the authors provide a general picture of " the theoretical backgrounds of culturally responsive teaching". It deals with issues such as "sociocultural theory, underlying assumptions, etc. Chapter three, *Contextualizing Student Achievement and Teacher Education,* establishes a rationale for culturally responsive pedagogy using an examination of students' performance in schools and studies of teachers' preparation to effectively teach a diverse student population in multicultural, multilingual, inclusive school contexts. In chapter three, we face topics such as "contextualizing student's achievement and teacher education, English language learners' achievement, achievement gap, language teachers and teacher education, and the relation between teaching and student achievement, etc. " In chapter four, *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: The Stance from Professional Organizations*, the authors talk about issues such as "culturally responsive pedagogy: the stance from professional organizations, professional organizations, teacher-focused membership, professional development, supervision, and teacher education, professional centers for educators". Then in chapter five, *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: National and State-Levels*, the authors narrow the view to a U.S.-based context and address national directives and see topics such as state-level context: a focus on COLORADO. Chapter six , *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Effective Teaching*, discusses topics such as" culturally responsive pedagogy: effective teaching, taking steps towards a culturally responsive pedagogy, racial/ethnic and cultural identity, societal structures, meritocracy in U.S. culture and education, attitudes and beliefs about cultural diversity, planning for culturally responsive pedagogy: an organizational framework, etc. It suggests the questions, ‘‘will I know it if I see it?’’ and ‘‘can I do it?". In chapter seven, *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: District and School Levels*, the author provides an overview of "district and school levels."—two large-scale districts where there is an emphasis on narrowing the achievement gap and ensuring that all ELL students (English language learners) achieve high academic standards in an environment that values linguistic and cultural diversity. In chapter eight, *Grade 3 Literacy Lesson with a Culturally Responsive Focus*, the book talks about " grade 3 literacy lesson with a culturally responsive focus, teacher profile, sociocultural classroom context, research foundations in literacy instruction for ELL students, and being responsive to students' culture." Chapter nine is on *Grade 5 Mathematics Lesson with a Culturally Responsive Focus*. The authors talk about" teacher profile, sociocultural classroom context, research foundations in mathematics instruction for all students, and being responsive to students' culture. " Chapter ten, *Grade 9 Science Lesson with a Culturally Responsive Focus,* discusses topics such as' 'sociocultural classroom context, and research foundations in science instruction for all students." Finally, the authors in chapter eleven, *Mentoring and Supporting Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices*, describe using the organizational framework to reflect on the classroom, especially language classroom, reflecting on the literacy scenario, reflecting on the math scenario, reflecting on the science scenario and supporting teachers in their journey towards culturally responsive pedagogy.

Indeed, teaching, culture and contexts are not separable from each other. The book is also good for those who want to teach literacy and language to English language learners. When culture and pedagogy are together, the result involves knowledge and skills for teachers to use and engage a culturally-diverse student population. Culturally responsive teaching feeds and cares for students' academic, social, emotional, cultural, psychological, and physiological well-being. For a culturally-responsive pedagogy, students' success is important—all students—including students who are from a variety of languages, cultures, racial/ethnic backgrounds, etc. Education is based on sociopolitical and sociocultural contexts. We should not decontextualize teaching and learning from culture. In this book, language and literature are inseparable from each other. The book contains learner information that can be used for the purposes of planning and instruction, language teachers can consider the inter-connection of curriculum, content, and the cultures of learners.

The book familiarizes teachers including language teachers with the communities of the students. Therefore language teachers can incorporate relevant experiences and resources into school practices. It illustrates teacher and student demographics and ethnic gap within the U.S. public schools. It calls for language teachers to create respectful, inclusive and supportive environments in which authentic learning communities can be strengthened. It recognizes the different cultures and experiences of the language learners and plans for this cultural incongruence. Language teachers using this book will come to a kind of understanding that the different cultures of the students can affect their thinking, beliefs and behaviors, so these different cultures can overshadow their own teaching and learning. The last but not the least word is that in this book, culture is at the center of all we do in education.
