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Message from the Editorial Board Chair

It is with great pleasure that we present this inaugural collection of selected papers from the Japan Association of College English Teachers [JACET] 52nd International Convention, which was held at Kyoto University, Japan, from August 30 to September 1, 2013. For the JACET organization, this was a very notable and successful convention not only because it was the first to be hosted by Kyoto University, but also because it attracted a record number of attendees and presenters from Japan and from other nations.

We begin this international collection of the selected papers from the convention by featuring the invited papers written by plenary speakers and the Kansai Chapter's Symposium panelists. Professor Susan Bassnett provides us with invaluable insight into translation as an important and shaping force in English. Professor Ken Hyland highlights the opportunities and options available for college English teachers of writing. Professor Alan Hirvela writes on academic publishing with especially helpful advice for those aspiring to get published in top-tier international academic journals.

In addition to these invited papers, we received a great response in our call for papers from convention presenters who submitted papers for this collective work on a wide-ranging span of topics related to English language research and pedagogy. With utmost concern for quality in selection, we have maintained a very stringent acceptance rate with the hope that this volume of selected papers could capture the most interesting and inspiring work of the convention for all to access online. This process resulted in the publication of four papers.

As the Chair of the Editorial Board, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to each of the reviewers, the Editorial Board members, and all of those who helped to publish this inaugural volume of the JACET International Convention Selected Papers.

Akira Tajino, Ph.D.

Chair, The Editorial Board of the JACET International Convention Selected Papers, Volume 1

Invited Papers

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Translation as a Shaping Force in English

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Anyone travelling round Britain cannot but be struck by the great variety of place names. Some names recur frequently; for example, we find Stratfords all over England, not only in Warwickshire where Stratford-on-Avon is the famous birthplace of William Shakespeare, but in the north and in the south of England too, while there are dozens of names ending in ‘ton’ or ‘ham’ or ‘burgh’. The explanation for such recurrences is, of course, that the place names embody topographical elements—‘ham’ derives from the Anglo-Saxon word for ‘homestead’, ‘tun’ signified an enclosure in a forest, ‘burg’ refers to a hill, while Stratford is simply ‘the place where a Roman road (*straet*, or street) crossed a river’. River crossings were obviously vital: Oxford referred to the place where oxen could cross, while Cambridge was simply ‘bridge over the river Cam’. ‘Cam’ it should be noted, is an ancient British (that is, Celtic) river name, as is Avon, and interestingly a substantial number of river names and names of hills and forests are British, hence close to contemporary Welsh. What we see in the Domesday Book of 1086, the first attempt to list inhabited sites in England is a palimpsest of placenames incorporating a variety of linguistic and cultural elements: British, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian. The great Swedish professor Eilert Ekwall, whose monumental book *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names* was first published in 1936, notes the variety of Scandinavian place names, from the Old Norse elements in large parts of the North of England, such as the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales, to the Danish elements most notable in the eastern part of the country and the Midlands.

On car journeys with my family, I taught my children basic place name spotting skills: towns with ‘by’ such as Grimsby, Formby, Easby etc all reveal their Danish heritage, towns with 'cester' or 'chester' (Leicester, Worcester, Manchester) all began as Roman camps, and the difference between those towns and the ones that have the suffix 'caster' (Lancaster, Doncaster) is explained by the influence of Scandinavian that turns the soft sound ch into the hard c. I tend to travel with a copy of Ekwall, because so many of the place names are so extraordinary that expert help is needed, particularly in the north of England where the settlement patterns were so diverse. Just down the road from me is Thwaite, deriving from an old Norse word for 'sloping meadow', and Muker, which incorporates 2 Old Norse elements, '*mior'* meaning 'narrow' and *'akr'* meaning field. Yet if you travel down the valley, along the river, through the string of villages with names deriving from Viking settlers a thousand years ago, you come to Richmond, a name deriving from French, for the great castle was built by one of the powerful Norman barons serving William the Conqueror who became king of England in 1066.

In his introduction, Ekwall argues for the value of place name study for cultural historians and for linguists. The various elements in English place names 'testify to changes in the population of the British Isles, and place names often supplement the meagre data of recorded history' (Ekwall, 1980: xix). In this, he is absolutely right: the Domesday book is a valuable source of information, showing changes in settlement patterns, as indicated in place names, over hundreds of years. Recognising the great linguistic diversity in place names shows how the population changed: a network of Roman roads and cities was superimposed on the Celtic world, then the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons changed the map again, to which was added the spread of Christianity which also had a major impact on place names, then came the Scandinavians, firstly the Danes whose territories encompassed large tracts of Eastern and Northern England, then, from the Viking kingdom of Dublin, came other Scandinavians who left their mark on the North (to this day, in the north a stream is a 'beck', a hillside is a 'fell', a street is a 'gate') and then the Normans brought their variant of Old French and built the string of fortresses whose ruins we so willingly visit today.

Why should we concern ourselves today with place-names and their origins? The point I am seeking to make from the outset is that place-names are a fine example of the significance of hybridity in English language, literature and cultural history. Even a cursory glance at place names reveals layers of interconnectedness between very diverse peoples, often hostile to one another, but whose traces are preserved through language and through the naming of the sites they inhabited. As English has developed as a language, we can see that tendency continuing: English is a highly flexible language, a language that absorbs elements from all kinds of sources, a language in a continual process of change. Dr Johnson, creator of the first English dictionary (more than 42,000 items) published in 1755 was all too aware of the volatility of English and of the inadequacy of any single dictionary to capture that endless linguistic movement. In his preface, he wrote:

> It must be remembered, that while our language is yet living, and variable by the caprice of everyone that speaks it … words are hourly shifting their relations, and can no more be ascertained in a dictionary, than a grove, in the agitation of a storm, can be accurately delineated from its picture in the water. (Johnson in Hitchings, 2005: 190)

Let us take just one simple example: the phrase ‘silver surfers’ has been recently coined to refer to older people, the silvery-haired, who use the internet. This is a metaphorical use of the term ‘surfer’, one who rides a surfboard. However, the idea of surfing as a sport is also very recent, first coined in the early twentieth century, and the origins of the word ‘surf’, which refers to waves breaking on the shore is unknown. The word is first recorded in the seventeenth century, to refer to the breaking of waves in the Indian Ocean, and one theory is that ‘surf’ is related to ‘sough’, that is, the rushing sound of leaves rustling in the wind, a word of Anglo-Saxon origin. The ship’s captain who first wrote the word ‘surf’ in his log could therefore have been referring to the sound of the sea, not to the waves themselves, though by the early nineteenth century the term 'surf' had acquired its modern meaning instead. So we have moved from sound to physical description, then to sport finally to metaphor thereby confirming Dr Johnson's statement about the impossibility of fixing the eternally changeable nature of language in any dictionary.

I began my academic career as a philologist and historian of literature. Today, I define myself as a scholar of comparative and world literature, with a series of publications also in Translation Studies. What this means is that my academic interest is in tracing patterns, the dictum of Matthew Arnold who, in his Oxford Inaugural Lecture of 1857 declared that:

> Everywhere there is connection, everywhere there is illustration. No single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in relation to other events, to other literatures.

What this paper is seeking to demonstrate is the undesirability of trying to isolate the study of one literature from another, and also to show the fundamental importance of translation in English literary history. Today, in the twenty first century we are finally starting to acknowledge the significance of translation as a major shaping force in literary history, as we move on from the fashion for conceptualising literatures in nationalistic terms that is the legacy of European Romanticism. Andre Lefevere argues, in his seminal book, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* that alongside this emphasis on the idea of a 'national' literature, uncontaminated by outside influences which became so predominant in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there has also been a desire to assert the pre-eminence of the national language. Lefevere sees this as part of what he calls the 'monolingualization' of literary history by Romantic historiographers, and he also suggests that the refusal to consider the importance of translation was also due to the association of translation with 'language' rather than with 'literature' (Lefevere, 1992: 39). In the case of

English, we have to acknowledge that until after the First World War, the study of both English literature and English language in English universities was considered on a much lower level than the study of classical languages and literatures, and the study of English could only be justified intellectually by claiming a direct line back to the ancients, read, of course, in the original languages. The first professor of English at Cambridge, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, known as Q, wrote in 1918 that English literature had always obeyed 'however unconsciously, the precept *Antiquam exquisite matrem*', seek back to the ancient mother; always it has recreated itself, kept itself pure and strong, by harking back to bathe in those native—yes, native—Mediterranean springs (Quiller-Couch in Crowley, 1989: 40). It is interesting to note that since Q was making this point in the year when the devastating First World War came to an end, with the loss of millions of lives he was at pains to try and obliterate any hint of English intellectual connection to German culture, which explains the strong antipathy he held for Anglo-Saxon philology. Heaven forbid that linguists or literary scholars could demonstrate a shared cultural heritage with the enemy! English literature was to be seen as the descendant of the greatest classical works from the ancient world, with Greece and Rome held up as ideal models, and the study of ancient languages considered essential to proper intellectual development.

Ironically, though, the first ever established Chair of English was not in an English, but in a German university. In 1762, just 7 years after the publication of Dr Johnson's monumental dictionary, a certain John Thompson was appointed to the Chair of English at the University of Gottingen. That university had been founded by King George I of England, the Elector of Hannover who had been obliged to accept the English throne on account of being the descendant of one of the daughters of King James I. George never learned English, and spent as much time as he could in Hannover, but the university he founded established a strong Faculty of Humanities and foreign languages and literatures were taught. Prof. Thompson, about whom we know sadly little, edited an anthology of contemporary English literature for teaching purposes, which went through several editions and was in use for decades.

In 1941 George Sampson brought out *the Concise Cambridge History of English Literature,* based on the 14 volumes of the earlier, extended Cambridge history, the final volume of which appeared in 1916. Once again, it is important to consider the context and the date of publication: in 1941 Britain was once again at war with Germany and the war was by no means going well. Sampson's history is a patriotic *cri de coeur,* and at every stage he stresses the native aspects of English writings. The book opens with this statement:

> The history of a national literature is part of the whole national story; but it is a separable part, for man is older than his songs, and passed through many stages of development before he found his way into the kind of self-expression we call literature. (Sampson, 1941: 1)

Throughout the book, Sampson stresses the 'Englishness' of English literature: in his chapter on 'The Beginnings of English Prose' he writes about 'the triumph of English over French' (Sampson, 1941: 68), Chaucer is 'one of the greatest English poets of all times' (Sampson, 1941: 77), Sidney and Spenser, rather than Wyatt and Surrey are the fathers of the English sonnet. Faced with the problem of the huge impact of German Romantic thought on Carlyle, Sampson says that the influence of German literature and especially Goethe has been exaggerated. Carlyle, he says was a man with a highly original mind.

He called Goethe his master; but actually there were very few points of contact. Carlyle believed that Goethe had found serenity by solving for himself the eternal riddle of the relations between man and the universe. Really Goethe had solved nothing. He attained his serenity by cutting out of his life anything likely to disturb him (Sampson, 1941: 96).

As for Wordsworth, Sampson urges his readers to ‘dismiss from their minds’ any ideas of Wordsworth as the liberal leader of a Romantic revolt and to think of him instead as ‘a great English poet, tenacious, indomitable and unsubmissive, carving his own way slowly to understanding of himself, and winning, in the end, the love and admiration of the best readers, not by any moral message or theory of art, but solely by the penetrating beauty of his poems’ (Sampson, 1941: 572).

With this emphasis on the Englishness of English literature, there could be no room for foreign intervention. This model was still firmly in place until the 1970s, and it has only recently started to change, challenged from many different sources, including feminist questioning of what was essentially a male canon, the rise of postcolonial writing in variants of English, which has led to the important shift in most universities from ‘English literature’ to ‘Literatures in English’, the development of cultural studies methodologies, the widespread enthusiasm for literary and cultural theorists writing in other languages, principally French and German, and the questions to the idea of a nationally hermetically closed literature posed by translation studies.

In his essay on Chaucer in the *Oxford History of Literary Translation in English, Vol. I to 1550*, Barry Windeatt refers to the earliest surviving response to Chaucer’s work, in a ballad dated roughly 1385, by his contemporary, Eustache Deschamps, who refers to ‘Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucer’ (The great translator, Geoffrey Chaucer). This is significant, because it shows the prestige Chaucer enjoyed as a translator in his own time. A great deal has been written about Chaucer’s translations, which can be summarised as follows: Chaucer moved easily between English, French and the Anglo-French that was part of courtly English life, he was sent on diplomatic missions to Italy and acquired good Italian, as an educated man he of course had Latin, and he translated from all these languages. However, what we find with Chaucer is a wide variety of translation practice: he used both French and Latin sources for his version of Boethius, for example, and alongside those translations where there is an identifiable source, he also used translation as a device, claiming sometimes to be translating (as he does in his *Troilus and Criseyde)* from an authoritative source, when what he is doing is freely inventing and merely playing with the idea of authority conveyed by the suggestion that there is an 'original' somewhere else. As Windeatt summarises:

> Any characterisation of Chaucer as a translator must account for just how far many of his works which are not translations of a single original may nevertheless include sections of relatively close verbal translation from particular sources, whether or not acknowledged. These translated sections may function alongside passages that represent translation more distantly. (Ellis, 2008: 145)

In other words, Chaucer sometimes translated closely, sometimes claimed to be translating when he was freely inventing, sometimes translated without acknowledging that this is what he was doing. Far from being a totally 'English' writer, Chaucer was able to make full use of the multilingual environment in which he lived, shifting between what we now refer to as Middle English, Anglo-French, French and Latin, with Italian as well. The picture becomes ever more complex when we look at his themes and plot lines, where it can be clearly seen that he drew upon a wide range of sources for his writings.

Traditional histories of English literature follow Sampson in seeing Chaucer as the 'father' of English poetry, followed by a fallow period when little of any significance was produced until the advent of Shakespeare. This is not only false, but also fallacious: just as Chaucer was recognised as a pre-eminent translator by his contemporaries, so he was also living in an age when translation was all around him. The Renaissance was a great age of translations; in Northern Europe religious debates hinged upon translation. The French scholar Edmond Cary points out that:

> The Reformation after all, was primarily a dispute between translators. Translation became an affair of State and a matter of Religion. The Sorbonne and the King were equally concerned with it. (Cary in Bassnett, 2014: 65)

Wherever we look in the history of English literature we find translations: let us take as an example the sonnet, which comes into English via translations, with Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey as the two earliest well-known exponents of the form. But here we see an aspect of translation that is often not recognised: when any text crosses a linguistic and cultural boundary and is recreated in another context, it is inevitably changed. Languages are different, so also are literary systems, and during the translation process changes may be relatively minor or they may be enormous. In the case of the sonnet, what happened is that while the dominant form of 14 lines was retained, the organisation of those 14 lines in English was very different from that of the original Italian. In Italian, the structure of the sonnet followed the Petrarchan principle of a rhyme scheme that divided the first 8 lines from the final 6 lines. This could be used to great effect, with subtle shifts of direction, extended metaphors, sophisticated patterns of rhyme. The first translations of sonnets in English follow this pattern, but it quickly became clear that the 14 lines could be structured differently; most notably there could be 3 sets of 4 lines and final couplet. So if we look at the first sonnet of Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, we can see just how the English sonnet created all kinds of possibilities for irony and for humour that were not there in the Italian. Shakespeare, of course, developed the sonnet in particularly striking ways.

Sidney's sonnet is about a lover seeking the approval of his lady, but it is also a poem about writing. The lover hopes that he might win his lady if she enjoys what he has written, but as he struggles to find the right words he encounters what today we would call a writer's block. He tries to find 'fit words', he reads what others have written 'Oft turning other's leaves' to see if anything will refresh his 'sunburn'd brain'. The first 8 lines describe this condition, then lines 9–12 build to a climax, as the poet realises that all his effort is getting in the way of genuine feeling:

> But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay;
> Invention, Nature's child, fled stepdame Study's blows;
> And other's feet still seemed but strangers in my way.

Sidney uses the image of pregnancy—'great with child to speak and helpless in my throes'. Then in the final couplet he turns on himself, rejects the failed solutions he has tried and urges himself to draw upon his own reserves of creative energy:

> Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite;
> 'Fool', said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart, and write'.

The final couplet is the English twist on the Petrarch sonnet form, and it can be argued that the final ironic reversal is a very English stylistic trait more generally. The Metaphysical poets such as John Donne, employed the idea of circularity to great effect: the opening lines of a poem may appear to lead the reader clearly along a particular path, but as the poem develops, so we find ourselves being led to an opposing position. The best-known example of this is probably Donne's poem 'To the Sun Rising', which opens with a reproof to the sun for wakening the poet and his lover, but concludes through cleverly crafted argument with welcoming the sun into the room. Today, we find this device also used frequently in journalism, which can present problems to readers not used to that convention. Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, in their book *The Translator as Communicator* talk about what they call 'through-argumentation' (stating something and then substantiating it) as opposed to 'counter-argumentation' which they define as 'citing an opponent's thesis, rebutting this and substantiating the point of the rebuttal' (Hatim and Mason, 1997: 127). Both have worked with translators in the Arab world, and point out that while counter-argumentation is strong in English, through-argumentation is the dominant mode in Arabic. This presents problems when for example, an English text starts out with a statement that appears to be a valid assertion, but which, as we read on, turns out to be statement made deliberately in order for the writer to argue against it and refute it by the end of the piece.

What they also point out is that although we appear to be talking here about stylistic conventions, there is a strong ideological element present as well. The norms that dominate in a particular culture will determine how a story is presented. The meaning of a text does not only concern its content, but also its construction, that is, the discourse that comprises that text. In his book of short essays reflecting on the problems of translation, *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?* (subtitled: *Translation and the Meaning of Everything*) David Bellos, translator and comparative literature scholar, points out that written and spoken expressions in any language do not have a meaning on their own, but acquire a meaning in context. He also adds that:

> Translation represents the meaning that an utterance has, and in that sense translation is a pretty good way of finding out what the expression used in it may mean. (Bellos, 2012: 80)

The title of Bellos' book provides a good example of the problem of linguistic and contextual meaning, for it is a reference to the Babel fish, the invention of the writer Douglas Adams in his award-winning book, *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, whereby travellers in the future would be able to understand any language in the universe through the device of placing a creature called a Babel fish in one ear.

Bellos plays with this absurd idea, and his book is a witty, but at the same time very serious investigation of some of the issues that surround translation. In one of his chapters, he tells us that when he ran a web search in 2010 for quotations of the old adage that poetry is what gets lost in translation, he came across 15,100 pages. Yet he also points out that the history of Western poetry *is* the history of poetry in translation. Literatures exchange forms, ideas, genres, themes, and once we acknowledge that literatures interact with one another, it becomes possible to see all kinds of patterns emerging that are not visible if we seek to follow a narrowly defined nationalistic path. For just as English as a language has been very receptive to other languages, incorporating new words, borrowing, coining neologisms all the time, so the literatures written in English also absorb from other literatures. Salman Rushdie may be considered as an exponent of magical realist writing, but magical realism was developed in the Spanish speaking countries of Latin America and found its way into English in the 1970s and 80s, during what has been described as a boom of Latin American literary translation. The detective story is another example of a genre that has moved across frontiers and undergone all kinds of transformation en route. Edgar Allen Poe's Auguste Dupin is often regarded as the first example of the detective hero, but Poe most likely had read Voltaire's *Zadig,* and then, of course, Poe's works became hugely influential in the late nineteenth entury in France. Writers criss-cross the globe, changing as they move, and out of that interaction come new ideas, new forms, new lines of development.

Sometimes, though, it can take a long time for writers who are canonical in their own culture to enter into another literature. A good example of this is the great Italian medieval poet, Dante Alighieri. Dante's *Divine Comedy* was one of the most powerful works of the European Middle Ages, a huge poem in 3 parts recounting the journey of the living poet, Dante himself, into the lands of the dead, travelling with his guide, the shade of the Latin poet, Virgil, through Hell, where all the souls are damned, then climbing up Mount Purgatory where the souls of the saved purge themselves of sinfulness, then ever upwards into the perfection that is Heaven. In this great allegorical, encyclopaedic work, Dante sets out a map of medieval cosmography, attacks contemporary politicians and religious leaders, and creates an alternative universe, in the course of which he engages with philosophical, historical and theological debates. In short, it is a work that has earned its place as one of the most important European texts ever produced.

But while other medieval Italian writers, such as Petrarch and Boccaccio found an enthusiastic response very early in English (Boccaccio being one of the authors whose influence is felt in Shakespeare, for example) the combination of theology and politics in Dante did not attract English translators, and it was not until the early nineteenth century that the first complete translation of the *Divine Comedy* appeared, after which Dante began to be appreciated in English. Throughout the nineteenth century, when enthusiasm for an idealised Middle Ages led to the writing and art of the Pre Raphaelites, and to the widespread popularity of poetry and prose based on the Arthurian cycle, there were dozens of translations of Dante by English and American writers. There is even a plaque in Florence, in the Piazza Santa Maria Novella dedicated to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882) who also translated Dante which reads:

> Poeta americano nelle lingue neolatine maestro/ traduttore della Divina Commedia/ tra le forestiere dimore ebbe questa/ nella Piazza che fu detta ‘la mecca degli stranieri’. (American poet, master of the neo-Latin languages, translator of the Divine Comedy, whose homes abroad included this house in this piazza, which was known as ‘the Mecca of foreigners’.)

The impact of Dante on English literature, however, came later, and Dante can be said to have entered into English through the work of two of the greatest English languages poets of the twentieth century (one American, one Irish), both of whom incorporate Dante into their own poetry. T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' is full of echoes of Dante's Hell, and in his essay on Dante in *The Sacred Wood* Eliot declares that:

> Dante is the most comprehensive and the most *ordered* presentation of emotions that has ever been made. (Eliot, 1964: 168)

After Eliot, the Irish poet Seamus Heaney drew upon Dante's Purgatory, first in his poem 'The Strand at Lough Beg' and then, most significantly, in his 'Station Island', the important poem in which Heaney struggles to articulate his own position regarding the Northern Ireland Troubles and to deal with the criticism he had received for being seen as 'apolitical' in the 1970s. Heaney uses Dante's encounter with souls in the other world as a framework for his own encounter with the dead, in particular in 'The Strand at Lough Beg' for his cousin, murdered by Protestant paramilitaries. This poem is prefaced with 3 lines from Dante's Purgatorio, so that the Italian medieval poet and the contemporary Irish poet are fused together in language. The world of thirteenth-century Italian politics may seem to be a far cry from the world of twentieth-century Irish politics, but Heaney shows how the two worlds actually coincide, through the personal grief of those damaged by the pointlessness of factional conflict.

In his important essay, 'Englands of the Mind', a reflective piece on the work of three great English poets, Ted Hughes, Philip Larkin and Geoffrey Hill, Heaney examines them in terms of different lines of linguistic and poetic development, using a geological metaphor as illustration. In his view, Hughes 'relies on the northern deposits, the pagan Anglo-Saxon and Norse elements', while Hill's language is 'modified and amplified by the vocabularies and values of the Mediterranean', and Larkin's is 'the English language Frenchified and turned Humanist by the Norman conquest'. Here Heaney conceives of English poetry, like the English language, built up of layers of linguistic and cultural sedimentation.

This paper has sought to demonstrate that literatures are porous, that writers draw their inspiration from many sources, and that in the case of English, the tendency is to absorb elements from other literatures, originally written in other languages, just as the English language itself tends to absorb elements from other linguistic systems. This has resulted in English having a vast vocabulary, while as a literature we can see traces of other literatures everywhere, once we start to look for them and move away from the old idea of 'native' tradition.

I shall end with a fascinating example of new writerly interaction, this time on the Internet. This work, entitled *theroadnorth.com* is described as a 'blog', but is actually a kind of travel journal of a journey around Scotland. In 2010, two Scottish poets, Alec Finlay and Ken Cockburn set off from Edinburgh and travelled around their native Scotland, taking photographs of people and places, writing short prose accounts of where they went and writing a string of little poems. When you log on, you find a map of Scotland on the home page, with 54 dots: you click on each in turn and can follow their journey, through images, sounds and words. Next to the map is a brief explanation:

> The Road North is a word-map of Scotland, composed by Alex Finlay and Ken Cockburn as they travel through their homeland, guided by the Japanese poet Basho, whose Oku-no-Hosomichi (Narrow Road to the Deep North) is one of the masterpieces of travel literature.
>
> Ken and Alec left Edo (Edinburgh) on May 16, 2010,—the very same date that Basho and his companion Sora departed in 1689.

The blog then invites readers to follow the poets' progress week by week, and to 'read about some of the places Basho leads them to'.

It is tempting to make a connection between Basho, the poet whose guiding spirit leads on the two modern travellers and Virgil, who led Dante through the afterworld, and the idea of a living being led on a journey by a spirit is a powerful recurring theme in many literatures. What is significant here is that throughout the journey there are references to Basho's work, a deliberate linking of the two distinct worlds through the poetic imagination. In their Epilogue, Alec Finlay notes that he had written to another Scottish poet, Kathleen Jamie, whose also writes about travel, and quotes her reply in which she says that she took a copy of Basho's poetry with her on a recent visit to St Kilda, the furthest island to the West of Scotland, the remotest place in the British Isles.

The Japanese master, Basho, read in translation, is the inspiration for a new work, in a new form, half way across the world in Scotland in the twenty-first century. In the preface to the Penguin translation of Basho's writings by Nobuyuki Yuasa, the translator declares that this version is primarily for lovers of poetry, not for scholars, adding that 'the present translation is not for purists'. One can only be thankful that contemporary poets are inspired by this 'unscholarly' translation, and have found new ways of journeying themselves with Basho.

This paper began with a journey around England, seeing traces of the past in contemporary place names, and is ending with a journey around Scotland, inspired by a seventeenth-century Japanese poet and utilizing twenty-first century technology. Underpinning both journeys, and everything this paper has sought to emphasize, is the power of translation in shaping language, literatures and cultures. Translation is key to discourses of intertextuality, global influence flows, transnational literary movement, canon formation and challenges to the canon. The English language and its literatures have been enriched over centuries through translation, for although states may close borders, the movement of ideas and linguistic change cannot be halted. Basho probably did not even know that Scotland existed, but I like to think that four hundred years after his death, he would have rejoiced at the thought that his spirit lives on, in another language, through other poets and via a technology he could never have imagined.

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Writing: Options and Opportunities for College English Teachers

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Abstract

This paper explores the main approaches to teaching and researching writing. Making a broad distinction between theories concerned with texts, with writers, and with readers, I will show what each approach offers and neglects and what each means for teachers. The categorisation implies no rigid divisions, and, in fact the approaches respond to, critique, and draw on each other in a variety of ways. I believe, however, this offers a useful way of comparing and evaluating the research each approach has produced and the pedagogic practices they have generated.

Introduction

Writing which has been a central topic in applied linguistics for over half a century is a central area of teaching and research in most languages. Its complex, multifaceted nature seems to constantly evade adequate description and explanation, and many forms of inquiry have been summoned to help clarify both how writing works and how it should best be taught. An important factor is, of course, the overarching significance of writing in all our lives, its roles in social, professional, and academic contexts, and the importance it has in determining our life chances. Writing is central to our personal experience and social identities, and we are often evaluated by our control of it. The various purposes of writing, then, the increased complexity of its contexts of use, and the diverse backgrounds and needs of those wishing to learn it, all push the study of writing into wider frameworks of analysis and understanding.

In this paper I want to offer a brief survey of these frameworks and explore the main approaches to teaching and researching writing, focusing on three main orientations (Hyland, 2002). Each focus assumes a different idea about what writing is and implies different ways of teaching it:

- The first approach concentrates on the products of writing by examining ***texts***.
- The second focuses on the writer and the ***processes*** used to create texts.
- The third approach emphasises the role that ***readers*** play in writing, showing how writers think about an audience in creating texts.

These three approaches have become blurred as teachers and researchers have drawn from each and combined them, to both learn more about writing and to provide better teaching and learning methods. In any classroom, then, a teacher may draw on a combination of these. But I think it is helpful to separate them to see clearly what we are doing when we make teaching decisions. We need to know the theories, assumptions, and research which support our teaching practices.

Text-oriented Research and Teaching

First, text-oriented approaches consider writing as an outcome, a noun rather than a verb, viewing writing as the words on a page or screen, and here we see texts either as *objects* or as *discourse*.

Texts as Objects

First of all, seeing texts as objects means understanding writing as the application of rules. Writing is a “thing” independent of particular contexts, writers, or readers—and learning to become a good writer is largely a matter of knowing grammar. So this view sees texts as arrangements of words, clauses, and sentences, and its exponents believe that students can be taught to say exactly what they mean by learning how to put these together effectively.

In the writing classroom teachers emphasise *language structures*, often in these four stages (Hyland, 2003):

1. *Familiarisation*: learners study a text to understand its grammar and vocabulary,
2. *Controlled writing*: then they manipulate fixed patterns, often from substitution tables,
3. *Guided writing*: then they imitate model texts—usually filling in gaps, completing texts, creating topic sentences, or writing parallel texts.
4. *Free writing*: learners use the patterns they have developed to write an essay, letter, etc.

But while this has been a major classroom approach for many years, it draws on the now discredited belief that meaning is contained in the message, and that we transfer ideas from one mind to another through language. It assumes that a text says everything that needs to be said with no conflicts of interpretations, no reader positions, no different understandings, because we all see things in the same way. Accuracy is just one feature of good writing and does not on its own facilitate communication. Even the most explicitly written contracts and legal documents can result in fierce disputes of interpretation. So our goal as writing teachers can never be just training students in accuracy because all texts include what writer's assume their readers will know, and how they will use the text. The writer's problem is not to make everything explicit, but to make it explicit for particular readers, balancing what needs to be said against what can be assumed.

Texts as Discourse

A second perspective sees texts as *discourse*—the way we use language to communicate, to achieve purposes in particular situations. Here the writer is seen as having certain goals and intentions and the ways we write are resources to accomplish these. Teachers working with writing in this way seek to identify how the texts actually work as communication, regarding forms of language as located in social action. A key idea here is that of *genre*, which is a term for grouping texts together. We know immediately, for example, whether a text is a recipe, a joke, or a love letter and can respond to it and write a similar one if we need to. We all have a repertoire of these responses we can call on to communicate in familiar situations, and we learn new ones as we need them.

Genre reminds us that when we write we follow conventions for organising messages because we want our reader to recognise our purpose. Genre approaches describe the stages which help writers to set out their thoughts in ways readers can easily follow, encouraging us to look for organisational patterns and salient features. So, looking at texts as discourse can tell us a lot about how we create meanings: what writers are trying to achieve when writing and how they do it.

Genres encourage us to look for organisational patterns, and we find them in even the most apparently personal and expressive kind of writing. In an analysis of the acknowledgments in 240 PhD and MA dissertations written by Hong Kong speakers of English, for example, I found students used the structure shown in Figure 1:

Move	**Example**
1 Reflecting Move	The most rewarding achievement in my life, as I approach middle age, is the completion of my doctoral dissertation.
2 Thanking Move	
2.1 Presenting participants	During the time of writing I received support and help from many people.
2.2 Thanks for academic help	I am profoundly indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Robert Chau who assisted me in each step to complete the thesis.
2.3 Thanks for resources	I am grateful to The Epsom Foundation whose research travel grant made the field work possible and to the library staff who tracked down elusive texts for me.
2.4 Thanks for Moral support	Finally, thanks goes to wife who has been an important source of emotional support.
3 Announcing Move	However, despite all this help, I am the only person responsible for errors in the thesis.

Figure 1. The structure of dissertation acknowledgements.

As we can see, the acknowledgement structure consists of a main Thanking Move sandwiched between optional Reflecting and Announcing Moves. So first the writer offers a brief introspection on his or her research experience. Then there is the Thanking Move where credit is given to individuals and institutions for help with the dissertation, and this can consist of up to 4 steps. First, a sentence introducing those to be thanked, followed by thanks for academic help. This was the only step that occurred in every single text, supervisors were always mentioned, and always before anyone else, but sometimes other academics appeared here too. Next there are thanks for providing resources such as clerical, technical, and financial, and then thanks for moral support from family and friends for encouragement, friendship, sympathy, etc., and this occurred in two thirds of all texts. The final Announcing Move was uncommon, but here writers accept responsibility to show that the thesis is theirs and not the work of all the people they've thanked.

In the classroom genre teaching means attending to grammar, but this is not the old disembodied grammar of the writing-as-object approach but a resource for producing texts. A knowledge of grammar shifts writing from the implicit and hidden to the conscious and explicit to allow students to effectively manipulate language (Hyland, 2004). In writing classes this means getting students to notice, reflect on, and then use the conventions to help them produce well-formed and appropriate texts. One approach widely used in Australia is the teaching-learning cycle (Figure 2).

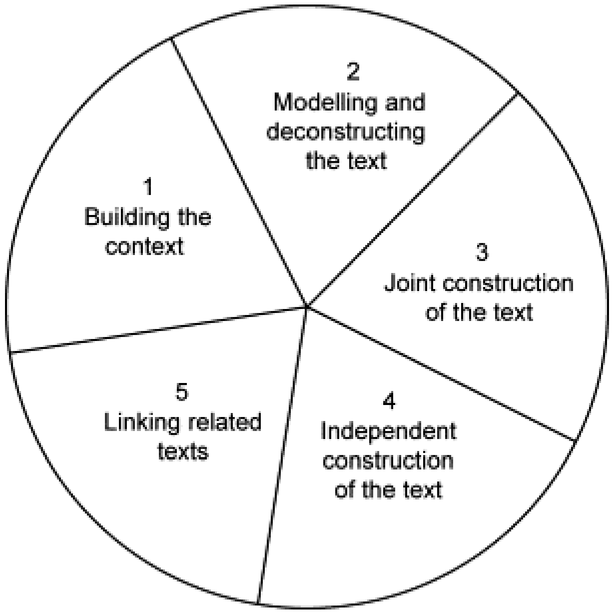

Figure 2. The teaching-learning cycle.

The cycle helps us plan classroom activities by showing genre learning as a series of linked stages which scaffold, or support, learners towards understanding texts. The key stages are:

1. First understanding the purpose of the genre and the settings where it is used: So, how it fits into target academic situations. Who writes it, with whom, who for, why, etc? What is the relationship between the writer and reader? What degree of formality is involved? This might involve presenting the context through films, guest speakers, simulations, role plays, or case studies to bring the context to life.
2. The second stage involves modelling the genre and analysing it to reveal its stages and key features (what are the main tenses, themes, vocabulary, and so on). Possible activities here are getting students to sequence, re-arrange, and label text stages, asking them to re-organise scrambled paragraphs or re-write unfinished ones, etc.
3. The third stage involves the joint construction of the genre with students, either in groups or individually, supporting students in their writing as they collect information through

library or internet research and interviews, as they create a parallel text following a given model or as they work in small groups to construct texts for presentation to the whole class.

4. Fourth is independent writing, with students working alone or in groups while monitored by the teacher. Possible activities are outlining and drafting a text based on pre-writing activities, rewriting a text for another purpose by changing the genre from an essay into a news article or notes to a report, or revising a draft in response to others' comments.
5. Finally the teacher relates what has been learnt to other genres and contexts. This can be done by showing how a genre fits into a chain of genres to achieve a purpose such as the interview which follows a job advert, application letter, etc., or comparing genres in the same context.

Each stage therefore has a different purpose and so draws on different classroom activities. The main features of the cycle are that students can enter it at any stage depending on what they know about the genre, and genres can be recycled at more advanced levels of expression. Perhaps more importantly, it provides scaffolded learning for students. As I show in Figure 3, the kind of scaffolding provided by the cycle supports students through what Vygotsky called the "the zone of proximal development," or the gap between student's current and potential performance. As we move round the circle, direct teacher instruction is reduced and students gradually get more confidence and learn to write the genre on their own. Their autonomy increases as they gain greater control over the genre.

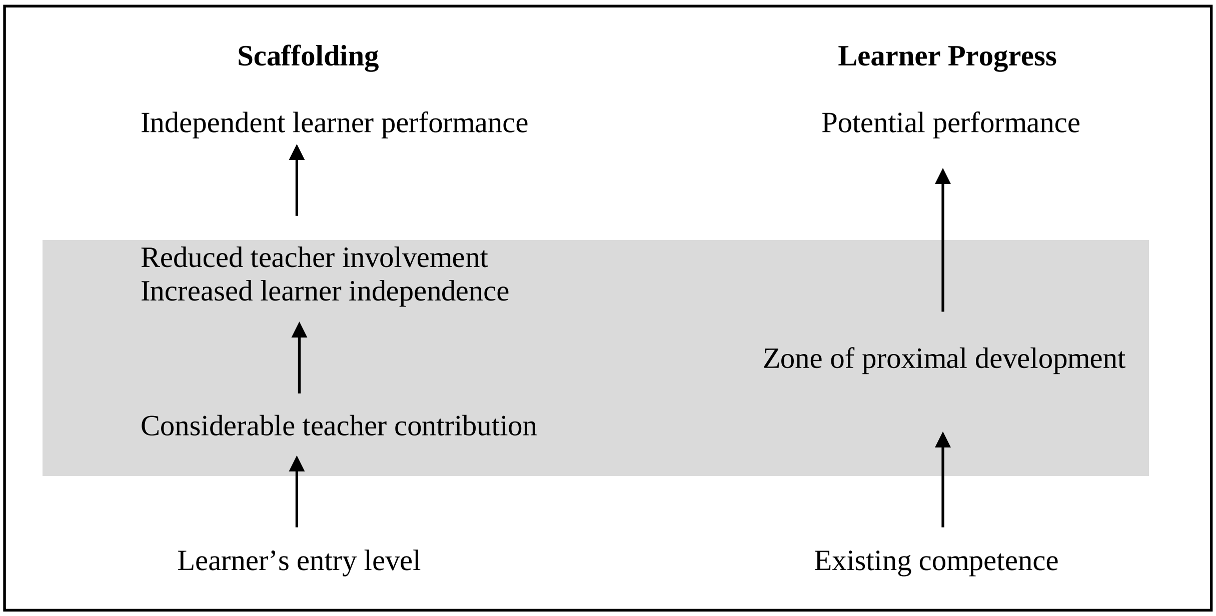

Figure 3. Teacher-learner collaboration (Based on Feez, 1998, p. 27).

Genre teaching has been criticised for stifling creativity by imposing models on students. Obviously teachers might teach genres as recipes so students get the idea that they just need to pour content into ready made moulds. But there is no reason why providing students with an understanding of discourse should be any more prescriptive than providing them with a description of parts of a sentence. The key point is that genres *do* constrain us. Once we accept that our goals are best achieved by, say, writing a postcard or an essay, then we will write within certain expected patterns. The genre doesn't "dictate" that we write in a certain way nor determine what we write; it enables choices to be made to create meaning. Genre theories suggest that a teacher who understands how texts are typically structured, understood, and used is in a better position to intervene successfully in the writing development of his or her students.

Writer-oriented Research and Teaching

The second broad approach focuses on the writer, rather than the text. Interest here is on what good writers do when they write so that these methods can be taught to L2 students.

Most teachers are familiar with process writing techniques and make use of brainstorming, peer and teacher feedback, multiple drafts, delaying corrections until the end, and so on. Writing is seen as a process through which writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to create meaning. It is more of a problem solving activity than an act of communication—how people approach a writing task as the solution to a series of problems. Essentially, process theorists explain writing using the tools and models of cognitive psychology and Artificial Intelligence. In the model there is a memory, Central Processing Unit, problem-solving programs, and flow charts. The flow chart in Figure 4 is well known to teachers and shows that writers create texts by jumping between these stages:

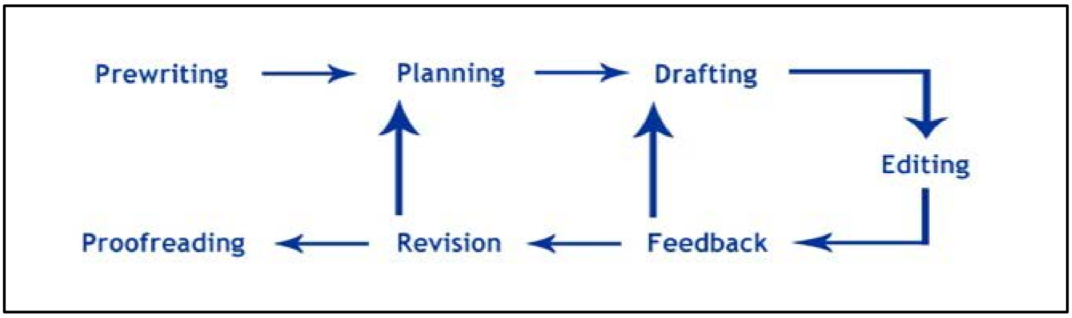

Figure 4. A flow chart of the writing process.

Process approaches tell us that writing is about discovering and formulating ideas as we create personal meanings. The flow chart shows us that:

- writers have goals and plan extensively.
- writing is constantly revised, often even before any text has been produced.
- planning, drafting, revising, and editing are recursive and potentially simultaneous.
- plans and text are constantly evaluated by the writer in a feedback loop.

For some teachers the model helps explain the difficulties their L2 students sometimes have because of the writing task and their lack of topic knowledge and we cannot deny that the quantity and impact of the research into the writing process has been enormous. This advises teachers to:

- set pre-writing activities to generate ideas about content and structure.
- encourage brainstorming and outlining.
- give students a variety of challenging writing tasks.
- require multiple drafts.
- give feedback on drafts and facilitate peer response.
- delay surface corrections until the final editing.

Writer-oriented approaches are influenced by cognitive psychology rather than applied linguistics, emphasizing what people think about when they write rather than the language they need to do it. For me this creates some serious problems for teaching writing (Hyland, 2003).

First of all, by over-emphasising psychological factors it neglects the importance of how context influences writing. Process tends to represent writing as a decontextualised skill as it focuses on the writer as an isolated individual struggling to express personal meanings. There is little understanding of the ways language is used in particular domains or what it means to communicate in writing. In fact, we don't just write, we write for a purpose in a particular context, and this involves variation in the ways we use language, not universal rules.

Second, this is a discovery-based approach which doesn't make the language students need explicit when they need it. Feedback is withheld until towards the end of the process and even then teachers are often concerned about much intervention. Students are not taught the language structures of the genre they are writing but are expected to discover them in the process of writing itself or through the teacher's feedback on drafts. This might be sufficient for L1 students, but L2 writers find themselves in an invisible curriculum as Delpit (1988, p. 287) points out:

Adherents to process approaches to writing create situations in which students

> ultimately find themselves held accountable for knowing a set of rules about which no one has ever directly informed them. Teachers do students no service to suggest, even implicitly, that "product" is not important. They will be judged on their product regardless of the process they utilized to achieve it. And that product, based as it is on the specific codes of a particular culture, is more readily produced when the directives of how to produce it are made explicit.

Third, it assumes that making the processes of expert writers explicit will make novices better writers. But not all writing is the same; it doesn't always depend on an ability to use universal, context-independent revision and editing practices. Exam writing doesn't involve multi-drafting and revision for instance, and academic and professional writing is often collaborative and time constrained. Different kinds of writing involve different skills.

Finally, process models disempower teachers. This is a model of learning based on personal freedom, self-expression, and learner responsibility, all of which might be stifled by too much teacher intervention. This reduces us to well-meaning bystanders who just assign tasks and give feedback. Because language and text organisation tend to be tacked on to the end of the process as "editing," rather than the central resources for constructing meanings, students are given no way of seeing how different texts are written for particular purposes and audience. So while a process approach will help novice writers to become more effective at generating texts, this cannot help them understand what their readers expect to find in those texts.

Reader-oriented Research and Teaching

Writer-oriented research sees context as the site of writing, where the writer is, what he or she is thinking of, and so on, but a final approach expands the idea of context beyond the local writing situation to the reader's context and what writers do to address the reader. When we write we choose our words to connect with others and present our ideas in ways that make most sense to them. We try and draw readers in, to influence, persuade, inform, or entertain them by a text that sees the world in similar ways to them, and we do this by using the words, structures and kinds of argument they will accept and understand.

So a reader-oriented view of writing emphases the *interaction* between writers and readers: The process of writing involves creating a text that the writer assumes the reader will recognise and expect. And the process of reading involves drawing on assumptions about what the writer is trying to do. Mike Hoey (2001) says this is like dancers following each other's steps, each building sense from a text by anticipating what the other is likely to do. This is one of the reasons why writing in English so difficult for speakers of other languages because what is seen as logical, engaging, relevant, or well-organised in writing, and what counts as evidence, irony, conciseness, and coherence, are likely to differ across cultures.

It is the unfamiliarity of these expectations that often makes writing in a foreign language so difficult. What is seen as logical, engaging, relevant, or well-organised in writing, and what counts as evidence, irony, conciseness, and coherence, are likely to differ across cultures. Some cultures favour deductive forms of writing, setting out the main point then adding support, while others prefer an inductive approach, getting to the point eventually; some are more formal than others, some more impersonal. Culture isn't the only explanation of course—we can't simply read off the ways students are likely to write on the basis of assumed cultural preferences or vice versa—we can't, for example, identify a Singaporean writer by his or her linguistics choices in English. But it is clear there are different ways of organising ideas and structuring arguments in different languages and this can have implications for teachers.

Research suggests, for instance, that compared with many languages, texts in English tend to be more explicit about structure and purposes with constant previewing and reviewing of material, to be less tolerant of digressions, and to use more sentence connectors (such as *therefore*, *in addition*, and *however*). For Clyne (1987) this is because English makes the writer rather than the reader responsible for clarity and this is very different from German, Korean, Chinese, and Japanese where the reader is expected to dig out the meaning. The writer compliments the reader by not spelling everything out and the text is more complex with less explicit signalling, but in English the onus is on the writer to set things out so they can be easily understood. So by looking at large numbers of samples, we can see the ways that texts are typically expressed by particular groups based on their usual ways of relating to readers.

Considering readers means looking at the ways writing is used by social groups and the concept of a *discourse community* is important here as a way of joining writers, texts, and readers together. Discourse communities have been defined in different ways, so that Swales (1990), for instance, sees them as having collective goals, while Johns (1997) suggests they have common interests, rather than goals.

Discourse community continues to be a problematic idea, often laying too much stress on what people share rather than the disputes and differences that occur in all communities. People have different commitments, stakes, and statuses in a community and these are not accounted for, nor is it clear how “local” such communities are. Are all writing teachers a community? All teachers? Members of a university department, a discipline, or just a specialism? But discourse community has been very influential in researching and teaching writing, particularly in EAP and ESP, showing us how writing works in different disciplines and why, for example, the kinds of essays we need to teach physics students look very different from those needed by students in history.

For teachers this means that different disciplines value different kinds of argument and set different writing tasks.

- In the social sciences, for instance, synthesising multiple sources is important, while in science, describing procedures, defining objects, and planning solutions are required.
- In post-graduate programmes, engineers give priority to describing charts, while business

studies faculty require students to compare ideas and take a position.

- In undergraduate classes, lab reports are common in chemistry, program documentation in computer science, article surveys in maths, and project reports in social sciences.

A reader-oriented approach, therefore suggests that instead of basing teaching on our impressions of writing, we need to study texts carefully and look for what features are used to engage different readers, helping them to understand that there are different patterns for different contexts and genres. I will mention just three ways which have potential for achieving these goals.

Genre Portfolios

It is important that students study a number of text examples to encourage reflection on similarities and differences. Ann Johns (1997) advocates using "genre portfolios" which require students to write a range of genres and then collect them together in a folder for assessment. Figure 5 shows a mixed-genre portfolio for secondary school students in Singapore.

An argumentative essay.
Why did you organise the essay in this way? What phrases or parts of the essay do you particularly like? Are you satisfied with this? Why or why not?

A research-based library project (All notes, drafts and materials leading to the final paper).
What difficulties did you encounter writing this? What did you learn from writing it?

A summary.
Why did you select this particular summary? How is it organised? Why is it organised like this? What are the basic elements of all the summaries you have written?

A writer's choice.
What is this? When did you write it? Why did you choose it? What does it say about you?

An overall reflection of the portfolio (A letter to the teacher integrating the entries).

Figure 5. A genre portfolio with reflective questions.

Essentially, the purpose of portfolios is to get a more accurate picture of students' writing, what they can do and how they can vary their language for particular purposes and readers. But they have a consciousness raising function by getting students to think about similarities and differences between genres as learners can be asked to write a reflection on the texts and on what they learnt.

Comparative Tasks

A second approach is to give students comparative tasks. These are excellent devices for raising students' awareness of language features and how they change with readers. For instance, comparisons can be made between:

- How a particular feature is used in writing a genre in English with how students use it in their L1, encouraging them to notice and reflect on similarities and differences.
- Compare the advice they find on a feature in language textbooks with actual target texts. Perhaps looking at what they say about using personal pronouns or hedges and then seeing how expert writers use them in the target genres.
- Compare how a feature like boosters or "you pronouns" varies across two genres.

Audience Analysis

Finally, students can be encouraged to think about who their readers are and what they need from a text. White and Arndt (1991) in Figure 6 suggest a simple checklist to sensitize students to the importance of attending to shared knowledge with an example response to a letter of complaint.

A	B	C	D
What do I know about the topic?	What does my reader already know about it?	What does my reader not know?	What is my reader's attitude likely to be?
Customer bought some biscuits. There was something hard in one of them.	As for A	What the company will do about it, eg., apologise, refund the price.	Customer is probably very annoyed. She will expect compensation.

Figure 6. An audience awareness prompt for a letter of adjustment.

Conclusion

I have tried to introduce and critique the major frameworks that are used to look at writing and at the same time to argue that writing isn't just words on a page or the activity of isolated individuals creating personal meanings. It is *always* a social practice, influenced by cultural and institutional contexts. What this means for writing teachers is that we need to become researchers of the texts our students will need and the contexts in which are likely to need them. And then, through our classroom activities, to make the features of these texts as explicit as we possibly can.

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Current Perspectives on Publishing in International Journals

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Introduction

This article is based in part on a presentation I gave at the 2013 JACET Convention about publishing in the journal *TESOL Quarterly*, which I co-edited from 2009–2013. I'm also drawing on the session which opened the JACET convention, where Ken Hyland (co-editor of the journal *Applied Linguistics*) and I discussed our perspectives on current trends in TESOL research and publication. My purpose is to share information, insights, and suggestions related to the journal publishing process in the hope of demystifying that process and providing authors with input that will help prepare them for the publishing experience.

With constantly increasing pressure in many countries for academics to publish their work, especially in "top-tier" English language journals, for such purposes as being granted a doctoral degree, seeking a faculty position, and being promoted to higher academic rank, there is a need to provide an updated look at what publishing in such journals entails. To achieve this purpose, I'll address several issues and questions that arise in discussions of these matters during "how to publish" sessions at conferences (where journal editors share their thoughts on such topics) and among journal editors in our conversations with each other.

Selecting a Publishing Site

Success in academic publishing begins with the crucial decision of *where* to send one's work, a decision that I fear is often not taken seriously or carefully enough. This is not a simple decision and should never be taken lightly, as a poor decision will result in an unhappy outcome. Here, I'd like to share a comment that I've perhaps made more than any other as both a journal editor and a reviewer for various journals: "Good manuscript, but wrong journal." What I mean here is that authors often fail to see which journal would be the best fit for the manuscript they've written. It's essential to *know* the available journals before making the submission decision. For example, be aware of whether they focus on research-based work only, on pedagogically-oriented work, or are open to both. In the case of *TESOL Quarterly*, for instance, it's rare to see non-empirically based work published as full-length articles. This is generally the case among the top-tier journals. It's also important to know about the kinds of topics journals prefer. Journals have their own target audiences and will look to publish work that appeals to their particular audience. Hence, a very good empirical study may be rejected simply because the topic is too narrow or too remote to be of interest to that journal's readership. Hence, try to determine who the primary target audience is. This should be apparent from the articles being published, and the journal's website may contain information to this effect.

What you need to seek is the best "fit" for the work you've done, as opposed to simply trying to publish in the most prestigious journal in the field, or the one with the highest impact factor, only because of its status. Such journals are likely to have very low acceptance rates, and your work might not fit what they're looking for. Your chances of being successful will increase when you have the right alignment between your work and the journal to which it is submitted. In my experience, it's best to decide on the journal you will submit to *before* even writing an article. In this way you can tailor what you write, and how you write it, relative to that journal's expectations and nuances.

The comments above lead to my second point, which is to know your work and understand the nature of its appeal. Don't allow a mismatch to occur between the kind of work you've done and the journal to which it's submitted, as this is a recipe for a rejection of the manuscript. You may have to settle for a "lesser" journal in terms of reputation or impact factor, but the right fit between what you've done and who's reviewing increases your chances of meeting your fundamental goal of having your work published.

A third point I want to make here, and one that draws from the second point, is that you should take some time to consider whether your manuscript works better as a journal article or a book chapter. Chapters in edited volumes *are* read and cited, and they can make an impact on their field. Thus, it's wise to keep a close eye on calls for proposals that appear in journals and on listservs, as well as at conferences. You may find that what you're working on is in fact a better fit for an edited collection of papers. Speaking of calls for proposals, look for those tied to special, guest-edited issues of journals as well. Some work may be a close fit with the theme of a special issue, and as a result it may have a better chance of being accepted for publication in a special issue than in a regular one of the same journal. Most top-tier journals publish special issues (e.g., *TESOL Quarterly* has one every year), and, in addition to perhaps having a better chance of seeing your manuscript accepted for a special issue, you'll find that articles in such issues tend to be cited a good deal because the special issue has drawn close attention to an important topic.

A fourth point I want to address in this context is that of the various publishing options some journals offer. It may not be necessary, or desirable, to submit a full-length article. Some manuscripts are more effective in shorter, more condensed form. *TESOL Quarterly*, for example, offers such options as "Brief Reports and Summaries" (shorter research-based pieces) and "Forum" (short, discussion-oriented manuscripts intended to provoke new thoughts or discussion on a topic of interest and importance in the field). These articles are read with interest and can be cited frequently, and the competition for publication is considerably reduced, as far fewer authors submit such manuscripts.

To sum up, it's essential to be *strategic* when attempting to publish your work, and being strategic begins with the crucial decision about where you wish to submit your work. Don't allow journal reputations and impact factors to cloud your judgment of the nature of your work and where it would best fit. My experience, as an author and a journal editor and reviewer, is that those who publish more often are very good at knowing *where* to send their work.

Read and Adhere to Submission Guidelines

Here I want to address an issue that is a sore point among journal editors and one that is remarkably easy to address. One of the most frequent complaints I've heard among journal editors (and reviewers) is that authors ignored the journal's specifications in terms of length of manuscripts, citation style to be used, guidelines for the handling of tables and figures, and so on. This is a regular source of amazement and confusion to editors. Journals provide detailed guidelines for the submission of manuscripts; these can easily be found on their website or perhaps inside the journal itself. Before not only submitting a manuscript but also deciding where to submit, study the submission guidelines for the journal(s) you're considering. This information can be surprisingly helpful. For example, you may find that a certain journal of interest to you only accepts articles of shorter length, while the nature of your work requires that you write a longer manuscript. You need to know this before deciding where to submit your work.

An important aspect of this issue is the fact that top-tier journals are now receiving far more manuscripts than was the case in the past. It's safe to assume that any top-tier journal in the domain of TESOL/applied linguistics receives a few hundred to several hundred manuscripts per year. Hence, the competition for acceptance is tougher than it's ever been. In this publishing climate, adhering to submission guidelines takes on added meaning. With so many manuscripts being submitted, they may be rejected without any peer review process simply because they're far too long, or too short, to cite a few possibilities related to submission guidelines. A careful reader of journals would be aware of the length expectations before making a submission decision so as to ensure that the submissions guidelines are being observed. Here it's also worth remembering that top-tier journals usually have space restrictions (a certain number of pages per issue) and only publish a small number of manuscripts per year (for example, *TESOL Quarterly* typically publishes only 20-25 full-length articles per year). Meanwhile, as noted earlier, more authors than ever before are submitting manuscripts. These factors can lead to very rapid rejection of manuscripts that fail to adhere to submission guidelines, regardless of the quality of the work. The guidelines are there for good reasons, and editors expect authors to read and follow them.

Understanding the Review Process

For a variety of reasons, the process by which manuscripts are reviewed has changed significantly in recent years, and it's important for authors to be aware of these changes. Historically speaking, in the case of TESOL/applied linguistics, the journals generally received manageable amounts of manuscripts. As a result, the review process could unfold over a reasonable period of time. We face far different circumstances nowadays, and the changes that have occurred have important ramifications for today's authors.

One important change is that, to return to a point made earlier, the number of authors has increased dramatically, especially as more individuals have earned (or are pursuing) higher degrees and seek or hold positions which require publications. On a closely related note, the number of countries from which authors come has also increased greatly. On the other hand, while the total number of journals in our field has probably increased a good deal, especially with the advent of online journals, the number of top-tier journals has not changed much. The critical mass of such journals remains very small. The net result is that there are now far more scholars competing for what remains a limited number of publishing opportunities in these journals.

A significant ramification of the factors just noted is that the burden on manuscript reviewers has become enormous. Top-tier journals will only want the top scholars to review their manuscript submissions, and there's a finite number of such scholars/reviewers. This means that, compared to the past, these individuals receive far more review invitations than used to be the case. Well-known scholars may well receive a handful of such invitations in a typical month. These come from both the top-tier and other journals. There are two important outcomes of this situation. First, this means that journals are now competing fiercely for the services of the same reviewers, and these individuals can only accept a small number of the invitations received. Second, and closely related to the previous point, there is now a very common phenomenon which many journal editors call "reviewer overload." Faced with the constant arrival of review invitations, and completing as many reviews as is reasonably possible amidst their demanding schedules, these reviewers eventually reach the point where they simply cannot review for periods of time, or greatly reduce the number of invitations they accept.

What this means for authors is that the review process is almost certain to run much longer than was the case in the past. When there were fewer authors and manuscripts, reviewers were more inclined to accept review invitations, and this meant that the review process could play out over a few months. That is rarely the case today. A journal editor may well have to issue several review invitations before finding the number of reviewers required by their journal's review policy. Time must be allowed for invited reviewers to decide whether to accept an invitation, and if they decline the invitation, other reviewers must be identified and contacted. Each time this happens, the review process is lengthened. If several potential reviewers decline, as is common these days, it may well take an editor at least a few to several months just to locate reviewers. Then the reviewers need sufficient time to complete their reviews. Since these individuals may well have a number of invitations to act upon, it can take much longer than in the past for reviews to be submitted. It also seems (anecdotally speaking) that major differences in opinion among reviewers are more common than in the past. These split decision situations necessitate having another review(er) to resolve the split, thereby further increasing the length of the review process.

The net result is that authors must now expect the review process to last several months, however inconvenient and frustrating that may be for them. At the same time, with more authors and more manuscripts in circulation, and limited publishing space available in journals, the competition for acceptance is much more demanding than in the past. All of this means that (a) authors must understand and respect the burdens faced by journal editors and reviewers, and (b) they must be exceptionally patient as the review process plays out. And they must bear in mind the increasingly lower acceptance rates that are the norm these days.

The situation just described is one that no-one likes, especially journal editors, for whom this is an ongoing and deeply frustrating occupational hazard. This is not to minimize the negative effects on authors. However, an author is experiencing it once at a time, while for journal editors the situation occurs over and over again (indeed, on a daily basis). They will typically have numerous cases in which the review process is taking much longer than they would like. What they (and authors) need to keep in mind is that reviewers, who are already very busy with their daily responsibilities, review for free. They generously and selflessly donate their time for the sake of the profession, and under ever more demanding circumstances. Meanwhile, journal editors must rely on the goodwill of these individuals who are so much in demand. This often leaves them in a very tight and uncomfortable spot between anxious (and sometimes angry) authors on one side and overburdened reviewers on the other.

Given the circumstances just described, it’s even more important for authors to make the right decision as to where they submit their work. In the past, authors would receive a review decision in a few months. As a result, they could revise a manuscript and submit it elsewhere a few or even several times per year. That is not true nowadays. With the review process lasting many months, resubmissions will occur less frequently, thus making it more important for the initial submission to be a successful one, which comes in part from selecting the right journal for the initial submission.

Nonnative English Speaker (NNES) Issues and Good Writing

One of the most common perceptions that journal editors encounter among authors is that reviewers are biased against NNES writers and their writing. An underlying assumption here is that the reviewers are all native speakers of English (NES) and will employ native English speaker norms during the review process. It seems safe to say that there was a time when some reviewers were indeed especially critical of the writing of NNES authors and reflected that view in the review comments they wrote and perhaps the recommendations they made. However, in my experience, this is rarely the case nowadays. First, today's reviewers are aware of, and sensitive to, debates about the unfairness of imposing native speaker norms on review criteria. As a result, they emphasize the kind of criteria that would be expected: quality of research design, effectiveness of analysis/interpretation of results, and the potential for the manuscript to make a contribution to its field, not the quality of the English. In short, what matters most is whether the research is good. Second, it is far more likely nowadays that reviewers themselves are NNES. As a result, they, too, will be sensitive to fairness issues when evaluating manuscripts. They, like NES reviewers, know that various writing-related issues can be dealt with at a later stage. They will also be especially appreciative of the value of having more NNES authors publishing.

A related point to be noted is that authors should consult a journal's list of editorial board members. This is usually available in the journal itself and perhaps on its webpage. Upon reviewing this list, they'll find that top-tier journals will have numerous NNES board members and will seek a good balance of reviewers among "center" and "periphery" countries or regions of the world. There is far greater diversity today in this regard than was the case in the past, and this helps ensure that the review process will be a fair one for NNES authors.

An important point that emerges here is the need to understand the criteria journals employ during the review process. Here it is valuable to seek out such information, which is usually readily available. For example, on its website, *TESOL Quarterly* provides detailed descriptions of its specifications and expectations for research within various research paradigms. This is the kind of information reviewers will bear in mind when reviewing for a specific journal. A key part of their job as a reviewer is to determine whether a manuscript is a good fit for the journal to which it was submitted, as opposed to employing some universal and decontextualized set of standards. In other words, they review relative to that particular journal. Thus, it is incumbent upon authors to familiarize themselves with those standards and to understand their importance in the review process.

The bottom line is that journals are interested in good research. Good writing is important, to be sure, but writing can be revised, whereas the research can't be changed. If the research is strong and the manuscript makes a contribution to the field, journal editors will find ways to make the writing work well, and reviewers will bear in mind that this is the case.

Understanding the Editor's Job

It's extremely important for authors to understand the situation editors find themselves in when dealing with manuscripts. First, they are expected to uphold the standards and expectations of the journal they represent. Second, they must be respectful of what reviewers have said about a particular manuscript, even if their own judgment of a manuscript differs. These points may seem obvious. There's a third one that isn't obvious but is just as important. This is the confidential remarks intended only for the editor.

Those authors who review for top-tier journals will know that there are two dimensions to the commentary process. One is the comments directed toward and made available to the author(s) of a manuscript. The other is comments only the editor sees. Because these are confidential remarks, they may be much franker in tone and more critical than those the authors see. Here it is not uncommonly the case that these remarks give the editor a different sense of the manuscript than what is seen in the commentary available to authors. From an editor's perspective, this is extremely important feedback that offers a truer picture of what the reviewer has in mind.

When making a manuscript decision, then, the editor may be privy to and guided by evaluations invisible to authors. This is an important point to bear in mind when an author reads reviewer comments which cast the manuscript in a more favorable light than what the editor sees. Authors will be understandably unhappy and confused when they receive a decision that seems to run counter to what the reviewers apparently felt about the manuscript. In these circumstances, they must remember the additional input an editor may possess, input that cannot be shared with the author(s) due to its confidential nature. It's also essential to understand that the decision as to whether a manuscript should be accepted is the editor's alone; recommendations from reviewers are just that: recommendations. Reviewers don't decide whether something will be published. The editor also reads manuscripts closely. Furthermore, not all reviews are of sufficient quality. Indeed, an editor may decide that a review is not thorough or fair and thus place less value on it when making a publication decision. This information will not be conveyed to authors, but it will be taken into consideration by the editor, along with her/his own reading of the manuscript. Thus, when an author sees a decision that doesn't align with what the reviewers said and recommended, it must be remembered that the editor is also deeply involved in the process and is the only person who has the full picture regarding a manuscript.

It should also be noted that, in this age of reviewer overload and the staggering numbers of manuscripts being submitted, that a full peer review process is not a guarantee. During their initial screening of a manuscript, editors are increasingly likely nowadays to make a decision about a manuscript instead of allowing the full review process to take place. This is an editor's prerogative, and editors are extremely perceptive readers of manuscripts. This makes it all the more important for authors to adhere to submission guidelines and to produce work that is a good fit for the journal to which it's been sent. Journal editors nowadays are, of necessity, increasingly cautious and prudent when it comes to deciding whether a manuscript merits a full review process.

Editors certainly strive to be fair to authors, but the decision making process runs in two directions at the same time: toward the authors and toward the reviewers. In these circumstances, editors may find themselves caught in the midst of a complex dilemma that cannot be explained to authors. The combination of the visible and invisible discourse of the review process generates a complex dynamic authors need to be aware of and to respect.

Plagiarism and Multiple Submissions

Here I want to address two issues of importance to editors, and thus to authors as well. First, nowadays, in discussions of academic publishing, the matter of plagiarism is certain to emerge at some point. Concern about it is a recurring theme among authors, particularly those breaking into the field, and it's a frequent (and often intense) topic of conversation among journal editors.

One important point to understand about plagiarism is that, at least among top-tier journals, detection of it is remarkably easy these days. These journals usually have access to sophisticated new software that not only points out occurrences of what may be inappropriate textual borrowing, but also of the original sources the questionable material comes from. This information is contained in "originality reports" that editors consult. Newly submitted manuscripts are routinely subjected to plagiarism checks before the review process begins, and these checks generate the originality reports just mentioned. The software is hardly infallible; material that is in fact acceptable is sometimes misidentified, but such mistakes are easily detected. More importantly, if plagiarism has occurred, it *will* be identified. To ensure fairness to authors, editors analyze the nature of items pinpointed by the software before determining the appropriate course of action, but originality reports which indicate large amounts of questionable textual borrowing are almost certain to result in rejection of the manuscript.

As a number of scholars have pointed out, plagiarism is a cultural issue as much as it is a textual one, and this complicates matters considerably. What is acceptable in one culture may be unacceptable in another. In the final analysis, there is no perfect definition of plagiarism to work with, and editors understand this. Then, too, there are some “gray areas” when it comes to determining whether something should be called plagiarism. For instance, what about authors recycling portions of their *own* work? It’s not uncommon, in cases where authors are preparing more than one manuscript based on the same study, for them to cut and paste at least some of their description of the study’s methodology, so that much of the same language is reused. From their point of view, authors may well feel that this is acceptable, and so will be surprised when editors express concerns about such a practice (which originality reports will identify). Another common occurrence is for authors to provide the appropriate citation information, but to copy the language of the original source without the use of quotation marks. Here the presence of the citation information alone is insufficient; readers need to know who actually wrote the words being read. However, authors may well feel that they were being responsible simply by indicating the original source of the words being used.

So, what does all of this mean? First, authors need to understand and account for the kinds of information now available to editors via the software mentioned earlier. Second, while being aware of this information, authors should not become obsessed with a fear of committing plagiarism. Concerned, yes; fixated, no. While different notions and practices connected to textual borrowing (and thus plagiarism) will perhaps always exist, plagiarism as defined by journals is usually avoidable as long as efforts are made to handle citation situations carefully. Hence, there’s no need to panic or feel unnecessarily anxious. This leads to the third point: look closely at how other authors have addressed citation situations in their publications. These examples will be revealing and helpful. Fourth, bear in mind that it’s just as easy to plagiarize one’s own work as it is to do so with the work of others. The rules that apply to the use of work produced by others apply equally to your own writing.

A second important issue to be addressed has to do with simultaneous submissions of manuscripts. While editors recognize that there can be genuine misunderstandings as to what constitutes plagiarism and will try to account for that possibility as much as they're able to do so, they will be absolutely rigid and uncompromising when it comes to authors submitting the same (or virtually the same) manuscript to more than one journal at the same time. This simply will not be accepted. And here it needs to be remembered that the scholars who review for top-tier journals are likely reviewing at least a few manuscripts at the same time. And since it would be likely that their work was cited in a manuscript being reviewed, they may receive more than one invitation to review the same manuscript. In these circumstances, they will quickly notice the similarity and immediately notify the editors involved. This is not an uncommon occurrence, and the outcome is never a happy one for the author(s) involved.

When submitting a manuscript, authors will usually be asked, via a checklist of submission-related items, whether they have followed a journal's policy of submitting the manuscript only to that journal. There must be honesty in responding to this item, and of course the policy must be respected. Also, authors need to remember that the community of available reviewers for manuscripts on various topics will be small, and so simultaneous submissions will very likely be detected and reported. Thus, it is essential to be patient and submit a manuscript to just one journal at a time.

Responding to Reviewer and Editor Comments

Another of the commonly asked questions among authors is how they should respond to feedback received when they have been encouraged to revise and resubmit a manuscript. This is not an easy matter to resolve, especially when there are conflicts between reviewers in terms of changes they've asked for, or when it's clear that a reviewer has, for whatever reason, not fully understood or carefully read the manuscript and thus asked for changes that are in fact unnecessary. Then, too, authors may simply disagree with the reviewers on some points. The long and short of the matter is that, between the reviewers' comments and those made by the editor, an author is confronted with a lot of input, and some may not be easy to decode or to respond to.

An important perspective to bear in mind in these circumstances is that the editor will usually highlight the most important recommendations for revision. The editor's decision letter provides important directions on how to approach the revision process, and it is these that matter most. In cases where the editor has not addressed conflicts or contradictions among the reviewers' comments, the wisest course of action is to contact the editor and seek clarification. Authors also need to read reviewer feedback with extreme care (and more than once). The comments and suggestions made are not all equal in importance, and authors need to detect which matter most, and which are interesting but not essential recommendations for change. They also need to understand that they aren't obliged to make every change recommended. When submitting a revised manuscript, authors are expected to also provide a letter detailing the changes made in response to specific suggestions from reviewers, and to provide a rationale for why some suggestions were not acted upon. Editors (and future reviewers) can be persuaded that some reviewer suggestions were not appropriate. Thus, authors have a voice, and an important one, in the revision process. However, it would be extremely unwise to ignore or reject recommendations made by editors.

What Happens to Revised and Resubmitted Manuscripts

Something authors often misunderstand is what actually happens when a manuscript is revised and resubmitted. What must first be understood here is that resubmission carries no promise of acceptance. Unless otherwise indicated by the editor in the decision letter governing the previous submission, the new version will also be sent out for peer review. In these circumstances, the editor will likely seek the original reviewers of the manuscript. However, there may be times when an editor wants a fresh set of eyes to look at the revision, and so will invite one new reviewer. The editor may also be dissatisfied with one of the previous reviewers and thus want a replacement.

Nowadays, given the reviewer overload problem mentioned earlier, there's a strong chance that at least one of the original reviewers will not be available to review the revision. In addition to being busy reviewing other manuscripts, a reviewer may also not want to look at a new version. Many journals have a system in which, upon submitting a review, reviewers are asked if they would be willing to review the resubmission. It's not uncommon for them to say no to this question.

Authors often ask if the reviewers of a revision are aware that it is a revision and have access to the previous reviews. Answers to these questions may vary between journals, but typically reviewers will know that they're reading a resubmission and will have access not only to the reviews, but also to the author's letter in which the responses to reviewer and editor comments are contained. Thus, reviewers are usually well informed upon reviewing a resubmission. All of this information must be considered carefully when revising a manuscript, since the new review process will be influenced in some ways by what took place before. In particular, authors who paid little or no attention to reviewer suggestions are not likely to be seen in a positive light by the new reviewers (or the editor).

Communication with Editors

Many authors ask about what is and isn't possible or advisable with respect to contacting editors. In a time when the review process now runs much longer than used to be the case, and when the pressure to publish, especially in top-tier journals, is greater than ever before, authors are understandably anxious about the status of their manuscripts. Also, as noted earlier, they may be uncertain as to how to respond to reviewer and editor comments. There are also many cases in which authors are uncertain as to whether a manuscript is suitable for a particular journal. Let me briefly address each of these situations.

With respect to the status of a manuscript, authors should proceed with great caution. While their desire to know where things stand is entirely understandable, inquiries about a manuscript are not likely to be well received by editors. Though it is true that a manuscript may occasionally "slip through the cracks" and get lost in the review shuffle, this is extremely unlikely nowadays, when online manager systems do a thorough job handling manuscripts. If the review process is taking what seems to be an inordinately long time, authors need to understand that there are valid reasons for this. First, as discussed earlier, the search for reviewers may take much longer than hoped. Second, it may well be necessary for an editor to seek an additional review after receiving the original one(s) due to significant differences in how the reviewers evaluated the manuscript. This entails another reviewer search, as well as the wait necessary while that review is completed. Editors, in addition to holding their regular, full-time jobs and doing the work of editor at the same time (and thus not always able to act as promptly as they'd like), are at the mercy of the reviewers and can only wait for reviews to arrive. Furthermore, once they do have the reviews, editors may discover that a complex picture has emerged, and time and care are necessary in crafting a helpful and appropriate decision letter.

Given these circumstances, and as understandably difficult as it may be for them, authors need to be patient. Angry or impatient messages to editors will not speed up the review process and will not be received joyously by editors. If inquiries are sent at all, they need to be polite and respectful, and it helps to acknowledge the difficult circumstances under which editors operate.

With respect to wondering whether a manuscript would be a good fit for a journal, authors once again need to be cautious about their communication with editors. Sending an entire manuscript to an editor and asking for an opinion as to its suitability for that journal is very unwise. First, the editor is being asked to read an entire manuscript that has not been submitted to the journal while also dealing with those which have been submitted. This is asking too much of an editor. In addition, the editor is placed in an awkward position, in that telling an author that the manuscript could be submitted to that journal may be incorrectly read as a sign that the manuscript has a good chance of being accepted for publication. Editors should not be placed in such a difficult position. The better course of action is to send a short description of the manuscript, or perhaps an abstract, to the editor. This approach doesn't make unacceptable demands on the editor's time and energy, and the editor's suggestion as to submission will not be misinterpreted.

Concluding Remarks

In this article I have addressed some (probably not all) of the topics and issues that authors raise most often in discussions with editors during "how to publish" sessions at conferences or in one-to-one conversations. The information and suggestions shared reflect what I have heard most often from other journal editors and have shared myself in the circumstances just described.

I think it's safe to say that the world of academic publishing today is far more complicated than it used to be, and perhaps far more unsatisfactory in some respects. Frustration abounds. For instance, authors often complain, with justification, about how much is involved in simply submitting a manuscript. Ironically, at a time when technology should make things easier than before, it may be that things were simpler in the days when authors mailed hard copies of manuscripts to editors. Negotiating with the rigid demands of online manager systems is not a pleasant task, especially for those making the attempt for the first time. Second, with the number of manuscript submissions growing every year and reviewers feeling increasingly overburdened, the review process is rarely short, unless conducted only by the editor (in which case the decision is not going to be a favorable one). Third, authors are under ever increasing pressure to publish, particularly in top-tier, English medium journals. Amidst that pressure, authors are competing with far greater numbers of other authors for a relatively small number of publication spaces in journals. As such, the need for high quality in the work submitted and patience during the review process is paramount, and yet not easy to manage.

However, all is not lost. Indeed, these are also exciting times for academic publishing. From an editor's perspective, it is much easier nowadays (thanks to technology) to identify and contact reviewers, and the online manager systems provide tremendous convenience and efficiency in the treatment of manuscripts. From an author's perspective, today's technology allows accepted manuscripts to appear publicly much faster than in the past via the "early view" option on journal websites. While not appearing in an actual issue of a journal for some time, an accepted manuscript is now accessible to readers relatively quickly; there is no need to wait one or two years to have an article in circulation (and thus cited much faster than in the past). Some journals are also adopting a "video abstracts" function by which authors can record comments about their manuscript. This allows them to share information not available in the article itself. In addition to giving authors an exciting opportunity to discuss their work and so add meaning to it, this option provides readers with additional material that can be beneficial in their reading and their use of the article. Also worth noting is the online availability of journals, thus expanding the audience available to read published work.

My hope, then, is that authors will be excited (all things considered) by the new world of publishing we operate in. I have already noted some of the advantages and opportunities that exist today. It's also worth remembering that, as discussed earlier, there is now much greater diversity in terms of those who review manuscripts. Journals are increasingly likely to have both NES and NNES reviewers (including as members of their editorial advisory boards), and to have representation among "periphery" as well "center" scholars.

I hope, too, that authors will understand and appreciate the challenges faced by journal editors, who certainly strive to provide feedback and decisions in a timely and responsible fashion, but who perform their duties under increasingly challenging circumstances.

Let me close by noting one more positive point, and that is the increased number of opportunities, like this one, for editors to demystify the world of publishing and for authors to learn what publishing entails. Such opportunities have not always existed. In this regard, it was impressive to see the 2013 JACET convention offering three sessions devoted to academic publishing, and for the JACET organization to commission this article. They are certainly to be applauded for this.

Selected Papers

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Questionnaire Survey on Business Meetings:
English Proficiency and Difficulty

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Abstract

Business meetings in English are becoming common in increasingly globalized companies located in Japan. The present study is part of a larger research project that used an online questionnaire to investigate how business meetings in English are conducted in those companies with focus on the problems of business meetings in English and the relationship to English proficiency of the meeting participants. The data set used for the present study was that of 277 business persons who were working in managerial positions for companies in Japan at the time of survey. The data was analyzed quantitatively by calculating Pearson's *rs* for the English proficiency of the business sections/divisions surveyed and the difficulty or magnitude of problems they perceived at their meetings in English. The results showed that business sections with higher English proficiency have less difficulty and fewer problems in their English at business meetings and that English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF) also

prevails in the respondents' companies. Although English proficiency is not a "determining" factor for difficulty or problems in business meetings, results still indicate its importance for solving those difficulties and problems.

Keywords: business meeting, CEFR, difficulty, BELF, online questionnaire

Introduction

Globalization is not a new trend but is recently being enhanced with a rapid increase and multiplication of connections across different people and organizations via the Internet (Friedman, 2007). International business is one of the fields that have been most affected by this trend. In those business activities, linguistic and communication skills often play an important role in business activity, which has made it imperative to understand linguistic and communication needs in the business field with large scale surveys (Barbara, Celani, Collins, & Scott, 1996; Hagen, 1999; Koike, Terauchi, Takada, & Matsui, 2010; Tsuji & Tsuji, 2012).

Survey research has pointed out that oral skills in business encounters are one of the key aspects much in need of support. Barbara et al. (1996) found "meeting" is one of the most frequent linguistic events in Brazilian companies that are often conducted in English, as well as "written report" and "memo" (Barbara et al., 1996, p. 64). Hagen (1999) used the data of the survey in the EU's Elucidate Project (1995-1997) and that of the U.K. Department of Trade and Industry's *Language Study* and examined the language needs perceived by 1,261 small and medium-sized companies in the U.K., France, Germany, and Spain. He found the key interfaces for the companies' international business activities were mainly oral and aural: telephoning, negotiating, and meetings (Hagen, 1999, p. 16).

Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2011) researched the perceptions of business people on the use of English in the context of international business communication, given that more and more people are now communicating with other non-native speakers in English because it is their shared language resource (i.e., lingua franca). Nine hundred eighty-seven business professionals with five international companies located in Finland responded to the online questionnaire. The main objective of the survey was to confirm the components that the authors hypothesized as necessary for what they termed global communicative competence (GCC). Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta found that (a) businesspersons tend to put more emphasis on getting things done as compared to communicating with the other party in a highly proficient way; (b) understanding the other person's culture is important in international business; (c) to get business done, business persons tend to think they need to be direct or clear in expressing their thoughts as compared with being polite, and so on. They propose a new conceptual framework, GCC, which consists of four constituent competencies: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. The authors argue that these multiple competencies are implemented flexibly and complementarily to manage international business communication at hand and that education needs to consider this framework, especially when preparing students for business encounters where the use of what they term English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF) prevails (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2011, pp. 259-260; see also Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, & Kankaanranta, 2005).

In Japan's context, there is a large-scale survey on business people's use of English, which was conducted by a research group led by Ikuo Koike and Hajime Terauchi (Koike & Terauchi, 2008; Koike et al., 2010). They conducted a questionnaire survey on English use of 7,354 business persons working for companies whose headquarters or branches were located in Japan. They also asked about their English proficiency by requesting that respondents indicate their recent score in the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), which enabled the researchers to stratify the participants' language needs according to their English proficiency level. The results showed that even highly proficient people might have difficulty speaking and presenting their views on complicated issues in English (Koike et al., 2010, pp. 51-65). Tsuji and Tsuji (2012) conducted a needs analysis of English use on 1,000 business persons working at manufacturing companies in Japan. Their results showed that discussions, presentations, meetings, and videoconferences were difficult for business persons, though they thought that those modes of communication were relatively high in their importance (Tsuji & Tsuji, 2012, p. 406).

Though not having been approached with a large-scale survey, business meetings have been one of the topics that were frequently studied in the field of English for Business Purposes (EBP) after a critical comment of St John's (1996) on the then dearth of research of that topic in EBP. Approximately 17 years after her remark, many business meeting studies were done in a variety of discourse analytic approaches, partly motivated by genre-analytic methodology (Bhatia, 2004; Swales, 1990). Nickerson (2005), in a review of previous studies on business discourse in the preceding decade, commented that negotiations, meetings, e-mail, and business letters were the topics most often researched in that period (Nickerson, 2005, p. 369).

One recent and unique contribution to this research field is Handford's (2010) corpus approach to the spoken data of business meetings. This corpus consists of 912,734 words compiled from 64 business meetings conducted in English at 26 companies located in European countries and Japan. Informed by the previous studies of business discourse, he used in his analysis four categories for the relationship of the speakers: peers and manager-subordinate for internal meetings, on the one hand, and contractually-bound and non-contractually-bound relationships for external meetings, on the other hand. Other categories used in his analysis are six major meeting purposes: reviewing, planning, giving and receiving information/advice, task-/problem-oriented, buying/selling/promoting a product, and negotiating. He used these categories to examine if there was any difference in terms of frequency of words or their collocations across those categories. For instance, he found that the word "negotiate" and its variants appeared differently between internal meetings and external meetings, being used in the situation of giving information/advice in the former, while being used to signal a conflictual situation in the latter (Handford, 2010, pp. 11-12).

There is also small-scale survey research on business meetings in a European context. Rogerson-Revell (2007) made some preliminary survey research on English use in business in the European context. She conducted a questionnaire on the nature and role of English used in business settings and collected data from 43 participants at an annual meeting of an EU-related organization. Rogerson-Revell found that native speakers (NSs) of English sometimes felt comprehending non-native speakers' (NNSs) pronunciation is challenging; that NNSs regarded speaking as the most difficult skill; and that NNSs did not necessarily feel communicating with NSs or NNSs particularly challenging.

Although business meetings have been extensively studied from both qualitative (e.g., discourse analysis) and quantitative (e.g., corpus analysis) points of view and there is some small-scale survey, there is as yet no published report of large-scale survey research with a specific focus on English use in business meetings. The current study is intended to add additional empirical findings to the previous studies via the survey method on business persons' perception of difficulties for business meetings in English in the context of companies located in Japan.

The following questions have guided us throughout this study: Is English proficiency related to the difficulty in business meetings? If so, how strong is that relation?

Method

Survey and Participants

We conducted an online survey. The pilot survey was first conducted in the fall-winter period of 2012. The final version of the questionnaire was open to online access from February 5 to April 30, 2013. Two hundred and seventy-seven participants agreed to answer the questionnaire after being asked to do so individually by our research team and their associates. Six hundred and thirty-two participants answered the questionnaire after being asked by an e-mail invitation that was sent to 267,228 subscribers of a portal website for English learning. We call the data collected from the 277 participants "closed" as the sampling of them is conducted within acquaintances of the research team; on the other hand, we call the data collected from the 632 participants "open" as the invitation e-mail was sent to a far wider population, who are qualified only as subscribers of the portal website.[1] The average time needed for answering was 32 minutes. We will use only the closed data set for discussion in the present study, partly for spatial reasons, and partly because most characteristics found thus far in both data sets are similar.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 21 questions, among which there were 19 closed and 2 open questions. The main focus of those questions was the difficulties that the members of the business section to which the respondent belongs would encounter in business meetings conducted in English. The closed questions also asked about various demographic data such as the field and type of their corporations, the business section to which the respondent belonged, the respondents' position, and so on. For the purpose of this research, we focus on the questions concerning the English proficiency of the respondents' business section, the linguistic backgrounds of business meeting participants, and the various types of difficulties that respondents may encounter in those meetings.

English Proficiency

The average English proficiency was estimated by the respondents about the current members of their own business sections using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale. The respondents were also asked to answer the English proficiency level that they hoped their colleagues would achieve in years to come.

The descriptors used were those under the heading "FORMAL DISCUSSION AND MEETINGS" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 78).

Types of Meetings and Participants

As different types of meetings have different characteristics and procedures (Handford, 2010), we asked respondents if they had any of the following types of meetings: "Internal Meetings," "Meetings with Contracted Partners," and "External Meetings." Respondents were asked to indicate the first language and number of meeting participants speaking that language: (a) Japanese, (b) English ("Inner Circle"), (c) English ("Outer Circle"), and (d) Other ("Expanding Circle"). These categories are based on Kachru's classification of English speakers (Kachru, 1985).

Difficulty and Magnitude of Problems

The difficulty that respondents encounter in their workplace was rated on a 4-point Likert scale (*strong difficulty*, *some difficulty*, *not much difficulty*, and *no difficulty at all*) for each item. We first asked respondents to rate how difficult it was to manage meetings for each of Handford's six meeting purposes: reviewing, planning, giving and receiving information, task-/problem-oriented, buying/selling/promoting a product, and negotiating (Handford, 2010, p. 13). We then asked about the respondents' perceived difficulties on 10 different stages of meeting processes. We asked about the applicability for each description of 10 communication problems, 10 linguistic problems, and seven psychological/mental issues to their own workplace. The magnitude of these problems was rated using a 4-point Likert scale (*very applicable*, *applicable*, *not applicable*, and *not applicable at all*). We also asked the respondents to elaborate on the difficulties with one open question that followed the above closed questions, although the results of open questions will be examined in another study of this research project.

Results

Respondent Profile

More than 50% of the questionnaire respondents had used English for their business for over 10 years, and 40% had been abroad for their business for at least one year. The top five industries for the respondents' industries were 42 (15.2%) in telecommunications/IT, 35 (12.6%) in electronics, 22 (7.9%) in automobiles, 21 (7.6%) in machinery, and 19 (6.9%) in precision machinery. Many of the respondents were in managerial positions at their company: 22 respondents (7.9%) were board members, 79 division managers (28.5%), 91 department chiefs (32.9%), 26 section heads (9.4%), and 54 senior staff (19.5%). Of the respondents and the top five industries, 70 (25.3%) belonged to the human resources/education department, 45 (16.2%) to sales/marketing, 21 (7.6%) to corporate planning, 17 (6.1%) to technology/design, and 16 (5.8%) to research/development.

Linguistic Backgrounds of Business Meeting Participants

An average "internal" business meeting in English consists of the following members with respect to their mother tongues and native countries: 7.6 participants (*SD* = 28.32) were Japanese native speakers; 2.5 participants (*SD* = 3.19) were English native speakers ("Inner Circle"); 3.1 participants (*SD* = 2.28) were English native speakers ("Outer Circle"); and 2.1 participants were native speakers of the other languages ("Expanding Circle"). An average business meeting in English "with contracted partners" consists of 2.8 participants (*SD* = 3.24) whose native language was Japanese, 2.1 participants (*SD* = 2.53) English ("Inner Circle"), 1.2 participants (*SD* = 1.85) English ("Outer Circle"), and 1.4 participants (*SD* = 1.64) another language ("Expanding Circle"). An average "external" business meeting in English consists of 2.7 participants (*SD* = 3.26) whose mother tongue was Japanese, 1.9 (*SD* = 2.47) English ("Inner Circle"), 1.1 (*SD* = 2.18) English ("Outer Circle"), and 2.0 (*SD* = 2.90) another language ("Expanding Circle"). Although the data shows high variance, only around

40% of participants at every business meeting in English were native English speakers (see Figure 1).

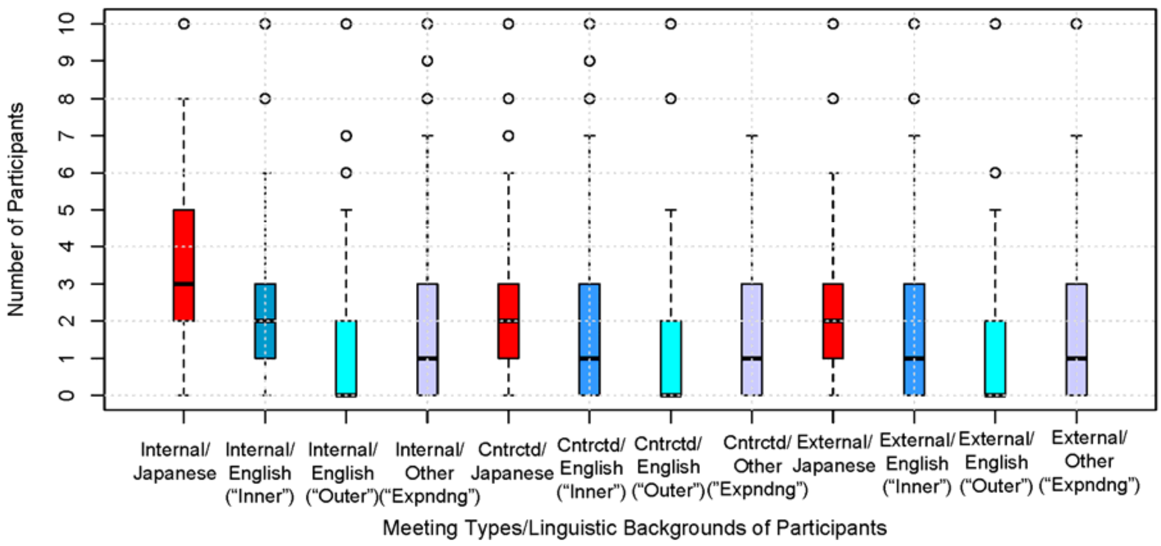

Figure 1. Composition of meeting participants in terms of their linguistic background for three types of business meetings (internal meetings, meetings with contracted partners, and external meetings).

English Proficiency

One hundred and three respondents (37.2%) estimated that the current CEFR level of the members of their business section/division was B1. Fifty-one respondents (18.4%) estimated that their business section/division was B2.1; 43 (15.5%) estimated A2.2; 40 (14.4%) estimated A2.1; 30 (10.8%) B2.2; 6 (2.2%) C1; and 4 (1.4%) C2. As for the CEFR level that they want their colleagues/subordinates to achieve in the years to come, 88 respondents (31.8%) considered B2.2 level as the goal of their business section/division's improvement. Sixty respondents (21.7%) answered C1; 60 (21.7%) B2.1; 32 (11.6%) C2; 26 (9.4%) B1; 9 (3.2%) A2.2; and 2 (0.7%) A2.1 for the expected levels of their business section/divisions. Most respondents indicated that their business section/divisions were expected to improve their English proficiency regarding meetings by one to three CEFR levels (see Figure 2).

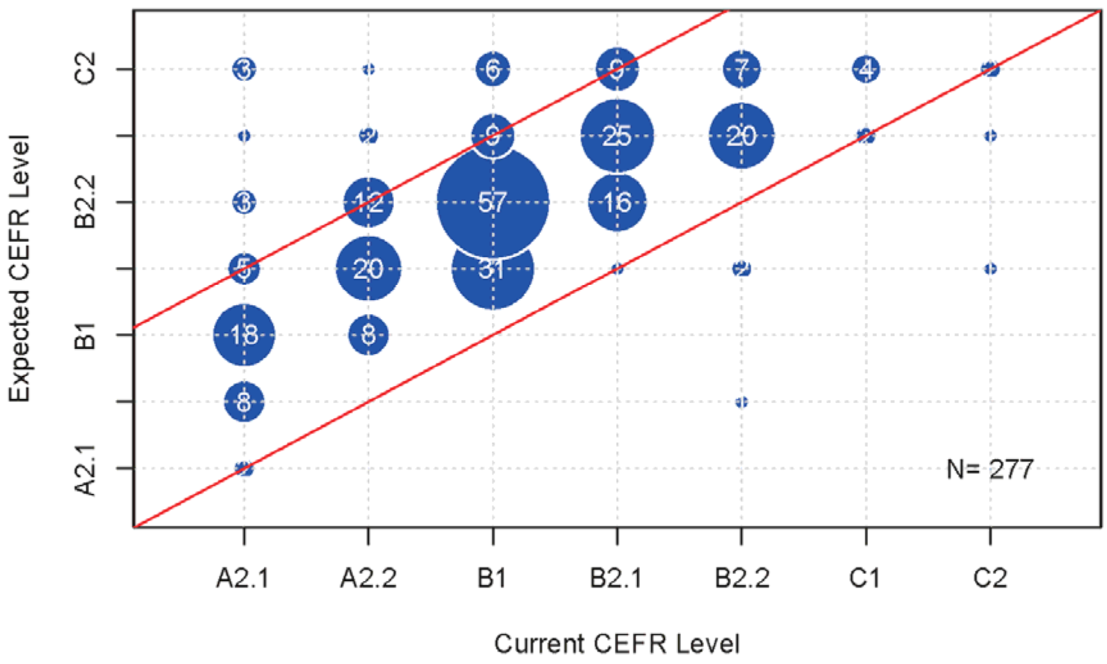

Figure 2. Bubble chart indicating the number of respondents for each CEFR level (current and expected). The lower diagonal line is the no improvement expected line, the bubbles above which represent the respondents expecting their colleagues/subordinates' improvement of English proficiency to any extent. The upper diagonal line is the 3-level improvement expected line.

Correlation Between Proficiency and Difficulties/Problems

To see if there is correlation between the English proficiency and difficulty/problem in business meetings, we calculated a Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient *r* for the CEFR level and each item of difficulty or problem in business meetings. To calculate the coefficients, a 7-point scale of CEFR level (C2, C1, B2.2, B2.1, B1, A2.2, and A2.1) was mapped onto the numerical scale from 7 to 1, with the highest level being the largest value.

On the other hand, the difficulty in business meetings was given values from 4 to 1, with 4 being the highest in difficulty (*very difficult*) while 1 being the least difficult (*not difficult at all*).

CEFR and difficulty: meeting purposes. A Pearson's r was calculated for the current CEFR level and the perceived difficulty for each of six different types of purposes, reviewing, planning, giving and receiving information/advice, task-/problem-oriented, buying/selling/promoting a product, and negotiating, in each of three different types of meetings, internal meetings, meetings with contracted partners, and external meetings (see Table 1). For internal meetings, difficulty in planning, giving and receiving information/advice, and task-/problem-oriented showed the (negative) correlation of medium effect size with the CEFR level (Cohen, 1992).[2] The correlation between CEFR level and difficulty in buying/selling/promoting a product or negotiating was not statistically significant (i.e., $p > .05$), probably because of small sample sizes (33 for the former; 49 for the latter).

On the other hand, for meetings with contracted partners, difficulty in all the six meeting purposes showed negative correlation of medium effect size with the CEFR level, with buying/selling/promoting a product being relatively high in effect size ($r = -.49$; $r^2 = .24$).

For external meetings, giving and receiving information/advice, task-/problem-oriented, buying/selling/promoting a product, and negotiating were the ones which showed a medium-sized correlation with CEFR level.

Table 1

Correlations Between the Current CEFR Level and Reported Difficulty for Different Meeting Purposes in Three Different Types of Meetings (Closed Group)

	Internal Meeting			Meeting with Contracted Partner			External Meeting		
	n	*r*	95% CI	*n*	*r*	95% CI	*n*	*r*	95% CI
Reviewing	173	-.27**	[-.41, -.13]	95	-.40**	[-.56, -.21]	61	-.19	[-.42, .06]
Planning	146	-.30**	[-.44, -.15]	68	-.38**	[-.56, -.15]	30	-.26	[-.56, .12]
Giving and receiving information/advice	163	-.35**	[-.48, -.21]	99	-.33**	[-.49, -.14]	77	-.33**	[-.52, -.12]
Task-/problem-oriented	147	-.31**	[-.46, -.17]	85	-.34**	[-.51, -.14]	64	-.40**	[-.58, -.17]
Buying/selling/promoting a product	33	-.29	[-.58, -.05]	53	-.49**	[-.67, -.26]	68	-.31*	[-.51, -.08]
Negotiating	49	-.27	[-.51, .09]	80	-.32**	[-.51, -.11]	87	-.33**	[-.51, -.13]

Note. CI = confidence interval. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

CEFR and difficulty: meeting stages. The CEFR level scale, on the one hand, and the difficulty in each of 10 different stages of a business meeting, on the other, showed the negative correlation to some extent (see Table 2). The correlation of a medium effect size were found in the pairs of CEFR level scale and difficulty in each of the following stages: explaining/reviewing background/agenda, understanding explanation/report, proposing solutions, confirming unclear points, responding to questions, exchanging ideas, organizing different ideas and building consensus, and making decisions. The correlations between CEFR level and the difficulty in preparing presentation materials and preparing handouts, both of which are the stages normally with less spoken interactions, were those of a small effect size.

Table 2

Correlations Between the Current CEFR Level and Reported Difficulty in Different Stages of Business Meetings of All Types (Closed Group)

	r	95% CI
Preparing presentation materials	-.29**	[-.40, -.18]
Preparing handouts	-.28**	[-.38, -.16]
Explaining/reviewing background/agenda	-.39**	[-.49, -.29]
Understanding explanation/report	-.38**	[-.48, -.27]
Proposing solutions	-.41**	[-.50, -.30]
Confirming unclear points	-.37**	[-.47, -.26]
Responding to questions	-.37**	[-.47, -.26]
Exchanging ideas	-.43**	[-.52, -.33]
Organizing different ideas and building consensus	-.40**	[-.49, -.29]
Making decisions	-.35**	[-.45, -.24]

Note. N = 277. CI = confidence interval. $^{**}p < .01$.

CEFR and problems in running meetings. All the pairs of CEFR level and the degree of problems in running business meetings showed some negative correlations (see Table 3).

Table 3

Correlations Between the Current CEFR Level and the Degree of Problem in Running Business Meetings (Closed Group)

	r	95% CI
Misunderstanding statements/ideas	-.26**	[-.36, -.14]
Not understanding the details	-.27**	[-.38, -.16]
Not understanding subtle nuances	-.30**	[-.40, -.18]
Speaking with English mistakes	-.35**	[-.45, -.25]
Not explaining with clear points	-.33**	[-.43, -.22]
Not explaining the details	-.32**	[-.42, -.21]
Not conveying subtle nuance	-.33**	[-.43, -.22]
Not showing emotions	-.34**	[-.44, -.23]
Not facilitating the meeting effectively	-.29**	[-.39, -.17]
Not gaining trust	-.24**	[-.35, -.13]

Note. N = 277. CI = confidence interval. **p < .01.

The correlations of medium-sized effects were those of CEFR level, on the one hand, and each of the following problems, on the other hand: not understanding subtle nuances, speaking with English mistakes, not explaining with clear points, not explaining the details, not conveying subtle nuance, and not showing emotions. CEFR level and each of the following problems showed a correlation of small effect size: misunderstanding statements/ideas, not understanding the details, not facilitating the meeting effectively, and not gaining trust.

CEFR and problems of language factors. All the pairs of CEFR level and the degree of language-related problem showed some correlations (see Table 4). Specific expressions for meetings/jobs, understanding English spoken fast, and understanding various pronunciations were those whose correlation with CEFR level was of a medium effect size. Vocabulary/technical terms, informal expressions for small talk, polite expressions, and humorous expressions showed a small-sized correlation with CEFR level.

Table 4

Correlations Between the Current CEFR Level and the Degree of Problem of Language Factors (Closed Group)

	r	95% CI
Vocabulary/technical terms	-.23**	[-.34, -.12]
Informal expressions for small talk	-.28**	[-.39, -.17]
Polite expressions	-.28**	[-.38, -.17]
Specific expressions for meetings/jobs	-.33**	[-.44, -.23]
Humorous expressions	-.26**	[-.37, -.15]
Understanding English spoken fast	-.33**	[-.43, -.22]
Understanding various pronunciations	-.33**	[-.43, -.22]

Note. $N = 277$. CI = confidence interval. **$p < .01$.

CEFR and problems of psychological/mental factors. A Pearson's *r* was calculated for the CEFR level, on the one hand, and each of five problems related to psychological/mental factors, on the other, for three different meeting types (see Table 5). For internal meetings and meetings with contracted partners, there was only one pair that showed a medium-sized correlation for each meeting type: CEFR level and lack of confidence in their own English proficiency. For external meetings, however, both hesitative/lack of positive attitude and lack of confidence in their own English proficiency showed a medium-sized negative correlation with CEFR level.

Table 5

Correlations Between the Current CEFR Level and the Degree of Problem of Psychological/Mental Factors (Closed Group)

	Internal Meeting (n = 217)		Meeting with Contracted Partner (n = 157)		External Meeting (n = 148)	
	r	95% CI	r	95% CI	r	95% CI
Hesitative/lack of positive attitude	-.20**	[-.32, -.06]	-.28**	[-.42, -.13]	-.32**	[-.45, -.16]
Lack of sustained concentration	-.07	[-.20, -.07]	-.06	[-.21, -.10]	-.10	[-.26, .06]
Not good at managing turn-taking	-.16*	[-.29, -.03]	-.25**	[-.39, -.10]	-.26**	[-.40, -.10]
Lack of confidence in their own English proficiency	-.30**	[-.41, -.17]	-.32**	[-.45, -.17]	-.39**	[-.52, -.24]
Not managing unexpected situation	-.19**	[-.32, -.06]	-.23**	[-.38, -.08]	-.21**	[-.36, -.05]

Note. CI = confidence interval. *p < .05. **p < .01.

Discussion

The results of our questionnaire indicate that English proficiency plays a key role in reducing the difficulty and the magnitude of problems in many aspects of business meetings. Even though they were not a determining factor, which should be marked with a correlation of high effect size ($r^2 > .25$, or $r < -.50$), many aspects showed medium effect sizes ($.09 < r^2 < .25$, or $-.50 < r < -.20$), which means that business sections with higher English proficiency tend to have fewer problems in their meetings conducted in English. This would strongly suggest that high English proficiency could be part of the solution for overcoming many problems in business meetings.

Nevertheless, English proficiency is not a key factor for all difficulty/problems for business meetings in English. Its effect seems to become more salient when business persons are handling a task with relatively higher complexity in a real-time situation. Across three types of meetings (internal meetings, meetings with contracted partners, and external meetings), for example, meetings with such purposes as reviewing and giving and receiving information/advice were relatively not high in difficulty, while meetings with such purposes as task-/problem-oriented and buying/selling/promoting a product were rated high in difficulty (see Table 1). It is probably because reviewing and giving and receiving information/advice could often be a one-sided activity where one party provides information of relatively fixed or planned content to the other party, while meetings with the purpose of task-/problem-oriented or buying/selling/promoting a product can often be highly interactive with unexpected or unplanned consequences. The same tendency can be observed in the correlations between CEFR level and difficulty in different stages of meetings. Preparing presentation materials and preparing handouts can be done with some linguistic assistance well before the meeting, which must have led to relatively low difficulty compared with more interactive and improvisational stages such as exchanging ideas, organizing different ideas and building consensus, and so on (see Table 2).

The problems related to linguistic factors tend to be mitigated as a business sections' average English proficiency increases. Thus, Table 3 shows the magnitude of an obviously linguistic problem, speaking with English mistakes, is high in its (negative) correlation with the sections' English proficiency while not gaining trust shows a relatively low correlation.

Among the linguistic problems, specific expressions for meetings/jobs, understanding English spoken fast, and understanding various pronunciations were relatively salient, which is in accordance with the above observation that English proficiency plays a more important role in handling the tasks with relatively higher complexity in a real-time situation. The high magnitude of problems of listening skill was pointed out in Rogerson-Revell (2007), where she indicates that the increase of so-called BELF communication has made this problem more salient. The same observation would be applicable to our study.

Finally, English proficiency would be mostly irrelevant to the improvement of psychological/mental aspects of English business meetings except the problem directly caused by the lack of English proficiency (lack of confidence in their own English proficiency). There is, however, a tendency that the correlations are relatively high in external meetings compared with those of the other two types, which might indicate that the improvement of English proficiency can be of help in situations with some degree of psychological/mental pressure.

Although our results indicated that BELF is also increasingly common in English business meetings in Japanese companies as in other regions (Ehrenreich, 2010; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005), English proficiency seems to play an important role in improving many aspects of business meetings in English in those companies. The question is why this is so. Although we need to see individual cases with some qualitative approach to answer this question, the linguistic environment of Japan, which is usually categorized as English as a Foreign Language (EFL), would have caused this difference. As Figure 2 shows, B1 was the level that the most respondents estimated to be the level of their business sections/divisions. Another study that was conducted with approximately 7,354 business persons shows that business persons in Japan consider B2 or C1 to be the minimum level that they need to achieve before conducting international business negotiation effectively (Koike & Terauchi, 2008, p. 42). Although this needs to be empirically proven, it is probable that business persons in Japan think that there is a more substantial gap between their current English proficiency and their future goal as compared with the thinking of business persons in the European case studies about the gap of their own.

The present study has focused mainly on the relationship between English proficiency and perceived difficulty/problems in business meetings using a quantitative approach. However, obviously, further qualitative examination using the data of open questions from the questionnaire or conducting follow-up interviews with questionnaire respondents is needed. For spatial reasons, however, this part of the research will be the focus of a future study to follow the present one.

Acknowledgement

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comments and suggestions. None of the above, however, is responsible for any remaining errors in this paper, which are entirely our own.

Notes

[1] We reached the "closed" group with the help of our direct acquaintances and business clients in various business fields and several JACET ESP-SIG members who have various backgrounds in terms of their relationships in the business communities. Although we did not select the respondents to the questionnaire in a random or stratified manner, we still consider that the group reflects a wide range of professionals in Japan's business world to some degree. The response rate of the "open" groups was very small as only 632 out of 267,228 responded to the questionnaire. This is one of the reasons why we regard the open dataset secondary to the closed one in the present study. However, we still have confidence in thinking that these two groups offer a legitimate base for analysis, because there have been few surveys in the business fields with around 1,000 participants from various business communities.

[2] Cohen (1992) defines effect sizes for Pearson's product-moment coefficient r in the following way: $r^2 = .01$ is a small effect; $r^2 = .09$ is a medium effect; and $r^2 = .25$ is a large effect (Cohen, 1992, p. 157; see also Larson-Hall, 2010). Not knowing any other literature on this topic that gives us a better indication of effect sizes of correlation, we will follow Cohen's definition here.

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Listening Comprehension Problems Among Two Different Groups and the Degree of Effectiveness to Which a Listening Skill is Applicable to Their Problems

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Abstract

This current study diagnoses listening problems in lower and higher groups of university students. It also tries to examine whether any method is effective in overcoming their problems. The participants took an immediate listening recall test and several months later, they did an equivalent reading test to compare how different these two comprehension modes are. In this way, the two tests were used to check the extent to which their listening problems were related to perceptional deficits. The data was analyzed and scored by using idea unit analysis. As a result, there was a wide margin between listening and reading comprehension, especially in the higher level group. Based on the former and latter parts of discrimination rates, the former part of speech showed a significantly lower perception. To address this problem, a verb tense confirmation strategy was initiated to check whether it could contribute to improved listening comprehension in both groups. The results showed that the effect was only favorable in the lower level group. Therefore effective listening strategies depending on a person's level of proficiency will be needed for them to acquire appropriate listening skills.

Keywords: listening problems, speech perception

Introduction

In a native language, listening is the very first communicative project that all human beings are destined to engage in. We have familiarized ourselves with various types of speech and subtle differences in sounds between words. Due to these accumulated layers of our rich language experience, it is unlikely that we cannot understand what people say in our native language. Since we have not learned how to listen solely through school education, we take it for granted that we can listen.

However, it is a different story in a foreign language setting. Despite paying full attention to aural input, foreign language learners may not fully understand what they hear. Listening comprehension is far from complete compared to reading comprehension even after many years of language learning. Because of its uncontrollable and unexpected nature, foreign language learners place listening comprehension as the most difficult skill of all the areas (Field, 2009; Vandergrift, 2004). Yet, listening takes a longer time for communication than any other language skill (Gilman & Moody, 1984). What we say depends on what we hear. If we cannot listen well, we will not be able to fully participate in our communicative activity in a meaningful way. Furthermore, listening time increases as the school years advance (Feyten, 1991). Considering the fact that listening is the learning skill with the longest time we are involved with, poor listening skills will surely narrow our further opportunities to learn even in academic fields. It is obvious that greater listening ability is the great supplier for speaking, reading, and writing.

In this paper, I try to explore possible ways to help learners' listening deficiencies. In order to help learners to become more effective in listening, we first need to know how acoustic input can be developed into meaningful interpretation, and at which stage of listening comprehension, problems may occur. Knowing specific problems at each listening comprehension stage can give us a hint to help learners.

Literature Review

Listening Comprehension Problems

Goh (2000) identified 10 listening problems among EFL listeners based on three stages of listening model, namely, perception, parsing, and utilization proposed by Anderson (1995). In the perceptional stage, learners segment acoustic input into words. Then, in parsing, the next phase, words are formed in light of grammatical knowledge. Finally, meaning is built based on the knowledge and experience learners have. In Goh's study, half of the problems that students reported in their diaries are related to the perception level, which is the first stage of listening comprehension. Roughly speaking, two problems are posed when we think of perception deficits. Firstly, lack of vocabulary; learners do not have enough word knowledge to cover the text to which they are listening. In this case, expanding vocabulary should be prioritized to overcome the problem. Secondly, phonological problems; learners cannot recognize the words they hear. This second problem is probably the main reason that makes EFL learners feel that listening is much harder than reading, claiming that they cannot recognize words they know. It is reported that more than 75% of lower-intermediate learners cannot recognize many common words in an authentic narrative story (Field, 1998).

Difference Between Reading and Listening Abilities

Unlike reading, listening is quite a shaky ability for many EFL learners who have spent much time for learning vocabulary and grammar. In other words, it implies that knowledge of vocabulary and grammar does not affect listening ability so much. This unbalanced ability between listening and reading surely can dampen learners' motivation. Evidence shows that though grammatical knowledge and vocabulary are significantly correlated with listening, they are not strong predictors to account for variance in listening comprehension (Mecartty, 2000; Vandergrift, 2006). Whereas, there has been ample evidence that vocabulary is strongly correlated with reading (e.g., Laufer, 1992). Furthermore, in the study of van Zeeland and

Schmitt (2013), non-native speakers arrived at 75% correct rates on the listening test with multiple choices for a passage with word coverage around 90%. It would be assumed that their actual understanding of the text would be much lower if those listeners were asked to show what was actually said.

One disadvantage in listening is its uncontrollable nature. Learners can control reading, but not listening. In written English, each word is entitled to stand on its own in a piece of text. Unrestricted power of freedom is given to readers if time permits. It is readers' own decisions and intentions as to how much attention span is directed to a particular piece of text. So readers can skim or skip where in-depth understanding is not required. They stay in a part where perusal is necessary. Readers can adjust their reading techniques to meet their demands. Even less skilled readers tend to pull together content words such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives out of the sentence to build the meaning, ignoring function words. This may lead to successful meaning building in reading to some extent. However, that is not the case in listening. In listening, absence of function words can create a difference in meaning. Even one preposition and one auxiliary verb are critical to meaning building (Field, 2009). This happens in about a second, so instantaneous judgment is necessary to achieve accurate comprehension.

Another disadvantage is its unpredictable nature. Utterance can be changed depending on the phonological conventions. In spoken English, each word is not pronounced in the same hierarchy. It is rather connected to one another (assimilation) or some sounds are dropped (elision) in natural speech. Therefore, EFL learners frequently perceive a few words as if they are like one word, or vice versa (Field, 2008; Wu, 1998). These phonetic variations are definitely the most difficult obstacle for EFL learners when they recognize aural input. In fact, assimilation does contribute to listening comprehension breakdown (Koster, 1987). The phonological aspects of English are very natural to native speakers but very problematic to EFL learners in Japan. We rarely have a chance to learn the spoken manners through our

English classes at school. Listening instruction based on phonological features is one of the most important but most ignored areas in English education. Considering the limited time to learn English in an EFL setting like Japan, acquiring phonetic discrimination skills should be undertaken in the first place.

Two Ways of Processing in Listening

When we try to understand spoken input, two types of processing are used. One is top-down processing based on pre-existing knowledge. Another is bottom-up processing based on decoding linguistic input (Tsui & Fullilove, 1998). In much of listening comprehension, there has been a general consensus that a good combination of top-down and bottom-up processes is vital for successful listening (e.g., Vandergrift, 2004). However, it is extremely difficult to make this happen especially for less skilled listeners. It should be aimed for, but the actual situation that most EFL listeners are facing is not such an ideal one. The share of either one or the other over two processes is quite dependent on the purpose of listening and the learners' language proficiency. If a question asks you to answer the main idea of the passage, you may use more of the top-down process. On the other hand, if a question asks you to answer a specific item, the bottom-up process may be more active.

Language proficiency can also affect how well these two processes can be integrated (Bacon, 1992; Vandergrift, 1997). The shift and dominance over one way or the other is directly linked to a learner's listening comprehension rate of the ongoing spoken message (Tsui & Fullilove, 1998). If learners have no problem about what they are listening to by using bottom-up processing, top-down processing may serve as a supplement to refine and edit their comprehension. However, if they stumble with incoming data, they rely more on top-down processing to compensate for missing parts of the spoken message. This biased use of processing could lead to information distortion especially among less skilled listeners (Bacon, 1992; Field, 2004; Long, 1990; Wu, 1998). This is exactly the problematic part about top-down dependency. As Long (1990) indicated, affluent background knowledge could harm listening comprehension by adding what is not actually stated. Tsui and Fullilove (1998) also report that comprehension rates drop when listeners face a text contradicting general schema. Less skilled listeners jump onto a conclusion without judging what is heard in light of top-down knowledge (Bacon, 1992; Graham, Santos, & Vanderplank, 2008; Wu, 1998). In order to build a successful interpretation, listeners are required to constantly adjust initial interpretation according to the subsequent input (Field, 2008; Tsui & Fullilove, 1998). Continuous negotiation of meaning has to be made as they listen along. In this sense, the role of bottom-up processing is indispensable for precise understanding of the whole message. Enhancing bottom-up skills will surely contribute to overall listening comprehension ability. Therefore, it is highly meaningful to explore whether there is any tactic available to learners and whether it is effective to overcome their perceptional problems.

Method

Research Questions

In this paper, I tried to investigate the following things:

1. To identify listening problems among two different levels of learners.
2. To investigate whether a strategy appeared to be suitable to them is effective.

Diagnostic Approach to Probing Listeners' Comprehension Problems

In order to help EFL learners with their problems, a diagnostic approach for assessing them was adopted in this study. Therefore, the nature of this study is quite exploratory. Outcomes from this study have to be turned for future study. Teaching learners how to listen is very difficult and in addition care needs to be taken. Teaching strategies only limited to certain tasks or without any links to real life listening should be avoided. Otherwise, it would be a waste of time teaching and learning. Therefore, a learners' listening ability must be assessed by using an appropriate test method suitable to what a researcher wants to reveal. In this respect, choosing an appropriate test method is significant. It dictates task demands and a learners' cognitive processes, which directly affects the reliability and validity of the test (Buck, 1991). In this study, immediate written recall in learners' L1 for assessing listening ability was adopted to assess the rate of the meaning building, which is the final phase of the listening comprehension process. Knowing learners' cognitive processes in real time can give us a clear description of what is not perceived by the learners. It is assumed that this method can contribute to providing appropriate help to the learners.

Research Design 1

In order to determine listening problems as well as learners degree of comprehension, I asked participants to listen to a piece of the material and to write everything in Japanese, that is, what they thought they had understood. Every time they wrote, 20 seconds were given to them. Five months later from this test to avoid the test effects, they took the reading test which was exactly the same passage as the listening test. The same phrases and sentences in the listening tests were projected through the PowerPoint on a screen, for only the same length of time as they were given in the listening test. Each sentence on the screen disappeared after the same duration as the utterance time. For example, the first sentence in the listening script was *Norman loves sports*. The utterance time was two seconds. So it was projected on the screen for two seconds. One of the notable differences between listening and reading is the time required for processing either spoken or written input. In listening, speech rate is considered to be one of the major variables affecting comprehension degree (Griffiths, 1992). In reading, returning to the point where comprehension has not been complete is possible. Skipping easy parts also can occur. Attention and time allotment are easily adjustable to a reader's intention. In my research, I tried to eliminate those factors arising from different comprehension manners that would probably affect the difference of the scores in listening and reading. By comparing two scores on the same piece of text under equal time given, I tried to assess whether their listening problems originated from a lack of word knowledge or sound discrimination skills.

Participants. This study included 16 lower level (second year) and 28 lower-intermediate level (first year) university students. Originally, there were 28 lower and 33 lower-intermediate students in the study. Because it took almost six months to complete the data collection across the first and second semesters, more than 15 students dropped out from the research. Moreover, they had to take five different tests along the way, the numbers of the lower and the lower-intermediate students were reduced to 16 and 28, respectively.

Before conducting the study, they took the EIKEN Grade Pre-2 test to define their listening proficiency levels. The EIKEN test is a widely used English test in Japan ranging from fifth to first grade. The mean score of the lower-intermediate group was 17.3 out of 30 and the lower group score was 9.53. The lower-intermediate group mean score was significantly higher than the lower group: $t(42) = 7.75$, $p < .01$. The margin between the two scores was quite large, so the two groups were labeled as the higher group (HG) and the lower group (LG), respectively in this study.

Material. In this study, the material was composed of three passages adopted from a listening section of the EIKEN Grade Pre-2 tests. Those passages were different from the ones used in the previous test for defining the two groups. The first passage was 24 seconds comprising 50 words, the second one was 27 seconds comprised of 59 words, and the last one was 27 seconds comprising 60 words (see Appendix A). Overall, the passages were delivered at the speed of 125 to 133 words per minute. The average speech rate was considered to be slow (e.g., Griffiths, 1992). Each story did not require any background knowledge.

Data analysis. Listening and reading protocols were scored based on the idea unit analysis (Carrell, 1985). Carrell states as follows:

> Each unit idea consisted of a single clause (main or subordinate, including adverbial and relative clauses). Each infinitival construction, gerundive, nominalized verb phrase, and conjunct was also identified as a separate idea unit. (p.737)

Based on the guidelines, each item was scored as either right or wrong. Any partial credits were not given to the units. After scoring the protocols, I discovered a problem that was not clearly revealed with this rule. In the passages, persons' names (Norman, Rob, Mrs. Peterson) were extremely less recognized than the other units. Because of this, single clause units including a person's name in the data showed low percentages of the correct answers. One of the major interests in this study was to reveal specific problems of learners' listening comprehension. Against the Carrell's system, I decided to count a person's name as one unit in my data.

Thus, each answer sheet was analyzed twice by the author, with one month intervals (Sakai, 2009). The rate of the agreement for each case was more than 98%. With respect to the items in disagreement on two occasions, the markings in the second one were adopted. As Table 1 and 2 show, there was a large difference between listening and reading comprehension with quite high Cronbach's α ranging from .81 to .99. As a result, there was a huge difference between listening and reading ability in both the HG and the LG. Even though the same time was allocated for both listening and reading, the degrees of comprehension in the two modes varied.

The results from both the listening and reading tests indicated that even the words or phrases learners would have surely known in reading were unrecognized in listening. The comprehension rates in two modalities in both groups are so divided. Right after the reading test five months later from the listening test, I asked both groups whether the contents of the passages were familiar to them. None of the learners in the LG remembered that they had listened to the texts before. In the HG, only three learners reported that the passages were a little familiar to them, but their memory was not clear enough to affect reading scores.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Listening Immediate Recall Test

	Mean (%)	*SD*	Cronbach's *α*
HG (*n* = 28)	20.29 (32.73%)	7.89	.93
LG (*n* = 16)	9.38 (15.13%)	6.20	.94

Note. The full score of the test is 62. HG = higher group; LG = lower group.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Reading Immediate Recall Test

	Mean (%)	*SD*	Cronbach's *α*
HG (*n* = 28)	36.93 (59.56 %)	6.93	.81
LG (*n* = 16)	17.00 (27.42%)	10.57	.99

Note. The full score of the test is 62. HG = higher group; LG = lower group.

In sum, as we can see from the Table 1 and 2, 27% out of 59% correct answers in reading in the HG and 12% out of 27% those in the LG did not lead to meaning building due to perceptional problems. Surprisingly, both groups of learners did not discriminate almost half the known words and phrases in listening. As Field (2008) pointed out, these results indicated that the learners failed to match what they heard with their known words.

Then, I looked for units with large differences in scores both listening and reading in the two groups. It seemed very important to know what kind of known words could not be perceived in listening. Knowing their perceptional breakdown of their known words would be a shortcut to appropriate guidance for them. Then, 12 units with the widest margins in listening and reading tests from the top were picked. Because there are units in the same ranking, 12 units are listed instead of 10 units as shown on Table 3 and 4.

Table 3

Top 12 Units with Large Difference Between Listening and Reading Scores in the LG

No.	Unit	L (%)	R (%)	Dif (%)
1	Norman	0.00	68.75	68.75
2	loves sports	25.00	81.25	56.25
9	Norman	0.00	56.25	56.25
20	Rob	0.00	56.25	56.25
3	He likes	18.75	62.50	43.75
13	He needs	6.25	50.00	43.75
58	Ms. Peterson	0.00	37.50	37.50
4	to swim	62.20	93.75	31.25
11	important exams	0.00	31.25	31.25
19	after his exams	0.00	31.25	31.25
31	Rob	0.00	31.25	31.25
43	Ms. Peterson	0.00	31.25	31.25
Mean (%)/12 units		9.38	52.60	43.22
Mean (%)/62 units		15.12	26.81	11.69

Note. No. = unit number (see Appendix A); L = listening immediate recall test (percentage score); R = reading immediate recall test (percentage score); Dif = difference of percentages between tests.

Table 4

Top 12 Units with Large Difference Between Listening and Reading Scores in the HG

No.	Unit	L (%)	R (%)	Dif (%)
1	Norman	10.71	92.85	82.14
19	after his exam	3.57	75.00	71.43
22	to drive	14.28	85.71	71.43
21	started learning	0.00	71.42	71.42
20	Rob	14.28	82.14	67.86
33	to pay	0.00	64.28	64.28
28	but then	21.42	82.14	60.72
32	decided	14.28	75.00	60.72
2	loves sports	28.57	89.28	60.71
26	from his father	14.28	71.42	57.14
11	important exams	0.00	53.57	53.57
49	did not want to go	7.14	60.71	53.57
Mean (%)/12 units		10.71	75.29	64.58
Mean (%)/62 units		32.72	59.56	26.84

Note. No. = unit number (see Appendix A); L = listening immediate recall test (percentage score); R = reading immediate recall test (percentage score); Dif = difference of percentages between tests.

Comparing 12 units with large differences in scores, interesting phenomena emerged. The mean listening scores of 12 units in both groups are much lower than the mean listening scores of the total 62 units. Likewise, their equivalent reading scores in 12 units are much higher than their mean reading scores of the total 62 units. These extremely different comprehension degrees indicate that more difficult words or phrases in listening are not necessarily difficult to discriminate in reading. They are rather lexically and syntactically easier. Moreover, the HG has a much wider margin in listening and reading abilities.

However, the problems that the two groups face appeared to be different and various. The two groups had only four out of 12 units in common. None of the learners in the LG could recognize persons' names in the first appearance. They could not perceive Rob (No. 31) even when it appeared a second time. In the LG, nine out of 12 units were either subjects or subjects and verbs. This tendency may be caused by memory loss. Since less skilled learners have a limited working memory (Vandergrift, 2004), they may have forgotten the first part of speech by the time they wrote their answers. Or the first part of speech may be phonetically more difficult to discriminate than the other parts. On the other hand, in the HG those 12 most difficult units were seen everywhere in the sentences regardless of the former or latter locations. Considering the quite high level of understanding in those units in reading among the HG, their problems may have been mainly caused by lack of phonetic discrimination skills. There seemed to be a tendency that subjects and verbs were more difficult to discriminate than objects and other parts among the LG. All the units were divided into either the former part; subjects and verbs or the latter part; objects, adverbial phrases, infinitives, and others. In order to confirm whether there was any significant difference between the former and the latter parts, a series of *t* tests were conducted as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Former– Latter Part of Sentence Recognition

	Former (%)	Latter (%)	t	Significance
LG-Listening	7.11	22.15	$t(14) = 6.16$	$p < .001$
HG-Listening	24.24	40.26	$t(26) = 7.07$	$p < .001$
LG-Reading	30.38	24.24	$t(14) = 2.19$	$p < .050$
HG-Reading	61.57	59.42	$t(26) = 1.28$	*n.s.*

Note. HG = higher group; LG = lower group.

As a result, there were significant differences between the former and latter parts in listening in the LG and HG: $t(14) = 6.16$, $p < .001$; $t(26) = 7.07$, $p < .001$, respectively. On the contrary, a significant difference between the former and latter parts in reading comprehension was only shown in the LG: $t(14) = 2.19$, $p < .05$. In the HG, there was no significant difference between the former–latter distinctions in reading: $t(26) = 1.28$, *n.s*. These differences between the former and latter reading parts show that the HG have more capacity to oversee the whole sentence and grasp the meaning within the limited time, whereas in the LG, time runs out before they arrive at the last word by reading a few words at a time from left to right.

Furthermore, the listening comprehension rates in the former parts are apparently different from the ones in reading in both groups; 7% vs. 30% and 24% vs. 62%, respectively. The results suggest that these learners used different ways of processing in listening and reading. Considering the wider margins between listening and reading comprehension rates in both groups, the former parts are more difficult to decode in listening. Probably, the words in the former parts have more sound variations than the latter parts. It is assumed that the learners in both groups in this study cannot deal with phonetic variations. Summarizing all these issues, I came to the conclusion that these groups of students lack decoding skills to segment subjects and verbs. Their extremely low scores in the former part of speech directly would have led to the poor comprehension degree of each sentence. It is assumed that they would not have been able to understand the whole passages in the end.

Taking both learners' problems into consideration, it appeared to me that paying extra attention to verb tenses while listening may be effective in subject and verb segmentation. It may be familiar to some of the students through their language learning. It does not require any concrete strategy instruction under guidance. One of the difficult things in strategy training is to confirm whether a learner has actually used an instructed strategy. It is quite questionable as to whether or not the score gain in the post-test results from using it. In order to maximize the use of the strategy as well as to verify its actual use, I decided to ask learners to choose either one of the three tenses, namely, past, present, and future, every time they listened to a sentence.

Research Design 2

The sentences for the pre-test and the post-test are 15, respectively. Past, present, and future sentences with forms of affirmative, interrogative, and negative contraction were equally but randomly placed in both tests (see Appendix B and C). Time expressions which can specify tenses were excluded from the test items because these tests were conducted to make sure that perceptional decoding skills to segment subject and verb could be enhanced by paying extra attention to a verb tense each time. All the sentences were read by an American male English teacher. They were read as naturally as possible. Each sentence had from six to ten words at most. Overall, the average speed of delivery was 150 to 165 words per minute. It was somewhat faster than the previously conducted listening recall test in this study, but considered to be a little slower than the medium speech rate in the listening literature (e.g., Griffiths, 1992).

As a pre-test, participants listened to 15 sentences and wrote the first three words of each sentence. Each proficiency group was equally divided into two groups, either control or experimental based on their scores; the LG, M = 10.93 (SD = 3.67) and the HG, M = 18.85 (SD = 6.02). The following week, both the lower and higher control groups listened to another 15 different sentences and wrote the first three words in the same manner they did the previous week. The experimental groups in both the LG and HG also took the same test as the control groups. The only difference was that each time the experimental groups checked the tense of each sentence out of the three: past, present, and future as seen in Figure 1.

Write the first three words of what you heard and check one of three tenses (for the experimental groups).

Example	He	won’t	buy	過去・ 現在・ 未来 past present $\boxed{\text{future}}$

Write the first three words of what you heard (for the control groups).

Example	He	won’t	buy

Figure 1. Examples from the post-test. The above example is a test with tense confirmation check for the experimental groups. The second example is a test without tense confirmation check for the control groups.

As to marking, 1 or 0 point was given per word based on either right or wrong. I did not give any partial credit for each answer like the previous listening and reading recall tests to assess the complete perception rate in the first part of speech.

Results

Table 6 and Figure 2 show the effect of confirming verb tense to higher and lower proficiency learners. The results suggested that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the LGs: $t(14) = 2.22$, $p < .05$, showing a mild effect size ($d = .51$). Verb tense confirmation strategy did affect the score gain in listening for the LG, whereas the scores of the HGs did not create any difference: $t(26) = 0.41$, *n.s*. Thus, the effects of verb confirmation facilitated the LG. Although the participants in the LG were only 16, the mild effect ($d = .51$) of the verb confirmation strategy was somewhat promising. It also indicates that this strategy is easy for the LG to incorporate, considering the fact that only a one-time application brought its effect without any concrete guidance.

Unfortunately, it obviously did not contribute to segmenting subject and verb in the HG. This strategy may have been familiar to the HG. Although the HG also had problems concerning subject and verb segmentation, their problems were different types and levels from ones in the LG. They may not be resolved by this simple strategy. It might be necessary that other strategies rather than paying extra attention to verb tense will be needed for the HG.

Table 6

Effect of Verb Tense Confirmation While Listening

	Control	Experimental	t	p	Effect size
LG	14.00 (2.93)	18.25 (3.54)	2.22	< .05	$d = .51$
HG	22.50 (4.99)	23.93 (3.65)	.41	0.69	$d = .00$

Note. The full score is 45. The number in parentheses represents *SD*. HG = higher group; LG = lower group.

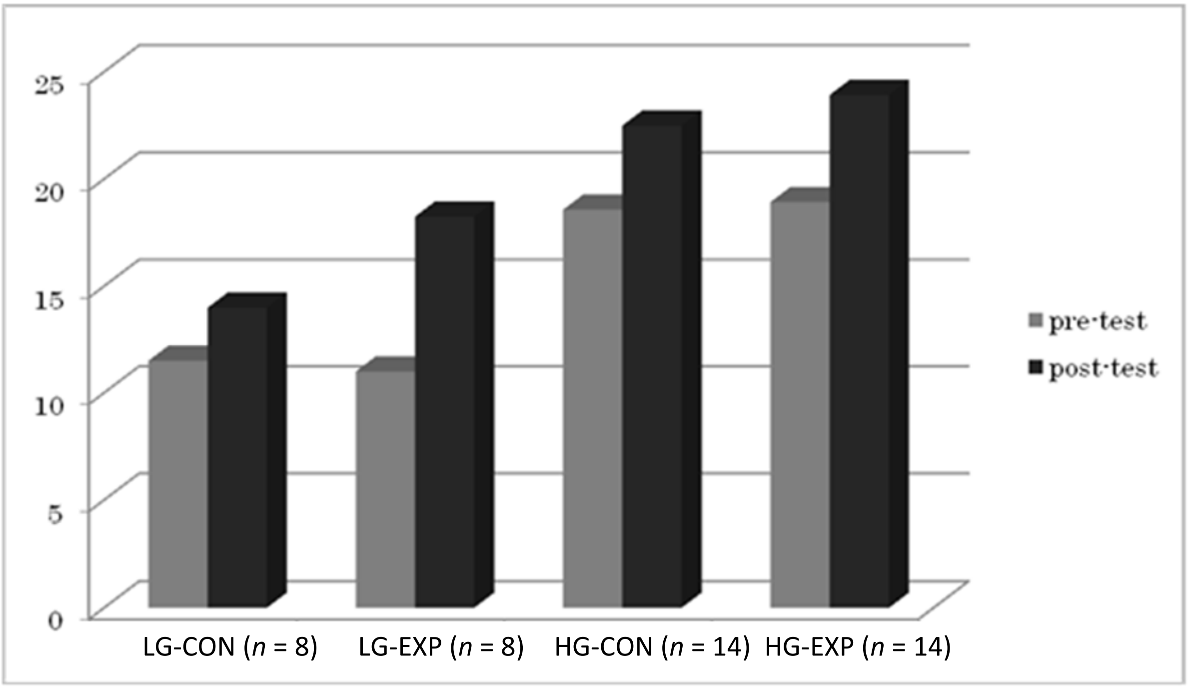

Figure 2. Mean percentage recognition rates of pre- and post- tests across LG and HG. LG and HG indicate the lower group and the higher group, respectively. In addition, CON and EXP indicate the experimental group and the control group, respectively.

Discussion

Both higher and lower proficiency learners exhibited extreme difficulty in the first part of speech in the immediate listening recall tests. One thing we have to consider is that memory loss affected written answers, especially for the LG. By the time they heard the last part of the sentence, they may have lost quite a lot of what they heard. Another possible reason is that first parts of the sentences in the passages in this study are more phonetically difficult to discriminate than the latter parts. The first parts in this study include persons' names, pronouns, and verb conjugations, which tend to create more sound change. Both groups are powerless when they deal with those phonetic variations.

A tense confirmation strategy for segmenting subject and verb was favorable for the LG, but not for the HG. The HG may have already used that strategy or they may have got used to this test style of writing the first three words. Since all the participants took similar tests in both the pre- and post- tests, the scores of the HGs may have been affected by the test effects. From a different point of view, just writing the beginning parts of speech repeatedly may be a positive effect in raising recognition among the HG learners.

Nevertheless, they need to acquire the skill to quickly understand formulaic chunking words in the first part of speech. Among the HG, the perception rate of the first three words just reached about 50%. The frequently used formulaic expressions such as *I won't go to …* and *I want to …* sound phonetically similar to EFL learners, but they are significantly different in their meanings. Without a doubt, they greatly confuse EFL learners. If learners can discriminate those phonetic variations, they are more likely to understand the message instantly. Then, their language learning will accelerate. To make this happen, they have to know the system of phonology and strategy instruction based on phonological tactics (Field, 2009). They will also need to not only listen and understand what they hear but repeat it in the same manner as it is spoken. A new phrase should be leaned and stored in their mental lexicon as one loop with orthographic, semantic, and phonological aspects, so it would get activated if either one of the three were assessed. Then, we might be able to fill the perception gaps between reading and listening. Without having the three dimensional linkage for each expression, automatized real time processing will not be acquired.

Considering the fact of only a one-time application and no actual demonstration of strategy instruction, confirming verb tense in every sentence while listening might be promising to beginning learners. It would help those learners narrow down a possible tense of a sentence and help them to match the sounds of a chunk of words with the most candidate words they know. Less skilled listeners tend to put more value on what they hear (Tsui & Fullilove, 1998; Wu, 1998). It would be helpful to exclude unlikely words they tend to pick based on the words they heard. Detailed micro strategies like this will be more beneficial to them rather than aiming at using contextual cues and linguistic decoding at the same time.

Since less skilled listeners' working memories' consumption is limited, their attention should be primarily directed to the first part of speech, which will affect the outline of the sentence.

Conclusion

The wide margins between the first and latter parts of speech in listening was a surprising finding. Unlike academic texts, conversations and stories tend to have fewer syllable words, such as pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and prepositions in the place of subject and verb. As Toya (2005) implies, it is more likely for less proficient learners to encounter sentences starting with fewer syllable words such as *I* and *she*. When those words are connected in natural speech, they are "easier to see, but harder to hear."

According to the results, tense confirmation strategy was favorable only for the LG, but not for the HG. Confirming verb tenses is one of the effective strategies that lower proficiency listeners can use. There would be more effective strategies for both lower and higher learners. Speech perception in beginning parts would be probably a problematic area for many EFL learners even after many years of language learning. This is definitely one of the most important areas that teachers have to tackle. The ability to segment subject and verb would not be earned easily. Frequent formulaic chunks of words and their corresponding sounds in connected speech should be stored as inseparable companions in a learners' spoken repertoire. Otherwise, gaps between listening and reading will not be bridged. Listening instruction should put more emphasis on step by step decoding skills incorporating phonetic elements especially for lower listeners (Vandergrift, 2004; Wilson, 2003). As Goh's (2000) findings show, many problems in the low level listeners in this study lie in their perceptional deficits.

Finally, there are some limitations in this research. Firstly, the scale of the research is too small. The interpretation of the results needs caution due to the small numbers of participants. For the next research, more participants should be included in this type of medium-term research for unexpected dropouts. Secondly, more precise analysis of listening problems based on phonetic conventions such as assimilation and elision will be necessary. Although the first part of speech is more difficult to discriminate, more precise investigation is necessary as to what are the key variables that make listening much harder. Thirdly, there should be more effective strategies relevant to learners' problems. In this study, the effect of only one strategy, namely, the verb confirmation strategy, was examined. There would be more promising strategies to help their difficulties. To raise their awareness of the relationship concerning written words and their corresponding sounds, matching a piece of aural input with one out of a few candidate chunking words might be an effective activity for both lower and higher groups. In future research, the effects of multiple strategies depending on levels of proficiency should be carefully explored.

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Appendix A: Listening and Reading Immediate Recall Tests

Passage 1

1. Norman 2. loves sports.// (3sec)

3. He likes 4. to swim 5. every morning.// (3sec)

6. and he plays 7. for his high school's football team.// (4sec)

8. Next month, 9. Norman 10. has to take 11. important exams 12. at school.// (5sec)

13. He needs 14. to study hard.// (2sec)

15. So he cannot go swimming 16. this month.// (3sec)

17. He is looking forward to swimming 18. again 19. after his exams.// (5sec)

Passage 2

20. Rob 21. started learning 22. to drive// (3sec)

23. when he was 18 years old.// (3sec)

24. At first, 25. he learned 26. from his father 27. for free,// (4sec)

28. but then 29. his father became too busy 30. to teach him.// (4sec)

31. Rob 32. decided 33. to pay 34. for lessons 35. at a driving school,// (5sec)

36. and he passed his test 37. six weeks later.// (3sec)

38. Now 39. he drives his father 40. Sometimes 41. to work 42. in the morning.// (5sec)

Passage 3

43. Ms. Peterson 44. went to Hawaii// (3sec)

45. with her daughter and grandchildren 46. last summer.// (3sec)

47. At first, 48. Ms. Peterson 49. did not want to go// (4sec)

50. because she had never been 51. on an airplane 52. before// (4sec)

53. and was afraid of flying.// (2sec)

54. But after she saw 55. some pictures of Hawaii// (4sec)

56. She decided 57. to go.// (2sec)

58. Ms. Peterson 59. found// (2sec)

60. that she enjoyed 61. the flight 62. and her trip to Hawaii.// (5sec)

Note. // is the place where pause was inserted and ( ) is the length of the utterance.

Appendix B: Recorded Sentences for the Pre-test

1	I'll give you back your money and present
2	Did she get up early yesterday morning?
3	He brushes his teeth after breakfast
4	Did he have to take the test again?
5	I won't go there by ten.
6	Does he read a newspaper every morning?
7	They didn't send the document by email.
8	I didn't meet any interesting people at school.
9	We won't do our homework at home.
10	They'll find something interesting during the vacation.
11	She goes to church every Sunday.
12	Does he go out with Amy on Sundays?
13	Did they take many pictures of the animals?
14	Does she teach English at high school?
15	We'll clean our house before our friends come over.

Appendix C: Recorded Sentences for the Post-test

1	He won’t buy food and drinks at the store.
2	She needs your help for this project.
3	He wants you to go there tonight for him.
4	They won’t run in the park in the morning.
5	She’ll be back by 7 o’clock.
6	She won’t take gifts to her grandfather.
7	I didn’t take many courses this year.
8	He didn’t use a computer to make his report.
9	She takes her son to the zoo every year.
10	Did you know about that accident in this town?
11	We didn’t have a party at our grandmother’s house.
12	Did we bring all the textbooks to school?
13	Does she take this train in the morning?
14	Does he have any ideas about the party?
15	He’ll meet you at the station at three.

Verification of the Effects of Remedial Education Aimed at Improving Students' Basic English Ability

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to verify the effects of remedial education aimed at improving students' basic ability of English at Uekusa Gakuen University. The subjects were students who belonged to the lowest 10% of each grade in English ability, from freshmen to seniors. The contents of each class were a series of learning activities, involving listening, vocabulary, grammar, and extensive reading. Under the small class system, each grade was instructed by the use of "a fresh learning method" and "a discovery method." To verify the effects, the students were administered a pre- and post-test, along with a pre- and post-questionnaire. The results revealed the following: (a) on English proficiency, the positive effect had been yielded not only in individual grades but also across all grades; (b) in each grade's attitudes toward English, it was suggested that the students had gained a normal attitude toward English learning in accordance with their developmental stages; (c) in all grades' attitudes toward English, the students had acquired, more or less, a sense of self-efficacy, namely the belief that they can complete a given task, in this trial.

Key words: remedial education, instruction method, English proficiency, attitudes toward English, self-efficacy

Introduction

Recently in Japan, by a decrease in 18-year-old population, university entrance has become popular and the selection methods for entrance examination diverse. As a result, the qualitative change of the freshmen and the academic ability difference among them have been serious problems, to the extent that even the redefinition of the university as the educational institution is demanded (Uchida, 2012, p. 41).

With the diversified selection methods, hereafter, it is expected that the decline in the English ability of freshmen and the expansion of the English ability difference among them will be accelerated in universities (Chujo, Yokota, Hasegawa, & Nishigaki, 2012, p. 49). In order to achieve the original aims of specific classes at universities, therefore, it is an important issue to devise the way to practice "remedial education" mainly on "the re-education" of the high school stage (ibid., p. 49).

Uekusa Gakuen University, where the first author teaches English, is no exception to the description given above. In 2012, the university was obliged to start remedial education in order to improve all of the students' basic ability of English. As the first step, focusing on the students who were in the lowest level of English ability, the number of subjects was restricted to 10% of each grade. Related to this trial, the purpose of the present study was to verify the effects of remedial education aimed at the improvement of the students' basic ability of English at Uekusa Gakuen University.

Study of the Literature

As a technique to tackle remedial English education, Sakai (2011) claims the following three points: (a) to let the applicable students learn English grammar, (b) to let them be independent, and (c) to encourage them to use the interlanguage. The first point is based on the fact that those who have low command of English are poor at sorting English words into a grammatical order in composition (Sakai, Ishige, & Nishimura, 2005). The second point results from the fact that those who have low performance of English are lacking in a sense of self-efficacy, namely a feeling of oneself being able to complete a given task (Sakai & Takagi, 2009), with the ability for meta-recognition about English learning (Sakai et al., 2010). And the third point derives from an interview with Japanese Nobel prize winners ("Noberu-kagakusho jusho-kinen," 2010) in which the scientists stress the importance of being allowed to use English without being afraid of making mistakes.

Concerning the instruction of English grammar, Ano (2009) asserts that many of the students needing the remedial education have a strong negative reaction to the learning of English grammar and also to the technical terms used in explanation (p. 35). To diminish the reaction, Chujo, Yokota, et al. (2012) report that, utilizing the findings of the corpus linguistics, they are developing teaching materials along with instruction methods for remedial-level learners (p. 49). The new approach is based on Ono (2005), which maintains that it is important for remedial education to incorporate "a fresh learning method" and also "a discovery method." The former means a method students have not experienced in high school. And the latter is a method "whereby students are permitted to find solutions to problems on their own or at their own pace, often jointly in group activities, either independent of or under the guidance of a teacher" ("Discovery method," n.d.).

As for the independence of the students, Kiyota (2011) contends that it is necessary for the instructor not only to prepare appropriate teaching materials according to the students' degree of achievement, but also to let them realize the value of English learning and then to devise a method to motivate them (p. 31). Referring to the results of his research (Kiyota, 2010), Kiyota (2011) furthermore maintains that the main characteristic of mid- and low-ranking university students in their English ability is having "no confidence in self-expression," in addition to carrying "uneasiness over building personal relationships" (p. 32). According to Kiyota (2011), the personal relationships include those between students and instructors as well as those of inter-students (p. 32).

If the primary aim of English classes in the university is to foster English proficiency, it goes without saying that “vocabulary” is an essential element. Meara (1996) claims that “all other things being equal, learners with big vocabularies are more proficient in a wide range of language skills than learners with smaller vocabularies” (p. 37). Meara (ibid.) asserts then that “vocabulary skills make a significant contribution to almost all aspects of L2 proficiency” (p. 37). Folse (2004) also contends that “empirical studies have shown that good L2 readers, writers, speakers, and listeners have a more extensive vocabulary under their control” (p. 25). Moreover, Schmitt (2010) maintains that “there is plenty of evidence pointing to the importance of vocabulary in language use” (p. 4).

All of the reports cited above provide evidence of the features common to the learners weak in English, both in their English proficiency and in their attitudes toward English. However, none of these provide us with any evidence of successful results in experimentally applying their analyses to practical instruction. Therefore, in tackling remedial English education at Uekusa Gakuen University, it was thought to be a good opportunity to test the specific elements asserted in these reports.

As far as we (the authors) investigated the previous studies related to ours, it was impossible to find any trying to improve the students’ basic ability of English from freshmen to seniors in a Japanese university. If restricted to studies of freshmen only, Chujo, Anthony, Oghigian, and Uchibori (2012) reported the effectiveness of Data-Driven Learning (DDL), through a comparative study of computer-based, paper-based, and combined type of instruction using a parallel corpus for beginner-level students. As a limitation of this study, the authors suggested that it might have been affected by the interest or skill of the participants, who were all engineering students. Therefore, if remedial education is to be practiced incorporating DDL as “a fresh learning method” and “a discovery method,” the subjects’ university majors have to be considered.

Research Questions

The purpose of the present study was to verify the effects of remedial education aimed at improving students' basic ability of English at Uekusa Gakuen University. Considering the details about the subjects and also majors, the instruction was to be conducted incorporating both "a fresh learning method" and "a discovery method." In order to specify the purpose of this study, the following questions were asked:

1. Does this remedial education improve the students' English proficiency?
2. Does this remedial education improve the students' attitudes toward English?

Method

Subjects of the Remedial Education

The subjects of this study were the lowest 10% in English ability of each grade from freshmen to seniors at Uekusa Gakuen University. Their majors were either education or health sciences. To select the subjects, a 30-minute English proficiency test based on EIKEN written test, Grade Pre-2 (high-school graduates' minimum level) was given to all of the students on the first day of the academic year 2012 in April. The resulting number of students selected was 17 freshmen, eight sophomores, nine juniors, and eight seniors.

Class Style

To support individual students, the small class system of 20 or fewer students per class was adopted, with one instructor allotted to each class.

Frequency of the Classes

Conforming to the regular course format, fifteen 90-minute classes were conducted in the first semester for freshmen and seniors, and then in the second semester for sophomores and juniors.

Contents of Each Class

In order to help determine the contents of each class, the subjects were asked to write their request about the class in a questionnaire on their attitudes toward English, administered prior to the first class. Based on the comments, the contents of each class were mainly composed of a series of learning activities of Listening, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Extensive Reading, in this order.

In Listening instruction, English songs were utilized. Listening to popular songs, the students were required to fill in blank spaces on sheets of lyrics with key words they were able to hear.

In Vocabulary instruction, crossword puzzles were employed. The vocabulary used in the puzzles was extracted from a vocabulary list of high frequency words, collected from all the English textbooks for junior and senior high schools in Japan.

In Grammar instruction, original printed materials starting from a junior high school level were adopted, along with paper-based Data-Driven Learning (DDL). With the printed materials, the students were able to proceed at their own pace from their own individual level. And with the paper-based DDL, the students were presented with a list of English sentences, and then required to find a specific grammatical rule from the list “on their own or at their own pace, often jointly in group activities, either independent of or under the guidance of a teacher” (“Discovery method,” n.d.).

In Extensive Reading instruction, the students were urged to read their favorite books from the easier level to the more difficult level at their own pace. To develop a more rapid reading ability, each student was advised to measure the Words Per Minute (WPM) and then to record it on a graph. All the books were prepared by the instructor.

To promote confidence in self-expression, the students were individually encouraged to introduce the contents of the books they found interesting in front of the class. At the same time, they were obliged to answer questions from their classmates either in English or, if impossible, in Japanese. The interlanguage was permitted to use in this activity.

In all these activities, the instructor devoted himself to resolving the problems each individual student was facing. To let each student be independent, the instructor adopted only a supporting role to deal with all matters.

All this instruction incorporated “a fresh learning method” and “a discovery method.” In particular, the impression of being “fresh” was carefully considered so that the students could participate in the class with positive attitudes, relieved from their negative feelings toward the method adopted in high school, such as that prevalent in lecture-style explanation. Typical examples of the “fresh” learning method included the adoption of the paper-based DDL (see Appendix A) and the students introducing the contents of books that they had found interesting in front of the class (see Appendix B).

Evaluation Method for Determining “Passed” or “Not Passed”

The students’ performance on each activity was evaluated numerically, and their ability of English attained under the remedial education was measured by a final examination in English. If the total of these points met the required standard, the student was considered “Passed,” and if not, “Not Passed.”

Verification of the Effects of the Remedial Education

The verification of the effects of the remedial education was conducted both on the students’ English proficiency and on their attitudes toward English which could affect their English learning. The English proficiency was investigated by means of a pre- and post-test. Utilizing the initial selection test as the pre-test, the identical test was administered to the students as the post-test at the final class. On the other hand, attitudes toward English were surveyed by means of a pre- and post-questionnaire, which included identical question items. The details of the test and the questionnaire were as follows:

English proficiency test. The English proficiency test was a 30-minute test based on EIKEN written test, Grade Pre-2 (high-school graduates' minimum level), concerning vocabulary, grammar, and reading. It consisted of a total of 30 questions, each of which was counted as a mark of 1, with a perfect score being a mark of 30.

Questionnaire. In order to analyze the attitudes toward English, the questionnaire for this study was based on the basic matters stated in the Course of Study for Junior and Senior High Schools (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 1998, 1999). Thus, the questionnaire included 13 items representing the fundamental feelings of the students about English. Each of the items was answered by means of a five-point Likert scale. The five potential choices were "5 = strongly agree," "4 = agree," "3 = neutral," "2 = disagree," and "1 = strongly disagree." The specific 13 items, related both to the four skills in English and to the instructions practiced in this trial, were as follows:

1. I can understand what I've listened to in English.
2. I can speak English.
3. I can read English sentences.
4. I can write English sentences.
5. I can read English sentences rapidly.
6. I have confidence in individual English words.
7. I can understand English grammar.
8. I can communicate in English.
9. I like English.
10. I like English classes.
11. I like instruction in English grammar.
12. I'd like to be more proficient in English.

13. I like reading English books, including Japanese books.

Results

The results of the tests and the questionnaires administered to the students are summarized in the following sections separately. Because the number of the students who attended both of the pre- and post-test, along with both of the pre- and post-questionnaire, was smaller than expected, a non-parametric dependent test, i.e., Wilcoxon signed-rank test, was applied to the specific evaluation.

Tests on the English Proficiency

Table 1 shows the results of the pre- and post-test conducted on the students' English proficiency. Compared with the pre-test *Mean*-values, all the post-test *Mean*-values increased by 3 to 6 points in each grade. Wilcoxon signed-rank test produced a statistical significance in the freshmen ($p < .01$) and also in the juniors ($p < .05$). In the sophomores, the difference was not at the level of significance but at the level of marginal significance ($.05 < p < .10$). In the seniors, although the difference was not significant, each student gained 6 points. In all grades (see the Total row in Table 1) from freshmen to seniors, the difference was statistically significant ($p < .01$).

Questionnaires on Attitudes Toward English

Each grade. Table 2 presents the results of the pre- and post-questionnaire conducted on each grade's attitudes toward English (see Appendix C, D, E, and F for complete results for each grade). Because there was no item that showed a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-questionnaire, those items which produced marginal significance ($.05 < p < .10$) were listed. In Table 2, therefore, each item listed is a characteristic feeling which represents each grade's attitudes. After the remedial education, the following specific

Table 1

Results of the Pre- and Post-Test on the Students' English Proficiency

Grade	Test	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum	*Z*-value	*p*
Freshmen	Pre	13	5.23	0.73	4	6	-2.85	.00**
	Post	13	8.08	2.18	3	11		
Sophomores	Pre	8	4.88	0.99	3	6	-1.84	.07
	Post	8	7.88	3.27	3	13		
Juniors	Pre	6	5.33	0.82	4	6	-2.21	.03*
	Post	6	8.50	1.87	7	12		
Seniors	Pre	2	3.00	4.24	0	6	-1.41	.16
	Post	2	9.00	4.24	6	12		
Total	Pre	29	5.00	1.25	0	6	-4.18	.00**
	Post	29	8.17	2.47	3	13		

Note. $^*p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$.

Table 2

Results of the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire on Each Grade's Attitudes Toward English

Grade	Item	Question-naire	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Z*-value	*p*
Freshmen	I can speak English.	Pre	15	1.80	0.86	-1.89	.06
		Post	15	2.13	0.99		
Sophomores	I can read English sentences.	Pre	8	1.63	0.74	-1.73	.08
		Post	8	2.00	0.54		
Juniors	I like reading English books, including Japanese books.	Pre	4	3.25	0.50	-1.73	.08
		Post	4	4.00	0.82		
Seniors	I can read English sentences rapidly.	Pre	4	1.25	0.50	-1.89	.06
		Post	4	2.50	0.58		

Note. The items listed are those which produced marginal significance ($.05 < p < .10$).

feelings had increased: “I can speak English.” for the freshmen, “I can read English sentences.” for the sophomores, “I like reading English books, including Japanese books.” for the juniors, and “I can read English sentences rapidly.” for the seniors.

All grades. Table 3 provides the results of the pre- and post-questionnaire on all grades’ attitudes toward English. As is apparent from this table, all of the *Mean*-values in the post-questionnaire items are higher than those correspondents in the pre-questionnaire items. Out of the 13 items, Wilcoxon signed-rank test produced a statistical significance in the following three items ($p < .05$, respectively): “I can read English sentences rapidly.,” “I can communicate in English.,” and “I like instruction in English grammar.” Additionally, marginal significance ($.05 < p < .10$) was produced in the following one item: “I like reading English books, including Japanese books.”

Table 3

Results of the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire on All Grades' Attitudes Toward English

No.	Item	Question-naire	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Z*-value	*p*
1	I can understand what I've listened to in English.	Pre	31	2.19	1.11	-0.79	.44
		Post	31	2.32	0.83		
2	I can speak English.	Pre	31	1.68	0.79	-1.41	.16
		Post	31	1.87	0.80		
3	I can read English sentences.	Pre	31	2.32	1.14	-0.36	.72
		Post	31	2.39	0.96		
4	I can write English sentences.	Pre	31	1.87	0.92	-0.50	.62
		Post	31	1.94	0.89		
5	I can read English sentences rapidly.	Pre	31	1.65	0.99	-2.08	.04*
		Post	31	2.00	0.82		
6	I have confidence in individual English words.	Pre	31	1.74	0.82	-1.00	.32
		Post	31	1.84	0.97		
7	I can understand English grammar.	Pre	31	1.65	0.80	-1.27	.21
		Post	31	1.77	0.76		
8	I can communicate in English.	Pre	31	1.61	0.67	-2.13	.04*
		Post	31	1.87	0.76		
9	I like English.	Pre	31	2.32	1.22	-0.28	.78
		Post	31	2.39	1.17		
10	I like English classes.	Pre	31	2.39	1.36	-0.96	.34
		Post	31	2.58	1.18		
11	I like instruction in English grammar.	Pre	31	1.68	0.91	-1.98	.05*
		Post	31	2.00	1.00		
12	I'd like to be more proficient in English.	Pre	31	3.87	1.12	-0.63	.53
		Post	31	3.97	0.95		
13	I like reading English books, including Japanese books.	Pre	31	3.39	1.31	-1.85	.06
		Post	31	3.71	1.16		

Note. $*p < .05$.

Discussion

Effects on the Students' English Proficiency

As is shown in Table 1, the results of the pre- and post-test prove that this remedial education brought a positive effect to the students' English proficiency. The positive effect was yielded not only in each grade but also in all grades.

The effect is presumed to have been caused by a series of learning activities of Listening, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Extensive Reading, each practiced by "a fresh learning method" (Ono, 2005), namely a new approach that the students had not experienced in high school. Especially in Grammar instruction, which is important for those who have low command of English (Sakai, 2011), adopting original printed materials starting from a junior high school level, along with the paper-based Data-Driven Learning (DDL), proved successful. The original printed materials were applicable to each student's individual level, and the paper-based DDL was an application of "a discovery method" (Ono, 2005), in which "students are permitted to find solutions to problems on their own or at their own pace, often jointly in group activities, either independent of or under the guidance of a teacher" ("Discovery method," n.d.).

Based on the comments written on the prior questionnaire by the students, the contents of the instruction, although not intended for the preparation of the post-test, roughly corresponded to the elements of the English proficiency test concerning vocabulary, grammar, and reading. Consequently, fulfilling the students' needs using "a fresh learning method," along with "a discovery method," is considered to have led to the positive effect on the students' English proficiency.

Effects on Each Grade's Attitudes

In Table 2, the results of the pre- and post-questionnaire presented a characteristic feeling which represents each grade's attitudes toward English. The freshmen reported they "can speak English.," the sophomores "can read English sentences.," the juniors "like reading English books, including Japanese books.," and the seniors "can read English sentences rapidly."

Typical criticism for English education in Japan is that we cannot speak English even if we have learned English for a total of six years in junior and senior high schools (Kanatani, 2008, p. iii). However, focusing on English speaking, the freshmen's feeling after the remedial education shows a positive reaction to the item. Notably, it appears that the focus changes from English speaking to English reading, when it comes to the sophomores. And as the scholastic year progresses, it is thought that the students' interest goes in the direction of improving reading skills, starting from sentence reading and progressing to rapid reading. All of these grade changes suggest to us that the students have gained a normal attitude toward English learning in accordance with their developmental stages. It must be noted that this is not a longitudinal research on a single group of students, following their growth year by year.

Effects on All Grades' Attitudes

On all grades' attitudes toward English, as is provided in Table 3, the results of the pre- and post-questionnaire yielded significant positive effects in the following three items: "I can read English sentences rapidly.," "I can communicate in English.," and "I like instruction in English grammar." Additionally, a marginally significant positive effect was produced in the following one item: "I like reading English books, including Japanese books."

In the students' feeling that "I can read English sentences rapidly.," the instruction method to advise the students to measure their WPM and then to record it into a graph is thought to have contributed to the significant positive effect. Concerning Extensive Reading, urging the students to read their favorite books from the easier level to the more difficult level at their own pace is also thought to have had the marginally significant positive effect on the feeling that "I like reading English books, including Japanese books."

In the feeling that “I can communicate in English.,” the significant positive effect is presumed to have been brought about by the instruction method of encouraging the students to introduce the contents of the books they found interesting in front of the class and then to answer the questions from their classmates either in English or, if impossible, in Japanese. Permission to use the interlanguage, as is claimed by Sakai (2011), is thought to have lowered obstacles in the promotion of confidence in self-expression and in building personal relationships with others (Kiyota, 2011).

In the feeling that “I like instruction in English grammar.,” the cause of the significant positive effect is possibly attributable to the method of adopting original printed materials starting from a junior high school level, along with the paper-based DDL, both of which are already referred to in the section about the effects on the students’ English proficiency. While re-learning English grammar with the original printed materials, participating in a discussion to discover a specific rule in a list of sentences is considered to have been a challenging activity for the students as if they were researchers (Gaviori, 2001, p. 110).

According to Bandura (1977), expectations of self-efficacy, which is referred to in Sakai (2011) and also in Sakai and Takagi (2009), are “based on four major sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychological states” (p. 195). Concerning the first factor, the subjects of this study are considered to have felt a sense of accomplishment through the visualization of their performance, such as recording their WPM into a graph, in the class. On the second factor, they have experienced “seeing others perform threatening activities” (Bandura, 1977, p. 197) in front of the class. Relating to the third factor, the students have been encouraged by the instructor’s suggestive advice. As to the fourth factor, they have been instructed under none of the “stressful and taxing situations” (ibid., p. 197). Consequently, it is thought that the students have acquired a certain sense of self-efficacy, namely the belief that they can complete a given task, in this trial.

Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to verify the effects of the remedial education aimed at improving the students' basic English ability at Uekusa Gakuen University. To complete the study, those who belonged to the lowest 10% of each-year students in their English ability were selected as subjects from freshmen to seniors. The contents of each class were a series of learning activities involving Listening, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Extensive Reading. Under the small class system, each grade was instructed by the use of "a fresh learning method" and "a discovery method." Verification of the effects was conducted both on the students' English proficiency and on their attitudes toward English. The results revealed the following:

1. On English proficiency, in the comparison of the pre- and post-test, all the post-test *Mean*-values increased by 3 to 6 points in each grade. Wilcoxon signed-rank test produced a statistical significance in the freshmen ($p < .01$) and also in the juniors ($p < .05$). In the sophomores, the difference was not at the level of significance but at the level of marginal significance ($.05 < p < .10$). In the seniors, although the difference was not significant, each student gained 6 points. In the all grades from freshmen to seniors, the difference was statistically significant ($p < .01$). Accordingly, it was presumed that positive effect had been yielded not only in each grade but also in all grades.
2. On each grade's attitudes toward English, in the comparison of the pre- and post-questionnaire, no item showed any statistical significance. However, with the increased *Mean*-values, those which produced marginal significance ($.05 < p < .10$) were the following specific items: "I can speak English." for freshmen, "I can read English sentences." for sophomores, "I like reading English books, including Japanese books." for juniors, and "I can read English sentences rapidly." for seniors. Accordingly, this suggested that the students had gained a normal attitude toward English learning in accordance with their developmental stages.

3. On all grades' attitudes toward English, all of the *Mean*-values in the post-questionnaire items were higher than those correspondents in the pre-questionnaire items. Wilcoxon signed-rank test produced a statistical significance in the three items ($p < .05$, respectively): "I can read English sentences rapidly.," "I can communicate in English.," and "I like instruction in English grammar." Additionally, marginal significance ($.05 < p < .10$) was produced in the one item: "I like reading English books, including Japanese books." Accordingly, it was thought that the students had acquired a certain sense of self-efficacy, namely the belief that they can complete a given task, in this trial.

To sum up, the positive effects were shown both on the students' English proficiency and on their attitudes toward English. Consequently, it can be said that the remedial education practiced in this study was successful in improving the students' basic ability of English not only in their performance of English but also in their attitudes toward English. The cause of the success is attributed especially to the adoption of "a fresh learning method" that the students had not experienced in high school and of "a discovery method" by which the students were encouraged to behave independently.

The limitations of this study are the following: Firstly, there were not a few missing values in juniors and seniors when performing the statistical analyses, because some of the subjects were obliged to go for student teaching on the day when the relevant test or questionnaire was administered. Secondly, to get stable results statistically, it was desirable for the number of the subjects in each grade to be balanced. Thirdly, to firmly assert the success of this trial, a control group should have been prepared for comparison, but was not, owing to the limited number of instructors.

Taking these reservations into consideration, along with the findings of this trial, another study will have to be carried out in order to confirm that the method adopted in this study was effective. In conclusion, referring to the results of this trial, it is hoped that future remedial education will be refined for the next stage in the university.

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Appendix A: Example of the Paper-Based DDL (Data-Driven Learning)

文法の復習　ー a と an [Review of the grammar: “a” and “an”]

Look 上と下のリストを比較してください。a と an をどのようなルールで使い分けるのか発見しましょう。[Compare the upper list and the lower, and then discover a rule to properly use “a” and “an.”]

1	Kabuki has	a	unique speaking style.	(　　　)
2	People think of polo as	a	European game.	(　　　)
3	Joy lives in	a	one-room house.	(　　　)
4	I saw	a	UFO in the sky.	(　　　)
5	The photo of	a	15-year-old girl was found.	(　　　)
1	歌舞伎ではユニークな話し方をします。			
2	人々はポロをヨーロッパの競技だと思っています。			
3	ジョンはワンルームの住宅に住んでいます。			
4	私は空 UFO を見ました。			
5	15 歳の少女の写真が見つかりました。			

1	Bob became	an	unhappy man.	(　　　)
2	My sister bought	an	MD player last week.	(　　　)
3	Tom sent	an	SOS to his friends.	(　　　)
4	London is	an	hour away by air.	(　　　)
5	Ann is	an	11-year-old girl.	(　　　)
1	ボブは不幸な男になりました。			
2	先週，姉はMD プレーヤーを買いました。			
3	トムは友達に SOS を送りました。			
4	ロンドンは空路で１時間です。			
5	アンは 11 歳の少女です。			

****

ヒント 1　上下のリスト中の下線を引いた単語を発音して，最初の音を比較してください。

[**Hint 1**: Pronounce the underlined words in the upper list and the lower, and then compare the initial sound of each word.]

ヒント 2　上で発音した音をリストの横の（　　）にカタカナで書きましょう。

[**Hint 2**: Write the pronounced sound in katakana in the parentheses located to the right side of each example listed.]

****

Understand

上段のリスト　　a の直後の単語の発音は ______________で始まっています。

[Upper list: The pronunciation of a word following “a” begins with a ____________ sound.]

下段のリスト　　an の直後の単語の発音は ______________で始まっています。

[Lower list: The pronunciation of a word following “an” begins with a ____________ sound.]

a と an のルール　[Rule of “a” and “an”]

☆ 直後の単語の最初の音が母音のときは（ a / an ）
[Where the initial sound of the following word is a vowel, (a / an)]

☆ 直後の単語の最初の音が子音のときは（ a / an ）
[Where the initial sound of the following word is a consonant, (a / an)]

Appendix B: Example of the Students Introducing the Contents of the Books They Found Interesting in Front of the Class

Figure 1. Example of the books used in the activity.

Figure 2. Example of one of the students introducing the contents of a book he found interesting in front of the class.

Appendix C: Results of the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire on the Freshmen's Attitudes Toward English

No.	Item	Question-naire	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	Mini-mum	Maxi-mum	*Z*-value	*p*
1	I can understand what I've listened to in English.	Pre	15	2.60	1.12	1	4	0.00	1.00
		Post	15	2.60	0.91	1	4		
2	I can speak English.	Pre	15	1.80	0.86	1	3	-1.89	.06
		Post	15	2.13	0.99	1	4		
3	I can read English sentences.	Pre	15	2.87	1.19	1	5	-1.51	.13
		Post	15	2.47	1.06	1	4		
4	I can write English sentences.	Pre	15	2.33	0.98	1	4	-0.38	.71
		Post	15	2.27	1.03	1	4		
5	I can read English sentences rapidly.	Pre	15	2.13	1.19	1	5	-0.30	.76
		Post	15	2.13	0.83	1	4		
6	I have confidence in individual English words.	Pre	15	2.13	0.92	1	4	0.00	1.00
		Post	15	2.13	1.06	1	5		
7	I can understand English grammar.	Pre	15	1.87	0.92	1	4	0.00	1.00
		Post	15	1.87	0.64	1	3		
8	I can communicate in English.	Pre	15	1.67	0.72	1	3	-1.41	.16
		Post	15	1.93	0.80	1	3		
9	I like English.	Pre	15	2.67	1.40	1	5	-1.25	.21
		Post	15	2.33	1.18	1	5		
10	I like English classes.	Pre	15	2.60	1.40	1	5	-0.09	.93
		Post	15	2.60	1.18	1	5		
11	I like instruction in English grammar.	Pre	15	1.73	0.70	1	3	-1.34	.18
		Post	15	1.93	0.70	1	3		
12	I'd like to be more proficient in English.	Pre	15	3.93	1.10	2	5	0.00	1.00
		Post	15	3.93	0.96	2	5		
13	I like reading English books, including Japanese books.	Pre	15	3.80	1.27	1	5	-0.33	.74
		Post	15	3.73	1.39	2	5		

Appendix D: Results of the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire on the Sophomores' Attitudes Toward English

No.	Item	Question-naire	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	Mini-mum	Maxi-mum	*Z*-value	*p*
1	I can understand what I've listened to in English.	Pre	8	1.63	1.06	1	4	-0.71	.48
		Post	8	1.88	0.64	1	3		
2	I can speak English.	Pre	8	1.50	0.76	1	3	0.00	1.00
		Post	8	1.50	0.54	1	2		
3	I can read English sentences.	Pre	8	1.63	0.74	1	3	-1.73	.08
		Post	8	2.00	0.54	1	3		
4	I can write English sentences.	Pre	8	1.38	0.52	1	2	-0.45	.66
		Post	8	1.50	0.54	1	2		
5	I can read English sentences rapidly.	Pre	8	1.13	0.35	1	2	-1.00	.32
		Post	8	1.38	0.52	1	2		
6	I have confidence in individual English words.	Pre	8	1.25	0.46	1	2	-1.41	.16
		Post	8	1.50	0.76	1	3		
7	I can understand English grammar.	Pre	8	1.25	0.46	1	2	-1.00	.32
		Post	8	1.50	0.76	1	3		
8	I can communicate in English.	Pre	8	1.50	0.54	1	2	-1.34	.18
		Post	8	1.88	0.84	1	3		
9	I like English.	Pre	8	1.25	0.46	1	2	-1.29	.20
		Post	8	1.88	1.13	1	4		
10	I like English classes.	Pre	8	1.75	1.39	1	5	-0.27	.79
		Post	8	2.00	1.07	1	4		
11	I like instruction in English grammar.	Pre	8	1.25	0.46	1	2	-1.09	.28
		Post	8	1.63	0.92	1	3		
12	I'd like to be more proficient in English.	Pre	8	3.13	1.36	1	5	-1.63	.10
		Post	8	3.63	1.19	2	5		
13	I like reading English books, including Japanese books.	Pre	8	2.75	1.67	1	5	-1.52	.13
		Post	8	3.38	1.06	2	5		

Appendix E: Results of the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire on the Juniors' Attitudes Toward English

No.	Item	Question-naire	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	Mini-mum	Maxi-mum	*Z*-value	*p*
1	I can understand what I've listened to in English.	Pre	4	1.75	0.96	1	3	-0.82	.41
		Post	4	2.25	0.96	1	3		
2	I can speak English.	Pre	4	1.50	1.00	1	3	-0.58	.56
		Post	4	1.75	0.50	1	2		
3	I can read English sentences.	Pre	4	1.75	0.96	1	3	-1.34	.18
		Post	4	2.50	1.29	1	4		
4	I can write English sentences.	Pre	4	1.50	1.00	1	3	-1.00	.32
		Post	4	1.75	0.96	1	3		
5	I can read English sentences rapidly.	Pre	4	1.25	0.50	1	2	-1.41	.16
		Post	4	2.25	0.96	1	3		
6	I have confidence in individual English words.	Pre	4	1.25	0.50	1	2	-1.00	.32
		Post	4	1.00	0.00	1	1		
7	I can understand English grammar.	Pre	4	1.25	0.50	1	2	-1.00	.32
		Post	4	1.50	0.58	1	2		
8	I can communicate in English.	Pre	4	1.25	0.50	1	2	-1.00	.32
		Post	4	1.50	0.58	1	2		
9	I like English.	Pre	4	2.25	0.50	2	3	0.00	1.00
		Post	4	2.25	0.96	1	3		
10	I like English classes.	Pre	4	1.75	0.96	1	3	-1.13	.26
		Post	4	2.50	1.29	1	4		
11	I like instruction in English grammar.	Pre	4	1.25	0.50	1	2	-0.58	.56
		Post	4	1.50	0.58	1	2		
12	I'd like to be more proficient in English.	Pre	4	4.00	0.82	3	5	-0.58	.56
		Post	4	4.25	0.50	4	5		
13	I like reading English books, including Japanese books.	Pre	4	3.25	0.50	3	4	-1.73	.08
		Post	4	4.00	0.82	3	5		

Appendix F: Results of the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire on the Seniors' Attitudes Toward English

No.	Item	Question-naire	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	Mini-mum	Maxi-mum	*Z*-value	*p*
1	I can understand what I've listened to in English.	Pre	4	2.25	0.96	1	3	0.00	1.00
		Post	4	2.25	0.50	2	3		
2	I can speak English.	Pre	4	1.75	0.50	1	2	0.00	1.00
		Post	4	1.75	0.50	1	2		
3	I can read English sentences.	Pre	4	2.25	0.96	1	3	-1.41	.16
		Post	4	2.25	0.96	2	4		
4	I can write English sentences.	Pre	4	1.50	0.58	1	2	-0.58	.56
		Post	4	1.75	0.50	1	2		
5	I can read English sentences rapidly.	Pre	4	1.25	0.50	1	2	-1.89	.06
		Post	4	2.50	0.58	2	3		
6	I have confidence in individual English words.	Pre	4	1.75	0.50	1	2	-1.41	.16
		Post	4	2.25	0.96	1	3		
7	I can understand English grammar.	Pre	4	2.00	0.82	1	3	-1.00	.32
		Post	4	2.25	1.26	1	4		
8	I can communicate in English.	Pre	4	2.00	0.82	1	3	0.00	1.00
		Post	4	2.00	0.82	1	3		
9	I like English.	Pre	4	3.25	0.50	3	4	-1.41	.16
		Post	4	3.75	0.50	3	4		
10	I like English classes.	Pre	4	3.50	0.58	3	4	-1.00	.32
		Post	4	3.75	0.50	3	4		
11	I like instruction in English grammar.	Pre	4	2.75	1.71	1	5	-1.00	.32
		Post	4	3.50	1.29	2	5		
12	I'd like to be more proficient in English.	Pre	4	5.00	0.00	5	5	-1.41	.16
		Post	4	4.50	0.58	4	5		
13	I like reading English books, including Japanese books.	Pre	4	3.25	0.96	2	4	-1.34	.18
		Post	4	4.00	0.82	3	5		

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Linguistic Dimensions of Hint Expressions in Science and Engineering Research Presentations

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Abstract

The oral research presentation is an important genre in science and engineering fields. To help nonnative English speakers become better able to listen to and prepare research presentations, we tried to define hint expressions that signal moves (sections of communicative purpose occurring in logical progression) and identify the characteristics of these hint expressions. In this study, we first defined "hint expressions" by comparing them with formulaic sequences and then undertook the cataloguing of hint expressions for 12 moves from 16 English research presentations by expert native speakers in science and engineering (from a subcorpus of JECPRESE, http://www.jecprese.sci.waseda.ac.jp/). Based on observations during a manual tagging process, we hypothesized that the chronological sequencing of hint expressions within a text and the sensitive use of verb tense and modality appearing in them plays a key role in perceiving shifts in communicative purpose. Our analyses revealed a characteristic distribution of verb tenses and modals across moves, which suggested that being aware of hint expressions can help nonnative English speaker researchers become better able to perceive and identify moves as well as prepare more effective research presentations. Our findings

have pedagogical implications and should also contribute to the development of automated pragmatic tagging of moves.

Keywords: research presentation, genre analysis, hint expressions, tense, modality

Introduction

One of the essential genres in a researcher's repertoire is the professional research presentation. This is because no research is complete until it has been shared with members of the professional community for evaluation, critique, and possible inclusion in the accepted knowledge base of the field. In order to share research results, the researcher can write them up as a journal paper, present them in a poster session, or give an oral conference presentation. Regardless of the genre chosen, the language employed will probably be English in order to address the global scientific community. Such professional communication is challenging, even for native English speakers (Robinson & Stoller, 2008, Stoller & Robinson, 2013), and for those whose first language is not English, it can be a demanding enterprise requiring much time and effort.

Fortunately, professional communication can be made more manageable for the nonnative English speaker by adopting a genre-based approach. By "genre," we are referring to the Swales' definition (Swales, 1981, 1985, 1990) summarized by Bhatia (1993):

> [Genre] is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. (p. 13)

More simply put is Hyland's (2007) succinct definition: "Genre refers to abstract, socially recognized ways of using language" (p. 149). He points out that members of a community can easily recognize similar texts because they repeatedly encounter them. The fact that a professional genre is “highly structured and conventionalized” offers the keys to making it easier to handle. Stoller and Robinson (2013) pointed out that “students who engage in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) benefit from access and control of genres in their academic disciplines and workplace domains” (p. 45). Their work targeted third-year undergraduate students at an American university but, as described by Noguchi (2003), such an approach can also be very useful for nonnative speakers of the target language.

Here we describe our efforts to alleviate the burden of preparing oral research presentations for nonnative English-speaker researchers in science and engineering by offering a corpus of science and engineering presentations tagged for moves. In this paper, we focus on the concept of “hint expressions” that signal the moves and are important for the audience listening to presentations as well as for the speakers giving them.

Framework of the Study

Previous Studies on Formulaic Expressions

Recurrent linguistic patterns have been of much interest over the past decades. One study suggested that 58.6% of spoken English discourse and 52.3% of the written discourse are composed of formulaic sequences (Erman & Warren, 2000) and another study concluded that a conservative 32.3% of native speaker speech is made up of formulaic language (Foster, 2001). The fact that formulaic sequences constitute large portions of written as well as spoken English discourse is especially attractive for those engaging in studies of language acquisition and language teaching, because, theoretically, the mastery of these sequences should lead to a high level of English proficiency.

Formulaic sequences are known by many alternative terms such as lexical patterning, chunks, multi-word units, multi-word strings, prefabricated routines, collocation, and holophrases, to name a few. Wray (2002) in his work defines formulaic sequence as:

> a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar. (p. 9)

As Wray's definition covers various aspects of formulaic sequences, a careful look at each dimension with examples will help our discussion. The first obvious examples are idioms, proverbs, and sayings. They are clearly formulaic expressions because they are "stand alone" units in terms of meaning and syntactic structure. *Pull someone's legs* is a verb phrase meaning "tease" and *a stitch in time saves nine* is a well-known proverb. Discourse markers usually taught in English academic writing (such as *first of all* and *in conclusion*) are also formulaic sequences, which have a function of structuring the writing and signaling the writer's intent to the readers. Other types of sequences are more flexible in terms of form; the colloquial sets of *Would you please* or *I'd like to talk about*, for example, are not grammatically complete but have functions to indicate "requesting" or "intention." Another type of strings is exemplified by *prevent X from happening*, or *as far as X is concerned*. Wherever the strings are interrupted, the slot (X) can be always filled with an arbitrary word or words in order to semantically and syntactically complete the sentence. Formulaic sequences can be short or long, continuous or discontinuous, grammatically complete or incomplete, or functional or non-functional, but share the criteria of being "prefabricated" and "stored and retrieved as a whole from memory at the time of use" (Wray, 2002, p. 9). Table 1 summarizes the types and features of various formulaic sequences.

Lexical bundles (Biber & Barbieri, 2007; Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999) are strings of continuous words derived from a corpus solely on the basis of frequency of appearance. When lexical bundles are mechanistically identified from a corpus, no consideration is given as to semantic and syntactic independence. Thus, examples include *in the middle of the* or *what I want to* which would not be found in a learner's idiom book.

Table 1

Types of Formulaic Sequences

Type	Example	Features
Idiom	*pull someone's leg*; *pain in the neck*; *skating on thin ice*	Semantic, syntactical
Proverb	*A stitch in time saves nine*; *A friend in need is a friend indeed.*	Semantic, syntactical
Discourse marker	*first of all*; *in order to*; *on the other hand*; *last but not least*	Semantic, syntactical, functional
Continuous formulaic sequence	*Would you please*; *we must not forget that*; *to put you in the picture*; *wait until I tell*	Functional
Discontinuous formulaic sequence	*prevent X from happening*; *as far as X is concerned*; *the effect of X is*; *an increase in X often leads to*; *X and Y are quite similar in terms of* (Jones & Haywood, 2004, Appendix 1)	Functional
Recurrent cluster/lexical bundle	*in the same way as*; *aim of this study*; *as shown in figure*; *to give you an example*; *I see what you*; *in the middle of the*; *you've got to have*; *in addition to the*; *is one of the most* (Schmitt, Grandage, & Adolphs, 2004, p.136)	Functional, frequency-based

However, it is possible to identify the function represented by each bundle as stance, discourse, referential, and so on (Biber et al., 1999). In conjunction with the definition of formulaic sequences explored above, it remains questionable as to whether the entire chunks of lexical bundles are holistically planned, automatically produced, and stored in one's mental lexicon. As a matter of fact, Schmitt, Grandage, & Adolphs (2004) make a distinction between "word strings which come from corpus analysis but which may or may not be stored holistically in the mind" and "word strings which are stored in the mind as whole units but which may or may not be identifiable through corpus analysis" and term the former as "recurrent clusters" and the latter as "formulaic sequences" (p. 128). Recurrent occurrence, at least, is a common ground for both lexical bundles and formulaic sequences in that frequent exposure to a linguistic unit can be expected to facilitate holistic acquisition, processing, and usage. Whether recurrent clusters derived from a corpus are psychologically valid units or not must await further study (Schmitt et al., 2004).

Adding the Dimension of Textual Organization

In our search for linguistic signals to identify moves, we must go beyond the lexico-grammatical features of the language. Swales (1990) states that "identification of moves needs to be based on both communicative intents and linguistic realization" and that "communicative intent can be expressed in different levels of discourse units, where conformity to the convention plays the vital role" (p. 100). Given that the language use of a genre is constrained by the conventions shared by a given discourse community, the set patterns of "textual organization" must also be considered. Moves can be only defined or identified in the textual organization constrained by the genre. Thus, "textual organization" is a vital element for move identification but is an aspect that has been totally ignored in the discussion of formulaic sequences. In other words, sense can be made of a language sequence because of its position in the text, i.e., the point of its chronological appearance in the text. The same expression may take on a different meaning depending on its location in the text. When this is applied to the moves of a research presentation in science and engineering, the time sequence of when the utterance appears (at the beginning of the presentation, at the middle part, or at the end) helps determine the move.

Defining a "Hint Expression"

From the above considerations, we defined hint expressions as linguistic clues for move identification based on position in a genre text. Hint expressions help the receiver of the text (listener or reader) understand the presenter's communicative purpose, or move. For example, when the presenter says *I will talk to you today about* at the beginning, we would know that he/she is trying to "overview" the presentation. Here are some other examples of hint expressions retrieved from the corpus of science and engineering research presentations.

- *Thank you very much for the introduction, and let me join the other speakers in thanking the organizers for this wonderful opportunity to talk*. (Speaker directly addressing audience)
- *I will talk to you today about what we have studied for about the last X years*. (Speaker overviewing the talk)
- *X are classical, but over the last Y decades the application for Z has been extended to many disciplines*. (Speaker presenting background)
- *The problem, though, is that with many of these systems, they're very unstable*. (Speaker presenting an issue)
- *So this is an indication that X should be more Y*. (Speaker making implication)
- *And then to make this X, we first started with Y*. (Speaker describing procedure)
- *It remains to me to thank and acknowledge all the people that have been involved in this research over the last X years*, . . . (Speaker acknowledging)

As can be seen in the above examples, a hint expression can be one word or one phrase, or it can be a whole sentence or even a group of sentences. It can be a continuous string or a discontinuous string where slots are filled with a specific content word or words. It guides the structure of the text and has a functional purpose. It may or may not stand alone semantically or syntactically. Hint expressions can take a variety of forms, even reflecting individually preferred language choices and unintentional production mistakes. Hint expressions are spontaneously produced, are conventionalized but not quite rigidly prefabricated, and are dependent on the text organization.

There are two distinctive characteristics of a hint expression: its use of conventionalized material and the inclusion of conjugated verb phrases. Conventionalized material includes content words such as *introduction*, *speaker* and *organizers* as found in *Thank you very much* *for the introduction, and let me join the other speakers in thanking the organizers for this wonderful opportunity to talk* and *application* and *disciplines* in *X are classical, but over the last Y decades the application for Z has been extended to many disciplines*. The other characteristic that makes a hint expression distinguishable from formulaic sequences is the distinct presence of conjugated verb phrases. While formulaic sequences are usually discussed with decontextualized samples and verbs when included are shown in their root forms, hint expressions encompass verb tenses and modal verbs as they appear in the texts. For example, *I will talk to you today about what we <u>have studied</u> for about the last X years* and *So this is an indication that X <u>should</u> be more Y*.

For further clarification of our proposed hint expressions, let us consider the sequence of *in order to study* which is regarded as a formulaic expression. Searching for this phrase in one of the widely available search engines yields more that 39 million hits. Adding one word, *Here, in order to study* yields 710 thousand hits, but the longer *Here, in order to study the clinical usefulness of* pinpoints the original source with a single hit. This example from the field of medical science shows that a hint expression is not frequency-driven and may not be efficiently retrieved by concordance software. A hint expression can include one or several formulaic expressions, but it is much more specific with respect to content and context as well as communicative intent in a given discourse community.

In summary, our proposed hint expressions are compared below with the definitions given by Schmitt and Carter (2004) of formulaic sequences to more clearly delineate their characteristics.

1. "Formulaic sequences appear to be stored in the mind as holistic units, but they may not be acquired in an all-or-nothing manner" (ibid., p. 4). On the other hand, hint expressions are not acquired in an all-or-nothing manner, and they may not be stored in the mind as holistic units.

2. "Formulaic sequences can have slots to enable flexibility of use, but the slots typically have semantic constraints" (ibid., p. 6). Hint expressions have the same feature.
3. "Formulaic expressions can have semantic prosody" (ibid., p. 7). Hint expressions have semantic prosody but only as a secondary/flexible manifestation.
4. "Formulaic expressions are often tied to particular conditions of use" (ibid., p. 9). Hint expressions have the same feature and reflect specific purposes or functions.
5. Formulaic expressions do not take textual organization into consideration. However, for hint expressions, textual organization is a vital construct.

In this paper, we describe our research leading to the definition of hint expressions and how we tested the validity of using hint expressions to identify moves. Our findings offer implications for the initiation of novices, both native and nonnative English speakers, into the discourse of a professional discourse community.

Method

The Corpus

The corpus used for the study is JECPRESE (Japanese-English Corpus of Presentations in Science and Engineering). As described in Kunioshi, Noguchi, Tojo, and Hayashi (2012), JECPRESE is a corpus including three types of oral presentations: master's degree presentations in Japanese, professional presentations at an international conference on aromatic chemistry in English, and student presentations in English at an American university. The oral presentations were video-taped and transcribed to constitute a corpus. After developing an interface, we classified the moves used by the presenters to deliver their messages (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2

Sections Found in English and Japanese Presentations in JECPRESE

Section	Description
S	Start
I	Introduction
M	Materials and Methods
R	Results and Discussion
C	Conclusion
E	Ending
Q	Question and Answer

Note. Adapted from "An Online Support Site for Preparation of Oral Presentations in Science and Engineering," by N. Kunioshi, J. Noguchi, H. Hayashi, & K. Tojo, 2012, *European Journal of Engineering Education*, *37*(6), 600–608. Copyright 2012 by the European Society of Engineering Education.

Table 3

Moves Found in English and Japanese Presentations in JECPRESE

Move	Description
Ack	Acknowledgments
Aud	Audience Orientation
Bkg	Background
Des	Description
Eva	Evaluation
Exp	Explanation
Fur	Further Research
Gap	Gap
Imp	Implication
Ovw	Overview
Prc	Procedure
Wrk	Present Work

Note. Adapted from "An Online Support Site for Preparation of Oral Presentations in Science and Engineering," by N. Kunioshi, J. Noguchi, H. Hayashi, & K. Tojo, 2012, *European Journal of Engineering Education*, *37*(6), 600–608. Copyright 2012 by the European Society of Engineering Education.

The Subcorpus for the Present Study

The subcorpus used for the present study consists of 16 English research presentations by expert native speakers in science and engineering. Table 4 shows the composition of the subcorpus based on English research presentations by expert native speakers. Although the subcorpus used is quite small, it offers a highly specialized resource of spoken research language in the field of science and engineering. For move analysis, we manually classified the sections and moves shown in the above tables. Table 5 shows the distribution of the sections and moves as a result of move tagging.

Table 4

Composition of Subcorpus for the Present Study

Number of presentations	16
Number of words	68,727
Number of move tagging units	2,455
Number of verb phrases	7,311

Table 5

Distribution of Sections and Moves of the Research Presentations

	Start	Introduction	Methods	Res/Dis	Conclusion	Ending	%
Ack	3	5	−	−	27	3	1.3
Aud	37	35	9	93	9	19	6.9
Bkg	−	266	54	78	−	−	13.6
Des	1	74	92	463	5	1	21.8
Eva	−	16	53	187	8	−	9.0
Exp	−	27	78	271	−	−	12.9
Fur	−	3	3	69	7	−	2.8
Gap	−	43	29	76	−	−	5.1
Imp	−	14	24	101	8	−	5.0
Ovw	4	52	27	60	17	−	5.5
Prc	−	15	81	148	1	−	8.4
Wrk	1	72	37	116	1	−	7.8
%	1.6	21.3	16.7	56.9	2.8	0.8	100

Note: A transcribed sentence may be double-counted for a move.

As shown in Table 5, predominant moves in each section play significant roles in realizing the communicative functions. In the *Start Section*, *Aud* (*Audience Orientation*) plays a major role in effectively establishing rapport with the audience. *Aud* is a move frequently found in oral research presentations, but not explicitly found in research articles. The *Introduction Section* of research presentations shares the communicative purpose of the introduction of research articles; i.e., reviewing the background of the research field with a look at previous work, indicating the gap, and presenting the novelty of the present study. The values in the *Introduction Section* in Table 5 reflect the major roles played by the moves of *Bkg (Background*), *Des* (*Description*), and *Wrk* (*Present Work*). The *Methods Section* has moves such as *Des*, *Prc* (*Procedures*) and *Exp* (*Explanation*). More than half of the moves are devoted to the *Results/Discussion* Section, where *Des* and *Exp* account for a significant portion of the moves. Note the presence of *Eva* (*Evaluation*) and *Imp* (*Implication*) moves for discussing and evaluating the results obtained. The *Conclusion Section* basically restates the present work mainly with the *Ovw* (*Overview*) move, and the *Ending Section* brings the presentation to a close with *Aud*.

Identifying Hint Expressions in Actual Research Presentations

Our observations during the manual tagging process led us to hypothesize that verb tense, aspect, and modality play major roles in influencing move identification. We therefore classified all the verb phrases observed in each move-tagged unit according to tense, voice (active or passive), and modality. A total of 7,311 target verb phrases were sorted using Shallow Parser[1] into five tense types (past perfect, past, present perfect, present, and future), each of which was divided into the secondary category of active or passive voice. At the same time, modal verbs were classified into five types (*can*, *could*, *would*, *should/must/have to*, and *might/may*). [2]

Results

Distributions of Verb Tenses and Modals Across Sections

Table 6 and Figures 1 and 2 show the frequency distributions of verb tenses and modals across sections. Taking the subcorpus size (68,727 words) into consideration, the frequencies were normalized per 1,000 words. (For the raw frequency data, see Appendix A.) All sections revealed the consistent preference of the present tense, which was considered to be an attribute of spoken presentations. The *Start* and *Ending Sections* displayed similar proportional patterns except the present perfect tense was more frequently used in the former and the past tense more frequently used in the latter. *Introduction*, *Methods*, and *Results/Discussion* displayed good synchrony in terms of the distribution of tense types, with the present tense being predominant (51.27 per 1,000 words in *Introduction*, 65.00 in *Methods*, and 62.05 in *Results/Discussion*), followed by the past tense (11.74 in *Introduction*, 15.37 in *Methods*, and 12.32 in *Results/Discussion*). What was noteworthy was the distinct tense distribution in the *Conclusion Section* with more frequent use of the past and present perfect tenses and less frequent use of the present tense compared with the other sections. The past perfect tense did not occur with noticeable frequency and was excluded from our discussion.

Table 6

Distribution of Verb Tenses and Modals Across Sections (Frequency per 1,000 Words)

		Start	Introduction	Methods	Res/Dis	Conclusion	Ending
Past Perf.		–	–	0.07	0.05	–	–
	active	–	–	0.07	0.05	–	–
	passive	–	–	–	–	–	–
Past		11.56	11.74	15.37	12.32	27.74	18.05
	active	10.92	10.78	14.85	11.87	26.24	10.83
	passive	0.64	0.96	0.51	0.45	1.50	7.22
Pres. Perf.		9.63	3.52	3.24	3.85	13.12	3.61
	active	9.63	2.78	2.87	3.47	13.12	1.81
	passive	–	0.74	0.37	0.38	–	1.81
Pres.		64.87	51.27	65.00	62.05	36.36	68.59
	active	63.58	48.15	62.50	59.87	36.36	64.98
	passive	1.28	3.12	2.50	2.18	–	3.61
Future		9.63	3.40	3.60	2.63	1.12	9.03
	active	8.99	3.35	3.53	2.63	1.12	9.03
	passive	0.64	0.06	0.07	–	–	–
Subtotal (Verb)		112.40	69.93	87.29	78.51	78.34	99.28
Modal	can	9.63	5.39	11.84	5.29	4.87	7.22
	could	–	0.23	0.59	0.72	0.37	–
	would	6.42	2.78	1.47	2.61	3.37	3.61
	should/must/have to	3.85	1.70	1.10	1.33	1.50	1.81
	might/may	1.28	0.62	0.81	0.59	0.37	1.81
Subtotal (Modal)		21.19	10.72	15.81	10.54	10.49	14.44
Total		135.59	80.65	103.10	89.05	88.83	113.72

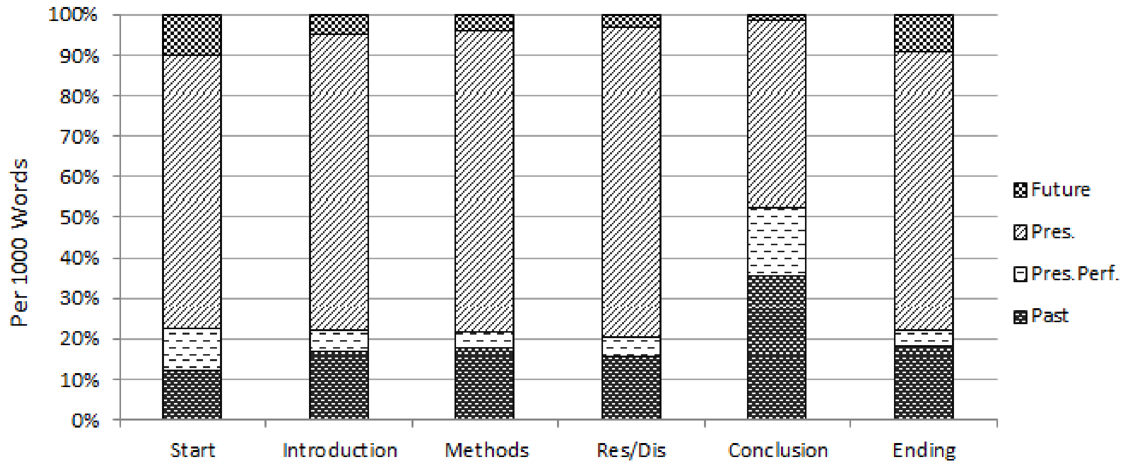

Figure 1. Frequencies of verb tenses across sections. The frequencies are normalized per 1,000 words.

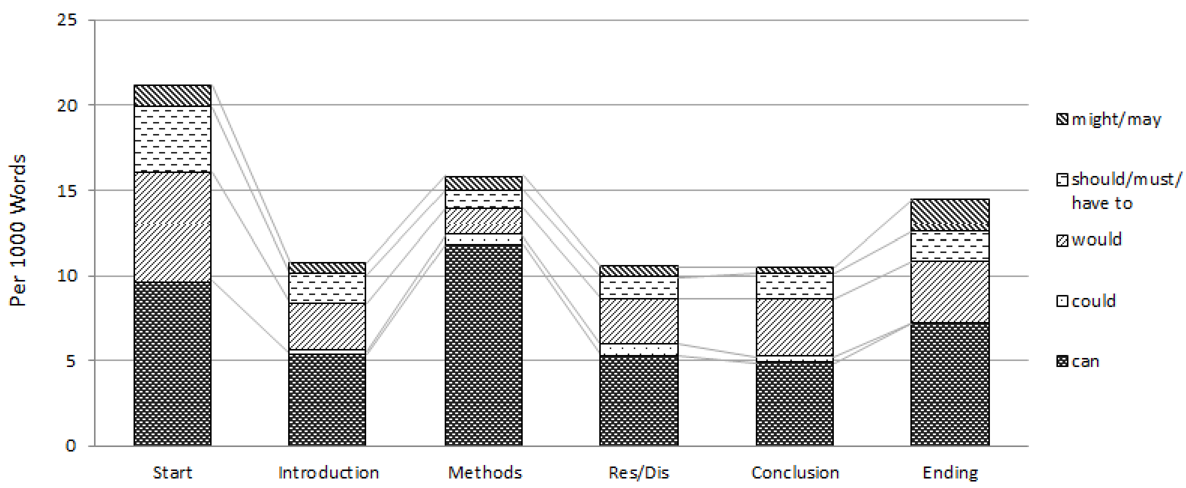

Figure 2. Frequencies of modals across sections. The frequencies are normalized per 1,000 words.

As for the distributions of modals across sections, *Start* employed the modals most frequently followed by *Methods* and *Ending*. As was the case with the tense type, *Start* and *Ending* revealed similar distributional proportions. More interesting was the distribution synchrony among *Introduction*, *Results/Discussion* and *Conclusion* where *can* was the most frequently used modal (5.39, 5.29, and 4.87, respectively) and *would* was the next (2.78, 2.61, and 3.37, respectively). Ranked third was *should/must/have to* (1.70, 1.33, and 1.50, respectively). *Methods*, on the other hand, showed more dependency on *can* (11.84) and less the use of *would* (1.47) compared with the other sections.

Distributions of Verb Tenses and Modals Across Moves

Table 7 and Figures 3 and 4 indicate the frequency distribution of verb tenses and modals across moves. (For the raw frequency data, see Appendix B.) The present tense was the predominant tense for all moves; the three largest frequency figures were 72.18 (*Des*), 70.95 (*Aud*), and 61.39 (*Gap*). Next preferred was the past tense with distinct occurrences in *Ack* (42.08), *Wrk* (23.02), *Bkg* (17.48), and *Prc* (17.45). The present perfect tense was used most frequently in *Ack* (14.27) followed by *Fur* (6.84), *Wrk* (6.40), and *Ovw* (6.03). *Bkg*, which describes previous work, also showed the substantial frequency of the present perfect tense (5.27). The characteristic distribution of the past tense was found in *Ack*, which is likely to be due to the distinct communicative purpose of the move addressing those who contributed to the research.

Table 7

Distribution of Verb Tenses and Modals across Moves (Frequency per 1,000 Words)

		Ack	Aud	Bkg	Des	Eva	Exp	Fur	Gap	Imp	Ovw	Prc	Wrk
Past Perf.		–	–	0.08	–	–	0.09	0.38	–	–	–	–	–
	active	–	–	0.08	–	–	0.09	0.38	–	–	–	–	–
	passive	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Past		42.08	15.66	17.48	8.53	10.40	8.38	7.60	12.82	4.87	9.55	17.45	23.02
	active	37.09	15.43	15.30	7.92	10.40	8.29	7.60	12.82	4.65	9.30	16.90	22.71
	passive	4.99	0.23	2.17	0.61	–	0.09	–	–	0.22	0.25	0.55	0.30
Pres. Perf.		14.27	5.53	5.27	3.29	2.38	2.46	6.84	4.37	2.65	6.03	1.79	6.40
	active	13.55	4.84	3.93	2.80	2.38	2.28	6.84	3.55	2.43	5.78	1.65	6.40
	passive	0.71	0.69	1.34	0.49	–	0.18	-	0.82	0.22	0.25	0.14	-
Pres.		32.81	70.95	55.94	72.18	51.87	58.68	57.35	61.39	51.55	52.55	51.80	53.20
	active	32.10	69.57	51.84	69.31	50.83	55.31	55.83	59.75	50.22	51.29	49.74	52.13
	passive	0.71	1.38	4.10	2.87	1.04	3.37	1.52	1.64	1.33	1.26	2.06	1.07
Future		1.43	7.14	2.59	2.50	0.89	3.74	1.14	0.82	2.65	8.30	3.98	2.59
	active	1.43	7.14	2.51	2.50	0.89	3.74	1.14	0.82	2.65	8.05	3.98	2.44
	passive	–	–	0.08	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.25	–	0.15
Subtotal (Verb)		90.58	99.29	81.36	86.50	65.55	73.35	73.30	79.40	61.73	76.44	75.02	85.21
Modal	can	–	4.15	6.69	7.68	5.05	6.29	2.66	3.82	8.63	5.78	9.21	7.01
	could	–	0.92	0.25	–	0.59	0.64	–	1.36	1.77	0.25	0.82	1.07
	would	5.71	4.84	2.93	1.83	1.34	3.28	3.42	3.27	4.20	2.77	0.69	1.68
	should/must/have to	4.28	1.15	1.76	0.18	0.59	1.91	1.52	4.64	1.99	1.26	0.82	2.13
	might/may	–	0.92	0.59	0.06	0.30	0.82	0.76	1.09	1.55	1.01	0.55	1.22
Subtotal (Modal)		9.99	11.98	12.21	9.75	7.88	12.94	8.36	14.19	18.14	11.06	12.09	13.11
Total		100.57	111.26	93.57	96.26	73.42	86.29	81.66	93.59	79.87	87.50	87.11	98.32

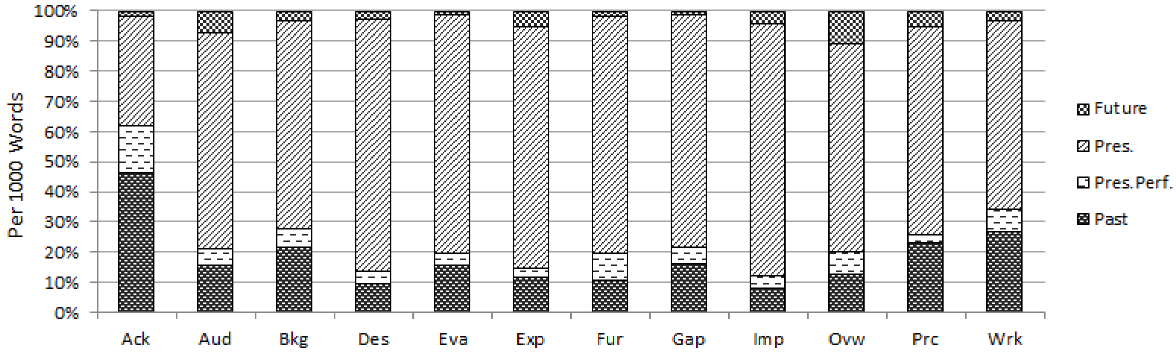

Figure 3. Frequencies of verb tenses across moves. The frequencies are normalized per 1,000 words.

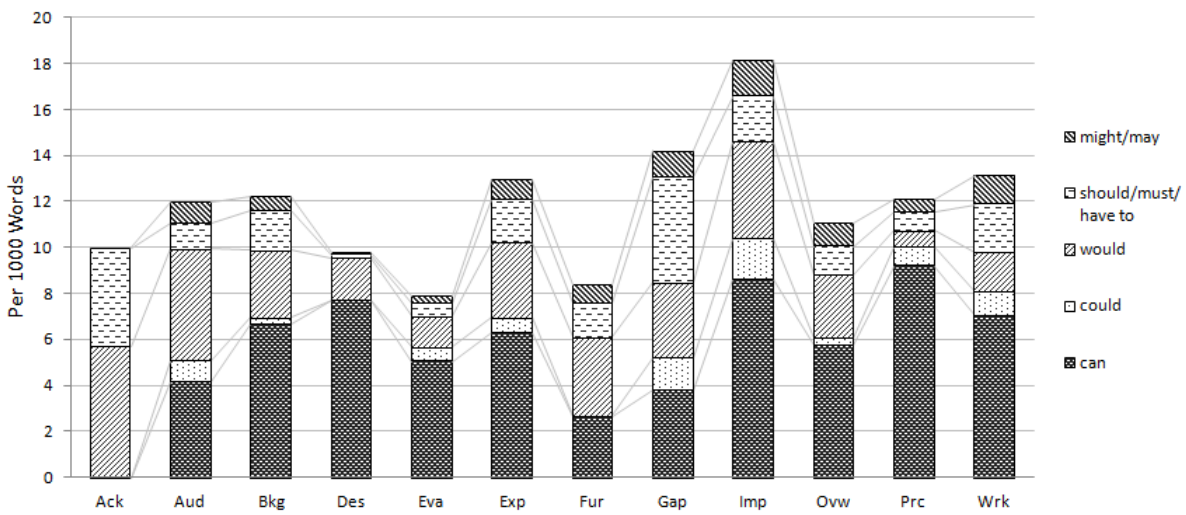

Figure 4. Frequencies of modals across moves. The frequencies are normalized per 1,000 words.

The distributions of modals across moves were very diverse and no two moves showed any similar pattern, which indicates that modal usage was consistently move-dependent. *Can* was the most frequently used modal overall, showing frequent occurrences in *Prc* (9.21 per 1,000 words), *Imp* (8.63), *Des* (7.68), and *Wrk* (7.01). Although overall use of *could* was minimal among the five modal types, comparatively more instances were seen in *Imp* (1.77), *Gap* (1.36), and *Wrk* (1.07). *Would*, on the other hand, was the second most frequently used modal, which may reflect the spoken features of the corpus. This was supported by the fact that *Ack* had the highest frequency of 5.71 per 1,000 words and *Aud* 4.84. The obligatory modals *should/must/have to* were most frequently used in *Gap* (4.64) and *Ack* (4.28) followed by *Imp* (1.99) and *Bkg* (1.76). This was predictable because in the *Gap* move, the speaker needs to clearly state what "should" be done and in the *Ack* move, the speaker would be obliged to acknowledge the people involved in the research. The last group of *might/may* was not frequently used, except in *Imp* (1.55) and *Gap* (1.09). From a move type point of view, *Imp* uses modals most frequently, followed by *Gap*, *Wrk*, and *Exp*.

The proportion of the passive voice to the active voice was very small throughout the moves. Figure 5 shows that *Bkg*, *Des*, and *Exp* together with *Ack* had more instances of passive than other moves. This implies that the passive form may be used in spoken presentations where an objective statement or description is expected.

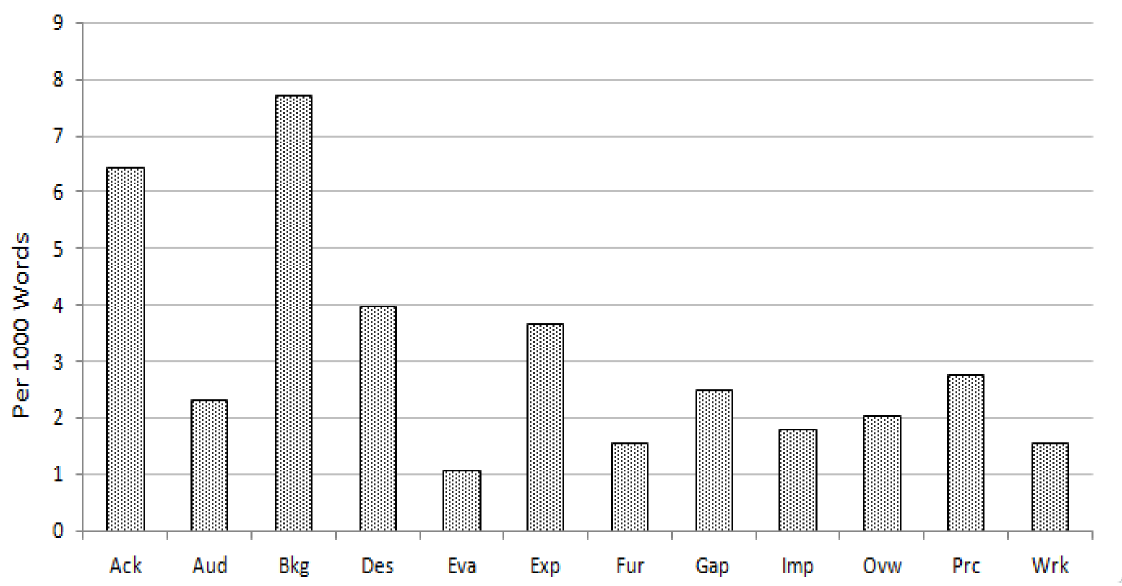

Figure 5. Frequencies of passive voice across moves. The frequencies are normalized per 1,000 words.

Descriptive Analyses of Moves

Along with the quantitative analyses of identifying characteristics in terms of verb tense, verb aspect and modality, we also extracted all the hint expressions in the texts analyzed. The characteristics of each move are described below with actual examples. The moves are presented in alphabetical order, not in the order in which they appeared in the texts. The sections are indicated by abbreviations: S (*Start*), I (*Introduction*), M (*Methods*), R (*Results/Discussion*), C (*Conclusion*), and E (*Ending*). Underlining is used to indicate the tense and modal usages characteristic of a move.

Acknowledgement (Ack). The *Ack* move used the past and present perfect tenses. Approximately 90 percent of the verb phrases use main verbs (Appendix B) and modal verbs are least employed with the exception of *would* and *should/must/have to*. Acknowledging those who have helped with the work can be considered to be a well-established convention in the research community.

- *I* ***have to*** *give credit to the students that* ***did*** *this work.* (C)
- *So,* ***let*** *me finish by thanking people that I****'ve collaborated*** *with.* (E)
- *It* ***remains*** *to me to thank and acknowledge all the people that* ***have been involved*** *in this research over the last X years.* (E)

Audience orientation (Aud). *Aud* is a move not found in research articles. When the presenter directly addresses the audience to draw attention to something or give guidance, the present tense is preferred. The relatively frequent use of the future tense also characterizes this move. *Would* is quite often chosen in the sequence of *I would like to*, which expresses conventionalized politeness when addressing the audience.

- *I* ***would also like to*** *offer a welcome to all of the new people that are here for the first time, as it is to me.* (S)
- *Many of you* ***will*** *recognize this as a view of X.* (S)
- *Where* ***are we going*** *with some of these things?* (R)

- *So, what this* ***is telling*** *us?* (R)
- *So,* ***are*** *we there yet? Or* ***are*** *we still a long way away?* (R)
- *So, we* ***want to start*** *asking some alternative questions now, at the end of the talk here*. (R)
- *So, what we****'ve learned*** *about this?* (R)

Background (Bkg). The present perfect tense is widely known as the preferred tense in the *Bkg* move of research articles. Here, the examples support the frequent use of the present perfect tense and the passive voice.

- *Xs are classical, but over the last Y decades the application for X* ***has been extended*** *to many disciplines*. (I)
- *This principle* ***has been well established*** *in the search for X by SURNAME, as reported in his review*. (I)
- *The group* ***has done*** *some really nice work on X*. (I)
- *Now, this* ***has been known*** *since 19XX, SURNAME* ***was*** *one of the first people to make Y*. (I)
- *And a number of X* ***have been looked*** *at, the group* ***has done*** *a lot of beautiful work on that, and Y* ***has been examined*** *. . .* (R)

Description (Des). Methods and results are described mostly with the present tense, with nearly 90 percent expressed by main verbs (Appendix B). With low dependency on modal verbs, objectivity is aimed for in these descriptions.

- *These* ***are*** *the type of things that we're talking about*. (M)
- *The outcome of this reaction* ***depends upon*** *the X*. (M)
- *This* ***is*** *clearly not X*. (R/D)
- *. . . the two best systems* ***are*** *the X which shows up about Y . . .* (R)
- *So, one of the characteristics of the X that* ***are shown*** *down here is . . .* (R)
- *This* ***is*** *just the highlights of what we've done for the past years.* (C)

Evaluation (Eva). Contrary to our expectation, the *Eva* move often uses the present tense and shows less dependency on modal verbs. As shown in the following example, content words such as adjectives and/or adverbs, not functional words such as modals, are used to present judgment on the quality of the research findings.

- *Now the **advantages** of these X **are pretty easy** to assemble for commercial available materials.* (M)
- *This **works really well**, and we can do this in X.* (M)
- ***Unfortunately**, X **is not as good** . . .* (R)
- *And then in some sense, it**'s surprising**, you have to think about this*. (R)
- *X **are not too bad, not great** . . .* (R)
- *And it proceeded **nicely**, we now **have** X, **quite easy** to work with*. (R)

Explanation (Exp). The linguistic structure of the *Exp* move enjoys much freedom and employs a variety of verb tenses. The hint expressions usually come with *because* or *if*. When the if-clause is used, the subjunctive form is seen with the modal *would*.

- *X **is** not very useful here **because** you have a lot of different Y . . .* (M)
- ***If** we **had** X, it **would be** Y.* (M)
- *We **thought** this **was** ok, **because** we would still be able to make X, but we found that . . .* (R)
- *An important thing about those pictures **is** that they do this to X . . .* (R)
- ***If** a given X **can see** Y, this **would be** a large quantity, this **would indicate** a big change in Z.* (R)
- *You **get** a nice X again, **so** . . .* (R)
- ***If** we **were to** observe any of the X, we **would expect** a very strong Y instead what we see are Z.* (R)
- *We also **thought** that we **could use** X.* (R)
- ***Therefore**, we **have taken** this kind of approach, the consecutive fashion . . .* (R)

Further research (Fur). *Fur* takes a variety of tense types with less dependency on modal verbs. The communicative signal that further work needs to be done is expressed by combinations of several tense types and/or the choice of main verbs.

- *. . . we* ***still have not been able to*** *X*. (R)
- *And thus, we* ***hope to go from*** *something in the order of X* ***to*** *may be Y*. (R)
- *So, we****'re in the process of*** *making these X we****'ve already made****, the other Y we****'re still being worked on***. (R)
- *Then, we* ***started doing*** *this with relatively standard X,* ***but now we've replaced*** *Y, we****'re settling now*** . . . (R)
- *If that's so, that should be just X, and we****'re now endeavoring to*** *make Y*. (R)
- *That****'s the guess that we have now****. We* ***haven't done*** *the X experiments that* ***would prove*** *that Y is* . . . (R)

Gap (Gap). The *Gap* move is one of the critical functions which can determine the effectiveness of the research presentation. Notable characteristics are the predominantly frequent use of *should/must/have to*, which is justifiable as the communicative purpose is to indicate what is lacking in previous work and to express the necessity of the present work. The hint expressions for this move often accompany negative terms such as *the problem* and *unfortunately*.

- *For understanding X, we* ***have to consider*** *all of this together, Y-theory* ***would not work****, the reason for that is that* . . . (I)
- ***The problem****, though,* ***is*** *that with many of these systems, they****'re very unstable****. And in the case of all of these X systems, you* ***must have*** *Y*. (I)
- ***The problem*** *with this* ***is*** *that* . . . (I)
- *What they* ***had to do is not*** *a very simple X procedure*. (I)
- *. . . we* ***have been using*** *this newer X,* ***but unfortunately*** *they* ***have*** *low yields*. (I)

Implication (Imp). In the *Imp* move, researchers can relatively freely express their scientific judgment without assuming ultimate responsibility. The hint expressions reveal flexible linguistic structures and this might be one of the most problematic moves for novice non-native researchers to perceive. The *Imp* move most frequently employs various types of modals, and the modal distribution does not tend toward any single modal type. *Could* and *might/may* or their semantically relevant adverbial words or phrases characterize this move.

- *So, the idea of X **is perhaps reasonable***. (M)
- *. . . so **this is some indication that** X **should be more** Y*. (M)
- *. . . and this **I think means that** X . . .* (R)
- *But it **seems to be** a general phenomenon as well*. (R)
- *. . . and then we **could interpret this to** X . . .* (R)
- *. . . so that also X **could be performed***. (R)
- *It **certainly would be** evidence for a X, **if** these **were** the outcome of the experiment*. (R)

Overview (Ovw). The *Ovw* move is characterized by the preferred use of the future tense, as the function of this move is to project and organize what will follow in the presentation.

- *What I**’d like to do today is**, first, explain a little bit about the nature about X*. (S)
- *Here, we’ll go. I **will talk to** you today about X which we have been studied for about the last Y years*. (I)
- *And when I was preparing the abstract I thought I was able to say a little bit about these systems but the reality I**’m going to** have to restrict it to the series of compounds one, two and five in this morning presentation*. (I)
- *I’ve introduced you to two concepts, one is the X . . . Now, specifically what I **will be talking about** is X*. (C)
- ** So, to wrap up with what you**’ve seen** in this morning is that we **were able to** prepare X . . .* (C)

- ** Finally, I**'d just like to** conclude by showing that we **have been able to** do a wide variety of X, and we **were able to** Y, and we **hope** that in future we **are able to** work with people that have the tools to which we can investigate Z.* (C)

Ovw appears in various sections. At the beginning of the *Start* and *Introduction Sections*, the presenter overviews what will be talked about, and when the presentation is coming to a close in the *Conclusion Section*, the presenter overviews what has been stated, as can be seen from the last two examples (marked with asterisks). Therefore, the tense choice can be expected to shift from the future and present tenses to the present perfect and past tenses.

Procedure (Prc). With this move, the use of can is notable. Main verbs usually appear with *and* and/or *then*. The past tense is frequently seen together with the present tense.

- *And **then** we **do** the X **and then** we **generate** Y **and then** we Z . . .* (M)
- *. . . we actually **have to make** this, and **the way that we do that is** via X.* (M)
- *I just briefly **run through how we make** X, strategically we **take** Y . . .* (M)
- *. . . so we **prepare** these X.* (M)
- *We **can make** X pretty easily.* (R)
- ***And then** to make this X, we **first started** with Y.* (R)
- *We**'ll then be able to** use this X, **add** to Y **and make** here another Z . . .* (R)

Present work (Wrk). *Wrk* is expressed using the past and present perfect tenses.

- *So, we **thought** it **was worthy investigating** what was likely to happen.* (I)
- *So what we **wanted to do** **is to** look at something that **is actually more** X.* (I)
- *And so, we **wanted to** try something a bit different.* (I)
- *So what we **decided to do** **was** to do the final X . . .* (M)
- *And we **propose** a X, which **is probably even more hypothetical**.* (M)
- *Now I **mentioned** that we**'d like to** make X and Y **is the first step towards that goal**.* (M)
- *And so, we**'ve looked at** both X as well as Y.* (R)

Discussion

With the aim of trying to identify recurrently used patterns in professional genre texts, we built JECPRESE and manually tagged the moves in the corpus files. Move tagging presupposes adequate move identification. In the move identification process, the move rater largely relies on his/her intuition which is backed by his/her expertise as well as linguistic competence. As far as raters rely on their intuition, tagging outcomes can vary from rater to rater. In one study, 70 percent was considered to be a reasonable inter-rater reliability rate (Biber, Conner, & Upton, 2007). The more expertise one has in a discourse community, the better the intuitive judgment can be. However, as human judgment cannot be totally free from subjectivity, the difference in the psychological reality of moves among raters is unavoidable. In our study, we had to repeat the tagging process several times until discrepancies among the four raters were minimized and agreement could be reached. We realized that our disagreements on the move identifications may have been due to differences in our backgrounds in terms of field of specialization and first language.

The questions then arose of: How novice nonnative researchers could perceive moves in an English research presentation? Could they use their intuition, which is what expert native speakers do? Are there any strategies that they can use? If so, what are some of the clues that they might rely on? In the present study, triggered by such questions, we tried to develop a rationale that could be used for move identification. We started by examining lexical clues that were objectively analyzable because “moves represent semantic and functional units of text with specific communicative purposes” (Biber et al., 2007, p. 24). We termed these lexical clues that signal the moves “hint expressions.”

Our findings disclosed the linguistic dimensions of hint expressions that can be used to identify move types in the research presentations in science and engineering. Although verb tense distributions across sections, with the present tense being the dominant tense, did not show significant differences, the distribution across moves indicated several characteristics;

frequent use of the past tense in *Ack*, *Bkg*, *Prc*, and *Wrk* moves, more use of the present perfect tense in *Ack*, *Bkg*, *Ovw*, and *Wrk*, and more instances of the future tense in *Ovw*. The modality distribution, on the other hand, revealed highly diverse patterns especially across moves. Frequent use of *would* in *Ack*, *Aud*, and *Ovw*, the distinct use of *should/must/have to* in *Gap*, and prominent occurrence of *can* in *Prc*, *Des*, and *Wrk* can serve as clues to help nonnative speakers of English perceive moves in presentations. The results of the distribution analyses of verb tenses and modals across sections and moves complement our observations from descriptive analyses of hint expressions across moves. They showed how hint expressions can be used to identify and express the speaker's communicative intent.

Conclusion

The present study identified the characteristics of hint expressions that can reveal speaker intent in an oral presentation. One of the salient features is the characteristic use of verb tenses and modals. Sensitivity to verb tense or modality can help us perceive communicative purposes in a given discourse. Acquiring the competency to recognize tense and modality can be difficult for nonnative speakers of English, especially as the perception of tense is considered to be culture-bound. Pedagogically speaking, verb tense is usually taught according to time lines and it is not sufficiently nor appropriately considered in the teaching of scientists (Salager-Meyer, 1992). Another important aspect of hint expressions is their chronological location within the presentation flow. Similar hint expressions can have different functions if they appear at different chronological locations within the text. Finally, in spoken research presentations by native speakers of English, hint expressions can be produced spontaneously and flexibly. This means that they may not be obvious if the texts are examined only with frequency searches.

Our definition and description of hint expressions show that they have identifiable characteristics. This should enable conscious learning of hint expressions as well as the acquisition of an awareness of their existence. Hint expressions can help novice nonnative English-speaking researchers properly perceive and identify moves, and use them to prepare effective research presentations. We hope that our findings can contribute to the development of more automated pragmatic tagging of moves.

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Notes

[1] Shallow Parser (http://cogcomp.cs.illinois.edu/download/software/8) is an open software provided by Cognitive Computation Group, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Unlike POS tagging which would tag each and every word in the input sentence, Shallow Parser, a "chunker," provides the groupings of words with their representations in the form of phrases such as verb phrase, noun phrase, adverbial phrase, and prepositional phrase. Shallow Parser enabled us to sort the verb phrases in terms of tense type, voice type (active or passive), and modal type. Here are examples of verb phrase tags obtained via Shallow Parser and their sorting under the present study.

[VP works] – present/active; [VP took] – past/active; [VP want to talk] – present/active;

[VP will be talking] – future/active; [VP was organized] – past/passive;

[VP 're going to do] – future/active; [VP have discussed] – present perfect/active;

[VP could go] – modal (*could*); [VP might work] – modal (*might*);

[VP have to do] – semi-modal (*have to*)

For the present study, *be going to* as well as *will* was considered to be a "future" tense indicator.

[2] Groupings of modal verbs vary depending on the analysis viewpoint. Biber (2006), for example, classifies modals into three categories according to their functions; *can*, *may*, *might*, and *could* with possibility/permission/ability functions, *ought*, *must*, and *should* with necessity/obligation functions and *will*, *would*, and *shal*l with predictive/volition functions. As mentioned in Note 1, we decided to use *will* as a future tense indictor, which was supported by Biber's analysis that "the modal *will* is used to announce future class actions/events" (Biber, 2006, p. 97). We also separated *can/could* and *may/might* because in science and engineering fields, *can/could* commonly expresses ability rather than possibility while *may/might* expresses possibility rather than ability. We further wanted to separate *can* and *could* because assertion made by *could* be less direct or weaker than *can*, which is a typical hedging expression. The semi-modal *have to* was grouped with *should/must/have to*.

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Appendix A: Distribution of Verb Tenses and Modals Across Sections (Raw Frequency)

		Start	Introduction	Methods	Res/Dis	Conclusion	Ending
Past Perf.		–	–	1	2	–	–
	active	–	–	1	2	–	–
	passive	–	–	–	–	–	–
Past		18	207	187	547	74	10
	active	17	190	180	527	70	6
	passive	1	17	7	20	4	4
Pres. Perf.		15	62	44	171	35	2
	active	15	49	39	154	35	1
	passive	0	13	5	17	-	1
Pres.		101	904	906	2756	107	38
	active	99	849	872	2659	106	36
	passive	2	55	34	97	1	2
Future		15	60	49	117	3	5
	active	14	59	48	117	3	5
	passive	1	1	1	–	–	–
Subtotal (Verb)		149	1233	1187	3593	219	55
Modal	can	15	95	161	235	13	4
	could	–	4	8	32	1	–
	would	10	49	20	116	9	2
	should/must/have to	6	30	15	59	4	1
	might/may	2	11	11	26	1	1
Subtotal (Modal)		33	189	215	468	28	8
Total		182	1422	1402	4061	247	63

Appendix B: Distribution of Verb Tenses and Modals Across Moves (Raw Frequency)

		Ack	Aud	Bkg	Des	Eva	Exp	Fur	Gap	Imp	Ovw	Prc	Wrk
Past Perf.		–	–	1	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–
	active	–	–	1	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–
	passive	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Past		59	68	209	140	70	92	20	47	22	38	127	151
	active	52	67	183	130	70	91	20	47	21	37	123	149
	passive	7	1	26	10	–	1	–	–	1	1	4	2
Pres. Perf.		20	24	63	54	16	27	18	16	12	24	13	42
	active	19	21	47	46	16	25	18	13	11	23	12	42
	passive	1	3	16	8	–	2	–	3	1	1	1	–
Pres.		46	308	669	1184	349	644	151	225	233	209	377	349
	active	45	302	620	1137	342	607	147	219	227	204	362	342
	passive	1	6	49	47	7	37	4	6	6	5	15	7
Future		2	31	31	41	6	41	3	3	12	33	29	17
	active	2	31	30	41	6	41	3	3	12	32	29	16
	passive	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
Subtotal (Verb)		127	431	973	1419	441	805	193	291	279	304	546	559
Modal	can	–	18	80	126	34	69	7	14	39	23	67	46
	could	–	4	3	–	4	7	–	5	8	1	6	7
	would	8	21	35	30	9	36	9	12	19	11	5	11
	should/must/have to	6	5	21	3	4	21	4	17	9	5	6	14
	might/may	–	4	7	1	2	9	2	4	7	4	4	8
Subtotal (Modal)		14	52	146	160	53	142	22	52	82	44	88	86
Total		141	483	1119	1579	494	947	215	343	361	348	634	645

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