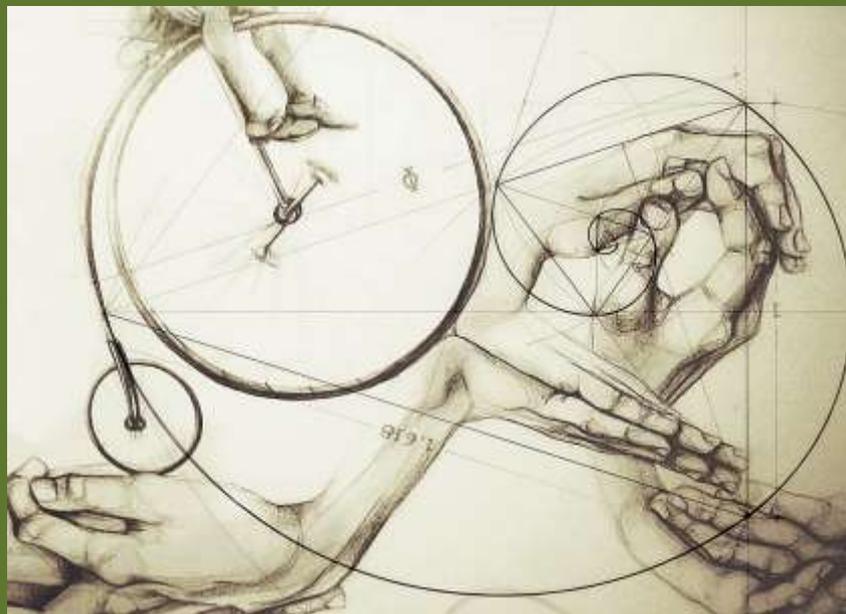




# ELT RESEARCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IATEFL RESEARCH SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP



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## About IATEFL Research SIG

The IATEFL Research SIG (ReSIG) is a unique forum for the discussion of issues connected with research into (or relating to) ELT, bringing together teachers, teacher-researchers, teacher educators and researchers from around the world. In this active community, members share their experiences of research, as well as findings from and interpretations of research, and network face-to-face at regular events, online via our discussion list, and in print via *ELT Research*.



If you are a teacher interested in investigating your own practice, a researcher involved in other kinds of ELT inquiry, a teacher educator engaging others in research or not a researcher but curious about what research is and how you can get involved with and in it, then the Research SIG is for you! Our members come from all around the world and we have a large and diverse committee, reflecting our desire to be as open to members' initiative as much as possible.

If you enjoy reading this issue and would like to subscribe and/or join us at future events, you can find out more about how to become a member of ReSIG via our website: <http://resig.weebly.com/> (in the section titled 'Join us').

You can renew your membership of IATEFL or become a new member of IATEFL (and the Research SIG) online via [www.iatefl.org](http://www.iatefl.org) or you can contact IATEFL Head Office at:

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## About *ELT Research*

Submissions for *ELT Research*, published once a year by the IATEFL Research Special Interest Group, should be sent to [resigeditors@gmail.com](mailto:resigeditors@gmail.com). Please visit the SIG website <http://resig.weebly.com/> for author guidelines (under 'Publications').

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Views expressed in this issue (35) of *ELT Research* are not necessarily those of the editors, of the IATEFL Research SIG, of IATEFL or its staff or trustees.

### Editing and cover artwork

This issue was edited by Darío Luis Banegas, Jessica Mackay, Emily Edwards, Conor Keogh, and Amol Padwad.

The front cover artwork, called *Descansar en mí*, is by Guillermina Victoria and belongs to a private collection. You can check Guillermina's website at <http://wilhelmina18.wix.com/arte-victoria>

# Editorial

**Darío Luis Banegas and Jessica Mackay**

## Introduction

We are delighted to bring you the latest issue (Issue 35) of *ELT Research*, an IATEFL Research Special Interest Group (ReSIG) annual publication.

This issue is a celebration of diversity of voices, contexts, and experiences as we have included research reports and reflective accounts set in different geographical locations and levels of education.

As in previous issues, the issue features research reports, reflective reports, conference reports together with reflections drawing on different CPD events, and a book review.

We truly hope that you enjoy reading the contributions and that you feel tempted to submitting your manuscript for potential publication in 2021.

## About the editors of this issue of *ELT Research*



Darío Luis Banegas is a lecturer in TESOL in the University of Strathclyde, an associate fellow with the University of Warwick, and an online teacher educator for Argentinian teacher education programmes. In South America, he is a regular visiting lecturer in the following areas:

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Jessica is Barcelona Area Coordinator for TESOL-Spain. She is coordinator of the *ELT Research in Action* conference (supported by the IATEFL ReSIG) and is co-editor of the conference publication.



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Amol Padwad is Professor and Director for the Centre of English Language Education at Ambedkar University in Delhi. He is also Secretary of the All India Network of English Teachers (AINET). He has researched, spoken and published widely about language teacher education and development, teacher motivation, and professional learning communities.

## A note from the coordinators

Dear ELT Research community,

We are delighted to welcome *ELT Research* Issue 35 and would like to thank the editors who worked hard all throughout the year to put such a rich and wide variety of articles, reports and reviews of research in ELT from different parts of the world together.



ReSIG once more has been active in 2019, and has started working hard in 2020, organising and supporting conferences and events, publications, online discussions, webinars and new initiatives such as mentoring teacher research.

On 1st April 2019 ReSIG organised the annual **IATEFL Pre-Conference Event (PCE)** in Liverpool. The event was entitled 'Communicating and Learning from Research' and featured plenary talks by Anne Burns and Richard Smith, poster presentations by students, teachers and academics involved in research, and a final

wrap-up of the day led by David Nunan. It was a very interactive day which offered opportunities to learn, interact, reflect and be inspired. We have kept a record of the day with pictures and details of the presentations on our website at <http://resig.weebly.com/resig-pce-2019.html>. The 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019 was the **ReSIG Showcase Day at the IATEFL Annual Conference**. ReSIG showcased relevant talks on research in ELT and held an Open Forum for anyone who wanted to know more about the ReSIG. For details about the selected talks on the day please visit our website on <http://resig.weebly.com/resig-showcase-day-2019.html>.

**ReSIG** also organised three **online discussions** in 2019. The first one in the year was in February and focused on 'Practitioner Research as a Principled Framework for Continuing Professional Development for English Language Teachers'. Moderated by Chris Banister, the discussion featured Assia Slimani-Rolls and Richard Kiely, authors of the book *Exploratory Practice for Continuing Professional Development*, which served as the basis for discussion. The second online discussion was on 12-20 June, and was entitled 'Blowing Away the Dust: Illuminating the Value of Practitioner Research in Applied Linguistics' following on from a BAAL/Cambridge University Press seminar of the same name which was held at the University of Leeds on 8-9 April. Moderated by Laura Grassick, Judith Hanks, Harry Kuchah, Chris Banister, and Loreto Aliaga, the discussion raised some interesting thoughts and questions around issues of agency, identity, ethics, and inclusivity in practitioner research as well as how, through practitioner-led inquiry, Applied Linguistics might better respond to local contexts and diverse learning environments. Finally, the third discussion in 2019 was held on 28<sup>th</sup> October-8<sup>th</sup> November and invited authors Adrian Holiday and Malcolm MacDonald to discuss their recent article entitled '*Researching the Intercultural: Intersubjectivity and the Problem with Post-positivism*' and published in the *Applied Linguistics* journal. The discussion was moderated by Ana Ines Salvi and Chris Banister. You will find a record of each of these discussions on our website at <http://resig.weebly.com/online-discussions.html>.

ReSIG also supports the **publication** of different outputs that emerge from ReSIG events, conferences and initiatives. Some of the publications in 2019 include *Stories by Teacher Researchers in an Online Research Community* which was edited by Aslı Lidice Goktürk Sağlam and Kenan Dikilitaş; and an edited book of research accounts by teachers around the globe, entitled "*Energising teacher research*". Edited by Kenan Dikilitaş, Mark Wyatt, Anne Burns and Gary Barkhuizen, this is a follow-up publication from the 2018 ReSIG organised conference held at Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul. To access the open access books please visit the ReSIG website at <http://resig.weebly.com/books.html>.

ReSIG also hosts **webinars and supports ELT Research related events**. On 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019 ReSIG hosted a webinar on Anxiety in English Language Teaching led by Christina Gkonou. A record of this enlightening webinar can be found on <http://resig.weebly.com/webinar-foreign-language-learner-anxiety.html>. On 26-27<sup>th</sup> April, ReSIG supported the ELTRIA (ELT Research In Action) conference, entitled 'ELT research in action: bringing together two communities of practice', which was held at the University of Barcelona, in Spain. This two-day event aimed to demystify research and encourage teachers to read, engage with, and participate in relevant studies with clear practical grounding in order to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

ReSIG also organised two further events in 2019. The **MA TESOL Quick Fire Dissertation Presentation Event**, organised by Tilly Harrison and Ana Ines Salvi, was held on 7th August 2019 at the University of Warwick (see also p.57 this issue). This is an event for MA ELT/ TESOL students to share what they have found out in their research with other students at the same stage in their career from all over UK. Further details can be found on our website at <http://resig.weebly.com/the-ma-the-ma-elt-quick-fire-presentation-event.html>.

Secondly, ReSIG, together with the Global Issues SIG, organised a **TESOL Africa Pre-Conference Event** called 'Teachers in Action: Exploring Global Issues through Classroom Research' at the Africa TESOL conference in Abuja, Nigeria on 8th August 2019. The day included hands-on workshops by international and local speakers.

Following from ReSIG teacher-research events, ReSIG is now **mentoring teacher researchers and supporting mentors**. Following from the above mentioned TESOL Africa Pre-Conference Event, ReSIG is now supporting teacher participants develop their research projects via mentoring, webinars and discussions online. We are expecting to publish the work teacher-researchers, mentors, organisers, and webinar hosts are doing by August 2020. Further details can be found on our website at <http://resig.weebly.com/resig-gisig-project-with-africa-tesol.html>. Secondly, from 11 January to 15 February 2020, ReSIG is supporting a TESOL International Electronic Village Online on Mentoring teacher-research. Moderated by Richard Smith and Seden Eraldemir Tuyan, this series of webinars, tasks and discussion activities aims to help develop a worldwide community of teacher-research mentors, via a syllabus based largely on a forthcoming British Council publication, *Mentoring Teachers to Research Their Classrooms*, but with input also from other experienced mentors. Further information can be found <http://mentoring-tr.weebly.com/evo2020.html> here:

Looking ahead to the IATEFL Conference 2020 in Manchester, ReSIG is holding two events. The **Pre-**

**conference Event (PCE)** will take place on 17 April and is entitled "The role of Research in English Language Teaching and Teacher Education". The event features two plenaries by Sarah Mercer and Maggie Kubanyiova, as well as poster presentations by language teachers, teacher educators and researchers.

The **ReSIG Showcase Day** will be held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April, featuring 5 talks, 2 workshops and an open forum. Further details about both events can be found on the ReSIG website at <http://resig.weebly.com/iatefl-conference-resig-events.html>. (see also back cover)

Finally, the next ReSIG **Online Discussion** in late February 2020 will focus on 'Knowledge Mobilisation in TESOL' in the context of the research-practice gap in the field. Sardar Anwaruddin of York University, Toronto, Canada will be joining us as guest moderator with the discussion centring around his latest publications on this topic. Besides, in the pipeline is a **volume** of accounts of teacher research produced by language teachers from all around the world. Entitled *Creating Quiet Reflective Spaces: Language Teacher Research as Professional Development*, this book, edited by Loreto Aliaga Salas and Elena Ončevska Ager, is promising.

2019 has been a very active year for ReSIG and 2020 is promising too. From conferences to discussions, webinars to publications, events to new creative initiatives that support ELT research in general and teacher research in particular, ReSIG has worked and will continue working hard to engage the ELT Research community in a variety of events. I would like to thank the ReSIG committee and community for their support and participation!

To a fruitful 2020!

**Ana Ines Salvi** on behalf of the ReSIG coordinators

## Action research: Using Turnitin peer feedback assignments to improve academic English writing skills and foster reflective learning

**Finlay McCall**

### Introduction

Turnitin (turnitin.com) is widely used to detect and determine plagiarism in academic writing courses. Recent additions to Turnitin include the use of a feedback studio to facilitate feedback from the instructor as well as peer feedback assignments which allow students to provide feedback on both their peers' submitted written assignments and their own. This feedback can be in the form of open-ended questions, a minimal response rating scale or mark-up of the text using comments.

Noting that students were often unwilling to give critical feedback face-to-face, I was interested in exploring whether the use of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) might help them overcome some of this reluctance.

The following is a description of the initial stages of an Action Research project on the use of peer and self-feedback on Turnitin to facilitate the development of academic English writing skills in process/product oriented academic English writing. Having experienced the benefits for personal professional development of applying Action Research in the academic English classroom (McCall, 2018), I initiated this project at the beginning of 2019.

Initial data collected suggests that the students found the peer and self-review tasks to be useful in determining how to improve their own writing at both a content and organisation level. The data also suggest that while students lack confidence in their peers' motivation to respond accurately to such tasks, they felt that overall the peer feedback process was useful.

### Background

Peer review is considered a part of the process approach to writing in which learning takes place through the shared construction of meaning (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Zhang (1995) notes that peer response and revision can be problematic due to learners' affective response to the task and their desire to receive teacher-led feedback rather than from their peers. Research suggests that learners lack training in how to deliver such feedback (Connor & Asenavage, 1994) and for peer feedback tasks to be successful, more emphasis needs to be placed on providing them with the linguistic and metacognitive tools involved in such a task (Berg, 2018). Berg (1999) further hypothesises that peer feedback tasks could assist inexperienced writers to develop their own revision strategies for detecting mismatches between what they intend to write and what they have written, specifically when dealing with issues of meaning and rhetorical aspects of text.

In conducting this research I hoped to address some of these concerns as the use of CMC may better allow instructors to structure the scope and focus of feedback required by learners while also allowing for reflective learning practices to be encouraged. Li and Li (2018) found that the use of Turnitin's Peermark tool facilitated classroom management of the peer review process (e.g. easy setup of blind review) as well as tracking and monitoring of student engagement, hence I chose this tool for my action research.

### Context

#### Aims

The primary purpose of the research was to explore the benefits for students of this tool in developing academic writing skills. A secondary aim was to determine whether

the use of Turnitin's Peermark tool was practical in my own teaching context, that of academic English pathway programs in China.

### Students

This initial cycle comprised 31 second year Chinese undergraduate students studying English at a Chinese university in order to eventually study mainly business-related courses in English overseas. All students had access to their own laptops and were highly literate in the use of digital technologies.

### Coursework/curriculum

The curriculum followed is part of Insearch's Academic English programs which are designed to develop the English language and academic literacy skills required for successful entry to an English-speaking university (Insearch, 2019). The level 5 course requires students to write three formative portfolio tasks (150 - 250 words) and one summative five paragraph report (700 words) over 10 weeks (100 hours). The tasks were outlined and drafted during class and then typed and submitted to Turnitin in the students' own time. The portfolio tasks were designed to develop the writing skills needed to complete the report and, as such, only typically assessed for completion rather than against specific criteria. However, the summative report grade was a significant component of the students' final grade for the course.

### Method of delivery

Asynchronous peer feedback was used on the second of the portfolio tasks and the draft essay. Once the students had had the opportunity to read the feedback provided by their peers, they then resubmitted their work to Turnitin for instructor feedback. For the draft submission of the report, the peer and self-assessment results formed the basis of a one-on-one tutorial discussion with their instructor. In both uses of the Peermark tool a self-assessment was required to complete the assignment.

### Peer feedback tasks

While the Turnitin Peermark module allows for sophisticated mark-up of texts using comments and highlights, I did not encourage their use as they were beyond the scope of this project, nor did any students employ these features.

#### Task 1

Noting that Benesch (1984) suggests providing constructive models for peer feedback, feedback on the first portfolio task was provided by the instructor using a similar peer feedback format on Turnitin as those developed for subsequent tasks. This task was to verify that students could upload to Turnitin and access feedback on the platform.

#### Task 2

The second task was to submit a summary of a section of a case study in academic prose. For the peer feedback component, students were assigned 1 of the

submitted papers from an anonymous student and also required to self-evaluate using the questions and interface shown in Figure 1.

The questions (Figure 1) were designed to address specific textual features as covered in class. The use of minimal response questions 1 to 12 was an attempt to minimize the need to train students in features of the text on which they should focus or the language required to provide feedback as the latter was not a specific focus of the syllabus and I hoped the former would be construed through the questions.

Figure 1. Peer feedback questions assignment 1.



The screenshot shows a peer feedback assignment interface with the following questions and rating options:

- 1. Both the section of text in italics AND the "name of the article" in quotes are mentioned. (No  Yes )
- 2. There is an author-prominent citation in Harvard-UTS style. (No  Yes )
- 3. The citation is accurate and only the author's surname is used. (No  Yes )
- 4. The reporting verb is suitable for stating the purpose of the section. (No  Yes )
- 5. The reporting verb is followed by an appropriate noun clause or noun phrase. (No  Yes )
- 6. The purpose of the section is accurately stated. (No  Yes )
- 7. All sentences refer to the author. (No  Yes )
- 8. There are a variety of reporting verbs throughout the summary. (No  Yes )
- 9. The failure of the 'smile-factory' policy is mentioned. (No  Yes )
- 10. Explanation of why the 'smile-factory' policy didn't work is mentioned. (No  Yes )
- 11. Issues related to pay and conditions are mentioned. (No  Yes )
- 12. There is a statement which shows that Disney had to adjust its policies. (No  Yes )

### Task 3

The third task was the draft report, the final version of which would constitute a significant percentage of the grade for the course. Again, students were assigned one anonymous report to evaluate and were also required to self-evaluate. The evaluation took the form of minimal response items, noticing items, rating of clarity items and simple short answer items requiring the reviewer to identify and type in textual and content elements of the paper (Figure 2).

Figure. 2. Peer feedback questions assignment 2.

1. Paragraph 1: The background of the industry is outlined.  
No  1  2 Yes

2. Paragraph 1: The dilemma is outlined in general terms (NOT specific to the case study company)  
No  1  2 Yes

3. Paragraph 1: The case study title, author's and date are clearly stated.  
No  1  2 Yes

4. Paragraph 1: How many terms are defined?  
None  1  2  3  4 or more

5. Paragraph 2: Are the key actors and their opinions summarised clearly?  
No  1  2 Yes

6. Paragraph 2: What is the owner's dilemma? (this must be a 'whether' statement)  
  
3 word minimum

7. Paragraph 3: Both experts viewpoints are summarised in terms of their overall focus.  
No  1  2 Yes

8. Paragraph 3: There is a sentence showing similarity between the experts? (using 'both' or 'neither')  
No  1  2 Yes

9. Paragraph 4: The detailed points of both experts viewpoints are clearly outlined.  
Not clear  1  2  3  4 Very clear

10. Paragraph 5: It is clear which expert the WAT writer agrees with and why.  
Not clear  1  2  3  4 Very clear

11. Paragraph 5: It is clear with which expert the WAT writer doesn't agree.  
Not clear  1  2  3  4 Very clear

12. Paragraph 5: There is a recommendation to resolve the dilemma.  
No  1  2 Yes

13. Paragraph 5: What modals (should, could, need to, etc...) has the WAT writer used in their recommendation?

### Data collection

I monitored and measured participation using the data from the Turnitin interface. Participation was encouraged through reminder emails and the use of WeChat, a synchronous messaging platform popular in China. Students' affective response to the peer feedback task was collected through an anonymous survey at the end of the course. A short interview was conducted at the end of the course and students were asked how they felt about the peer feedback task and what they thought about it in very general terms.

At the end of each peer feedback task assignment, I reflected on the effectiveness of the task, the students' ability to complete the tasks and my impression of how it had informed my teaching practice.

### Preliminary results Task completion

Table 1. Participation.

Task	Submitted to Turnitin		Peer correction task completed	
	Class 3	Class 4	Class 3	Class 4
Portfolio Task 1	16	15	NA	
Portfolio Task 2 (Peermark)	16	15	13	15
Revised Task 2	16	12	NA	
Portfolio Task 3	16	15	Time constraints did not permit the use of peer feedback for this task	
Draft Assignment (Peermark)	16	15	16	11
Final Assignment	16	15	Criteria based summative feedback from instructor	

Table 1 shows that the majority of students in both classes completed the tasks set but some had difficulty with completing the peer feedback tasks. This may indicate a lack of learner training and unfamiliarity with this mode of assessment and review. They were all able to submit the required coursework.

### Surveys results

Figure 1. Usefulness of receiving feedback.

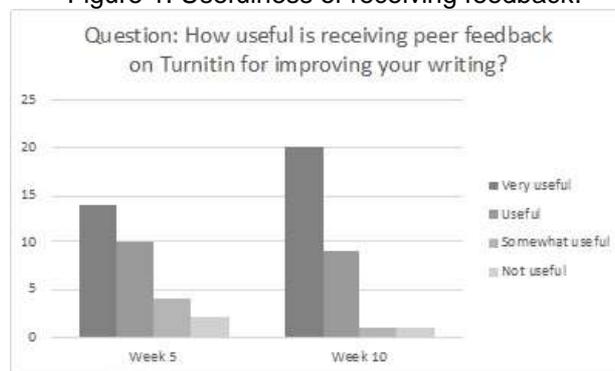
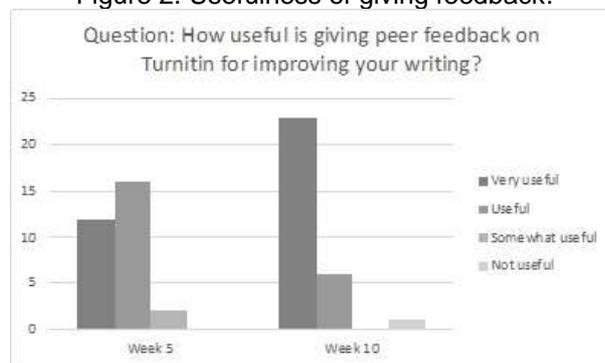


Figure 2. Usefulness of giving feedback.



Figures 3 & 4 show that the majority of students felt that both giving and receiving peer feedback was useful for

improving their writing. I noted a slight bias towards giving peer feedback rather than receiving it and explored this further in the interviews.

### **Interview**

Most of the students interviewed confirmed the results from the survey and stated that they found the tasks generally useful for improving their own writing. Several, however, felt that their peers may not have taken the task seriously enough and may have answered the minimal response tasks quickly or without referring to the writing they were reviewing in order to complete the tasks as quickly as possible. In response to the question “What did you think of the peer review tasks?”, one student’s response was:

I think it depends on the attitudes of them done for you if they do it without thinking I think it’s very useless but if he look at your article and correct it and really spend um time on it I think it’s useful.

I will give 70% of useful because some classmates will not take it useful and will not go very deep through the article because they want to save time and they might but some of us might really use the questions to analyse our classmates’ article and we can also use the questions to evaluate ourselves.

In response to the question “What did you think of the peer review tasks? Were they useful or not?”, some student responses articulate the motivational effects of both reading and responding to the peer feedback tasks, such as:

It’s useful too because I can see what they have written and I can see some good aspects and I can also see some not good aspects in their writing.

It’s very useful because when I finished my writing but I don’t want to check it again but this system can make me to reread my writing and I can find some new mistake and new improvement and I can improve it or change some not appropriate words or something.

I think it was useful for me because normally I can see my classmates writing and I can learn something from them and also I can see how to improve my writing task.

### **Instructor reflection**

- I found the development of the questions useful in determining the focus of the peer review tasks as I could see from observing the in-class drafting process the areas where problems were most likely to occur.
- Related to the above, I felt that the reinforcement of specific textual features through the peer review tasks resulted in less of a need to for in-class repetition of the same points. Where questions arose regarding some of the questions, effective use of modality for instance, I was able to focus on these areas in class.
- Turnitin is primarily used as a similarity checker at my institution, I found that instances of high

similarity scores were generally low for this cohort, while this may be anecdotal other disciplines had similar results with their deployments (King, 2018).

- Interestingly, in the one-on-one tutorials where the peer reviews were used as the basis for initial discussion there was little evidence for the perceived lack of care of peer reviewers as the reviews generally had answered the tasks reasonably accurately (within the limited scope provided) and where they had not done this, it provided opportunities for tutorial discussion.
- Monitoring student participation was facilitated by the platform and I was able to motivate students to complete tasks using email and WeChat fairly easily. Nevertheless, the design and deployment of Peermark assignments was time consuming.

### **Discussion**

An area that bears further consideration is the perceived lack of confidence in peers’ ability to accurately provide feedback on the platform. While I attempted to mitigate this by using minimal choice and rating scales, I may have gone too far as a common concern from students in the interview was that the feedback process may have been ‘done quickly’ or without care. Perhaps more learner training could build students’ confidence in their peers’ ability to comment on their work or perhaps it is more of a need to increase the instructor’s role in the peer feedback activity system as suggested by Yu and Li (2016).

For teachers wishing to use the platform for peer review, it requires familiarity with the use of Turnitin, which can sometimes be counterintuitive in its user interface. Added to this is the need to devise and input suitable questions and question types that can address the specific textual features students are asked to produce and comment on. Warschauer and Grimes (2013), in reference to the theory of socio-technical constructivism, suggest that teachers adapt their use of such technologies in such a way as to allow them to be selective in the parts of essays they grade or how they grade them. A question, therefore, is whether doing so provides sufficient benefit in our classrooms to warrant the effort involved.

### **Conclusion**

I will be working with lower level students in the next cycle of Action Research and this will provide an opportunity to explore the impact of learner training on students’ affective responses to the peer feedback process. Using the experience gained so far, I will also collaborate with other teachers to integrate Peermark assignments into the broader curriculum as part of my institution’s professional development programs.

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## Taking a closer look at episodes of languaging in a collaborative writing activity

**Annita Stell**

### Introduction

Languaging consists of all discussions related to a range of rules and concepts. In a second language (L2) classroom, collaborative writing (CW) is an example of one co-authored writing activity that encourages learners to discuss different aspects of a learning task from explaining grammar rules, essay structures to technological functions with (or without) their teachers' assistance. Many studies on CW, however, tend to focus on metalanguage, which is the general term used to explain the process of talking about language (Moore & Schelppegrell, 2014). The problem with focusing on metalanguage is that less attention is placed on examining the additional learning opportunities emerging from students' language about writing at a discourse level. Building on previous research, this study takes a closer look at languaging episodes about both language and discourse that occur when students complete a CW activity.

### Background

Much of the research examining peer interaction views language learning from a sociocultural theory (SCT) perspective, where language and the social environment

are considered as one holistic unit. The discussions in a CW activity for instance, become a key part of the learning process as students are encouraged to focus on both local (word and sentence-level) and global (discourse-level) aspects of composition (Storch, 2013, 2017; Yang & Zhang, 2010). Currently, many studies analyse metalanguage through a coding scheme called language-related episodes (LREs), which focus on local issues related to lexis, forms and mechanics (Swain & Lapkin, 1998). There are currently no generalised coding schemes, however, used for global issues. Consequently, more research on the different types of languaging episodes in CW is needed to further understand how students work together to complete written texts. This paper examines the languaging episodes in a collaborative writing activity when two students write an essay together on a laptop.

### The study

#### **Participants and instructional context**

The languaging approaches of two pairs: Ben and Katie (Pair 1), and Venita and Melinda (Pair 2) are reported in this paper. These four international students were part of a larger group of sixteen, enrolled in an undergraduate writing course offered by an Australian University, who were participants in a study on computer-mediated collaborative writing. While the participants had different L1 backgrounds (Pair 1: Cantonese and Pair 2: Hindi), they were selected due to their similar proficiency levels (IELTS 6.5 or CEFR B2) and collaborative orientations based on Storch's (2002) patterns of dyadic interaction. According to past literature, collaborative pairs engaged in more languaging episodes than non-collaborative pairs, as there is a distinct balance between the students' levels of mutuality (engagement) and levels of equality (contribution), thus, providing more data to examine languaging episodes (e.g., Swain & Watanabe, 2012).

Each pair wrote an argumentative essay in 50 minutes on university laptops through a keystroke logger application called *InputLog* that recorded the processes involved in the Microsoft Word documents (Leijten & Van Waes, 2013). In the larger study, students were given two *TOEFL iBT* style questions to complete, which were counterbalanced according to the essay topic and order. Their discussions were recorded on the designated laptops through the microphone application. In this study however, data from the transcribed audio for only one essay: "*should we have a tax on sugar?*" was used to examine the pairs' process of languaging.

#### **Analysis**

The transcribed audio recordings were analysed for two main functions: (1) language-related episodes (LREs) according to Swain and Lapkin (1998) and (2) emerging themes that reflect the concepts or rules the students were discussing during the collaborative writing task. Each episode was categorised and counted to provide an understanding of the learners' discussion topics. For

example, the LREs focused on local aspects of language and were coded for Lexis-focused (L-LRE; definitions, word choices), Form-focused (F-LRE; grammar-related), and Mechanics-focused (M-LRE; spelling, punctuation), and marked as either resolved, incorrectly resolved or unresolved.

### Languageing about different aspects of composition

The two pairs discussed different aspects of composition, which contrasted with past studies that focused mainly on the impact metalanguage had on their writing processes (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 2001). In this activity, both pairs engaged in a limited number of LREs. However, pair 1: Ben (B) and Katie (K) discussed mechanical and lexical issues more than the second pair, with extra assistance from the Internet, as shown in excerpt 1:

#### Excerpt 1: Example of M-LREs

136	K	Yeah... good health... how to spell economical...
137	B	economical? Uh (0.4) e-u
138	K	(0.5) I forgot how to spell
139	B	Search lah
140	K	Ok (0.5) Yeah is it that?
141	B	Mmhmm

There are examples of longer pauses as the pair tried to work out the spelling problem independently first (line 137) but then with technology (Line 139-140) to resolve the issue correctly. Pair 2 however, only engaged in two LREs during the whole writing process when Melinda says, "do changes and spellings-" and Venita agrees without elaborating on which part of the essay they are checking. Later, the pair also talk about using RACGP as the acronym for *Rural Australia College*.

### What about other languaging episodes?

While both pairs worked on the essay topics for 55 minutes, their discussions showed that languaging episodes were not limited to LREs. The analysis revealed that, in fact, students focused on three main aspects of a task: (a) planning strategies, (b) organising text structure, and (c) using additional tools/resources. Some of these languaging episodes tend to overlap, especially when writing is viewed as a dynamic activity. Table 1 outlines the different types of Task-related episodes (TRE) presented in this study.

Table 1. Task-related episodes.

Type	Code	Categories
Strategy-focused	S-TRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task instructions</li> <li>• Planning</li> </ul>
Discourse-focused	D-TRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation patterns</li> <li>• Coherence and cohesion</li> </ul>
Instrument-focused	T-TRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technological tools</li> <li>• Supplementary material</li> </ul>

Even though both pairs worked with a collaborative orientation, they focused on different aspects of the activity, which influenced their languaging and overall writing performance.

### Planning strategies

The first type of languaging episode focuses directly on the different *planning strategies*, for instance, reading keywords in the task instructions and listing ideas. Both pairs spent time clarifying what they had to do for the writing activity by discussing their roles and task conditions (e.g., word length, number of reasons and references).

Notably, Ben and Katie spent a lot of time asking whether "*they needed to write [the] essay or just the plan*" while they were listing different points, even though they confirmed that they needed to write the full essay each time. None of these languaging episodes were elaborate, so it was difficult to determine whether the pair understood the task. It wasn't until Ben exclaimed that "[they] need to be done by three ah" and began to reformulate their ideas into paragraphs in the last 10 minutes before submitting an incomplete essay. These discussions contrasted with Pair 2, who focused more on remembering the essay question and talking about "sticking with [the essay plan]".

### Organising text structure

An important strategy in writing is to look at how a text will be (or has been) organised. In this study, the languaging episodes were categorised as *discourse-focused* since the pairs focused on two main areas: (a) following organisational patterns, where they tried to structure their text according to the essay type, and (b) improving cohesion and coherence to make sure their arguments flow. In excerpt 2, Ben and Katie (Pair 1) illustrate an example of discourse focused discussion when they talk about how to rearrange their list of ideas into different paragraphs. For example, in line 55, Katie suggests that they should focus on organising their ideas into three main argument points. Ben agrees by pointing out an example of how two of their bullet points can fall under the same topic (line 58).

#### Excerpt 2: Example of D-TREs

55	K	<u>So we think of three main arguments</u> and we in these three points,
56		we give three points to support it
57		(0.2)
58	B	<u>So I think these two is...part of the economic burden</u>
59	K	OK
60	B	Because fat people are increasing... are increasing... or do you think
61		this is introduction
62	K	Yeah, it is introduction

Pair 2 however, spent a lot more time explaining how they were going to structure each section of the essay after they read different sources online together. An

example of their discussions is shown in Excerpt 3. For example, at one stage, Melinda (M) focused more on coherence when Venita (V) wanted to provide an alternative solution to sugar taxes by explaining how solutions are needed for the potential consequences (see underlined lines 180-181); Melinda tried to link Venita's idea to the current age restrictions on tobacco to keep their reasons relevant to the topic (see lines in bold 182, 192-193).

180 V Maybe they could do another thing...like with the rebel and stuff...  
 181 underage people can't go into the stores  
 182 M **Oh like an age limit... yeah can put an age limit...like ..underage people**  
 183 like maybe below 13...or something like that  
 184 V Can't go  
 |  
 191 M **But with tobacco you always need to show your id or maybe alcohol**  
 192 **you need to show your ID ...before you can buy...so maybe with soft**  
 193 **drink also they can introduce something for kids coming from**  
 194 **schools so they can stop that**  
 195 V Yeah ... um

### Using additional resources

The way each pair approached the additional resources also changed as they focused on different aspects of the online readings. This category was identified as *instrument-focused*, which would also include the electronic devices, supplementary materials and reading resources that students use. Ben and Katie had more extended discussions about supplementary materials, especially when they were adding facts to their plan. Their discussions, however, were influenced by their original interpretations of the task. For instance, when Ben wanted to just write facts down without the references, Katie was persistent about finding the reference again even though they both remembered the percentage of overweight people. The discussions about selecting recent articles continued as Katie continued to emphasise that they needed to include references in the essay. In contrast, Venita and Melinda did not discuss online readings as much. There was only one example at the start when Melinda asked about whether the first article was recent enough: "Wait that should be the last statistics...in 2015- 16... would it be right?".

Overall, the findings showed how students focused on discussing different aspects of composition that addressed the task directly. Unlike previous studies, this study suggests that these languaging episodes depend on the dynamic nature of an activity and social setting since very few episodes focused on linguistic issues. The three categories provide a snapshot of how students

engaged in task-related episodes even though some of these language episodes were limited.

### Pedagogical implications

The findings in this study provide an example of how languaging is a dynamic learning tool that can be used differently according to the individuals and classroom context. Practical recommendations are provided below to show examples of how similar activities can be implemented in different classroom contexts.

#### **Increase awareness of different forms of languaging**

As writing shifts into a social activity in classrooms, students should be aware of the local and global aspects of composition so that they can discuss and pool ideas about a range of rules and concepts. It is important to remember that the focus for each pair can vary depending on the social context (e.g., individual, classroom environment, task), making it important for teachers to be aware of the dynamic nature of a collaborative activity. Teachers can observe the students' interactions and use additional scaffolding or reflection activities to encourage students to focus on certain areas of the task (e.g., structure or references).

#### **Engaging students in collaborative writing processes**

Collaborative writing processes can encourage students to view writing as a social activity. While many tasks are completed individually, collaborative writing gives students the opportunity to engage in languaging and broaden their target audience. In some previous studies, students have become more aware of their reader when they engage in co-authored writing activities. The outcomes however, can vary from pair to pair or even, task to task as the steps taken to complete a task can change depending on their discussions. Their interpretations of collaborative writing may also be different, highlighting how important it is for teachers to stress what can be expected during collaborative writing activities in their classroom contexts. Teachers can also implement planning, writing and editing activities to help develop learners' problem-solving and negotiating strategies when they work in pairs.

To conclude, it is important to note that the current study only examined a small sample and it is impossible to impose a generalised view on students' languaging practices. The importance of taking a closer look at languaging however, was highlighted through examining the pairs' discussions related to local and global aspects of composition through both LREs and TREs. More research on how students engage in languaging in different classroom contexts can provide a holistic understanding of the impact social interaction has on L2 writing development.

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## Gender and sexuality in English language teaching (ELT) coursebooks: What teachers think

**Chris Richards**

### Introduction

This article reports on research undertaken for a Masters of Education in Applied Linguistics dissertation. I examined five ELT course books and interviewed five ELT practitioners to address three research questions. Here, I focus on the third question: How do teachers respond to the representations of gender and sexuality in ELT course books?

The research project grew out of a professional interest in the importance of a diverse, inclusive classroom and an awareness of the 'potentially profound' impact that classroom materials can have on students (Paiz, 2017, p. 362). If students cannot find themselves represented in the pages of the books we ask them to use, we might find that our classroom practices invite them to withdraw their investment (see Norton, 2013). Do teachers find themselves working with materials that realistically represent the diversity of our world and classrooms? If not, what (can) do they do?

### Methodology

The research design was inspired by Gray (2013) and draws on his combined use of analysis of course books and interviews with teachers. I examined a sample of five ELT course books published for different ages and levels, by Oxford and Cambridge University Press and Pearson. My investigation considered the course books as multimodal, and I checked written texts, images, listening texts and video files. After coding the written data, I used semi-structured interviews with teachers to obtain general views on the issues being explored; on specific examples of material; and how the participants might make use of it, or not, in the classroom. Questions were treated as prompts to permit the participants to explore their ideas in conversation with the researcher and examples from the written data were used to elicit opinions. I recruited participants who identified as male and female, heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual. They taught different courses and were familiar with some of the material already.

### Findings and discussion

Although this article deals primarily with the data from the interviews, for the purposes of context I will briefly present the findings from the written data. In the five course books examined, there were no representations of non-heteronormative sexuality. While there were representations of progressive femininity, the majority of men were shown in traditional roles in, for example, positions of power or playing sport. This data might concern us, but the interview data provides a slightly different picture. A thematic analysis of the interview data produced the following three overarching themes: representations, problems and opportunities, and training and development needs.

### Representations

When asked about representation of gender, the teachers all initially referred to the material used with younger children and how it presented conservative, traditional ideas. Participant 5 referred to the "unnecessary stereotypes" and participant 1 used the word 'shocking' to describe some of the materials she had used. She added: "Especially as a woman, I don't like the idea of the fact that men do certain jobs and women do certain other jobs. So, where I can, I challenge that." Participant 2 used the word "horrific" to refer to a set of flash cards she had decided against using with young students who were learning the terms for parents where "the mother was literally carrying a basket of laundry and the father was sitting there kinda fixing a train." Participant 5 was also concerned about the way gender is usually shown to younger learners: "The idea that boys wear blue and girls wear pink." Materials produced for such learners often address immediate ideas and concepts with easily understood visual clues. However, as the participants suggested, these visual clues need updating.

The responses of the participants about the extent to which they see non-heterosexual identities represented in ELT course books matched well with the data I collected. For example, participant 5 stated that he does not “see any LGBTQ relationships being portrayed by characters in the books” and participant 2 does not recall using “a textbook that has a same sex couple in it.” Interestingly, participant 3 reflected “I haven’t noticed if they’ve explicitly addressed [sexuality] which makes me wonder if they’ve purposely avoided it.” My data found zero representations of non-heteronormative sexuality or relationships across the sample.

### **Problems and opportunities for teachers**

Overall, and taken at face value, the interviews suggest that teachers are very aware of the issues and seek to challenge the stereotypes they find in front of them. However, participant 1 observed: “it depends on the day whether [...] I would necessarily pick up on that” while looking at an example page that showed ‘different’ couples, all of whom were heteronormative. Covert or implicit possibilities in a text may not be as visible to heterosexual teachers in the classroom, just as unbalanced representations of gender may be less visible to cisgendered men. Participant 2 commented that the reality of a teaching timetable means that there is not much time to examine course materials before teaching and that sometimes she has to accept that “this is what [she’s] got.”

Participant 4 raised another point:

I do try to focus my lesson on whatever the purpose is and try not to bring up too much *outside* information. I know it’s relevant, but lesson time is usually limited and unfortunately classes often get derailed by polemical topics such as this.

Despite his own personal investment in talking about diversity and inclusivity, he preferred to stay pedagogically focused and ensure the aims of his lessons were met over any other concerns. Gray (2019) notes that demands of testing are often prioritised over a queer or inclusive pedagogy. On the other hand, participant 5 feels differently and suggested that there is always time for such discussions in his classroom because otherwise “it just makes things poorer...we live in such diversity in society nowadays. It’s about time we discussed these things.” Perhaps he would agree that the lack of representation in course books can be used as a stimulus for discussion, but ultimately, he found the lack of variety in representations dull, saying “there’s nothing to talk about.”

Finally, participant 2 talked about how themes of gender and sexuality arise with her teenage classes “organically” and that her students often “really come into their own” while expressing their opinions on tackling homophobia, for example. Paiz (2017, p. 356) argues that it is “often left to the students” to queer the curriculum and this is obviously problematic for an

un(der)informed or un(der)prepared educator. Participant 2 also specifically mentioned a 14-year-old male student who had recently come out as gay and makes reference to his personal life in discussion with his peers. Society, including the young people in our classrooms, has progressed further than the imaginations of the publishers of many of the books we use. Participant 2 remarked: “I have never had a class of teenagers where I’d feel afraid that someone is going to say something very controversial” and she thinks that the fear publishers seem to have is unfounded.

### **Training and development needs**

In general, the interviewees raised the issue that it is “always going to come back to the teacher” and that there should be ‘teacher training about how to approach these themes’ (participant 1). This lack is an issue that Gray (2019) also highlights and this is a theme that appears regularly in the literature (see Paiz, 2017). Thus, if this question does ‘come back to the teacher’, such discussions are likely to be poorer if the teacher lacks the comfort or confidence to give space to these topics in their classroom. There are multiple routes into the ELT classroom and they do not always involve explicit training or qualifications, and with those that do, there is no specific training about dealing with materials and issues of social concern in the classroom.

### **Conclusions**

Social change is happening fast and participant 1 observed that “books don’t necessarily represent [that] change.” Whilst it might be argued that publishing cycles are long, there have been civil partnerships registered in the UK since 2005, yet this is a term I have yet to encounter in published course materials. Participant 1 remarked that “we are supposed to be preparing them to go out and use English in the real world” and if teaching materials do not introduce such terms, how are students going to understand them?

Many of the teachers pointed out that the more problematic pages, especially at higher levels, provided material for discussion. This suggests that, instinctively or otherwise, the teachers interviewed for this study are already doing what Nelson (1999) argues they should. The research found that what teachers are prepared to accept is different at different stages or ages. For example, with younger students the participants would prefer to have to do less work to balance the material they are asked to teach. However, when working with older learners, the participants valued the opportunity afforded by material to spark discussion and debate, and even critique the materials with them.

Due to economic considerations, publishers are unlikely to change their editorial line in the near future (see Paiz, 2017). Thus, despite projects such as *Raise Up* (Taylor & Coimbra, 2018), the work of diversifying classroom materials will continue to fall to the teacher who might be insufficiently experienced or prepared to “queer their

own practice” (Paiz, 2017, p. 361). Without appropriate training this leaves us no better off.

Finally, as gender inequality and homophobia are still present in the lives of the students we educate, we ‘have a responsibility to create spaces for students to engage in debate and discussion about gender relations and sexuality’ (Moffat & Norton, 2008: 120). The teachers interviewed for this research project were evidently aware of this need, but drew attention to the limited planning time, curriculum pressures and the lack of training in approaching these issues in the classroom. It is acknowledged that the scope of this study is relatively limited: more work into teachers’ attitudes towards the material could be useful in effecting change.

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## “I’m always afraid”: The effects of violence on a group of ELT learners in Mexico

Leticia Araceli Salas Serrano

### Introduction

In recent years, several Latin-American countries have experienced a rapid increase in crime rates. In its Regional Human Development Report 2013-2014 (p.1) the UN stated that “Latin America is the only region in the world where lethal violence increased between 2000 and 2010”. It is therefore necessary to explore the way students in an ELT undergraduate program in Mexico perceive and experience these violent contexts and how these situations might affect their emotions and language learning. This case study was carried out in a public university in Puebla, Mexico where students, on their way to school or home, are daily exposed to crimes such as kidnappings or bus robberies. According to Furlan (2003, p. 273), the topic of violence as an educational research topic has not been fully acknowledged. Therefore, the effects of the increasing violence on students’ well-being and language learning still need to be explored.

Language learning is both a cognitive and an emotional process, as emotions such as excitement, sadness, joy and anxiety can impact on language learning. When learning a language, a number of “affective variables” play a relevant role, according to Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis (1981). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge emotions as teachers and students are influenced by the feelings taken into the language classroom and their effects on student performance. Bernal (2007) has suggested that classroom factors such as students’ misbehavior or lack of concentration cause the most discomfort in teachers as they need to expend more time and effort trying to attract and hold students’ attention.

Arnold and Brown (1999, p. 1) have defined affect as the “aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behavior”. By the same token, Zheng (2008) has claimed that there are visible manifestations that can help teachers to identify when learners are struggling with their emotions, for example, fear or anxiety. These manifestations include reluctance to participate or a negative attitude in class. The relationship between affective factors and language learning has been acknowledged by Arnold (2000) and Gardner (1985), since language portrays expressions of identity as an individual or a social being as a member of a given group or community. Isserlis (2000, p. 3) affirms that to “make the classroom safer for all, teachers should allow concerns about violence to surface in one form or another” that is, by providing a place where learners can talk about their worries.

The surrounding context might be a source of anxiety that affects not only the victims but also the emotions of learners and their language learning process. Mexico, like other Latin-American countries, has suffered an increase in crime rates in the last ten years. In 2018, Mexico saw record violence, as reported by the Mexican National Security System (*Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública*). Puebla, a central state located two hours southeast of Mexico City, has also seen an increase in crime although it is not considered one of the most dangerous cities in the country. This study, carried out in the context of a public university in this Mexican State, aims at exploring the ways learners in an undergraduate ELT program experience the increasing violence in the surroundings of their school and how they deal with their emotions and their personal and academic well-being.

### Research question

A research question was established in order to guide and organize the study: How can the violent context in Mexico affect ELT students' emotions and learning?

### The context

The School of Languages is located in a working-class neighborhood in the City of Puebla. Puebla, the fourth biggest city in Mexico, is a large and crowded city with more than 2 million inhabitants according to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI, The National Institute for Statistics and Geography). The students who attend the School of Languages come from very different backgrounds. The participants in this study are enrolled in an ELT major, therefore, they are going to become English teachers. The average age range is between 18 and 35 and most of them need to take public transport or walk to and from the school. These students are the most affected by crime as robberies on public transport have increased in a way that almost every day one or two students suffer this experience on their way to school or home, leading to a normalization of violence as something that regularly happens in this context.

The study originated after one of the students told the class that he had just been through this ordeal. As the teacher in the class and part of the community, I empathized with the student and allowed the group to talk about their experiences and insights into the situation happening in Puebla in particular and in Mexico in general. As they continued talking about the topic, I realized that I needed more information on their feelings and perceptions in order to be of help and support them as a group. Consequently, a questionnaire consisting of six questions related to the situation was created, printed and given to the students at the end of the same class so as to take advantage of the moment to explore and get more information for this case study. The questions were:

How do you feel in relation to the situation of violence in Puebla?

How has this situation affected your life?

How has violence affected your studies?

Do you feel safe in school? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Explain your answer, please.

Are there any ways in which teachers could help students in this situation?

How can your teachers help in creating an environment of peace and hope?

That day, the class consisted of 24 out of a total of 28 students. The participants took an average of 15 minutes to answer the six questions. The questionnaire was answered in English as the group of future English teachers had an intermediate level of proficiency in the language, B1 according to the CEFR. Therefore, the answers presented in the results section are the actual words of the participants.

### Results

The answers from the 24 participants were then organized according to each question and the most representative answers were summarized.

The first question referred to the participants' feelings in relation to the situation of violence in Puebla. Their answers, in general, reflected their insecurities and fears as the crime rate has increased. Some of the most representative answers were:

"I feel afraid, this is a big problem, and I feel authorities don't do much"

"I am angry because of this situation"

"I am always afraid, so I don't go out much"

The second question aimed at discussing how violence has affected the participants' lives, in general and how the environment has forced them to behave in a different way. Some of the comments they wrote were:

"I'm always thinking about being careful and I don't want to go out"

"I am more careful now as some people in my family have been victims."

"I had to move because I didn't feel safe in my other apartment"

The third question explored how violence has affected their studies specifically. Their answers reflected the way their studies have also been impacted by the situation.

"It has affected my schedule, now I don't want to take classes when it's dark"

"We cannot take any expensive gadgets to school anymore."

"I cannot concentrate in my studies, I'm always thinking of my family."

The question about feeling safe in school showed that 17 of the 24 participants feel safe inside the school. However, 20 of the participants also mentioned that, once outside the school, they do not feel safe. Seven said they did not feel safe either inside or outside the school.

The last two questions were about the ways teachers could help them or how teachers can create an environment of peace and hope. 14 of the participants stated that teachers must talk about the situation as they feel this has been ignored. Five participants suggested that teachers can create a pleasant, safe environment for them, as well as promoting empathy, respect and patience. One of the participants sadly observed: "Teachers cannot do much, they have been victims of crime, too".

From their answers, it can be inferred that the increasing violence can be a serious issue as learners do not feel safe anymore. Following Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, (1968) basic human needs must be covered before more abstract needs such as knowledge or aesthetics can be met. In order to learn in the best conditions, learners must feel safe, secure and comfortable and affective factors are decisive when learning. The violent environment makes it difficult for them to act normally as young people usually do in other contexts as they do not want to socialize or leave their homes because they feel afraid or angry or anxious. Participants claimed that teachers can provide an environment of a "safe place" in their classrooms by building a classroom community that shows respect, empathy and understanding during the violent times they are experiencing in the school surroundings. The classroom must be perceived as a welcoming and safe place for learners in order to restore their feelings of hope and safety.

### Conclusions

School communities suffer different tensions and one of these is the violence that might happen in and outside the schools. Guidelines or protocols have to be created in order to guide action. Meanwhile, teachers can create safe environments where their students feel welcome and appreciated. The nature of the language classroom allows teachers and learners to share their ideas and relate their experiences by developing tasks that may give students the chance to talk about their experiences, express their feelings and raise awareness of the situation outside the school and the ways this can affect their well-being and academic performance. In the context of the study, an undergraduate ELT program, where students are going to become language teachers, raising empathy and provoking debate and discussions on critical issues happening in the community might prepare future teachers to deal with these situations when they become the teachers. Debates, forums with other schools, writing letters to the authorities or diary entries can be some of the activities learners can get involved in when dealing with difficult situations and at the same time develop as teachers and responsible citizens. The participants repeatedly mentioned that violence should not be ignored or avoided: it must be acknowledged and discussed and their voices must be heard. Although there have not been formal studies on how violence has affected student performance, or what the impact of the context on students' grades has been,

what is evident is the sensation of insecurity and vulnerability that the participants expressed in their answers to the questionnaire. The study has shown how the surrounding violence affects not only the feelings of learners but also their well-being in an ELT context in Latin America.

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## ELT teachers' stories of resilience

**Gwyneth James & Ana Carolina de Laurentiis Brandão**

### Our research puzzle

After more than 20 combined years as ELT/TESOL practitioners, what has kept us in this profession? There are many answers to this question, and developing resilience is just one such answer. But what does resilience look like? We have relied on it all these years despite it being in the background, a shape in the shadows rather than something which has been made explicit and conscious. How have we, and those whom we are training, fostered, managed and sustained it? These were questions that Ana and I set out to investigate in the above-titled study, not from a personal perspective but from that of early career ELT teachers. We wanted to investigate everyday resilience using narrative inquiry, an innovative research methodology. What does this everyday resilience look like? What would the stories of teachers uncover to help us begin to describe and understand this? This was the beginning of our research puzzle.

### Context

Teacher resilience is a relatively recent area of investigation and what has been researched tends to focus primarily on mainstream education, with very few existing studies on language teacher resilience in general (Hiver, 2018) and even fewer on ELT teachers' resilience in particular. Much research has focused on the problems teachers face, for example stress and attrition (e.g. Craig, 2017) but we wanted to seek causes of and solutions to those problems by understanding in greater depth the experiences of six early career ELT teachers, three in the UK and three in Brazil. We wanted to give these teachers space in which to tell their stories of resilience so we could learn more about what sustains them and enables them to thrive as well as how resilience enhances their teaching or is used as a resource.

### Conceptualising teacher resilience

As teacher resilience is an emerging field and is potentially wide-ranging (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011), conceptualising it is somewhat complex. A search of the literature reveals, unsurprisingly, no single definition. Mansfield, Beltman, Price and McConney (2012) provide a range of definitions, from conceptualising resilience as a process and a capacity to overcome challenges to it being a trait and a quality. In our study, the notion of resilience is understood as "a complex, idiosyncratic and cyclical construct, involving dynamic processes of interaction over time between person and the environment" (Beltman et al., 2011, p. 195).

To investigate ELT teachers' resilience, we looked at various dimensions of resilience specifically in regard to how teachers themselves demonstrated their agency in exercising their resilience. We used the framework proposed by Beltman et al. (2011), which focuses on identifying factors that characterise teacher resilience, and which covers individual and contextual risk factors (i.e. challenges) and individual and contextual protective factors (i.e. supports).

### Research design

Because teacher resilience is a complex construct, and to enable us to understand the experiences of the six teachers, we conducted a narrative inquiry, a research methodology that analyses experience as a storied phenomenon (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry, accompanied by visual methods (e.g. Rose, 2012), is a relational methodology where people in relation study people in relation (Clandinin, 2013). In this approach, narrative is both the method (the stories told) and the methodology (a way of understanding experience).

Our study focused on four research questions, of which numbers three and four will be addressed here:

What are the similarities and differences between teacher resilience as demonstrated by the six teachers in Brazil and the UK?

How can teachers' resilience be fostered in language teacher education?

The participants were six early career (i.e. less than five years' teaching experience) ELT teachers. From the UK: Laura, aged 48 with two years of EFL and ESOL experience; Louise, aged 63 with one year of EFL and ESOL experience and Sienna, aged 34 with five years of EFL experience.

From Brazil: Julia, aged 35 with four years of EFL experience; Maria, aged 38 with three years of EFL experience and Pedro, aged 23 with three years of EFL experience (NB. all names are pseudonyms).

The field texts (i.e. a narrative term for data) consisted of four recorded interview conversations for each teacher of 60-90 minutes over an academic year, emails and visual narratives (Rose, 2012). These visual narratives were based on four drawings per teacher, with their recorded explanations, and were used to gather a different perspective on the teachers' experiences and to generate even richer data. Here, however, the focus is limited to the interview data. To understand the experiences narratively, we needed to situate the field texts collected within Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional space of temporality, sociality and place. We then needed to construct the narratives and do to this, our analysis of these field texts consisted of the identification of narrative threads, these being "particular plotlines that threaded or wove over time and place" (Clandinin, 2013: 132). The findings of the study are presented in the form of six individual narratives,

each one structured around the threads which were shaped by the stories of resilience emerging from the data.

## Findings

### *Similarities between the UK and Brazil*

In answering research question 3, Table 1 provides one example of many from the data of each of the four prominent categories of factors (i.e. individual risk, individual protective, contextual risk and contextual protective) which characterise teacher resilience. These are further illustrated below with excerpts taken from the narratives. It is worth emphasising that the narratives are our interpretative constructions of the six teachers' experiences and therefore include both direct quotes and prose.

Table 1. Similarities across the six narrative accounts

Factors	Risk (challenges)	Protective (supports)
Individual	e.g. lacking confidence / stage fright + loneliness of teaching (Maria, Louise)	e.g. staying in teaching through a sense of enjoyment/fulfilment (Julia, Louise, Laura, Sienna)
Contextual	e.g. heterogeneous classes, especially illiterate/semi-illiterate students (Pedro, Louise)	e.g. commitment to the profession and by extension, to motivating students (all six teachers)

### *Individual risk: Lacking confidence/stage fright + loneliness of teaching*

**Brazil:** After a month, lacking confidence in her ability to teach, Maria decided she had had enough: "I went to the principal and said 'I don't want this! (...) I can't handle it! It's too difficult! We see one thing at university, and then when you arrive here the reality is different!'" The principal, on the other hand, persuaded her to stay: "no, Maria, you won't quit! What did you spend four years studying for? Did you waste your time? (...) I'll give you a month, if you can't handle it, you talk to me".

**UK:** "It's very lonely I think being a teacher, very lonely...it's a lonesome profession really, it's not, through my life I don't feel lonely but there you are, the spotlight is on you, we're back to this analogy of stage really, spotlight is on you and have I learnt the right words? Is the script right?" (Louise).

Tait (2008, p. 60-61) talks about "resilience, personal efficacy and emotional competence each contribut[ing] to the success of novice teachers in their work, [potentially also leading to] greater commitment to teaching as a career" and of the thirteen indicators specific to resilience, here Maria and Louise exhibit two, namely persistence and the ability to reflect.

### *Contextual risk: Heterogeneous classes, especially illiterate/semi-illiterate students*

**Brazil:** Apart from pupils' tiredness and lack of interest, Pedro had to cope with a series of difficulties. For example, he had to teach pupils with a wide range of abilities: "there are pupils that read a lot (...) there are pupils that are semi-illiterate (...) there are some that don't even know how to read and write." He also had to teach pupils with special needs: "it's complicated (...) I don't how to deal with them properly."

**UK:** Louise was allocated three families for ESOL: two elderly women (Kalima and Eilijah) and a married couple. Kalima lives with her son and daughter-in-law. She is illiterate in Arabic and has no motivation to learn English, describing it as "like learning to be a doctor." Louise's interpretation is "I suppose she thinks it's impossible, it's so difficult...it's like me learning brain surgery." At that point (December 2017) Louise had only taught her once and even that early on described it as "a really difficult lesson, and I was really, really depressed about it." Louise had tried to reassure her but "we got through very few words so I had an hour and a half and it was really difficult, and then I thought 'well I'm obviously doing it all wrong, and not quite sure what I should be doing,' and it was horrible, it was really horrible."

Again using Tait's (2008) indicators, those glimpsed here are having problem-solving skills (further in the narrative Pedro demonstrated another factor, i.e. positive adaptation in the face of adversity to demonstrate these skills) and the abilities to reflect and rebound.

### *Individual protective: Staying in teaching through a sense of enjoyment/fulfilment*

**Brazil:** As time went by, Julia identified with English teaching, especially because of students' positive feedback: "some thanked me, I saw the sparkle in their eyes, this motivated me to keep teaching English (...) this is my reward." "I fell in love with English", she confided.

**UK:** I just thought "oh my God, I love this so much, why didn't I do this before, I should have done this years ago." Sienna loves the creativity of ELT, travel opportunities it gives, the lightbulb moments her students have and seeing their progress, "and you know that you may have had something to do with it."

Having a sense of pride in their work and finding it so rewarding are both reflected in the key resilience indicator of optimism (Tait, 2008).

### *Contextual protective: Commitment to the profession and by extension, to motivating students*

**Brazil:** Despite some difficulties, Pedro began to enjoy teaching:

“I had been enjoying the profession a lot (...) I discovered I like it. It changed my way of seeing things a lot, my way of seeing the world, people. After I started teaching, I stopped being so hard (...) I’m still [hard] on myself (...) but I learned a way that works with others.”

He found the profession rewarding: “I have the opportunity to influence people in a positive way (...) on the personal side (...) [and] also in terms of choosing a profession that gives them better life chances.” The problem is “I’m not paid enough to make a living,” Pedro complained.

**UK:** Although Louise gave up primary school teaching (because of the sheer volume of work and extensive time it took to prepare classes), she has never thought of giving up ELT teaching:

“I can’t see myself stopping this...because...if I can be of any help, just giving [the students] a bit more confidence, and that sounds a bit goody-goody, but I don’t mean that, it’s just if I have something I can help them with, and then I would like to continue doing that.”

Here, optimism and persistence (Tait, 2008) are clear indicators of the teachers’ emerging resilience.

### Differences between the UK and Brazil

Table 2 provides a summary of the main differences emerging from our data, excerpts for which are not provided due to space restrictions.

Table 2. Differences across the six narrative accounts

Factors	Risk (Brazil)	Risk (UK)
Individual	English language competence (Julia, Maria)	Time spent on planning (Louise, Laura, Sienna)
Contextual	Teaching subjects other than English (Julia, Maria, Pedro) ⇒ Coping with instability, e.g. temporary contracts (Julia, Maria) ⇒ Lack of continuing teacher education opportunities (Julia) ⇒ Lack of interest in English (Julia, Pedro)	-

### How can we help foster and sustain resilience in ELT teacher education?

Responsibility to foster resilience lies with both the teacher and their context; it is not that it lies solely with one or the other. Specific implications from the study based on our reflections on the data as a collected whole include, but are not limited to:

- Resilience can be learned; it is not an innate source
- Strategies for resilience (e.g. the ability to seek help) can be taught and promoted in pre-service and teacher training programmes as well as CPD sessions
- Dealing with stressful situations (e.g. heterogeneous classes) can be added to pre-service programmes
- Peer or mentoring support can be more visibly promoted and encouraged on the job.

This is a small-scale study reflective of the nature of a narrative inquiry. The results are not generalisable, but this is not the goal of a narrative inquiry; rather, it is to “paint a complex picture of the issue in focus” (Benson, 2014, p. 164) and we hope that is what this brief article has begun to do.

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## A feedback study for pre-service teachers

**Carolina Orgnero & Julia I. Martínez**

Allow us to introduce ourselves: we are Julia Martínez and Carolina Orgnero, professors of English as a Foreign Language at the University of Río Cuarto (Córdoba, Argentina). Julia teaches Language in the 2nd year and Carolina, Technology in the 3rd year of the four-year undergraduate English language teacher education program. Our university encourages research across course subjects and this is why we decided to team up to participate in one of the funded projects called "PELPA" (Proyecto de Escritura y Lectura Académica para los Primeros Años- Academic Reading and Writing Project). The goal of this project is to foster a better understanding of academic reading and writing that could result in better teaching for our students. The purpose of this reflective report is to unveil some of the behind-the-scenes decisions and theoretical underpinnings that shaped the design and implementation of the research process that have contributed to interesting results. Here, we provide a brief overview of our project, as we have shared it in other publications (see Martínez & Orgnero, submitted for publication, for further reading).

### The inquiry that guided our research project

Our students on the Teacher Training Program at the University of Río Cuarto have received feedback in prior courses of the program. Yet, we observed that they experienced difficulties related to different types of feedback –teacher, peer and self-assessment- and to the use of technology for academic and pedagogical

purposes. Our interest in understanding these difficulties framed the inquiry that guided our research project. Specifically, we sought to understand the difficulties students had with feedback, its role in the process of academic writing, feedback provided by means of technology, and the inter-related role of these components in increasing students' autonomy as learners. When students understand what feedback is, it helps them reflect about their thinking process, also known as metacognition (Ertmer & Newby, 1996). As students become strategic learners, they can make decisions that affect their learning, and thus, enhance their autonomy as learners.

### The research project in a nutshell

The participants in this project were 2<sup>nd</sup> year pre-service teachers enrolled in the Language course (from now on the *writers*) and 3<sup>rd</sup> year pre-service teachers enrolled in the Technology course (from now on the *reviewers*) who voluntarily accepted to participate in the project. There was a total of 12 pre-service teachers.

The writers prepared expository essays and uploaded them to their virtual classroom that accompanies the face-to-face English course. The teachers downloaded the essays, deleted the students' names to preserve their anonymity and sent the essays to the reviewers who were asked to prepare a combination of oral and written feedback. The reviewers received an email with 4 attachments: the essay they had to review, a sample reviewed essay with written feedback, an audio file with comments provided on the same essay, and a rubric (see Appendix). Specifically, the example illustrated that reviewers could either opt to provide feedback in the margin or in a summary letter at the end of the essay presented in written format. The accompanying audio highlighted what worked and why, and what needed to be improved during the second round of revision. We also specified to the reviewers that they needed to prioritize the number of feedback comments so the authors would not feel overwhelmed (Orgnero, 2007). The reviewers received a holistic rubric that asked them to comment primarily on content and organization and, to a lesser extent, on language use because students usually received comments on this area. As can be appreciated, the logistics were quite complex since our study involved pre-service teachers from two different courses that had classes on different days of the week. For this reason, we ensured that everything was well planned due to the number of exchanges that were needed to avoid confusion during implementation.

The study followed a qualitative design, and data were collected in semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Content analysis was used to interpret the data by creating codes that were later grouped into categories which were merged to create themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Two main themes emerged from the analysis:

1. Writers perceived that useful feedback combined strengths and weaknesses about the text with suggestions for the revision that could not only be used to improve the current text but also be applied in future writing instances.
2. Writers greatly appreciated the fact that their peer reviewers prepared effective feedback that included different types and formats even when this task demanded a lot of their time.

#### **Was the sample provided useful or constrictive?**

Mainly for organizational purposes, we decided to model how to prepare feedback by giving our pre-service teachers an example in the email attachment because we perceived the instructions given were lengthy and we did not want them to feel at a loss. We were concerned, however, about whether this had been a good decision.

When we interviewed our reviewers about the model they received in the email attachment, we wanted to know whether they had felt constricted by it, whether it was too much information to process and/or whether it was useful. The reviewers agreed that the sample was extremely helpful to guide how to work with feedback, and that they were driven to experiment with different feedback types. We gave reviewers the option to include notes or a letter at the end, and the majority decided to try out different formats. Thus, almost all the reviewers combined the feedback types with a selected number of oral and written comments they prioritized during the preparation. Many of the characteristics we chose to include in our model were based on Raimes (2001, p. 282-283) who suggests several strategies to prepare feedback. Among them, Raimes argues for the need to establish priorities instead of tackling every single error. She also suggests pointing out strengths as well as weaknesses within the students' own pieces of writing so the students can find models within their own work. Therefore, the decision to include a sample that modelled how to provide feedback proved to be very useful and effective for the training of the pre-service teachers and not just for organizational purposes, as we had originally thought.

During the interviews, the reviewers observed that they had wanted to play and experiment with the format of the comments, so they had the opportunity to do something novel with feedback. This notion of experimentation with how to prepare feedback is essential for pre-service teachers because they could reflect on alternative methods of feedback and compare them to what they had experienced so far in other courses. It is precisely the notion of reflection that may have encouraged teachers to learn about the process and not to provide feedback in an automated mode, as we can also appreciate from Ferris' insights (2007, p. 167):

Without training or without reflection on what has or has not worked well for us as student writers, we sit down with a student writer or with a stack

of student papers, and we do something with them—because we must.

It must be said that the reviewers also agreed that they had spent a considerable amount of time preparing the feedback. This suggests that if the process of feedback is included from the first year in the program, by the time students reach the third year they would be familiar with the procedures and thus focus on ways of improving how they provide feedback. Therefore, the choices we gave students were well received.

In their turn, the writers unanimously agreed on the usefulness and organization of the feedback received. This theme is in line with Rollinson (2005, p. 24), who stated that when student writers perceived feedback comments as useful it helped them be more critical of their own writing. Rollinson's idea was also sustained by the writers in our study when they noticed that the feedback received would not simply guide them to improve their current texts, but that they could transfer the comments to future pieces of writing. Rollinson also contended that when the procedures were perceived to be well set up, as it seemed was the case in our study, the usefulness was enhanced. Another possible explanation for the writers' perception that the feedback was useful could be attributed to the fact that our students could understand the comments and the underlying explanations. Overall, some study findings show that many students do not apply the feedback comments received simply because they cannot understand them or because they misunderstand what they have to do with them (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). The reviewers in our study had to prepare comments that explained why something worked and did not work, so that when the writers read them they would have guidelines to lead their revisions.

The fact that the writers perceived feedback prepared by their peer reviewers as useful is noteworthy since many students would favor their teachers' feedback due to their expertise (Zhang, 1995). This perception also suggested that the peer reviewers offered an alternative view to the feedback prepared by their teachers, perhaps because the student writers realized that the reviewers constituted a real audience.

#### **What thrills us about our project**

One of our conundrums during the research design had to do with how we could ensure student participation given the optional nature of the study on top of all the courses students usually take. We presented the study to our students and hoped they would join us. When we later analyzed the data, we noticed that the active role that both writers and reviewers had in the study became an asset.

We could also say that the pre-service teachers perceived that their participation in the study was beneficial because when we interviewed them, some

participants highlighted that they had learned to prepare feedback in ways they considered novel and that they would be able to apply when they become teachers. Ferris (2007) noted that many in-service and pre-service teachers are not trained to give feedback and this interest led her to write a paper with principles to guide the practice in a way that reflects an understanding of what the writing process entails. While there are many teacher-centered practices that would contribute to promote passive learners and may turn out to be suitable, our study has altered the format used in our classes by giving students key roles in the writing and feedback processes (Lee, 2008). Therefore, our decision regarding the design of the project was to empower our pre-service teachers, and the results seem to confirm our expectations. As a follow up of our study, we would like to replicate the study in other courses to gain further understanding of how pre-service teachers use and interpret feedback in other courses.

### Conclusion

We enjoyed the experience of designing a research project based on what we had done previously and that led us to experiment with a new format that engaged our students actively. Our students seemed to have enjoyed it as well, as they also expressed an interest in playing with novel feedback formats. The results we have obtained so far suggest that students have gained an initial understanding of feedback and the writing process.

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Appendix (Rubric)

### DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES PELPA PROJECT ON PEER FEEDBACK

Thank you for your participation on this project. We are thrilled about it!

This document is organized into two sections. The first part involves the organization a description of what the writing assignment involved and the second part includes the instructions to provide feedback.

First part

Please remember that the main goals of peer feedback are twofold: First, to help improve the writer's text by pointing out strengths and weaknesses that may not be apparent to the author; and second, to help improve the reviewer's analytical skills by providing thoughtful responses as a reader.

The writing assignment given to students was the following:

Your university has been holding debate sessions and workshops on various topics related to identity. For the closing session, the workshop facilitator has asked you to submit an academic essay based on the following quote:

*Personal identity is how you see yourself and express your individuality, and it's at the heart of everything you do. It drives the monumental and mundane choices you make in life, and it's the foundation of your unique viewpoint. Personal identity influences most of your choices— your mate and close friends, your line of work,*

*hobbies and interests, the sports teams you root for, the leaders you vote for, and so on. It also drives what you think about the big issues in life, like morality, freedom, and justice.*

Write an **academic essay** of about **400 words** on the **factors that may contribute to the construction of personal identity**.

### Second part INSTRUCTIONS FOR PEER FEEDBACK

Read the essay assigned to you twice, once to get an overview of the essay, and a second time to provide comments for the author to use when revising his/her text.

Answer the questions below. Remember that your review should focus on content and organisation, and not on language use only.

Reviewers will prepare a combination of written and oral feedback on the basis of the following questions:

WRITTEN FEEDBACK (To be provided as a marginal comment or as a final comment.)

1. Is the essay well-organized? Why/Why not?
2. Have the main ideas of the essay been adequately developed, i.e., has the author provided sufficient details and examples to explain the main idea of each body paragraph?

If your answer is “Yes,” provide an example.

If your answer is “No,” mention the idea that has not been sufficiently developed and explain why.

3. Is the writing style appropriate for you— the audience? (i.e., is the essay written in an appropriate style for a college student to read?) Why/Why not?

### ORAL FEEDBACK

You may notice that there will be some repetition of what you are saying. Some people identify with written feedback while others prefer oral feedback. Since we cannot determine who likes what, both types of feedback will be delivered.

You will record an audio file, the duration of which should be between one and three minutes.

1. In general terms, what is good about this essay? Why is it good?
2. Was there anything that was confusing or not clear? If so, what was it?
3. Can you provide two specific suggestions for improvement?

### GENERAL FEEDBACK

When the review is over, the reviewer will also complete the rubric below so that the author gets a sense of what the overall paper looks like and what he or she needs to do next.

Reviewers use the following rubric to complete their comments:

					Comments? (only if you consider them necessary after the marginal/end comments and the audio)
	5	Excellent			
	4	Very good			
	3	Good			
	2	Fair			
	1	Poor			
Content					
Organization					
Structure					
Language (vocabulary, grammar)					

## How English debate is perceived by Japanese EFL teachers and students: The comparison based on the debate experience

Yukari Abe

### Introduction

The current study stems from several years of experience in teaching English debate at a Japanese high school. I witnessed ordinary Japanese EFL students, who were shy and hesitant to speak in English, becoming eloquent debaters with a critical mind. Despite the benefits to students perceived in the actual coaching

and in the literature, English debate has not been a popular choice for the Japanese classroom.

The Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT) has striven to foster students' ability to think. The national curriculum guidelines officially included the term "debate" in 1989 for the first time. MEXT further encouraged "debate learning in various subjects" (MEXT, 2011, p. 6). The latest guidelines also included debate in the recommended activities, and importantly, a new subject named Logic and Expression was established to foster logical output skills (MEXT, 2018a). Despite decades of such governmental promotion, the ratio of debate use for speaking assessments at public high schools stagnated at 4.1% in 2017 (MEXT, 2018b).

Motivated by such a discrepancy, the current study explored the perceptions of Japanese secondary school English teachers and students about English debate. The perception study was chosen for two reasons: teacher perceptions directly affect classroom decision-making (Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999) and understanding of student perceptions makes English class more relevant to students, resulting in heightened motivation (Nunan, 2012). The research questions were as follows:

How is English debate perceived by Japanese EFL teachers and students?

Are there any differences in the perceptions due to debate experience or the status of the participants? If any, what are they like?

### **Rationale for English debate**

In general, a competitive debate takes place between two teams with a different number of debaters on each team. One side is for the topic, and the other is against. Teams role play and convey their arguments to the judge(s) or audience, aiming to convince them.

The conceptual foundation of English debate for English language teaching is Content-Based Instruction (CBI). CBI is defined as "a method of teaching language which focuses on learning about something in the target language, rather than learning about the target language itself" (Mesureur, 2017, p. 71). English debate falls into the category of CBI as the content of the topic determines the necessary language features.

The substantial advantage of CBI is the development of both language and thinking skills. English language proficiency is considered to improve through repeated exposure to the target language in multiple modes. In the case of English debate, the students research a debate topic, read miscellaneous materials, judge the reliability of these materials, write scripts for presentation, actually debate in English, and listen to their opponents. Students are thus immersed in the target language throughout the debating process, learning both the language and the content.

Pertaining to thinking skills, critical thinking is a significant outcome of debating. Critical thinking has been established as a disposition and related skills that assist in making rational judgments. Banegas and Villacañas (2016, p. 455) add that criticality means "considering an issue from multiple perspectives, even when these involve self-critique". "CBI seeks to enhance the critical thinking of students through gathering, organising, analysing information and then generating new ideas (e.g., inferring, predicting, and estimating) (Met, 1991). Teaching critical thinking is also considered vital for democracy and tolerance of diversity (UNESCO, 1995). Hence, English debate is also highly useful for fostering thinking skills to thrive in society.

### **Research design**

In order to gain a holistic understanding of teacher and student perceptions of English debate, a questionnaire survey and semi-structured individual interviews were conducted. The questionnaire data were analysed quantitatively through inferential statistics. The independent variable is the participant group with three levels: teachers with debate coaching experience, teachers without debate coaching experience, and students with debate experience. Dependent variables are the mean score of each questionnaire item with a five-point Likert scale. The interview data were analysed qualitatively to complement the results of the questionnaire.

### **Participants**

The teacher participants were in-service Japanese EFL teachers teaching at secondary schools in Japan. Those with debate coaching experience were categorised as TD+ group (n = 43), whilst those without such experience as TD- group (n = 34). The student participants comprised those with debate experience (n = 44). A total of 121 participants answered the questionnaire survey. Twenty volunteers out of the questionnaire respondents advanced to the interview (TD+: n = 6, TD-: n = 6, Student: n = 8).

### **Instruments**

The questionnaire comprised 18 items divided into three categories: the impact of English debate on a) English language skills, b) other skills besides English language (e.g. critical thinking), and c) intuitive judgment on English debate (e.g. suitability for Japanese students) (see Appendix for details). Participants were asked to express their perceptions in response to positive statements such as "English debate improves general conversation skills" on a 5-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. Each interview conducted online or face to face took approximately 20 to 40 minutes. All the interaction was in Japanese and audio-recorded, and the relevant parts were translated and transcribed in English. The interviews were initiated by the question from the author, "What do you think of English debate?". The interviewees were then encouraged to express their

perceptions about the impact of English debate freely. Although the interview topics basically depended on the interviewee's interest, all the interviewees were asked: "What do you think hinders English debate in Japanese classroom?" This question was added in the expectation of revealing more realistic, perhaps negative, perceptions about English debate.

## Results

### Questionnaire results

As for RQ1, on the perceptions of English debate, descriptive statistics indicated that English debate was generally perceived favourably by all the participant groups. The average mean scores out of 5 points were as follows, in terms of the impact of English debate on English language and other skills: Speaking ( $M = 4.21$ ), Writing ( $M = 3.88$ ), Listening ( $M = 4.46$ ), Reading ( $M = 3.77$ ), Vocabulary ( $M = 4.49$ ), Other skills besides English including Understanding of Social Issues, Critical Thinking, and Collaboration ( $M = 4.40$ ), and Intuitive judgment ( $M = 3.87$ ). In particular, Logical Speaking ( $M = 4.73$ ) and Critical Thinking ( $M = 4.66$ ) were considered to develop effectively through English debate.

RQ2, the difference amongst the participant groups, was addressed by one-way ANOVA and a post hoc Tukey test. Regarding the impact of debate on English language skills, there were few significant differences amongst the participant groups. However, the significant results were obtained in the category of Intuitive Judgment: Enjoyability of debate;  $F(2,118) = 5.52$ ,  $p < .05$ , Suitability for Japanese students;  $F(2,118) = 6.08$ ,  $p < .01$ , and Future possibility to engage with debate;  $F(2,118) = 4.01$ ,  $p < .05$ . Post hoc comparisons indicated that TD- group evaluated all the three items above significantly lower than TD+ and Student group. That is, the TD- group did not regard English debate as enjoyable or suitable for Japanese students as the other groups did, nor did they hope to try debate coaching.

### Interview results

The key finding in the interviews was the anxiety expressed by the TD- group, which was inconsistent with the favourable reactions in the questionnaire. Some interviewees from the TD- group were actually concerned about the lack of exposure to so-called 'Native Speaker' English, as debate is conducted between Japanese students. Hence, the TD- group doubted that students would be making improvements in pronunciation and listening skills.

The additional question about any hindrances to teaching English debate revealed concrete constraints for teachers to teach English debate, which were divided into four types; Structural, Teacher side, Student side, and Cultural issues. The first pertained to systematic constraints such as large class size, insufficient class time, and the absence of assessment criteria. Teacher side issues referred to the teacher's motivation, disposition, knowledge and skills of debate coaching,

whilst Student issues were related to student motivation and English proficiency. Of particular note was the compatibility of debate with Japanese culture. A TD-teacher expressed: "*I feel uncomfortable with debate because it seems aggressively criticising others.*" Another TD- teacher said: "*English is more suitable for debating than Japanese. Japanese students are not raised to debate even in Japanese.*" These statements indicate that some teachers associated debating with verbal aggression and something missing in the Japanese culture. Such negative images might have led to the low evaluation of the Intuitive Judgment category in the questionnaire.

Interestingly, however, many of the concerns of the TD-group were directly addressed by the TD+ and Student interviewees. For instance, the lack of exposure to native-like English was of little significance to them since the intelligibility of the pronunciation was prioritised for the communication in debate. The aggressive image of debate was also denied by student interviewees, with one student stating, "*The more capable you are in debate, the calmer you are in talking because there is no need to be aggressive when you see the logical paths.*" Another student also said, "*I was worried and even scared about debating at first, but once I gave it a try, I came to feel like debating more.*" These statements attested that some of the concerns were not true or should be dismissed in the process of debating.

## Conclusion

The present study examined how differently English debate was perceived by Japanese EFL teachers and students. The mixed methods study design exposed the perceptions of Japanese teachers and students about English debate from different angles.

Of note was that Japanese EFL teachers without debate coaching experience were wavering between their professional and intuitive judgment on implementing English debate. Whilst they acknowledged the positive impact on English language skills and other aspects such as critical thinking, they were not intuitively favourable toward English debate. The Japanese harmony-oriented culture might have yielded biased images of debate. Considering that debating inevitably involves challenging the present situation, it is no wonder that some may worry about harmony being disturbed. However, this article is in line with the contention that critical thinking is compatible with group-oriented Asian culture as critical examination requires consideration for other perspectives (e.g., Davidson, 1998).

The current study suggests that such intuitive concerns can be allayed, as shown in the lived experience of students and teachers with debate experience. Establishing guidelines for debate teaching procedures and the assessment criteria of the debater's skills would also remove practical constraints. The paradigm shift in

the teacher's mindset is also required through sharing thoughts between those with experience and without. English debate is demanding, which is why it is also rewarding in the development of the language and thinking skills of students.

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### Appendix

#### The Questionnaire Items

(Q1-15) English debate improves...	
Speaking	1. General English conversation
	2. Logical Speaking
	3. Q and A skills
	4. Pronunciation
Writing	5. Summary writing
	6. Paragraph writing
	7. Differentiate colloquial and literary language
Listening	8. Listening
Reading	9. Quick reading (e.g. skimming, scanning)
	10. Intensive reading
Vocab	11. Receptive vocabulary
	12. Productive vocabulary
	13. Understanding of social issues
Other skills	14. Critical thinking
	15. Collaborative skills
Intuition	16. English debate is enjoyable
	17. English debate is suitable for Japanese students
	18. Hope to engage in English debate in the future

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## “Stop at nothing, we are rebels”: ELT pedagogies BE[ing] and resistance in the crossfire

Yecid Ortega

### Introduction

Colombia currently faces social-political turmoil that has lasted for more than fifty years. Life-threatening violence has mostly affected marginalized students in public schools (González, 2016). Although learning the English language is important for reasons beyond economic ones, there has been little discussion on the role that the English language teaching (ELT) curriculum can have in promoting social justice and peacebuilding. In this article, I present findings of a critical ethnographic case study conducted with three Colombian English teachers and their students in an impoverished neighbourhood in Bogotá (the capital). This study specifically explores how a *social justice and peacebuilding curriculum* (SJPBC) has been used in the English classroom to enable students to learn English skills and discuss violence in and out of school to address community and wider social problems.

### Guiding concepts

I use Galtung's (1964, 1969) 'negative peace' and 'positive peace' as points of entry. Generally, negative peace refers to the absence of violence and absence of passive co-existence while positive peace actively represents love, the union of body, mind and spirit in the presence of cooperation, equity, equality and dialogue. For the purposes of this article, I have simplified and adapted Galtung's quadrant model to identify positive peace to the right and negative peace to the left. The further to the left on the continuum, the greater the suffering, the further to the right the more reduced the suffering, while zero (0) is a state in between (see figure 1).

**Negative Peace** ←----- 0 -----→ **Positive Peace**  
Figure 1. Positive and negative peace

While on one hand, we have a type of peace that refers to the absence of violence, war, conflict, on the other hand, we have the idea of the integration of human society within a structural model of social justice. Although for Galtung these concepts mainly refer to contexts of war and conflict, in this article I borrow the ideas to refer to negative peace as the violence and

struggles faced by the students/teachers in the community and positive peace as the classroom projects that address issues of social justice and attempts to challenge the precarious situations they live in.

#### Methods and Findings

This study was carried out in a public high school in Bogotá, Colombia with three English teachers and their students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. I spent eight months immersed in the classrooms and shared experiences with the teachers and the students as I conducted several interviews. After using NVivo 12 and a content and theme analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), data revealed four forms of resistance: 1) native speakerism resistance, 2) language policy resistance, 3) administration resistance, and 4) capitalism resistance. These four resistances are grounded in the teachers' beliefs that other pedagogies are possible beyond the common grammar-based and communicative approaches to the teaching of languages in many Colombian public school classrooms.

*Native speakerism resistance:* teachers allow students to use their home language (Spanish) in class. In one of my classroom observations, students were doing presentations about their social justice projects when one of the students struggled to present his topic in English. The teacher immediately jumped in and told him to use his Spanish or code switch if necessary. We may see this act of using the students' own language as a scaffold to make meaning and as a type of resistance not only to the 'English-only' discourses that have permeated the English language teaching classrooms for a while but to an entire system of colonialism of power (Quijano, 2000) in which concepts of translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2014) and trans[ultural]linguación (Ortega, 2019) highlight the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students and put them at the front and centre of the day-to-day practice.

*Language policy resistance:* teachers argue that the curricular guidelines provided by the government are insufficient to address students' social needs and thus call for a co-created, participatory English curriculum design. Towards the end of my fieldwork, I noticed how teachers created a "hidden" curriculum that is not evident to their eyes but is in their classroom practices. I call this emerging curriculum of looking at teaching English in a more humanizing manner as *social justice and peacebuilding curriculum (SJPBC)*. Unlike educational systems that use schooling to prepare students for a capitalist world (Zajda, 2010), SJPBC promotes English teaching to a world in which students learn not only for the purposes of economic social mobility but for social cohesion. This is emphasized by the school environment in its mission and vision, the classroom environment in students' attitudes towards learning English differently, and the teachers' expectations and lesson planning that look at motivating and engaging students in learning for a better future. In a sense, SJPBC counters Colombia's educational policies

(such as Colombia Bilingüe) that promote English education for economic development and leadership in Latin America (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

*Administration resistance:* Teachers fit their social justice projects around the training for standardized English testing. It was evident that teachers had to train their students for the local standardized test at least once a week as mandated by the academic coordinators, thus restricting the possibilities for socially-oriented tasks. In the following interview extract, we can read how Sol (one of the teachers) argues that regardless of these constraints, students still manage to learn some English: "We have to train them (the students) for the standardized tests and we do not have time to do the real work, but with the little that we do, they do learn." (Sol –Teacher, August 2018)

In my ongoing observations and conversations with students and teachers in general, there is the sentiment of doing things in a different way. There is a push from the government and school administration to teach students to the test in order to obtain higher scores to get more funding, yet teachers and students push back by focusing more on social and cultural pedagogies that are more relevant to their communities (Paris & Alim, 2017).

*Capitalism resistance:* Teachers promote pedagogical approaches that look at students as human beings who care about others and resist their violent context. Rather than treating students as factory products of knowledge that feed a capitalistic neoliberal system, teachers portray them as potential agents of peace and social change (Hurie, 2018).

Data analysis evidenced the connection between teachers' practices and their actions to counter global capitalistic and neoliberal discourses of learning English. For example, parents and administrators tend to believe that learning English is important to secure well-paid jobs in the future, however teachers strongly believe that caring about students' well-being is imperative, as what happens in their lives affects them as well. Below, we can read an excerpt from one of the teachers who feels touched by what happens to her students.

"We deal with human beings who manage complex lives... I am affected by what happens to them." (Hadasa, August 1, 2018)

The teachers' concern for the students was captured by all my observations on how students as humans are put at the centre of teaching practice in what I call *pedagogies of BE[ING]*<sup>1</sup>. These students are not only constantly caring about others, but always learning, changing and transforming in search of solutions for

<sup>1</sup> This comes from more robust ideas on pedagogies be[ing], be[coming] and be[longing] which refers to students who care about their community they belong to and hope for a better future – work in progress.

problems in their community. Indeed, teachers are convinced that what students learn in the English class must cross the threshold of the classroom/school walls to create an impact on society. The following passage grasps the sentiment of these observations.

*"...so (teaching English) goes beyond what we teach in the English class, all of them are people, as beings who not only come to study but to establish different relationships."* (Hadasa, August 13, 2018)

These counter-narratives or resistance were well represented by the teachers' pedagogical activities towards solving a specific problem in the community. For example, students in grade 10 collaborated to create invented social-justice-oriented non-profit organizations to raise money to feed stray dogs, to help community members to navigate their unemployment situation and to promote sports as a way to move away from drug addiction (see photos below). Towards the end of the academic year, students shared their reflections about these projects in the form of public presentations in English to peer groups and the entire school.

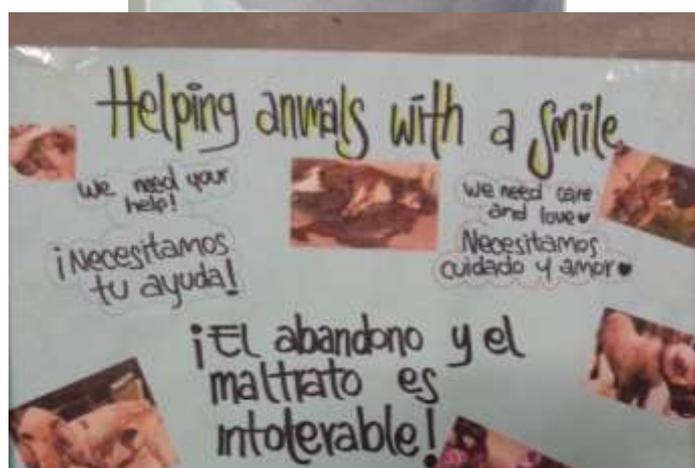


Photo Set 1: Images of social-oriented projects.

In one of the interviews, a teacher mentioned that the reason why they were able to approach English teaching in this manner was that they see themselves as *"rebels with a cause"*. They gave students the skills to create projects to promote social cohesion while ignoring mandated administrative or government guidelines. Initially, the students were skeptical about making the connections between learning English and addressing social issues in their community. However, the classroom activities, tasks and projects actively problematized social issues and prepared students to acquire critical and social skills for their future outside the school.

*"...this is the first stage of the rebellion, but I do dream of joining forces and taking these projects outside the school with other teachers and other teacher educators."* (Sol, October 1, 2018)

I conclude that although these students face everyday violence, gang recruitment, drug dealing, and family abuse, they have found hope in education as BE[ings] in which BE refers to individual humans and [ing] refers to constant learning and changing. Here, learning English becomes a conduit to pursue the students' dreams and hopes to move socially. The teachers' pedagogies of BE[ing] chip away at neoliberal and capitalistic discourses of English language teaching. They explicitly do not want their students to acquire English skills to serve the system, but to make community problems visible and attempt to solve them. Teachers believe this *"rebeldia"* (rebellion) against the system must be done with concrete actions that counter dehumanization and connect them with the world.

*"...a teacher who is human and that feels humanity is already an excellent teacher because he/she is already connected and when you connect with humanity you win 90% of learning."*

(Sol, August 12, 2018)

Finally, while negative peace was conceived as the absence of violence/war and positive peace as the integration of humans into society, we can see how these pedagogies of BE[ing] are strong evidence

towards positive peace in which the ultimate goal is to foster active agents of social change and remove them from the gangs, drugs and violence.

Notes: Thanks to all the English teachers in Colombia who keep working with social-justice-oriented pedagogies to the teaching of English. Some more resources and research information can be found at <https://www.andjustice4all.ca/>

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## Professional development and research engagement through podcasting

**Matthew W. Turner, Robert J. Lowe, & Matthew Y. Schaefer**

### Introduction

Advances in technology have provided English language teachers with new avenues of professional development, podcasting being one. Although podcasts are generally acknowledged as language learning tools (see Rosell-Aguilar, 2007), there has been limited conversation around the role of podcasting in the continuing professional development (CPD) of English language educators.

Since May 2014, we have produced *The TEFLology Podcast* (available at [teflology-podcast.com](http://teflology-podcast.com)) on a biweekly basis. Episodes include sections on ELT history, methodology, second language acquisition, and other topics of interest to practitioners. We also regularly produce episodes, and on occasion host conference forums, featuring interviews with researchers. Drawing on these experiences, in this article we will exemplify how podcasts may help practitioners to develop professionally through engaging with research, both as *producers* and *listeners*. In doing so, we will situate podcasts within the professional development, teacher education, and reflective practice traditions.

### Exploring podcasts

Podcasts consist of audio recordings periodically delivered directly to consumers' smartphones, laptops, and tablets. Podcasts can be easily produced with readily available technology, and do not require professional expertise. In educational contexts, podcasts can act as a dynamic resource for creating, negotiating,

and sharing knowledge. For example, Lee, McLoughlin, and Chan (2008) explored how podcast creation acted as a catalyst for collaborative knowledge building amongst a group of students, encouraging teamwork and creative problem-solving. More broadly, Birch and Weitkamp (2010) proposed the term “podologue” to describe how podcasts are used to stimulate public discourse.

There are, however, few studies regarding podcasts’ applications in teacher training. One example is Güler and Özkan (2018), who studied how podcasts play a part in pre-service language teacher training, finding that participants possessed largely positive attitudes towards the inclusion of podcasts on teacher training courses. Beyond formal teacher education settings, i.e. “in the wild” (see Mann & Walsh, 2007), Lowe, Schaefer, and Turner (2017) offer a practical guide to making and using podcasts as a form of reflective, inquiry-based CPD. The following four sections will explore some benefits that both creating and listening to podcasts may have for teachers in terms of professional development and research engagement.

### Exploring research through podcast production

For teachers, producing podcasts can act as an impetus to explore research and broaden disciplinary horizons. ELT has a number of different subareas, and as Medgyes (2017) has noted, it is common for specialists in one subdiscipline to be unaware of work being carried out in another. Teachers may also find it difficult to keep abreast of new developments, or have a comprehensive understanding of the field’s scope.

As podcast producers, in order to provide the kind of diverse content required to keep an audience of practitioners engaged, teachers may have to move outside of their comfort zone and address issues in which they have no formal education or experience. This requires teachers to engage in informal learning projects, in which they investigate a new topic through reading professional texts and research literature. Creating podcasts thus provides the stimulus for autonomous CPD and engagement with research findings. Through the production of podcasts, teachers are encouraged not only to produce original public content, pushing them into areas they may never have explored before, but also to do so in correspondence with a scheduled release deadline. For example, in episode 68 of our podcast we explored the topic of collaborative writing in the language classroom. In preparation for this segment we read the work of Storch (2013), and discussed at length the implications of research findings for the classroom. This discussion led us to explore an unfamiliar area of research.

We have further found that during the recording of the podcast, the ideas presented are discussed, challenged, and reflected on by each other as co-presenters, allowing for a deeper level of engagement with the

content, as well as developing professional awareness and critical thinking. Farrell (2018) discusses the notion of Critical Friendships, which consist of two-way reflections that partly aim to reduce isolation and develop a sense of solidarity among peers. The *Critical Co-presenterships* (Lowe et al., 2017) between podcasters play a similar role in helping to develop professional identities and relationships, as well as critical attitudes towards research.

### Interacting with researchers

There is an oft-lamented gap between ELT research and practice; teachers seldom engage with research, and academics often publish their work in a form which may not be teacher-friendly (Borg, 2009). There are, however, mediators who seek to bridge the gap between the two, and these bridge-building efforts have included a growing number of podcasts which focus on conversations with ELT researchers.

The dialogic nature of podcasts gives them several advantages as a space for researcher-teacher mediation. Firstly, the act of engaging in dialogue is very natural; listening to a conversation is a welcoming and familiar way of approaching a subject. Swiatek (2018) refers to podcasts as having “intimate bridging” qualities, in the way that knowledge boundaries are crossed through an informal medium.

For producers, conducting interviews, and all the stages involved in doing so, has great potential for professional development. In preparation for interviews, podcasters must (re)familiarize themselves with their interviewees’ work, which in itself is a developmental process. During the interview, podcasters have the opportunity to ask questions to clarify their understanding of ideas or implications of research findings. In addition, if guests’ responses seem unclear, interviewers can request clarification and confirm their understanding, allowing the talk to remain comprehensible for listeners. Finally, dialogue can ground the interview in human experience. While research may often appear abstract, a well-performed interview can find connections between the researchers’ motivations and their work, thus illuminating for listeners the relevance of research for practitioners. For example, in our sixth podcast interview, we spoke to Phil Benson, a learner autonomy researcher. Benson explained how his own experiences of language learning led him to take an interest in autonomy, thus addressing research at a more human level. We were further able to clarify our understanding regarding the implications of his work for the role of the teacher.

### Facilitating dialogue between researchers

The opportunity for dialogue within a podcast extends beyond interaction between podcast producers and researchers; it can also facilitate direct communication among researchers from disparate subfields. This may take many forms, but one example with which we have experimented is a conference session format consisting

of reflective interviews as described in the previous section, followed by a dialogue among the group of interviewees in response to each other's interview content, with the aim of seeking connections between their respective interests. For example, in an exchange between Hugh Starkey and Reiko Yoshihara (see Schaefer, Turner, & Lowe, 2017), the two were able to find some common ground between their areas of global citizenship and feminist pedagogy. Specifically, they both found a shared concern that cultural relativism could be used to justify human rights violations in their respective areas of research.

While this kind of innovative conference session format may be uncommon in ELT, there are several advantages of encouraging these interactions. Due to the varied and fractured nature of research, individual researchers working in ELT may know little about each other's output. However, interaction among researchers and practitioners could lead to a shared understanding of wider ELT practices. Broadening one's awareness of other sub-fields may lead to new avenues of inquiry and collaboration that could result in the development of novel theories and ideas for research. In our experience, such interactions often lead to illuminating connections being found among the participating researchers' interests. These connections are examples of sub-disciplinary co-constructions of knowledge that this type of dialogue facilitates (see Choi & Richards, 2017).

### Engaging others through podcasts

Finally, podcasts have several professional development benefits for listeners. Podcasts can primarily be beneficial in addressing gaps in professional knowledge, providing short overviews of topics which may spark new teacher interests, and lead them to areas they had not previously considered relevant to their practice. The accessibility, familiarity, and regularity of podcast recordings make them a sustainable platform for providing stimulating introductions to areas of research which may lead to more extensive investigation by teachers in the future.

In addition, although there is no direct dialogue between podcasters and their audience immediately, various forms of subsequent engagement still occur. First, listeners may not simply be listening passively to discussions, but formulating their own perspectives on the various topics and, ideally, being inspired to pursue new areas of inquiry. As an example of this type of engagement being encouraged, educators on university-level TESOL courses have recommended ELT podcasts to their students, as well as encouraging them to engage in podcasts as collaborative learning activities. At the University of South Wales, for example, *The TEFLology Podcast* is considered an accessible resource, with BA English with TESOL students offered it as a reference material for their dissertations (M. Chick, personal communication, August 6, 2019).

Listeners are also encouraged to share their own reflections on what they have heard with podcast producers, which often takes place through online communities of practitioners, such as Twitter. One listener wrote detailed blog posts about our episodes, showing clearly how he processed and critically assessed the ideas presented (see Swagman, 2016). We have also had fruitful discussions with listeners over social media that have introduced new perspectives on content discussed, leading to the development of new insights all around.

### Conclusion

We have explored how podcasting can bring about opportunities for reflective engagement with research, and between researchers in the field of ELT. In producing podcasts, research is informally shared, with discussions and reflections on content being negotiated and constructed with supportive peers. Audio recordings can then be used as an apparatus for knowledge bridging across the ELT community, connecting with an audience of practitioners for whom more traditional academic resources may have less resonance. Podcasting, given its public and communicative nature, has been discussed with regard to how dialogue with and between researchers can be facilitated. Podcasts create spaces in which researchers can discuss their work and where interviewers can ask questions and deepen their own understandings. They can also promote initiatives for encouraging scholars from across the field to engage with one another's ideas for the benefit of themselves and a wider audience.

Although the number of independent podcasts made by and for practising English language teachers in the community has been increasing over the past five years, there have been few studies into their effectiveness as a CPD tool for both producers and listeners. We therefore hope to continue to raise awareness of podcasting's role in encouraging CPD and engagement with research in ELT.

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## First experiences with ELT research: Voices from southern Argentina

**Darío Luis Banegas, Sabrina Morales, Mauricio Peláez, Carol Rivera, Mauricio Tello, Vanina Troncoso, & Mariana Vilchez**

### Introduction

The aim of this contribution is to share the preliminary processes and outcomes of a nine-month module called *Research in English Language Teaching* at a four-year initial English language teacher education (IELTE) programme in the city of Esquel, Argentina. The module is delivered in the last year of the programme and aims at providing future teachers with tools for investigating their own classrooms to encourage teacher knowledge, reflective practice, context-responsive pedagogies, and ultimately, research-based teaching.

In 2019, the group taking the module consisted of six student-teachers. During the first two months, March and April, content was delivered through tutor lectures and workshop-like activities such as problem-solving (e.g. a teacher wanting to find out how to make her students speak more English in class), student presentations, or summarising and sharing articles about studies carried out in South America, usually published in the *Argentinian Journal of Applied Linguistics* (AJAL) (Argentina) and *Profile* (Colombia) and other contexts such as Turkey (e.g., Burns, Dikilitaş, Smith, & Wyatt, 2017).

Given the fact that two of the student-teachers already had some teaching experience and were completing their practicum or were employed as part-time English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, Darío, the tutor, decided to concentrate on exploratory action research (EAR) as a meaningful framework. In addition, we also discussed the basics of exploratory practice as discussed in Hanks (2017). Core textbooks were: Smith and Rebolledo (2018), Rebolledo, Bullock and Smith (2018), and Rebolledo, Smith and Bullock (2016). The six student-teachers organised themselves into two groups to carry out their research projects. Group 1 included Sabrina and Carol, and Group 2 included Mariana, Mauricio T., Mauricio P., and Vanina.

When Darío suggested the possibility of writing something about their first ever research experience, the student-teachers were enthusiastic. To make the write-up more reader-friendly and motivating, we agreed on summarising the research projects as if it were an interview. Below, readers will find a summary of each research project. The module, overall projects and report write-up finished in November 2019. This contribution was written in August 2019.

### Project 1: Motivation and speaking skills

Darío: What's the topic or area of your research project?

Sabrina: The topic of our research project is motivation and developing speaking skills in a bilingual school. As Ushioda (2013) states, “motivation is widely recognized as a significant factor influencing success in second foreign language (L2) learning, and is perhaps one of the key variables that distinguishes first language acquisition from second language acquisition” (p. 1), that is why motivation became one of the main concepts to investigate among the learners in this classroom.

Darío: What was the context of your investigation? Tell us a little bit about the students and school where you did your study.

Carol: Our investigation took place at a private bilingual school in Trevelin, a small city, in southern Argentina. In this class, the students come from the first and second year for mainstream subjects, and they are divided into two different levels: A1 and A2. The project was carried out in the A1 level, where there are twenty-six students of about twelve and thirteen years of age. At the time of running the investigation, among the learners, there were four who were new in the school and who had not had English classes before. Students had five hours of English a week. They used the book “World English 1A” Second Edition from Heinle Cengage Learning. The lessons were expected to follow the communicative approach. The research was conducted in a school where I work as a co-teacher. We decided to explore motivation and developing learning skills because, despite the fact that students have five hours of English lessons a week, they have great difficulties in using English for communication in class. With this in mind, we set four exploratory questions: “Why do I think my students have difficulties expressing themselves in class?”, “What do my students feel about speaking English in class?”, “What do I do about speaking English in class?” and “What do my students do about speaking English when they have to do it?”

Darío: What happened during the exploratory stage? How did you collect data? What did you find out?

Sabrina: During the exploratory stage, we decided to divide the work into three different steps. The first day, the observation stage was carried out, in order to study the students and my own behaviour. The second day, learners were given a Spanish-medium questionnaire to answer individually and anonymously about factors and activities that facilitated or hindered using English in class. The questions were in Spanish so that students felt comfortable and they could understand them clearly. The last day, focus group discussions took place. During this stage, the children were asked to discuss follow-up questions about the survey results. The results were analysed during the same week, and we found that some students felt nervous, anxious, embarrassed about or ashamed of speaking in English in front of their peers. They felt that older children would laugh at them if they made mistakes or did not answer quickly. On the other hand, some other learners stated that they got bored at times, and when they were not sure how to answer

correctly, it was better for them to use Spanish instead. In addition, other students said that they needed more time to connect words or ideas since they had the vocabulary needed but not enough practice on how to use it.

Darío: What did you do during the action stage? How did the students react?

Carol: During the action stage, we decided to plan lessons centred mainly on speaking activities. Moreover, we agreed that students should work together in groups in order to get them speak more. We believed that students could share their ideas and work together to share their knowledge as well. For this reason, activities which involved discussion were implemented. For instance, students had to think of possible solutions to different problems or situations. For this activity, they had to read the different situations and speak about the possible solutions, and finally, they shared their answers with the rest of the class. In addition, we decided to include games and roleplays to keep students motivated to speak and participate, since these two types of activities were chosen by the students in the questionnaire. Students seemed to enjoy these types of activities, they got involved and they were willing to use the language, even when they had doubts or did not know some words. When the action stage finished, learners were asked in Spanish how they had felt during this period. They said that acting in a play was a good idea but at the beginning they thought this activity would be implemented in a different way, for instance, based on films. Also, a low number of learners stated that the activities were okay. What’s more, they preferred working from the coursebook. On the other hand, other groups observed that they liked and enjoyed the activities, and that they felt they were able to speak more than in other opportunities. However, they expected more games.

Darío: What have you learnt from this experience?

Sabrina: At the beginning of the exploratory stage, students did not use English to communicate in class. Only some of them tried to develop their answers with their own ideas but they ended up speaking in Spanish due to the lack of vocabulary they felt they had. Nevertheless, on the last day of the action stage, students were asked to write and then act a dialogue based on a video they had watched, and they completed this task successfully, almost by themselves. The change we could see in the students was not great but we understand this is a gradual process. From this experience we learned that teacher research helps us to improve our lessons and improve our performance as teachers as well. When we work on different aspects of our teaching we feel we have trouble with or we feel that can be improved, we grow professionally. Additionally, having the opportunity to do the research with a partner who observes the classes helps to detect aspects that a teacher might not see, and it enriches the experience

and the process as we can have different perspectives on what happens in the classroom.

Carol: We have realised that, sometimes, as teachers, we tend to expect students to understand and to do things according to the curriculum or planning in order to cover a lot of topics during the school year, but we do not stop and ask the learners what they like doing. Having the chance to collect and analyse data, and then planning lessons according to what the students said they enjoyed is a great advantage to make them participate at the same time as they are learning. What is more, it creates an environment where both sides, teacher and students, can work and share their knowledge in order to learn to use the language.

### **Project 2: Student participation in a vulnerable context**

Darío: What's the topic or area of your research project?

Vanina: The topic of our project is English as a Foreign Language Teaching (EFLT) in a vulnerable context, specifically to improve student's participation. Following Kuchah and Shamim (2018), we understand that educational vulnerability refers to those individuals experiencing a number of marked difficulties throughout their school career that prevent them from taking advantage of the curriculum and the lessons. Common barriers that appear on their way through formal education can be: emotional, family, interpersonal, related to the learning process and to the climate of the educational institution in which the students are immersed. These conditions are usually accompanied by more complex factors and, in most cases, lead to failure at school.

Darío: What is the context of your investigation? Tell us a little bit about the students and the school where you did your study.

Mauricio: Our investigation took place in a school called Cacique Inacayal located in Esquel, a small city in southern Argentina. At the time of the investigation, the institution was momentarily using a borrowed building. Most of the students who were attending classes came from different neighbourhoods. Some of them had been expelled from other schools and some others had had an unsatisfactory trajectory. A large number of the students attending this school come from low income families and a high percentage of them arrive with problematic situations such as teenage pregnancy or drug consumption. Also, there are students who have been in prison. Our study was carried out with students of the Integrated Modular Basic Cycle (CBMI in Spanish), composed of 18 students between 15-17 years old from the first, second and third year of secondary school. It is a multi-grade classroom and they have English classes for three periods (120 minutes) every Monday. In this module students do not use coursebooks and language learning hinges on the communicative approach. In the observation stage of our research project, students did not show any evidence of having a basic knowledge of the target language. Even

though they came from other schools they did not show knowledge of English.

Darío: What did you wish to investigate and why?

Mariana: We carried out the study in this institution where Vanina was teaching and facing some issues regarding teaching as this was her first experience. She wished to encourage students' participation because she noticed a lack of it in class. To start this study we asked ourselves these questions: "When do students participate in class?", "How does she engage students to participate in different activities?" and "What do students feel when she proposes activities?"

Darío: What happened during the exploratory stage? How did you collect data? What did you find out?

Mauricio: In order to collect data, we used three instruments: classroom observation, questionnaires and focus groups. After the first week of observation (we observed Vanina in her teaching role and the students), we implemented an individual questionnaire; the second week we arranged group discussions. Surprisingly, we found out that most of the students had the desire to learn English, they considered the subject important and they wanted to improve their knowledge in the target language. Despite going to school, students considered that they were not going to learn and they only attended classes to comply with attendance requirements. One striking finding was that they wanted the classes to be designed around the following topics of interest: sports, motorbikes, music and soap operas.

Darío: What did you do during the action stage? How did the students react?

Mariana: We planned lesson by lesson taking into account the findings from the previous stage. We discussed which activities would be better to use with this group of students in order to make them participate using English. We met every Saturday morning previous to the class, which was taught on Monday. Firstly, we spoke about what each of us had observed, and then we shared ideas to plan possible activities which included games, videos and music according to the group's interests. After implementing our lesson plans we observed that students changed their behaviour and most of them started to participate. There was an inviting environment, the students seemed to be engaged and they also started to relate to each other in a more friendly way. Through the survey we gave them, we found that most of the students agreed that the changes made by the teacher were needed. They also commented that their performance had improved. Regarding games, they said that they enjoyed the games proposed and they started considering speaking as a positive way of boosting learning.

Darío: What have you learned from this experience?

Vanina: We have clearly learnt the stages of Exploratory Action Research. We realised that over the course of the process we had to revise the questions in order to focus

on the aspects that we wanted to investigate. In addition, we had to modify the lesson plans according to the results of previous classes.

Mauricio: We have learnt to choose and design data collection tools, which had to be appropriate to the characteristics of our students and the study. We also learnt how to analyse the information gathered. Above all, we learnt how to design lessons that respond to the social-school context and the students' needs and interests. In addition, among the discoveries that we gathered class after class, we got to know the group of students more deeply and their interests, so we were able to readjust the activities for the following class. Moreover, the relationship between the students and Vanina improved a lot.

### Conclusion

In this short report, we have included the research experience lived by two groups of pre-service student-teachers at an IELTE programme in Argentina. As a teacher educator, Darío noticed the changes the student-teachers underwent as they become more reflective, critical, and curious about finding original ideas to tackle practical issues found in the classroom.

The student-teachers' views and accounts lend support to the benefits of including a mandatory module on ELT research in the first stages of teacher preparation as student-teachers develop research, reflective, and teaching skills as they build bridges between research and practice by using research as a tool for improving their practices.

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## Finding exploratory practice in unusual places

### Rhian Webb & Dinesha Senaratne

Exploratory Practice as a research-based teaching approach is gaining traction with foreign language teachers internationally, as it offers a framework and a set of principles which opens up opportunities for teachers to engage in investigating what puzzles them about their teaching, or similarly, what puzzles them about learning. The EP approach encourages teachers to pursue their own personal maze of puzzles, which eventually leads to a refined research question - posed not as what or how but *why*. Asking 'why', is the starting point for many teachers' journeys of exploration into revealing a deeper, humanistic understanding of their teaching experiences in language education.

Rhian Webb and Dinesha Senaratne are EFL teachers at the British Council Teaching Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka. They discuss their individual stories about how they came across Exploratory Practice in their desire to carry out their own research in their classes and what it means for them personally to enact Exploratory Practice with their learners.

### How did I come across Exploratory Practice?

Rhian: I was very fortunate to come across Exploratory Practice (EP) when two of the leading experts in Exploratory Practice (Dr. Judith Hanks and Dr. Kenan Dikilitaş) came to the university where I was working in Northern Cyprus to conduct several introductory workshops. I was taken with the notion of Exploratory Practice because it brought out my inquisitive nature and it encouraged me to think more deeply about the things that puzzled me in my role as an EFL teacher. Initially, it felt unfamiliar framing my puzzle around 'why' but eventually I came to realise that it was a natural place to start, and I grew more comfortable with asking myself, 'why is this puzzle so important to me that I want to explore it further?' Answering this question helped me to identify the kernel of my research idea, and I became more confident with my new identity as a teacher-researcher. I found that Exploratory Practice empowered me to question why we assess learners' language proficiency and progress in certain ways. Fortuitously, I found out that a colleague and I shared the same puzzle, so we decided to conduct an EP research project together (Öncül & Webb, 2018). It was an illuminating

journey, at the end of which, we discovered that the learners shared different perspectives from us about how their language progress should be assessed.

Dinesha: As a student studying Educational Research, I look at every situation as an opportunity to learn about new research methods. Sitting in a classroom during a Career Professional Development session on how to incorporate Democratic Competencies for Democratic Cultures (CDC) in the EFL classrooms, I was completely intrigued. Following the session, I spoke to Rhian who delivered the training and I expressed my interest in studying it further and the possibility of conducting research on it. She suggested I explore the subject using Exploratory Practice, to which I responded with a blank face because I had not come across it before.

### **Why do I want to incorporate Exploratory Practice into my teaching practice?**

Rhian: There are many facets, layers and nuances to teaching a foreign language, which means it a rich and diverse area for teachers to conduct their own classroom research. Exploratory Practice provides me with a mechanism to delve into areas of education which intrigue me. One such area I explored concerned 'Education for Democratic Citizenship' (Council of Europe, 2016) which proposes an approach for educators, irrespective of the subjects taught, to devise ways in which their learners can develop their democratic competences. My Exploratory Practice project (Webb & Sarina, 2018) involved using in-class debating activities with my language learners to see if the process of arguing for and against in a group debate encouraged them to develop aspects of democratic competency – in this case, their interpersonal skills as well as their communicative linguistic skills. I consider the Exploratory Practice principles (Allwright & Hanks, 2009) of 'involve everybody' and 'work for mutual development' definitely shaped my research journey and also established a co-investigatory ethos whereby I designed the research project to include my learners as co-researchers in the research project. Using Potentially Exploitable Pedagogical Activities (PEPA) during the usual class time meant that my learners and I could collect data together without interrupting their learning and my teaching. Later, we discovered shared understandings concerning the linguistic and interpersonal skills required to participate in a group debate, and it also shed light on the many challenges and successes they experienced while debating a controversial issue in a foreign language.

Dinesha: The flexibility of the EP approach is the greatest advantage for EFL teachers. In reality, every lesson we plan includes a PEPA. In my opinion, by creating more awareness about EP in Sri Lanka, we could encourage EFL teachers to carry out more research in the classroom. This paves the way for us to be reflective teachers who continue to discover new ways to have bigger impacts on our learners.

### **What obstacles did I face when attempting to implement it?**

Dinesha: Rhian was kind enough to lend me a book by Dikilitaş and Hanks (2018) to which she herself had contributed two chapters (Öncül & Webb, 2018; Webb & Sarina, 2018). I read up on EP and found that even my search engines mixed it up with Explanatory and Exploratory case study methods. What I learnt about EP was mostly thanks to informal chats with Rhian and from the book she lent me. Discussing the methods of EP with her opened up a world of possibilities to conduct research in my EFL classroom. Having grasped an understanding of the ease of conducting EP, I planned to use it as my method for my dissertation. Alas, this proved to be quite a feat. EP is a fluid methodology without a strict design, which perhaps is its greatest benefit as well as weakness. From reading the chapters in Dikilitaş and Hanks (2018), I realised that each person's research design was unique. From my perspective the fluidity of the research approach does not enable fellow researchers to replicate studies. A guideline of how to design an EP study would be ideal, especially to encourage educators in research-based universities to follow suit. Despite being established as a research method by Allwright (2003) my university was not keen on accepting EP as my research method as there were not enough studies completed in the area I wanted to focus on. This inspired me to create awareness so that future EFL teachers will not meet the same fate.

Rhian: Exploratory Practice is not widely known among academics in the fields of Teaching English as a Foreign Language, which is why it is timely that Hanks (2019) has provided a comprehensive literature review of ninety-four empirical studies in which EP was enacted in teachers' educational settings. Hanks discusses the benefits and challenges that teachers-as-researchers experience when pursuing EP as part of their pedagogic practice. An aspect of Hank's article that really struck a chord is the notion that by enacting EP, language teachers and their learners can feel empowered to knit together their research and pedagogy in search of a deep and mutually beneficial understanding.

### **Why is EP more suitable than other research methods for classroom research?**

Dinesha: As EFL teachers, we are constantly striving to 'lift activities off the book'. This in fact is what EP encourages as a method. To identify, design and use a PEPA is a major way for teachers to explore pedagogy and teaching practice. I have conducted three classroom-based research projects at the British Council in Colombo as part of my Master's degree program. Each time, my biggest challenges were my instruments and methods of data collection because it had to fit into the conventions of traditional research tools. By using a PEPA as a research tool, it allows one to be empowered as a researcher rather than caged by it. The flexibility of the EP methodology is the greatest advantage for EFL

teachers. One could say that every lesson a teacher plans includes a PEPA although they may not know how to use it as part of their research practice. In my opinion, creating more awareness about EP would encourage EFL teachers to carry out more research in the EFL classrooms. This paves the way for cohorts of teachers to become reflective teachers who continue to discover new ways to make changes in our teaching practices, and, to better understand our learners.

Rhian: After having completed the research on assessment practices of English language learners on an English preparatory course, my co-author and I reflected on our research design and we found that the use of PEPAs really helped our learners to express their views naturally and confidently. However, when we ran the focus groups to discuss the pros and cons of the assessment practices, we observed that a handful of participants were very opinionated and dominated the group and many participants in the focus groups did not have the chance to speak for themselves (Öncül and Webb, 2018). It was our conclusion that the PEPA provided us with the most fine-grained and illuminating data. This, we felt, was largely because the participants felt more comfortable carrying out group discussions in their classroom environment.

#### Future plans for EP

The impetus to carry out an EP project can either be teacher-motivated or learner-motivated or a combination of both. It is an effective and exciting way for teachers to create and design their own research project, which they can mold to suit their individual teaching and learning styles, settings and professional development interests.

Dinesha: I look forward to using PEPAs to implement CDC in primary classrooms. Using EP to document and explore this component in the EFL classroom will enable me to empower my students with the tools of communication while also inculcating global citizenship competencies. Due to the reflective nature of EP, this research has potential to expand my horizons as an educator. I look forward to sharing my experience using EP with my fellow colleagues, paving the way for more EFL teachers to become research-practitioners.

Rhian: In my role as Senior Teacher, I would like to run training sessions with Sri Lankan teachers, so that I may introduce them to the Exploratory Practice concept of puzzles and why they are important to pursue – not solely to satisfy teachers' curiosity or deepen their own understanding but more importantly to share their puzzle with their learners, and by doing so, open up the possibility that essentially learners have meaningful contributions to make.

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## Repeat after me: “The thesis won’t kill me”

**Carolina Rodriguez Buitrago**

### Introduction

For students and professors in the undergraduate program in Bilingual Education at Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana, *ÚNICA* in Bogotá, Colombia, doing the thesis project required for graduation becomes a daunting task. Usually, a set of guidelines for the thesis, written by the Director of Research should suffice as the resource for planning and executing a research project and constructing the research report. Since the undergraduate thesis project is our students’ first formal approach to educational research, they need more scaffolded support in operationalizing the research and writing processes. Thinking of research, in general, is not easy for teachers, much less for students whose perception of the educational reality is still based mostly on observation and second-hand teaching experience. Furthermore, the expectations with regards to research and academic writing knowledge set by the government and the program are too high to manage without close guidance generating anxiety and fear in students.

### The role of the thesis director

Directing the thesis project for undergraduate and graduate students is just one more of the duties assigned to college and university professors in Colombia. However, little training is provided as to how to guide students in this high-stress situation, with the assumption that if we have completed one, two or three theses ourselves we are capable of directing somebody else’s work. At *ÚNICA*, the role of the thesis director is to guide students in the process of research and writing the academic paper. As a thesis director, I have noticed most of my students experience panic towards the end of the process. The thesis process raises a myriad of emotional issues and reveals insecurities in students at a personal level. They feel inadequate, lost, and frustrated, and they get a glimpse of what adulthood entails. I have realized that when methodological advice cannot remove them from that state, my attentive ear and personal advice usually gets the ball rolling and that document written.

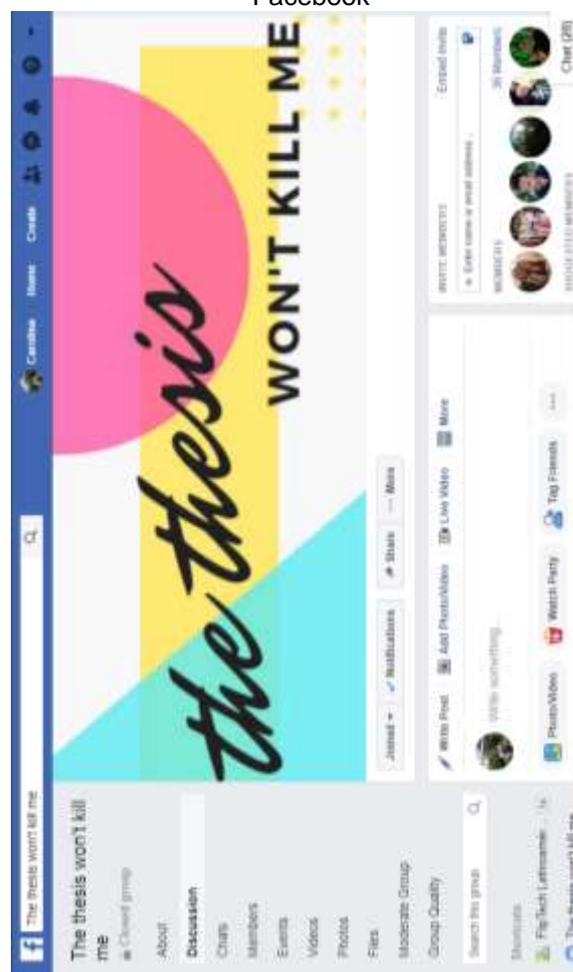
Having too many students at a time and realizing that most of them were struggling with similar issues led me to create a Facebook group called, *the thesis won’t kill me*<sup>2</sup>. Through my thesis coaching sessions with students, I realized that students had difficulties with time management, the operationalization of research tasks, and procrastination towards the thesis project and document. Thus, I decided to use Facebook as a

platform to communicate and exchange content with my thesis students due to its multimodality and the fact that all of my students are on it. There are 2.4 million active users of Facebook nowadays (Noyes, 2019). University students are avid users of Facebook. Thus, “universities and educational institutions are using Facebook now for communicating with the whole community (internal and external). Universities have tapped into the social network as a method to recruit and inform students” (Bledsoe & Pilgrim, 2011: 7). Thus, I created an online thesis writing support-group using this free social network as the platform.

### The thesis won’t kill me group on Facebook

*The thesis won’t kill me* started as a closed Facebook group for the ten or twelve students whose undergraduate thesis I needed to direct. However, with time, I have started to receive master’s degree students, specialist program students, and even professors. For example, I presented the idea to the Research Seminar professor at the college and he asked me to invite his students to the group. The purpose of the group is to make the research process less daunting by acknowledging the difficulties people have and by providing hacks for succeeding in finalizing the thesis. Figure 1 shows the group page on Facebook.

Figure 1. The thesis won’t kill me group on Facebook



The group currently has thirty-six members, even though the number is not massive, at ÚNICA it is meaningful, as we only have 162 students in total. At the beginning, the group was just my initiative and the main goal was the publication of research-related content. At first, I curated videos, links, articles, and images and shared them. But now, students and other professors have started to make valuable contributions from their experience. They share their questions, messages of encouragement, and resources in the group. As a result, a sense of community is being built around the “pain” caused by research.

For my students, research and writing are equally challenging. Not necessarily because they are ignorant about research or academic writing, but because of poorly developed executive functions. Students struggle with organization because they see the thesis as a monster, not as the seventy-to-eighty-page report it is. They also have difficulties breaking the thesis down into manageable tasks and scheduling times to check items off their to-do list. So, sharing strategies that work for me as a teacher-researcher has been a highlight. Tutorials on how to get organized with the use of a notebook, a calendar and Trello (a project management tool) are available for students to watch. Consequently, ‘*The thesis won’t kill me*’ Facebook group is a place for students to go when they feel lost during the process.

### **Building positive relationships through Facebook**

The thesis project raises feelings of inadequacy and frustration because of the size of the task at hand. At ÚNICA, students have to write a 25.000-word document taking 1-2 years with the help of a research director. In an undergraduate program, the support of the research professors and thesis director is pivotal in helping students overcome these feelings and be successful in the completion of their research process and in the writing of the report. However, because of the additional time demands and constraints, directors tend to adopt the role of editors, commenting on the document once it is written. The student-director relationship might be limited to revising and perfecting the document. However, support during the organizational tasks, the design of the research, the application of instruments and the planning for the writing is also necessary.

If the thesis director adopts the role of a coach, providing direct training to students on the different skills and competencies of a good researcher, results might be more positive and less traumatic. The director-student relationship can be more fruitful if aimed at the student, not the document alone. As suggested by Wacker and Olson (2019: 2), “advisories are designed to foster strong teacher-student bonds and to teach social-emotional skills, such as identifying and managing emotions, coping with stress and developing positive relationships”. They were referring to the teacher-student relationships built at some institutions within a particular

project, but we can extrapolate their words to the research process.

As a flipped learning educator, building strong relationships with students and re-examining the role I play in the teaching-learning experience is pivotal for the development of students’ potential. Therefore, having a strong and even friendly relationship with students can bear fruit academically and personally for students. Through the Facebook group’s constant contact, they feel more comfortable and supported.

### **Emotions in research writing**

Students and teachers are human beings and emotions are an inherent human characteristic which affect every domain of our lives. Emotions and their impact on learning have been studied by educational psychology and educational neuroscience (Tyng, Amin, Saad, & Malik, 2017) extensively. Thus, intentionally acknowledging their importance in the classroom, and acting on them, can be beneficial for teachers and students. We professors have a responsibility for the holistic development of people under our care. If we only address content and students’ cognition, we neglect the other domains that complete them as people. Consequently, by acknowledging the importance of students’ personal issues raised by research and thesis writing, we help them as students but also as people.

The way people see themselves and how they perceive their capabilities shapes their learning experiences. As Bandura (1994: 71) pointed out, “self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave”. If students see themselves as incapable and inadequate of producing a thesis document, they are more likely to sabotage themselves. Besides, the attitude of the research director towards errors and, in general, the process can also hinder the students’ ability to see themselves as capable and may even reinforce negative perceptions. This can be a negative cycle, leading students to abandon the writing process altogether, and to deny themselves the possibility of seeing the end of the project.

Certainly, the responsibility of finalizing the research and writing process belongs to the student, but it is naïve to ignore the impact the research director has on students’ thesis project completion. The thesis director can establish a system of support for students considering that building socio-emotional skills like self-awareness and self-management can help them finish their project and graduate successfully. ‘*The thesis won’t kill me*’ is a space for the professor to provide support through images, videos and testimonials and to show students that they can also complete their projects. Figure 2 illustrates one of the interactions generated after a student successfully defended his thesis.

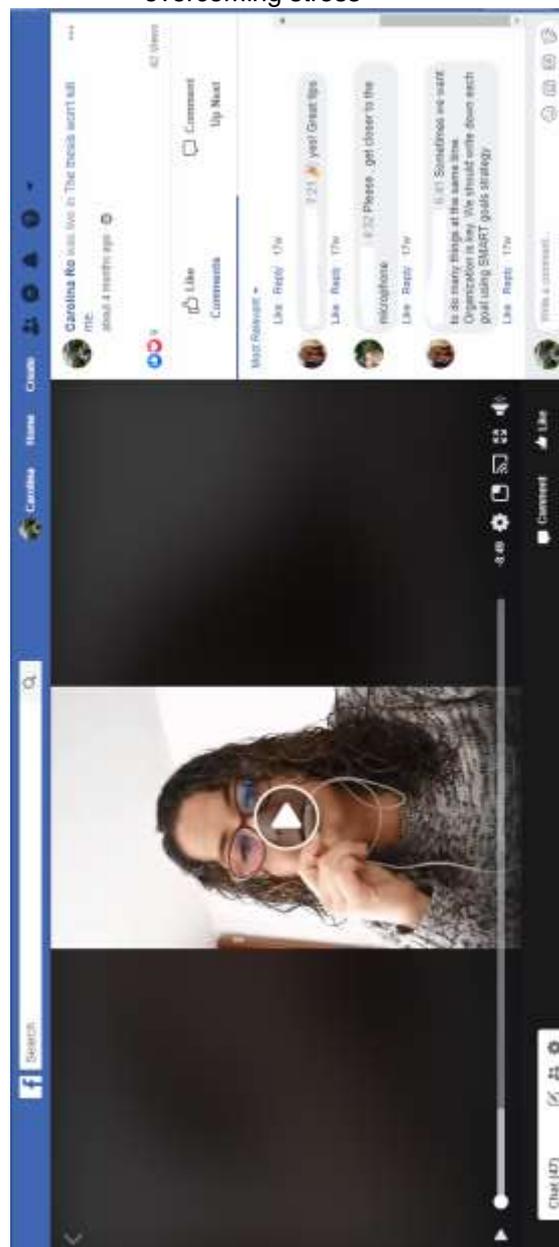
Figure 2. Post by a proud student who handed in this thesis and defended. (Reproduced with permission from the student)



### Building a community through Facebook

Research directors and students have numerous challenges to face given the myriad of tasks and conflicting schedules both have. Therefore, an online space for communication removes some of the barriers of time. I observed how relationships with students have improved since I created the group because they could see me at different times, not only during our formal thesis direction sessions. As suggested by Bledsoe and Pilgrim (2016: 94), “participation in such a network offers the opportunity for growth at any time”. I have arranged ‘Facebook Live’ sessions to discuss issues pertaining to motivation, organization, and focus with students. Figure 3 illustrates one live discussion I gave to talk to students about dealing with stress as a teacher, and the connection my experience could have to their thesis.

Figure 3. Facebook Live session about overcoming stress



Participating in a Facebook academic group is beneficial for undergraduate students in helping them own their professional development before graduation. Nowadays, formal associations already operate on social media bringing people together based on their interests. Facebook has made belonging to professional networks effortless through a few clicks and an administrator willing to move the group. Groups are not only for content consumption, but for collaboration, construction of knowledge and of communities of practice. So, students who are active members of an academic online group can continue their professional development autonomously once they finish their studies.

Even though many professors might doubt the effectiveness of Facebook in an academic setting, its power with today’s students cannot be denied. It

becomes more pervasive every day and students no longer deem its use in academia inappropriate. In the past, some concerns included teacher professionalism and the fact that teachers might spy on students' Facebook activity (Heiberger & Harper, 2008). However, nowadays, students' and teachers' Facebook friendships are not uncommon, at least where I work. Besides, Facebook can be a powerful tool in improving a poor supervisor/student relationship which otherwise could bring distress to the thesis writer and diminish the possibilities of success (Comer & Garret, 2014; Maslach, 2019). Facebook can be an oasis of calm in a desert of uncertainty and fear around the thesis project.

### Future directions

Research resources, messages of encouragement, motivational videos, and organizational tips are inherent to the group and will continue to be posted. However, I plan to add interviews with expert researchers and successful thesis writers who have already graduated. Collecting students' views and needs via polls is also useful to maintain content relevant and pertinent for all users. I also plan to work on a template bank to help students with the operationalization of their research tasks.

More importantly, I plan to conduct a research study on the effectiveness of the group beyond impressions and perceptions from students. I already know they feel better about themselves and they are thriving. However, I would like to go more in-depth into the measurement of the actual effect this kind of support group might have on students' thesis completion and understanding of the writing process. Researching this initiative can help me theorize around the impact of Facebook and the sense of community built with it for the successful completion of a thesis and determine best practices for other teacher-researchers to maximize their students' potential and facilitate the research process.

*The thesis won't kill me* is not only the name of the group, it is a mantra I want students to repeat to themselves every day. As they open their Facebook feed and see their notifications, the image on the front page is there to remind them they can do it, and they are not alone in the process.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1860717240678937/>

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## Challenges and opportunities of teaching applied linguistics in the context of EFL teacher training

**Rodrigo Arellano**

### Introduction

I am an EFL teacher (non-native speaker), an applied linguist (as a postgraduate specialization) and a Spanish teacher (native speaker), a journey which has deeply influenced my professional development and my identity. After studying an MA in Applied Linguistics and an MA in Educational Studies, I began to work as a teacher educator in Southern Chile and I was thrilled and excited about the changes I could implement and bring about. Yet, I realized quite soon that not only did the bureaucracy cause difficulties for the newcomer, but also that my skills as an educator were going to be

challenged by the practice of training new language teachers. Firstly, I discovered that teaching Foreign Languages (FL) was not the same as teaching Linguistics. Despite the fact I had to discover the differences through my professional practice, this helped me to develop my own strategies to teach, mainly, Discourse Analysis and Second Language Acquisition by creating my own didactics of (Applied) Linguistics.

In order to gain an understanding of the learning and teaching of Applied Linguistics, I use the concept of “Linguistics Imperialism” (Bartels, 2004), defined as “the idea that language teachers should be socialized into the practices of applied linguistics” (p. 130). This practice can be problematic as pre-service EFL teachers need to learn such a complex discipline as applied linguistics, but linguists are not always prepared to teach language-related areas, mostly as they were trained to conduct research. This understanding has been useful in my work as a teacher, but also as a researcher, since the ideologies behind the teaching of a particular field of Applied Linguistics - Second Language Acquisition - is the topic of the PhD thesis that I am currently writing. Therefore, in this short article I would like to unpack some of the issues involved in the learning and teaching of Applied Linguistics courses, particularly from the perspective of a linguist with a background and experience in FL teaching.

### **The lack of training to teach applied linguistics**

One problem when teaching these areas is the different agendas of language-related professionals. According to Maley (2009) teachers have very practical preoccupations, but “applied linguists have their own, quite proper research and theoretical concerns” (p. 189) and I have personally experienced this struggle in my teaching. When I first commenced working as a lecturer in Applied Linguistics, I started to imitate, maybe unconsciously, the lecture-based methodology of my professors, through the so-called “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975). This principle is based on the fact that we learn by imitating what others do in professional contexts and this is relevant when teaching, as educators normally teach in the way they were taught. In fact, teachers have spent hundreds of hours in the past observing how their own teachers behaved, so by the time teacher candidates reach university and start their teaching practicums, they may do what they have already observed rather than what they have been trained to do. Consequently, the pedagogical training they receive is sometimes ineffective and they may be unable to change the beliefs they have constructed about learning and teaching.

So, can the same happen to Applied Linguists? Can their teaching methodologies be the result of fixed beliefs about the learning and teaching of Linguistics? In the same way that speaking a language does not make a person a teacher of that language, knowledge of Applied Linguistics is not enough to become a

professor/lecturer in Linguistics. I believe most Applied Linguists still need to understand how to make this field more accessible, more teachable and not just based on research. This includes the adjustment of postgraduate curricula within Applied Linguistics specializations to include modules/courses or even practicums about the teaching of this field (Stanley & Murray, 2013). In this way, Applied Linguists will not just imitate the methodologies of their professors, but they will critically reflect on them in light of the context and the audience they are teaching. Foreign Language teachers are not trained in Linguistics to become Linguists (linguistics imperialism), but as professionals who can understand and know how a second language is learned and taught.

Certainly, the belief that Linguistics is a difficult field is widespread and this negative perception towards the discipline has been confirmed by research, particularly in language teacher education (Bartels, 2005). Learners often find Linguistics courses too theoretical, too focused on research, not directly related to their future profession and even, too boring (Arellano, 2019). Of course, learning Applied Linguistics will not be the same for everybody and I am sure many of us would like to acknowledge the work of some excellent professors we have had during our undergraduate or postgraduate instruction. However, it is imperative to think about ways to improve the training of Applied Linguists, especially in the context of TESOL programs, as their work will not only be about doing research, but also training others with different professional expectations.

### **Differences in methodologies to teach foreign languages and applied linguistics**

In my particular case, I have taught English and Spanish in Chile and Australia respectively (as FLs) and despite the fact they are very distinct linguistic codes, they have more similarities than people think they have, mainly due to their shared European heritage. Also, it is easy to transfer pedagogical principles from Spanish to English or vice versa when someone has training as a FL teacher, so this just left me the obvious task of learning more about the teaching of Spanish (my last specialization) and then working on the specifics of each language. For instance, teaching pronunciation in Spanish might appear easier due to the phonetic nature of the language (there is a correlation between each consonant and vowel and the way to pronounce it). Or teaching English syntax might look simpler due to the absence of the complex verb conjugations of Spanish. However, both languages are lingua francas and their presence in so many countries all over the world poses a challenge in terms of their rich variety of dialects.

Nonetheless, the methodology to teach Linguistics is a completely different story. Firstly, it is not a set of language skills to be developed by learners, but an academic discipline which can be applied to a range of scenarios. Second, pedagogical training nowadays is different compared to the context in which I started my

training as a FL teacher 15 years ago. The usual method back then was learning Linguistics through a lecture with no immediate application to the profession and without much technology (as still happens in some universities), which aimed at creating a “mini-specialist” in (Applied) Linguistics, but not a FL teacher. Thirdly, the idea of teaching Linguistics to EFL teacher candidates usually means that the content must be delivered in the target language and as a consequence, the FL is not just the content of the program, but also the medium of instruction. From my point of view, this poses three difficulties: (a) students are exposed to the study of a complex scientific discipline using a language they are still learning. (b) Linguistics courses are generally scheduled at the beginning of teaching programs for students without teaching expertise, and (c) the limited academic experience of learners inhibits the connections between theory and practice (knowledge transfer).

From the perspective of professional development, these three problematic scenarios have been useful to push me towards the discovery of better teaching methods. In the first place, I have used Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) which is “a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (Marsh & Frigols, 2013, p. 1). It is useful, especially from the perspective of material design as it provides the opportunity to select graded resources to improve the students’ language proficiency (Banegas, 2017). Besides, considering my students’ limited experience of teaching FLs, I have decided to emphasize their own linguistic practices as language learners (in SLA courses) and as text consumers/producers (when teaching Discourse Analysis). In this way, I can better illustrate a language learning scenario because they have already experienced it as students in high school or even at tertiary education. This simple strategy has been useful as it engages students with their own lives and provides them with many “aha!” moments, where it seems easier to explain the content from the situation they have already faced in a practice-theory scheme rather than from theory to practice. For instance, I have shown my students real clips from classes in the Chilean context so that we can identify principles, theories or relevant issues of SLA or we have analyzed their own EFL textbooks in the Discourse Analysis class.

### **The practice of working as an applied linguist**

As a teacher-researcher, a very relevant factor influencing investigations is the actual praxis of teaching FLs. It is quite common to read articles written by “desktop researchers” in the literature and despite the fact that their specific expertise cannot be neglected, the activity of the practitioner while doing research provides a more holistic perspective with immediate pedagogical implications. Research carried out by professional teachers has the voice of classroom experience as it deals with issues that are important in pedagogy.

Therefore, they do not only represent the interest of the researcher in academia, but they show the perspective of the real practitioner in the FL classroom. From this perspective, the Applied Linguist is normally in the tradition of pedagogical research, where the identities of the FL teacher and the language specialist merge.

In this context, training in Linguistics and Second/Foreign Languages is very handy. First, because a linguist with a teaching background can easily identify educational issues worth researching in the FL classroom. Second, the expertise in Linguistics comes with knowledge about research methods, which are not normally in the scope of the training FL teachers receive or at least, these research-based skills are not developed in-depth in pedagogical programs. Third, a bilingual identity, in the case of an English-Spanish speaker, allows access to a wide range of literature (also to more possibilities to disseminate the results of research!). And fourth, the varieties of dialects in different languages offer a tremendous opportunity to explore issues in Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, Cross-cultural Communication, etc.

However, one common problem is the community of practice where the Applied Linguist works. It is not strange to find the “lone linguist” (Hornsby, 2003: 11) in a FL teaching program or at best, with a colleague or two to share research interests, methodological advice, teaching tips, etc. This excludes digital spaces, where geographical areas no longer seem important to establish networks with other linguists. Notwithstanding, the physical presence of other colleagues can enrich the work Applied Linguists carry out and can better illuminate their academic activities, for example by observing each other’s classes, promoting the need to apply for funds, to research/publish, among others. This need is increased by the “divorce between training in the disciplines (English Linguistics) and in education” (Abrahams & Farias, 2010, p. 113) and it is an ideal opportunity for the Applied Linguist to work as a bridge between pedagogical knowledge and language-related disciplines.

### **Final thoughts**

The literature about FL teaching methodology is vast, but research in the teaching of specific disciplines at university is in its infancy and this includes the teaching of Applied Linguistics. Therefore, it is imperative to see what is happening inside the Applied Linguistics classroom to see how students learn this academic field in order to comprehend the impact and contribution to their future professional practices, considering that the goal is using the subject as a tool rather than as a content to teach (linguistics imperialism). In real university classrooms, Linguists entering academia must develop their own methodological principles and these are normally learned from experience. In this context, teaching more than one FL provides a clearer picture of what is needed in teaching and research and knowing

about Linguistics improves the understanding of how languages are learned and how they should be taught. This combination of skills and the presence/absence of colleagues will have profound implications for the Applied Linguist's identity and will impact on the way the Linguist understands his/her work.

Finally, it is important to clarify that despite the fact training in the teaching of FLs does help in becoming a Linguist, the methodology to teach Applied Linguistics differs from the didactics of FLs. Therefore, it is essential to include pedagogical training during their specializations to meet the needs Linguists will have in case they take teaching positions in the future.

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## Integrating international school award projects as telecollaborative language learning projects into Australian and Sri Lankan primary schools

**Thushara Ari Gamage**

### Introduction

Telecollaboration is a term used to refer to the engagement of groups of learners in online intercultural interactions and collaborative projects with partners from other cultural contexts or geographical locations as an integrated part of their educational programmes (O'Dowd, 2018). Telecollaborative learning projects are not very common in primary schools, however, a project that includes telecollaborative learning activities and is an intercultural exchange is the International School Award (ISA) project facilitated by The British Council (British Council, 2019).

The International School Award project has been designed by The British Council to embed international awareness and understanding within the participating class or school by completing collaborative, curriculum-based work with partnering with a school located overseas. The award varies according to the level of certification achieved (British Council, 2019). As an Australian school has yet to be awarded an ISA certification, a case study (as part of a PhD Research study) was designed using an online collaborative tool called Voice Thread (2019), where multimedia presentations were exchanged between two schools in Sri Lanka and Australia to identify if telecollaborative learning projects, designed as ISA projects could be integrated into the Australian (New South Wales) and Sri Lankan primary school curricula. This paper provides an outline of the seven telecollaborative learning activities that were designed to be integrated into two participating schools where 140 students and 5 teachers participated in the project during a school year (2013-2014). The relevance of the activities to the current events and syllabus in both schools has been outlined in this paper.

### Participating schools

The two schools that were selected to participate in the project were schools that had expressed interest to participate in an exploratory study to evaluate if there were individual, classroom and socio-institutional conditions favourable to a telecollaborative learning project to be implemented between schools in Sri Lanka and Australia (Gamage & Chappell, 2013). After receiving approval from the Human Sciences Ethics Committee at Macquarie University, the two schools were invited to participate in the ISA case study in June 2013. The project began in November 2013 and ended in December 2014.

The school that participated from Sri Lanka (School A) is a private boys' school where students from years 4-6 have the opportunity to enrol in English medium classes where most of the subjects are taught in English. The Australian school (School B) is a government school in New South Wales (NSW) where over half of the students are from a non-English speaking background and which gives great prominence to multicultural activities.

### Action plan

An action plan was created at the beginning of the project and amended as the project progressed by the coordinating teachers and the researcher to identify participating students and teachers (Table 1), the activities, time frames, subjects and events that the activities could be integrated into (Table 2), and the targeted outcomes for each activity (Table 3).

### Participating teachers and students

Two teachers volunteered to coordinate the project from both schools, and four teachers from the Australian school volunteered to assist the coordinating teacher. The role that enabled each teacher at the school to design and implement an activity in their classroom or with their group of students is summarised in Table 1. In the Sri Lankan school, the teacher was a Year 4 English medium classroom teacher and she implemented all the activities during the project in her classroom.

The students who participated from the Sri Lanka school were the volunteer teacher's year 4 class and a year 2 student who was invited by the coordinating teacher. In the Australian school, the students who were invited to volunteer for the project were in the class or specialized group of the teacher in charge of the activity. The number of students in each task differed due to students being absent or refusing to volunteer in that specific activity.

Table 1. Summary of the student and teacher participants in the ISA case study

Activity	Teacher Participants		Students Participants Number/Year or Group	
	Sri Lanka	Australia	Sri Lanka	Australia
Book Week Parade	Teacher 1	Teacher 2 Coordinator of the ISA Project Year 1 Classroom Teacher	25/ Year 4	18/ Year 1
Multicultural Dance	Teacher 1	Teacher 3 Creative Arts Coordinator Year 4/5 Composite Class Teacher	30/ Year 4	23/ Year 3/4 Composite Class
Two-Nation Cricket	Teacher 1	Teacher 3 Cricket Coordinator Assistant Principal	25/ Year 4	12/ Junior Cricket
Athletics Carnival	Teacher 1	Teacher 4 Coordinator Girls' Sport Year 2/3 Composite Class Teacher	27/ Year 4	14/ Year 2/3 Composite Class
Playing by Rules	Teacher 1	Teacher 4 Coordinator Girls' Sport Year 2/3 Composite Class Teacher	23/ Year 4	12/ Year 2 /3 Composite Class
Healthy Eating	Teacher 1	Teacher 2 Science and Technology Coordinator Year 1 Class Teacher  Teacher 4 Environmental Coordinator	33/ Year 4	17/ Year 1 and 10/ Year 2 /3 Composite Class
Creating Mosaics/Ethics	Teacher 1	Teacher 2 Student Representative Council Coordinator	25/ Year 4 1/Year 2	18/ Year 5/6

Table 2. Subjects and events the ISA project was integrated into in both schools

Activity	Subject/Event/Year/ Time	
	Australia	Sri Lanka
Book Week Parade	Book Character Parade Science and Technology and English lessons November 2013	English lessons March 2014
Multicultural Dance	Dance and English lessons Multicultural Day Celebrations August 2014	Dance School Assembly March 2014
Two-Nation Cricket	Cricket Practices March and September 2014	Cricket Practices May 2014
Athletics Carnival Rules in Sport	The Athletics Carnival English lessons July to September 2014	English homework activity July to September 2014
Healthy Eating	Lunch (Church and Sp) Science and Technology and English lessons October to November 2014	Lunch International Children's Day) English lessons November 2014
Creating Mosaics	Ethics November 2014	Art Religious Studies November 2014

### Outline of activities

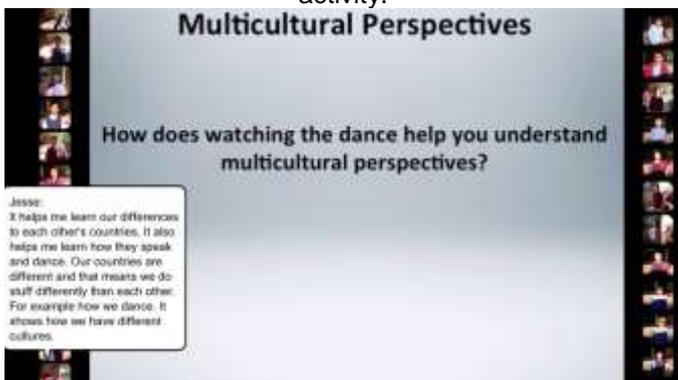
#### Activity 1: Book Week Parade

The first activity began during the annual Book Character Parade at School B. A PowerPoint presentation was created using images of the students dressed up as book characters, and a brief description typed in by the student with the help of Teacher 2. The presentation was uploaded to Voice Thread and viewed by the class in Sri Lanka. Teacher 1 divided the students in her class who were participating in the project into 6 groups and gave each of the groups one of the following books to read: Oliver Twist, Gulliver's Travels, The Jungle Book, Treasure Island, Peter Pan and The Three Musketeers. Scanned pictures drawn by the students and typed text from their handwritten character descriptions were used by Teacher 1 to create a PowerPoint presentation.

#### Activity 2: Multicultural Dance

A traditional Sri Lankan dance 'Kulu (Harvest) Dance was performed by the students in school A. The students from school B watched this dance, downloaded from Dropbox, practised and performed it wearing the costumes posted to them by school B as part of their Multicultural Day celebrations, which was featured in their local newspaper. Next, students from school B wrote handwritten comments to identify the similarities and differences between dances in Sri Lanka and Australia. These comments (which included errors in spelling and punctuation) were typed in as Voice Thread text comments by the researcher. Students were given the opportunity to edit these comments online (Figure. 1). Finally, the edited comments were viewed by the students in Sri Lanka and School B's performance was viewed at their School Assembly.

Figure 1. Example of a Voice Thread comment by one of the Australian students during the Multicultural Dance activity.



### Activity 3: Two –Nation Cricket

Seven video clips of the Junior Cricket Team, repeating monologues and practising their bowling, batting and fielding skills were shared with School A. After viewing these video clips on Voice Thread, four video clips of students practising their cricket skills, and one student describing how the students in Sri Lanka play cricket were recorded and shared by School B. Teacher 3 instructed the students in School B to handwrite three similarities and differences between playing cricket in Sri Lanka and Australia.

### Activity 4 and Activity 5: Athletics Carnival and Sporting Rules/Pen-Pal Exchange

These two activities were implemented as a combined activity because it was a pen-pal exchange. A video was uploaded of Teacher 4 who was coordinating these two activities, explaining what happens during an Athletics Carnival at School B. The students in Sri Lanka and Australia wrote handwritten letters, which were uploaded to Voice Thread, then downloaded, printed and given to each student to write two rounds of letters to their pen-pal in the partner country to share information on the Athletics Carnival and rules in sport played in their own schools.

### Activity 6: Healthy Eating

Ten short video clips of students explaining what they do during 'Crunch and Sip' at School B were recorded and shared with School A. For International Children's Day, the students in the Year 4 class in school A were divided into 6 groups and asked to research and bring a healthy vegetable or fruit into school. Their choices were: Jack, Manioc, Pineapple, Rambutan, Ambarella and King Coconut. The students made something healthy to eat with their chosen fruit or vegetable and also wrote a short description, which was converted into a Healthy Eating Newsletter by Teacher 1.

After viewing this newsletter, the students in a Year 1 class created slides of their favourite meal. Their meal was typed into a Word Document and the students were encouraged to identify and edit their errors by the

researcher. Using the students' edited Australian and Asian dishes a class menu was created and shared with School A.

### Activity: Creating Mosaics/Ethical Values

The final activity involved the students from Australia creating a mosaic of the three ethical values at their school (i) aspire (ii) respect (iii) responsibility and sharing it with the students in the Sri Lankan school along with the cards that they receive for demonstrating these values at school. A student from the Sri Lankan School then drew pictures to identify how these values are interpreted in Sri Lanka and Teacher 1, together with her class created 4 ethics cards for her classroom.

### Learning outcomes

Findings from the Voice Thread activities, the teachers' 14 evaluation forms and the action plan indicated that the activities were suitable to integrate into the K-6 English, Personal Development health and Physical Education (PDHPE), Science and Technology, and Creative Arts syllabus in the Australian school (NESA, n.d.). Due to the online and intercultural nature of the project, the activities suited the Information Technology skills and Intercultural Understanding components of the 'learning across the curriculum' section in the current K-6 English syllabus (NESA, n.d.-1), as summarised in Table 3.

In the Sri Lankan school, the data revealed that the ISA project was used as a stimulus to create different types of written and visual texts in an English medium classroom where there was no prescribed syllabus (Table 3).

Table 3. Targeted learning outcomes in the participating schools.

Activity	Learning Outcome	
	Australia	Sri Lanka
Book Week Parade	Handwriting and Using Digital Technologies	Writing a Book Review
Multi-cultural Dance	Performing and Appreciating Dance Spelling	Performing a Traditional Dance
Two-Nation Cricket	Movement, Skill and Performance:	Cricket Game
Athletics Carnival/ Rules in Sport	Health, Wellbeing and Relationships Handwriting and Using Digital Technologies	Writing an Informal Letter
Healthy Eating	Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyle Digital Technologies Spelling	Creating a Master Chef Newsletter
Creating Mosaics	Health, Wellbeing and Relationships	Creating Ethics Cards for the School

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## Teaching English pragmatics in EFL contexts: A critical discussion on the efficacy of L2 teaching approaches

Anh Ton Nu Tuy

### Introduction

For at least the last three decades, the growing recognition of the importance of pragmatics in language teaching and learning has resulted in a line of research addressing (1) the teachability of L2 pragmatics, (2) the effectiveness of instruction in L2 pragmatics, and (3) the efficacy of different teaching approaches. To a large extent, the first two issues have been resolved, with general agreements that L2 pragmatics can be taught and instruction is necessary for pragmatic development (see Taguchi, 2015 for a comprehensive review). This paper investigates the third area with an emphasis on EFL contexts. Having been an EFL teacher for many years, I realize that choosing which approach to take is the first and most important decision that teachers have to make before thinking about lesson planning and detailed activities to include in their lessons.

Given that EFL learners mainly rely on a teacher's instruction to acquire knowledge in the target language and on classrooms settings to practise their knowledge, EFL teachers need to facilitate and enhance the

acquisition of target language features by different pedagogical interventions. Therefore, in this paper, I have selected two L2 pragmatics teaching approaches for discussion: (1) the explicit and implicit method which "has occupied much of the debate" (Taguchi, 2015, p. 11), and (2) the input-processing approach whose efficacy in the teaching of grammar has been noticed (Benati, 2013).

### The explicit and implicit method debate, guided by Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis

The terms *explicit* and *implicit* have been used in the language learning literature for different types of cognitive processes, and different methods of acquiring knowledge. Under the explicit and implicit approaches to L2 pragmatics teaching, these terms refer to how directly the L2 pragmatic features are introduced to learners. The explicit approach makes use of direct explanation of pragmatic information to make the target features more salient, which is then followed by focused practice. Meanwhile, the implicit pedagogical intervention aims at developing learners' understanding of the target features implicitly by using input flood, input enhancement, consciousness-raising tasks, and implicit feedback without the provision of direct explanation (Taguchi, 2015). Both of these teaching approaches are based on the assumption of Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis that second language learners begin to acquire a language feature by becoming aware of it in the input, and thus aim at enabling learners to increase their awareness of the target form-function-context mappings and subsequently internalize them (Taguchi, 2015).

A bulk of research from as early as 1994 to 2013 in ESL and EFL contexts (see Cohen & Tarone, 1994; Nguyen, Pham & Pham, 2012 for examples) revealed common results that learners who received explicit treatments outperformed those under implicit measures in terms of both fluency and quality of target features, including request forms, criticisms, hedging, etc. However, the implicit approach is occasionally found to produce better outcomes. One typical example of its efficacy can be seen through Li's (2012) study on adolescent Chinese EFL learners' use of request modification. Two groups of learners received input under implicit conditions. This included enhanced input and input-output conditions (learners received dialogues with input enhancement plus role played scenarios and dialogues without enhancement and role played situations respectively). These groups outperformed the explicit group (who received direct pragmatic information explanation) in the discourse completion task. With this result, the author remarked that the effectiveness of the implicit methods might be due to the nature of the target features (which are supportive moves in requests) and the fact that the participants are young learners who have limited attentional resources and limited linguistic proficiency.

Reconciling this controversy of explicit versus implicit, Taguchi (2015) suggested analysing the characteristics

of these two methods to compile common features of effective treatments rather than trying to reach a conclusion as to which one is definitely more effective in the teaching and learning of pragmatics. She also recommended moving away from the umbrella terms of 'explicit' and 'implicit' to investigate other theoretical paradigms.

### **The input processing approach in L2 pragmatic instruction by Takimoto (2009, 2012)**

Another SLA theory that is quite close to the noticing hypothesis is the input processing theory introduced into pragmatic instruction by Takimoto (2009, 2012). The input processing theory, developed by VanPatten (2002), aims to explain "how learners derive intake from input" (VanPatten, 2002, p. 757). This theory provides the foundation for a pedagogical model called Processing Instruction whose aim is to enable learners to gain "richer intake from input by having them engage in structured input activities that push them away from the strategies they normally use to make form-meaning connections" (Benati, 2013, p. 33).

Based on this theory, in his studies, Takimoto (2009, 2012) has modified structured input activities in a way that guides learners in processing form-function connection with relevant contextual factors. For example, in his study of the relative effectiveness of the input-based approaches for teaching English polite request forms to Japanese learners of English, Takimoto (2009) used structured input tasks comprising pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connection activities and reinforcement activities of the target forms. In the pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connection activities, the participants read dialogues for given situations and chose the more appropriate request form, from two options, based on their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge (for example, participants were asked to choose between *I wonder if I could get a lift* and *Could I get a lift?* in an asking-for-help conversation between a tenant and a busy landlord who she has never spoken to before). Participants then listened to an oral recording of the dialogue and underlined the correct request form. In the reinforcement activities, participants read each dialogue aloud and listened to the oral recordings again. Finally, they were asked to rate the level of appropriateness of each underlined request on a 5-point scale. The goal of the pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connection activities was to ensure that participants focused on understanding the relationship between the request, the relevant social context variables, and the targeted pragmalinguistic resources. Meanwhile, the purpose of the reinforcement activities was to strengthen the pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connections by providing the participants with more opportunities to observe and understand how the different factors, the request, the social context variables, and the targeted pragmalinguistic features, were interrelated. The result of this study revealed a positive outcome for the input-

processing instruction in both comprehension and production of pragmatic forms, without the need for explicit metapragmatic explanation.

Comparing this approach with the explicit and implicit instructions, Taguchi (2015: 39) commented that "the input-processing theory provides a clearer explanation of how noticed input gets processed by learners". This is because, under the noticing hypothesis, instructions typically involve a combination of activities, both explicit and implicit, and production- and comprehension-based. Hence, it is often difficult to discern which parts of the instruction encourage the noticing of pragmatic features and which aspects are supplementary. In contrast, by only focusing on the comprehension of language data, the input-processing theory can help us identify how instructional activities can help learners transform input to intake.

### **Conclusion and implications for EFL teachers in L2 Pragmatics teaching**

This paper has brought into discussion two pedagogical interventions for L2 pragmatics treatment in EFL classrooms. As discussed above, the explicit and implicit methods, which call for conscious attention to pragmatics-related information in the L2 classroom, have resulted in a fruitful source of possible classroom tasks for receptive and productive skills development for teachers to apply in their teaching practices.

Likewise, the input-processing approach, whose aim is to enrich the input in such a way that it can be more easily processed to become intake, has brought about useful suggestions for teachers to apply in their classes.

In my own teaching practices so far, I have made use of these two approaches in teaching pragmatic knowledge to my students, as well as in sharing my actual practices of pragmatics teaching with my colleagues. Most of the time, I have received positive feedback from both entities.

For example, in the teaching of the speech act of giving advice to Vietnamese high school graduates – who usually employ the modal verb 'should' in giving advice, I tried raising their awareness of softening advice explicitly by asking them some lead-in questions such as: *Why is getting advice sometimes like being slapped with a fish?*, *What do you think about softening advice?*, *Is it better to soften advice? Always? When? With whom?*, *What are some good ways to soften advice?* before providing them with some linguistic tools to soften advice via the use of some alternative modal verbs (e.g. *You might like to think about ...*), questions (e.g. *Have you considered ...?*), conditional sentences (e.g. *Well, if I were you, I would (not) ...*; *If you ask me, it probably would have been better to ...*), or adverbs of probability (e.g. *You could perhaps think about ...*). The students were then asked to practise softening their advice in such sensitive situations as giving advice to a new colleague who is often late for work and the boss is upset about it, or to an

elderly neighbour who often throws used batteries into the rubbish bin, etc.

The explicit approach is frequently adopted in my class rather than the implicit one due to the limited time allotted per class with a set curriculum to be completed per semester in the EFL context of Vietnam, together with the generally low level of English proficiency of Vietnamese non-English-major students. However, it is highly recommended that teachers in other contexts identify learners' characteristics and types of pragmatic knowledge before deciding on which approach to adopt in their lessons rather than just follow the general trend. In EFL contexts like in Vietnam, where learners have limited exposure to English use in their daily life and little chance to use English for communication outside the classroom, teachers are encouraged to play an active role in making informed instructional decisions based on current understanding of L2 pragmatic development.

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## A reflection on action research conducted in English classes attended by non-native speakers

Li Wang

### Introduction

This is a reflection on my experiences of doing an action research with two different English classes attended by non-native speakers in Australia and China. The purpose of the research was to create a reflective teaching experience to understand and accommodate as far as possible the learners' different needs, interests and learning differences in the teaching and learning process. My goal in doing the research was to improve my teaching practice. If this is the only goal, with no identified secondary use of the data, no Research Ethics Board review is required (University of Regina, 2018). Therefore, I am not reporting on the action research findings, instead I am reflecting on my experiences of doing action research, without including any data. The method, action research, is contingent on the researcher-participant's own experiences for it is those experiences that s/he brings to the research. Further, I, myself, being the teacher/researcher, am also a non-native English speaker. Thus I hope this paper can highlight both the limitations and successes, with certain point of views from different perspectives.

### Background

I trace my interest in reflection on my teaching through action research to the early stage of my education. I was educated under the 17-Year (1949-1966) national education policy of China embodying the traditional Chinese philosophy promoting "integration of knowledge with action for constant change", which originated from Shang Shu (The Book of Documents), compiled by Confucius (551-479 BC), and Zuo Zhuan (Zuo's Commentary) by Zuo, Qiuming during 722 BC-468 BC. It emphasizes that knowledge is an inner understanding which can only be gained through integration with action constantly for change. In 1978 when the national higher education system was formally recovered in China, I became a normal university student to be trained as an English teacher.

Integration of knowledge and action by learning from teaching for change has been the educational ideologies I applied in years of teaching and research since my graduation, while China experienced the historical turning points of the Opening and Reform. I actively lobbied the university leadership for an education reform based on my investigations of the needs and interests of students from all parts of China with considerably different English proficiencies. With the support, I

implemented the reform of the university English teaching and learning in curriculum, text books and pedagogy, and I published the report in a tertiary teaching conference in Australia (Wang, 1999). In 1996 I was invited to participate in a comparative education research and classroom assessment in tertiary learning in Charles Darwin University. The changed setting directed my strong interests in learners' needs, interests and learning differences in cross-cultural contexts to complete a study for a Master of Education degree and then a Research Doctorate through reflective teaching by case studies.

In my view, "Reflective teaching, particularly critical reflective teaching, is a good way to evaluate our teaching practice and to develop professional experience" (Wang, 2011, p. 5). I view my teaching of L2 in the following years as benefiting from what I learned by doing the research. It increased my understanding of the contextualized and selective nature of the pedagogical issues in the current stage of tertiary education with diverse cultural identities and cross-disciplinary settings. I was also convinced by Kemmis (2010, p. 420) that "clearly, action researchers examining their own practices are, or can be, one fertile source of new ideas for practice and praxis (sayings), new ways of doing things (doings), and new kinds of relationships between those involved (relatings)", and the researcher, can be "part of the endless production, reproduction and transformation of practices that is the process by which collective practices evolve to meet the needs, circumstances and opportunities of new times and new circumstances". I suspect this type of research sits well with teachers who can become intimately involved through practice that improves practice. Teachers view much (quantitative) research as too esoteric to be of much use to them in the daily press of teaching.

### Context

Cavanagh (1992, p. 151) suggests that "value preference needed to be considered as one of the key elements with any model of the 'research environment'". Accordingly, to address the value and environment issues for the research, I refer to the fact that the number of international students in Australia has increased from almost 200,000 out of a total of just over a million students in 2007, to approximately 350,000 out of a total of approximately 1.5 million students in 2017. And about 85% of them returned to their country of origin after "they contributed an enormous cultural richness and economic benefits to Australia" (Alexander, 2019). As many colleagues, I have often been approached by international students for support. What constitutes a good learning experience for international students and what our moral responsibility is to these students to improve their English language capabilities are questions posed by many educators and scholars recently (Alexander, 2019). As a participant in teaching and learning in Australia, I understand that most

international students are non-native speakers of English. Thus, I planned to do this action research project when undertaking two English programs attended by non-native speakers in Australia and China in 2013, in the hope that the research would identify some shared values in addressing those questions.

### Participants

The participants were in two different English classes. One was a TESOL class with 21 high school English teachers for 20 hours at Graduate Certificate level in a university at Sydney in 2013 which I have called "Sydney Class" for this report. The other was an undergraduate degree level class with 20 TESOL and L2 students and teachers for 40 hours in culture studies in a university at Shanghai, which I have named "Shanghai Class". All the students in the two classes were non-native speakers of English. I was the only lecturer for the classes.

### Instruments

#### *Cycles and interventions/actions*

As "action research concerns action, and transforming people's practices (as well as their understandings of their practices and the conditions under which they practise)" (Kemmis, 2010, p. 417), I designed two cycles with interventions/actions for each class with the research. Specifically, each class consisted of two cycles at the early stage and later stage. Each cycle involved investigations to understand learners' needs, interests and expectations, and my reflections on the teaching and learning, and the interventions/actions accordingly. The interventions/actions were for organising or adjusting the teaching and learning activities reflectively to accommodate the learners' needs and interests, and the learning differences. This was a deliberate action. I believe that many experienced teachers do this as a matter of course. However for novice teachers often survival in the classroom with ego intact itself is top priority rather than student needs.

### Methods of data collection

#### *Questionnaires*

I designed two questionnaires with five open-ended questions written in simple English for each. The first round of questionnaires was used for each of the two classes at the beginning of their course to collect data to better understand learners' needs, interests, expectations, cultural backgrounds and learning experiences, and anything else they wanted me to know in relation to their studies. The second round of questionnaires was administered at a later stage to gather learners' feedback on the teaching and learning, their continuous needs and interests, and their suggestions for any improvement of the teaching approaches, contents, learning activities and anything else of relevance they wanted to tell me. The students were informed that they could choose to provide their names or not when completing the questionnaires.

### **Interviews and emails**

I selected students for interviews and I used more flexible questions in English to understand individual learners' needs and interests, when I viewed a potential issue or learning difference. I offered students the option to talk to me or email me to express any needs and interests in their learning process. The interviews involved asking and answering questions without recording, within the time arranged before and after classes. The length of interview depended on learners' needs, but generally lasted about twenty minutes.

### **Samples of student work**

I collected samples of all students' writing including their drafts for presentations, their reflections on the teaching and learning, and their essays about their teaching and learning, for analysis to identify their language proficiencies, ways of thinking and expressing, cultural values and academic capability. I supported them with encouraging feedback and suggestions for improvement. This is a critical procedure so that students remain involved in the analysis and reflection.

### **Observations, teacher's notes and asking questions of myself**

I closely observed every student's performance, attitudes, communication, critical arguments, creativity and collaboration with others through their oral, written, group work and individual work. To further understand each one's needs, interests and learning differences, I also participated in learners' activities, such as singing songs, telling stories, etc. To motivate natural and active learning, I did not use video or audio recording, but I took down field-notes about the learning after classes. This was an attempt by the teacher action researcher to avoid distraction within the design. After the observation and note-taking stage and before taking actions for teaching reflectively, I went through the process of asking questions of myself: a constant reflection on the teaching and learning within the action research. This process was guided by Cavanagh's (1992: 151-153) suggestion that teachers and teacher educators can be a further respondent, asking questions of oneself. The notes and diaries we keep about our deliberations can be tangible artifacts recording the retrospection, providing space for validation, qualification and quantification as well as allowing future generations to reconstruct our present

### **Reflections**

As a reflection on doing the research, I conclude a brief review of the following:

#### **Research enhanced relational work**

Firstly, I found that using questionnaires, interviews and emails were not only helpful in understanding learners' needs and interests, and their learning differences, but also in building up mutual trust between the students and myself. For example, by asking students about their needs, interests, learning experiences, backgrounds,

expectations and for feedback on the teaching and learning, I found that all of them were dedicated and grateful learners. Although this was qualitative rather than quantitative research, I appreciated that all the participants in the two classes answered my questions and most of them provided their names. I also considered that reconciling my roles as a teacher, an observer and a participant in the classes developed my "relational work" as a teacher (Comber, 2009: 61-63). Thus it is thought that I achieved the notion of research with participators rather than on them.

#### **Focus on cultural issues**

Secondly, I found that most of the students in the two classes expressed their learning interests in cultural more than language issues. Furthermore, by examining their writing, I observed that cultural factors, such as ways of thinking and expressing themselves, as well as cultural perceptions, had a greater impact on their writing compared to the small number of students who struggled with grammar issues. In addition, through interviews and communication, the Sydney class expressed their further needs and interests in understanding the culture of the campus, the system and policies related to their learning and assessment. It also helped me to understand that a teacher's work is also discursive and institutional (Comber, 2009: 61-63).

Teaching reflectively by steps to motivate active learning  
Thirdly, I consider action research as a helpful approach to promoting the philosophy and practice of teaching according to learners' needs, interests and aptitudes, and gradually taking the regular steps for change, advocated by Confucius (551-479 BC) and Mencius (372-289 BC). For example, as a lead-in for the intervention in the first cycle with the Shanghai class to motivate active learning, I told a story comparing six cultures, which received a warm response from learners with dedicated presentations, group performances and role plays. Furthermore, in the interviews during the later cycle, the Sydney class expressed deep appreciation for TESOL theories, but less interest in language activities due to the different educational systems in their home countries with limited class time to cope with test-based tasks. Accordingly, I modified the task for the intervention. The new task encouraged learners to experience and enjoy the target culture outside of the classroom or campus, but make presentations about what they experienced. Later the Sydney class presented excellent presentations with role plays. I received encouraging feedback from students in both classes.

Comber (2009, p. 61-63) suggests that good teaching makes a significant positive difference through interpretive work, pedagogical work, discursive work, relational work and institutional work. It requires a teacher to make close observations and notes, have well-developed knowledge of and practice and capability in community languages, cultures and so on. It also

requires the teacher to think carefully when speaking and writing, respecting students, believing in students' potential and having high expectations, making sophisticated academic demands, and ensuring that the institutions work well and are relevant for students. By doing the research I believed that constant reflections for actions taken in teaching helped to address those goals, and doing action research helped to achieve them.

In conclusion, I consider that action research is a useful instrument in constant development of reflective teaching, and that the action research conducted allowed me to learn from the experience to understand and accommodate learners' needs, interests and learning differences in order to effect change. While I consider the research benefited me and learners, I do not suggest what I learned from this research can be applied to others, as I believe that teaching and learning is a selective and contextualized process. However, through sharing the experience of my learning, I hope to share experiences with colleagues in making significant positive differences in teaching and research. Often teaching can become so content bound that as teachers we forget that students have needs, interests, and desires that need to be taken into account so that the content itself becomes to paraphrase John Dewey (1971) "psychologised", for the learners.

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## Bridging the gap between multimodality and pragmatics: Towards multimodal pragmatics

**Vicent Beltrán-Palanques**

### Introduction

Speaking in a second/foreign language (SL/FL) involves more than learning grammar and vocabulary since it also entails learning how to use language appropriately in specific contexts, express intentions and understand other speakers' intentions. Therefore, in order to communicate successfully in different communicative situations, SL/FL learners need to expand their pragmatic knowledge, whether in spoken or written modes. Moreover, it should be noted that any kind of communicative exchange involves more than linguistic resources since speakers draw on a full semiotic repertoire to communicate. In fact, speakers have their full semiotic repertoire (e.g. linguistic and extra-linguistic resources) at their disposal from which to select suitable resources for a particular situation and construct discourse. This is based on the idea that communication is inherently multimodal and speakers are not limited to the use of linguistic resources; rather, they employ multiple resources, such as gestures or facial expressions to communicate (Jewitt, Bezemer & O'Halloran, 2016).

Bearing in mind these aspects, my intention here is to briefly discuss the nexus between pragmatics and multimodality from a pedagogical perspective.

### Heading for a new nexus: Multimodal pragmatics

Pragmatics is commonly defined as "the study of language from the point of view of the users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on the other participants in an act of communication" (Crystal, 2008, p. 379).

Accordingly, pragmatics functions at the discourse and conversation level and includes the perspective of users,

as it refers to the choices they make, the various constraints they face during interaction, as well as the impact their performance has on each participant. This definition, albeit clear and precise, fails to pay attention to speakers' full semiotic repertoire because it is limited to linguistic resources and therefore does not take into account the widely recognised multimodal nature of communication. Considered broadly, it refers to the coexistence of different semiotic resources in a particular context (Jewitt et al., 2016). Central to multimodality is understanding and explaining how semiotic resources (e.g. speech, facial expressions, head movements) contribute to the construction of meaning, and this is why it is necessary to address pragmatics from a multimodal perspective.

Focusing particularly on the context of English language teaching, it should be noted that pragmatics and multimodality are commonly viewed as peripheral aspects, regardless of their relevance to equip learners with appropriate tools to communicate effectively. Pragmatic competence, as it is usually referred to in the language classroom setting, refers to "the ability to use language appropriately in a social context" (Taguchi, 2009, p. 1), and pragmatic knowledge consists of pragmalinguistics (linguistic resources) and sociopragmatics (sociocultural aspects). Pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics are interconnected: speakers may perform a sociopragmatic assessment of the context and, drawing on that information, they can decide on which pragmalinguistic realisations are most appropriate in a specific context (see Taguchi and Roever, 2017, for further information). Therefore, in order to use language appropriately in communication, SL/FL learners need to increase their pragmatic knowledge, for example, by becoming aware of the social norms that govern language use.

When addressing pragmatic competence at the level of discourse and conversation, it becomes clear that learners not only need to master pragmatic knowledge to communicate effectively, but they also need to become aware of the multimodal nature of pragmatics. In focusing exclusively on the linguistic side of pragmatics, learners are only provided with a partial view of communication, which, albeit necessary, may not fully serve to prepare them for authentic interaction. Hence, it is of paramount importance to provide learners with opportunities to explore pragmatics at the discursive and conversational level, taking into account how speakers draw on their full semiotic repertoires to elaborate effective multimodal communication. By this I do not mean that traditional approaches to teaching pragmatic competence are not sufficient or valid to promote effective communication. Rather, what I am suggesting is that the multimodal nature of pragmatics should be more widely recognised and that SL/FL teaching practices would benefit from adapting them to the current trends in communication.

### **Pedagogical implications**

A good way to start to integrate multimodal pragmatics in the SL/FL classroom is to focus on speech acts, which, as literature shows, have become central in most teaching frameworks (e.g., Félix-Brasdefer, 2006; Olshtain & Cohen, 1991). This approach should be accompanied by a selection of appropriate materials for use in the classroom. In this case, audiovisual and/or online materials (e.g. videos) are a good choice as they offer learners visual and audio input, which is of great importance to explore pragmatics from a multimodal perspective. Learners should first be exposed to simpler language awareness activities, and little by little go on to engage in more complex activities such as analysing conversations from a multimodal perspective and producing multimodal spoken texts. In so doing, learners may have opportunities to reflect on how pragmatic meaning is constructed and deconstructed by means of speakers' full semiotic repertoire.

To illustrate this better, I present a pedagogical proposal for raising learners' multimodal pragmatic awareness. Specifically, this proposal is devised to teach complaints and responses to complaints at the level of discourse and conversation. Nonetheless, the different steps presented can also be applied to the teaching of other speech acts.

The first step involves identifying learners' prior knowledge as regards complaints and responses to complaints. To do so, for example, the teacher can elicit information about learners' own experiences in situations involving complaints and potential complaint situations. This can be done orally in the form of a whole class discussion.

After this and with the teacher's help, learners can be asked to explore some audiovisual samples, which may be either authentic data or authentic-like, containing the target functions. This activity aims to raise learners' awareness of the construction of these functional exponents from a holistic perspective, by encouraging them to take into account how speakers employ all the resources at their disposal in order to create discourse and engage in conversation. Nevertheless, at first, the majority of learners are quite likely to relate the complaint-response solely to linguistic expressions, while they overlook most interactional resources and non-linguistic resources. With this in mind, the teacher can provide learners with some scaffolding so as to help them conduct a further in-depth analysis of the samples, focusing particularly on the different resources speakers use to construct and deconstruct conversation.

Once learners have completed this activity, they can then go on to deal explicitly with pragmatics and multimodality. More specifically, the teacher should discuss the notion of pragmatics, focusing on sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics, and multimodality, by indicating that speakers employ their

full semiotic repertoire to make meaning. This could be done by using the audiovisual samples presented in the previous activity and demonstrating how speakers employ a rich variety of semiotic resources to construct and deconstruct meaning. Moreover, the teacher should provide learners with a list of some common complaint-response to complaint expressions, discuss aspects of politeness as regards the speech act of complaints, for example, by addressing aspects related to speakers' social status (equal, low, high) and severity of offence (high and low), and make learners reflect on the relationship between pragmalinguistic realisations and sociopragmatics.

This could then be followed by further practice so that learners can apply what they have learnt. As an example of how this can be practised, I propose an activity involving learner production and peer feedback. Learners can be asked to act out some role-play scenarios involving different complaint situations with various degrees of politeness, for example, equal/low social status and low/high severity of offence. This can be done either in front of their peers or video recorded in their own time to be projected in class for further analysis. In order to proceed with peer feedback, learners need to be provided with some guidance. In this particular case, they should focus mainly on: 1) sociopragmatics, 2) pragmalinguistics, 3) interactional resources, and 4) how speakers draw on their full semiotic repertoire to elaborate discourse. Finally, a whole class discussion should be conducted after completing this activity and the teacher should provide further feedback if necessary.

This pedagogical proposal may serve as an example for language practitioners who might be interested in exploring pragmatics from a multimodal perspective and making learners reflect on how speakers draw on their full semiotic repertoire to elaborate discourse.

### Concluding remarks

Pragmatics is part of communication and SL/FL learners need to master pragmatic knowledge to construct and deconstruct meaning appropriately. Nevertheless, as reported here, communication goes beyond the purely linguistic side of pragmatics and it is therefore necessary to adopt new perspectives to deal with this particular competence in the language classroom. This nexus (i.e. multimodal pragmatics) may serve, for example, to explain how speakers make meaning by drawing on their full semiotic repertoire to construct and deconstruct pragmatic meaning in social interaction.

Assuming that it may be challenging for language practitioners to deal with multimodal pragmatics, in this paper I have provided some pedagogical implications for those willing to incorporate it into the language classroom. Although it does not involve a change in language teaching methodology, it does imply revisiting teaching practices, syllabi and materials, and adapting

them to current trends in communication. I consider it necessary to start addressing multimodal literacy in the language classroom and it is our responsibility, as language practitioners, to bring a holistic view of communication into the classroom, to expand learners' communicative competence and to prepare them for successful and effective multimodal communication in the SL/FL. However, specific training in how to integrate pragmatics and multimodality is necessary, as is designing materials and developing pedagogical proposals to best suit current learners' communicative needs.

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## Conference report Teachers research! 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Latin American Conference for Teacher Research in ELT and 14<sup>th</sup> PROFILE Symposium, 6-7 December 2018, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá

**Patricia Carabelli**

The venue for this year's Teachers Research! conference was an excellent choice, both for its academic relevance, as the Universidad de Colombia (Bogotá) is renowned for the quality of its studies, and for the building the conference was held in (the postgraduate Department of Humanities), which was built by one of Colombia's best architects: Rogelio Salmona. Two days of intense work and dialogue awaited all the English teachers that participated in the event, and the beauty of the rounded or irregular open spaces, filled with water from fountains, plants and light, allowed them to socialize and discuss issues related to teaching and learning theory, practice and experiences with great enthusiasm.

The Opening Symposium given by Chala, Mosquera and Ubaque regarding research experiences anticipated the diversity of ideas the conference promoted. Forty-two talks were given during the event and a wide range of topics were tackled, from the development of the four basic language skills in different ways, to the promotion of inquiry skills, peer tutoring, and language teaching in rural schools or on the Internet. The only cause for regret during these events is that it is not possible to attend all the sessions as they are concurrent, but fortunately, one learns about the most interesting points that were made during the energizing coffee breaks.

Although many of the English teachers and researchers who participated were from Colombia (Libia Cárdenas, Guerrero, Díaz, Quintero, et al.), speakers from different nations were also present, such as Varela Guzmán, Donoso, Gomez Burgos, Sandoval Molina, Díaz Suazo, Vásquez Vicencio, Amigo Capelli, Carbone, and Elizalde González from Chile, Conchas Gaytán and Torres Barreto from Mexico, Huaches from Peru, Calini and Alberio from Argentina, and myself from Uruguay. This was highly enriching as we were able to present and compare varied perspectives and build an international and intercultural ethos. What is more, some speakers, such as the ones from Argentina, mentioned that they were carrying out web projects with schools in France and Italy allowing the inclusion of people living in these countries as well.

During the conference, I discovered and learnt many new things. To name just three, I learnt from Cárdenas

Moreno that the most important factors for students to improve their oral skills are: a desire to improve, language enjoyment and ability to overcome difficult situations. Secondly, in Hortúa Bravo, Diaz España and Pajaro Manjarrez's session, I saw that students can be trained to structure and improve their oral production by using different collaborative and interactive learning opportunities for speaking production while using technological tools such as Flipgrid, Padlet and Seesaw. Finally, Abella and Torres demonstrated that students feel highly motivated towards learning English while they develop musical skills by singing songs or learning how to play an instrument as "songs helped students feel connected to English. They facilitated the design of diverse types of activities".

As Melba Lidia Cárdenas mentioned in the closing ceremony, the conference was highly meaningful because most of the many wonderful things that teachers do are not known about beyond their teaching contexts. As she stated, "We have a voice. Our knowledge is valuable", and these conferences allow the invisible to become visible while promoting discussion and reflection on pedagogical issues which are to the benefit of all students.

The Camerata Graduale choir, directed by Andrés Rodríguez Ferreira and Paola Corso, closed the event. The colorfully dressed singers delighted listeners with some of Colombia's typical music, ending the event on a high note. It was a real pleasure to be able to attend and participate in such a meaningful event. I will definitely put all the things I have learnt into practice during lessons.

**Patricia Carabelli.** I am an English teacher and graduate in Education Sciences with a diploma in virtual teaching and a Master in Human Sciences (Contemporary Philosophy). I have also recently finished the courses and dissertation process - which are still being formally evaluated by a board - of a Master's Degree in English Language Teaching at Southampton University (England, UK). I have been teaching English in different levels for twenty years.

## Reflections on the IATEFL Research Special Interest Group Pre Conference Event 'Communicating and Learning from Research' (Liverpool, 2019)

**Elis Kakoulli Constantinou**

In today's world where researching, questioning, interpreting and synthesising information are among the most important skills that an individual needs to possess,

teacher research is considered to be one of the best practices that lead to teacher learning and professional development (Dikilitaş & Yaylı, 2018; Gallagher-Brett, 2019; Rebolledo, Smith & Bullock, 2016; Snoek & Moens, 2011). The benefits of teacher research as well as the dynamic interaction between academics and teachers in relation to research constituted the focus of the IATEFL Research Special Interest Group (ReSIG) Pre-Conference Event at the IATEFL 2019 conference in Liverpool. The event, which I had the pleasure of attending, was entitled 'Communicating and Learning from Research', and was truly a success.

I first saw the event advertised on the ReSIG website in October 2018. The theme of the event and the names of the two plenary speakers, Anne Burns and Richard Smith, immediately drew my attention. The call for proposals for poster presentations was addressed to language teachers actively engaged in research or whose professional learning process involved doing research, research mentors who supported teachers in doing research and academics who might like to talk about the knowledge that they gain from teacher research. Learners were also welcome to participate. Being an English language teacher working in Higher Education in Cyprus, having been continuously involved in research which informed my classroom practices and also pursuing a PhD in the area of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Teacher Education, the call for proposals appeared really alluring. This was definitely an event that should not be missed.

I immediately contacted my supervisor, Dr Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous, informing her about the event, and we soon compiled a proposal which revolved around my PhD research in the area of ESP Teacher Education. The title of our proposal was 'English for Specific Purposes Teacher Education: Glimpses of a Technical Action Research Study'. The email informing us that the proposal was accepted was received with joy. After some weeks, with much excitement and enthusiasm, I received the news that I had also been granted the ReSIG scholarship to attend the event.

The Pre-Conference event took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, at the ACC Liverpool in a spacious and comfortable room. The morning session began with a plenary talk by Anne Burns titled 'What can teachers learn from academic research?', during which the speaker stressed the fact that, even though teachers are expected to refer to academic research and be inspired by it, most of the time this research is too inaccessible and incomprehensible. Prof. Burns highlighted the importance of teachers' engagement in research for the development of their personal identity, practices, confidence and generally for their professional development. She also emphasised the need to establish a relationship and find a balance between academic and practitioner research.

While Anne Burns was talking, I thought of how true what she said was, and how much research helped me as an ESP practitioner to develop professionally. ESP is a field of language teaching, which by definition relies heavily on the specific needs of different groups of learners, who learn English 'with an identifiable purpose' Johnson and Johnson (1998: 105). In this context practitioner's research is of paramount importance, since practitioners need to be involved in extensive needs analysis procedures, look for authentic or authentic-like materials and tasks to use with their learners, very often design the programmes that they will teach, and of course deal with many other issues as in every other language class. I could understand very well what Anne Burns described as the challenge of finding a balance between academic and practitioner research. The fact that I was a language teacher working in an academic environment very often made me feel as if I was walking a tightrope, reconciling the dual roles of teaching and surviving in academia. Nevertheless, I felt lucky and blessed at the same time that I had somehow managed to combine both.

Anne Burns' interesting and highly engaging plenary talk was followed by concurrent poster presentations in a very friendly and relaxed atmosphere, during which presenters from different parts of the world, ranging from Mexico to Australia, had the opportunity to present their research and talk about their educational contexts. Presenters and attendees engaged in interesting discussions regarding research at different levels of education and set against different educational backgrounds. This session was an opportunity for me to meet teachers, academics, PhD students and people who worked in ministries of education in their countries talking about their research and the knowledge that they acquired from it. What was absolutely fascinating for me was the chance to hear about the challenges and the obstacles faced in places where teachers lacked resources, because of poverty, war or censorship and deprivation of freedom of speech. As the time passed, I felt more and more that I was surrounded by people who spoke the same language as me, and I was assured that becoming a member of the Research SIG and attending this event was the right thing to do. It had not often met other strong supporters of action research who valued and understood its significance, people who were even pursuing a PhD doing action research, like me. This was a community that I was happy to be a member of. This very enlightening and thought-provoking poster session was followed by a lunch break, during which I had the opportunity to mingle with professionals attending other Special Interest Groups' Pre-Conference events in the same venue.

The afternoon session commenced with the second plenary talk by Richard Smith with the title 'What can academics learn from teacher research?' Richard Smith shared with the audience his own story about being a teacher, teacher educator and an academic, and talked

about the fact that many people identify themselves as both teachers and researchers. He stressed the importance of action research, and how much academics could learn from it, and he expressed the view that academic teacher educators as well as teacher associations should embrace teachers and help them in their efforts to become knowledgeable teacher researchers. I gained a lot from Richard Smith's plenary talk. First of all, once again I heard about the value of action research in a world where traditional academic research still dominates. Moreover, it made me understand how necessary it is to integrate practitioner research into teacher education programmes to supply teachers or future teachers with the knowledge that is required in order for them to become teacher researchers. This is something that I had already begun to introduce in my teacher training endeavours, but I would definitely try to implement more persistently in the future.

Richard Smith's inspiring talk was followed by another poster presentation session. During this session, I had the pleasure of presenting the action research study I had been involved in previously, which explored the topic of English for Specific Purposes Teacher Education that still remains a very poorly-researched area. This round of poster presentations provided me with the opportunity to meet teacher researchers and academics from different parts of the world and exchange views on various issues pertaining to my research and research in general. However, what was most exhilarating of all was the fact that I met professionals who could really comprehend what it meant to be a teacher researcher, people who understood how it felt to carry what Xerri (2016: 1) referred to as 'split personality' yet a 'unified identity'. This session was concluded with all the poster presenters reflecting on this experience and the feedback they obtained from delegates. Recalling all the positive comments heard and all the smiling faces, I am confident to say that the event was a great success.

Before the event came to an end, a follow-up discussion on the plenary talks took place, moderated by yet another legend in the field of Applied Linguistics, David Nunan. During this discussion, I felt that all the participants agreed on the value of teacher research, despite the fact that this kind of research is not usually published in academic journals, and therefore largely stays hidden. This brought to my mind McNiff's (2002: 12) reference to 'the 'butterfly effect', where the beat of a butterfly's wings locally can have repercussions in far-flung global terms', meaning that every single research study, no matter how small in scale it is, carries its own insights that could prove useful for the future of language education. It made me think that, even though it shouldn't be imposed on teachers, practitioner-research could be a way to encourage more skillful, creative, inventive, confident and empowered language teachers.

The ReSIG Pre Conference Event in Liverpool was a very insightful experience, and I wholeheartedly thank the ReSIG for granting me the scholarship to attend the event. For me it was a wonderful opportunity to socialise, widen my network of professionals in language teaching and language research, discuss issues related to my research and research in general, learn about other educational contexts, make new friends and catch up with old ones, and most importantly feel like an active member of this community. I returned to Cyprus with a suitcase filled with new knowledge and experiences and of course unforgettable memories of the picturesque city of Liverpool. Looking forward to the next one!

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## Report on the MA TESOL Quick Fire Presentation Event

### Meiyan Ren

The MA TESOL Quick Fire Presentation Event took place at the University of Warwick on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019. It was hosted by the Applied Linguistics Faculty, University of Warwick and supported by the Research Special Interest Group (ReSIG) of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL). This event offered a great opportunity for MA TESOL students from different universities to communicate and engage with different dissertation research methodologies and critical thinking.

Quick Fire Presentation means that each presenter should spend 5 minutes presenting his or her dissertation topic using 15 PowerPoint slides that move automatically every 20 seconds. This requirement was illustrated comprehensibly and straightforwardly in a video on the event's website before the event so that presenters knew what was expected of them.

The morning session included a warm-up activity, 6 presentations and a 20-minute break. The warm-up activity was a self-introduction in pairs in rounds of 5 minutes. After several rounds, attendees became more confident and ready to do their presentations. Each 5-minute presentation was followed by 10-15 minutes of discussion, which inspired the presenters and the attendees and was especially helpful for their dissertation discussion chapter.

Summaries of the presentations are as follows:

- *Exploring Thai EFL teachers' perceptions and teaching practices towards the English test in the National Examination*

This research was delivered carefully by Pariwat Imasard from the University of York. The findings from his research showed the washback of the main English Examination system in Thailand, O-NET, was negative and unsatisfactory for most teachers and students. That result offered a useful insight into O-NET for educators and policy makers.

- *Pupils' self-regulation in vocabulary learning strategies in urban areas in China*

This topic was presented by Meiyan Ren from the University of Leeds. From this study she found that there were significant differences between genders in self-regulatory vocabulary learning. Moreover, teachers strongly disagreed with students' views of their self-regulation utilization, which indicated to the teachers that students may be more confident than they expect.

- *Journey to the west - Chinese students' perceived challenges when writing in English for Academic Purposes*

This thoughtful presentation by Wenjun Liao from Kings' College London drew attention to the practical academic

English learning of Chinese international students. Her finding was very interesting: that most of the students she surveyed lacked confidence in academic writing, especially as regards the different academic culture.

- *Guidelines for teachers of senior language learners in Germany*

This topic was reported by Sarah Curtius from the University of Portsmouth. She pointed out that English training could challenge seniors' brains and benefit their brain health, which may help to alleviate the problem of an aging society in Germany. However, seniors' learning motivation was problematic since it was mainly relevant to tourist travelling, which might not be strong enough. Also, the seniors did not really welcome testing of their language skills, although it could be a good source of motivation for most learners.

- *Bridging the gap between IELTS and ESAP*

This topic was studied by Cai Lili from King's College London who reported that International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores were not good evidence of the capability of Chinese international students' academic learning, especially in academic writing or communicative speaking. She suggested that the combination of IELTS and Endocrine Society Program (ESAP) may be a solution for this gap, especially for those students who need more academic writing training.

- *Chinese MA TESOL students' intercultural challenges whilst studying in the UK*

This interesting research was conducted by Tzu-Ning Yu from the University of Bath. She found that it was a huge challenge for Chinese international MA TESOL students in the UK to understand everyday British and academic English even though they may have scored an overall 7.5 in IELTS. Her suggestion was to engage those students in as many intercultural or local society activities as possible.

- *Motivation of adult ESOL learners in a multi-level class: Community language learning in England*

This was a piece of qualitative research which was impressively introduced by Kathryn Sidaway of the University of Warwick. It studied the learning strategies and motivations of multi-level female ESL learners who had to attend English courses during their free time. Community language learning was recommended as one method of motivating English learning for those learners who had high motivation at school but were demotivated at home.

- *Enhancing L2 motivation through video self-modelling*

Denny Vlaeva from the University of Nottingham enthusiastically gave a talk on another motivation-related study. She stated that video-modelling could boost learners' confidence so that learners can learn from themselves through seeing their good performance in the videos. This method could be applied to both young learners and adults to enhance their motivation, especially in reading fluency.

Then, after a short break, Dr. Ana Ines Salvi, the

Coordinator of the IATEFL Research Special Interest Group (ReSIG), gave a talk via Skype about the significant influences of her MA TESOL courses on her teaching and career, which was really nice and inspiring. She shared with us that she had used a great deal of the knowledge gained during her MA TESOL during her PhD research and now she is still using it in her classes.

At the end of the programme, Tilly Harrison, Associate Professor at the University of Warwick, briefly wrapped up the event and introduced some information about IATEFL. She passionately encouraged everyone to join IATEFL and mentioned the generous scholarships for attendees and presenters at IATEFL's annual conference. We all felt very welcomed by her speech.

Thanks are due to Tilly Harrison who organized this event so well and successfully. All detailed information of buses, trains and other transportation to get there were provided on the website. The website link was also thoughtfully attached to the invitation email. Therefore, it enabled all the attendees and presenters to travel to the venue easily. Moreover, lovely refreshments and drinks were supplied before the event and during breaktimes, which were greatly appreciated by the participants.

Thanks to the sponsor IATEFL, every presenter and attendee had the opportunity to be part of this big event and it will profoundly influence our teaching, studying and career in the future. It allowed us to see brilliant and diverse research from different universities. Various comments and suggestions were received on the presentations which helped everyone build up more critical analysis of the findings and discussion sections of the dissertation. We appreciated it greatly. Thanks again to IATEFL.

## IATEFL ReSIG online discussion: Narrative knowledging

Chris Banister & Gary Barkhuizen

Chris Banister, the ReSIG Online Discussion Moderator, and Professor Gary Barkhuizen of the University of Auckland, New Zealand, reflect on the recent ReSIG online discussion that took place on the topic of Narrative Knowledging.

### Introduction

In December 2018, the IATEFL ReSIG hosted an online discussion about the concept of Narrative Knowledging (NK). Entitled *Narrative Knowledging – what is it and how does it relate to your research?*, this discussion picked up on the plenary talk that Gary gave on the subject of NK at the Teachers Research! event in Istanbul, Turkey in June 2018. We co-moderated the online event and in this short piece we begin by briefly saying what NK is, laying out the potential relevance of NK for research and practitioner research in particular.

We then summarise some of the key points that emerged in the discussion and reflect on the overall shape that the conversation took.

NK and its relevance for teacher research

Narrative Knowledging refers to the meaning making, the understanding, or learning that occurs when we engage in narrative research (see Barkhuizen, 2011). Put simply, as we tell and re-tell stories in the process of research we make sense of the phenomenon under study, specifically, some aspect of the life experiences of the participants. Stories are central to the process, and since all teachers tell stories all the time, teacher researchers might as well use them to focus their attention on what the stories tell them about the puzzles of their classroom life, and their own and their colleagues' experiences in their institutions and beyond.

### The discussion

This online discussion consisted of two phases and drew upon both text and diagrammatic extracts adapted from Gary's 2011 article in TESOL Quarterly (Barkhuizen, 2011). In phase one participants were presented with a teacher research case study and asked to consider alternative ways that NK might have played out in this particular case. In phase two the discussion used the same case study to focus on how alternative ways of sharing the research might have facilitated NK.

Chris opened the first phase by presenting participants with an extract from Gary's article defining NK and its key processes (Barkhuizen, 2011). They were then asked to consider a teacher researcher case relating to new assessment procedures in an English language school. The teacher researcher in question had interviewed colleagues, listened to their narratives about the assessment, transcribed these and authored a report, retelling the narratives. Finally, she had discussed these findings at a meeting with the same teachers, the school head and teachers from nearby schools hoping to impact future assessment practices.

### Summary of phase one questions/tasks and participants' responses

Two key points arising in this first phase were the dimensions of NK and the effect that alternatives to those in the given case might have had on the findings. In other words, participants were interested in the variables of NK. Contributors identified some of these variables in their comments pointing out that the setting, and aspects of power and privilege might impact any NK taking place in these zones. For instance, Gamze Sayram believes that one of the advantages of NK is its ability to remove status and hierarchy given that "we're all equal, we're all storytellers".

Chris wove together the responses at this stage and attempted to establish the boundaries of NK, querying whether quantitative data could be incorporated into the narratives. Gary accepted that quantitative data could form part of the narrative but stated that "we should be

working with stories” in order to stay “faithful to the concept”. Gary reiterated at this stage that NK is simply what happens during storytelling, providing coherence but without seeking to theorise or provide a methodological or philosophical frame. He also reminded participants that NK was conceived as a research framework, rather than a pedagogical framework, saying,

NK simply reminds us that when designing and actually doing a research project (narrative or otherwise) we should be aware that there will be knowledging (meaning making, learning, understanding) at all stages of the research process; and we should plan for that and be ready for that!

He invited participants to share examples of NK, prompting one participant, Rukiye Eryilmaz, to relate her first-hand experience of NK as part of her PhD work and to ponder the genuineness of narration if we accept the fluidity of the process. As Rukiye put it, “Even a word you change in your interview question or comment might cause a reshape in the story.” Gary responded by noting that if narrative research is to be deemed ethical it is desirable to go back and forth with the narrators and establish and reestablish accuracy and consistency and other key features.

### Summary of phase two questions/tasks and participants’ responses

The second phase of the discussion focused on the sharing of research findings and posed the question: Do you think it is always necessary to report and share one’s teacher research findings? There was a general consensus that research needs to be shared (even if over a coffee!) and that there are many advantages that accrue from doing so. Dr Assia Slimani-Rolls, a UK-based academic and Practitioner Research mentor, pointed to research findings which suggest that failing to disseminate could actually deprive others from benefiting from teacher research. Chris noted that locally-situated teacher research that is shared has the potential to resonate more widely and noted also the benefit of receiving feedback from audiences, which can then help the teacher researcher gain deeper understanding. A number of contributors to the discussion agreed that the repeated telling of the stories was beneficial, with one contributor, Rukiye Eryilmaz, eloquently stating that “each layer of retelling enriches [the stories]”. A favourite quote of both moderators from the discussion!

Gary framed the discussion in terms of NK. He gave the example of teachers presenting their research story by poster at a conference. He commented that teacher NK takes place (a) in the process of preparing for the presentation (i.e., putting the poster together), and (b) when they actually present the poster and interact with the audience. He added that the audience also engages in NK as they listen to the teacher and read the poster; in other words, the audience learns about or

understands the contents of the poster – the findings and experiences of the teachers’ research.

### Moderators’ reflections/discussion regarding the nature and extent of participants’ responses

Perspectives were offered by teacher researchers, academics and PhD students from the ReSIG community and beyond. And whilst the number of participants was modest, the quality of contributions was high, with many notable for their extent and the depth with which they explored the topic of NK.

As moderators, we feel that participants gained from the rich exchanges that emerged in the course of the discussion. For example, phase one reminded teacher researchers looking to adopt NK to explore their research agendas that they should carefully plan their research by considering the impact that changes in the key variables (methods, participants, and their interactions within the NK process itself) might bring about. Similarly, participants can reflect upon the different roles that stories can play during the research process, the fluid nature of these narratives, and the way that they are shared, all of which were highlighted in the second phase of the discussion.

As Chris mentioned in drawing the discussion to a close, the ReSIG are grateful to all those who participate in these discussions and who, in the process, enrich the dialogue of our researcher and practitioner researcher community of practice. We look forward to hearing more telling and re-telling of narratives from the practice of teacher researchers and researchers who have adopted NK at the various teacher research events that ReSIG has planned for 2020 and beyond.

### Reference

Barkhuizen, G. (2011). Narrative knowledging in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 45(3), 391-414.

If you found this article interesting and would like to get involved in future **ReSIG discussions**, the simple steps for joining in can be found here: <http://resig.weebly.com/online-discussions.html> You do not have to be a member to add your voice. Also, we are always open to new research related themes for our discussions, so if you have an idea for an online conversation, please get in touch with **Chris Banister**, the ReSIG Online Discussion Moderator: [chrisbanister@gmail.com](mailto:chrisbanister@gmail.com)

## **Review of *Exploratory practice for continuing professional development – An innovative approach for language teachers* by A. Slimani-Rolls & R. Kiely (2018)**

**Ma. Isabel A. Cunha, Judith Hanks, & Ines K. de Miller**

Slimani-Rolls and Kiely's (2018) *Exploratory Practice for Continuing Professional Development* vividly illustrates Allwright's claim that "research is too good to be left to the professional researchers" (Foreword, p. v-xi). The book is an important contribution that discusses how a group of three Modern Foreign Language (MFL) teachers/lecturers and three English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers/lecturers, working in a Higher Education institution in the UK were supported by two lead researchers to engage in Exploratory Practice (Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Gieve & Miller, 2006; Hanks, 2017), which is a sustainable form of fully inclusive practitioner research.

In Part I, the authors situate Exploratory Practice (EP) on a continuum of notions and practices that have been traditionally considered to organise most teachers' lives. These range from a variety of teaching methods regarding the use of materials, techniques and technologies to the three pedagogic parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility, as proposed by the critical and transformative post-method approach. Having acknowledged that various modalities of practitioner research permeate the fields of language teacher education, teacher development and continuing professional development, the authors then favour EP as an innovative platform, which prioritises understanding local puzzles, while integrating input from teachers and learners as well as insights from teaching and research. Since the authors adopt EP as a promising framework for CPD, they align it with collaboration, collegiality and enquiry, aspects that characterise such models of CPD as coaching/mentoring, communities of practice, action research, and an overall transformative approach. The EP principles orient teachers, learners and/or other individuals in educational contexts to engage in collaborative work to understand their local puzzles about the quality of life they experience in their contexts, thus creating a spirit of collegiality based on mutual trust and development. Due to the integration of an attitude of enquiry that naturally transforms group members into a learning community, the authors advocate EP as policy for CPD in contexts of teaching and learning MFL and EAP.

It is in Part II that the book really comes alive, with case studies written by teachers, which illustrate the EP principles in action. As with its sister-publication (Dikilitaş & Hanks, 2018), practitioners were encouraged to

critically engage with their pedagogic practices through their 'puzzles' about learning, teaching, pedagogy, and research.

Working in MFL, Rawson investigated the use of the mother tongue by students in her French classes. Like Bella in Hanks (2017), she shared her puzzle with her students. Rawson asked: '*Does the use of Italian by [...] students studying French impact negatively on their progress?*' and, through questionnaires, interviews and learner journals, she gained a deeper understanding of her own teaching processes and assumptions. She noted that when she engaged the learners in her puzzle, they expressed enjoyment at being seen as responsible adults with opinions of their own.

Similarly, Lecumberri discovered ways of promoting better understanding of the different perspectives in her Spanish classes, asking '*In what ways does mobile phone use create patterns of inattentive and unengaged behaviour in the classroom?*' Through interviews with her students, a more positive atmosphere for learning developed, with less frustration on the side of the teacher, and more accommodation on the part of the learners, leading to mutual development.

Meanwhile, Costantino provided a reflexive account of CPD and her own personal development as a teacher of Italian. Her puzzle '*Why do students seem uninterested in teacher written feedback?*' opened up a range of discussions about student and teacher perceptions and behaviours around written feedback on student work. Exemplifying the EP principle of integrating research and pedagogy, Costantino developed Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Activities (PEPAs) such as classroom discussions and written reflections from learners on the feedback they received from their various teachers. Working in EAP, Banister offered a useful commentary on the teacher's journey, demonstrating how his puzzle was revised, refined and reconceived as his understandings developed. In investigating his puzzle '*Why do I feel it's a challenge to obtain meaningful evaluations [from students] on the learning experience?*' he went beyond questionnaires and interviews, to incorporate tasks such as reading, comprehension questions, and tutorials (i.e., the normal practices of teaching, as indicated by Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Hanks, 2017) as his PEPAs.

Also working in EAP, Houghton investigated his puzzle: '*why do learners rarely use recently taught lexical/grammatical items during speaking activities which are intended to facilitate their use?*' This puzzle led him to question his own underlying assumptions about the relationship between what is taught and what is learnt. As he continued on the project, he encapsulated something that is true for many: "I realised that by working in this way, I was teaching and researching, rather than researching via teaching" (Houghton, in Slimani-Rolls & Kiely, 2018, p. 157), and

began slowly to incorporate his explorations into PEPAs in the shape of a questionnaire written by the learners themselves.

Concurrently, Goral provided an honest account of her worries as well as her triumphs in investigating her puzzle 'what makes student presentations and discussion boards work well?' She too went beyond the usual questionnaires and interviews of research to ensure that her investigations were also PEPAs, useful for her students. Like many of her colleagues in the UK (in this volume and elsewhere), and those working in Australia, Northern Cyprus, and Turkey (see Dikilitaş & Hanks, 2018), Goral used normal pedagogic practices in the shape of discussion boards and written self-reflections, as well as class materials such as readings, to prompt student investigations of her puzzle, which then helped develop her understandings of the issue.

These thoughtful accounts provide useful insights into the processes of 'doing-being' Exploratory Practice (Miller et al. in Allwright & Hanks, 2009: 227). Their narratives provide helpful details about the formation of puzzles, and the refinement and reconceptualising of these puzzles into research questions (something that EP claims as distinctive). They also shed light on the processes involved in PEPAs, and give honest and self-critical assessments, including the doubts and difficulties many teachers experience when attempting practitioner research of any kind. These exemplars provide further evidence that it is possible, and having done so, that both teachers and learners may benefit.

Considering sustainability, Banister documents that the positive effects went beyond the project itself, to increase his confidence in presenting his work at conferences (national and international) and his comments on dissemination are of particular interest. Goral's puzzle is a rare example which is framed as a positive query, something that EP advocates say is unique to EP. Costantino notes the temporal aspects of understanding as an ongoing human activity which is deeply satisfying, yet always developing. She also provides a lucid account of the development of understandings of all concerned, concluding that rather than the usual top-down, hierarchical approach, theorising can be two-way.

In these practitioner research narratives, the reader will notice the echoes of the EP principles, notably: working for understanding, working together for mutual development, and, in some cases, integrating the work for understanding (i.e., research) with the pedagogy. Several of the participants went on to disseminate their work at conferences or through publications, and they used EP as a form of scholarship to gain recognition as Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) or achieve successful promotions. The EP principles are here used as a guide for conceptualising, developing and experiencing the situated teacher learning

processes. We heartily recommend this book as a useful addition to the literature on Continuing Professional Development, English for Academic Purposes, Modern Foreign Languages and Exploratory Practice.

### References

- Allwright, D., & Hanks, J. (2009). *The developing language learner: An introduction to exploratory practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dikilitaş, K., & Hanks, J. (Eds.). (2018). *Developing language teachers with exploratory practice: Innovations and explorations in language education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gieve, S., & Miller, I. K. (Eds.). (2006). *Understanding the language classroom*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hanks, J. (2017). *Exploratory practice in language teaching: Puzzling about principles and practices*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

# IATEFL SIG SHOWCASE – MANCHESTER 2020

## DAY 1 – SATURDAY 18 APRIL

**Research SIG COORDINATOR NAMES:** Ana Ines Salvi and Kenan Dikilitas

### Research SIG SHOWCASE

Session	Time	Mins	Proposer's Name	Title of session ( <i>just put the first few words</i> )	Room name
1.1	1035-1120	45 Workshop	Judith Hanks & Sian Etherington	'Sticky objects': exploring quality of life for teacher development	Cobden 3
<b>Coffee Break</b>					
1.2	1150-1220	30 Talk	Tania Horak & Laura Walker	What we can learn from role reversal: teachers as learners	Central 5
1.3	1235-1305	30 Talk	Ana Ines Salvi	Towards a framework for criticality development	Central 5
<b>Lunch break</b>					
<b>Poster presentations</b>					
1.5	1405-1435	30 Talk	Richard Pinner	Authenticity and teacher-student motivational synergy	Central 5
1.6	1450-1520	30 Talk	Cemile Buğra & Mark Wyatt	English language teachers collaborating in teacher research and loving it	Central 5
1.7	1535-1605	30	SIG Open Forum	Discussing educational research in English language teaching and teacher education	Central 5
<b>Coffee Break</b>					
1.8	1635-1705	30 Talk	David Barnard	Exploring English language teachers' engagement with published research	Central 5
1.9	1720-1805	45 Workshop	Richard Smith	Mentoring teacher-research	Cobden 3



## **IATEFL 2020 - ReSIG Pre Conference Event (PCE)**

### **'The role of Research in English Language Teaching and Teacher Education'**

**Friday 17 April 2020, Manchester, UK  
Plenary speakers**



**Sarah Mercer**



**Maggie Kubanyiova**