



RESEARCH

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From the Co-ordinator

Time flies and when you get this issue of ReSIG News we will be at the end of 2007 or the start of 2008. I trust you have all had a good year and that 2008 will be even better. You will have seen various messages from me in recent weeks updating you on changes to our committee for next year. I am pleased to have received several expressions of interest and we will confirm the new line up at the next annual conference in Exeter. We are, however, still looking for a new Co-ordinator for our SIG and identifying this person is currently one of our priorities. If you think this might be a role for you, or would like to recommend someone who would be suitable, I'd be delighted to hear from you.

Our recent event in Poland was successful and work has already started on the proceedings. I would like to thank Mirosław Pawlak for working so tirelessly to make the event happen and of course all the presenters and delegates who contributed to the event.

Our next event will be the annual conference in Exeter (see back cover for details). Our Research SIG day at the conference will be on Wednesday 9th April and as usual we will have an interesting and varied programme of talks. I will be circulating details as soon as these are confirmed.

In the meantime I send you all very best wishes from the Research SIG committee.

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From the Editor

This issue of our Research SIG newsletter deals with ELT teacher education, its current outcomes and goals and how we can evaluate the impact INSET makes on teachers and learners of English. In addition, we have an article about third person pronoun usage by L2 speakers, and a light-hearted mini article about conference presentations and finally the sixth column of My links.

Please continue to send in your ideas and works for our publication and visit our website for more information and guidelines: <http://www.btinternet.com/~simon.borg/ReSIG/submit.htm>. I hope you will enjoy this issue.

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A Brief look at the current goals and outcomes of short-term ELT teacher education

Valerie Hobbs

Introduction

The short ELT teacher training course remains one of the most popular methods of entry into the field of ELT. Begun by John Haycraft in the early 1960's as a practical answer to the overly theoretical nature of available ELT teacher education, the typically one-month TESOL teacher training course has spread worldwide, bolstered by mass market appeal, and is offered by an estimated 400 course providers to over 10,000 participants annually (Green, 2005). However, some in the field (see Davis, 1990; Kerr, 1994; Borg, 2002; Baxter, 2003; Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Hobbs, 2007) have raised questions regarding its effectiveness, particularly given the backdrop of our understanding of the inflexibility of teachers' beliefs (Hedgcock, 2002).

Despite such criticism, the short course seems reluctant to give up its status. Hailed by the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (UCLES) and Trinity College London, the two most prominent short course validators in the industry, as a hands-on, highly practical, skills-based, basic toolkit, the short teacher training course is quite popular with teachers, who have long viewed the practical elements of teacher education, like the practice teaching, to be the most valuable components (Clarke, 1983). In this way, the short course meets teachers' demand for a focus on practice while simultaneously offering the opportunity for a swift career change without a great deal of time or financial commitment. The market-driven nature of the short course alone combined with current understanding of the nature of teacher beliefs and teacher change warrants investigation into the short ELT training course's impact on trainees. This article, based on a recent presentation at the TTEd/Research PCE event at IATEFL 2007, will examine the current goals of short initial language teacher education (ITE), specifically of the CELTA and Trinity CertTESOL, and look at what current research reveals about the outcomes of ITE.

Current Goals of IET

Largely because UCLES' CELTA and Trinity College London's CertTESOL are short-term programs, their focus is on the practical rather than the theoretical side of English language teaching in keeping with Haycraft's original design. Participants spend the majority of their time honing skills such as classroom management, lesson planning, choosing materials, and specific teaching methods. Although some CELTA providers claim to include language learning theory in the coursework (see Oxford Brookes University, 2004), UCLES (2007) does not make any such claims in its own publications about the program. Similarly, the CertTESOL emphasizes 'the basic skills and knowledge needed to take up a first post as a TESOL teacher...' (TCL: 2006: 6), although variation in content among course providers is allowed.

In addition to the published, practical course objectives, certain implicit objectives also exist within the short course, including instilling confidence and meeting market demand. Regarding the first, many writers and researchers have pointed out the importance of encouraging confidence in novice teachers. Because new teachers are most often in 'survival mode', regularly questioning their own competence, teacher educators must provide encouragement and support that will give them the confidence they require to move to the next stage of teaching ability (Brady & Bowd, 2005; Worthy, 2005). However, recent research (Hobbs, 2007) conducted during a CertTESOL course revealed that course participants' increased confidence seemed linked to understanding of procedural skills, such as classroom management, rather than subject knowledge, such as explicit language awareness. Borg (2004: 94), supporting this finding, notes that this often leads to trainees' overestimation of their teaching ability and underestimation of the complexity of teaching (see also Book, Byers & Freeman, 1983). And as Warford and Reeves (2003) point out, misplaced optimism can be just as detrimental as lack of confidence, and confidence rooted in a weak foundation often bows to the pressures of a novice teacher's first teaching situation. Certainly, confidence is important to novice teachers, who often 'find it almost impossible to detach themselves from the crisis of the moment' (Kennedy, 1993: 162), and confidence building should be a goal of teacher education courses. However, the short course's effectiveness may be hindered by its tendency to promote confidence rooted primarily in basic classroom procedure, which is insufficient for preparing teachers for the realities of the classroom.

Another implicit objective of the short course is meeting market demand (White, 1998; Borg, 2002; Baxter, 2003; Hobbs, 2007). One CertTESOL course director offered the following explanation:

Because it is something that a lot people will see – they say, ok, if I invest 1,000 pounds in a four-week course and then I can go off and work in any one of a hundred countries um, and I can recoup the cost of that course in the first year probably, even though it's such a lousy paid profession and you know, it gives me access to travel, employment, it's got a reputation of being value for money in the sense that you get a lot crammed in (Hobbs, 2007: 134).

Customer satisfaction has some role in determining the course structure and content of the short course, which focuses heavily on practical classroom skills with limited exploration of their origin and of how to make informed choices in a specific context (Baxter, 2003; Hobbs, 2007). Although many course providers make great effort to increase the rigor and quality of the short course, the time constraints of the course hinders such efforts.

In summary, the current goals of short-term initial ELT teacher education focus primarily on supplying novice teachers with basic procedural skills and the confidence to take up their first position. The next section will explore what research has revealed about whether or not these goals are met and what impact the course has on trainees.

The impact of short course

This section focuses on three recent studies which examined the outcomes of initial language teacher education. First, Borg (2002) documented the beliefs, experiences, and reflections of six trainee teachers on a full-time CELTA course in the UK. She found that the course's focus on basic skills resulted in a transmission-based approach, where the trainees were drilled in certain non-negotiable skills which they were expected to use in the classroom. She writes

There was never any discussion with trainees of what they brought with them to the course, and trainees were expected to adopt and use techniques without much consideration of their beliefs or stance towards these techniques (p. 402).

Borg also found that the trainees beliefs remained largely static, which, according to her, stemmed from a lack of reflection on pre-existing beliefs.

Baxter (2003) examined the notion of professionalism and the nature of ELT training within both Certificate level and Diploma level ELT courses. Like Borg (2002), she noted the promotion of a linear relationship between input (training seminars and the participants' observation of other teachers) and output (the participants' teaching practice). Baxter argues that at the Certificate level, notions of 'good' and 'bad' teaching behavior, reinforced by reflective practice assignments and input sessions (again, intensified by brevity of the course), stem from a notion of trainees as 'blank canvas'. She writes that the Certificate course provides

training which presents knowledge and practices in this way prepares teachers who are efficient demonstrators of a range of classroom skills, but have little understanding of where these have come from and no basis upon which to make informed choices in a particular teaching situation (p. 193).

Baxter concludes that the current goals of initial language teacher education have only limited impact on teaching practice and lead to a lack of professionalism in the field.

Finally, Hobbs (2007) conducted an ethnographic study of the experiences and change in beliefs of eleven trainee teachers on a full-time TESOL Certificate course in the UK. She found that while the course providers made many attempts to increase the rigour of the course, the brevity of the course necessitated a prioritization of practice, which reinforced trainees' pre-existing preferences for practice and may have suggested to them (even if told the contrary) that engaging in teaching without understanding or reflecting on the theory that underlies it is acceptable. Rather than modifying their beliefs about teaching and learning, the trainees exhibited the most change in the area of confidence, which seemed rooted in procedural skills rather than subject knowledge or awareness of the importance of teaching context.

In summary, the goals of ITE, which focus primarily on providing a basic toolkit for ELT, instilling confidence in novice teachers, and meeting market demand are, at first glance, quite successful. However, as the three studies above demonstrate, these goals are somewhat shortsighted in that they downplay the importance of teachers' beliefs and overlook the impact of a transmission-based philosophy of teacher education on the notion of professionalism in the field.

Conclusions

This article has presented some evidence in favour of a shift in initial TESOL teacher education goals, moving away from a focus on transmission of skills to active exploration and evaluation of teachers' beliefs and their appropriateness in different contexts. However, one cannot pretend that drastic change is likely in this sector, primarily due to the powerful market forces that drive it and the vulnerable position of course providers. Beyond these obstacles to change, however, some pre-service ELT teacher trainers argue that because the Certificate course is intended only as an initial 'basic tools kit', change is unnecessary and that those with the 'right' attitude and a 'real desire' to become a good teacher will seek further professional support and development. That said, research reveals that the majority of novice ELT teachers, 70%, according to Timmis (2000), will not pursue additional training, leaving us with the following question: if the Certificate course is the only professional qualification undertaken then does it provide a sufficient springboard from which novice teachers can develop? The research presented here suggests that the answer is no, that the current goals of ITE in ELT require radical change, and that, ultimately, more discussion and research is needed.

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Conceptualising Impact In INSET Evaluation

An edited version of a paper given at the IATEFL Research and Teacher Training and Education SIGs pre-conference event, Aberdeen, 2007.

Alan Waters

Introduction

How can we evaluate the impact INSET makes? There are obviously a number of major aspects involved. However, first and foremost, any such study needs to be informed by an understanding of what we mean by “impact” in this context. This article therefore tries to address this question. In doing so, it begins with some “points of reference”, in order to provide the basis for an overall “map” for linking together and distinguishing a number of main frameworks for conceptualising INSET impact.

Points of reference

Since the development of “a way of teaching” is the main focus of most INSET, the first part of the overview begins with a conceptualisation of teaching method, using the three-part model of Richards & Rodgers (2001: Ch. 2), as can be seen on the left hand side of Table 1 below. In this framework, the *Procedure* is primarily concerned with classroom teaching techniques; the *Design* level focuses on how theoretical concepts can be operationalised in pedagogic terms; and the *Approach* level involves conceptualisations of the nature of language, learning, etc.

Next, in the second column, this framework is associated with a “picture” of the teacher, since, of course, it is

through the teacher that INSET attempts to affect teaching. The “teacher iceberg” diagram of Malderez & Bodóczy (1999: 15) has been borrowed for this purpose. At its tip is the visible part of teachers’ make-up - what they do in terms of *classroom behaviours*, etc. This can be seen as the manifestation of the Procedure level in Richard and Rodgers’ framework. Then, just below the surface, are teachers’ *knowledge and ideas*, which inform their behaviours, in much the same way as the Design level in Richard and Rodgers’ framework influences the Procedure one. Finally, at the lowest level, making up the bulk of the remainder of the “iceberg”, are teachers’ *feelings, beliefs, attitudes and values*, i.e., the stratum where the fundamental orientations that shape teachers’ overall views of their subject are formulated. Mutatis mutandis, this aspect can be seen as congruent with the Approach part of Richard and Rodgers’ system.

Finally as far as this part of the diagram goes, we can make a further connection, as shown in the third column, this time in terms of teacher learning processes, since it is these which are the ultimate “stock in trade” of INSET. The well-known training/education /development model has been used for this purpose (see, e.g, Allwright, 2001). Thus, the *training* aspect of teacher learning can be seen as corresponding to the acquisition by teachers of repertoires of classroom behaviours or other forms of procedural knowledge; the *education* level can be seen as to do with the building up by teachers of theoretical ideas and other forms of abstract knowledge; and the *development* level can be seen as concerned with the shaping of teachers’ personal views about teaching, etc. - again, very much the equivalent stratum at this level of the other two frameworks.

This basic three-level categorisation is used in the remainder of the table in order to “situate” some of the main ways that INSET impact can be conceptualised in terms of potential teacher learning outcomes. However, it should be noted at this point that, while this type of impact forms the main focus of the literature on the topic, other, non-teacher learning kinds of INSET outcomes also exist, of course. This point will be returned to later on. Also, the allocation of items to the various slots in the table is intended to illustrate only one set of possibilities of this kind.

Teaching	The Teacher	Teacher learning processes	Types of teacher learning impact (only principal areas of potential congruence are indicated)					
			Fullan (2001: 39)	Bell & Gilbert (1996: 16ff)	Joyce & Showers (1980: 290-291)	Hall & Hord (2001: 82) – “LoU”	Harland & Kinder (1997)	Davies & Preston (2002)
Procedure	Behaviour	Training	(1) New or revised materials	Professional development Social development Personal development	D. Application and problem-solving	III Mechanical use IVA Routine IVB Refinement V Integration VI Renewal	1. Material and provisionary outcomes 9. Impact on practice 8. Institutional outcomes	
Design	Knowledge & Ideas	Education	(2) New teaching approaches		A. Awareness	I Orientation	2. Informational outcomes 7. Knowledge and skills	
Approach	Feelings, Beliefs, Attitudes, Values	Development	(3) Possible alterations of beliefs		B. Concepts and Organized Knowledge	I Orientation	3. New awareness 4. Value congruence outcomes 5. Affective outcomes 6. Motivational and attitudinal outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence/self-esteem • Networking • Relations with colleagues • Capacity for learning • Personal life

Table 1: *Some conceptualisations of INSET impact*

Types of teacher learning impact

The first of the main INSET teacher learning impact frameworks included in the table is from Fullan (2001: 39). He sees INSET linked to “second-order” (i.e., significant) educational change as concerned with making an impact on teacher learning in terms of all three of the levels indicated, which can be seen to correspond to the earlier part of the table in the manner shown. In other words, what Fullan refers to as *new or revised materials* can be regarded as a “short-hand” for the learning of new classroom techniques, a matter which relates to the INSET training level. *New teaching approaches* (despite the slightly different usage of “approach”) can be seen as concerned with the getting of new ideas and so forth, very much the equivalent of the education level of INSET; and *belief alteration* is clearly closely-linked to the teacher development level.

Secondly, although made somewhat complicated by the terminology used and the way they see the processes involved extending across all the three main levels, we can map the framework of Bell & Gilbert (1996: 16) onto

the diagram as indicated. What this conceptualisation contributes is the notion that all three levels identified so far actually involve impact being made, in different ways, in terms of all three of the development processes indicated. This seems helpful, as all the other conceptual frameworks appear to operate mainly on a horizontal dimension, and this obscures the way in which, in fact, important vertical connections also exist in all cases between each of the levels, as the use of dotted horizontal lines in the table is intended to indicate.

The conceptualisation by Joyce & Showers (1980: 290-291) of INSET teacher learning outcomes can be added next. Here there is a refinement of the way in which impact at the middle level is conceived, with a distinction between, on the one hand, knowledge in the form of information about a teaching idea (*Awareness*), and, on the other, knowledge about how the teaching idea can be put into practice (*Principles and skills*) – learning “about” vs. learning “how to”, in other words.

Moving on, two further conceptual systems can be included. The first - the Levels of Use (LoU) framework

of Hall & Hord (2001: 82) - is a system for analysing the potential extent of implementation of a new teaching idea by teachers. Its primary contribution is to provide a more refined picture than in the previous systems of potential teacher learning impact at the classroom practice level. Thus, the first five items in this part of the table (i.e., III - VI) indicate that use of the new teaching idea may occur only mechanically (III), or in a "going through the motions" manner (IVA), or by undergoing some kind of positive modification (IVB), or be changed more radically so that it becomes fully integrated within the teacher's existing repertoire (V), or even be transformed wholesale (VI).

Secondly, Harland & Kinder (1997) likewise make a number of useful additional conceptual distinctions. Thus, at the topmost, "applied" level, they distinguish impact in the form of new materials and other resources (1.) vs. new teacher learning, since the two are not necessarily the same, of course. At the same level they also distinguish between impact which takes place at the classroom level (9.) - very much the concern at this level of all the other frameworks looked at so far - and additional potential impact in terms of the institutional dimension (8.), by which they mean, e.g., the emergence of shared practical understandings among colleagues, mutual collaboration and support among colleagues in implementing teaching ideas, and so on.

At the middle level they make a distinction similar to that of Joyce & Showers (op. cit.), and then, at the third level, they also introduce several additional categorisations. Thus, *new awareness* means a shift in teachers' underlying schemata about the subject area and its teaching; *value congruence outcomes* refers to the emergence among teachers of personal philosophies about teaching which resemble the ones being promoted by the INSET (they see this type of impact as being the most likely predictor of changed practice, incidentally). *Affective outcomes* refers to feelings of excitement or depression, increased confidence etc. as a result of INSET, whereas *motivational and attitudinal outcomes* refer to enhanced interest in implementing INSET ideas. They also stress that both the last two categories of effects, while important, can, however, be only short-lived. But it seems important for attention to also be drawn in this way to the affective side of impact on teacher learning, largely in contradistinction to the other frameworks looked at so far.

Finally, as far as types of teacher learning outcomes go, Davies & Preston (2002) draw attention to a number of other possible outcomes at the third level, some of which complement those identified by Harland and Kinder, such as the first two, while others add further dimensions, such as the potential effects (good or bad!) of INSET on collegial relations, one's ability to develop

as a learner, and one's personal life (e.g., levels of stress, workload, etc.).

Other frameworks for categorising INSET teacher learning impact doubtless exist. However, those considered so far appear to be the main ones, and it is hoped that the scheme of analysis that has been provided will help to make the main features of others which are encountered reasonably transparent.

Other types of impact

In addition, however, it is also obviously important to bear in mind, as already indicated, that impact in terms of teacher learning is not, of course, the only kind of INSET impact that can occur. Thus, for example, it may be expected that impact will be manifested in terms of not only teacher but also student learning, with improved student grades being viewed as the prime indicator of an outcome of this kind. However, as (inter alia) Veenman et al (1994: 304) indicate, the problems involved in trying to identify impact of this kind means that, in practice, it is rarely attempted.

Nevertheless, as they also point out, impact on learners can be more feasibly assessed in alternative ways, e.g., in terms of whether a better classroom atmosphere is reported as a result of INSET. These and other forms of INSET impact, over and above those concerned with teacher learning, can therefore also form the focus of INSET evaluation, and although greatest attention is given in the literature to the latter type of impact, and space unfortunately precludes further discussion of the matter here, the former obviously also needs to be given due consideration.

Conclusion

I have tried to show that three main levels of potential INSET teacher learning impact can be identified, corresponding in overall terms to the development of pedagogic practices, of knowledge of teaching ideas, and professional and personal self-development. Also, within each of these main divisions, several conceptual sub-divisions can be identified, and awareness of these can help to increase the theoretical "delicacy" of an INSET evaluation study. At the same time, impact in terms of other factors, not just teacher learning, such as effects on students, clearly also needs to form part of a well-developed INSET impact construct. In these ways, the fundamental basis for a sound INSET impact evaluation study can be established.

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Gender-neutral third person pronoun usage employed by L2 speakers of English

Simon Cole

The English pronoun system is characterized by frequent use of personal pronouns (Wales, 1996:23). The absence of a gender-neutral third person pronoun (3PP), however, leads to inconvenience in the expression of singular, animate, gender-neutral beings, such as in (1) and (2) below.

- (1) *An air traffic controller* trains for many months before *they* start work.

Some languages have this pronoun (*ta* in Chinese, and *kao* in Thai), while others that don't (e.g. Japanese) use a phrase such as 'that person' (*ano hito*) or avoid pronouns altogether. The pronoun in question is popularly known as the 'generic third person', because it is often used for hypothetical referents and generalizations. However, that does not account for a specific referent whose sex is irrelevant, or nonexistent, or unknown as in;

- (2) *Someone* put a message on the door but *they* didn't leave *their* name.

The preferred term among linguists now is 'epicene', meaning 'of unknown sex' (McArthur, 1992; Noll, 1999; Newman, 1997). Henceforth, the term used here will be epicene third person pronoun (E3PP).

Now that L2 speakers of English outnumber L1 speakers (Jenkins, 2000:1) - and are likely to influence English in the coming century (Wales, 1996:198) - a study of L2 speaker use of E3PP is timely. Do these speakers (with their various E3PP mother-tongues) handle the absence of an E3PP in English differently and if so, how?

There is now a small body of rigorous work on current L1 E3PP strategies (Newman, 1997; Wales, 1996). However, if the target discourse community of L2 speakers includes L2 speakers, should not we be aware of their strategies also?

There have been very few studies of L2 E3PP strategies (Demel, 1990; Schmidt and McCreary, 1977). The truth is we know next to nothing of how they use E3PPs.

This study investigates some of the E3PPs that L2 subjects use. After defining terminology and reviewing past research, I use a questionnaire to elicit pronouns anaphoric to singular, gender-neutral antecedents and analyze the responses of 44 L2 subjects and 27 L1 subjects. It is hoped that these results will inform mainly language teachers, who are, arguably, uniquely positioned to wield a disproportionate influence on the direction of the EIL. L1 results are used to validate the study's effectiveness.

Definitions of Terms

The word *generic* is used to refer to a type or class here. The opposite of this is *specific*, where the referent is quantified, or known. Wales (1996) refers to combination words, such as *he or she* and *s/he* as *compounds*, however, Newman (1997), after a thorough analysis of the semantic theories related to anaphoric pronouns, prefers the term *disjunctives*; I adhere to Newman's terminology.

Studies to date

There has been a great deal of debate and commentary among L1 speakers about the E3PP 'problem' stretching back 300 years (Baron, 1986). The development of linguistics as a discipline over the last century and the more recent use of technology to expedite analysis of vast quantities of data have improved the body of knowledge related to pronoun use (Wales, 1996). Quite naturally, most of this research relates to L1 speakers who are seen as the source of English.

Few researchers have looked at L2 speakers' use of E3PPs. Demel (1990) investigated the relationship between overall comprehension and the comprehension of coreferential pronouns (*he, she, they*) for L2 readers of English. However, she did not look at epicene or generic pronouns.

The only study to date to have considered L2 speaker E3PP data that I could find is Schmidt's and McCreary's

(1977) search for 'standard English' in their observations of the recognition and use of prescriptive rules by L1 and L2 speakers. They elicited written linguistic data from 104 children and adults who responded to sentences presented orally, focusing on grammatical variables. They define superstandard as "either not followed by speakers or restricted to only the most formal level of style." (p.415). Their results show L1 speakers use singular *they* with *nobody/everybody* much more than *he*. They suggest, therefore, that 'prescriptive *he*' is superstandard. However, their L2 speaking subjects, a group of 20 English teachers whose native language is Egyptian Arabic, use *he* much more (p.421). "Our group of non-native speakers, all English teachers, is the only group which seems to have internalized the prescriptive rule thoroughly. Most of them know and seem to use the rule." (p.422). While these results are telling, the study itself is "focussed primarily on the acquisition of standard forms by native-speakers" (p.415), not L2 speakers. In addition, the L2 subjects were only tested on antecedents with plural meaning (*nobody, everybody*) and not the wide range of other coreferent possibilities. Therefore, it must be seen as a limited study at best.

Methodology

To find out what E3PPs L2 speakers are using, data was collected and analyzed (Table 1 & Appendix 1) using a questionnaire that surveyed responses to a variety of textual possibilities. The design of the questionnaire is based on the principles of discourse analysis which facilitate the construction of a variety of sentence structures in which E3PPs are commonly found. The work of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Winter (1994), Hoey (1994) and Abbott (1984) is employed to some extent in identifying these patterns.

Subjects

The questionnaire respondents consisted of two groups: The first group was 44 L2 speakers, 22 of them identified their first language as an Asian language (mostly Japanese and Chinese) and 22 of them identified their first language as a European language. Five of these responded by email from various countries around the world. The second group was 27 L1 speakers who identified their first language as English, included to compare results with the findings of existing research.

Materials design

The questionnaire design used in this study attempts to accommodate habitual or potential responses (Schmidt & McCreary, 1977) in order to get a true picture of the respondents' linguistic habits and beliefs about E3PPs.

The first exercise elicits an open-response to a hypothetical problem (Appendix 1) followed by controlled, closed-response cloze exercises that employ several lessons from discourse analysis. Other, unrelated lexical items are elicited to disguise the purpose of the exercise, eliciting unconscious (habitual) responses initially.

Closed-response sentences following personal reference (Halliday et.al., 1976) and, exemplification and generalization, which Winter (1994) and Hoey (1994) describe as Hypothetical-Real and Generalization-Example were constructed around employment situations, the first being a matching relation: hypothetical-real pattern using *each* and a female dominated profession.

The final section of the questionnaire operates on a subjective and conscious level and reveals the target lexical item.

Procedure

The questionnaire was piloted for a month on 10 subjects locally and internationally. Feedback was taken and the questionnaire was improved. It was then administered over a one year period from November 2002 to October 2003 via email and paper.

Results

The responses were tabulated (Table 1) through existing pronouns (*he, she, it, and they*) in keeping with Newman's (1992:131) definition of a token (Appendix 2). Table 1 shows unconscious or habitual preference results (open response and cloze exercises) of L2 speaker and L1 speaker subjects. One count equals one token and one subject. Percentages are parenthesized. All the entries are to be read as singular E3PPs. Other/rephrasing is repeats or rephrasing of the antecedent (such as *the person*).

Table 1 Unconscious/belief E3PP choices of L2 speaker and L1 speaker compared.

Subjects Token	L2 speaker Total (%)	L1 speaker Total (%)
singular they	6(5.7)	22(27.2)
he	30(28.6)	8(9.9)
she	13(12.4)	9(11.1)
it	2(1.9)	(0)
inconsistent	2(1.9)	1(1.2)
disjunctive	16(15.2)	22(27.2)
none	6(5.7)	5(6.2)
other/rephrase	24(22.9)	11(13.6)

Summary of habitual/unconscious results (Table 1)

The results indicate that L2 speakers prefer *he* as the E3PP of choice. They suggest that there is approximately a 29% chance that in these contexts, a L2 speaker will use *he* to express gender-neutral generic reference. This is followed by a 15.2% chance that a disjunctive would be used. These are the clearest deductions that can be made from the results. There is an approximately 23% chance of some other strategy being employed; in the open response exercise it appears that they favored rephrasing the antecedent (24).

Table 2 shows raw data comparing L2 speaker and L1 speakers' conscious first preference of sentence forms presented in exercise 4 of the questionnaire.

Table 2 Conscious 1st preference E3PPs of L2 speaker and L1 speakers.

Subjects		L2 speakers = 30	L1 speakers = 26	Total = 56
Tokens				
All singular avoid		3	2	5
All plural		15	8	23
Plural head	<i>they</i>	2	1	3
	<i>he</i>	0	0	0
	<i>she</i>	0	0	0
	disjunctive	0	0	0
	repeated	1	2	3
Singular head	<i>they</i>	2	3	5
	<i>he</i>	10	1	11
	<i>she</i>	0	2	2
	disjunctive	0	2	2
	repeated	4	12	16
	none	2	6	8

Summary of conscious 1st preferences (Table 2)

L2 speakers displayed a strong preference for the all plural form of the sentence presented (15 out of 30, 17 including the plural form with *they* co-referent to the singular subordinate antecedent), followed by a form of

all singular (9 out of 30, 12 including the all singular avoidance form), most with *he* anaphoric to both antecedents.

The most striking result is the inconsistency between L2 speaker's unconscious and conscious choices; their unconscious preference for singular *he* changed to all plural *they* (15). They did, however continue a preference for *he* in singular structures. Their tendency to repeat or rephrase the antecedent in the open response exercise was not a skill they employed for the subordinate antecedent in the conscious preference exercise. Notably, no L2 speakers altered co-text.

Evaluation & discussion

Limitations of the sample study

There were a number of drawbacks that cast doubt on the results. The subjects' level of ability and fluency in English was not assessed systematically. The study was not triangulated with interviews of all the subjects, which might have yielded answers to questions about background experiences that contribute to the subjects' choice of E3PP. The questionnaire design could have been more reliable had a "panel of experts" been used "to establish content validity" (Hullah, 2003:14).

Nevertheless, I regard the questionnaire as having enough internal consistency (similar questions) to ensure its reliability. In addition, anecdotal reports from respondents saying they didn't guess the purpose of it until the end, suggest there is a reliable contrast between the habitual and subjective results. The steady drop in the number of disjunctives toward the end of the questionnaire confirms the unconscious-to-conscious theory underlying its design as stylistic concerns about overusing disjunctives arose. The L1 speaker results concur with the findings of other researchers, validating the design and implementation of the study.

Interpretations and conclusions: The conservativeness of L2 speakers

The results suggest that *he* is the most commonly used E3PP by L2 speakers. This concurs with Schmidt and McCreary's (1977) findings about L2 speakers. In as much as *he* is grammatically singular and gender exclusive (and therefore considered socially inappropriate) it can be said that L2 speakers appear to be more concerned about the agreement rule. The discrepancy between the L2 speakers' habitual and subjective choices suggests ambivalence and

uncertainty. Nevertheless, an overall picture of EIL emerges; L2 speakers appear to lag behind, or follow the innovations of L1 speakers.

This study adds modestly to the small body of research on L2 speaker epicene pronoun use. Newman's study (1997) of L1 speakers demonstrates the value of spoken data taken from daily life, away from educational contexts in which respondents might feel they are being 'tested'. In places where L2 speakers might be more confident diverging from L1 speaker norms, such as Europe and Africa, there may be evidence of epicene pronoun use quite different to that found here. Clearly this line of enquiry is a fertile ground for further research.

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Appendices are available from author on request:

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Nightmare on Handover Street!!!

Martin McMorro

Ah, the day has finally come: the ordeal you swore you'd never willingly put yourself through again. Yet those years of therapy have finally erased the humiliation of your first attempt at presenting and now, here you are, ready to face the inscrutable ELT world again - this time with your laboriously planned and polished research project. Yes, the one where you "created a research space" big enough to park the space shuttle. And now - hedged and boosted within an inch of its ethnographic life - your baby is ready to face the world. Well, enrolment was smooth enough: no early morning drilling to shake your nerves, no coffee spills or wild-goose-chase hunting around for your room. You even managed to catch the plenary before wisely skipping the first session to go through your notes. So here you are at the seminar room door with 10 minutes to spare - just as indicated in the conference handbook. All that remains is to survive

__ 50 New presenter (NP) enters lecture theatre, unexpectedly finding him/herself silhouetted in the full-frontal glare of the projector

__ 51 Old presenter (OP) logs out, unplugs projector he/she didn't get round to using and removes elbow patches from corduroy presenting jacket

__ 52 OP momentarily extinguishes all lecture theatre lighting. NP gropes in the dark for lecture notes knocked out of hand by panic-stricken departing delegates

__ 53 OP and NP approach respectfully and yet subtly manage to avoid eye contact in a sophisticated attempt to cover up the fact they don't remember each other's names

__ 54 OP sighs heavily, remembering the crucial point about the research project that he/she forgot to mention at the end of the lecture

__ 55 NP breaks out in a cold sweat; OP gathers up all notes and books except for memory stick containing only copy of final draft of PhD dissertation. NP dislodges this and it falls behind redundant slide projector for the benefit of future archaeologists

__ 56 OP moves away from lectern, trips over step and drops 200 transparencies. Grabs them up in a random pile; NP presses everything on the console - including the fire alarm - in an attempt to lower screen. Only as it starts to go up does he/she realise it was already down

__ 57 A desultory huddle of conference delegates enters and immediately disperses to the far corners of the lecture theatre.

__ 58 OP attempts to leave lecture theatre, but door appears to be jammed; NP logs in and opens and closes several versions of PowerPoint presentation files with identical names followed by series of numbers.

Then, finally recalling what the numbers '2007' stand for, clicks on current course file. Meanwhile, one delegate asks: "Is this '101 songs for the Tone-Deaf Teacher?'". NP replies in the negative, upon which half of the audience shuffles out the door, humming out of tune

__ 59 OP makes out the word 'PULL' on the lecture room door and gracefully makes his/her egress

__ 00 NP grits teeth and clicks mouse. Against all odds, the first slide appears in the gloom. You've made it!

MyLinks

In this sixth column of MyLinks, you'll find again a few more websites on research and supporting resources. We hope you find them useful!

» *Scholarpedia* is 'the free peer reviewed encyclopedia written by scholars from all around the world.'

http://scholarpedia.org/article/Main_Page

» *TIP – Theory into Practice* 'is a tool intended to make learning and instructional theory more accessible to educators. The database contains brief summaries of 50 major theories of learning and instruction.'

<http://tip.psychology.org/index.html>

» *Visual ANOVA* provides visual explanations of the statistical procedure called ANOVA.

<http://www.psych.utah.edu/stat/introstats/anovaflash.html>

» *inventio* 'is 'a free peer-reviewed publication on creative thinking about learning and teaching.'

<http://www.doit.gmu.edu/inventio/>

» *Inquiry Strategies* offers ideas to help teachers 'create a climate for inquiry, support productive discussions, generate questions, plan investigations and gather data, guide consideration of evidence, and critically review research reports.'

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/inquiry/menu.html>

» *JoSoTL* is the Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, a free publication 'to promote effective practices in teaching and learning and add to the knowledge base.'

<http://www.iupui.edu/~josotl/index.htm>

» *Misunderstood Minds* provides interactive simulations of what it is like to have a deficit in writing, reading, math, or attention.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/attention.html>

» *The Harvard-Smithsonian Digital Video Library*, offers video clips of K-12 classes based on USA benchmarks, state standards and other instructional criteria... which might be also useful for training rooms elsewhere.

<http://hsdvl.org/instruction.php>

If you have comments, a request or a link to suggest, please do get in touch!

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