NEW ZEALAND STUDIES IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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'HAVE YOU SEEN A COTTON PLANT, ROMILA?'
AN EXAMINATION OF PARAPROFESSIONALS' QUESTIONING PRACTICES IN INITIAL
ESOL READING PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

This paper argues that the development of effective questioning skills for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) paraprofessionals should be a strong consideration for designers and practitioners of professional development programmes. Effective questioning is a vital teaching practice for promoting language learning in English Language Learners (ELLs), relying on a skill set that many paraprofessionals have only partially developed. The type of questions a paraprofessional asks students within a reading programme will shape the structure and content of student responses and will affect the level of meaning the student is able to acquire through engagement with the text. It will also impact on the extra-textual (outside of the text) knowledge the student links with the text. Based on a 2007 study of the practices of ESOL paraprofessionals supporting ELLs in initial reading programmes in schools (Harvey, Stacey & Richards, 2009), this paper examines the questioning practices of paraprofessionals in these contexts. In this qualitative study conducted with 24 paraprofessionals and their coordinating teachers across the Auckland region, the researchers analysed the questioning skills they observed, categorising them into three broad divisions. Given the paucity of research on the teaching engagements of paraprofessionals with ELLs, the paper addresses an important gap in the literature. The researchers strongly recommend the inclusion of effective questioning in any ESOL paraprofessional professional development programmes.

Introduction

Internationally, paraprofessionals have increasingly been employed in schools to support students with high needs in diverse areas including mental and physical disability, behaviour management and literacy and language. Concomitantly, in New Zealand paraprofessionals (more commonly known as teacher aides) have been employed since the late 1990s to assist English Language Learner (ELL) students in New Zealand schools.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education (2006) defines paraprofessionals as: 'Teacher aides and education, behaviour and communication support workers' and in turn defines teacher aides as 'People who help educators support students and young people who have special education needs, also known as kaiawhina and paraprofessionals'. Those paraprofessionals employed to work with ELLs in New Zealand schools may be

from a variety of employment and educational backgrounds and might be bilingual, multilingual or English-speaking only. Equally, they may be employed to support the work of teachers in a variety of ways. Ministry suggestions for the ways in which paraprofessionals can be deployed in ESOL work are in Table 1.

Table 1: Suggestions for the ways in which paraprofessionals can be deployed in ESOL work

Read to and with a small group of students, with supportive activities and discussion
Work through the Self-Pacing Boxes programme with individuals or small groups
Develop key oral and written vocabulary in a specific curriculum, topic or concept area, through discussion and using visual support materials with a group
Support first language translation and interpretation to aid learning
Be available in a class to support NESB students in carrying out specific learning tasks set by the class teacher
Prepare and organise materials and learning support resources under teacher direction
Supervise learning centres established by the teacher

(Ministry of Education, 2006)

In practice ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) paraprofessionals are deployed in a range of roles from teacher-directed to more autonomous support of student learning. Much of their work is directly instructional. Moreover some ESOL paraprofessionals may spend up to five hours a week with any one ELL. The context for this paper is that of initial reading instruction and literacy engagement for ELLs (Harvey, Stacey & Richards, 2009) where paraprofessionals work as in-class support, alternatively with withdrawal groups, or in one-to-one situations to give students the more focussed attention in reading that they need. The required pedagogical skills range from working sensitively with a culturally and linguistically diverse group of students, to giving appropriate feedback to students, to an ability to select and prepare materials at the correct English language level. An important skill in all instructional engagements is the nature, range and pacing of questioning. For paraprofessionals working with ELLs who are learning to read, the type of questions a paraprofessional asks students within a reading programme will shape the structure and content of student responses and will affect the level of meaning the student is able to acquire through involvement with the text. It will also impact on the extra-textual (outside of the text) knowledge the student links with the text. Based on a study of paraprofessional practices in supporting initial reading programmes conducted in 2007 (Harvey et al., 2009) this paper examines the questioning practices of paraprofessionals when working with ELLs across the New Zealand school system, from Years 1-13. The study was originally commissioned by the Ministry of Education to investigate the wider practices of paraprofessionals in these contexts.

The 2007 qualitative study (Harvey et al., 2009) was conducted throughout the Auckland region with 28 participating schools (four at Years 1-4, eight at Years 5-6, eight at Years 7-8 and eight at Years 9-13). The data for the project was gathered through observations and interviews augmented by ERO (Education Review Office) reports as well as ESOL verification reports obtained through the Ministry of Education. All data was recorded as handwritten notes and later written into electronic data files. There was no electronic recording of data during the observations or interviews so as to avoid disrupting the class further in observations, and to conduct the interviews in as unobtrusive manner as possible. The presence of a researcher in the room with students and paraprofessionals was in itself intrusive to some degree (Labov's [1972] observer's paradox) and electronic recording would have been even more distracting. While handwritten notes are not the most usual way of recording spoken data, in the context of initial reading with ELLs, it was satisfactory because of the slow pace of many paraprofessional-student interactions.

For Years 1-4, four coordinating teachers with responsibility for paraprofessionals working in ESOL and initial reading in particular, were interviewed to discuss the organisation and practices of ESOL paraprofessionals in their school. For Years 5-13, data was gathered through 48 observations of 24 paraprofessionals working in the classroom and 24 interviews with the same paraprofessionals together with their coordinating teachers. The interviews and observations were equally divided between primary (Years 5-6), intermediate (Years 7-8) and secondary (Years 9-13) schools. ELLs in New Zealand schools across the age levels range in English language proficiency from those with virtually no English (very new migrants) to those with near native level proficiency. Because this study focussed on initial reading and literacy programmes, the observed paraprofessionals were working with ELLs who generally had low levels of proficiency in English.

Literature review

Much of the literature on questioning examines teacher practice in mainstream reading and other subject contexts. However, there is a paucity of research available on the questioning practices of paraprofessionals working with ELLs. Therefore it is important to consider literature on teacher questioning in order to identify the characteristics needed by paraprofessionals as they are increasingly given the responsibility of supporting ELLs in their educational programs. We argue that *any* educators charged with the responsibility of developing student learning need to be able to question effectively if student time and energy is to be appropriately engaged.

Teacher questioning in western countries has long been recognised as an important strategy or skill needed to encourage student learning. Teachers use questions for many purposes in the classroom for both whole-class teaching and when working with small groups. Research on teaching discourse shows a common questioning pattern involving a teacher initiating interaction with a question followed by the student's response and then teacher feedback. The Initiate, Response and Feedback pattern, although not common in adult interaction, is used extensively between

parents and young children at home as well as in the teacher-student relationship in the classroom to encourage the core goal of student learning (Seedhouse, 1996; Cazden, 2001; Guan Eng Ho, 2005; Wright, 2005).

The patterning of questions established by teachers in classrooms determines to a very large extent the kind of response they will receive from their students and in turn the effect this will have on developing learning (Falk-Ross, Grossi, Nordmeyer, Stanfield, Griffen & Wallace, 2003). Language teacher questions have traditionally been categorised into two groups, display questions, where the learner's response is already known to the teacher, and referential questions, where the response is not known to the teacher and learners are encouraged to make links with the world outside the classroom (Nunn, 1999). However in her study of ESOL teacher questions during reading comprehension in the secondary school language classroom, Guan Eng Ho (2005) found it difficult to categorise teacher's questions and like Van Lier (1988) recommended that the analysis of question types should go beyond prescriptive labelling. Van Lier (1988) suggested the merits and values of different question types were of less importance than the *purpose* of questions, the tasks questions set for learners and the type and length of utterance they encourage.

Questions promoting understanding for learners when beginning to read include factual or literal questions. These demand information retrieval of basic information from a text as a starting point for the learner to possibly identify prior knowledge before moving on to more complex thinking. Inferential or speculative questions asking for opinion and imaginings or ideas promote deeper learner understanding of the text and its context. Further, a third level of thinking is introduced through process questions that invite learners to explain their thinking, for example, *Why do you think that*?, and also demonstrate understanding of their learning, for example, *How do you know that*? (Myhill & Dunkin, 2002).

However, it is not only the purpose of questions that needs consideration in developing reading but also the stage of the reading lesson at which the questions are asked. Effective teachers ask questions for differing purposes at different stages of a reading lesson. Questions at the start of the lesson can help the learner make connections and prepare them to readily engage with the text, they help the reader to predict and set a purpose for reading. Questions during reading help to clarify and review reading and give the practitioner an opportunity to check learner's comprehension of the text. Questions asked post reading can reinforce the concept that reading is for understanding the meaning of a text, helping learners to think critically and to make connections to their wider contexts (Ministry of Education, 2003).

In a study of whole class interaction in literacy, numeracy and other areas of the curriculum with Year 2 and Year 6 learners, Myhill & Dunkin (2005) analysed the type and purpose of teacher questions and how they were used to move the learner from what was already known to new knowledge. One finding was that literacy teachers asked more factual questions that checked understanding than teachers in other subject areas. The authors suggested that many of these questions demanded

only low level retrieval of information and required short responses from students. A later study on teacher-class interaction in literacy contexts by Myhill (2006) revealed the potential of teacher talk both to develop learners' understanding or alternatively and worryingly to actually impede learning.

An important part of effective questioning in the ESOL classroom is the teacher's skill in question delivery (Ur, 1996). ESOL teachers need to ask questions using language which is graded appropriate to the English language proficiency level of the learners. Questions also need to be well constructed, precise and grammatically accurate so they do not cause confusion. Ideally for the initial ELL reader, questions should be formulated into single clauses. Asking questions with more than one clause and adding hypothetical language and modality quickly overloads the student who will subsequently be unlikely to attempt a response. Practitioners who question effectively also allow sufficient 'wait time' for ELLs to process information and to reflect on what has been asked before they respond (Rowe, 1986). Writing about his research with learners more generally, Stahl (1994) has argued that periods of uninterrupted silence, that is 'wait time' or 'think time', assist learners to fully process information and complete cognitive tasks. In fact, both learners and teachers benefit from extended wait time. In his research Stahl (1994) reported that when learners had periods of silence after a question was asked, there was deeper engagement, their responses lengthened and in turn they received more effective feedback. In addition, teachers decreased the number of questions they asked overall giving *them* more 'think time' to formulate higher quality questions. These more focussed and varied questions promoted higher order thinking in students (Stahl, 1994).

From the literature on teachers' questioning practices, it is evident that questioning by paraprofessionals in relation to initial ESOL reading programmes needs to be varied in purpose and character, conducive to higher levels of thinking and reading and should push the students to look inside and outside the text for answers. An added complexity in dealing with ELLs is that questioning also needs to promote a greater proficiency in English. This means that students need to be building their English language proficiency through their reading engagements (Purdy, 2008). Although it may seem like a high expectation, where paraprofessionals are working to develop student language proficiency and particularly reading, any targeted professional development needs to incorporate the aspects of questioning that effective teachers employ. If this does not happen then learning opportunities for students will be lost.

Discussion of findings

When observing paraprofessionals working with learners the researchers recorded the range of question types asked, the complexity of language used to ask questions and the paraprofessionals' question delivery. Importantly they also noted learner response to questions and the level of learner engagement paraprofessionals' questions encouraged. The skill levels of the 24 paraprofessionals in this research were

categorised into three groups: proficient questioners, those who could question effectively in supported situations and those who were not skilled in their questioning (Harvey et al., 2009).

Proficient questioners

The first group, nine paraprofessionals in all, were considered proficient questioners, employing well developed strategies when working with ELLs in most of the observed situations. They were able to ask learners a range of questions whether working with comprehensive support material in the form of guided teachers' notes such as in the *Rainbow Reading* programme, as well as when working with texts where there were no clear teacher guidelines. This group of paraprofessionals asked factual questions that prompted accurate answers and allowed learners to display some previous knowledge. As well, they could ask questions designed to gauge student knowledge of language structures and vocabulary and they also were able to ask speculative questions that helped stimulate a more complex and lengthy linguistic utterance from the student. In addition, some paraprofessionals asked questions that prompted students to articulate their understanding of how language worked. In Figure 1 the paraprofessional working with two students during reading, began the turn with a one-clause, referential question.

The paraprofessional was using Self-Pacing Boxes to develop reading and promote oral language. She was working on the consonant blend ' fr ' with two Year 7 students (one Korean, one Chinese). There was a focus on the short and long form of the word fridge –refrigerator, which led to other similar short and long forms maths- mathematics.

Paraprofessional:	*What's the word for maths in Korean?*
Korean Student:	*suhak*
Paraprofessional:	*What about in Chinese?*
Chinese student:	*shu xue*
Korean student:	*Long time ago we used Chinese words so some words nearly the same—like verb.*
Chinese student:	*What's verb in Korea?*
Korean student:	*dongsa*
Paraprofessional:	*That's the same in my language. I speak Afrikaans and Mrs S speaks Dutch. We are nearly the same….*

Figure 1: Paraprofessional successfully prompting learners to articulate understanding of their learning

This question required the Korean student firstly to give the paraprofessional factual information about the Korean language that was unknown to her. In doing this the paraprofessional was checking that the student understood the concept of maths and she also enabled the student to make lexical links between first language (L1) and second language (L2). Although the Korean student's first utterance was a single word, the question set up a productive exchange between both students and the paraprofessional. The Korean student's second utterance was fifteen words in length. The Chinese student, in his second utterance directed a question to his classmate attempting to model the paraprofessional's question.

The paraprofessionals who were proficient questioners also timed their questions well, providing the appropriate wait time needed for students to formulate their answer. In terms of delivery and pacing, these paraprofessionals asked questions before learners began to read, moving them from the known to the new. Questions were asked during reading to monitor students for accuracy and their understanding of the text. They also prompted learners to evaluate the story and make personal connections. At the post reading stage paraprofessionals were able to question to help reinforce student understanding and establish links with the world beyond the text. They listened carefully to learners' responses and gave effective feedback as evidenced in the exchange in Figure 2.

In this exchange the paraprofessional asked a single-clause referential question giving the learner an opportunity to make links between her own experience and that of the text. The question was asked in the present perfect tense in order to ask about the learner's experience. The student's response comprised two sentences. The first was a direct and grammatically accurate short answer to the question while the second sentence was considerably elaborated at fifteen words in length. In this answer the student skilfully linked the text with her own experience. The paraprofessional in her response reformulated the student's final clause modelling the correct grammar and also extended the learner's vocabulary by providing the meaning for 'generous' with 'gives it to people'.

The Pacific Island paraprofessional was working with Year 7 learners and their Home Reading books. The Pacific Island student had selected the book and read it at home. The teacher was listening to her read aloud and was asking questions before signing the book off in the student's reading notebook.

Paraprofessional: *Have you seen a cotton plant Romila?*
Student: *Yes I have. My grandma has a lot in her garden, she packs it and gives it people*
Paraprofessional: *Gives it to people, she's very generous.*

Figure 2: Paraprofessional successfully giving feedback to learner in one to one reading

A delivery skill of paraprofessionals proficient in questioning was their ability to draw out more reticent learners through the use of judiciously targeted questions. For example, in two observations in Years 5-6, paraprofessionals specifically directed their questions at very quiet girls and this was appreciated by the girls who then had the space to contribute to lessons otherwise dominated by boys. It is interesting to note that the group of paraprofessionals who were proficient questioners were mostly overseas born and multilingual with tertiary qualifications from their own countries. As well they tended to have extensive experience in teaching.

Effective questioners in supported contexts

The second group of paraprofessionals, numbering seven, were observed to be competent at questioning when they were using commercially prepared reading resources or other teacher-prepared resources which had accompanying teacher guidelines. Paraprofessionals in this group were observed using *Rainbow Readers* and *Self-Pacing Boxes*, as well as other texts all of which had clear guidelines on how to work with the resource. When they were working one to one or with students in small groups, paraprofessionals used the teaching guidelines, systematically asking the set questions in the teacher notes. Students were encouraged to predict the story content using pictures and other visual clues. As well, learners were asked questions that checked both knowledge of language and comprehension of content. These paraprofessionals usually allowed some wait and think time for the learners to answer. Having the questions prepared (in the commercial materials) and at hand seemed to provide paraprofessionals with the confidence to tolerate some silence while students thought of an answer. In contexts where the paraprofessional was very familiar with the set reader and the guiding notes they led the learner successfully through the reading text, from the pre-reading stage through to a productive post-reading stage, using a wide range of questions appropriately. In these classes students were engaged and learning was observed to be taking place.

In some situations students were given useful feedback enabling them to personalise and make connections to the text. However, other paraprofessionals were less able to elaborate effectively at the feedback stage of an exchange. This may have been because they were not able to access a 'script' for this part of the learning situation and therefore felt less confident and knowledgeable in their exchange with the student. Figure 3 is an example of a paraprofessional using published teacher resources to develop initial reading with learners. In this exchange the questions elicit student language and prepare them for reading. However there is no feedback to students on the appropriateness of their answers and therefore no effective elaboration as in the previous examples in Figures 1 and 2. The paraprofessional simply follows the questions as set out in the resource.

> *The bi-lingual paraprofessional was working with two Year 7 Korean students using commercial resources. The group were preparing for re-reading a story they had had in a previous session.*
>
> Paraprofessional: *(looking at the cover of story with students) The cat is wearing a green necklace.*
> Student 1: *Cat is sit on skateboard.*
> Student 2: *Cat ride skateboard and he fell off.*
> Paraprofessional: *Who is the man talking to the children?*
> Student 2: *Father tells them 'don't watch TV'*
> Paraprofessional: *What happened? Where are they? Lets' read and find out. (Students read.)*

Figure 3: Paraprofessional using guiding notes to develop learners' reading

In Figure 3 the paraprofessional at the start of the lesson began the turn by revising language related to the story. She then asked the students a display question. One student gave a limited short answer and the second student gave a more extended utterance. Both answers were correct but instead of acknowledging this through reformulation or other positive feedback the paraprofessional went straight on to the next question in the guidelines. The next display question then moved the students on to review more information about the story. The final questions were rhetorical only and served to instruct the students to read silently.

The paraprofessionals who were able to use guiding notes to ask set questions effectively and engage learners had a range of backgrounds. Some were monolingual and New Zealand-born while others in this group were overseas- born and bi- or multilingual.

Unskilled questioners

The third group of eight paraprofessionals were relatively unskilled in their questioning over a range of criteria (for example, type and purpose of question, suitability of question for stage of learning, delivery, complexity of question, question structure and wait time). This group of paraprofessionals tended to be using reading resources where fewer appropriate teacher guidelines were available. In some cases although there were guidelines they were prepared for first language speakers of English rather than ELL students which meant that the level of English in the questions was too complex for beginner learners. In other instances the paraprofessional was in a situation where there were no teacher guidelines and they were required to work with learners with texts they may not have read or prepared for previously. Researchers observed sessions where students were bombarded with questions, with the paraprofessional asking questions in quick succession and offering students little or no wait time (see Figure 4). The result

was that students produced minimal utterances themselves and gained little or no understanding or insight into the reading text.

> *The paraprofessional was working with six Year 7-8 learners with a group for reading support using School Journal Part 2. Students were reading aloud along with the paraprofessional (some students muttering, most articulating some words).*
>
> Paraprofessional: *Lots of Maori words let's leave these and move on.*
> Paraprofessional: *Does anyone know what a nose flute is? What's a nose flute?*
> Students: *(No response.)*
> Paraprofessional: *Can you explain what a nose flute is? Have you had a go at one? What is a nose flute?*
> Student: *Yep, put it at the nose.*
> Paraprofessional: *What about the word in the story 'appeal'. What does that mean? Appeal, appeal?*
> Students: *No response*
> Paraprofessional: *Think of it and put it in a sentence.*
> Student: *Appeal my eyes.*
> Paraprofessional: *No.*
> Students: *(laughing and joking.)*

Figure 4: Paraprofessional attempting reading support with a group of learners

In Figure 4 students were attempting to decode Maori words in the text but because they seemed to be struggling with pronunciation the paraprofessional moved them on quickly by asking a question about an item in the story which she thought would attract their interest (the nose flute). Her first question was a display question which with extended wait time may have elicited a number of responses. However, without providing any wait or think time the paraprofessional reformulated the question with a simple open question. The students gave no response and so the paraprofessional continued to try to elicit responses through rephrasing and repeating the question. Again with no response time, the paraprofessional asked a new question before returning to the original question. After five questions in progression one student did give a limited response, however the paraprofessional gave no acknowledgement or extended reformulation to build student learning. She then moved on to a completely new area of checking word meaning. In one turn the paraprofessional asked three questions that were decontextualised. There was no lead-in to the questions, for example, reading the sentence to the students. Still with no response the paraprofessional encouraged learners to make a sentence with the word. This elicited a response that showed that one student did have some idea of the meaning of the word, however, this was not accepted by the paraprofessional. This resulted in the students losing focus and interest in the lesson.

A compounding feature of ineffective questioning was when paraprofessionals answered their questions themselves. This could have been for several reasons. Either

they had asked a question that was too difficult in terms of the structure or the content matter was unfamiliar to the students. Often the paraprofessional realised as soon as the question had been asked that the students did not understand and so answered herself to cover up any awkwardness (silence) in the lesson. In some cases students might have been able to answer the question but were simply not given the wait time to think about and formulate an answer.

Another issue for this group of paraprofessionals was a tendency not to modify their language complexity level for ELLs, repeating relatively complex questions slowly and loudly rather than reformulating them into simpler English. One example was a paraprofessional working with one ELL at Year 7 (see Figure 5).

In this exchange the paraprofessional was trying to develop ELL oral language for explaining the process of growing seeds. While the exchange began with a productive student response, the student was not able to contribute much more because of the nature of the questioning that followed. There were two complex questions in the exchange which resulted in no response from the student because he did not understand the question. After the student's first response '*put seeds*' the paraprofessional closed down further student contribution with another question: '*After you sprinkle the seeds what must you do?*'. This was a two clause question where the time reference was thematised. For an ELL the more logical positioning would be to place the time marker in the rheme and to thematise the 'wh' question, in this case the call to action i.e. *What must you do…?* In addition the verb '*sprinkle*' was new for the student but not explained or reformulated for him. Also, the strong modality of the verb *must* may not have been understood by the student and could have been replaced by the more high frequency verb *do*.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Paraprofessional working one to one with ELL. Student was reading aloud from completed work sheet on procedure for growing seeds.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Paraprofessional:</td><td>What do you do first?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Student:</td><td>Put seeds.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Paraprofessional:</td><td>After you sprinkle the seeds what must you do?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Student:</td><td>(No response.)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Paraprofessional:</td><td>(checking work) Seeds, wrong spelling again!</td></tr>
<tr><td>Student:</td><td>(Rubs out and changes spelling.)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Paraprofessional:</td><td>What do you put on after the cotton-wool?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Student:</td><td>Seeds.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Paraprofessional:</td><td>Yes, good and water. What do you think might happen after they had put them in the water?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Student:</td><td>(No response.)</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 5: Paraprofessional attempting to develop oral language based on a reading text

In the second complex question '*What do you think might happen after they had put them in the water?*' the student was also unable to respond. The question was not grammatically correct and the use of time referencing was confusing. Even if the sentence had been correct, i.e. '*What do you think might have happened after they had put them in the water?*', the time referencing and other grammatical features made the question too complex for a new learner of English. The use of the modal verb *might* introduced a strongly hypothetical element which increased the cognitive burden of answering. Asking a question with more than one clause (three in this case) also made the question more difficult to understand. The ELL (an emergent reader) did not respond, subsequently got no feedback from the paraprofessional and no learning appeared to have taken place. A reformulation that could have worked more effectively would have been: '*They put them in the water. What happened next*?'

When they did ask correctly formed factual questions, this less skilled group of paraprofessionals mainly questioned word meaning and pronunciation or focused on surface level features such as full stops and capital letters. The lack of variety failed to lead the students into considering comprehension of the text itself or how the text related to the wider world, for example, *What does [word] mean*?, *Do you know 'giggle'?, What is 'snip'?*. Alternatively they pointed and said *How do you say that word?* Sometimes they asked closed questions that required minimal answers from students and no learner engagement in the text at all, for example, *Was that hard?, Did you understand that?, Do you want to read another one?*. With this group of paraprofessionals, learners had minimal opportunity to extend their English language proficiency, make links with their prior knowledge or think critically about the reading text.

Conclusion

Effective questioning plays a vital role in ESOL teaching and learning. As this study proceeded it became apparent that ability in questioning was a strong indicator for overall skill as an ESOL practitioner. Where paraprofessionals were able to question appropriately, the ELL group was likely to be focussed on the task at hand and learning was likely to be occurring. This skill appears to be so important for English language and reading development in ELLs that an explicit focus on questioning needs to be an integral part of any ESOL professional development programme. Paraprofessionals need to have opportunities to observe and analyse a range of questioning models and practices. In doing this they should examine the linguistic structure and cognitive load (in terms of grammatical structure and vocabulary) of questions for different purposes and learners' levels of English ability. In addition, question delivery (incorporating think time, graded language, single-clause questions, attention to lesson stage and purpose of questions) needs to be considered so learning is developed and not impeded (Myhill, 2006). Developing effective questioning skills may require an extended period of time. Until it becomes automatic, paraprofessionals need to be able to access a flexible 'script' for appropriate questioning (and its important partner, feedback), either through their lesson

preparation with their coordinating teacher or through teacher notes in commercial materials and other classroom resources.

Moreover, for paraprofessionals who are developing questioning skills, a regular programme of observation and feedback by teachers needs to be in place. In the 2007 study (Harvey et al., 2009) paraprofessionals were enthusiastic about receiving more guidance and would have welcomed regular observations and feedback. However, many coordinating teachers were too busy to accommodate this. Equally, it would be very beneficial for paraprofessionals to observe teachers who are skilled at questioning in ESOL contexts. As paraprofessionals are increasingly utilised to support ELLs in their English language development they need support and ongoing professional development in order to make a worthwhile contribution to ELL learning across the compulsory school sector.

Acknowledgements

Acronyms

ELL	English Language Learner
ERO	Education Review Office
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
L1	First language
L2	Second language
NESB	Non English Speaking Background

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DIFFERENCES OF OPINION: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING ADDRESSIVITY IN INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

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An essential marker of the utterance is its quality of being directed to someone, its *addressivity*…Both the composition and, particularly, the style of the utterance depend on those to whom the utterance is addressed, how the speaker (or writer) senses and imagines the addressees, and the force of the effect on the utterance, Each speech genre in each area of communication has its own typical conception of the addressee, and this defines it as a genre (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 95–emphasis in original).

Abstract

This paper considers the extent to which research participants express their opinions and attitudes differently, according to whether they are engaged in one-to-one interviews or in a focus group with members of their community of practice. While the respective advantages and disadvantages of using individual interviews and focus groups have been discussed in the research literature, there appears to have been no empirical work which has actually investigated this issue of addressivity. *This small-scale study sought to explore this empirical gap. Three teachers of English were individually interviewed about their attitudes towards the teaching of grammar, and–a week later–they participated in a focus group. In both sessions, the same questions were posed. The transcript of the findings reveals that both the content and the manner of the participants' responses differed in various ways, and some reasons for this divergence are suggested. Although this study is very limited in scope and its findings are extremely tentative, there may be interesting implications for qualitative researchers seeking to elicit people's attitudes.*

Introduction

Several doctoral and post doctoral research projects are being conducted at the University of Waikato informed by Activity Theory (Leont'ev 1978, 1981; Engeström, 1987, 2001), and most of these focus on the cognitive processes of teachers and/or learners, and in particular within the area of second language education. This brief report discusses a small-scale and exploratory study which was carried out within one of these projects to examine the way that individual language teachers differentially reported, in one-to-one interviews and in a focus group session, their attitudes towards the teaching of grammar in their specific context. In other words, it explores the issue of *addressivity,* referred to in the above quotation by Bakhtin, in communication in two similar genres. Although the study is very modest in scope, it is felt that its findings have interesting implications for any research

project whose primary data collection procedures include some form of oral elicitation.

It will begin with a brief overview of the main principles of Activity Theory, showing that interactions among members of an academic community of practice will inevitably be influenced by the power relationships of the institutional framework within which they work, as well as by insights gained through their membership of an external discourse community related to their specific discipline. This will be followed by a review of the importance of researching language teacher cognition, with particular regard to teachers' beliefs about the role of grammar in the language classroom, and the relative lack of research into teachers' beliefs in Asian contexts. It will also outline the underlying sources for their knowledge, beliefs and assumptions, among which interaction with other members of their community of practice is of particular interest. Although the major project is a holistic investigation of teachers' beliefs, this report more narrowly focuses on the way that such beliefs may be expressed through individual interviews and/or a focus group session. Thus there follows a discussion of methodological issues arising from a review of relevant literature concerning these two genres. The report will then present the research questions leading this exploratory study and describe the data collection methods used. The findings will be presented and discussed, and the report will conclude with the implications for other similar research projects.

Theoretical background

Central to Activity Theory is the notion of distributed cognition—"the mind does not work alone'" (Pea, 1993, p. 47). In other words, an individual's knowledge and understanding are shaped by dialogue with others in their community of practice (Wenger, 1998), which is characterized by mutual engagement in a joint enterprise, using a shared repertoire of common physical and symbolic artifacts, including specific uses of language. From an Activity Theory perspective, the engagement of members of a community of practice can be illustrated in the simple model proposed by Leont'ev (1981), in which they ('subjects') work together on a problem ('object/motive') to achieve one or more common goals ('outcomes'), and this interaction is mediated by material and symbolic artifacts ('tools'), the most important of which is language. Through dialogue, both thought and action are co-constructed by colleagues engaged in what Mercer (1995) refers to as 'social thinking' (see Figure 1).

However, any dialogue that may take place among such community members has to take into account the wider institutional environment, as can be seen in Engeström's (1987) expanded model of Activity Theory, which illustrates the relationships between individuals and the different components within the system (see Figure 2).
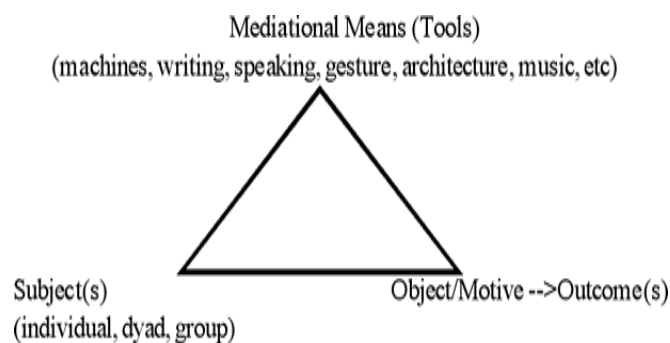
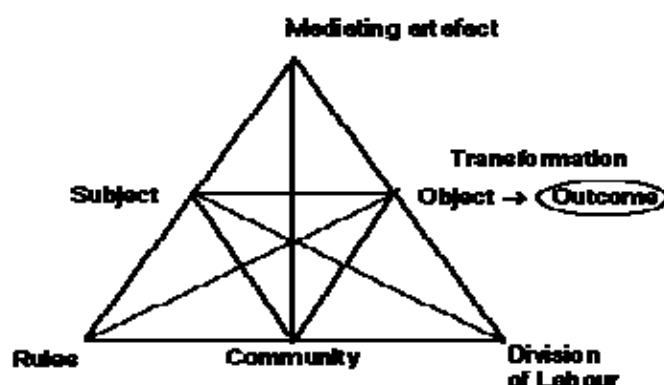**Figure 1: Leont'ev's (1981) model of an activity system**

Figure 2: The Structure of an Activity System (Engeström, 1987, p.78).

Individual and collective activity—and dialogue about this activity—is both facilitated and constrained by the social rules operating across the organisation ('activity system') within which they work; these rules include explicitly stated policies, laws and regulations as well as the implicit conventions, codes and *mores* that govern relationships among members of the institution, and which indeed reflect the norms and expectations of society at large. It needs to be added that individual members will vary in their understanding of, and adherence to, these rules, but they nevertheless constitute cultural boundary markers of a community. The division of labour refers to the horizontal allocation of tasks between community members; in an academic community of practice roles and responsibilities may be expected to be distributed according to the respective knowledge, skills and experience of librarians and registrars, of administrators and academics, of those who primarily teach and those whose interests are more inclined to scholarship and research, and so on. The division of labour also takes into account the vertical distribution of responsibility, status and power—for example, from the professor to the newly-appointed assistant lecturer—at various levels within the activity system. Thus power relationships are inevitably, to a greater or lesser extent, implicated in the discourse within collegial interactions.

Academic discourse and activity is also influenced by professional colleagues outside the specific activity system. Swales (1990) has made a useful distinction between speech and discourse communities: the former may be said to be locally-based groups who use language face-to-face, whereas discourse communities comprise

dispersed groups who communicate through texts. Thus, teachers who work in the same institution form part of a local speech community of practice by regularly meeting together to directly share their experiences, ideas and reflections on practice. At the same time, although separated by distance, there is a sense in which they are members of the wider discourse community of teaching practitioners by virtue of having encountered, indirectly through reading a common stock of academic works, similar constructs relating to their academic development and pedagogic practice. Therefore, an individual's beliefs about the nature of the activity in which s/he is engaged is motivated, among other things, by what has been internalized from dialogic engagement with fellow community members, whether physically proximate or distant.

Research into language teachers beliefs about grammar

For many years, educational research operated within a behaviourist paradigm, and considered activity of teaching and learning in terms of observable behaviour (e.g., Flanders, 1970), which viewed the meanings and intentions underlying such behaviour as unresearchable. However, as Clark and Peterson (1986) have claimed, teaching is "substantially influenced and even determined by teachers' underlying thinking" (p. 255) and the interrelationship between their underlying thinking--their knowledge, beliefs and assumptions (Woods, 1996)—and the various factors that give rise to this nexus. The importance of this has been recognised in mainstream education since the mid 1970s: "It is obvious that what teachers do is directed in no small measure by what they think" (National Institute of America, 1975), but it is only in the past fifteen years or so that there has been increasing interest in, and investigation of, the beliefs of language teachers in particular. Borg (2006) reviewed 64 studies of language teacher cognition, of which 38 focussed on grammar teaching. The overwhelming majority of these studies took place in Europe, Britain or North America: only ten involved Asian teachers. Very few other studies into Asian teachers' beliefs about grammar have been identified, such as Richards, Gallo and Renandya's (2001) survey of Asian EFL teachers, and a survey of EAP teachers in Vietnamese universities (Canh & Barnard, in press). Given the paucity of studies in Asian contexts it is felt that further studies, such as the present one, might modestly add to understanding of teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of grammar.

Borg (2006) suggests a wide range of factors underlying teachers' beliefs and practice. As reflective professional practitioners, they may well take into account insights derived from theoretical insights and empirical research studies from the wider discourse community to facilitate the development of their knowledge and pedagogy. However, their belief systems are affected by other factors, some of which relate to their background experience as language learners and/or their specialised professional development as language teachers—but others of which do not. For example, the beliefs of many teachers may be influenced by the imposition of authoritarian standards, either directly by inspectors, principals and heads of department, or indirectly by prescribed textbooks which may constitute the entire

curriculum. The specific context in which they carry out their teaching and especially perhaps, their understanding of the needs, interests and abilities of their students, will colour their value judgments and possibly lead to long-term changes in their belief systems. In short, language teaching "can be seen as a process which is defined by dynamic interactions among cognition, context and experience" (Borg, 2006, p. 275).

Methodological issues: interviews and focus groups

Of course, teachers' beliefs about their classroom activity cannot be directly observed, but explored only indirectly by one or other forms of elicitation and, as Bakhtin says, "each speech genre in each area of speech communication has its own typical conception of the addressee, and this defines it as a genre" (Bakhtin, 1995, p. 95). Most of the empirical studies of teacher cognition reviewed by Borg (2006) used surveys, in which the respondents were usually assured anonymity. There is, therefore, little sense of addressivity; this has both advantages and disadvantages, and probably the most important of the latter is the inability of the researcher to establish the truth value of the responses. Another genre sometimes used to elicit teachers' beliefs is to ask them to relate specific aspects of their experiences through reflective journals, retrospective accounts or autobiographies (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2009; Pavlenko, 2007). In this case, it may be assumed that the addressee is the authoring teacher him or herself. However, when the teacher is aware that what has been written is to be read by the researcher, the issue of addressivity may become clouded. Alternatively, what individuals believe can be elicited in interviews or focus groups. A definition of a standard interview may be "a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information" (Cannell & Kahn 1968, cited by Cohen & Manion 1994, p. 271). Much has been written over the years specifically about interviews as research instruments (e.g, Chase, 2003a, 2003b; Fontana & Frey, 1994; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Measor, 1985; Powney & Watts, 1987; Spindler & Spindler, 1987). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), "the interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, nonverbal, spoken and heard (p. 349). Thus, interviews are now accepted as a basic tool of qualitative research because "we cannot describe social activity at all without knowing what its constituent actors know, tacitly, as well as discursively" (Giddens 1984, p. 336).

There are some inevitable limitations to standard interviews, apart from issues of the time and possibly expense involved in collecting data from one-to-one dialogues compared to survey methods. It is often the case that the interviewer is not a member of the participant's local *speech* community, and this very contextual (-etic) distance, while facilitating a necessary ethnological distance, may lead to misunderstandings. As Morrison (1998, p. 209) points out, "much *academic* work is an internal discourse, and thus it is very difficult to brief the outsider on its intricacies" (emphasis added). Thus it is usually important that the interviewer be a member of the same academic *discourse* community as his or her research participants so that mutual -emic' understanding can be constructed during the ensuing collegial

dialogue. This enables both interlocutors to take into account the "apperceptive background" (Bakhtin, 1995, p. 954) i.e., the addressee's understanding of what is being said. Of course, it is necessary for interviewers to develop appropriate interpersonal skills to build a trusting rapport with their interviewees. However, one of the problems of interviews, affecting both the reliability and validity of the data thus co-constructed, is the inherently asymmetrical relationship between the interactants: "the rules of conversational discourse are flagrantly disregarded in the name of social science" (Ball, 1983, pp. 93-95). The researcher's need efficiently to address his or her agenda may lead him or her to exert undue control not only over the content and procedure of the interview but also over the interpersonal relationship. Interviewees will tend to adjust their responses to the presumed values of the researcher and, as Morrison (1998, p.186) has also pointed out with implicit reference to addressivity, "Respondents will enquire who you are working for, and despite assurances that the work is 'academic' one is never quite sure that the explanation is accepted".

To avoid undue imposition of the researcher and his or her agenda, a focus group session may be *facilitated*, rather than directed (which is usually the case with interviews) by the researcher as a means of exploring opinions, attitudes and understandings shared people from the same background. This approach was initiated by Kurt Lewin in 1936, and subsequently widely applied in market research; according to Morgan (1997), the use of focus groups has steadily increased in the social sciences, either as the sole or supplementary source of data, and there is a growing body of recent and useful literature (e.g., Morrison 1998; Sarantakos, 1989; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2007). In his review, Morrison (1998) points out that a focus group tends to be used more frequently in health research than in other areas, and compared with survey, it can produce more in-depth data. As Litosseliti (2003) says, a focus group facilitates "gaining insights into the ways in which individuals are influenced by others in a group situation" (p. 18), which could not be easily explored in individual interviews. Sarantakos (1998, pp. 181-182) suggests that it can be used both for such analysis of group interaction and also to bring forth new information created by the group in discussion, either as preparation for subsequent data collection or to triangulate data already collected by other means. Typically, with regard to the composition of focus groups in both market research and in social science research, it is usually recommended that the participants should belong to pre-determined categories (Morgan, 1997, pp. 67-68), but not be acquainted with each other (Goldman & McDonald, 1987, p. 37). However, from an Activity Analysis perspective, it is important that focus groups are comprised of members of the same speech community. This is because they share common knowledge of that community, though they may have different opinions on some issues. Thus, they can serve not only as a means of data collection but also as a way of clarifying meanings and co-constructing shared understandings of the group's activity. However, such dialogues are also influenced by power relationships within the activity system and this may affect what is said, and what may not be said. It is important, therefore, that the moderator, or facilitator, of the focus group discussion should not be a member of the same speech community, as s/he too would be implicated in such relationships.

However, if the facilitator is understood by the participants to be a member of the same *discourse* community, it is likely that s/he will be aware of the potential tensions to arise, without knowing the specific circumstances.

The respective advantages and disadvantages of interviews versus focus groups have been discussed (e.g., Morgan 1997, pp. 149-154; Goldman & McDonald, 1987, p. 37), and it is assumed that more data can be gained, and more cost-effectively, by group interaction than by individual interviews (Morgan, 1988; Lederman, 1990; Kitzinger, 1994). Rather than choose between the two approaches, Morgan (1997) suggests using them in combination: in one study (Morgan, 1992), individual interviews were used to facilitate the design of focus group; in another (Duncan & Morgan, 1994) individual interviews were used to confirm the data gained by focus group. However, what appears to be lacking in the recent research literature is an *empirical* examination of how issues relating to addressivity can be compared by actually eliciting the attitudes of the same research participants in individual interviews and in a focus group session. One study which is frequently cited (for example, by Morgan, 1997; Morrison, 1998) is that conducted by Fern (1982), in which the advantages and disadvantages of one-to-one interviews were compared to those of focus groups (of participants unknown to each other). Fern (1982) found by his research that individual interviews generate more and better quality ideas than focus groups. However, this study was concerned with the efficiency of data collected for market research purposes. The only other empirical study which has come to light is that by Wight (1994), who compared the results of individual interview and group interview of adolescent males' opinion on females. Half of the participants were interviewed individually then in groups, the other half were interviewed after the focus group sessions. He found that the participants who were first interviewed individually reacted more sensitively to the questions compared with those in the other three interviews. However, Wight (1994) didn't explain whether he asked the same questions in different kinds of interviews. Neither of the above studies specifically considered the issues of addressivity—the apperceptive relationship between interlocutors, and the effect this has on the discourse.

The study

This small-scale study arose, therefore, from the assumption that people will present and discuss their attitudes differently according to the audience, which may be a single interlocutor as in an individual interview, or several interactants as in a focus group dialogue. In particular, differences may emerge according to whether the addressees are perceived as insiders within the local speech community, or outside—perhaps as more distant members of a shared discourse community. Thus, the following questions motivated the study:
- To what extent do participants express the same attitudes in focus group sessions as they do in individual interviews?
- In what ways do they express their attitudes differently to different addressees?
- What might account for any divergences?

The participants in the study were members of an inter-university research team involved in a collaborative English language curriculum project. Information about their attitudes towards the teaching of grammar was solicited from three lecturers in the English Department of the overseas university—Martin, Yolanda and Emily (pseudonyms). Each was interviewed individually by one of two New Zealand members of the team, and the interviews (between 20 and 30 minutes in length) were video-recorded. These interviews were followed up four days later by a 30-minute (also video-recorded) focus group session facilitated by a doctoral candidate, who although recognised as a member of the wider discourse community, was not otherwise involved in the project. The same set of questions was asked in each interview and in the focus group session.

1. What do you understand by the word "grammar"?
2. Do you think it is important to teach grammar in language classrooms?
3. How much knowledge of 'grammar' do you believe teachers of English in your country need to have before they commence work in schools?
4. In your university, what do you understand to be the approach to the teaching of grammar?
5. In what ways do you believe the teaching of grammar at your university could be improved?

Discussion of findings

Transcription and analysis of the interviews and focus group yielded a great deal of interesting information and insights, but for the sake of both clarity and brevity only the transcription of the focus group relating to question 5 (In what ways you believe the teaching of grammar at your university could be improved?) is presented here. Transcripts of the relevant sections of the individual interviews are appended.

The first point to note is that a great deal more was said by each of the participants in the interviews than in the focus group session, as can be seen in Table 1. This is hardly surprising, given that each interview was approximately the same length as the group session. What is interesting is the respective proportions of talk in the focus group session: Martin had much to say both in his interview and in the group session, whereas the two women, while freely giving their opinions individually, were much less forthcoming in the group session.

Name Type	Martin	Yolanda	Emily
Interview	290 tokens	272 tokens	67 tokens
Focus Group	223 tokens	70 tokens	26 tokens

Table 1: Number of words (tokens) spoken by each participant in the two sessions

On the whole, Martin was active and fluent in both sessions In his individual interview, he freely discussed the need for more and better resources to improve the teaching of grammar in his university, but in the focus group (see Table 2), he avoided mentioning practical problems; rather, he talked more about what he believed to be the best way to teach grammar. Generally, however, he provided shorter and more general answers to questions, and seemed more reluctant within the group to provide specific information on sensitive issues, and exchanged eye contact with Emily when Yolanda raised these (lines 17-22). However, in this forum, he had the opportunity to review his previous thinking within this area, and the group session enabled him not only to share, but to develop and co-construct,   understanding with his colleagues to mutual benefit. There was evidence of what Mercer's (1995) 'social thinking' when he followed up Yolanda's point about evaluation (lines 23-30) and peer observation (lines 32-33 and 35-40).

Yolanda said much less in the focus group than in the interview, where she provided several possible solutions to improve the teaching of grammar in her context; she didn't mention any of these solutions in the focus group, where – like Emily – she deferred to Martin. For example, she agreed with Martin about the usefulness of workshops, and hesitatingly provided two other ideas which could be regarded as triggered by his point. This is an example of 'cumulative talk' (Mercer, 1995, p. 104) in which, by repetition, confirmation, agreement etc, participants may add to a partner's ideas, and thereby raise issues that the original speaker might not have considered. This, in turn can lead to Mercer's 'exploratory' talk, which consists of statements, opinions and suggestions offered for joint consideration; these may be challenged, but alternative hypotheses and reformulations are also proposed. Evidence of the emergence of such exploratory talk may be seen in Martin's final comments (35-40), and it is possible to conjecture that it could have stimulated further discussion beyond this specific context.

Compared with her readiness to respond to questions in her individual interview, Emily seemed very reluctant to talk in the group session. In her individual interview, Emily made two points about how the teaching of grammar might be improved in her university context – greater access to media and collegial meetings – but did not contribute to this issue in the group session, even when the value of workshops was being discussed by Yolanda and Martin. She always spoke after the others, never taking the initiative, and her responses were brief. She never contested the views of the others or provided new information. When her view was solicited by the facilitator (11-12), she merely echoed the points made previously by Martin and otherwise kept silent throughout the session. Despite her silence, she was attentive to the discourse; the video recording shows that she maintained eye-contact, especially with Martin, and her posture indicated that she was actively listening to what the others said. The presence of a silent, but contributing, auditor can be a useful stimulus for other participants to put forward their developing ideas on the social plane.

Facilitator (generally)	1 2	Do you think there are any ways to improve grammar teaching in your university?
Martin Martin leans forward, using gestures frequently to emphasize or facilitate the verbal expressions Emily looks at Martin while Yolanda plays with her hair, looking away.	3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Yes. Well, whether you want to improve or not depends on the condition: the way, the condition that you, er, face in teaching of students subjects. You think, ok, we have problems in teaching grammar, that you may as crowd, or workmates sitting together and then doing some activities in relation to grammar, so they can improve the way how teachers teach, through workshops or sharing ideas, not only for grammar, may be other subjects could improve the way how to teach.
Facilitator Looking at Emily.	11 12	Yes. Do you have any special ideas about how to improve grammar teaching?
Emily Yolanda covers her face, looks down. Martin folds his arms.	13 14 15	I think, as Martin say, the way you know/they say we have to improve our department or teachers, lecturers, you teach grammar, writing, everything you can.
Facilitator Looking at Yolanda.	16	To have workshops to discuss better ways
Yolanda Speaking with hand gestures, as she tries to find appropriate words. Emily looks at her with smile. Martin looks at Emily.	17 18 19 20 21 22	Well, I am not as other lecturers. I think it is a good idea like workshop, work colleagues, lecturers, actually teaching the grammar, the respect so they can like, er, propose, then like, evaluate their teaching. So they can have like, What can we call, make, take the advantage of the teaching and can apply to students.
Martin Emily looks intently at Martin while Yolanda plays with her hands, looking down.	23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	I think that is important. The evaluation is important. I think students, you can ask, can also give ideas to you to improve the way how to teach writing. So you know whether they understand or not. So evaluation is another way to evaluate the ways how we teach, advantages and disadvantages, problems of students. They can give you the solution, you know, something we call feedback, you know, contribute to the way how you could improve.
Yolanda	31	I think it is good through observation of each other's class
Martin	32 33	Well, I think in some cases we can do that. (Visit.) I can visit one of my teachers or (xx) teachers I can visit.
Yolanda Martin smiles	34	Your good friends
Martin Emily looks at Martine while Yolanda looks down and then lifts her head with smile.	35 36 37 38 39 40	If it is important, you can there probably and learn from the way they teach. You know, sometimes, of course different teachers may use different ways. You can come and notice, oh this what I have to do. She or he can come to my class and observe What I 'm teaching you should do this, you should do that. Oh, that is good , beautiful. make contribution to improve, how to teach.

Table 2: Transcript of the focus group discussion of question 5

Interpretations

Certain obvious biographical details may serve to explain the way that these individuals expressed (or did not express) their opinions in the two sessions. The three informants were all 'non-native' speakers of English with varying degrees of competence; Martin and Yolanda were the more fluent users of English, and this may be reflected in the amount of talk they produced in both sessions; by contrast, Emily had a more limited repertoire, but although her spoken contribution to the group sessions was very limited she still made many relevant and clearly-expressed comments in her individual interview. It was thought that gender issues might be significant, and although this did not seem to affect the quantity of what was said in either individual interviews or in the group session, it is noticeable in Table 2 that both women tended to defer to their male colleague in the focus group. Age is another factor that might have influenced the discourse, and indeed Yolanda, a generation younger than the other two, might well for this reason have refrained in the group session from discussing certain topics that stimulated her in the individual interviews. This may have been reinforced by the communication conventions of their South-East Asian cultural background, where age is *ipso facto* given more respect than in countries like New Zealand. The status attributed to age is also reinforced by their respective professional status; Martin is the head of the English department, Emily a longstanding lecturer, and Yolanda a very new member of staff at the university. Another likely variable is the perceived status of the interlocutor – the interviewers or the focus group facilitator—and the skills they may bring to the task at hand. Obviously a combination of these—and other—factors led to the qualitative and quantitative differences in the expression of their opinions during the two sessions. Another contributing factor is that the two (male 'native-speakers' of English) researchers conducting the individual interviews were older, and were perceived as having a higher academic standing, than the interviewees. The (female 'non-native speaker' of English) facilitator of the focus group session was about the same age and probably perceived as having the same academic and social status as Yolanda. These differences may have led to a deferential addressivity on the part of the three interviewees towards their interlocutor, and a lack of such overt deference towards the focus group facilitator. This is suggested by the interactants' verbal and nonverbal language in all the sessions, and the video recordings are being more fully analysed for both aspects as the project proceeds.

Implications

Given the need for researchers interested in teacher cognition to elicit their informants' verbal expressions of beliefs, attitudes and opinions, it is evident from the data in this study that the choice of either individual interview or focus group presents both opportunities and constraints. The three participants clearly provided more detailed information to address the researcher's specific questions in the individual interviews, and perhaps did so more readily than in the focus group session However, according to Activity Theory, individual motivation—and hence

cognition—is never separate from that of the community of practice. Therefore, the way that people express themselves and co-construct meaning through interactive dialogue may be a fair reflection of how they actually work, and think, together in their daily professional lives. Nevertheless, there are some inherent difficulties posed by focus groups, and participants may not react as they would when in one-to-one dialogue. For example, junior community members, such as Yolanda, may not express their opinions freely if this is likely to affect "their personal life or professional career" (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 185), and the data may have been "biased by a very dominant or opinionated member. More reserved group members may be hesitant to speak" (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2007, p. 43). Thus Emily and Yolanda may have felt Martin's presence, a constraining influence on the expression of their own ideas, partly because of his seniority and also perhaps because of his gender. It may be difficult to distinguish between an individual view and a group view—and it is obvious that there will be individual differences within any community of practice, however close, and any such differences may have been disguised in the focus group session. There is also the possibility, implicit in the present data, that the group may seek to present to the facilitator a united front that they do not in their actual professional life share. Clearly, too, the role of the facilitator is different from that of an interviewer; in the latter context, both parties normally expect the agenda to be explicitly led by the researcher, whereas in a focus group it is more likely that the facilitator will be, as far as possible, in the background both verbally and visibly. Without some intervention, verbal or nonverbal (such as in lines 11-12 and 16 in Table 2) this may lead to the group conversation going in directions unhelpful to the researcher, and it is more than possible that the group referred to issues well-understood among themselves, but perhaps incomprehensible to the facilitator (Morgan, 2002).

The findings of this very limited study of only three participants, and the above discussion, suggest that qualitative researchers seeking to investigate or explore attitudes of members of communities of practice may need to obtain both individual and collective viewpoints, and this suggests a judicious combination of individual interviews and focus group sessions. Therefore, depending on which is used for primary data collection, it would be appropriate to use the other to triangulate the findings in order to facilitate a richer interpretation of the participants' expressed attitudes and opinions. If only one elicitation instrument is applied, the researcher is likely to derive somewhat partial, if not distorted, data and his or her interpretations will thus tend to lose validity.

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APPENDIX: Transcripts of responses in the individual interviews to Question 5 (*In what ways you believe the teaching of grammar at your university could be improved?*).
Martin's interview

I think, er, our teachers need to always continue to (update) themselves the way how to teacher through various activities, by sharing knowledge, or through seminars in language teaching or through workshops, by, you know, small workshops by sharing information in relation to how to do teaching, for example. So these are probably we need to have sought to facilitate our teachers in English, especially in teaching grammar.

Well, there is the experience in the part I think. As I mentioned, we need more facilities which would facilitate not only students but also the teachers who want to improve more their knowledge in teaching, grammars or other areas. We need probably something like some materials, like self access materials or stuff which could be available. So that students, for example, the teachers, ok, I want to teach this area in relation to grammar, but maybe I need to go to the self access centre, so that I can look at this specific area, how to, how to deliver to students in a, er, well, a good manner. And then also when the teachers teach these students, ok, I teach this part of grammar to you, and then if you find this program difficult, you can go to and improve the area by CD ROMs, or by some games, or some materials you can access for yourself, in the library for example. So that is probably one way. Or probably could be some guidelines several of us prepared for teachers, for students, so they can improve their knowledge. This meaning not only students not only waiting for what the teacher says, writing down on the board, and copy everything, but they can go to access themselves, improve themselves through different facilities.

Yolanda's interview

Yeah, I think, yeah, if I need to suggest something. Er, as I said, you do by individually. Then maybe you cannot have somebody to ask for unless you come to the class. You know there is no group work. You cannot have others to ask. I think we should have group or three people or four because in East Timor we tend to have like, usually a room like this, like you teach forty or more than forty people, for example structure, that is the basic grammar. And you don't have like one and a half hour er, tutorial, lecture, lesson time. And then they say (xxx) not like form a group, like critical thinking why it should be formed like this? This formula should be like this. And what is the point we have to do this?

I think there is plenty of time. For example, you, you may have like, the size, or arrange your own time rather than in class. I mean you take other subject, for example, my friend take a subject, and we can meet one day rather than classes for example, all your teacher ask you to do, or you intend personally want to work in a group.

May be the teacher themselves, for example, the techniques, how they deliver, how to make it more fun, you know, teaching grammar is quite boring.   For example, Yeah, I find sometimes for example, during, after lunch time, or you know, and people sometime like oh, (xx) maybe perhaps some techniques. For example, warming-up or doing you know, er I don't know/ role play or something? Or, yeah.

Emily's interview

Yes, improve the grammar. Now I think the lecturers, they have access to the media, Media and you know, like to follow the meeting (class). It is important, you know, we can learn by this kind of meeting, of the resources, you know, other people. We can improve ourselves, to make more, more clear, our duty, you know, if you want to make other people understand more.

BLENDED LEARNING AND THE ACADEMIC WORD LISTS

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Abstract

This article explores innovative blended learning strategies for online access to the Academic Word Lists (Coxhead, 1998) within what is predominantly a face-to-face paper within an English for Academic Study programme. Reasons for the blend were to give students flexible access to the Academic Word Lists in terms of time and place and to engage students more actively in the learning process by enhancing opportunities for listening to the academic vocabulary items in sentence examples relating to further study contexts. Using a questionnaire, students evaluated the online learning activities. The findings indicate the blended approach appeals to a cross-section of learners and analysis suggests that the results were favourable, giving insights into the importance to learners of repetition, which assists the learning of academic skills for vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation.

Introduction

Recent developments in the use of digital technology for language teaching are creating new opportunities to extend content and media to actively engage learners. Course content has expanded through access to the Internet and new media has developed that allows for new ways of interaction between individual students, between students and computers, and students and teachers. Consequently, a new pedagogy is developing that utilises this content and media for learning and teaching. The present emphasis in pedagogy has moved away from delivering instruction in a predominantly teacher centred environment to facilitating learning in more student centred ones (Alonso, Lopez, Manrique, & Vines, 2005; Lea, Stephenson, & Troy, 2003; Rovai & Jordan, 2004). One learning environment that makes use of the advantages for learning that digital technology has created, is blended learning (Ellis, Steed, & Applebee, 2006; Graham, 2006; Singh & Reed, 2003). The blend described in this paper is a combination of e-learning, where students interact with computers, and of face-to-face teaching in a classroom.

This article argues that blended learning can hold answers to some of the challenges facing language teaching by accommodating diverse needs and learning styles, because blended learning is a flexible approach to course design, blending different times and places for learning without the complete loss of face-to-face contact. According to Rovai and Jordan (2004) and Graham (2006), the result is an improved educational experience. However, it is not just the blend that makes the difference, but rather a reconsideration of course design in light of the new instructional and media choices (Graham, 2006; Singh & Reed, 2001).

This article examines using a blended approach to enhance the learning of Coxhead's (1998) Academic Word Lists (AWL). It firstly examines the reasons for using a blended approach to online components of the AWL for an English for Academic Study (EAS) pre-degree programme at a university in New Zealand. The article then describes the study, presenting the findings and conclusions based on the responses to a questionnaire from students in both 2005 and 2006 in the EAS programme's Reading and Vocabulary Development paper. The results were overwhelmingly positive as regards student perceptions of the online paper components and for pronunciation, usage and retention of academic vocabulary.

Rationale for using blended approaches

According to *The New Zealand Herald* ("Internet Users," 2006) around 70% of New Zealand homes had Internet access in 2004 compared to 35% in 2000. For the "Asian and other ethnic groups" the figure was 79%. The Internet's emergence as a component of people's daily lives is being reflected in demands for it to feature centrally in any learning they may do. A blended approach suits those students who Prensky (2001), describes as "digital natives", raised on video games, email, the Web and instant messaging (p.1). According to Prensky, digital natives view technology as their friend and rely on it to study, work, relax and communicate. These students dominate many of our classrooms and the challenge facing educational designers is to develop learning opportunities that are appropriate to their cognitive learning patterns. This is being reflected in the shift away from learning to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) towards using ICT to learn (Murray & McPherson, 2005). Furthermore, Conacher, Taalas and Vogel (as cited in Chambers, Conacher, & Littlemore, 2004) state that the use of ICT for language-learning has an impact beyond the language classroom, as students not only develop linguistic and sociocultural expertise through ICT, but also acquire ICT-related skills through the use of the target language. According to Jonassen, Howland, Moore and Marra (2003), technologies can engage and support thinking when students learn with technology. Blended learning uses technology which involves students engaging with computers in writing, collaborating, communicating, doing group work, and in interpretation, criticism and analysis of complex problems (Bonk & Graham, 2006; Warschauer, 1996; Warschauer & Grimes, 2007). This can be accomplished by helping students develop active mastery of computers for their own production of knowledge, and be active users of technology (Jonassen et al., 2003) thus promoting a constructivist approach to learning.

One of the main outcomes of the increased uptake of e-learning, particularly in predominately campus-based universities, is the creation of student learning experiences that flow back and forth between face-to-face and online contexts. The facilitator cannot just replicate what was done in the traditional classroom online. The best medium and activities need to be selected in order for students to meet their learning outcomes (Sanders, 2006) and selected to take into account student and teacher preferred learning styles, motivational factors, degrees of student

independence, amount of feedback required, organisation skills and practical knowledge of technology (Alonso et al., 2005; Hagel & Shaw, 2007; Warschauer & Grimes, 2007). In the case of the EAS course that is the focus of this study, one of its four papers, the Reading and Vocabulary Development paper, is delivered in a blended learning mode consisting of three hours of face-to-face classroom teaching, one hour of students interacting with computers and six hours of independent study per week in a fifteen week semester. This blended learning process was designed over a period of time. Initially the blend consisted of the face-to-face program with the addition of some self-paced activities online, alongside email access and web links to extend the learning process.

Academic Word Lists

Academic vocabulary is a central part of a language as used in a university, and the more students can use these words correctly, the better they can communicate in a wide variety of circumstances (Coxhead, 2006). Coxhead lists several reasons for the importance of academic vocabulary to learners. One reason is that understanding and properly using academic vocabulary allows students to be part of the academic community. Also, to be successful at university, learners need to be able to show that they can read, understand and respond clearly in writing and speaking using academic language and concepts. Students also will frequently meet general academic words in their academic reading and these words occur in a wide variety of subject areas.

Coxhead (1998) developed the AWL based on data gathered from a large corpus of academic English of over 3.5 million running words of written academic text. She examined the range and frequency of words outside the first 2,000 most frequently occurring words of English. The AWL contains 570 word families that account for approximately 10% of the total words in academic texts but only 1.4% of the total words in a fiction collection of the same size. The composition of the Academic Corpus represented the disciplines of Arts (e.g. Education, History Linguistics, Philosophy), Commerce (Accounting, Management, Marketing), Law and Science (Mathematics, Biology). Coxhead argues that the AWL constitutes a specialised vocabulary with good coverage of academic texts, regardless of the subject area and that "94% of the words in the list occur in 20 or more of the 28 subject areas of the Academic Corpus" (Coxhead, 2000, p. 226). The word list has been divided into 10 sublists based on the frequency of occurrence.

While there has been some recent criticism of the applicability of the list across all disciplines (Hyland & Tse, 2007), it is argued here that the AWL is suitable for students who enrol on courses such as EAS as preparation for a variety of disciplinary communities such as business, social sciences, hospitality, art and design, computing and mathematical sciences, health sciences and applied sciences. As Eldridge (2008) suggests, it is wiser to use an at least partially universal literacy rather than engage in the task of identifying the multiple literacies that individual students in 'particularized contexts' might need (p.110). This article also advocates

the teaching and learning of vocabulary to include skills that can be transferred to any vocabulary whether technical, AWL or of general usage. By studying the AWL in a direct way, students can use the learning process as a scaffolding method (Love, 2002). Students can have support in learning the AWL and then use the skills developed for lifelong learning in situations where new words are encountered in a variety of contexts. Coxhead (2000) promotes direct learning and direct teaching of the words in the AWL. Courses that involve direct attention to language features have been found to result in better learning than courses that rely solely on incidental learning (Ellis et al., 2006; Long, 1988). EAS uses the 10 subdivisions of the AWL to enable students to set short-term vocabulary goals. Academic vocabulary study is thus an important part of the Reading and Vocabulary Development paper.

Background to the Study

When the study began in 2005, the vocabulary component of the course was based on an adapted copy of the General Service List (West, 1953) with example sentences in a course book of class activities. Student feedback from previous paper surveys indicated they wanted to be able to also listen to the vocabulary item, definition and the sentence examples. The blended learning approach to the academic vocabulary in this paper focuses on strategies to meet their needs. Initially, a class audio tape was recorded but with limited success as many of the students did not have easy access to tape recorders. Therefore that technology was not meeting the needs of all the students and this led to the opportunity to include technologies that would (Sanders, 2006).

The 2005 online component of the Reading and Vocabulary Development paper consisted of a facilitator-produced online multimedia activity with scripting in HTML and recording of 500 academic words from the course book (West, 1953) with one in five of the words having a recorded sentence. These were posted into the Blackboard LMS, and students could click on each word in order to see it written, hear it spoken and see and hear the word used in a sentence relating to academic study. Each vocabulary item showed pronunciation via stress markers. A weekly vocabulary test was created in the test manager in the Blackboard LMS, and used to give feedback to the students. Students could access this online component from home or university computers as often as they wished and at times to suit. This gave the students the opportunity to listen to the same material several times ensuring that the words and their context become more firmly part of the learners' vocabulary (Coxhead, 2006; Nation & Gu, 2007).

The study

The aim of the study was to gather data about student's perceptions of the learning activities within the blended paper. This study was based on two surveys (2005; 2006) of respondents believed to have relevant experience with using the online tools and the academic word lists. Approval for the research was obtained from the

University Ethics Committee to gather and store data using the Blackboard LMS survey manager. The first survey took place in the last week of semester two, 2005 and the second at the end of semester one, 2006. An invitation to take part in the survey was posted online and students completed it in their own time. Questions 1-3 were used to gather quantitative data about student demographics and questions 4-7 were used to gather qualitative data about the learning activities as well as suggestions for improvement (see Appendix One).

Findings, 2005 survey

Data gathered from the course statistics in the online paper reveal that student enrolments for Semester Two, 2005, were 52. Overall student usage of the online academic vocabulary programme recorded 6518 hits in 2005. Sentence listening for 2005 was 5712 hits or 84% of the total hit rate and online tests accounted for 816 hits or approximately 12% of the total.

The remaining findings are from the two identical surveys administered in the Blackboard LMS survey manager in 2005 and 2006. Out of a possible 52 enrolled students, 44% (n=23) completed the online survey in 2005. Findings for gender were 43% female and 57% male, and age range results were 16-19 years old at 9%, 20-24 years at 26%, 25-35 years at 30% and over 36 at 26%. The nationalities from the 22 students, who responded, were six from China and Korea, two from Ethiopia and Burma and one from Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, Somalia, Turkey and India.

Findings to the questions relating to Questions 4 and 5 on student attitudes to the reading and listening activities were all positive as regards the combination of the reading and listening with academic vocabulary, finding it advantageous for memory, meaning and pronunciation. Eleven students specifically mentioned the activity helping pronunciation and 10 commented on the benefits for learning academic vocabulary. Phrases such as "it made it easier", or "it helped me to remember unknown words", and "the best part was pronunciation practice", were frequent. Students suggested that improvements could be made in sound quality and by having more of the sentences and vocabulary items recorded.

Twenty-one of the 23 students responded to Questions 6 and 7 on the vocabulary online tests. All students found the tests to be helpful with comments like: "This is awesome. I learnt a lot and when I have to write an essay I have to be aware of which word is appropriate to use" and "The tests were quite tricky so it encourages us to think very carefully". Five students also commented on the user-friendly aspects of the test manager in the Blackboard LMS stating: "It's fun to do and user friendly," "I can get instant feedback" and "I can get results at the same time". Students also liked the repetition aspect with "you can repeat the test if you didn't do it well the first time." Suggestions for improvement were from four students and they related to having more tests and more class time spent on learning the academic vocabulary.

Facilitator response to the 2005 survey

The high number of hits to the online listening and reading of the University Word Lists, at 5172, was very encouraging to the facilitator who had designed and recorded this activity. Student comments support the gradual learning of academic vocabulary as advocated by Nation and Gu (2007), who assert that academic items need to be directly studied gradually and because there are too many of them, teaching needs to focus on the strategies for coping with them.

For 2006, a decision was made to use Coxhead's AWL rather than West's word lists because of the more transparent validity of the AWL. Students from the 2005 survey had made the suggestion for a better sound quality and to reflect this, the 2006 online design involved the facilitator using Sony Soloist to record 420 words and sentences from the first seven lists of Coxhead's AWL in a multimedia product created within Macromedia Authorware which produced a better sound and look to the 2005 version.

The second student suggestion was for more tests and this was actioned in the 2006 design and involved recycling of the AWL to suit a variety of learning styles through the creation of a bank of tests from the test manager and of MS PowerPoint quizzes which included adding more visual elements. These include guessing from context or using clues to infer meaning; using word cards, with one word on one side and a meaning on the other; using word part analysis into prefix, root and suffix; and using a dictionary to find meaning and promote independence. Students practise pronouncing the words and academic sentences, record a selection using an audio file recorder such as Audacity, and post the audio files in the discussion forum for feedback. According to Coxhead (2006), learners develop their knowledge of word forms incrementally by building up their knowledge slowly. Suggestions for facilitating this are to help learners notice the word forms, grammar and collocations of a target word in context. Nation and Gu (2007) stress the importance of using various repetition strategies, and for the online component of this blended course students can engage in a variety of learning activities such as substitution tables, matching exercises, true/false, and 'fill in the blank' or cloze exercises with key words removed in order for learners to notice and practise target vocabulary. Students could use the strategy of guessing from context or use clues to infer meaning. The two innovations provided opportunities for repetition and spaced retrieval which are considered to be important for giving learners exposure to the target vocabulary.

For additional practice students were directed to Web pages for gap filling exercises such as Cobb's Compleat Lexical Tutor http://www.lextutor.ca/, Hayward's AWL Gapmaker http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~alzsh3/acvocab/awlgapmaker.htm or Gerry's 'filling in gaps' exercises http://www.academicvocabularyexercises.com/.

Findings, 2006 survey

The student enrolments for semester one, 2006 were 42. Overall student usage of the online academic vocabulary programme recorded 14,000 hits in semester one 2006. Sentence listening for 2005 was 8160 hits or 57% of the total hit rate and online tests accounted for 5791 hits or approximately 40% of the total.

For 2006, of the 42 enrolled students 66% (n=29) completed the survey. Findings for gender were 59% female and 41% male and age range results were 16-19 years old at 0%, 20-24 years at 31%, 25-35 years at 48% and over 36 at 21%. The nationalities from the 25 students who responded to this question were eight from China and six from Korea, two from Somalia and Sri Lanka and one each from Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, Somalia, Turkey, Burma and Russia.

There were 27 responses out of a possible 29 for Questions 4 and 5 relating to the listening and reading activities. Five of the students linked this listening and reading activity to it assisting them in writing academic texts. "This area can help my writing and lead me to achieve high standards and they have helped us improve our reading and especially our writing." This connection to other skills, like reading and writing, supports Coxhead (2006), where the more academic words a student can use correctly the better will be their overall communication. There was also reference made to real life learning with "Academic vocabulary lists are very helpful in real life," and "Now I can read the newspapers and understanding what I read." Another student commented that the activity was good for speaking because "I feel speaking is like real life in this class." One student mentioned how they can evaluate themselves by listening and trying to copy the model pronunciation. This suggests that students are not just relying on the facilitator for feedback, but that they are beginning to develop autonomous learning skills. Suggestions for improvement from two students related to access speed from home computers.

Twenty five of the 29 students responded to Questions 6 and 7 on the online tests in the 2006 survey. Students commented on the flexibility aspect of doing the tests at times and places that suit them: "I could have a go anytime and anywhere with a computer;" on liking the different contexts that academic vocabulary were situated in: "the ones made with PowerPoint were different," "I liked the pictures and different look" and "the best thing I like is using the words in different contexts;" on being pushed to learn due to grades being posted online; and for the test's relevance to study in the future. The real life learning reference is relevant for our adult learners and the positive comments on flexibility of time and place support the use of online learning as advocated by both Rovai and Jordan (2004) and Graham (2006). Students also commented on the recycling of the AWL items in responses to learning in different contexts indicating they liked the addition of the PowerPoint quizzes.

Further Observations

Table 1 gives the total enrolled numbers and the gender and age ranges of the two groups of students, and are representative of previous Reading and Vocabulary Development papers indicating diverse backgrounds and expected wide range of learning style preferences. Many of the students were digital natives and these students were able to buddy up with less technically proficient ones (Love, 2002). The facilitator observed that this scaffolded assistance from the teacher and peers increased the confidence in those learners with little previous experience of using the technology and helped to make the learning experience more rewarding as both language skills and technology skills were being practised. In addition, the facilitator's increasing expertise in creating online content has led to more attention being directed to the online interface in order to minimise technical problems. It was hoped the scaffolding used to support the learning of new vocabulary items would be transferred to their discipline-specific study or when they were met in other contexts.

Table 1. Results for both 2005 and 2006

	2005 semester two	2006 semester one
Total number of enrolled students	52	42
Survey participants	23	29
Female	43%	59%
Male	57%	41%
16-19 years	9%	0
20-24 years	26%	31%
25-35 years	30%	48%
36+	26%	21%

The following results are the findings from examining the course statistics from the 2005 and 2006 online components of the Reading and Vocabulary Development papers.

Figure 1 lists the number of hits onto the online course. The student enrolments for semester two, 2005 were 52 and those of semester one, 2006 were 42. Overall student usage of the online component of the Reading and Vocabulary Development paper rose from 6815 hits in 2005 to more than twice that for semester one, 2006 at over 14,000. This was significant given the actual number of students enrolled in 2006 was 10 lower than on the previous paper. There was a considerable increase in student usage of the online programme in both the listening component and in the test activities. Sentence listening for 2005 was 5712 hits or 84% of the total hit rate and online tests accounted for 816 hits or approximately 12% of the total. This contrasts to the 2006 student hits on sentence listening at 8160 or 57% and online tests at 5791 or 40%. Figure 1 also shows that hits on course information, where students accessed course manuals, timetables and general administration, remained approximately the same for both semesters.
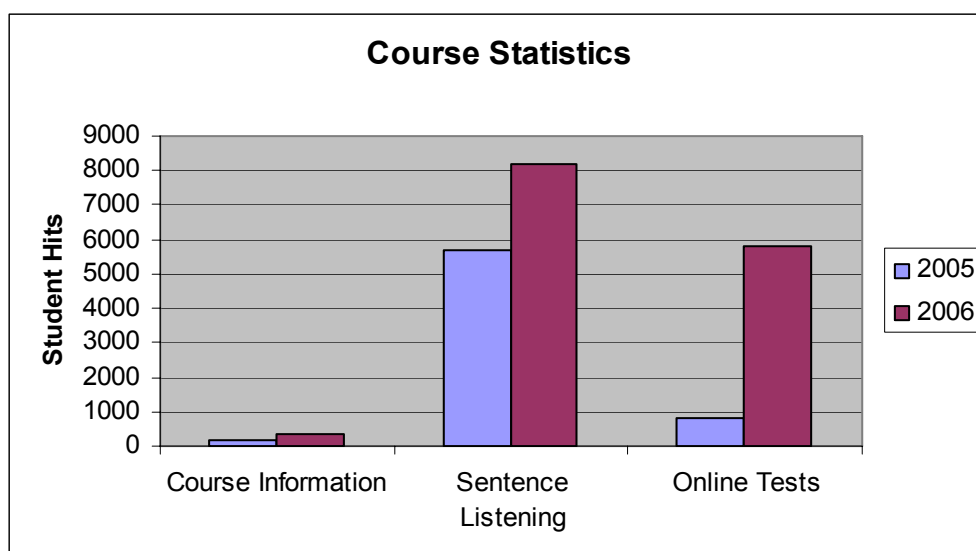
Figure 1. Course Statistics

The number of student hits to the online academic vocabulary site in 2006 represented in Figure 1 indicates increased usage of both the sentence listening and the online tests. This is a positive result, given Coxhead's (2006) and Nation and Gu's (2007) assertion of the value of repetition. The increase in student hits from the 2006 course statistics is evidence for using the direct approach to teaching language features, where students can study collocation, grammar and usage of target vocabulary in a variety of ways as promoted by Ellis et al. (2006). This increase in usage from 2005 to 2006 justifies the investment in developing a wider range of ways of engaging with the vocabulary items since it shows that students were motivated to use them. This is an important finding for blended learning, since it has allowed the facilitator to extend student engagement with the course without increasing face-to-face teaching and it can be re-cycled for subsequent courses.

Conclusion

This study has investigated the design and student responses to a blended approach to using the Academic Word Lists. Many of our students have grown up with technology and have often experienced it as an integral part of their secondary education. This blended learning model is a mix of traditional face-to-face and online learning where learning occurs in both spaces and at a pace to suit the learner. The innovations online utilise the advantages of offering flexibility of time and place, increased opportunity for listening and recording, access to Web pages, communication through the Blackboard LMS and additional practice through online tests and quizzes.

This blended approach to the Academic Word Lists has proven to be successful with learners as can be seen from the student hits onto the online site and from the positive responses to the two surveys. Its strength lies in the fact that the AWL lists are based on a corpus and are thus seen to be relevant and of value and that the blended

approach gives the learners expanded opportunities for rehearsal. The blended learning approach described makes use of the wealth of resources both available on the Internet as well as those specifically developed for the paper, without losing the personal and social element that many learners need in order to learn.

While the outcomes of this study provide useful insights into the structure and student perceptions of a blended approach to learning, there are some limitations. More than two years have passed since the survey was conducted. During this time the blended paper has developed still further. However the online components described in the project are still embedded in the current 2009 EAS programme. There have been major new inclusions as well with the advent of Web 2 technologies with more emphasis on online collaboration. Students are now recording their spoken texts and using comparative software in order for them to more closely analyse and replicate native English speech patterns.

Follow-up studies might focus on specific aspects of blended learning that institutions need to address, such as types of blended learning, activities that lead to blended-learning success, and instructor training for blended-learning situations.

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Appendix One:

Reading and Vocabulary Development Online Survey 2005/2006

Q 1.   What is your gender?
    i.   Male   ii.   Female

Q 2   What is your age range?
    i.   16-19 years
    ii.   20-24 years
    iii.   25-35 years
    iv.   36+ years

Q 3   What is your nationality?

Q 4   In the Course Material folder you can listen and read sentences and definitions for academic vocabulary items. What did you like/dislike about this online section of the paper?

Q 5   What suggestions do you have in order for us to improve this listening and reading section?

Q 6   What did not like/dislike about the Online tests?

Q 7   What suggestions do you have in order for us to improve this test section of the paper?

ACHIEVING UNCONSCIOUS RECALL OF KANJI: CAN ROTE LEARNING HELP?

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Abstract

This study suggests guided rote-learning strategies can help the beginning learner of Japanese kanji overcome frustration when attempting to master the multi-faceted, multi-item writing system. Rote-learning practices can build and strengthen neural pathways to the Procedural memory, a memory system that is implicated in automatic performance of habit or unconscious learning.

Traditionally the simpler kanji characters are introduced as isolated visuals related to the learners' prior world-knowledge thus encouraging a tendency to process kanji in the Declarative memory as learned facts. Each kanji character has semantic as well as phonemic and graphemic components therefore the Declarative memory will at some stage necessarily be involved in kanji learning but self-efficacy issues and high rates of failure early in the kanji learning process point towards the need for targeted early development of a body of kanji characters able to be recalled without conscious effort. Preliminary results of an exploratory classroom action research project show that learners respond positively to three guided rote-learning methods.

Introduction

Learners new to the Japanese writing system tend to view the kanji script as an alphabet: an ordered system of symbols used to form words for the purpose of communication. Scrimgeour (2005, p.14) alerts us to the dangers of this view.

> The manner in which sounds and words (meanings) are constructed, and the degree of accessibility and reliability of the sound and meaning information that (kanji) characters contain is totally unrelated to the (Latin) alphabet-based assumptions and practices second language learners bring to the study of these scripts.

The English letters a-z trigger a sound association. When combined with other letters to make a word a semantic value is activated; therefore a degree of separation can be maintained between the simple phonetic-based alphabet and its lexical context.

On the other hand, kanji and the context they appear in are bound together. Individual kanji have phonological, semantic and graphemic components. For example the kanji 秋 has two possible phonological readings, *aki* and *shuu*. The character consists of two 'graphemes', components that can be seen in a number of kanji. The graphemes are 'rice plant' and 'fire', a possible reference to the cultural practice of burning rice

husks after harvesting in autumn. Unlike a letter of the English alphabet, 秋 is associated with the meaning *autumn* outside of any lexical context. The new learner rarely comes to the study of Japanese with prior learning that is accepting of such a multi-faceted orthography.

Due also to a long and perhaps ill-considered path of historical and political development (Gottlieb, 1995), further complexity arises from the unreliability of the Japanese writing system. As seen in the kanji for autumn, items in context are not confined to a single phonemic or semantic value. Depending on the word, kanji may have one of several *on-yomi* (Chinese readings) or *kun-yomi* (Japanese readings). The semantic, phonemic and graphemic components of kanji have all been distorted by historical changes, cultural adaptation from the Chinese to the Japanese civilization and the integration, through trade, of characters from a number of geographical areas (dialect differences).

Differences between the Latin alphabet and kanji that are of more immediate concern to the new learner are the number of kanji to be learned and the graphically detailed shape of some kanji requiring an almost artistic sense of proportion and balance to maintain an even written script.

It is clear that kanji is not *similar to* the Latin alphabet but I wish to emphasise that essentially it *is* an alphabet to be used by the learner as a communicative tool. This basic premise has been overlooked in the development of pedagogy for teaching the kanji script. The primary goal in learning an alphabet is development of the ability to unconsciously, and at speed, retrieve and use a combination of elements of the alphabet. This ability, which involves both cognitive and motor skills, requires the development of automatic habits so that writing tasks can be performed without the need to apply conscious thought at every step of the process (James, 1950). From the perspective of brain processes involved in the acquisition and activation of such automatic habits, it has been proposed that the 'Procedural memory system' is necessarily "implicated in learning new, and controlling well-established, motor and cognitive skills" (Ullman, 2001, p.717). Rote learning has also been considered an appropriate way of establishing procedural knowledge that can be deployed as an automatic habit.

The purpose of this report is to present for discussion the first findings of an ongoing exploratory action-research project in which I will qualitatively measure the effectiveness of rote learning tools as an aid in initial retention and recall of kanji. Over a number of years I had observed many early learners of kanji in tertiary level Japanese programmes are unable to master rudimentary kanji even with consistent effort. Having identified a problem area in my teaching I formed the assumption that rote learning, used to develop automatic habits, could forge new neural pathways and, if completed to a certain level, could enable unconscious recall of kanji characters.

In the first section I will define Nondeclarative or Procedural memory and provide an overview of how learning in the current kanji classroom may not be encouraging

activation of the Procedural memory. The Research Methodology section includes a description of the learning tools, an outline of the treatment, the limitations of the findings and discussion of the questions that will form the basis of future research cycles.

The Memory System

Traditionally the memory system was seen as one single system but that different 'processes' are used to store and access the material in the long-term memory.

However, biological rather than psychological experiments have provided direct evidence for the existence of a number of memory systems (Squire, 2004) and the concept of multiple memory systems is now mainstream (Nyberg & Tulving, 1997; Poldrack & Packard, 2003; Meeter, Veldkamp & Jin, 2008). These systems include the Declarative memory system for storage of facts (semantic) and events (episodic) that are consciously recollected, and the Nondeclarative or Procedural memory system that is a type of performed memory or memory of automatic habit and response. There appears to be some competition between memory systems and, although memory systems can substitute for each other, learning will not be the same when substitution has taken place. Squire (2004, p. 174) goes as far as asserting that "trying to memorize what one is doing can interfere with human skill learning." It is the distinction between the Declarative or 'facts' memory and the Nondeclarative or Procedural 'skills and habits' memory systems that is the key to my assumptions about kanji learning.

Throughout the early learning process kanji appear to be learned as whole items retrieved from semantic memory through conscious recall. "For beginners, kanji are not seen as a system and every single character is an unique and unrelated individual letter" (Usuki, 2000, p. 5). On the other hand, Squire (2004, p.4) has described the importance of each link in the whole process of 'remembering'. He observes that memory systems should be taken into consideration for optimal learning:

> Findings in humans and rats emphasize that what is important is not only the task that is to be learned but also what strategy is implemented during learning, which in turn reflects what memory system is engaged. Under some circumstances the strategy that is engaged is not optimal for solving a task.

Methods of Learning in the Classroom

A number of learners of Japanese as a foreign language find they are unable to learn kanji. They have no prior knowledge that can aid memorising of the unfamiliar orthography. They have no meta-cognitive experience in structuring the learning of an overwhelming number of script items and they may have poorly developed neural pathways for retention and recall of kanji. Issues of self-efficacy come to the fore in this situation. The frustration of learners new to kanji has been well documented

(Kirkpatrick, 1995; Kirwan, 2005; Shimizu & Green, 2002; Yamashita & Maru, 2000). Frustration and a feeling of helplessness can be exacerbated by the pedagogical tendency of teachers to focus on meaningful learning or deeper processing strategies and activities. As Novak (2000, p.33) points out "high levels of meaningful learning require that the learner possess a relatively sophisticated relevant knowledge structure."

Successful rote learning practices can provide a strong base of knowledge as well as high self-efficacy. Repeated writing, if carefully structured, is a non-demanding task. Procedural memory will be activated and automatic habit or unconscious recall will be facilitated if enough repetitions are completed. Thomas and Dieter (1987) proved that the mere act of copying draws learners' attention to the shape of the word. In this way it may also improve the learners' sense of proportion and thus task confidence.

Other methods teachers use in the classroom, as identified by Toyoda (1998), centre on a 'show and tell' drawing of attention to visual aspects of each kanji such as stroke order, components and historical origin. A common strategy used in instruction of the beginning learner is to show how the simple characters are related to visual aspects of the everyday world. This is a proven excellent strategy (Shen, 2004; Shepard, 1967) as memory capacity is greater for pictures than for words and learners can relate what they are learning to their prior knowledge. However, at the same time visual processing of kanji, used in the early stages of learning, focuses learner attention on individual items and does not encourage 'habit' development. I suggest some balance is required between guided development of a 'visual memory' (Declarative), and a habit that will aid unconscious recall (Procedural).

Learners naturally tend to adopt rote learning strategies such as repeated writing for the task of mastering the kanji script. Mori and Shimizu (2007, p. 482) found that "students considered rote memorization strategies most effective and metacognitive strategies least effective." Other studies had the same results (Gamage, 2003; Shimizu & Green, 2002; Okita, 1995). Kanji-background learners (i.e. learners from countries such as China that have a similar logographic script to Japanese kanji) also tend to prefer repeated writing for learning kanji. Rote learning methods may remain fresh and viable for them since much of their educational experience has involved gaining automatic habits in kanji through rote learning even if their teachers may, at various stages, also have employed other methods such as visual processing or etymological and graphemic analysis.

The new-to-kanji learner tends to use rote learning as a general learning method rather than for a specific learning outcome. In this way it appears to have limited effect. The learner is soon discouraged by the difficulties of needing to focus attention on correct stroke order, the similarity of many characters and of trying to differentiate between characters with exactly the same components but a different radical or semantic marker. Learning an alphabet requires a combination of motor skills and daily exposure to the items being learned. In this case exposure does not clear up confusions between similar items as the characters are not normally

displayed in the society of the foreign language learner and the new learner does not have enough kanji knowledge or accompanying language fluency to read anything except simple children's books. Ironically Japanese children's books are written in the simpler scripts, hiragana and katakana.

Yamashita and Maru (2000) have made a clear case against random repeated writing as a learning method, suggesting that it is only effective when well organized and controlled in some way by the learner. I suggest rote learning be used in the first year of kanji learning as a specific, structured learning-tool to develop strong neural pathways for automaticity. The rote learning should, of course, take place alongside other tools and strategies with different focus. The multi-faceted nature of kanji suits pedagogy where various approaches to kanji learning are covered but when the visual aspects are over-emphasised in the early stages of learning this can be to the detriment of building a strong automatic knowledge structure.

The Methodology

Three Learning Tools
1) My Own Cards
This is software that I have developed based loosely on the 'hand-held computer' method of vocabulary learning. (Mondria & Mondria-De Vries, 1994). The software has an on-screen box with five sections. Learners see a series of flashcards, each one with a single word from the current textbook lesson written in hiragana (see Figure 1).

In their notebooks learners write the selected word in kanji then, to check their answer, click on the flashcard. It will flip over and display the kanji equivalent. When a selected number of cards have been completed in this fashion the cards are dragged to the 'My Own Cards' virtual box and a secondary quiz is taken to confirm knowledge of the kanji (see Figure 2).

The correctly completed cards are then automatically transferred to Section 2 of the box and automatically saved in that location so that the learner does not need to begin the process again the next time the computer is turned on. When the software is used again the learner begins from Section 2 of the box and if the kanji is written incorrectly this time the card returns to Section 1. If written correctly the card is moved to Section 3. Even if a card has reached Section 4 and is subsequently written incorrectly or read incorrectly in the quiz it will go back to Section 1, thus increasing exponentially the number of times the kanji character will be written if it is not recalled easily. Section 5 is titled 'My Own Cards' signifying personal ownership of the kanji in that section. The kanji have been learned using a simple motor skills approach in a similar way to an alphabet.
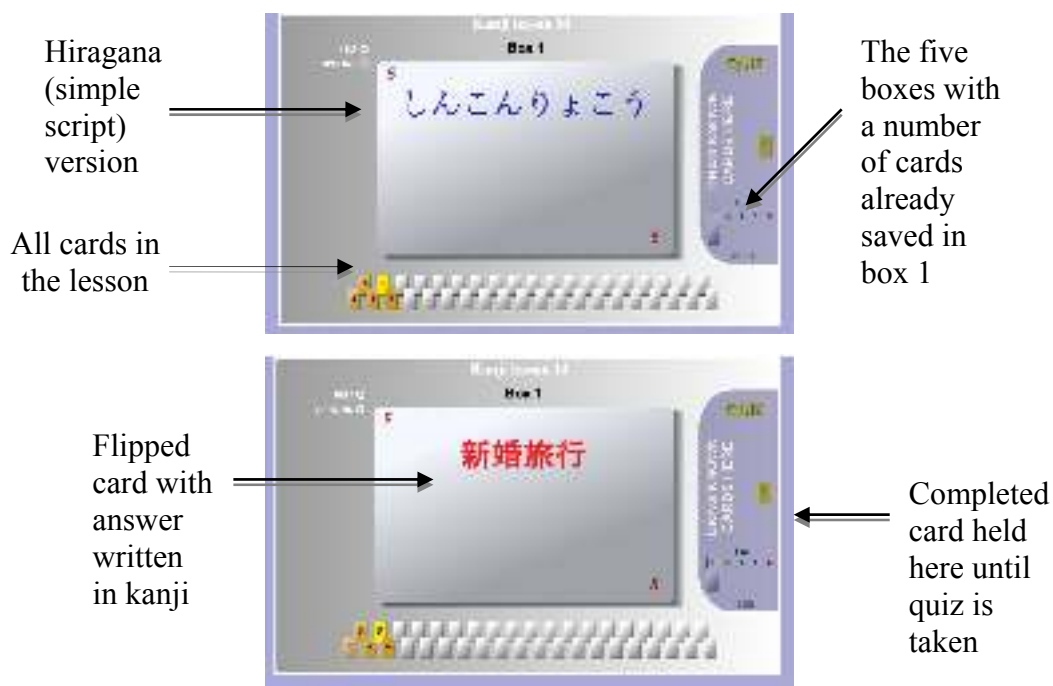
Hiragana (simple script) version

All cards in the lesson

The five boxes with a number of cards already saved in box 1

Flipped card with answer written in kanji

Completed card held here until quiz is taken

Figure 1: My Own Cards

Continued exposure to the kanji takes place in other classroom tasks. In this way the kanji should surface unconsciously when required. To test this unfamiliar sensation of unconscious recall learners are required to write the kanji from three randomly selected Section 5 cards to confirm their retrieval skill each time they re-engage with the software programme.

Figure 2: Secondary quiz

2) Kanji Maru
Kanji Maru is hyper-card software that provides information about each kanji (see Figure 3). It also has a series of reading tests with timed, multi-choice answers. It is a rote learning tool for reading rather than writing despite the fact that rote learning is commonly tied to the concept of repeated writing. As confirmed by Thomas and Dieter (1987) writing of new orthographic items gives a stronger representation of those items in the memory. However two reasons suggest repeated 'reading' of kanji

is also a necessary part of building a basic kanji knowledge. Each kanji item can have up to four or, in some cases, more readings and merely writing the kanji character will not strengthen memory for all of the native Japanese and Chinese readings. Secondly, for kanji-background learners, unconscious recall of kanji characters is not difficult but they are unfamiliar with Japanese readings and historically altered Chinese readings. Kanji-background learners respond positively to a learning tool emphasising only the skill area they may be weak in. However all learners can benefit from a rote learning 'reading' tool as kanji assessment is traditionally divided into 'writing' and 'reading' skill areas as well as 'understanding and use of kanji in context'. Learners are quickly able to identify their weak areas and use all, or a combination, of the tools.

Figure 3: Kanji Maru

3) Context Learning
The third learning tool is a simple paper-based learning tool with a repeated-writing component. It is designed for the confident learner and the aim is to increase vocabulary and grammar knowledge at the same time as checking and reinforcing recall of the kanji characters (see Figure 4). In her study of different encoding conditions in learning Chinese characters Shen (2004) uses the Craig and Lockhart (1972) Level of Processing model to confirm that retention of written materials in long-term memory depends not only on how many times the information is rehearsed but on the depth to which it is processed. Shen's research was conducted with learners who had prior knowledge of up to 1000 characters. Therefore it does not weaken my assumption that shallow processing such as simple rote learning measures can help new learners develop unconscious recall of kanji characters.

In 'Context Learning' a kanji is written in Column 1 and the learner writes the hiragana equivalent in Column 2. The learner covers Columns 1 and 2 and writes the kanji in Column 3. Columns 1, 2 and 3 are then covered and the learner writes the kanji one more time (fewer repetitions than in the 'My Own Cards' software and

without the benefits of timed exposure). In a further column on the right of the paper a question has been written in Japanese eliciting the kanji character in the answer. Learners write an answer to the question using the kanji and then write a sentence of their own creation using the same kanji. The lecturer checks the produced work and feedback is supplied on correctness of grammar, naturalness of sentence, etc.

Figure 4: Context learning

Participants

Twenty learners in a tertiary Level Two kanji paper (second semester of Year One Japanese) were invited to participate in the research project. Ten learners gave consent to do so. The ethnic background of the participants was Korean 2, Filipino 2, Chinese 2 and New Zealand European 4. Grades achieved by the voluntary participants in the prerequisite paper (Kanji 1) ranged from C- (lowest) to A+ (highest).

A second cycle of the research project was completed in the following semester. Eight learners agreed to participate in the research project. Five of the original participants completed the follow-up interview. The ethnic background of the participants was Chinese 2 and New Zealand European 3. Grades achieved by the second group of participants ranged from C+ to A+.

Treatment

Initially a three-step treatment was established with the full kanji class as part of my general teaching practice:

1) Ascertain through inductive questioning learner perception of the brain, memory and the processes that take place in recall of stored items.

2) Explain the concept of learning alphabets and demonstrate the currently accepted model of memory systems with emphasis on the unconscious retrieval of material stored in the Procedural memory compared with the conscious retrieval of material stored in the Declarative memory.

3) Introduce and provide practice opportunities with three rote learning tools for two hours per week for 10 weeks, one with teacher guidance, the other in which the learners work independently.

All learners, participants included, were able to use the three rote learning tools autonomously at home or on campus through the online learning portal.

Following the treatment I used small-group focus interviews, for research participants only, to gather data on student response to the three learning tools and to the underlying concepts of Procedural memory activation and unconscious recall of kanji. The full project, including the three-step treatment and the interviews, was repeated in a second action research cycle. Exactly the same procedures were followed in both the first and second research cycles.

Limitations of the Study

Numbers in kanji classes beyond the first beginners' class are traditionally small. Even though the first cycle of the research project sought only learner response to the learning tools and any other patterns that would form a basis for further cycles of research, I felt that the learner numbers were low for a focus group interview method in which all participants were not required to respond to all of the questions. Therefore I prepared, and have included, a second cycle of the research following the same methodology and seeking the same results but due to a number of factors only five of the eight participants were able to complete the second cycle of treatment and focus interview. Other limitations may also have been present. The English language level of some participants may have stopped them from participating confidently in the interview. Teacher guidance in the correct use of the learning tools was given but no check was made on whether the participants actually used the tools correctly as this control was outside the ethical boundaries of this project.

The Research Findings

The limitations outlined above suggest that any findings would lack statistical significance but, as 100% of participants in both groups answered yes to the question '*Did your test results reflect the use of the learning tools?*', I consider the findings are a strong beginning in the process of finding a solution to the research problem – the inability of early learners to master kanji. Individuals followed up with comments such as: "When I didn't use them I didn't get good marks" and "Times that I did use them and times when I didn't my grades definitely changed." These comments suggest a beginning awareness of the benefits of using rote learning tools to develop unconscious recall of kanji.

Two further questions produced data relevant to the exploration of rote learning as an effective beginner's learning tool. As this project is classroom action research it is not isolated from other classroom activity. Throughout any teaching semester I will model a number of effective strategies for learning and will introduce a number of tools to support learning, such as OVAL: an approach in which learners Observe each

kanji then Visualise the character with eyes closed and Articulate or say each character aloud and explain how it is formed. They then Listen to the characters on tape and try writing them (Ren, 2004). It was first necessary to collect data on the tools participants perceived to be useful, out of all those I had introduced, to ascertain whether any of the group of three rote learning tools stood out as being effective in meeting early learner needs. Findings clearly showed the learners prefer two of the three specific rote learning tools. Perhaps significantly, the preferred tools are both CALL software tools. Students did not choose the third rote learning tool—the paper-based 'Context Learning' tool (see Figures 6).
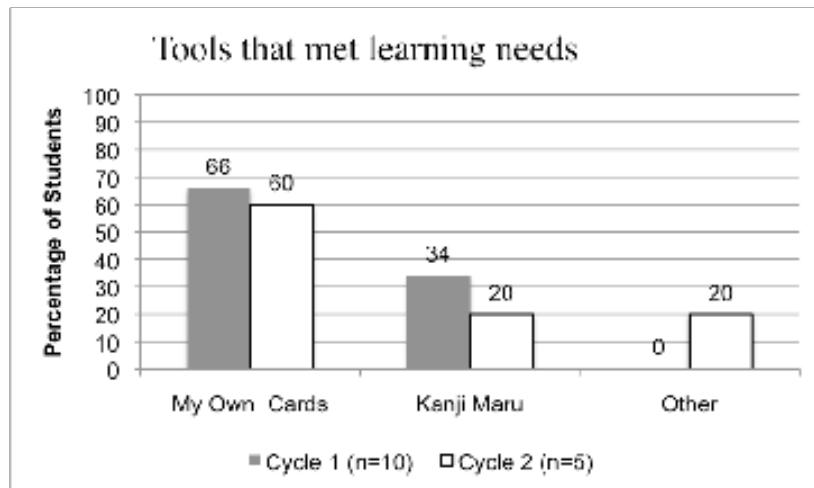
Figure 5: Tools that met learning needs
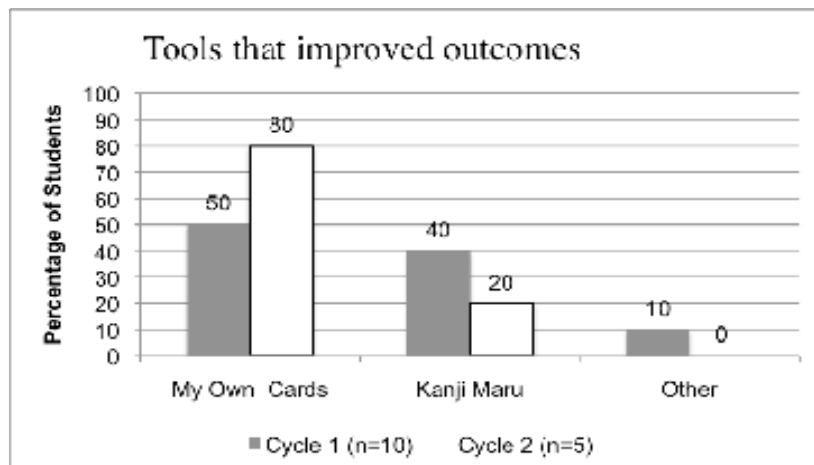
Figure 6: Tools that improved outcomes

The data was collected over two research cycles. The question in Figure 5 gathered data on the tools that met individual learner needs and the question in Figure 6 gathered data on the tools that were effective in improving student outcomes. In Figure 5 two other learning tools were mentioned besides My Own Cards and Kanji Maru. They were OVAL and the List of Useful Websites posted on the online

learning portal. In Figure 6 one learner considered the OVAL method to be effective in improving mastery of kanji.

The My Own Cards tool (repeated writing) was clearly perceived to meet most learners needs as well as being the most beneficial, with Kanji Maru (repeated reading tool) the second most beneficial.

Discussion

Findings of this project suggest the need for kanji teachers to overcome their reservations about the place of rote learning in the classroom. Rote learning, used in this way, may be a novel approach in early kanji learning. It differs in two ways from traditional rote learning practices, such as drilling (used in language laboratory pedagogy) and rote memorisation of vocabulary or kanji characters. It is a specific tool used to target one part of the learning process. It is not a language-learning method. Further, it is not randomly executed. It is a guided learning tool with measurable outcomes. The learner will be fully aware, at all times during the process, which kanji he/she has mastered.

To verify whether the initial favourable outcomes can be generalised many questions will need to be answered. The most pressing of these are:

 Is it necessary for learners to *complete* the CALL system in order to produce improved recall (e.g. as far as Box 5 in My Own Cards or until they achieve 100% in the Kanji Maru random tests) or can My Own Cards and Kanji Maru be used as casual practice tools?

How long can rote learning strategies be continued before task boredom negatively affects motivation?

Can rote learning be discontinued when there is some evidence of automaticity or is there a need for continued work of this nature alongside other 'deeper processing' strategies such as component awareness and reading in context?

Why did students perceive 'My Own Cards' and 'Kanji Maru' (the CALL learning tools) to be more effective than the third tool 'Context Learning'? Was it because students prefer CALL tools, because of delay of feedback given, or was it because the required work in the third tool is more difficult and needs a higher level of expertise to complete well?

And further,

Would the students have responded favourably to *any* CALL learning tool, whether specially designed to promote automatic habit or not?

Douglas (2004) has also offered the provocative as well as interesting proposal that the learner be encouraged to consider kanji not as an alphabet at all but as vocabulary to be learned over time as words rather than as letters. A further series of action research cycles will be undertaken to address these questions and her view.

The Declarative memory system must be involved in kanji learning as each item carries one or more meanings. However, the new learner, whose prior learning experience is that of an alphabet with no complex graphemic or semantic components, will struggle with the concept and application of multi-faceted character learning without a solid base of learned characters. My research findings suggest that this solid base may be gained from guided writing and reading using rote learning tools.

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THAT "EUREKA FEELING": A CASE STUDY OF EXTENSIVE READING IN JAPANESE

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Abstract

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken over the last two decades to support claims about the benefits of extensive reading (Day & Bamford, 1998 summarise a number of studies). The majority of these studies target the learning of English, with only a limited amount of research carried out in the learning of other languages, including Japanese, a language which can pose orthographic challenges for learners from alphabetic first language backgrounds and for which suitable extensive reading resources are not as readily available as they are in English. This paper considers these issues and reports on a case study of a learner who read extensively in Japanese over a three-month period. The exposure to extensive reading helped the participant become a more strategic and more confident reader, and appeared to facilitate language learning with her experience of passive knowledge turning into active knowledge as a result of extensive reading.

Introduction

Interest in undertaking this study arose when students of a university Japanese language course submitted learning diaries as a part of their course requirements. Two issues of concern emerged. First, many students mentioned that even after a number of years of Japanese language learning, they felt that they could never master Japanese, particularly reading and writing. They also believed, however, that if only they had made more effort at the 'right' method their Japanese, including reading proficiency, would have been better. The second source of concern was that the students reported that their initially high intrinsic motivation to learn Japanese had declined. These were highly motivated students with above-average academic success in other disciplines such as media studies, law, and international relations. The majority had started being interested in the Japanese language through aspects of contemporary culture such as animation graphics, fashion, and music. What then was lacking in the Japanese language education they received? Throughout tertiary education, they had been overloaded with assignments centred on traditional culture-oriented studies, and followed a university course in which students read short expository texts from the set textbook. This approach did not appear to satisfy the students' strong interests in contemporary Japanese culture, and failed to maintain their initial interest.

If motivation was lacking, then perhaps the nature of the reading was part of the problem. The students had been experiencing intensive reading instruction from a textbook that appeared to be far beyond their linguistic competence, a further demotivating factor, but this focus was not satisfying them. Perhaps an extensive reading approach in which students read a large amount of self-selected 'easy' material would yield better results. After all, as Nuttall points out, "Somehow or other we must help [students] to get out of this cycle of frustration and enter instead the cycle of growth" represented by her "virtuous circle of the good reader" (1996, p. 127) which links reading speed, quantity of reading, comprehension and enjoyment. Concerns about motivating readers could also be addressed, according to Day and Bamford (1998, p. 26), who claim that:

> … because it includes individualized, free choice of reading material, an extensive reading approach makes it possible for individual students to follow their own interests in reading. It is therefore possible for them to enter the second language culture on their own terms, and even to enter it deeply.

Research has confirmed the importance of employing extensive reading in second language classrooms. Since Elley and Mangubhai's classic Fijian "book flood" study (1983) reported significant language learning gains by students in the experimental groups compared with the control group, there have been numerous studies investigating the language learning benefits of extensive reading including affective changes in L2 reading, and changes of reading behaviours.

Affect

Day and Bamford claim that "gains in affect, like gains in reading ability [from extensive reading], are impressive" (1998, p. 35). Research findings regarding affective changes of L2 readers support this. In Cho and Krashen's (1994) study, four Korean female learners of English presented remarkable affective gains after getting hooked into the Sweet Valley Kids series. Cho and Kim (2004) report that students in their experimental group who read stories from the internet showed superior attitudes on all attitudinal measures. Twenty-six adult lower-intermediate learners of English in Constantino's study (1995) also experienced affective gains. As these students read more and more, they showed a stronger liking for reading, found that reading in English was not as difficult as they had expected and grew more confident. Shin (1998) investigated whether extensive reading would have an impact on grade 6 – 8 ESL students' attitudes toward L2 reading. After the nine-month programme, the number of students who gave a positive answer to the questions "I read for pleasure in L2" and "L2 reading is fun" doubled. Robb and Susser (1989) report that the extensive reading approach was regarded by students at a Japanese university as more pleasurable than the translation/skills approach. Mohd Asraf and Ahmad (2003) present qualitative data about the attitudes of Malaysian rural school children whose English competence was very basic. Class teachers' diaries reported that students were initially reluctant to undertake Guided Extensive Reading. However, as the term progressed, they started looking forward to these sessions and asked if their teachers had more books. This study was carried out in less-than-optimal circumstances where studying English was not easy for students. Other studies indicate that the extensive

reading approach can positively change the affective factors of either very low proficiency learners or unmotivated learners (Davis, 1995; Mason & Krashen, 1997). One other specific affective change is particularly significant for L2 readers who often read only short texts under intensive reading instruction: extensive reading lowers apprehension about facing longer texts by developing students' confidence and reading ability (Kembo, 1993).

Reading behaviour
One observable change that may occur through extensive reading is the learners' departure from dictionary use. One of the four Korean female participants in Cho and Krashen's study (1994) stopped using a dictionary after having read four volumes of the Sweet Valley Kids series. Nevertheless, she made gains in vocabulary knowledge. Similarly, Hayashi (1999) found that learners in her extensive reading group showed a decrease in the use of both a dictionary and translation into L1. Constantino's (1995) adult learners of English also stopped underlining unknown words for later clarification by a dictionary within the first six weeks of a pleasure reading project. In another study, Constantino (1994) reports that advanced students who forsook the dictionary and embarked on pleasure reading dramatically improved their reading proficiency with their target materials, academic documents. These successful extensive readers developed the skill of reading-for-meaning rather than decoding texts in a word-by-word fashion with the help of a dictionary.

Extensive reading in Japanese
Most extensive reading studies have focused on the learning of English. There are a very limited number of studies done in the context of Japanese learning/teaching, but these have found similar results to the English language studies. Hitosugi and Day (2004) incorporated extensive reading in a first-year Japanese class with 14 students at Hawaii University. The participating students showed more positive attitudes toward their study of Japanese after the 10-week programme than those following the regular curriculum. The context for a second study (Goda, Iijima, Noda, & Yoshida, 2005) was a university class with intermediate to advanced-level students. The students of the experimental group gained more on reading test scores and started employing more top-down strategies as the term progressed. As for attitudinal changes towards reading Japanese texts, as the course progressed, extensive readers tended to use strategies such as "read faster rather than slower", "try to have fun reading", and "choose texts which suit your own interests" rather than strategies such as "try to understand every detail correctly", and "study vocabulary and sentence patterns first" (ibid: 80). Finally, Leung (2002) undertook a diary study of a beginning learner of Japanese who first studied basic vocabulary/grammatical features and later embarked on self-monitored extensive reading. She found vocabulary improvement, attitude enhancement, and improved decoding of *hiragana*, one of the two Japanese syllabaries (see Note 1).

Thus, while extensive reading may not be a panacea for the difficulties of teaching reading in an L2, it certainly does a different job from the intensive reading approach the students on the university course had been experiencing. It appears to address

concerns about the extent to which the course was motivating the learners to read, and also about the development of their language proficiency. At the very least, extensive reading would "surely result in a more enjoyable language learning experience" (Renandya, 2007, p. 147).

With these thoughts in mind, we decided to use a case study approach to investigate the following question:
> What effect will a short-term extensive reading project have on a Japanese language learner in a foreign language situation in terms of:
> - attitudes to reading in Japanese
> - reading behaviour?

Methodology

This paper reports on one participant who volunteered to read extensively for three months in Japanese. Lola (not her real name) was from a final year class of a university Japanese language course; her first language was English. She had spent an academic year at a Japanese university as an exchange student and had finished her degree in Japanese with a high grade. She can, therefore, be seen as an advanced learner of Japanese.

The extensive reading took place after she had completed her studies and was undertaken solely for the present research. The participant did not receive any other Japanese language instruction and she did not read to satisfy any particular requirement, nor was she provided with any reward. In other words, she was reading Japanese in circumstances in which reading was its own reward. The approach taken drew on the experience of other researchers; Shin (1998), for example, points out that two factors contributed significantly to the students' attitudinal changes towards L2 reading: there was no accountability attached to the reading, and students were allowed to select materials on their own. The approach also considered the ten principles for teaching extensive reading proposed by Day and Bamford (2002):
1. The reading material is easy.
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available.
3. Learners choose what they want to read.
4. Learners read as much as possible.
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and a general understanding.
6. Reading is its own reward.
7. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
8. Reading is individual and silent.
9. Teachers orient and guide their students.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader.

At the start of the study, Lola was given a briefing about extensive reading. She was advised to read 15 to 20 minutes every day regularly. She understood that she was

allowed to read whatever she liked and to stop if she did not like the materials. She was advised to read in the same way as she would do in L1 pleasure reading, that is, meaning-focused reading without using a dictionary. For monitoring purposes, she was asked to keep daily reading records.

A particular dilemma that this study shared with other extensive reading studies undertaken in the context of Japanese learning/teaching (Goda, et al., 2005; Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Leung, 2002) was the shortage of appropriate materials for different levels of learners. This study took place in an English-language environment where there was little access to Japanese language or culture. Materials for this study were drawn from three sources:

- a private collection of 70 children's books, designed for elementary to intermediate level native speakers
- a small library collection of the university Japanese department, although most of these books were too difficult for extensive reading materials
- numerous short texts re-written from magazine/newspaper articles and internet sources/magazines/Japanese newspapers.

The purpose of providing these short texts was to provide Lola with more options for reading materials. She was told that she did not have to read them if she did not find them interesting. As these short texts were produced parallel with the progress of this project, their linguistic and structural complexity was not fully scrutinized due to time constraints. Their suitability for the participant was judged intuitively, an approach to learner literature supported by Day and Bamford (1998, p. 66).

For later analysis and in order to inform the participant of the difficulty of materials, all the materials were ranked into 5 levels as shown in Table 1. The ranking was informed by the guidelines for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test and the governmental guidelines for *kanji* learning (i.e. Chinese logographs) (Ministry of Education, 1998; Nakagawa, 1990). Native readers of Japanese need to acquire around 2000 *kanji* and many more *kanji* compound words in order to read standard reading materials such as newspapers. Therefore, learning these basic *kanji* before entering a tertiary educational institution has prime importance for Japanese students.

Mohd Asraf and Ahmad (2003, p. 86) point out that "quantitative means are not able to completely capture the essence of the difficulties" that students may encounter in different language learning situations. Similarly, in this study, mainly qualitative data provided answers to the research question. Regular monitoring, including the daily reading records, and conferencing were intended to provide "a clear picture of what learners experience during the extensive reading process" (Leung, 2002, p. 2).

Table 1: Grading of the reading materials

Code	Difficulty	Level – description of competency	Japanese Language Proficiency Test levels	Japanese mainstream education stages
I	Very difficult	Advanced - learners are ready for university	1st grade-about 2000 *kanji*	End of junior high school – Officially, all 1945 *kanji* of the *jooyoo kanji* list have to be learnt.
II	Difficult	Intermediate - learners have no problems in every-day communication	2nd grade-about 1000 *kanji*	Primary school grade 6 – 1006 *kanji* Grade 5 -825 *kanji* grade 4 -640 *kanji* grade 3 -440 *kanji*
III	A little difficult	Upper elementary	3rd grade- about 300 *kanji*	Grade 2 -240 *kanji*
IV	Easy	Lower elementary	4th grade-about 100 *kanji*	Grade 1 – 80 *kanji*
V	Very easy	Beginner	N/A	Pre-school children first master the two syllabaries.

Pre- /Post- project interviews

Interviews were conducted and recorded at the beginning and end of the project. Lola answered in English. The pre-project questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part pertained to her L1 reading awareness and habits, the second to her L2 reading awareness and habits. The post-project interviews included additional questions which derived from observational findings during earlier stages of the project. There was no time frame for interview sessions. (See Appendix 1 for the questionnaires.)

Other observation methods

Bi-weekly conferencing was carried out with Lola to guide, encourage and monitor her reading, with her comments recorded manually and kept for later analyses.

Findings

The amount, frequency, and level of Lola's reading are shown in Table 2. She did not read every day, but on the days when she did read she read over 2,300 'letters' and tended to read texts ranked as intermediate level (58%).

Table 2: Amount, frequency and level of reading (see Note 2)

Estimated amount ('letters')		Days (per week)	Level (% of reading) Rankings (I → V) in Table 2 are used.				
Total	per day		I	II	III	IV	V
106,409	2,313	43 (3.6)	8	58	8	6	20

Affective factors

The findings relating to affective gains were partly analyzed using Day and Bamford's discussion of the affective dimension of second language reading (1998, Chapter 3). They identify attitude and motivation as two important variables in the affective dimension of L2 reading. Attitude is influenced by four factors:

- first language reading attitudes
- previous experiences with learning to read other second languages (if any)
- attitudes toward the second language, culture, and people
- the second language classroom environment

The following four variables trigger (or inhibit) motivation to read in L2:

- materials
- reading ability
- attitudes
- sociocultural environment

Day and Bamford explain that an extensive reading approach may influence the motivational variables, enhancing learner motivation to read in an L2 more effectively than a traditional teacher-fronted skills-based intensive reading approach.

The pre-project interview revealed that Lola had positive L1 reading attitudes which were nurtured through her high school's uninterrupted sustained silent reading (USSR) programme. She had also studied Chinese for a couple of years and found that she could transfer phonological information from Chinese *kanji* when processing unfamiliar *kanji* in Japanese texts. Another positive variable identified in the initial interview was her high instrumental motivation toward reading Japanese technical texts. She was eager to read technical books related to graphic design so that she could learn some Japanese-original graphic design methods. These factors indicated positive second language reading attitudes. She embarked, however, on the extensive reading project with a mixture of positive and negative factors, for she pointed out two demotivating variables: the difficulty in finding appropriate materials and insufficient reading ability. Like many learners of Japanese from an alphabetical L1 background, she found that her knowledge of *kanji* was insufficient although she was experienced with logographic scripts. When she encountered unfamiliar *kanji*, she lost the flow of

reading and gave up reading altogether. The following excerpt from the pre-project interview indicates her perceptions in this respect (for transcription conventions, see Appendix 2).

> INT. what is the biggest obstacle when you read japanese texts?
> A. um, (1) when i don't know word, i can't read kanji, so, (1) well, i sort of find, just in general when i'm reading, (2), i sort of wonder, am i processing this in japanese or english? that's what i often wonder, (i mean) am i reading it? or am i translating it? that's what i, + i sort of wonder, whether i understand it in japanese straight away. but what i find is (1) when i hit the word i don't know::, (1), i kind of come out of this japanese mode and then, you know? back to english. and break my flow (hh) [sigh] and i don't want to read any more.
> INT. aha:: i see. so (1) as long as you can stay in japanese mode, >you are very happy to continue to read<, but once something stops you, i mean, (1) like difficult words or kanji, suddenly english comes and says <u>hello::</u> <u>to</u> you and
> A. [yeah, and it takes a while to go back. i really have to read, (1) i really have to focus on trying to read in japanese.

This phenomenon forced her to read low-level materials such as children's books which she found were not beneficial in terms of *kanji* acquisition since they were written mainly in syllabaries.

> A. i have been given some japanese children's books.
> INT. have you finished those books?
> A. not all of them (hh). i usually read them maybe, (1), half way through? and then, then, i just sort of stop.
> INT. why?
> A. [laughter] um, (1) sometimes it's, not knowing vocabs and sometimes end up looking at pictures instead (hh). i think, i feel, + what's the benefit if it's written in all hiragana? it's not so beneficial for me.

Although she was reluctant to read children's books initially, she read many of them. The comments of her daily reading records showed (see Table 3) that she enjoyed those books and also that she reinforced her grammatical knowledge through reading them.

Table 3: Responses to reading children's books

Date	Title	Time reading	Pages read	Comment, if any
Thursday 08/11	Boy who slept for three years	20 minutes	24 pages	Interesting! Even if it's a kid story, it tells me the difference between Western and Eastern cultures.
Saturday 10/11	Little Match Girl	18 minutes	9 pages	The story is ok. But the way that its grammatical usage was very unique. I often saw "verb + *te* form".
Tuesday 08/01	Blue Bird	10 minutes	10 pages	The book which is written only in hiragana seems boring, but, I find the grammatical usage of this book was interesting

In the post-project interview, she pointed out that being able to read material which she was interested in was the most rewarding thing. She benefited from being able to select what she read and she tried to make the most of this opportunity to find out what materials suited her. However, despite this, she failed to expand her reading to the level of reading authentic materials. Over the three months, her selection of reading materials stayed within texts which contained *furigana*, i.e. phonological assistance device above *kanji*. Only 8% of what she read was level I, authentic materials (Table 2). A few non-fiction authentic materials were recommended to her. She found these challenging and too demanding due to the numerous *kanji* without *furigana*. This corresponds with the fact that after three months she still regarded the original demotivating variable of insufficient kanji knowledge as a hindrance in L2 reading.

INT. you said that when you tried to read in Japanese, the difficult kanji comes as the biggest obstacle.+ Do you still think so?

A. ah, (??) (1) if there is no reading beside it (1), yeah. it's still some sort of block. am +, but because i've read a lot, i can pick up a few more words or think, its difficulty lessens a little bit, + but]

INT.   [but still difficult

A. still a problem if there's no reading beside it.

INT. if you don't have that problem, you can read much better?

A. `yeah, yeah, definitely`. i think, + um (1), [laughter] it, it is hard, if you ca::n't read it, and you don't know the word, the, you can't even guess what it is.

Although this demotivating variable persisted, Lola showed more interest in reading short Japanese texts, gained confidence in her reading ability and developed a strategy for reading longer texts. Instead of seeing a whole book and being overwhelmed by its volume, she could see a book in segments and try to read segment by segment.

INT. do you think that + your attitudes towards reading long texts are different now? compared to before?

A. am, (1), yeah, because now i can >at least i think< oh i can attack it in segments? maybe only three pages a day or something. whereas before > i was just too concentrating on reading the whole book<.[laughter] you know? (1) um, so i can see it as step to step.

INT. why did you come to treat a book in segments?

A. i think it's (1) some >of the stories or thing i've read so fa::r<, i have actually appreciated it in, oh it's a quite a long one. and if i read it the first one, the interest tides down or i don't have time. then i come back and read the rest? so um, that's sort of oh, i can do that to the book i want to read.

Regular bi-weekly conferencing and daily reading records also reflected positive affective changes. As can be seen in Table 4, she enjoyed learning different kinds of vocabulary from stories and found pleasure in reading stories because she enjoyed the conversational texts, a type of discourse the set text at university had failed to provide.

Table 4: Responses to text types

Date	Title	Time reading	Pages read	Comment, if any
Monday 05/11	You are not alone.	About 30 minutes.	11 pages	Sometimes it's not clear what the subject of a sentence is. But vocab is not difficult. Even if I cannot [sic] some parts, I enjoy what I understood. Especially, I loved reading of Kansai dialect conversations.
Friday 30/11	Singing clock	32 minutes	23 pages	I really liked this story. I like being able to read Japanese conversations and find it interesting with dialects etc.
Saturday 05/01	A story presented for you	12 minutes	-	I really enjoy reading all the different characters styles of speaking, and the styles of speaking, and the words used in this book made me think it's quite modern.

Reading behaviour

In the initial interview, as reported earlier, she mentioned that unfamiliar *kanji* compound words triggered mental translation into English and that when this happened she would lose the flow of reading in Japanese, often giving up reading altogether. After the project, she found that her mental translation decreased and she could keep reading in Japanese, relying on English less than before.

> INT. in general do you think your mental translation is decreasing or?
> A. um (1), yeah, i'm not having to retell the areas so much back again.
> INT. did you do that before sometimes?
> A. um (1), yeah, i think i did. maybe not sentence by sentence but
> INT. [but when you don't understand, you might still rely on English?
> A. yeah. but now when i don't know, i don't freak out so much(hh), keep reading. it doesn't matter because later on (1), i >think that was< a couple of names of characters, i realized oh that's what it is, someone's name right and then the story came to me.

While Lola found mental translation an inhibiting phenomenon, in her daily reading record she referred to a motivating reading behaviour which she often did during reading, and called 'mental notes'.

> I like this story not so much for its content but for its style. Because the same verb was used over and over again in many different forms. I often take mental notes when reading Japanese, when I see grammar I understand but can't use myself yet.

When asked specifically about mental notes, she explained the phenomenon as follows:

> Mental note is definitely a positive one unlike mental translation. It's more of a eureka feeling when I've come to understand a new word, or see something that I've never used before but understand and would like to use later. So I guess by mental notes I'm meaning more of things I stored away while reading to recall later and write down. The type of material that caused these mental notes was below my reading level or slightly above, but I wouldn't say demanding texts caused note taking. I feel the note taking increased but it wasn't a case of striking words or structures I didn't understand it was more of striking similar patterns that I could understand or was coming to understand better. (personal communication, February 12, 2008).

This reading behaviour which brought the "eureka feeling" also had a positive impact on her attitude to L2 reading.

Discussion

In this section we discuss affective factors towards reading in a second language, and changes in reading behaviour as observed in this study.

Affective factors towards L2 reading

As mentioned earlier, Day and Bamford (1998, Chapter 3) point out four factors that determine L2 reading attitudes and four variables that influence L2 reading motivation. The participant in the current study generally rated positively in, for example, her attitudes toward Japanese culture and people, and to L2 reading, and in having supportive sociocultural environments and so on. However, she displayed a demotivating factor toward L2 reading: her expressed belief that she had insufficient reading ability, and specifically her limited knowledge of *kanji*. The fact that she regarded difficult *kanji* as a very demotivating factor has been reported earlier. At the end of the extensive reading project, she maintained the same opinions. As Kondo-Brown (2006, p. 66) has suggested, "the lack of adequate *kanji* knowledge may not only decrease efficiency in reading but also significantly reduce motivation to read". This is probably the universal obstacle faced by learners of Japanese from alphabetical L1 backgrounds. Although the participant in this study was highly motivated to learn and read Japanese, encountering numerous unfamiliar *kanji* in Japanese texts seemed to be very discouraging. Lola was a native speaker of English and appears to have found Japanese orthography with *kanji* an anxiety-provoking factor. It is understandable that she attributed her unsuccessful L2 reading experiences to limited *kanji* knowledge. However, as her comments in the post-project interviews imply, through the experience of reading manageable and enjoyable materials the current project has at least served to give her a more optimistic view towards her future *kanji* learning and reading Japanese texts. It seems that by reading numerous texts on a regular basis, she either acquired a strategy for tackling long texts, or simply got used to reading for a longer time.

Another achievement which will work positively for the participant's future L2 reading motivation is her awareness of material selection. She had not experienced choosing Japanese reading materials on her own, partly because of constant provision of set textbooks. Although the amount of material offered in the current project was limited, she was still free to select materials on her own. She noticed that if she read things that interested her, reading became much more pleasurable, but if she read things she did not like, reading became difficult. For example:

> INT. what was the most rewarding thing in reading japanese?
> A. ah, i think (1) just reading things that i'm interested in, rather than the textbooks. actually, and um, + that way i was able to go to just (1) i don't know, see words all the time grammar all the time, and just i just found understanding. oh, i ca::n understand it. yeah sure thing it will go into me (hh) as well. i absorbed it (well).

<pre>
    INT.   It seems important that you don't read things you don't have
              an interest
    A.   Yes. I think that I've really noticed that. Not so much in the beginning
              because I just tried to read anything I could understand. As I got better,
              if I wasn't interested, it was a real struggle.
</pre>

This recalls Williams's adage (1986, p. 42) - "in the absence of interesting texts, very little is possible". The importance of materials which maintain learners' initial interest and motivation cannot therefore be overemphasized. Comments from the reading records such as "Loved it. I wanted to read faster & faster" and "That was fun. I felt like I could read this article very fluently" describe her newly-gained confidence and enjoyment when she encountered interesting and comprehensible materials.

Reading behaviour
Changes in reading behaviour were observed. As stated earlier, Lola initially had a problem with mental translation. In the pre-project interview, she explained that when she encountered an unfamiliar *kanji* or difficult vocabulary, she started translating texts, and that once she went into translation, she lost the flow of Japanese and found it difficult to go back to the original flow. After the three-month extensive reading experience, she believed that her mental translation decreased. She said that she did not have to rephrase what she just read as much as before. This developmental process corresponds with Kern's (1994) study of 51 intermediate learners of French, who relied less on translation as they became more familiar with the target language.

An important insight into Lola's reading behaviour was also gained through her use of 'mental notes', where she was experiencing passive knowledge turning into active knowledge as a result of extensive reading. It would seem that in the process she was meeting the conditions for language-focused learning (Nation, 2007); she was noticing a language feature, seeing the form and retrieving the meaning, and then, after repeated exposure to the form, feeling able to use the form to express the meaning. The role of extensive reading in providing repeated encounters with the language feature was crucial to the learning.

Limitations of the study

While this study provides positive support for the use of extensive reading with learners of Japanese as a second or foreign language, it does have certain limitations.

First, the duration of the project was rather short. While some short-term extensive reading projects report positive findings (e.g. Cho & Kim, 2004; Lai, 1993; Lee, 2005, being 6, 4 and 12 weeks respectively) authors generally claim that the longer the duration of the extensive reading programme, the more impressive its outcomes (e.g. Krashen, 1988; Renandya, 2007). The remarkable results of the Fijian 'book flood',

for instance, probably came from its long practice period. All the same, it can be assumed that if the study had been longer the learner would have read more, and the results would have been even more positive.

Secondly, while considerable efforts were made to provide a reasonably wide range of interesting reading material, and Lola was free to choose what to read and whether or not to finish it, the control of linguistic features may not always have been adequate. Leung (2002) mentioned that her own newly built confidence in L2 reading was negatively affected when she read materials beyond her capability. Therefore, a more systematic control of material's linguistic features, possibly similar to graded reader schemes in English, may be necessary to protect learners' growing confidence in L2 reading.

Pedagogical implications

The principal pedagogical implication from this study is to recognise the positive role that extensive reading can play in the learning of Japanese. Such extensive reading programs for learners of Japanese must ensure that there are enough materials at various levels for learners to choose from, in order to maintain their growing confidence and interest in reading.

At the same time, attention needs to be given to the teaching and learning of *kanji*. At the very least, Japanese teachers need to be aware of what kind of material their students want to read and what kind of *kanji* should be taught to facilitate this reading. Existing *kanji* frequency lists (e.g. Chikamatsu, Yokoyama, Nozaki, Long, & Fukuda, 2000) could be useful here.

The use of *furigana* also needs thought. It is likely that teachers will need to produce or collect reading materials for extensive reading themselves. When producing graded reading materials, teachers can vary the frequency of *furigana*, i.e. phonological assistance device for *kanji*. As we have seen, the participant in the current study did not tend to read authentic material. She mainly read easy texts which were written in *hiragana* with a limited number of *kanji*, or texts in which *kanji* were presented with *furigana*. The overwhelming majority of learners of Japanese need *furigana* because their *kanji* knowledge is insufficient and they cannot phonologically decode many *kanji*. However, authentic materials usually do not have *furigana* and consequently learners of Japanese cannot read most authentic materials. Although the participant welcomed materials in which *furigana* was attached to most *kanji*, if *furigana* are always present a learner might rely on them rather than learning the *kanji*. Therefore, teachers of Japanese could experiment to gradually decrease *furigana* in accordance with learners' developmental stages of *kanji* acquisition.

Finally, the fact that Lola was not reading every day (see Table 2) invites consideration. As Robb warns, "the priorities of the students favour extracurricular activities, such as part-time jobs, clubs and social life, over learning" (2002, p. 146)

in some countries. In the present study, Lola found it difficult to find time for reading due to social, academic, and work commitments. As Mohd Asraf and Ahmad (2003) and Macalister (2008) suggest, leaving students to use their free time for reading without allocating time for reading in class might not be a practical approach.

Conclusion

The current study was intended to investigate the effect of a short-term extensive reading experience on the attitudes and behaviour of a learner of Japanese as a foreign language whose previous experience of reading was primarily intensive reading activities in a university language programme. Like other studies of extensive reading for English language learners (e.g. Cho & Kim, 2004; Lai, 1993; Lee, 2005) this study found that a short-term extensive reading programme facilitated language learning, changed reading behaviour in a positive way, and identified one major positive and one major negative factor affecting the learner's reading in Japanese: her high motivation to read in L2 and her low self-perception of L2 reading ability derived from insufficient knowledge of *kanji*. As this corresponds with Kondo-Brown (2006) and Saito, Garza and Horwitz (1999), it is suggested that the findings reported here could be extended to other Japanese language learners. Thus, when an extensive reading programme is employed in the context of Japanese learning/teaching, it may help to maintain learners' initial high motivation, and also lower affective barriers created by the writing systems in Japanese. When the extensive reading approach is employed flexibly with careful consideration given to factors such as the linguistic characteristics of the target language, the nature of the learners, and the sociocultural environment, language learning benefits can be maximised.

Note 1: Japanese texts consist of two different orthographies. One of them is the Japanese syllabaries, *hiragana* and *katakana*. These two syllabaries are phonographies. In them, each grapheme represents a sound unit (i.e. a syllable). *Hiragana* is used to describe traditional Japanese words and function words such as particles and endings of verbs & adjectives. *Katakana* is used to describe foreign-originated words or onomatopoeia. The two *kana* orthographies establish a fairly strict one-to-one correspondence between symbols and syllables (i.e., grapheme-phoneme correspondence) with only a few exceptions. On the other hand, *kanji* in Japanese have several readings according to context. As a result, *furigana* is used for developing readers such as young readers and L2 readers (Mori, 1998, p. 70). *Furigana* are referred to as a "phonological assistance device" in this paper. They are printed above *kanji* words in smaller size in *hiragana*. They enable readers to decode unfamiliar *kanji* words at least phonologically. However, this *furigana* is usually not printed in authentic texts of which target readers are adults.

Note 2: In calculating the estimated amount the participant read, the word 'letters' is used although we recognise this is an inexact description. For a book, the average number of 'letters' per page on the first 5 pages was calculated, then the page average multiplied by the number of pages. For the short texts produced for this project, the average number of 'letters' per line was multiplied by the number of lines in the text. It must be emphasised, however, that the numbers indicated in Table 2 are a rough estimate. As Chikamatsu et al. have noted, the "inconsistency in orthographic representation makes word counting in Japanese extremely difficult and complicated" (2000, p. 483).

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Appendix 1: Questionnaires used

A. The pre-project interview questionnaire

Reading Interest Questionnaire

The following questions are about your reading habits / awareness toward reading in English.

1. Do you like reading?
   ----- yes   How much?
   ----- no   Why?
2. What books have you read lately?
3. Do you have a favourite author?
4. What type of books do you like to read?
5. How often do you read?
6. Outside of school, how much time do you spend on reading for your own interest/pleasure?

The next section is about your reading habits / awareness toward reading in Japanese.

1. Do you like reading in Japanese in the class?
   ----- yes   How much?
   ----- no   Why?

2. Have you ever finished reading a Japanese book?
   ----- yes   What book is it?
   ----- no   Have you tried to read a book?
              ----- no   Why not?
              ----- yes   Why didn't you finish?

3. Do you read short texts in Japanese such as news articles, magazine articles, articles on internet?
   ----- yes   What kind of articles do you like to read?
   ----- no   Why not?

4. When you try to read in Japanese, what comes as the biggest obstacles?
   ----- 2nd obstacle? or any other?

5. In general, what kind of books or articles do you want to read in Japanese for your interest / pleasure?

B. The post-project interview questionnaire

Reading Interest Questionnaire

The following section is about your reading habits / awareness toward reading in Japanese.

1. Do you like reading in Japanese in your free time?
   ----- yes   How much?
   ----- no   Why?

2. Do you want to read short texts in Japanese such as news articles, magazine articles, articles on internet more often?
   ----- yes   What kind of articles do you like to read?
   ----- no   Why not?

3. You said that when you tried to read in Japanese, the difficult kanji comes as the biggest obstacle. Do you still think so?
   ----- Do you think that if you don't have that problem, you can read much better?
   ----- Through extensive reading, did you find any other difficult parts in reading Japanese texts aside from kanji?

4. What kind of texts (books, articles) do you think is easy for you to read at the moment?

5. In general, what kind of books or articles do you want to read in Japanese for your interest / pleasure in the future?

6. Do you think that your attitudes towards reading long texts (books, articles, etc.) are different now?

7. Did you try to find reading materials? If so, was that easy? In general, is it easy to find Japanese reading materials?

8. What was the most rewarding thing in reading Japanese texts?

9. The most discouraging thing?

10. Can you point out any words you learnt through extensive reading? Or can you mention any words which you already knew beforehand but you learnt another meaning? Or any grammar points which you learnt or had a good review through extensive reading?

11. How hard was it to find time to read in Japanese? What stopped you from finding time for reading in Japanese?

12.   When you didn't read Japanese texts much, did you still read English texts?

13.   In the future, if you have very limited time for reading, which do you think you will choose an English book or a Japanese book?

14.   If you continue to study Japanese on your own, what do you want to do most? - reading, listening (music, movie, radio, etc), writing, speaking, grammar, and so on.

15.   Any other comment?

Appendix 2: Transcription conventions

[laughs]   paralinguistic or descriptive features in square brackets
[the beginning of overlapped talk
+   pause of up to one second
(0.0)   length of silence
underlining relatively high pitch
::   noticeably lengthened sound
?   rising intonation
.   falling intonation
,   continuing intonation
!   animated talk
(words)   unintelligible stretch
hh   audible outbreath
(hh)   laughter within a word
` `   quieter than the surrounding talk
> <   increase in tempo

In the transcriptions, INT refers to the interviewer.

REVIEWS

Chan, C. & Rao, N. (Eds.). (2009). *Revisiting the Chinese learner: Changing contexts, changing education.* **Springer: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong. ISBN 978962-8093- 16-8 (pbk.) 360 pp.**

This is the third volume in a series that investigates the teaching and learning of Chinese students, the examples coming mainly from Hong Kong. The topic is becoming popular amongst English speaking readers. Only two years ago *Continuum* brought out a similar book, about half of which related to students in Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland (Liu, 2007).

Apart from the editors' opening and concluding chapters, there are nine contributions, the first three emphasizing students and their learning, the other six looking at teachers. Not surprisingly, there are overlaps between these two aspects within most chapters. This review aims to highlight some of the book's theses, particularly those that challenge historical assumptions about Chinese learners.

The introduction, by Chan and Rao, is worth reading in its own right, with its summary of traits inherited by students from societies based on Confucian values. (Incidentally, this section made me wonder what Chinese analysts of Western education would see as the historical source of values in *our* education system.) Some stereotypes are attacked. For instance, contrary to the widely held belief that 'rote learning' and 'deep understanding' are mutually exclusive, research suggests that "many Chinese students who use memorization are not rote learners but memorize with understanding" (p. 6).

Another widely held assumption is questioned in Chapter 3 by David Watkins, an Australian who has spent many years in Hong Kong. His description of the kinds and degrees of motivation amongst Hong Kong secondary students makes interesting reading.

Chapter 4's contents suggest that a distinction needs to be made between Chinese and Confucian pedagogy. The seven Hong Kong based authors worked with secondary students and their teachers as they set out to investigate students' beliefs about learning and about the role of their teachers.

Chapter 5, the first of the second section, will be of particular interest to teachers of reading. Marton, a Swede with an advisory role in Hong Kong, worked with a local team to investigate aspects of students' reading of argumentative texts.

What of the international understanding that Chinese children are particularly successful in mathematics? In Chapter 7, Rao, Chi and Cheng start by addressing suggested reasons for this, such as parental influences, the Chinese system of naming numbers and characteristics of the Chinese language. They then report on a project

which observed the teaching of mathematics in three different areas of Mainland China, ranging from (very) rural to a provincial capital.

The youngest subjects of the book's studies appear in Chapter 9. Here the importance of a teacher's role at the kindergarten level is highlighted by a number of proverbs and idioms. One example: *Though you have taught me for only one day, you will be my mentor all my life" (* p. 265).

Teacher educators are the target readers of Chapter 10 which reports on teacher development in Mainland China. The writers (Tsui and Wong) investigate the effects of the meeting between Chinese traditional views and Western ideas. A distinction is made between various models and philosophies, all of which are referred to in their translated (English) forms, in *pin ying* and its phonetic form. For more on views from within the system, turn to a translated book by Li (2005), who was formerly Chinese Vice Premier.

Until recently it has been difficult for non-readers of Chinese to read an 'inside' perspective such as Li's and the accounts in this book. It is hoped that this review has whetted the appetite of applied linguists, although they do not appear in the list of "scholars from a broad range of disciplines" (p.xiv) to whom the contents are addressed. With its range of contexts, its extensive literature reviews on which the new findings are built, and the index for easy access to topics of interest, this collection is recommended to all teachers and teacher educators whose classes include Chinese learners.

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Cook, G. (2005). *Genetically modified language: The discourse of arguments for GM crops and food.* **London: Routledge. ISBN 0-415-31468-2. 162pp.**

"Members of the public have been exposed to a whirlwind [on genetic modification]," says Guy Cook, "battering them from all sides" (p. 130). Faced with this onslaught, Cook subjects an array of statements on genetic modification to intense "rational scrutiny." The scrutiny is impressive and the rational thinking is incisive and lucid. Time and again, Cook challenges us to read the texts, revisit them, and reconsider the meaning of statements by high-profile speakers like George Bush, Tony Blair, Prince Charles, Lord May of the Royal Society, prominent scientists, leading journalists, and of course, massively powerful corporations like Monsanto.

Calmly and dispassionately, he dissects texts from different sides of the debate, with close analysis and an attractive even-handedness. He has a decisive case to make: language is used to represent and severely misrepresent particular positions, in this case genetic modification. In a sobering comment, he points out that the use of language parallels the use of land:

> the contrast between monocultures and mixed crops, between fields in which all rival species are eliminated and those in which they are encouraged to thrive, has a very pertinent parallel with uses of discourse (p. 114).

On the use of science, he is constantly interesting. He helpfully distinguishes between science and technology. He suggests that the appeal to science to bolster the case for genetic modification is often just that – an *appeal* to science rather than a plausible interpretation of science itself. He critiques the view that scientific discourse is the only appropriate resource for discussing GM, arguing that this is a way of limiting options in the debate (p. 114). And by carefully analysing texts, he shows how those who claim they argue only from scientific evidence can easily change their ground (p. 103).

Genetically modified language is an immensely readable book. Cook writes very accessibly, he explains technical terms simply; he makes sure that the continuing inquiry into people's statements is a voyage of discovery for the reader. This book should come with a warning – you won't read corporate pitches or watch the news the same way again. Cook calls on us to *think* while doing so, in the process showing how critical it is to locate texts in their social context.

Cook invokes theory gently, perhaps too gently, given his ability to explain concepts. After all, his approach embodies the inspiration and procedures of Critical Discourse Analysis, though without naming it, including concern for the wider political and ideological contexts of loaded subject-matter like GM, and a desire to change the world for the better. Social justice is clearly important to Cook.

So *Genetically modified language* is an object-lesson in integrating a range of goals: scrutinising the way language is used in society; relating text to the wider context of politically-charged issues; dealing with discourse; and exploring the public debate on GM. "We have become so used to corporate nonsense that it is all too easy to pass over it without paying it any attention," decides Cook (p. 74). "Surely language, like agriculture, should be used for better purposes."

Not surprisingly, then, he suggests, "Language like Nature, is being used in an unnatural and unsuccessful way" (p. 131). But he's not without hope. In his parting comment, he notes that people outside the GM camp "remain critical of both GM and the language used to promote it" (p. 131). The book is a primer on how to do so.

DAVID COOKE, Honorary Research Associate, Unitec NZ

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics.* **Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN 978 0 19 442258 1. 336 pp.**

In addition to writing, co-writing and editing a number of books on group dynamics, motivation and individual differences in second language learning over the last ten years, Zoltán Dörnyei has published two books on applied language studies research: one on using questionnaires, and now a comprehensive introductory text on research methods. The purpose of the book is, in his words, to survey "the complementary values of qualitative and quantitative research and the promising possibility of combining them to best effect through mixed-methods research" (p. 315). His target audience is "teachers and those at the novice end of the scale of experience", which would include those of us who are familiar with disciplinary literature and have extensive teaching experience, but much less experienced and knowledgeable about research. As an introductory text, this book is excellent value.

The first reason for a strong recommendation is its choice of content. One-third of the book (Part I, Chapters 1-4) discusses key research issues. Those concerning the selection of a qualitative or quantitative research design, including information on the "paradigm wars" of the 1970s and 1980s and key differences between the two paradigms in respect of ideologies, coding practices, and recognition of individual differences are discussed. Longitudinal and cross-sectional research methods are compared, and Dörnyei makes informative comments about their usefulness in studies of second language acquisition. Although the range of topics is necessarily more general than in more specialized texts, informative detail is provided about those that are covered.

Part II of the book describes data collection in qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods and classroom research. While these four chapters (5-8) are selective in the methods they discuss, Dörnyei's explanations are clear and comprehensible. There are no tables in the book; however, extensive use is made of sub- and sub-sub headings, bullet points and numbered lists to provide information about advantages and disadvantages of specific research strategies. Throughout, Dörnyei keeps the perspective of the (novice) researcher in mind, emphasizing the kind of decisions that need to be made and perils and pitfalls to be avoided. This is a refreshing contrast to texts that treat research as a largely unproblematic sequence of steps. He strongly recommends the idea of keeping a research journal as a kind of "internal dialogue", as well as for administrative purposes. He suggests that such a journal includes information about what is done, where, how, when, why; what is read; what data is collected and how it is processed; any outcomes of data analysis; and particular achievements, dead ends, surprises, ideas, and feelings that may be relevant.

The third part of the book (Chapters 9-11) deals with data analysis. Discussion of quantitative analysis covers the "power language" of descriptive and inferential statistics, and the stages of data analysis. This is followed by a chapter that unpacks the four main principles of qualitative data analysis: (1) its language-based nature, (2)

iterative processes, (3) the tension between formalization and intuition and (4) the tension between being methodology-bound and methodology-independent. As with the previous chapter, stages of analysis from transcribing through coding to data display are outlined, and grounded theory in its pure and actual forms are explained. Benefits (as well as limitations and possible drawbacks) of SPSS and NVivo are pointed out.

In Part IV, Dörnyei turns to the particular demands of writing a quantitative (Chapter 12) and a qualitative (Chapter 13) research report. He advises use of the kind of style he himself has mastered: clear, coherent, reader-friendly, and able to "tell a story" in an interesting and convincing manner. The second main reason to recommend this text is therefore the very accessible style in which it is written: a style that makes even detailed descriptions of SPSS and NVivo software readable. The final chapter in the book gives general advice about choosing an appropriate research method, taking research questions or problem, audience, practical and personal considerations into account.

The third strength of Dörnyei's book is its extensive use of examples from a variety of teaching contexts, and from his own research experience. These too help to make the text meaningful and interesting for readers, and the examples chosen are relevant and comprehensible.

Although this more general and introductory text lacks the detail of others with a more specialized focus, the fourth reason to recommend this book is for its extensive referencing throughout to other methodology sources, in both applied language studies and other social sciences. The reader is therefore introduced to sources of more detailed scholarly discussion of many of the content themes of the book, for example, qualitative data collection (Miles & Huberman), validity and reliability (Denzin, Lincoln & Guba, Maxwell), interviews (Patton), case studies (Stake, Duff), SPSS (Pallant), grounded theory (Glaser, Strauss, Corbin) and qualitative data analysis (L. Richards).

Two minor areas of discussion contained some surprises. The first was that it appears that, in some countries, gaining ethical approval does not require submission of instruments such as interview questions and questionnaire items, which Dörnyei assumes can be composed after the necessary approval has been obtained. The second, in a book on research methods that explicitly identifies teachers as a key audience, is his rather pessimistic, even somewhat dismissive view of the value of action research and of the notion of teachers as researchers. He cites lack of time, expertise and incentives as constraints on practitioner research; however, he does not point out the importance and benefits of encouraging an involvement in research activity by those who have the responsibility for taking the "implications for practice" in research reports into the dynamic, uncertain world of the language classroom.

To sum up, on account of its coverage of key content areas, its very accessible style, its extensive use of practical examples and referencing of more specialized texts, I thoroughly recommend this very accessible comprehensive and thorough introductory text, in particular to postgraduate students, teachers, and those starting out on research careers.

ROSEMARY WETTE, University of Auckland

Long, M. H. (2007) *Problems in SLA*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. ISBN 0-8058-3580-6 (hbk). 201pp.

Given the enormous influence Mike Long has had in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), this book is one that many researchers, language practitioners and students of applied linguistics should be interested in. Long's discussion of six controversial issues in SLA theory, research and practice reflect his wealth of knowledge and expertise as a researcher and theorist. In each of these six areas, his own seminal work has been highly influential over the past 30+ years: delineating theory (Long, 1990a); investigating the role of age and SLA (Long, 1990b; 1993b; 2005b); considering the benefits of implicit feedback for second language development (Long, 1996); implementing tasks in language instruction (Long & Robinson, 1998; Long & Crookes, 1993); and understanding SLA theory from a cognitive perspective. He delivers as expected: consistent with his previous work, Long expertly synthesizes the current literature on each topic, in each case summarizing his position while logically critiquing opponent positions. I enjoyed the book most for his insightful, if somewhat polemic, commentary that challenges us to reconsider these issues - whether or not we agree with his conclusions.

In Part I, on theory, Long begins by describing the book as "essentially a proposal concerning how the field might develop greater coherence and a clearer focus than it has now, and do so systematically" (p.vii). This approach highlights the growing sophistication in SLA research (p21), and the myriad of approaches and ideas vying for position. In the first two chapters, Long draws attention to the nature of theory. He differentiates between the goals of theory and pedagogy, but recognizes the shared common interest in L2 development: "it would clearly be self-defeating for either group to ignore the other's work" (p.20) – perhaps as much a recommendation for practitioners to read this and similar literature as for theorists to pay attention to the realities of practice. Long draws heavily from work by Laudan in the philosophy of science to recognize theory as essentially based on problem solving, whether empirical or conceptual. He illustrates this by identifying deficiencies in a number of current theories (touching on Krashen's Monitor Theory, and some concepts in Sociocultural Theory) and points to essential features of productive theory change.

In Part II, on research, the third chapter looks at the evidence for attributing age differences in acquisition to innate linguistic knowledge or abilities, an issue with implications for any SLA theory. Long draws on both published and unpublished work and largely focuses on the possible biological explanations. In the fourth chapter Long examines research on recasts, defining these strictly as implicit negative feedback, in contrast to classroom-based research on corrective feedback that includes more explicit forms of recasts. In reviewing work to date on the effectiveness of recasts over explicit negative feedback, Long deals with some of the criticisms and unresolved issues regarding the potential benefits of implicit feedback for L2 learning.

In Part III, on practice, the fifth chapter concerns the practice of language teaching. It focuses on the theory and practice of task-based language teaching, particularly in regard to the more advanced learner. In the final chapter, Long addresses three general criticisms of SLA theory: sociolinguistic naiveté, modernism (versus postmodernism) and irrelevance to language teaching. The underlying assumption here, and throughout the book, is that in order to understand how languages are learned, a tenable scientific theory of SLA (i.e., one that is testable, based on measureable evidence) must be developed. In this view, he encourages researchers towards a better understanding of the philosophy of science as a basis for conducting theory building research.

This book will be of greatest interest to researchers and postgraduate students who already have some knowledge of SLA theory, it would certainly make a useful course text for an advanced class on SLA theory. Language practitioners and those working in other areas of applied linguistics who want to read further in this area, may also find the book thought provoking.

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McKay, S. (2006). *Researching second language classrooms.* **Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum. ISBN0 8058 5340 5. 183 pp.**

In her book 'Researching second language classrooms', Sandra McKay aims to provide novice teacher-researchers with the necessary background information and skills to be able to systematically and ethically implement research in their own classrooms. Moreover, she aims to provide teachers with a basis for assessing the findings of existing research. The text is divided into four broad sections (chapters): classroom research; researching teachers and learners; researching classroom discourse; and writing research reports. Each section includes 'Exploring the Ideas' exercises which would be suitable for independent study or groups of teacher-researchers to complete and discuss together.

Each chapter opens clearly and simply by stating the questions which will be addressed. For example Chapter One begins with:
- What are major types of research and how do they differ?
- What are the characteristics of sound research questions and designs?
- What ethical standards should researchers adhere to?

The chapter goes on to discuss each of these questions in sufficient depth to give novice researchers the background information they require to be able to make informed decisions about their own projects. The reader gains a sense of the complexities underlying the various approaches to research, as advantages and disadvantages are presented in a clear and unbiased manner. For example when introducing "action research", McKay alerts readers to the fact that some academics criticize the approach because it involves teacher reflection, and thus is not a rigorous methodology for classroom research. She then provides the counter claim that it is a worthwhile methodology because it includes a "researchable question, data gathering, and data analysis" (p. 16). A strength of this, and indeed all chapters, is the reference to real examples of L2 classroom research to illustrate the research method or idea being presented. As well as examples discussed in the text itself, readers are directed to several specific studies for their own independent further reading, at the end of each chapter.

Chapter Two, entitled "Researching teachers and learners", outlines the commonly used research methods in L2 research: action research, survey research, introspective research, and qualitative research. The choice of headings and terminology used to describe and define research approaches is the one aspect of this book which may cause some confusion. For example "action research" is separated from "qualitative research", and yet it is primarily a qualitative methodology. Furthermore "survey research" which includes in this book questionnaires and interviews is described as a methodology and yet both questionnaires and interviews are methods which can be used in many types of research including action research and case studies. Nevertheless, the specific explanations and examples provided are practical and relevant for L2 teachers. Guidelines for ways in which to create valid, reliable, and

ethical data collection instruments are excellent, and would be most useful in any teacher research course. Techniques for analyzing the data are also suggested. The author has considered her intended audience carefully, ensuring that these suggestions are as practical as possible for busy classroom teachers who are limited in terms of the amount of time they can devote to their research. For example, McKay cautions that transcribing complete audio-taped interviews can be tedious, and is not always necessary. She suggests that note-taking during an interview or when listening to a recording afterwards can provide key insights.

Chapter Three introduces the reader to commonly used methods which can be used to study classroom discourse, and also provides a section about ways in which corpus linguistics can contribute to the study of written L2 classroom discourse. Generic coding schemes are introduced and explained, including the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) system. A section on critical discourse analysis is also included and, maintaining consistency with the rest of this text, the background information and explanations provided about this research approach are clear and illustrated with relevant examples from L2 classrooms.

The final section, Chapter Four, deals with writing research reports. Suggestions for writing effective masters' theses and journal articles are provided. Although not intended specifically for the writing of dissertations or doctoral theses, McKay states that many of the suggestions will be relevant for graduate students. While most texts about research provide guidelines for writing research reports, few provide the kind of detailed information about writing for journal publication that is included here. McKay alerts the reader to the complete process of publication for an academic journal from selecting an appropriate journal, through to dealing with rejection and revision.

In summary, this text would be a useful addition to the reference list for any second or foreign language post-graduate course dealing with research in classrooms. The language used throughout is clear and easily accessible for teachers with little or no experience of research. Where technical jargon is used it is simply and precisely explained. The use of real examples of research implemented in second language classrooms make this text particularly relevant for the intended audience, namely novice researchers wanting to answer questions about L2 teaching and learning.

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Ortega L. (2009). *Understanding second language acquisition.* **London: Hodder Education. ISBN 978 0 340 90559 3. xvi+302 pp.**

This is a very recent volume in the new *Understanding Language* series, and is intended primarily as a textbook for graduate students who have, according to the publisher's end-cover blurb, "little or no prior knowledge of linguistics". Perhaps it is important to note that the author uses the terms acquisition and learning interchangeably because, as she says (p.5) "in contemporary SLA terminology no such distinction is typically upheld."

The book's ten chapters cover, as one might expect, the most important areas in second language acquisition. It begins with a ten-page introduction, in which Ortega locates SLA within the broader purview of the language sciences in general, and explains key terms and concepts in the field: this is especially important given the target audience. The following chapters focus on issues relating to age, cross-linguistic influence, the linguistic environment, cognition, the development of learner language, foreign language aptitude, motivation, affect, and social dimensions of L2 learning. Each chapter begins with a paragraph-length introduction to the topic, and concludes with a summary of points raised and, very helpfully, annotated suggestions for further reading. In between, the sub-topics are discussed in numbered sections, each of one or two pages, with plentiful examples and comprehensive citations of authoritative sources; the list of references at the end of the book runs to over 30 pages. There are helpful, and comprehensive, author and subject indexes.

Each of the chapters presents the key issues within the specified topic in sufficient depth and clarity to provide an authoritative introduction to the novice linguist. For example, Chapter 2, covering age and SLA, looks at the arguments for and against critical and sensitive periods, whether children or adults are better language learners, the development of children's morphosyntax and phonology from neuroscientific and biological evidence, and from findings of bilingual studies. Finally, two questions are raised: How important is age in L2 acquisition, and (why) does it matter? Ortega briefly addresses these questions in terms of, firstly, the quest for understanding the nature of human language as a whole, and secondly their educational implications: the importance of appropriate bilingual educational provision, the need to consider the wisdom of commencing foreign language instruction to young learners, and the fact that adult SLA can be successful.

Generally speaking, each of the issues is discussed in historical terms, beginning with early seminal work. Thus, in Chapter 3, cross linguistic influence is considered from the contrastive analysis hypothesis of the 1960s, then to Eckman's markedness theory in the 1970s and Kellermans' insights into transferability of the 1980s, through to recent studies indicating the importance of cross linguistic influence of multiple languages. Similarly, Chapter 8 deals with motivation by discussing first the pioneering work by Gardner and Lambert in the late 1950s and then the various critiques of their basic positivistic constructs in the 1990s, leading to the theoretical

renewal of the construct led by scholars such as Dörnyei, whose work (and that of others) in the past five years has focussed on the importance of social and contextual factors is neatly summarised.

The historical perspective is reflected not only internally within each chapter, but also in the way that the topics are sequenced throughout the book. There is a sense, therefore, that this is an exploration of the discourse within SLA as it has developed overt the years. Thus, the final two chapters, dealing with affect and social respectively, discuss an important paradigm shift that is occurring within mainstream SLA research and theory.

Chapter 9 begins the discussion of affect and other individual differences by pointing to the important relationship between cognition and emotional aspects of personality, taking as its starting point Eysenck's typological work in the 1960s and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator model devised in the 1980s, and the empirical applications of these models through to the present decade. This is followed by discussions of constructs such as Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate, leading on to a review of cognitive styles and learning strategies, and the many empirical studies that have sought to validate the various taxonomies associated with these constructs. Importantly, Ortega (p.211) cites critiques of these approaches by Skehan and Dörnyei who, from a social psychological perspective, argue that language learning cannot be reduced to quantitative analysis of self-reported responses to inventories and questionnaires, and that what is required is a more holistic framework. The chapter concludes with a consideration of Baumeister & Vohs' concept of self-regulation, a theory which seeks to explain how people take control over their actions, thoughts and feelings to achieve their goals. Adopting such a framework would enable cognition and affect to be studied together in principled way, using multiple data collection methods and, presumably, grounded analyses procedures. The way forward for SLA—towards the importance of studying individual learners within their complex social context—is thus signalled. Interestingly, however, the only empirical study into self-regulation cited by Ortega is that conducted with Taiwanese students using a six-point Likert-scale instrument.

The final chapter brings the reader up to day by considering the 'social turn'—the increasing recognition among SLA theorists and researchers that language acquisition can be only fully explored and explained by taking into account the rich social context in which the individual learns, and uses, language. Ortega firstly discusses Vygotskian sociocultural theory, and the role of inner, private and social speech, and the zone of proximal development with particular reference to the work of Lantolf and his colleagues and the recent valuable insights provide by Merrill Swain. Attention is then turned to Conversation Analysis and its application to SLA developed in the late 1990s by Wagner and his associates, and the various ways that research within this paradigm can contribute to understanding that language learning is fundamentally a social action. This in turn leads Ortega to discuss the influence of Halliday's systemic functional linguistics—which has for so long been ignored, or at least neglected, by many mainstream SLA researchers—and then the insights

provided by socialization theory, as espoused by Ochs & Schieffelin since the early 1980s and more recently by Patricia Duff and Bonny Norton with their emphasis on personal identity, whether as language learner or language user, deriving from the surrounding social context, and the implications this has regarding power relationships. The chapter, and the book, concludes with a consideration of technology-mediated communication.

As can be easily see from the above review, Ortega's perspective is broad, both in the wide range of issues covered and also in her historical perspective; she relates key theories and empirical studies from the 1960s to the most recent published work. Although the book is densely packed with references to key theories and empirical studies, it is also student-friendly in terms of the author's style and considerate explanations. This book therefore stands up to the claim for the series that it provides an approachable, yet authoritative, introduction to major topics in linguistics, in this particular case second language acquisition.

I strongly recommend this book. Over the years, I have taught a first-year MA course focussing on social and psychological aspects of language teaching and learning. Ortega's book deals with the topics relating to language learning (or acquisition) of that course more comprehensively than the textbook I currently prescribe, and I shall therefore add it to the other books that I strongly recommend, with a view to eventually using it as the core text. What the book does not cover, nor does it claim to cover, are the pedagogical implications of the many issues raised in the book that demand the language teacher's attention. It is to be hoped that there will be a future addition to this evidently valuable new series that will provide an equally authoritative introduction and overview.

ROGER BARNARD, University of Waikato

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

NZSAL is a refereed journal that is published twice a year. It welcomes manuscripts from those actively involved in Applied Linguistics/Applied Language Studies including second and foreign language educators, researchers, teacher educators, language planners, policy makers and other language practitioners. The journal is a forum for reporting and critical discussion of language research and practice across a wide range of languages and international contexts. A broad range of research types is represented (qualitative and quantitative, established and innovative), including cross-disciplinary approaches.

1. Submission of Manuscripts

1.1 Articles should be double-spaced in A4 format with generous margins at head, foot and both sides. Pages should be numbered consecutively. Submission of a manuscript implies that it has not been published previously and that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

1.2 Articles should normally be between 3000 and 5000 words in length.

1.2 Each article should include, on a separate page, an abstract of between 150 and 200 words, which is capable of standing alone as a descriptor of the article. Include the title on the abstract page.

1.3 A separate title page should include the following

the title of the article
author's name, and in the case of more than one author, an indication of which author will receive the correspondence
the affiliation of all authors
full postal address and telephone, e-mail and fax numbers of all authors

1.4 Authors should include a brief autobiographical sketch (50-80 words) on a separate page.

1.5 Copies should be submitted as an attachment to John Bitchener, co-editor:

john.bitchener@aut.ac.nz

1.6 All relevant articles submitted for publication will be reviewed by members of the Editorial Board or other referees.

2. Presentation of Manuscripts

2.1   Sections of the article should be headed but not numbered.

2.2   All Figures and Tables should be provided in camera-ready form, suitable for reproduction (which may include reduction) and should require no change. Figures (e.g. charts and diagrams) and Tables should be numbered consecutively in the order to which they are referred. They should not be included within the text, but submitted each on a separate page. All Figures and Tables should have a number and a caption.

2.3   Do not use Footnotes. Endnotes should be avoided, but if essential, they should be numbered in the text by means of a superscript and grouped together at the end of the article before the References under the heading Notes.

2.4   References within the text should contain the name of the author, the year of publication, and, if necessary, the relevant page number(s), as in these examples:

It is stated by McCloud and Henry (1993, p. 238) that "students never …" This, however, has not been the case (Baker & Thomas, 2001; Frank, 1996; Smithers,1985).

2.5   The list of References at the end of the article should be arranged alphabetically by authors' names. References should be given in the following form:

References

Books

Lillis, T. M. (2001). *Student writing: Access, regulation, desire.* London: Routledge.
Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Article in book
Clark, R. (1992). Principles and practice of CLA in the classroom. In N. Fairclough (Ed.), *Critical language awareness* (pp. 117-140). Harlow: Longman.

Journal articles

Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (1998). Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education, 23*(2), 157-172.
Turner, J. (2004). Language as academic purpose. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 3*(2), 95-109.

Unpublished manuscript

Park-Oh, Y.Y. (1994). *Self-regulated strategy training in second language reading*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alabama, USA.

Stein, F. & G.R. Johnson. (2001). *Language policy at work.* Unpublished manuscript.

Conference presentation

King, J., & M. Maclagan. 2001, August. *Maori pronunciation over time*. Paper presented at the 14th Annual New Zealand Linguistics Society Conference, Christchurch, New Zealand

Work sourced from the internet

Sanders, R. (2006). The imponderable bloom: Reconsidering the role of technology in education. *Innovate Journal of Online Education, 2*(6). Retrieved July 31, 2006, from http//www.innovateonline.info/index.php?view=article&id=232

For other sources use APA (American Psychological Association) conventions.

3. Short reports and summaries

NZSAL invites short reports on any aspect of theory and practice in Applied Linguistics. Manuscripts could also present preliminary research findings or focus on some aspect of a larger study. Submissions to this section should be no longer than 2000 words, and should follow the submission guidelines for full-length articles (no abstract is required, however).

4. Reviews

NZSAL welcomes reviews of professional books, classroom texts, and other instructional materials. Reviews should provide a descriptive and evaluative summary and a brief discussion of the work in the context of current theory and practice. Submissions should generally be no longer than 1000 words.