Doctor of Philosophy Program in English Language Teaching (Ph.D in ELT)  
(International Program)

OBJECTIVES:
1. To ensure student's ability to apply their advanced knowledge and understanding in the further development of theories and methods in the field related to ELT.
2. To equip students with knowledge about the latest developments in ELT including emerging issues and research trends.
3. To develop students' ability to design and complete major research projects for the development of new knowledge or substantial improvements in professional practice.
4. To enable students to interact consistently and effectively in academic and professional contexts.
5. To encourage students to take an active role in scholarly activities and establish construction interactions in group activities.
6. To ensure that students can communicate effectively through presentations and publications of their advanced research projects.

CLASS SCHEDULE/VENUE:
1. The doctoral program is a weekend program. Classes take place at Thammasat University's Ramkhamhaeng Campus.
2. The first semester is scheduled from June to September, the second semester is from November to February.

DURATION OF THE PROGRAMS:
The maximum period of time allowed to study in the program is five years of 10 regular semesters.

COURSES:
- Required Courses (9 credits)
  - TE721: Innovative in English Language Teaching
  - TE722: Research Methodology in English Language Teaching
  - TE723: Assessment in English Language Teaching

- Elective Courses (9 credits)
  - TE714: Language, Cognition, and Communication
  - TE715: Sociolinguistic Analysis for English Language Teaching
  - TE716: Discourse Analysis in English Language Teaching
  - TE717: Corpus Analysis in English Language Teaching
  - TE718: Educational Media and Materials Development in English Language Teaching
  - TE719: Seminar in Second Language Acquisition
  - TE719: Seminar in Applied Linguistics for Research in English Language Teaching
  - TE720: Seminar in English Language Teaching Program Evaluation
  - TE721: Seminar in Teaching English as a Foreign Language
  - TE722: Seminar in English Language Teaching Methodologies
  - TE723: Seminar in Selected Topics in English for Specific Purposes
  - TE724: Seminar in Professional Development of English Teachers
  - TE725: Seminar in Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Instruction

- Dissertation (60 credits)

ASSESSMENT:
- Qualifying Exam
  A Ph.D. student is required to pass the qualifying exam prior to the completion of the second semester of the first year. To be eligible for the exam, a student needs to have a minimum GPA of 3.00.
  A qualifying exam consists of written test and oral exam. It is given twice a year. Failing the qualifying exam after three attempts, a student will have to leave the program.

Dissertation:
A Ph.D. student must complete his or her dissertation defense within the second semester of their academic year.
In order to pass a Ph.D., a candidate has to earn an A grade in his dissertation.
Prior to graduation, a Ph.D. candidate is required to publish at least one of his/her dissertations in an international peer-reviewed refereed journal.

APPLICATION PERIOD:
November - January
Online application at: http://ift.com/th/ml/Thana.php

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:
1. Graduates record
2. Statement of purpose
3. English proficiency score
4. Written test
5. Interview result

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We welcome articles which address theoretical, empirical, and/or practical aspects of ELT or ESP including (but not restricted to) foreign language acquisition, foreign language skill development, language testing and evaluation, the teaching of English for specific purposes, and the application of English for career development, language testing and evaluation, the teaching of English for specific purposes, and the application of English for career development.

This journal is sponsored by the Language Institute, Thammasat University. However, authors are solely responsible for the opinions expressed. Interested persons are advised to consult the information concerning manuscript preparation provided at the back of this journal.

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FLLT Journal is published by the Language Institute, Thammasat University.

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Thammasat University
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2 Prachan Road
Bangkok 10220
Thailand

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Thammasat University
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99 M. 18 Paholyothin Road
Pathumthani 12121
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Tel: 0-2696-6003-5 Fax: 0-2696-6017
E-mail: flttjournal@yahoo.com

FLLT Journal is printed by Chok Chai Creation Printing Group Co. Ltd., 2012.

Tha Prachan        Tel. 0-2224-1350        Fax: 0-2224-7357 Ext. 106
Rangsit Campus    Tel. 0-2564-3105-11    Fax: 0-2564-3119
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Editorial

First of all, let me extend my greetings and a welcome to you to the second issue of the first volume of the FLLT Journal (Foreign Language and Language Teaching Journal), which provides a collection of academic and research articles in various fields of study relating to English Language Teaching (ELT), Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Education, and Communication. Published by the Language Institute of Thammasat University, FLLT Journal is intended to present recent theoretical concepts and empirical findings from research projects undertaken by international scholars and researchers.

All the selected articles in this issue have been peer-reviewed and edited by our competent reviewers and editors in the editorial board. The painstaking production of this journal ensures the benefit to be reaped by both specialized and lay readers. Researchers, teachers, and students in the related fields would gain insights into how classroom practice can be improved and how language works in some particular contexts.

In this issue are mainly articles that present research findings derived from classroom-based methodologies. The very first article by Professor Emeritus Achara Wongsothorn focuses on the relationships between classroom-centered research and English language learning and teaching. This paper effectively presents research findings related to language testing and assessment interfacing with language learning and teaching. This featured article also includes discussions of areas that address various types of assessment and correlations among variables relevant to language pedagogy.

The following articles report research results in diverse areas of language teaching and learning. First, Chun-Mei Chen presents a thorough research study on the production and perception of Thai students regarding Mandarin prosody. The study reveals that the improvement of students’ accuracy in tonal production was due to training under both communicative and instructional conditions. The subsequent article by Andrés Villagrá involves research projects contributing to the development of social skills in innovative Spanish classes. The research findings in this study vividly provide insights and pedagogical implications with regard to the application of technological devices to classroom practices.
In the next article on advanced linguistic research, Apinya Soithurum presents findings and discussions on the syntactic and semantic features of an irrealis marker in Thai grammar. The study provides a large amount of authentic evidence that supports the justification of the functions and meanings of the Thai marker under investigation. In the survey research conducted by Ramani Perur Nagaratnam and Abdo Al-Mekhlafi, the role of grammar in language learning was examined. The results reveal the positive attitudes English teachers had towards grammar instruction in language classrooms and their preference over the implicit approach to language teaching. The final paper by Worawan Sleesongsom and Suksan Suppasetseeree presents findings from an experimental study on the effects of online chatting on students’ oral proficiency. With a mixed-methodology design, the study found the positive correlation between the online activity and the post-test scores, as well as the positive attitudes of students towards speaking.

The journal ends with a book review by Nattama Pongpairoj on the book Discovering Statistics Using SPSS by Andy Field. The review includes summaries of all the chapters, accompanied by the reviewer’s personal feelings about the book and its use.

Many thanks go to all the authors, who made contributions to the quality of this journal, and to all the reviewers, who devoted their valuable time to the review process. The informed feedback provided by the editorial review board effectively led to the improved versions of the articles. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the advisory board for their useful opinions and advice, and those in the editorial team for evaluating and editing these articles with commitment and dedication. This is another time when we have fulfilled institutional objectives for the academic development in our community.

Associate Professor Supong Tangkiengsirisin, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief
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Discovering Statistics Using SPSS by Andy Field
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The Interface between Language Testing and Assessment and English Classroom Practices: What Research Says

Achara Wongsothorn
Chulalongkorn University

Plenary Address to the 2nd International Conference on Foreign Language Learning and Teaching, Ambassador Hotel, Thailand, 11-12 March 2011

Abstract

This paper addresses classroom-centered research (CCR) in terms of its purposes, methodology, and research outcomes focusing on the usefulness and application of outcomes. Being goal-oriented, CCR interfaces with English language learning and teaching to fulfill the learners’, the teachers’, and institutional demand for English excellence. Testing and assessment are evaluative mechanisms that drive the implementation of classroom materials and methods including evaluative loops for goal fulfillment. Various CCR testing and assessment projects here and abroad will be discussed and crystallized.

Keywords: Classroom centered research, Alternative assessment, Peer assessment, Maximal ability assessment, Typical performance assessment, Assessment and evaluation methodology
1. Introduction

The two concepts of testing and evaluation within the classroom have always been intertwined to make learner evaluation complete, i.e. learner variables consisting of typical performance and maximal ability are tapped. Brown (1970) categorized learning assessment as typical if it assesses such variables as motivation, personality, attitude, opinion, self-concept, anxiety, pride, self-confidence, and so on, and as maximal ability if it assesses such variables as English language proficiency, achievement, and language aptitude. The former uses the self-manifestation method of assessment while the latter employs externally developed instruments to assess learner cognitive domain benchmarking it against set criteria such as pass-fail, low-achiever and high-achiever, and grades, such as A, C, F.

The typical performance strand consists of assessment of such variables as self-assessment of one’s own language abilities and skills, self-report inventories of one’s motivation, attitude, opinion, levels of readiness, anxiety, teacher reflection (Ellis, 1977), learner reflection, (Lightbown & Spada, 2001), student academic self-concept or learners’ perceptions of his or her academic abilities (Hamachek, 1995; House, 2000), self-esteem (Loeb & Magee, 1992), etc. have been found to impact language learning achievement.

The maximal ability strand consists of assessment of language components: vocabulary, sound, and grammar, and assessment of language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing in both unitary and integrative modes. The common practice is to use both psychometrically sound objective test items like multiple choice, true-false, matching, and sequencing, and required reliability confirmation subjective test items like short answers, paragraph and essay writings, and real cloze. (Wongsothorn, 2003a).

Diagram 1 on the next page conceptualizes the system of practice in language teaching and learning, which in turn guides the interface between language research assessment and language classroom practice.
Diagram 1. The System of Practice in Language Teaching and Learning (van Lier (1996, p. 5))

With reference to the principles in Diagram 1, the right-hand column of the first 3 A’s principles consisting of awareness, autonomy, and authenticity impinges upon the “typical performance” variables with its psycholinguistic underpinnings focusing on both the teacher and the learner variables intertwined to make assessment and learning realistic, authentic, and exist within the realm of possible learner linguistic development. Allwright (1984, p. 9) commented that "it may be that interaction is what somehow produces linguistic development", and that "success …..includes ....."customer satisfaction", when learners are confident, motivated, independent, and more aware of the language-learning process and are satisfied with the tools they have to go on with their learning.

The right-hand column of the last 3 A’s principles consisting of achievement, assessment, and accountability means “maximal ability” points to assessment of knowledge and skills in language use for interaction, communication, inferencing, and evaluating through analyses
and syntheses. Language knowledge consists of forms and functions while language skills consist of unitary and integrating skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Periodical formative assessment and evaluation, when combined with summative assessment and evaluation, yield reliable grading, reporting, exiting, and remedial systems in a continuous loop.

In terms of strategies, contingent interaction requires information or data from both sides to enable teachers and administrators to plan an adequate program for language learning success, alongside with scaffolding, critical thinking, and learner training. Pinpointing on learner readiness, self-concept, learning styles, learning strategies, modality preference, and motivation, a module can be built to alleviate learner lack, serve learner needs and wants, and suit learner learning styles and strategies.

Regarding action, the activities are varied and planned to be well-rounded rendering reliability and validity to the tasks, field work, portfolios, conversation, negotiation, stories, genre variation, and team work, which are tools for assessment and evaluation of both aspects: typical performance and maximal ability.

Thus, this van Lier’s model serves as the framework for the discussion on the interface.

2. Trends in Language Assessment Research

To update needs for language testing research, the Millennium International Survey was conducted using the Internet as the means of data collection by Wongsothorn in 2003, (Wongsothorn, 2003b). To update these findings in 2009, another survey was conducted by the same researcher on approximately 50 respondents belonging to various governmental and private universities. Again the Internet was the research tool. The instrument for the survey was a questionnaire consisting of 4 parts: Respondent Information, Directions in Language Research, Thrusts of Language Testing and Evaluation Research, and Problems and Concerns.
On the issue of the interface between language assessment and evaluation, the following areas discovered to be of high relevance to language learning were:

**Typical performance variables:** teacher needs, learning styles, strategies, learning preferences, and readiness; test anxiety; self-concept; self-esteem; familiarity with ICT for assessment purposes; self-assessment and self-evaluation; self-reflection by both the teacher and the learner.

**Maximal ability variables:** effectiveness of collaborative learning, usefulness of scaffolding on language skills development, study skills, impact of backward design methodology on language learning, interrelationships among grammar-syntax-lexis in the realm of pedagogy.

2.1 The survey research findings interfacing with language learning in the classroom context

Leo van Lier (1988) stresses the significance of meaningful context and activities in the emergence of language abilities on the one hand; on the other hand the emergence of grammaring through social interaction and quality dynamics of language interaction has been found to be powerful in learner language emergence. In Leo van Lier’s emergentist perspective, grammar is not a prerequisite of communication, rather it is a byproduct of communication (Hopper, 1992). Regularity and systematicity are “produced by the partial settling or sedimentation of frequently used forms into temporary subsystems” (Hopper, 1992, p. 158). Larsen-Freeman (2003) views grammar as something which is organic and evolving. Then how are these emergents from research related to classroom assessment and evaluation and learning?

2.2 Domain of typical performance and maximal ability

The role of self-assessment and self-evaluation emerge forcefully in CCR for action outcomes. Diagram 2, taken from Rolheiser and Ross (2001), presents the flow from self-evaluation to self-confidence, a variable strongly and significantly related to motivation and learning achievement (Ross, Rolheiser & Hogaboam-Gray, 1998b).
Diagram 2. The Flow from Self-Evaluation to Self-Confidence

The model above has a loop starting from the combination of goals and effort to achievement, self-evaluation, self-judgment, self-reaction, and self-confidence. It is clear that the model demands learner training and self-training to acquire knowledge and skills of self-assessment and evaluation, which form basis for achievement (Ross, Rolheiser & Hogaboam-Gray, 1998a; Ross et. al., 1998b).

Based on the model and the findings, learner perceptions and beliefs are crucial to designing the content and the method of learning. According to Williams and Burden (1997, p. 205), beliefs “or perceptions” are important factors in determining what students learn and how they learn it. Principles of authentic assessment using self-assessment and peer –assessment gradually become integrated in the learning process. Kohonen (1999) promotes learning through the process of on-going feedback on learning in the form of “learning conversation”, in which students discuss their goals and achievement (Harri-Augstein & Thomas, 1991). Self-assessment then intertwines with peer-assessment and teacher feedback leading to final summative evaluation taking the form of oral tests and formal final paper and pencil
examination with determined share towards the final grade. Examination or assessment and evaluation results yield information for the students rather than about them.

Wongsothorn (2009) conducted a CCR on the relationships among peer-assessment, self-assessment, and teacher assessment on a group of 10 participants who were graduate students taking “Consolidating Skills for Science Graduates” course at the Chulalongkorn University Language Institute. The course members consisted of 5 males and 5 females in the fields of civil engineering, electrical engineering, environmental engineering, biology, and bio-chemistry. The objectives of the research were to find whether students’ academic self-perceptions of academic abilities would be related positively to academic achievement as evaluated by peers and teacher in each student’s individual oral presentation of a research project in his or her field of study. As the number was small, Kendall’s Tau and Spearman’s Rho correlations for non-parametric statistics were used to study the significance of relationships. The ratings by self- and peers were plotted and compared in the initial stage, then with the teacher rating in the middle stage, then with the summative final test scores in the final stage. The rating consisted of overall, system, delivery, body language, and visual aids. The 3 scale rating scale: 0=not at all, 1=somewhat, 2=much, 3=very much was used. The student final test scores were also converted into a 3-scale with 60-65 for 1, 66-75 for 2, and 76-85 for 3. The cutting point for pass-fail was at 60%. All students received the P rating.

Table 1. Plots of Ratings by Self-, Peer, Teacher, and Final Examination Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Teacher Rating</th>
<th>Self-Rating</th>
<th>Peer-Rating</th>
<th>Final</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
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<td>2.5</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>Wach</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The last column in Table 1 presents the degree of relationships among the category as judged by the researcher: H for high relationship, M for medium relationship, and L for low relationship. Among the ten cases, the interrelationships were 90% high and only 10% medium. The preliminary findings did not contradict the findings of Hamachek (1995) and House (2000).

Table 2. Kendall’s Tau and Spearman’s Rho Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>TEACHER</th>
<th>SELFRAI</th>
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<th>FINAL</th>
<th>RELATION</th>
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<td>.266</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

With reference to Table 2, Kendall’s Tau and Spearman’s Rho statistical analyses of relationships found significant correlations among the four variables with two highest relationships between peer-rating and final test score rating, and between self-rating and final score rating (Kendall’s Tau=.882 and Spearman’s Rho=.913 for the first pair, and Kendall’s Tau = .830 and Spearman’s Rho=.866 for the second pair). The correlations between teacher rating and peer-rating were slightly higher than those found between peer-rating and self-rating.
These findings showed that typical performance ratings and maximal ability tests were significantly related. Assessment and evaluation using both methods are justified, reliable and valid. In addition, the findings of this study did not contradict those made by Hamachek (1995) and House (2000).

3. Conclusion and Recommendation

From this simple preliminary investigation, it can be concluded that the interrelationships among peer-assessment self-assessment and teacher assessment were very high. This has paved the way for further investigation into the role and impact of self-assessment, peer-assessment and teacher ratings which are typical performance assessment with the final test scores which are maximal ability assessment. This recommendation also reflects the recommendation given by Wongsothorn (2009) that “The teacher and peers’ ratings have very frequent significant relationships implying that peers are reliable raters. Peers should be involved in assessing one another’s language use”.

To implement the products of CCR for language learning, whatever action and activities to be taken by the teacher and the learner as deemed suitable should be varied and planned rendering reliability and face as well as content and construct validity to the tasks assigned for formative evaluation such as field work, portfolios, self-assessment, peer assessment, and team work, using the typical performance and maximal ability tools, and last but not least to the summative assessment which may be mainly evaluated by maximal ability assessment tools such as psychometrically sound objective tests and production tests for writing and oral assessment including conversation, negotiation, stories, and genre variation. Below is a diagram presenting the goal-oriented applications of CCR outcomes.
A further study is needed to research using triangulated qualitative-quantitative instruments (Lynch 1996, p. 10) to find out the interface between classroom assessment research and learning achievement through the mixed-method research model.

References


About the Author

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Accuracy of Mandarin Prosody in the Production and Perception of Thai Learners

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Abstract

This study investigates the development of second language (L2) learning of Mandarin prosody and the accuracy of Thai learners in their L2 performance. Twenty-four Thai learners participated in production and perception trials over twelve weeks. Their learning of Mandarin prosody had not begun until adulthood. The patterns of their tonal learning were identified as more accurate in accessing level and falling tones, and less stable in perceiving and producing rising and falling-rising or dipping contour tones. On the other hand, Thai learners have shown better achievements in their production and perception of Mandarin prosody after tracks of tonal training under both communicative and instructional conditions. The results suggest that linguistic patterns such as level or contour prosodic features in Mandarin should be taken into consideration in effective language teaching and learning.

Keywords: Mandarin prosody, Production, Perception, Tonal training, Accuracy
1. Introduction

Both Mandarin and Thai are tonal languages, as they use distinctive pitch patterns to cue lexical contrasts. Previous research has shown that linguistic experience can change the way listeners attend to the acoustic patterns of speech (Francis, Baldwin, & Nusbaum, 2000; Francis & Nusbaum, 2002; Guion & Pederson, 2007). Many phonetic studies (Burnham & Francis, 1997; Burnham, Earnshaw & Quinn, 1987; Flege, 1995a; Hamburger & Slowiaczek, 1996; Strange, 1992; Wayland & Guion, 2003, 2004; Wayland & Li, 2008) focused on the perception of monosyllabic or disyllabic Mandarin tones by L1 speakers. In the present study, I extend the investigation of the perception of Mandarin prosody to the domain of Chinese as a second language, with an account of the effect of tonal training in instructional contexts.

Different tones frequently differ not only in fundamental frequency \(f_0\) but also in duration, amplitude, and voice quality. It has been agreed that fundamental frequency \(f_0\) is the indispensable cue to tonal identification and discrimination (Fu, Zeng, Shannon & Soli, 1998; Guion & Pederson, 2007; Liu & Samuel, 2004; Whalen & Xu, 1992; Xu, Gandour, & Francis, 2006), and that duration does affect the perception and identification of Mandarin tones (Blicher, Diehl, & Cohen, 1990). Although some studies have begun to examine tone perception by both tone and non-tone language speakers (Behne, Jongman & Sereno, 2004; Wang, Krishnan, Xu, Gandour & Cariani, 2005; Wong, 2002), the development of prosodic identification among second language (L2) learners is not clear, and very few researchers have paid attention to the L2 learning of Mandarin tones and speech prosody. The trajectory of the L2 prosodic identification of Mandarin Chinese is unknown yet. Empirical studies on L2 learners’ development of Mandarin tones are definitely needed.

The current study aimed to investigate the development of L2 learning of Mandarin prosody, and the accuracy of Thai learners in their L2 performance. To my knowledge, an interaction between training procedure and perception of Mandarin prosody in communicative and instructional contexts has not been explored. Questions arise as to whether the effectiveness of training procedures remains comparable in non-laboratory condition and whether the
accuracy of tonal production and perception of L2 learners with tonal experience can be improved through training procedures. The current study fills the gap by investigating Mandarin prosody from the perspective of Thai learners, whose first language is also a tone language.

1.1. Mandarin prosody

In Mandarin Chinese, meaningful lexical differences can be indicated by changing the fundamental frequency pattern of a given syllable. There are four lexical tones in Mandarin Chinese, which are Tone 1 (level tone), Tone 2 (rising tone), Tone 3 (falling-rising or low tone) and Tone 4 (falling tone). For example, in Mandarin the syllable [ma] means “mother” when produced with a high level tone (Tone 1), but when produced with a falling-rising tone (Tone 3), it means “horse”. In Mandarin Chinese, syllables produced with different pitch contours will result in different words. The value [5] indicates the highest level on the five-scaled system, whereas [1] indicates the lowest level. The four Mandarin tones, followed by the level and change labels in parentheses, are Tone 1: [55] (high level), Tone 2: [35] (rising), Tone 3: [214] (falling-rising), and Tone 4: [51] (falling). However, it has been observed that [212] and [211] are frequently uttered in speech for Tone 3 (Chao, 1968), which indicates tonal values of the four tones may not be reliable in spontaneous speech. Tone 3 in Mandarin has been labelled as a falling-rising or dipping, low tone.

On the other hand, non-tone language learners will process foreign lexical tones with reference to their native prosodic categories, and tone language learners will process foreign tones with reference to their native tone categories (Ladd, 1996). Studies focusing on prosody learning remain scarce. A lexical tone contrast refers to a contrast in which variation in pitch, or f0, an auditory impression of rates of vocal fold vibration, serves to differentiate lexical meaning. The present study examined how L2 learners perceived another tone system and the f0 variation in differentiating minimal pairs of Mandarin, namely, the perception and production of L2 learners with tonal experience.
Furthermore, in Third Tone Sandhi contexts of Mandarin, where at least two third tones come together, Tone 3 alternates with Tone 2 when another Tone 3 follows. In other words, the Third Tone Sandhi rule turns a Tone 3 (falling-rising or low tone) into a Tone 2 (rising tone) when followed by another Tone 3. Chen (2000) provides phonological account for sandhi domain, and the Third Tone Sandhi rule in Mandarin has been treated as a dissimilation process on a register level (Yip, 2002). When two syllables with identical tones come together, the first one changes its tone. For example, นิ่หำo [Tone 3+Tone 3] “hello” becomes นิ่หำo [Tone 2+Tone 3] “hello” in oral production. The phenomenon is also widely demonstrated in Mandarin language textbooks. In the current study, tokens with Tone Sandhi were included in perceptual stimuli. Both Tone 2 and Tone 3 in Mandarin are contour tones, the first one with rising label and the second with falling-rising label. It has been reported that native Mandarin speakers tend to place more emphasis on the contour dimension than the pitch height dimension (Gandour, 1984), and that the direction of the contour changes differentiates Tone 2 from Tone 3 (Moore & Jongman, 1997). It would be interesting to see if Thai learners were able to differentiate Tone 2 from Tone 3 in their production and perception of Mandarin.

1.2. Previous research on Thai tones

The Thai language has five phonemic tones (Hudak, 1987), a low tone (level tone), a mid tone (level tone), a high tone (level tone), a falling tone (contour tone), and a rising tone (contour tone). The acoustic dimensions of average pitch level, pitch direction and pitch slope are the main perceptual cues to the discrimination of Thai lexical tones (Gandour, 1979, 1983). Abramson (1975) found that native speakers of Thai are easily confused by two level tones, the low and mid tones.

Wayland and Guion (2004) investigated the ability to identify and discriminate the mid-tone and low-tone contrast in Thai by native English and native Chinese listeners before and after auditory training under two inter-stimulus-intervals (ISI) of presentation. They found that the native Chinese group outperformed the native English group in their ability to discriminate between the two Thai tones under the 500-ms ISI condition before training and under both
ISI conditions after training. Wayland and Guion (2003) found that without laboratory training, American English listeners with prior experience of Thai were better at discriminating the mid and low tones in Thai than those without the experience. These studies suggest laboratory training and language experience affect the perceptions of tonal languages. Yet, the improvement observed after short-term laboratory training has been questioned and is believed by some to be due to modifications in selective attention (Flege, 1995b). The effect of laboratory training in L2 learning and development is uncertain.

In addition, methodological factors that may affect the outcome of laboratory training include training procedures and the inter-stimulus-interval (ISI) used. Although results from laboratory studies showed an improvement in the ability to identify or discriminate non-native contrasts after training, the amount of improvement varies from study to study. Unlike laboratory training, authentic language or natural stimuli is always encouraged and widely used in language classrooms. Can the improvement observed in laboratory training be applicable to L2 prosodic development and learning in language classrooms? The design of the present study afforded the opportunity to test for changes in Mandarin prosody over real time and the effect of classroom training.

1.3 Accuracy of L2 learners

Accuracy is one aspect of language production with reference to oral task performance of L2 learners. Accuracy, or correctness, refers to the degree of deviancy from a particular norm (Hammerly, 1991; Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, & Kim, 1998). Deviations from the norm are usually characterized as errors. In other words, accuracy is the ability to avoid error in performance (Skehan & Foster, 1999). On the other hand, fluency typically refers to a person’s general language proficiency, characterized by perceptions of ease, eloquence, and ‘smoothness’ of speech or writing (Chambers, 1997; Guillot, 1999; Hilton, 2008). Many language researchers (Cucchiarini, Strik, & Boves, 2002; Lennon, 1990; Towell, Hawkins & Bazergui, 1996) analyzed oral production data to determine which quantifiable linguistic phenomena contribute to perceptions of fluency in L2 speech. Tavakoli and Skehan (2005) suggest that speech fluency is a multi-componential construct with sub-dimensions such as
speed fluency, breakdown fluency, and repair fluency. Both fluency and accuracy have proved useful measures of L2 performance. A proficient speaker is assumed to be able to perform tasks fluently and accurately.

Accuracy has been evaluated across different language domains by means of a variety of tools, including subjective ratings, quantifiable measures of linguistic properties of L2 production, objective accounts of L2 learners’ level such as number and type of errors for accuracy. In the current study, objective measures for accuracy were adopted. Percent correct identification measures were compared to examine Thai learners’ perceptual accessibility of Mandarin prosody.

1.4 The present study

My purpose in this article was threefold. First, I investigated the accuracy of perceptual identification of first-year Thai learners of Mandarin Chinese in a number of perception tasks that presented the effects of the different kinds of planning on the accuracy of learners’ performance with a view to identifying the variables they have on performance. Second, I compared the findings from perception tasks and examined the accuracy in L2 oral performance. Finally, I discussed the role of tonal trainings in communicative and instructional conditions, the limitations of the current study, and suggested directions for future research.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Twenty-four first-year Thai learners participated in the study. Their native language is Thai, and their learning of Mandarin prosody did not begin until adulthood. Ten learners took the courses of Elementary Chinese I or Elementary Chinese II in Fall 2010, whereas fourteen learners did not take the language course during the same semester (two of them registered in
Elementary I in Week 1, but they dropped the course in Week 2). All the learners spoke Mandarin in their daily life, with various degrees of frequency. All the learners participated in the production and perception trials during the following 12 weeks. Among the twenty-four native speakers of Thai, 8 were male, and 16 were female. Mean age for the participants was 26.5 years (ranging from 22-36). All the participants had been living in Taichung, Taiwan, for an average of 3 months (ranging from 0-12) at the time of testing. All participants were recruited from the student population of the National Chung Hsing University and were paid for their participation. All participants were L2 speakers of Mandarin and reported no history of hearing impairments or speech disorders at the time of testing.

2.2 Stimuli

Stimuli were two sets of perception testing, one with minimal pairs (e.g., Contour-Contour pair, má ‘hemp’ and mă ‘horse’), and the other one with words and phrases from the textbooks adopted in the courses Elementary Chinese I and Elementary Chinese II (e.g., bāozhĭ ‘newspaper’ and xiàngpiàn ‘photo’). There were 408 stimuli in the perception testing, and a total of 9792 [408 stimuli X 24 learners=9792] responses were obtained from each session of perception testing.

In perception tasks, all stimuli were produced by two experienced Mandarin instructors who conducted the courses Elementary Chinese I and Elementary Chinese II. The stimulus word was placed in a Mandarin carrier phrase [wŏmen shuō ____] ‘we say ______’. Each word was produced twice, the first time at a slow rate, the same rate the instructors used in their language classroom, and the second time at a normal rate. The duration (length) of a word at the slow rate was about 1.5 times that of the same word at the normal rate. Each word was in random order within the sequence of words. The recording took place in a quiet classroom using a high-quality digital recorder and a head-mounted microphone. The stimuli were later digitalized using a personal computer sampling at 22,050 Hz and 16-bit quantization.
The Thai learners were tested individually in a pre-test in a quiet classroom in one session that lasted approximately 15 minutes. They were told that they were to focus their attention on the tone of the stimuli. They were asked to mark the tones in the appropriate blanks. Both oral and written instructions were given prior to the test. Examples were illustrated on the blackboard of the classroom. All learners were tested on both sets of stimuli.

2.3 Training trials in language classrooms

Following the pre-test, ten Thai learners took the language courses Elementary Chinese I or Elementary Chinese II, three hours per week, with the weekly input of classroom tonal training sessions, about 15 minutes per session. Both elementary language courses were offered in the current study because three of the Thai learners had learned beginning-level Mandarin in Thailand, whereas seven of them had no learning experience of Mandarin before they arrived in Taiwan. Among the ten Thai learners, seven took Elementary Chinese I, and three took Elementary Chinese II. The two language instructors who recorded the stimuli were the instructors of the two language courses.

In each classroom tonal training session, the target words or phrases were placed in an Initiation-Response-Feedback (teacher initiation—student response—teacher feedback, IRF) sequence. The instructors presented an image of the target phrases with Mandarin tone markers or pitch contours, and the Thai learners were asked to say the words or phrases. For instance, when the instructor asked a learner: [zhè shì shénme] ‘what is this?’, the learner would say: [bàozhǐ] ‘newspaper’. The learners were asked to repeat the target words if correct tones were produced. Compliments were given to the learners with higher accuracy of tonal production. Corrective feedback was given when learners produced the wrong tone. Peer-correction was used when repeated errors were attested. Target words were also repeated in conversations between the learners and the instructors, as well as among the learners. In other words, tracks of tonal identification training were embedded in both communicative and instructional conditions.
All the twenty-four Thai learners (those with tonal identification training and those without identification training) were asked to come back for the next three months for perception testing and production performance. They were asked to produce the words they had marked with the wrong tone in the perception testing. They were told to focus on the tones of these words during the production tasks.

2.4 Tonal measurements

All the Thai learners were asked to participate in the production tasks after each track of perception testing. They were asked to say the words they did not perceive correctly in the session. They were told to pay attention to the tones of the words and say the words as slowly as possible. In other words, the best oral performance of the learners was recorded. Tokens from production tasks were later digitalized using a personal computer sampling at 22,050 Hz. Tonal measurements included vowel duration, f₀ at Onset and Offset points, and pitch contour. Vowel duration was measured for each target word.

Pitch contour (rising or falling) was obtained by subtracting onset from offset (f₀ Contour = Offset-Onset). If f₀ value is larger than zero (f₀ > 0), it is a rising contour. If f₀ value is smaller than zero (f₀ < 0), it is a falling contour. Figure 1 is a sample display of a pitch track of a rising tone, with onset and offset points marked. Actual f₀ values at onset and offset were obtained from PCquirer.

Pre-test and post-test data obtained from perception and production tasks was statistically analyzed. Pre-test scores were analyzed for the effects of tonal contrast and tonal identification. To test the effects of training trials in language classrooms, an ANOVA analysis was performed using both pre- and post-test scores.
3. Results

3.1 Accuracy of perceptual identification

Mean percent correct identification scores obtained from the pre-test is presented in Figure 2. The Thai learners perceived Tone 1 (level tone) and Tone 4 (falling tone) stimuli more accurately than Tone 2 (rising tone) and Tone 3 (falling-rising or dipping tone) stimuli. In other words, the patterns of their tonal perception in the pre-test were identified as more accurate in accessing level and falling contour tones, and less stable in perceiving rising and low or dipping contour tones. The accuracy scale of Mandarin prosodic change labels obtained from the perception testing of Thai learners is summarized as follows: Level, Falling Contour > Dipping Contour > Rising Contour.
Error analyses of the twenty-four learners have revealed that Tone 2 (rising tone) was most frequently misperceived as Tone 3 (falling-rising or dipping tone). On the other hand, Tone 3 (falling-rising or dipping tone) was most frequently misperceived as Tone 2 (rising tone). Overall, Mandarin rising and falling-rising contour tones have been reported with lower mean percent identification scores and less accuracy in the pre-test. The analysis of score data by ANOVA yielded a significant main effect of Tone Category (Tone 1, Tone 2, Tone 3, and Tone 4) \[F(3, 92) = 4.37, p < .05\]. The findings indicate the tonal category did affect the perception testing of Thai learners. Tonal contrast of level and falling tones in Mandarin was more accessible among the Thai learners.

Mean percent correct identification scores obtained from the post-test perception testing in Week 4, on the other hand, have shown various degrees of accuracy improvement in the perception of contour tones. Mean percent correct identification scores obtained from the pre-test and Week 4 post-test in both groups (with and without classroom tonal training) are presented in Figure 3.
As shown in Figure 3, the Thai learners with classroom tonal training had better perception accuracy in the categories of Tone 1 (level tone) and Tone 3 (falling-rising or dipping tone), but not in the categories of Tone 2 (rising tone) and Tone 4 (falling tone). The Thai learners without classroom tonal training, on the other hand, did not show significant accuracy improvement in any of the categories of Mandarin tones. Interestingly, these Thai learners had shown better perception accuracy of Tone 2 in the pre-test. After learning Mandarin or living in Taiwan for four weeks, their mean percent correct identification scores of Tone 2 in the post-test slightly dropped. Rising contour tone (Tone 2) in Mandarin seemed a challenge for the Thai learners, whose native language has five phonemic tones. Mean percent correct identification scores of the high level tone (Tone 1) in Mandarin have shown the highest accuracy in both the pre-test and the post-test. Classroom tonal training enhanced Thai learners’ perception of the high level tone in Mandarin.

### 3.2. Accuracy and speech rate in perception

Results from the perception testing in Week 8 have shown that the speech rate of native Chinese speakers’ production did affect the accuracy of Thai learners’ tonal perception. The main effect of speech rate is significant \(F (1, 46) = 18.28, p < .0001\). The Thai learners
perceived both sets of stimuli at the slow rate more accurately. Table 1 illustrates the variation of perception among the twenty-four learners. Names of the learners were replaced by Subject X in the table. Learners with tonal training trials in language classrooms were marked in bold fonts with gray background.

Table 1. The Effect of Speech Rate in the Perception of Mandarin Tones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Accuracy at Slow Rate</th>
<th>Accuracy at Normal Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject 1*</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject 2*</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject 3</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject 4*</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject 5*</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject 6*</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject 7*</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject 8*</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject 9*</td>
<td>61%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Subject 11*</td>
<td>72%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Subject 13*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject 24*</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

As shown in Table 1, overall tonal identification accuracy at the slow rate was higher than that at the normal rate. However, those enrolled in the language courses seemed to be more stable in perceiving stimuli at the normal rate. The Thai learners with classroom training trials have shown a perception accuracy rate of above 52% in perceiving stimuli at the normal rate, whereas those without tonal training trials have shown a lower accuracy rate in perceiving Mandarin tones at the normal rate.
3.3. Production of Mandarin prosody

Results from perception tests have shown native speakers of Thai are easily confused by two contour tones in Mandarin, rising tone and falling-rising or dipping tone. In the follow-up production tasks, the twenty-four Thai learners were asked to say the words they did not perceive correctly in the previous perception testing. Tokens recorded from each learner varied, as the learners have different percent correct identification scores in each session. Measurements made in Week 12 production tasks were the base here. Tokens were mainly with Tone 2 (rising tone) or Tone 3 (falling-rising or dipping tone), as most Thai learners made errors in the two tone categories. Tokens with Tone 2 and Tone 3 were divided into four categories: Tone 3 tokens in Sandhi context (T3 Sandhi), Tone 2 tokens in Sandhi context (T2 Sandhi), Tone 3 tokens in isolation (T3 Isolation), and Tone 2 tokens in isolation (T2 Isolation). Production tasks have shown that the duration of Tone 3 in Sandhi context has a significantly longer duration [Group with training: $F (3, 236) = 93.60, p < .0001$; Group without training: $F (3, 236) = 54.36, p < .001$] than that of Tone 2 in the same Sandhi context. Mandarin target words with Tone 2 (rising tone) or Tone 3 (falling-rising or dipping) in the Third Tone Sandhi context may cause confusion for Thai learners. The mean duration (speed fluency) of the tokens from the two groups (with and without training) is presented in Figure 4. Most Thai learners with tonal training produced the correct forms of Tone 2 and Tone 3 in their production tasks.

![Figure 4. Mean Durations Measured from the Tokens Produced by the Two Groups](image-url)
Tone 2 (rising tone) and Tone 3 (falling-rising tone) tokens produced by the group without training have shown deviations from the target offset and pitch contour. Tone 3 tokens in isolation have shown rising pitch contour, as shown in Figure 5. The rising effect for the tokens produced by the group without tonal training was indicated by the contour [Offset-Onset]. The results indicate that not only tonal training but also tonal contexts affected the rising contour of the tokens produced by the Thai learners.

![Figure 5. Pitch Contour [Offset-Onset] Per Condition for the Tokens Produced by the Two Groups](image)

Acoustic analyses of the tokens produced by the Thai learners have shown that classroom tonal training and tonal contexts could affect the phonetic representations of tonal production of the Thai learners. The number of the deviation tokens was different in the two groups (with and without training), with more deviation tokens attested in the group without training.

To sum up, Mandarin Tone 2 (rising tone) has been a challenge in the perception and production of Thai learners. Tonal training affected the accuracy of Mandarin tonal identification in perception testing. Speed rate also affected the accuracy of tonal perception. Tracks of tonal training in both communicative and instructional conditions affected the oral performance of the first-year L2 learners and their accuracy in the production tasks.
4. Discussion

This study investigated accuracy of Mandarin tones in production and perception tasks of L2 learners. It also examined how a group of Thai learners dealt with Mandarin tonal identification, training trials, and production tasks. The perceptual data provided support for the role of tonal training made in language classrooms, communicative and instructional contexts. Mandarin high-level tones were identified more accurately than rising and falling-rising or dipping contour tones, indicating that pitch contour and Mandarin tone categories add to the processing demand for L2 prosodic identification. On the other hand, Mandarin stimuli presented at the slow rate were identified more accurately, indicating the facilitative effect of classroom language register on the first-year learners of Mandarin. Furthermore, Mandarin Third Tone Sandhi contexts also caused confusion for the first-year L2 learners. Thai learners’ prosodic identification was facilitated less by a complex context. Results suggest tonal training in instructional contexts enhanced Thai learners’ perception of the high level tone in Mandarin. The Thai learners enrolled in the language courses seemed to be more stable in perceiving stimuli at the normal rate.

As mentioned earlier, Mandarin speakers tend to place more emphasis on the contour dimension than the pitch height dimension (Gandour, 1984), and that the direction of the contour changes differentiates Tone 2 from Tone 3 (Moore & Jongman, 1997). Without intensive and extensive tonal practices and training in a communicative condition, it would be a challenge for Thai learners to master the direction of the contour changes in Tone 2 (rising tone) and produce the correct forms.

Although the acoustic dimensions of average pitch level, pitch direction and pitch slope are the main perceptual cues to the discrimination of Thai lexical tones (Gandour, 1979, 1983), Thai learners have shown better accuracy in perceiving level-tone stimuli in Mandarin. Native speakers of Thai are easily confused by two-level tones in Thai (Abramson, 1975), but the only level tone in Mandarin, in contrast, is the most accessible tonal category for Thai learners in their L2 production and perception. In other words, the only level tone (Tone 1) in Mandarin is more accessible for Thai learners, whereas the two contour tones (Tone 2 and Tone 3) in Mandarin are less accessible for first-year Thai learners. Although tonal training in
classroom practices improved the first-year Thai learners’ accuracy in the production tasks, prosodic features (rising and falling rising contour) in situ affected the perceptual accessibility of Thai learners, whose first language was also a tone language. Native speakers of Mandarin pay more attention to the direction of contour tones, and L2 learners would be required to make more effort to master the two contour tones (Tone 2 and Tone 3) in Mandarin. Linguistic patterns such as level and contour change labels in the current study should at least in part account for the perceptual accessibility of the second language learners. In brief, variables on Thai learners’ perception performance included the speech rate of native speakers, contour prosodic features, and tracks of tonal training in both communicative and instructional conditions.

From a pedagogical standpoint, classroom tonal training increased the tonal production and perception accuracy of the first-year learners in a Mandarin-speaking learning condition. One finding worth noting is the speech rate in first-year language classrooms. As the speed rate affected the accuracy of tonal perception, it is suggested that language instructors pay attention to their speech rate in their classrooms. In language classroom practices, tonal contrast exaggerated the tonal pitch direction of the target words, and peer-correction increased the frequency of the use of the target words. Classroom tonal training tracks in reality often came with other messages and acted as communication cues in instructional contexts.

5. Conclusion

In the present study, twenty-four Thai learners participated in the production and perception trials over twelve weeks. Results from perception tests have shown native speakers of Thai are easily confused by two contour tones in Mandarin, rising tone and falling-rising or dipping tone. The general patterns of their tonal learning were identified as more accurate in accessing level and falling tones, less stable in perceiving and producing rising and low or dipping contour tones.
On the other hand, Thai learners have shown better achievements in their production and perception of Mandarin prosody after tracks of tonal identification training in both communicative and instructional conditions. This finding suggests that native experience with one tonal language, for example, the Thai language, and effective training in communicative conditions may facilitate the acquisition or learning of another tonal language, such as Mandarin in the present study. The ability to perceive a change in pitch contour in Mandarin, the input of tonal contrasts in communicative conditions, and the existence of tonal representations in long-term memory may improve the learning of a different tonal system. Although from the current study a concrete answer cannot be drawn as to whether it is advantageous for native speakers of a tonal language to learn another tonal language, the prosodic performance of L2 learners can be enhanced with instructional training procedures.

In conclusion, results obtained from the current study indicate that linguistic patterns such as level or contour prosodic features should be taken into consideration in effective language teaching and learning. The effects of the classroom training mode to novel stimuli should also be explored in further studies. Besides, the current study did not investigate production and perception performances of L2 learners whose first languages are not tone languages. Future studies should recruit participants without tonal experience or those whose first languages are not tonal languages, to test if no prior experience with a tonal language would prove to be disadvantages in perceiving and producing another tone language, and to examine if a positive transfer universally exists among L2 learners with tonal experience, and how a positive transfer would facilitate second language learning.

Acknowledgements

This study was supported by grant NSC 99-2410-H-005-043 from the National Science Council. The author is grateful to Chompunut Lumsangkul and Jenjira Chumpookam for help with data collection, the audience at the Second International Conference on Foreign Language Learning and Teaching (Bangkok, 2011) for generous comments and discussion, and two anonymous reviewers for valuable comments on an earlier version of this article.
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Developing Social Skills in the Spanish Classroom Through Content Creation and Collaboration

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Abstract

This paper explores how collaboration and content creation projects contribute to learning in the foreign language field. As new Web 2.0 technologies and open education resources become available, course objectives and course project design differ from traditional learning and assessment methods. Emphasis is placed on learning in active collaboration, which in turn aims at achieving students’ rhetorical competence.

The paper shows how the application of web 2.0 tools and social learning in The Spanish Lounge de Pace University results in a varied content-based class projects for the foreign language classroom. These projects come as a result of aligning course goals and objectives with projects that enhance social skills. It goes on to consider benefits as well as obstacles of such methodology and if, in fact, social learning environments promote language learning.

The project focuses on the students who become producers of learning materials as well as on the importance of project-specific course design. Being active learners, students share the responsibility of the creation of a new ecology of ‘open’ content and multimedia. As both students and teachers gradually become adept in social learning, this study concludes by suggesting good practices on the use of Web 2.0 technology in the foreign language classroom.

Keywords: Web 2.0, Open education, Rhetorical competence, Social skills, Foreign language education
1. Introduction

This study addresses the application of Web 2.0 technologies to the teaching of the cultural, literature and language skills in the foreign language classroom. The implementation of Web 2.0 tools aims to develop skills needed in the professional world. As such, course goals and objectives include procedures needed to be aligned with these expected outcomes. In this paper, we will examine current key aspects in open education (OE) methods and resources in promoting project-based learning (PBL). Wikis, in particular, have been very successful in developing collaborative projects that are later applied as classroom materials, as exemplified in The Spanish Lounge de Pace University classroom management system (CMS). The flexibility provided while working on wiki environments allows for greater collaboration of in-group projects (academic, cross-institutional and external) while fostering “individual and collective metacognitive strategies for making meaning out of complexity” (Dede, 2009, p. 4). In addition to traditional classroom evaluations, new assessment methods should integrate rhetorical competence, social skills, and reflective practices.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Web 2.0 tools in foreign languages

Clearly, the advent of Web 2.0 technology has generated a wealth of instructional benefits to foreign language education. According to Amstrong, Web 2.0 tools provide the ability to “write, show, speak, and listen to the web site as well as read it” (Amstrong, 2008, p. 4). Speaking, audio, and video tools allow for practicing real dialogue and develop communicative skills between students and Spanish-speaking natives and non-natives from around the world. Reading authentic materials such as newspapers, academic papers and discussion forums also develops writing skills. Students can also expand listening and speaking abilities and skills by watching TV, creating podcast or videocast, playing games with Spanish counterparts and creating communities or participating in discussion. In addition, there are online virtual environments exclusively dedicated to learning Spanish
(Second Life environment is a point in case). Web 2.0 tools are also being used by students to post personal reflections in blogs, to participate in collaborative projects in wikis, and to podcasts and videocasts of their learning experiences. Students themselves are demanding the new form of social learning (Richardson, 2009).

Ease of use and accessibility and free or inexpensive software resulted in numerous projects but the degree in which instructors have used this technology differs greatly. According to The 2010 Franklyn Report, “usage to date has been driven primarily by the particular interests of individual members of staff rather than institutional policies” (Amstrong, 2008, p. 1). Individual practitioners are using Web 2.0 to enhance their teaching because of the visual and communicative richness that it offers, or at their students’ request, and to make course materials more attractive to the students, or because it is clearly understood that practice with the new technologies will be a requirement in the professional world.

However, the application of these new technologies has not been readily adopted. In this respect, some of the issues dealt with the additional time or knowledge required that would conflict with the course material; the expense associated with the acquisition of necessary equipment and internet bandwidth, or the demonstration of educational advantage of the use of technology in the classroom, whether it is implemented in a face-to-face (F2F), hybrid, or online format (Amstrong, 2008; Blake, 2008; Nagel, 2008). In the study conducted at the University of Houston, Schaffhauser (2008) concludes that the greater benefit in terms of instructional learning and assessment methods is achieved in the hybrid classroom. But this study is based on the delivery method and not in the course content, goals and objectives associated with the use of technology.

Without a doubt, the use of these tools would enhance, enrich and expand the communicative experience by bringing the culture into the classroom. Students in the 21st century need to be taught skills that expand traditional learning (reading, writing, arithmetic, etc.), with the so-called “soft skills” (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity) in a digital setting (Gordon, 2011). These practices should also serve to develop proof of linguistic, cultural and technological student competencies. Wilen-Daugerthy (2009, p.59) defines this group of skills as Rhetorical Competence or the “ability to develop new research
skills, distinguish between fact and opinion, construct arguments and marshal evidence, use technical skills, and understand the ways new media represent perceptions of the world”.

On the other hand, many teachers feel ill-prepared to devise course activities in a digital environment. Similarly, students have not yet been taught how to best apply technology for academic and professional advancement. This is work in process which will greatly benefit from mutual interaction between teachers and students. Basing my approach on Duffy and Cunningham's (1996) *social constructivism* learning theory, skill development should be founded on "a social, dialogical process of construction by distributed, multidimensional selves using tools and signs within context created by the various communities with which they interact" (as cited in Reynard, 2009a). Collaboration with communities outside the classroom not only fosters social interaction and engagement but also determines course and activity design. Following the social constructivist approach, Web 2.0 instructional technology involves the use of *content, resources and practices*.

### 2.2 Open education

Far more than a collection of free online course materials, the open content movement is a response to the rising costs of education, the desire for access to learning in areas where such access is difficult, and an expression of student choice about when and how to learn. According to *The 2010 Horizon Report*, its implementation would have taken less than a year (Johnson et al., 2010). Commercial and academic websites provide numerous tools for developing Spanish language programs as well as content-specific resources, like the online encyclopedia *Wikipedia*. The arrival of social networking technologies around 2004 and 2005 (blogs have been used since the early 90’s) meant that the use of tools and services in the classroom (like wikis, podcast, screencasts, Google Docs, YouTube, and discussion forums) resulted in greater participation, communication, interaction and dialogue (Villano, 2008b). Simultaneously, the education industry is presenting copyrighted, protected content available through websites such as *Creative Commons*. Other pioneer projects such as MERLOT, and MIT open courseware, have been followed in their footsteps by those such as *Academic Commons and Science Commons* projects.
Vijay Kumar (as cited in Grush, 2009) in his book *Opening Up Education* emphasizes that: “open education, or an open knowledge ecology, is the open sharing of not just educational resources, but also of practices and pedagogies that underlie the content and resources”. Certainly, the use of Web 2.0 will reshape the learning process into a “social learning” environment by facilitating a more participatory, collaborative “form of education where people actually coproduce educational resources, actively reviewing and giving feedback to improve educational practices, create educational resources”.

It is precisely the development of collaborative classroom projects that becomes the real challenge. According to Blake’s (2008, p.70) *Network-Based Language Teaching* (NBLT) approach, “Potential benefits of collaborative exchanges whether set in the classroom, or managed online, depend more on sound pedagogical design of the tasks the participants are asked to accomplish than on the actual locus of the learning event”. The wealth of social skills brought about by the use of Web 2.0 tools for instruction represents “a culture shift for academics” (Amstrong, 2010, p. 2). Nevertheless, technology in itself is not a methodology, as Blake indicated (2008, p. xii). In the discussion that follows, I will describe the methodology, goals and objectives, projects and initial finding in the wiki learning environment *The Spanish Lounge de Pace University*, http://spanishlounge.wetpaint.com.

### 3. Research Methodology

The *Spanish Lounge*’s concept stems from the “Open Education” approach of creating content materials at a very low or no cost to the students or the institution (Johnson et al., 2010; McCrea, 2010). Presently, this 210-member community is composed of students, alumni, friends, teachers, and colleagues from the United States, Spain and Latin America. The *Spanish Lounge* is presently hosted in a wiki website because of the many advantages it offers, mainly because it provides “architecture for participation” (Wheeler et al., 2008, p. 987). The student population consists of university students between 18 and 25 years old with 2 to 4 years of previous study of the Spanish language. The different classes were composed of Spanish students’ majors, minors and those taking the course as an elective.
Drawing from both the communication aspect of Facebook and collaborative content creation of Wikipedia, (Villano, 2008b), this flexible Spanish wiki environment works as a CMS, academic social networking, e-portfolio and personal learning environment (PLE). It has the capability to send RSS feeds when changes are made and entries can be sent directly into Twitter and Facebook sites. The widget system allows for embedding multimedia documents to create podcast, audio lessons, interviews, and instant communication via chat, or text message. Results from student response systems (SRS or clickers) can also be shown on specific widgets. It can also accommodate needs of students with disabilities such as the first browser designed specifically for children with autism and other disorders.

One of the main objectives of The Spanish Lounge is to develop professional competencies and social skills in the so-called 5’Cs areas: communications, cultures, connections, comparisons and communities. Demonstrating abilities and skills in these areas has been emphasized by employers today. According to Kramchs (2001), language competency in today’s terms is not measured in how accurate and exact the user knows a language but in the adaptability and selection of terms depending on the social context and the objectives of the communicative act.

The pioneer project on social learning began in 2007 by using student blogs in an Advanced Spanish Composition course. A clear objective was to achieve learner independence, responsibility, and authorship by writing to a real audience of native Spanish-speakers outside the classroom (Pinkman, 2005; Reynard, 2008). During the first two weeks of classes, students were required to open a blogger account, format the blog appearance, provide a title and include a picture, songs or other multimedia. During the following two weeks, the students worked with a teacher blog. Initially, students needed to respond or to comment on some of the teacher entries in the blog called El Profe at http://pinchaqui.blogspot.com. A class blog was reserved to share additional thoughts and in-depth comments. Students were required to respond individually to 3-4 questions posed after class discussions. A Blog Central, found at http://ourplaza.blogspot.com, provided a link to all students’ blogs. During the remaining part of the course, the students worked on common practice writing exercises in their individual blogs. Students needed to comment on each two other student blogs once a
week. Progressively, students moved away from suggested topics to write about areas of personal interest. In the Writing, Technology and Teens supported by the Pew Foundation, researchers concluded that: “Teens are motivated to write by relevant topics, high expectations, an interested audience and opportunities to write creatively” (Lenhart et al., 2008, p. iii). During the second half of the semester, students were responsible to post their comments in Spanish blogs from around the world and invite people to write back to them. Several students achieved this greater level of writing and communicative competency. Student entries were based on class composition rubric. The frequency and quality of comments was also part of the final grades. Some initial findings demonstrated that students prefer personal comments and observations based on personal experience, students are very interested in others’ comments even if they don’t contribute themselves, and a shared understanding that public writing entails authorship and responsibility that contributed to their language improvement.

In 2008, the piloting class wiki project, Spanish Success Story, began as an individual assignment for an Intermediate Spanish Conversation course, which enrolled about 20 first and second-year university students. I started using a free educational wiki platform, found at http://wetpaint.com, because the flexibility and ability to develop visually rich interactive shared pages. As part of the final project for the course, students were required to videotape an interview with a Hispanic professional from the New York Metropolitan area. The interviewee would normally be someone related to the student’s major area of study. During class time student practiced questionnaire development and essay writing as well as mock interviews among students to enhance conversational skills. The purpose of this final project was three-fold: first, it placed students in an authentic situation that contributes to develop Spanish fluency in a professional environment; second, it helped the student to develop a professional relationship and network for future aspirations; third, it demonstrates a variety of technical skills as well as linguistic competence for their e-portfolio. As Boettcher (2011) suggested, these types of student tasks can also be used as an alternative method of course assessment. Students also commented on each other’s entry in a discussion forum format provided as part of the final grade. Each online interview webpage also includes a summary
of the interview in Spanish and English prepared by the student, a personal reflection, a questionnaire and a list of references about the field. Students were graded in writing and speaking abilities as well as project depth, structure, organization and presentation. On student evaluations, students praised the nature of this project and the opportunity to meet professionals in their areas of interest. However, this being a foreign language practice, other students expressed their objections to post their interviews online. After the course ended, students could remove the interviews from the website if they chose to do so. Finally, the website provided a discussion forum at the bottom of the page where members could continue a discussion. This project has evolved into a databank of rich multimedia documents that I have reused in my elementary and intermediate courses for reading, listening comprehension and writing exercises.¹

In the Spring 2009, I taught the course “Contemporary Hispanic Culture through Film”, which was followed by “Culture of Spain” in Fall 2009, and both courses had an approximate enrollment of 15-20 students per class comprised at first, second and third-year students as well as native speakers of Spanish. Both classes involved a combination of Arts, History and Culture and they heavily relied on visual presentations by the professor and students in the form of webpages, podcasts, and multimedia documents. Both the preparation of the visual components and ancillaries were very demanding and challenging.

Two of the main objectives for teaching with technology in these courses are developing a student e-portfolio and creating lesson plans as part of the final course projects. During the semester, students were responsible for conducting historical, chronological and cultural original research studies based on the student areas of interest. A rubric was created to focus on knowledge about the topic; comprehension and organization of the main ideas, application of facts, principles, examples and their significance; analysis that compares and contrasts evidence presented; synthesis of ideas and solutions; and a personal evaluation of opinions expressed, decisions made, and organizational methods.
According to Pearlman’s (2006) concept of Project-Based Learning (PLB), a well-designed course structure will help to ensure the success of the project. Then, these projects need to be characterized by:

1. Organizing small groups, and defining each member’s role.
2. Establishing an initial problem and scaffolding the research around it.
3. Setting a clear calendar with plan, drafts, special dates and final presentation. The course calendar should include plans, drafts, timely benchmarks, and finally the team's presentation.
4. Explaining all mechanics that involves teaching feedback and monitoring, clear set of instructions and grade rubrics, teamwork and peer editing, critical thinking, and other important skills.
5. Additionally, a system for rewarding participation should be delineated in the syllabus and grade system. This can be easily identified by the contributions made to the wiki and page updates.

4. Initial Findings

4.1 Benefits

Both the students and the instructor in a language classroom are gaining experience in learning in a collaborative online environment that emphasizes personal responsibility, authorship and ownership over the content created. Wiki technology can be easily taught and contributions can be added with very limited knowledge of Web development or design. RSS feed aggregator tools report changes made by the instructor and students. As such, any malpractice is immediately identified and reverted by anyone in the group and malicious members are banned from the site, if necessary. For a greater level of protection, the site is accessible only to members and invited guests while class instruction is being conducted.

Teachers provide guidance and modelling, and facilitate the discussion while students themselves become producers of learning materials creating “ecology” of reusable open
content for future courses. As projects are developed collaboratively, further editing is developed in separate or adjacent files to keep original document untouched.

Writing about topics in which students are interested or which are related to their field of studies promotes an open dialogue with a community of readers with similar interests. In this process, students become active participants and develop an awareness of an audience (Wheeler et al., 2008). Student members have created or maintained communities that continue beyond the classroom and after graduation.

Following Marcia Connor and researchers from MIT, *The Spanish Lounge* also emphasizes social skills developed through collaboration and networking. Boettcher (2011) exemplifies that beyond analysis, critical thinking and communication, students can also develop sets of practical resources by addressing pressing political, economic, cultural, literary problems, etc., such as (Reynard, 2009a):

- In *The Spanish Lounge* students have created lesson plans, questionnaires, vocabulary builders and glossaries as found in their course materials presenting the student with the view of both as a learner and a teacher.
- Collective intelligence is interpreted as the ability to practice together to achieve specific goals by developing online class projects, reusing and practicing with materials created by former students, and writing collaborative in editing and project development. The directions appeared in the course syllabus.
- Negotiation or the ability to learn and understand different cultural artifacts and worldviews.

Certainly, students are also receiving a hands-on experience on collaborative learning and web 2.0 technologies that have become an indispensable skill in today’s professional world (Batson, 2010; Goodyear, 2008). Unlike traditional final papers, the projects created in this technological environment can be easily accessed and be readapted for a variety of purposes beyond the course, and become part of the student e-portfolio.
4.2 Challenges

In this process of discovery, there are numerous challenges associated with the application of web 2.0 tools in the classroom; particularly, the transformation of the learning environment receives special attention by theorists (Reynard, 2009b; Wilen-Daugherty, 2009). A lack of new pedagogic models creates uncertainty for both staff and students (Amstrong, 2008). In this new role, teachers may feel like working in isolation without faculty and administration involvement. This results in a delay in terms of the number of students receiving training from other courses, as well as funding and support from administration (Nagel, 2008). Additionally, there is an obligation to keep up with the educational mandates of the state while showing a different set of traditional skills beyond the linguistic or literary ability of the student.

At times, students don’t see the obvious benefits of working with the latest technology. Sometimes they perceive the designing of a technology project as a burden when they are still trying to learn the subject matter and academic methods and discourses to fulfill state standards. These types of projects are presently being devised against academic standardization, as Hardagon (2008) indicated. The instructor should then re-direct the student to achieve rhetorical literacy by focusing on analysis and reflection, and content creation.

Time factor is a reality that cannot be underestimated. Whether working on a wiki environment, blog, or within a LMS, there is an initial familiarization or learning process involved with both technology and class methodology. According to Sagarra and Zapata (2008), time factor is a major issue as “peak effectiveness in second language courses is at about 8 months of continuous practice, or 2 consecutive semesters” (p. 107). Project design also requires preparation time for developing clear, original outcomes, and a meticulous delivery system well before the course is implemented.

Students themselves behave and process information differently. Thorne and Payne (2005) maintain that today’s students “learn differently, are less accepting of terms like ‘classroom’ and class participation, the roles of teachers, and technology as a tool for creative expression
and as a means for circumventing institutional structures” (p. 380). In this new environment, teachers become connectors, facilitators and collaborators while maintaining a constant presence to present new tools, synthesize ideas, provide individual coaching and customize learning (Bowen, 2007; Reynard, 2009b).

4.3 Assessment

The use of technology in my classroom demanded a new conceptualization of my teaching style, the choice and use of materials, the definition of learning objectives and outcomes, the assessment methods to evaluate student content-created products. Therefore, assessment methods should be developed simultaneously to the objectives and outcomes expected for the course (Batson, 2010). In general, use of Web 2.0 tools and resources should be rewarded when they are an integral part of the course (Google Docs, Wiki, Flickr, Del.icio.us, etc.,) or while creating personal learning spaces or e-portfolios. Content should be measured in terms of analysis, critical thinking, simulations, collective intelligence, and negotiations and it will be based on projects developed either individually or as a group. It is important to remember that methods of assessment not only should include the activities conducted during the course, but also should be as flexible as possible to accommodate different course learning objectives and student learning styles. Additionally, a system for rewarding participation should be delineated in the syllabus and grade system. This can be easily identified by the contributions made to the wiki and page updates. The National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLR) association provides a good resource for developing Assessment Guides for the foreign language classroom. The direct link to a collection of assessment models can be found at http://www.nclrc.org/teaching_materials/assessment/assessment_tools.html. The project “WebCEF” is intended as a collaborative evaluation of oral productions posted on online environments (podcasts, videos, audio postings, etc.). This project provides free materials for peer evaluation and it is available in several European languages. Its development could signal new directions for oral assessment with the use of technology.²
5. Discussion

Following research conducted by Blake (2008), Content-Based Instruction (CBI) places the student at a defining moment of ‘negotiation of meaning.’ The student is not just a passive learner but rather a participant in the creation of meaning. In this process, students develop critical thinking, writing skills and information literacy. Atwell (2007) also emphasizes the separation of course outcomes, which form a qualification, from the learning program, which develops competence for such outcomes. The students’ selection of materials, choice of resources and references, and establishment of global connections are indicative of achieving “rhetorical competence.”

Class exercises need to be aligned with direct application in the real world. A learning process needs to occur as a result of individual or social change. Active learning occurs in student projects focusing on developing connections, communities in a social environment. The student-centered approach provides relative freedom to the period when students can achieve learning outcomes in a collaborative environment. In this process, there should be certain “control” stages that determine the progress accomplished by the student or the group. These stages should build into one another from Novice to Expert under the guidance of a teacher/facilitator. A reward system should reflect each of these stages and activities.

Learning instruction in the foreign classroom will continue evolving as new technologies are created and become easily adaptable to all kind of projects. Sound pedagogical criteria and successful strategies for technology implementation will be created following careful assessment and demonstrable gains. However, the possibilities exist.

Faculty and students alike are in a constant process of learning and defining meaningful projects that promote social interaction and collaborative learning environments. Social learning environments provide effective support for the acquisition of listening speaking, reading and writing skills and by blending different types of learning experiences (home, academic, personal interest).
6. Conclusion

While traditional methods of teaching are vital in language instruction, Web 2.0 tools ensure that learning will take place in different contexts and situations, and certain social skills can be fostered. Web 2.0 foreign language classrooms will also benefit from having many teachers and by forming a community of collaborators from outside the classroom. Designing learning activities in a social setting and open to scrutiny can only improve methodology.

As Web 2.0 continues to evolve, we can expect the development and easiness of more interactive, global, networking practices in the classroom. Each course requires its own project design and implementation where the importance lies in both the process and the end result. This is the hardest part at this point. In time, the acquired experience and student familiarity with these new technologies will make course design more habitual practice.

Endnotes

1 An interesting discussion about sharing, reusing and repurposing materials can be found on The Horizon Report, pp. 13-14.
2 Collaborative oral assessment is available for the following languages available at the moment: English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Polish and Finnish. The direct link to this project is: https://email.pace.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=d016df1e18154a47bfe3322ca0ad9e99&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.webcef.eu%2fhttp://www.webcef.eu/
References


Appendix 1

Questionnaire

1- Describe your personal experience while using Web 2.0 tools in an learning environment (social networking, wikis, blogging, second life, instant chat, podcast and video, music and picture sharing).

2- Have you ever participated in a collaborative learning project while using Web 2.0 tools? Or have you peer-edited someone else’s work online? How did you feel about it then? How do you feel now?

3- How do you feel about creating a document for public view that it is also going to be reused in the classroom?

4- The fact that you are becoming an author has influenced your:
   a. Choice of topics
   b. Selection of sources and references
   c. Organization of materials
   d. Review and editing process

5- Do you apply rubrics for grading and peer-editing when they are provided to you? Do you always understand them? Can you suggest a better method of application?

6- Should classes be taped and broadcasted in a podcast format and every class be available online for review? Will it be only for a lecture format or for all unedited classroom interaction? How can a classroom experience be captured in a podcast format?
About the Author

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/ca?2/: An Irrealis Marker

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Abstract

The paper attempts to describe the syntax and semantics of the modal auxiliary /ca?2/ ‘will’ in Thai grammar. Syntactically, /ca?2/ is found before all types of verbs except verbs of permanent state, the deontic modal auxiliary /tong3/ ‘must’ and passive markers /dai3, /do:n1/ and /thu:k2/ but after epistemic modal auxiliaries, and modality verbs. Traditionally, /ca?2/ is said to semantically mark the following grammatical categories: intention, prediction and future tense. However, corpus data show evidence against this. The aim of this paper is to argue for the status of /ca?2/as an irrealis marker in the relevant sense of Bybee, Perkis and Pagliuca (1994) and Chung and Timberlake (1985).

Keywords: Modal auxiliary, Deontic modal auxiliary, Epistemic modal auxiliary, Modality verbs, Irrealis marker
1. Introduction

/ca?2/ is an auxiliary which is usually translated as ‘will’ in English and which behaves in the same way as ‘will’ syntactically, since it precedes a verb or verb phrase in a verbal construction, as shown in (1) and (2) below.

(1)

เขาจะกิน
khau5              ca?2               khin1
eh                ca?2                eat
‘He is going to eat.’

(2)

เขาจะอ่านหนังสือ
khau5             ca?2          ?a:n2        nang5sue:5
he                ca?2          read           book
‘He will read a book.

Moreover, /ca?2/ is also similar to ‘will’ semantically. Like ‘will’, /ca?2/ can be used to express intention, insistence, and futurity as in (3), (4) and (5) respectively.

(3)

เขาจะไปโรงเรียน
khau5         ca?2            pai1          rong1rian1
he               ca?2           go             school
‘He will go to school’

In (3), /ca?2/ indicates intention in the same way as the English “I will write a letter.” (Leech, 1981)

(4)

เขาจะไปว่ายน้ำแม้ทั้งๆที่ฝนตก
khau5   ca?2     pai1     wai3nam4   thang4 thang4 thi:3 fon5 tok2
he          ca?2     go         swim           even though            rain   fall
‘He will go swimming even though it is raining.’

In (4), /ca?2/ has the meaning of insistence in the same way as the English “He will go swimming in dangerous water” (Leech, 1981).

Moreover, /ca?2/ can also occur with future temporal adverbs such as /phrung3ni:4/ ‘tomorrow’, /pi:1 na:3 / ‘next year’, etc. (Charuskumchornkul, 1993)
(5) เขาจะไปโรงเรียนพรุ่งนี้
khau5 ca?2 pai1 rong1 rian1 phrung3 ni:4
‘He will go to school tomorrow.’

Despite the fact that /ca?2/ can appear in a future context as in (5), it is not obligatory. Thus, in (5), /ca?2/ can be omitted without a major change in meaning. While there are arguments as to whether ‘will’ in English is a modal or a tense marker (e.g., Bhat, 1999; Bybee, 1997; Palmer, 1986), /ca?2/ is often classified as a marker indicating futurity (e.g., Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005; Panupong, 1970; Suphanvanich, 1973; Upakitsilpasaan, 1972; Warotamasikkhadit, 1972). See the relevant examples (6), (7) and (8) below, reproduced from Upakitsilpasaan (1942, p.135), Panupong (1970, p.134), and Warotamasikkhadit (1972, p. 30), respectively.

(6) เขาจะกิน
khau5 ca?2 kin1
‘He is going to eat.’

(7) ผมจะไปหาหมอพรุ่งนี้
phom5 ca?2 pai1 ha:5 mor5 phrung3 ni:4
‘I will go to see the doctor tomorrow.’

(8) ถั่วจะกลายเป็นกบ
?ort4 ca?2 kla:j1 pen1 kop2
‘A tadpole will become a frog.’

In addition, /ca?2/ is identified by Boonyapatipak (1983) as a marker of prospective aspect and intentive modality. See (9) and (10), reproduced from Boonyapatipak’s examples (p. 213 and p. 217, respectively).

(9) รถจะออกแล้ว
rot4 ca?2 ?ork2 leaw4
‘The car is about to leave.’ (indicating prospective aspect)
There have also been works that address the optional co-occurrence of /ca?2/ with /thi:3/ and suggest the role of /ca?2/ as an indication of the presence of irrealis mood and a marker for infinitival complements (Diller, 2001; Jenks, 2006; Singhapreecha, 2010). See the relevant example (11) below, reproduced from Singhapreecha’s example (2e).

(11) สมศักดิ์อยากที่จะทํางานใน UN
Somsak ʔaːk2 thiː3 caʔ2 tham1 ngaːn1 nai1 UN
Somsak want thiː3 caʔ2 work in UN
‘Somsak wants to specifically work for the United Nations.’

This paper also supports the position that /ca?2/ marks irrealis. However, it aims at studying the use of /ca?2/ in naturally occurring language taken from the Chulalongkorn University electronic corpus. 600 tokens of 200 words each are sampled from 3 text categories (news articles, journals, excerpts from short stories and other fiction) totalling roughly 120,000 words.

2. Previous Treatment of /ca?2/

In Thai, the status of auxiliaries has long been a major issue in the linguistic literature. Studies of /ca?2/ are incomplete and a number of interesting dimensions have still not yet been studied. Most previous works have focused only on syntactic properties. In general, /ca?2/ is said to be a pre-verbal auxiliary and to co-occur with verbs and other auxiliaries. It can precede a verb (Kullavanijaya, 1968; Panupong, 1970; Phaya Upakitsilpasarn, 1972) and can also occur between two verbs (Panupong, 1970). Some works semantically classify /ca?2/ as an intensive marker (Bhunthumetha, 1982; Kullavanijaya, 1968; Sriphen, 1982), a marker of determination which is based on the power inside man or an external factor from natural law in the physical world (Sindhavananda, 1970) or an aspect marker (Boonyapatipak, 1983). Other works consider /ca?2/ as an auxiliary marking the future tense (Dhanvarajorn, 1973; Kanchanawan, 1978; Muansuwan, 2002; Panupong, 1970; Scovel,
1970; Soithurum, 1985; Suphanvanich, 1973; Thepkanjana, 1986; Warotamasikkhadit, 1972) or as a complement marker (either by itself or combined with /thi:3/, which functions as an irrealis marker (Diller, 2001; Jenks, 2006 & Singhapreecha, 2010).

Among these works, Singhapreecha’s study is most fully developed, theoretically and empirically. Singhapreecha’s (2010) section 3.3 (pp. 1295-1296) is dedicated to a discussion of the status of /ca?2/. Essentially, she claims that the /ca?2/ element that follows modal auxiliaries and (control) verbs such as /?a:t2/ ‘may/ might’ and /ja:k2/ ‘want’, respectively, is an infinitive marker. She develops a unified analysis for modal auxiliaries and (control) infinitives by establishing a Mood (Irrealis) Phrase to account for the co-occurrence restrictions of /thi:3/ and non-assertive (irrealis) infinitival complements.

Diller (2001) also ascribes /ca?2/ to a complement marker when attached to /thi:3/ (i.e. /thi:3 ca?2/). According to Diller, /ca?2/ can be considered an irrealis particle equivalent to “will/would”, or a complement marker when it co-occurs with /thi:3/. Jenks also points out that /ca?2/ is an infinitival marker which functions as a mood/aspect marker in finite clauses. However, these three works are mainly concerned with /ca?2/ when attached to /thi:3/ in modal/ control constructions. For the obligatoriness and optionality of /ca?2/ in control constructions, Jenks notes that /ca?2/ is optional in control constructions but obligatory when /thi:3/ appears, while Singhapreecha states that there seem to be two classes of control verbs, i.e. one which requires /ca?2/ and another which does not. Although the previous works claim that /ca?2/ functions as an irrealis marker, they do not present evidence to support the irrealis status of /ca?2/ and do not seriously account for the optional nature of /ca?2/ in other constructions.

In previous works, syntactically /ca?2/ is considered as a pre-verbal auxiliary and semantically, /ca?2/ is claimed to express future tense, intention and irrealis. With regards to the semantic account of /ca?2/, I give the following examples to argue against the analysis of /ca?2/ as a future tense marker or an intensive marker. I present further evidence against the analysis of /ca?2/ as a future tense marker and an intensive marker in Section 4.2.
In (12) /ca?2/ does not express future time since it co-occurs with the present temporal adverb /torn1 ni:4/ ‘now’. Nor does /ca?2/ express intention, since it can be used in (13), where it does not mean ‘intend to’. It, therefore, does not seem right to analyze /ca?2/ as a future tense marker or an intensive marker. I will describe Thai modal auxiliaries in Section 3 and Section 4 will deal with the analysis of /ca?2/.

3. Thai Modal Auxiliaries

In this section, the characteristics of Thai modal auxiliaries are described in 3.1 and their co-occurrence with /ca?2/ is described in 3.2.

3.1 The characteristics of Thai modal auxiliaries

Modal auxiliaries in Thai have a fixed position, which is in front of the verb or after the verb. Putting these modal auxiliaries in another position makes the sentences ungrammatical. Examples (14)-(18) illustrate this.
Examples (16) and (18) are unacceptable as the modal auxiliaries cannot be placed in front of or after the verb. With respect to the position that each modal auxiliary occupies in the verb phrase, modal auxiliaries may be sub-classified as follows: the modal auxiliaries dealing with grammatical categories of time and aspect occur close to the verb while the modal auxiliaries reflecting the speaker’s intention, attitude or judgment occur further away when they co-occur. The example (19) can illustrate this.

In (19), we can see that /khong1/ ‘might’ which indicates the speaker’s attitude or judgment occurs further away from the verb /kin1/ ‘eat’ while ‘/kam1lung1/’ which expresses the aspect occurs closer to the verb /kin1/ ‘eat’.

3.2 The co-occurrence of /ca?2/ and modal auxiliaries

Previous analyses of Thai modal auxiliaries include those of Konig and Muansuwan (2005) and Singhapreecha (2010) among others. Generally, modal auxiliaries are classified into two groups. They are modal auxiliaries dealing with grammatical categories of time or aspect and grammatical categories which reflect the speaker’s intention, attitude or judgment (as mentioned above). Moreover, the position of modal auxiliaries corresponds with the meanings that each class reflects. According to Sriphen (1982), the modal auxiliaries dealing
with the speaker’s judgment about the state-of-affairs will occur further away from the head verb than the modal auxiliaries dealing with time and aspect. However, /ca?2/ can co-occur with modal auxiliaries in both positions, which are right before the head verb as well as further away from the head verb.

(20) เขาคงจะอยู่บ้าน
khau5 khong1 ca?2 ju:2 ba:n3
he might ca?2 stay home
‘He might be staying at home.’

(21) เขาจะยังอยู่ที่นี่
khau5 ca?2 jang1 ju:2 thi:3 ni:3
he ca?2 still stay place this
‘He will still be staying here.’

In (20), /ca?2/ occurs before the head verb while in (21) /ca?2/ occurs further away from the head verb. The characteristics of /ca?2/ are very interesting. It can optionally co-occur with any individual modal auxiliary without causing a change in its original meaning, except with /kam1lang1/, /jang1/ and /leaw4/. Analyses of this are available (Bhundhumetha, 1984; Konig & Muansuwan, 2005; Kullavanijaya, 1968; Kullavanijaya & Bisang, 2004; Panupong, 1970; Singhapreecha, 2010; Sripen, 1982). See the relevant examples (22), (23), (24) and (25) below, where /ca?2/ a change in its original meaning. Examples (24) and (25) are reproduced from Singhapreecha (2010).

(22) เขาคงจะอยู่บ้าน
khau5 khong1 ca?2 ju:2 ba:n3
he might ca?2 stay home
‘He might be staying at home.’

(23) เขาคงอยู่บ้าน
khau5 ca?2 jang1 ju:2 ba:n3
he ca?2 stay home
‘He might be staying at home.’

(24) สมศักดิ์อาจจะปลูกบ้าน
Somsak ?a:t2 ca?2 plu:k2 ba:n3
Somsak may ca?2 build house
‘Somsak may build his house.’
4. The Analysis of /caʔ2/ in Thai Verb Phrases

In this section, /caʔ2/ is analyzed syntactically and semantically in 4.1 and 4.2, respectively.

4.1 Syntactic occurrences of /caʔ2/

From analysis of 600 tokens, /caʔ2/ can occur in the following constructions.

4.1.1. /caʔ2/ occurring with modal auxiliaries

210 tokens fall into this category. In this category, /caʔ2/ follows epistemic modal auxiliaries and auxiliaries which deal with aspects such as /kam1lan1/, and /jan1/ and precedes auxiliaries which deal with aspects such as /leaw4/ and /ju:ʔ2/, and the deontic modal auxiliary/tong3/ ‘must’.

In Thai, auxiliaries can be classified as aspectual, deontic (expressing obligation and permission), and epistemic (reflecting the speaker’s intention, attitude and judgment). Deontic modal auxiliaries concern the speaker’s intention to influence others’ action and they typically refer to obligation and permission (Evans & Green, 2006; Lyons, 1977; Saeed, 1977; Tyler & Evans, 2003). In Thai, obligation is expressed by the modal auxiliary // ‘must’. For permission, it is expressed by the expression /kor3dai3/, which is not considered in this study. In addition, deontic modal auxiliaries may be used to show that the person has the responsibility for doing or not doing something. The modal auxiliaries used to express this meaning are /khuan1/ and /na:ʔ3/ ‘should’ or ‘ought to’. While deontic modal auxiliaries refer to obligation and permission, epistemic modal auxiliaries express the speaker’s intention, attitude and judgment on the probability of the occurrence of the event (Evans & Green, 2006; Lyons, 1977; Saeed, 1977; Tyler & Evans, 2003). In Thai, epistemic modal auxiliaries are /ʔa:t2/ ‘may, might’, and /khong1/ ‘may’ or ‘might’.
In contrast to deontic and epistemic modal auxiliaries, modal auxiliaries expressing aspect deal with ‘different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation’ (Comrie, 1976, p. 3). According to Comrie, there are two kinds of aspects: perfective and imperfective. The perfective aspect is used to describe a situation without specifying its internal structure. However, if the imperfective aspect is used to describe a situation, the internal temporal structure of the situation is described in various phases. The phases of the internal temporal structure of the situation can be specified in terms of beginning, continuation or end. (Sasse, 2002). In Thai, aspect can also be categorized into two kinds of aspect, namely, perfective and imperfective. /laew4/ is an example of perfective aspect and /kam1lang1/ and /ju:2/ are examples of imperfective aspect. /ca?2/ can follow some modal auxiliaries and precede others as follows:

(26) เขาควรจะอยู่บ้าน
khau5 khuan1 (ca?2) ju:2 ba:n
he AUXILIARY (ca?2), stay home
‘He should have stayed at home.’

(27) เขาอาจไปทำงาน
khau5 ?a:t2 (ca?2) pai tham1 nga:n1
he AUXILIARY (ca?2) go do work
‘He might go to work.’

(28) เขาต้องไปกรุงเทพ
khau5 (ca?2) tong3 pai1 krung1thep3
he (ca?2) AUXILIARY go Bangkok
‘He must go to Bangkok.’

(29) เขายังจะทำงานอยู่ที่นี่
khau5 jang1 ca?2 tham1 nga:n1 ju:2 thi:3 ni:3
he ASPECT ca?2 do work stay place this
‘He will still be working here.’

(30) เขาจะหลับนอน
khau5 kam1lang1 ca?2 norn1
he AUXILIARY ca?2 sleep
‘He is going to go to bed.’
(31) เขาจะนอนแล้ว
kha5 ca?2 nor1 leaw4
he ca?2 sleep AUXILIARY
‘He will be going to bed.’

It can be seen that /ca?2/ follows epistemic modal auxiliaries in (26) and (27), modal auxiliaries which express imperfective aspect in (29) and (30). /ca?2/ precedes the deontic modal auxiliary of obligation and necessity /tong3/ in (28) and the modal auxiliary which expresses perfective aspect /leaw4/ in (31). /ca?2/ in these constructions can be omitted without causing a change in its meaning, except with /kam1lang1/, /jlang1/ and /leaw4/.

4.1.2 /ca?2/ occurring with verbs

390 tokens fall into this category. In a simple verbal construction, /ca?2/ can precede all types of verbs as in (32) and (33). Nevertheless, it cannot precede permanent state verbs when occurring with generic noun subjects as in (34). It can follow modality verbs as in (35) and (36), reproduced from Singhapreecha’s example (32), verbs of announcement as in (37), and verbs of beginning as in (38).

(32) คุณจะขายรถ
phom5 ca?2 kha5j5 rot4
I ca?2 sell car
‘I will sell my car.’

(33) คุณจะตกบก
fon5 ca?2 tok2 leaw4
rain ca?2 fall ASPECT
‘It will rain soon.’

(34) *คุณจะกลม
lo:k3 ca?2 klom1
earth ca?2 round
!’The earth will be round.’

(35) เขาอยากที่จะทำงานใน UN
kha5 ja:k2 thi:3 ca?2 tham1nga:n1 nai1 UN
He want thi:3 ca?2 work in UN
‘He wants to work in the UN.’
(36) เขาลืมที่จะใส่ถุงมือ
khau5 leum1 thi:3 ca?2 sai2 thung5meu1
He forget thi:3 ca?2 put on gloves
‘He forgot to put on gloves.’

(37) ธนาคารประกาศ(จะ)ลดดอกเบี้ย
thanaka:n1 pra2ka:t2 (ca?2) lot4 dork2bia3
bank announce (ca?2) decrease interest
‘The bank announced that it would decrease the interest.’

(38) คนเริ่ม(จะ)เข้าใจ
khon1 reum3 (ca?2) khau3jai1
people begin (ca?2) understand
‘People begin to understand.’

/ca?2/ is optional when it appears between verbs or when the verb which follows /ca?2/ expresses a non-sequential event. However, it is obligatory when /thi:3/ appears, as suggested by Jenks (2006).

4.2. Semantic analysis of /ca?2/

/ca?2/ can co-occur with modal auxiliaries. With the epistemic modal auxiliary, the state of affairs is not guaranteed to happen and there is no 100% certainty of its occurrence. This shows that the existence of uncertainty is correlated with the meaning of /ca?2/. When /ca?2/ co-occurs with epistemic modal auxiliaries, the realization of the state of affairs may not be fulfilled. In this case, /ca?2/ can be said to signal a non-actual state of affairs. On the other hand, deontic modal auxiliaries express obligation and necessity.

(39) คุณ(จะ)ต้องจ่ายเงินสด
khun1 (ca?2) tong3 ca:j2 ngern1sot2
You (ca?2) must pay cash
‘You must pay in cash.’

(40) เขา(จะ)ต้องสอบผ่านแน่
khau5 (ca?2) tong3 so:p2 pha:n2 nae3
He (ca?2) must exam pass surely
‘He must surely pass the exam.’
In (39) and (40), there is no actual obligation on the state of affairs. There is only a thought or an opinion of the speaker, not an obligation on the subject or the state of affairs. As deontic modal auxiliaries express the non-actual state of affairs and can co-occur with /ca?2/, it can be claimed that /ca?2/ is semantically compatible with deontic modal auxiliaries’ sense, and it expresses the non-actual state of affairs.

Apart from deontic modal auxiliaries, /ca?2/ can co-occur with aspect markers. Sasse (2002) proposes an analysis of aspect in terms of ‘boundary’. That is, the aspect marker selects a specific part of the temporal structure of a situation, as in the following examples which illustrate aspctual distinctions with respect to the description of Mary’s writing a letter between 6:30 and 7 o’clock. (reproduced from Bohnemeyer’s, 1998, p.73)

(41) At 6:30, Mary started writing a letter.
(42) At 6:45, Mary was writing a letter.
(43) At 7, Mary finished writing a letter.

In examples (41)-(43), the events are described in terms of phases. In (41), the beginning of the process of Mary’s writing a letter is focused on. In (42), the continuation of the process of Mary’s writing a letter is focused on. In (43), the end point of the process of Mary’s writing a letter is focused on. However, there is another kind of aspect which concerns the prospective and can be illustrated as follows:

(44) Mary was going to write a letter.

In this example, the ‘pre-state’ of the process of Mary’s writing a letter is highlighted. The terms ‘pre-state’ and ‘post-state’ are used by Bohnemeyer (1998). He assumes that “pre- and post-states of an event E are events which do not form part of E, but encompass E in a natural-causal chain” (1998, pp. 76-77).

In Thai, the perfective aspect /leaw4/ and imperfective aspects /kam1lang1/ and /ju:2/ can co-occur as in the following word order patterns.

/kam1lang1/ + /ca?2/ + verb + /leaw4/ เขากำลังจะนอนแล้ว
When /ca?2/ co-occurs with /leaw4/, the pre-state of the initial boundary is marked by /leaw4/.

(45) เขาจะนอนแล้ว
khau5 ca?2 norm1 leaw4
he ca?2 sleep ASPECT
‘He will go to bed.’

The construction of /ca?2/ + verb + /leaw4/ signals the ingressive state-of-affairs. However, it does not imply that the state-of-affairs reaches the point of completion. The example เขาจะนอนแล้ว ‘He will go to bed.’ does not imply that he already went to bed. In addition, for example (45) เขาจะนอนแล้ว “does not show the dynamic function or the ongoing process of /ca?2/ as in “เขาก็ตื่นนอน”

(46) เขาก็ตื่นนอน
khau5 kam1 lang1 ca?2 norm1
he ASPECT ca?2 sleep
‘He is going to bed.’

In the construction of /kam1lang1/ + /ca?2/ + verb, the progressive aspect /kam1lang1/ interacts with /ca?2/ and operates on the phase introduced by /ca?2/. Then, it seems as if /ca?2/ is reanalyzed as having the internal temporal structure in terms of phase. In this construction, the speaker focuses on the pre-state of the process of ‘going to bed’. In (46), /ca?2/ has the dynamic function so this results in a more imminent state-of-affairs, compared with “เขาจะนอน”.

(47) เขาก็ตื่นนอนแล้ว
khau5 kam1 lang1 ca?2 norm1 leaw4
he ASPECT ca?2 sleep ASPECT
‘He is going to go to bed.’

However, in (47) เขาก็ตื่นนอนแล้ว /kam1lang1/ and /ca?2/ interact with each other, providing the ongoing approach towards the initial boundary marked by /leaw4/, resulting in a more imminent state-of-affairs than เขาจะนอน ‘He is going to go to bed.’
(48) เขากำลังจะนอนอยู่แล้ว
khau5 kam1 lang1 ca?2 norm1 ju:2 leaw4
he ASPECT ca?2 sleep ASPECT ASPECT
‘He is about to go to bed.’

In (48), /ca?2/ can co-occur with /kam1lang1/, /ju:2/ and /leaw4/ in the construction /kam1lang1/ + /ca?2/ + verb + /ju:2/ + /leaw4/. In this case, /kam1lang1/ and /ca?2/ interact with each other, providing the ongoing approach towards the imminent change of state at the initial temporal boundary introduced by /leaw4/. /ju:2/ also operates on this pre-state, resulting in the meaning of a more imminent state-of-affairs than “เขากำลังจะนอนอยู่แล้ว”.

By contrast, when /ca?2/ co-occurs with achievement verbs, it highlights the pre-state of the terminative state-of-affairs (Kullavanijaya & Bisang, 2004).

(49) เขากำลังจะตายแล้ว
khau5 kam1 lang1 ca?2 ta:j1 leaw4
he ASPECT ca?2 die ASPECT
‘He is going to die.’

In (49) “เขากำลังจะตายแล้ว”, /leaw4/ expresses the start of the terminative state-of-affairs. When /ca?2/ is introduced, it provides a pre-terminative boundary. /καµαΝ/ operates on the phase introduced by /ca?2/.

(50) เขากำลังจะตายอยู่แล้ว
khau5 kam1 lang1 ca?2 ta:j1 ju:2 leaw4
he ASPECT ca?2 die ASPECT ASPECT
‘He is about to die.’

In (50), /kam1lang1/ and /ca?2/ interact with each other, providing the ongoing approach towards the terminative boundary marked by /leaw4/. /ju:2/ also operates on this pre-state, resulting in the meaning of a more imminent terminative state-of-affairs than “เขากำลังจะตายอยู่แล้ว”. /ca?2/ in the examples above expresses the imminence of a state-of-affairs which will occur after the moment of speech. Since the state-of-affairs is not yet realized, /ca?2/ in this construction expresses the non-actual state-of-affairs.
Moreover, /caʔ2/ can co-occur with verbs. If /caʔ2/ appears in a single predicate, it precedes the verb and expresses the intention of the subject, especially when the subject is the first person subject as in (51).

(51) นี่จะขายรถ
phom5  caʔ2  kha:j5  rot4
I  caʔ2  sell  car
‘I will sell my car.’

If the subject is an inanimate subject, it expresses the likelihood of non-intentional events as in (52). Since the syntactic context is extended from the first person subject to the inanimate subject, the use of /caʔ2/ is extended from the intensive marker to the marker of the likelihood of non-intentional events.

(52) น้ำจะท่วมเมือง
nam4  caʔ2  thuam3  leaw4
water  caʔ2  flood  ASPECT
‘It is going to flood.’

If /caʔ2/ occurs in a complex predicate where the subject of the main verb and that of the complement are human and where they are identical, it expresses the intention of the subject as in (53).

(53) จินตนาการ (ใจจัก) จะต้องมี
khau5  tat2sin5jai1  (wa:3 khau5)  caʔ2  rian1  tor2
he  decide  (complementizer he)  caʔ2  study  continue
‘He decided that he would further his study.’

However, if the subjects are not identical, /caʔ2/ refers to the speaker’s judgment of the likelihood of the event as in (54).

(54) จินตนาการ (ใจจัก)
khau5  khit4  wa:3  fon5  caʔ2  tok2
he  think  complementizer  rain  caʔ2  fall
‘He thinks that it is going to rain.’

In (54), /caʔ2/ expresses the speaker’s judgment of the likelihood of the rainfall. Again, the senses of the subject’s intention and the speaker’s judgment are identical as both refer to
states-of-affairs which have not yet happened in the real world. Thus, /ca?2/ in this
construction expresses a non-actual state-of-affairs.

/ca?2/ can also occur between verbs. In this case the verb which precedes /ca?2/ is similar to
what Givon called modality verbs\(^1\) (Givon, 1973; 1990; 1995) and the verb which follows
/ca?2/ is a verb of any type. This construction shows that the state-of-affairs expressed by the
verb following /ca?2/ is not yet realized and if it is to happen, it will happen as the purpose of
the verb preceding /ca?2/ and after the speech time. Thus, /ca?2/ in this construction
expresses a non-actual state-of-affairs.

\[(55) \begin{array}{c}
\text{เขา} & \text{จะ} & \text{เรียน} & \text{ต่อ} \\
khau5 & ja:k2 & ca?2 & rian1 & tor2 \\
\text{he} & \text{want} & \text{ca?2} & \text{study} & \text{continue}
\end{array}\]

‘He wants to further his study.’

From the data, the grammatical categories which can co-occur with /ca?2/ are epistemic
modal auxiliaries, deontic modal auxiliaries, modal auxiliaries marking aspect and verbs of
all types, except verbs of permanent state. They share the same semantic property. That is,
all the grammatical categories which can co-occur with /ca?2/ do not guarantee that the state
of affairs is certain to occur. This semantic property must be associated with the semantic
property of /ca?2/, so they can co-occur with /ca?2/. As a result, /ca?2/ can be said to involve
a non-actual state of affairs. This argues against the claim that /ca?2/ is a marker of intention
and future tense.

The corpus also shows that the senses of intention, prediction of the speaker, and future tense
are realized through contexts. That is, its sense of intention comes with the animate, first-
person subject. When /ca?2/ co-occurs with non-human and/or inanimate subjects, epistemic
and deontic modal auxiliaries or aspect markers, its sense of intention is not available,
marking instead the likelihood of non-intentional events and other types of speaker
involvement, such as conjecture. This also results in the sense of future tense as an
implication.

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\(^1\)According to Givon, modality verbs are verbs which require a sentential complement whose subject is identical
to that of the modality verb itself. The verbs in this group are want, try, manage, fail, hope, continue, avoid,
expect intend prefer, etc.
5. The Analysis of /caʔ2/

The terms ‘realis’ and ‘irrealis’ are used to distinguish between actual and non-actual events (Mithun, 1995). According to Chung and Timberlake (1985, p. 241), “language commonly distinguishes between actual and non-actual events or to use morphological terms between ‘realis’ and ‘irrealis’ moods. Realis is basically equivalent to indicative and irrealis is equivalent to subjunctive, conditional, hypothetical and the like.”

According to Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994), the uses of deontic modal auxiliaries and epistemic modal auxiliaries do not commit the speaker to the truth of the proposition. When /caʔ2/ co-occurs with these modal auxiliaries, /caʔ2/ is semantically compatible with these modal auxiliaries. Since there is no guarantee of the realization of the state-of-affairs, it cannot be certain that the state-of-affairs can occur. When the state-of-affairs is not realized in the real world, it is non-actual. As a result, in (56) and (57) /caʔ2/ is an irrealis marker which involves a non-actual state of affairs.

(56) เขาจะต้องไปกรุงเทพ
khau5 caʔ2 tong3 pai1 krung1thep3
he caʔ2 AUXILIARY go Bangkok
‘He must go to Bangkok.’

(57) เนื่องจะตกหนัก
fon5 khong1 caʔ2 tok2 nak2f
rain AUXILIARY caʔ2 fall heavy
‘It might rain heavily.’

/caʔ2/ can also involve the imminence of an event after the moment of speech when it co-occurs with aspect markers /kam1lang1/, /juʔ2/ and /leaw4/. In (58), (59) and (60), /caʔ2/ cannot be omitted.

(58) เขาจะต้องนอน
khau5 kam1 lang1 caʔ2 norn1
he ASPECT caʔ2 sleep
‘He is going to go to bed.’
The use of /ca?2/ in these examples does not constitute future tense since /ca?2/ can also occur with adverbials which refer to the past as in (61) and the present as in (62), and thus, its future time reference is only by implication.

(59) เขากำลังจะนอนแล้ว
khau5 kam1 lang1 ca?2 norm1 leaw4
he ASPECT ca?2 sleep ASPECT
‘He is going to go to bed.’

(60) เขากำลังจะนอนอยู่แล้ว
khau5 kam1 lang1 ca?2 norm1 ju:2 leaw4
he ASPECT ca?2 sleep ASPECT ASPECT
‘He is about to go to bed.’

(61) เขาจะไปดูหนังวานนี้
khau5 ca?2 pai1 du:1 nang5 wa:n1ni:4
he ca?2 go see movie yesterday
‘He was about to see the movie yesterday.’

(62) เขาจะทำอะไรอยู่นะตอนนี้
khau5 ca?2 tham1 ?a2rai1 ju:2 na4 torn1ni:4
he ca?2 do what ASPECT PARTICLE now
‘What is he doing now?’

If we think about what possibility and imminence of an event have in common, we can see that they describe a state of affairs that is non-actual. A distinction between actual and non-actual events is defined as a distinction between ‘realis’ and ‘irrealis’(Chung & Timberlake, 1985, p. 241 as cited in Bybee, 1994).

Thus, with reference to the studies of Chung and Timberlake (1985) and Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994), we can conclude that /ca?2/ expresses irrealis which is relevant to ‘the extent to which the speaker is willing to assert the truth of a proposition’. This can explain why /ca?2/ can follow modality verbs or verbs of utterance and can co-occur with aspect markers and modal auxiliaries which do not commit the speaker to the realization of the state of affairs.
The co-occurrence of /ca?2/ and modal auxiliaries, then, provides evidence that /ca?2/ is not a modal auxiliary. The example (63) below shows that two different modal auxiliaries do not occur next to each other.

(63) *เขาคงอาจไปดูหนัง
khau5 khong1 ?a:t2 pai1 du:1 nang5
he AUXILIARY AUXILIARY go see movie

In (63), /khong1/ and /?a:t2/, which are modal auxiliaries, occur together, and the sentence is ungrammatical. Moreover, examples (64) and (65) can illustrate the semantic nature of /ca?2/ as an irrealis marker.

(64) เมื่อวานนี้เขาจะไปดูหนัง (แต่ไม่ได้ไป)
mua3wa:n1ni:4 khau5 ca?2 pai1 du:1 nang5 (tea:2 mai3 dai3 pai1)
Yesterday he ca?2 go see movie (but NEGATION go)
‘Yesterday, he would go to see the movie (but did not go).’

(65) วันนี้เขาจะไปดูหนัง (แต่ไม่ได้ไป)
wan1ni:4 khau5 ca?2 pai1 du:1 nang5 (tea:2 mai3 dai3 pai1)
today he ca?2 go see movie (but NEGATION go)
*‘Today, he will go to see the movie (but did not go).’
(not possible in English)

/ca?2/ can occur with the expression / tea:2 mai3 dai3 pai1/ ‘but does/ did not go’ because these constructions express the non-actual state-of-affairs. Without /ca?2/, the sentences would express the actual state-of-affairs; therefore, /ca?2/ proves to be an irrealis marker.

6. Conclusion

It is found that /ca?2/ can co-occur with past temporal adverbs and present temporal adverbs, thus, it is not a future tense marker. Furthermore, /ca?2/ can occur with modal auxiliaries, which do not co-occur (Palmer 1986) as in example (63). If /ca?2/ can co-occur with modal auxiliaries, then, it is not a modal auxiliary. Moreover, /ca?2/ is essential in constructions expressing a non-actual state-of-affairs. It is therefore better described as an irrealis marker than a future tense marker or an intentive marker.
References


About the Author

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Attitudes towards EFL Grammar Instruction: 
Inductive or Deductive?

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**Abstract**

The teaching of grammar plays a central role in every EFL/ESL teacher’s classroom. This paper attempts to examine the role grammar plays in foreign or second language learning from the point of view of pre-service student teachers. The paper reports a study undertaken to investigate pre-service student teachers’ attitudes towards the mode of grammar instruction (i.e., explicit or implicit) in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. The study aimed to find out whether there were significant differences among the pre-service student teachers in their attitudes in relation to their gender and the level they teach in school. Fifty-eight pre-service student EFL teachers completed a questionnaire on a five-point scale of agreement. About 20 of them also responded to an open-ended questionnaire. The main findings of the study showed a positive attitude of the pre-service student teachers towards grammar instruction in general and a more favourable attitude towards the implicit approach than the explicit. These findings have implications for teacher education, pre-service student and in-service training, and curriculum review.

**Key words:** Inductive and deductive grammar instruction; Implicit and explicit grammar instruction; EFL grammar instruction; English language teaching.
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The role and type of grammar instruction in foreign language learning with particular reference to EFL has been the subject of SLA research and discussion for decades (Ellis 2001). In recent times, however, grammar instruction has been recognized as an essential and unavoidable component of language learning and use (Doughty & Williams 1998; Thornbury 1997, 1998). It is seen as valuable, if not indispensable, within the context of EFL teaching and learning.

Previous studies on students' and teachers' attitudes and perceptions of grammar instruction in the context of language learning suggest a disparity between students and teachers (e.g., Brindley 1984; Kumaravadivelu 1991; Leki 1995; Schultz 1996, 2001; Spratt 1999). While students favour formal and explicit grammar instruction and error correction, teachers favour communicative activities with less conscious focus on grammar.

Fox (1995) showed how the attitudes teachers take into their classroom can affect instruction and, in his two case studies of ESL teachers, Borg (2001) found that teachers' perceptions of their own knowledge of grammar affected their teaching practices (both cited in McClure, 2006).

There has, however, been little investigation of the attitudes and beliefs of pre-service student EFL teachers with regard to grammar instruction within the overall context of the gulf countries and the specific context of Oman. Since the decisions made by teachers regarding teaching and learning play a major role in affecting the kind of teaching that takes place in their classrooms, the attitudes and beliefs that influence their decisions become important areas of study. The study reported here aims to address this need by presenting the attitudes and beliefs of a cross section of school EFL teachers in Oman.
1.2 Grammar and grammar instruction

The term ‘grammar’ has been defined in a number of ways by language teachers and grammarians which have influenced and been influenced by different approaches to teaching grammar (Ellis, 2006; Purpura, 2004). For many L2 learners, learning grammar often means learning the rules of grammar and having an intellectual knowledge of grammar. Teachers often believe that this will provide the generative basis on which learners can build their knowledge and will be able to use the language eventually. For them, prescribed rules give a kind of security.

Different approaches to looking at language, from syntactic descriptions to attempts to show the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of grammar, are reflected in the different ways grammar has been taught. In EFL/ESL teaching, grammar has been viewed in three different ways: grammar as rules, grammar as form, and grammar as resource. In some cases, grammar instruction has meant learning the rules; in others, practising the form; and in others understanding how grammar helps to convey the meaning and intention of the message. The best approach is perhaps to see grammar as one of many resources that we have in language which helps us to communicate. We should see how grammar relates to what we want to say or write, and how we expect others to interpret our language use and its focus.

The teaching of second-language grammar in higher education is a topic of widespread concern to both teachers and students alike. Sometimes, very strong positions are taken, for example, “At any time, at any stage and in any circumstances, grammar teaching cannot be diluted. It ought to be an important part in foreign language teaching in China” (Wang, 1999, p. 80).

Many students and teachers tend to view grammar as a set of restrictions on what is allowed and disallowed in language use – ‘a linguistic straitjacket’ in Larsen-Freeman’s words (2002, p. 103), but some consider grammar as something that liberates rather than represses: "... grammar is not a constraining imposition but a liberating force: it frees us from a dependency on context and a purely lexical categorization of reality" (Widdowson, 1990, p. 86). The implications of this statement for our understanding of the nature of grammar and the role it
plays in communication are explored, and how this understanding might inform approaches to teaching grammar in second language classrooms is discussed (Cullen, 2008).

Besides the place/role of grammar in language teaching (Hinkel & Fotos, 2002; Ur, 1988), the factors involved in the teaching and learning of grammar (Ur, 1988) and specific practices in the grammar classroom and some current research on grammar structures (Hinkel & Fotos, 2002) have added to the discussion on how best to teach grammar in ESL/EFL contexts. Many books claim that they carry/include cognitive, affective and drama activities and games for EFL students that are directed towards stimulating their imagination and creativity (e.g., Gerngross, Puchta & Thornbury 2007; Rinvolutri, 1984).

The hard fact that most teachers face is that learners often find it difficult to make flexible use of the rules of grammar taught in the classroom. They may know the rules perfectly but are incapable of applying them during language use.

1.3 Grammar and communicative competence

The importance of grammar within the FL/SL syllabus has been under discussion for many years. Until the Communicative Approach in the 1970s, it was at the core of learning and teaching. The syllabus, a structural syllabus, was organized around the grammar to be taught. “The theoretical model that underlies the [cognitive] approach is that a language consists of a “set of rules” with an associated lexicon. It follows logically from the model that foreign language students must learn rules of grammar. The suggested sequence is: study a rule (usually with instructor explanation), practice a rule (in grammar exercises), and then apply the rule in meaningful interactions in the target language” (Terrell, 1991).

Since the 1970s, however, attention has shifted from ways of teaching grammar to ways of getting learners to communicate, and grammar has been seen to be a powerful undermining and demotivating force among L2 learners. In terms of motivation and learner success with languages, grammar has been seen to be a problem and to stand in the way of helping learners to communicate fluently. As a result, teaching grammar has become unfashionable.
Statements such as “... the study of grammar as such is neither necessary nor sufficient for learning to use a language” (Newmark, 1963) and definitions of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1971; van Ek, 1986) became widely quoted and accepted. Newmark, however, was only talking of grammar rules rather than grammar in language use. What was being questioned was the content of ‘grammar’ teaching based on certain behaviorist approaches (Newmark & Reibel, 1968). The need for a shift in focus in teaching from language form to language in use was expressed, placing grammar within context and with content. It was felt that by concentrating on communication and communicative language practice, students would naturally ‘acquire’ the language.

Models of communicative competence, with particular reference to FL/SL speakers (Canale & Swain, 1980; van Ek, 1986), include grammatical competence as one of the core dimensions of communicative competence. Such proposals led to the questioning of the importance of the role of grammar in a language learning syllabus. The syllabus must guide the learner in moving from knowledge of form to grammatical competence within the total communicative competence. It was suggested that “communication can generally be achieved most efficiently by means of a grammatical sentence or by a series of such sentences logically related” (Close, 1981, p. 14) and that grammar was an essential resource in using language communicatively (Littlewood, 1981; Nunan, 1989).

The discussion of learning and acquisition was led by Krashen, who proposed a model of second language acquisition in which the processing of input, rather than grammar instruction, plays the pivotal role. Krashen and Terrell (1983) claim that if language input is provided over a wide variety of topics with communicative goals, the input would automatically include the necessary grammatical structures. Carter (1993) points out that ‘acquisition’ is a natural and unconscious process that takes place as the result of meaningful exposure to language that occurs naturally and using it for the purpose of meaningful communication. This natural process of 'acquisition' is in contrast to the conscious process of language learning, which occurs when explicit knowledge about language forms is provided.
regularly. An explicit knowledge of grammar by adults is said to be useful in only one way – as a “monitor” for self-correction under certain circumstances.

In relation to FL/SL learners, a grammar pie was suggested showing the proportion of form, meaning and use (Larsen-Freeman, 1991). Teachers could alter the portions of the pie as appropriate for the lesson and for the students. A syllabus attempting to move beyond form to grammar in use in communication was proposed by Yalden (1983).

It was, however, observed that, despite the impact of the communicative approach on language teaching methodology (i.e., adopting learner-centred and task-based teaching methods), the majority of ESL and EFL learners had continued to learn from materials organized and presented in terms of grammatical items (Richards, 1985). The approach continued to be mostly one of presenting and explaining grammar points followed by controlled production practice.

Grammar instruction has thus been on the pendulum of language teaching methodologies swinging back and forth one extreme of grammar-driven methods to the other one of communicative methodologies (Yip, 1994). The thinking seems to be that learners’ attention should be focused on form within content-based curricula (Williams, 1995). These changes in methodologies are thus summed up: “The research on teaching methodology was focused on the relationship between language knowledge and practice and went through a U-shaped course – [it] first stressed, then unstressed, and finally re-stressed the language knowledge” (Liao, 1996, p. 6).

1.4 Explicit versus implicit grammar instruction

Two methods have been suggested for teaching grammar within an EFL/ESL context: Implicit/Inductive and Explicit/Deductive. 'Inductive' suggests a 'bottom up' approach, in which students discover grammar rules while working through exercises/tasks, while 'Deductive' suggests a 'top down' approach, which is the standard teaching approach that has
a teacher explaining rules to the students. There is still, however, controversy over the relative effectiveness of explicit and implicit grammar teaching (Thornbury, 2006). The complex relationship between teaching and learning, and the fact that how something is taught is not directly related to how it is learned could be the reasons for this controversy.

On the one hand, there are researchers like Krashen (1993) who have persistently denied the importance of any explicit grammar instruction in second language acquisition. Other researchers have objected to traditional grammar teaching methodology in which the teacher presents grammatical structures explicitly in a de-contextualized manner. In traditional methodology, the assumption has been that learners will develop the knowledge they need for communicative language use through conscious presentation and manipulation of forms through drills and practice. An inductive approach to grammatical rules and principles is encouraged rather than an exclusive reliance on the presentation-practice-production approach of many traditional grammar books (Carter, Hughes & McCarthy, 2000).

Explicit (or deductive) grammar instruction, which draws learners’ attention to linguistic form and structure, is characterized by two conflicting approaches: interventionist and non-interventionist (Terrell 1991, p. 58). Supporters of the interventionist approach state that “given the low number of input/interaction hours in a typical foreign language college (70-150 hours) or high school (100-300 hours) instruction, explicit grammar instruction can serve to speed up parts of the acquisition process” (Terrell 1991, p. 58). The non-interventionist approach supports the idea that explicit grammar instruction need not be given if enough comprehensible input is provided in a low anxiety environment (Krashen 1981). It is also argued that “the ability to demonstrate grammatical knowledge on a discrete-point grammar exam does not guarantee the ability to use that knowledge in ordinary conversation, be it spontaneous or monitored” (Terrell, 1991, p. 54).
The language acquisition process can be affected by explicit grammar instruction in three ways (Terrell, 1991, p. 58):

1. “as an ‘advanced organiser’ to aid in comprehending and segmenting the input;
2. as a meaning-form focuser that aids the learner in establishing a meaning-form relationship for morphologically complex forms; and
3. as a means for monitoring, which in turn, will be available for acquisition in the output.”

Grammatical knowledge is viewed by many researchers (e.g., DeKeyser, 1998; Doughty, 1991; Harley, 1998; Long, 1983, 1988; Long & Robinson, 1998; Schneider, 1993; Terrell, 1991) as a significant component in second language acquisition. Most agree that a certain degree of grammar instruction is necessary to develop learners’ language proficiency. No current research or theory, however, seems to advocate a return to traditional methods of teaching grammar or to a focus on grammatical features for their own sake (Lightbown, 1998).

Based on the results of an empirical study focusing on the ways in which explicit grammar teaching can facilitate L2 acquisition, Scheffler and Cinciata (2011) recommend that EFL/ESL teachers “should invest some classroom time in explicit grammar instruction”, as “at least some grammatical phenomena can be successfully taught as simple rules” (ibid., p.22). They refer to two kinds of benefit. First, simple descriptions of rules may lead to learners noticing the input structures exemplified by the rules, which may in turn lead to increased comprehension. Such conscious noticing of L2 features is necessary for implicit language development, according to many SLA researchers (e.g., Schmidt, 1990). Simple grammar rules help learners understand their own output and contribute to the learning process in general by increasing the learners’ sense of confidence, security and achievement. Thus the implicit-versus-explicit debate has been raging for over a century (Garrett, 1986; Doughty & Williams, 1998), the positions varying from an outright rejection of grammar instruction in a strongly communicative approach to a return to explicit, discrete-point grammar along a continuum. Many materials meant for classroom use encourage an inductive approach, probably because teachers are there to guide the learning process, while those meant for self-study usually adopt a deductive approach (Thornbury, 2006).
1.5 Some previous studies on grammar instruction

Several studies have been conducted on explicit and implicit grammar instruction, and teachers’ and students’ preferences in relation to the two approaches. For instance, Doughty’s study (1991, cited in Ellis, 1995) provides empirical evidence of the positive effect of grammar instruction. The value of meaning-based instruction with explicit grammatical explanation was also evidenced by Ellis (1993) and DeKeyser (1995). Scarcella (1996) emphasizes the role of form-focused instruction and corrective feedback in order to provide students with a structured setting of Standard English instruction.

According to a study by Ebsworth and Schweers (1997, p. 252), one of the teachers interviewed in the study observed, “It would seem that many practitioners have come to believe that individuals whose goal is to develop excellent English for use in academic or business environments can achieve greater accuracy and control though some measure of grammar instruction.” Schneider (1993) and Hunter (1996) showed that learners who received explicit grammar instruction performed well on both discrete-point grammar tests and tasks which draw learners’ attention to grammatical features.

Wang (1999), in his research into student and teacher attitudes towards grammar instruction in Taiwan, found that students preferred the explicit method of instruction and that most participating teachers also favoured and used the explicit method in their classes. Borg and Burns (2008) investigated the beliefs and practices of 176 English language teachers from 18 countries about the integration of grammar and skills teaching. The teachers expressed strong views about the value of inductive grammar learning and strong beliefs in the need to avoid teaching grammar in isolation.

In a study surveying the perceptions of preparatory and secondary school EFL teachers (about 220) and students (about 1,050) from three different geographical regions in Oman, Al-Kalbani (2004) found that students showed a more favourable attitude towards grammar instruction than teachers and that students favoured explicit instruction, while teachers favoured implicit instruction.
In a qualitative research project investigating six middle school English language arts teachers' beliefs and practices related to grammar and grammar teaching (McClure, 2006), the participants believed that grammar instruction is necessary to increase students' performance on standardized tests and both traditional and innovative methods of grammar instruction are valuable. In a study on teachers’ opinions and attitudes towards grammar teaching and their current practices, Petraki and Hill (2010) have reported that teachers use a combination of grammatical theories in giving explanations of grammar rules, because they believe that a variety of grammatical theories should be part of teachers’ ‘pedagogical content knowledge’.

1.6 Statement of the problem

The review of literature shows that practising teachers are faced with a range of options for grammar instruction in their classrooms. In such a situation, the views of pre-service student teachers, who have just been introduced to courses in language teaching methodologies and have ideas about teaching and learning still fresh in their minds, have done some practice teaching in schools as part of graduation requirements, and are about to embark on their own teaching career, will provide valuable insights into how they would translate their theoretical knowledge about grammar instruction into practical terms in the classrooms taking into consideration the ground realities. The present study, therefore, is an attempt to capture these insights systematically.

1.7 Purpose of the study

The study was aimed at investigating pre-service student teachers’ general attitudes towards EFL grammar instruction and their attitudes towards explicit and implicit methods of teaching grammar in an EFL context.
1.8 Research questions

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the pre-service student teachers' general attitudes towards the teaching of grammar in an EFL context?

2. (a) What are the pre-service student teachers' attitudes towards explicit and implicit grammar instruction?
   (b) What are the pre-service student teachers' reasons for their preference for either explicit or implicit instruction?
   (c) Which of the two methods, explicit or implicit grammar instruction, is more suitable for the pre-service student teachers focusing on students' grammatical errors?
   (d) Which learner characteristics help the pre-service student teachers decide on the kind of grammar teaching most appropriate for their students?

3. Do the pre-service student teachers’ attitudes differ according to their gender and the level of the students they teach?

1.9 Significance of the study

The findings of the present study will help bring in valuable information from the practical classrooms for improving the relevant pre-service student courses, thus bridging the gap between theory and practice. They would also help the Ministry of Education in planning in-service training programmes for novice teachers in a pragmatic way. Moreover, pre-service student teachers' insights will add value to the literature on EFL grammar instruction, which largely reports only EFL teachers' and students' views.

2. Methodology and Procedures

2.1 Method

The study was mainly quantitative in design, using a questionnaire. The subjects responded to each statement on a five-point Likert-type attitude scale (from 5 for 'strongly agree' to 1 for 'strongly disagree'). The respondents also provided background information on gender and the level they teach, for creating their profile in terms of variables. The study was also qualitative, using an open-ended questionnaire.
2.2 Population and sample
The subjects selected for the present study were pre-service student EFL teachers who have done teaching practice at different levels in Omani schools. The sample size was 58, higher than the one described by Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 77) as the minimum number required for making useful statistical analyses. Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents to this questionnaire. The study is limited to pre-service student EFL teachers from the only public university in Oman. The responses are valuable in themselves, indicating a probable trend in pre-service student teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards grammar instruction in an EFL context.

Table 1. Profile of Pre-service Student Teacher Respondents to the Attitude Scale Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Cycle 1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle 2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post Cycle 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The open-ended questionnaire was administered to 20 of the sample.

2.3 The research instruments
Two research instruments were used in the present study. The Likert-type attitude scale questionnaire used in the study was adopted from Al-Kalbani (2004), who had designed the instrument based on Burgess and Etherington (2002); Schultz (2001); and Wang (1999). The questionnaire used for the present study comprised 29 statements grouped into three sections, viz. Explicit instruction (Statements 1-11), Implicit instruction (Statements 12-17), and General attitudes to the teaching of grammar (Statements 18-29).
The study also used an open-ended questionnaire comprising four questions. The first question asked the respondents which of the two methods, explicit or implicit, they prefer to use for grammar instruction (Which method of grammar instruction – explicit or implicit – would you consider more appropriate in the context of teaching English as a foreign language in Oman?)

While the second question required them to state the reasons for their preferred method (Give at least two reasons why you think so), the fourth asked them to state which learner characteristics influenced their choice of the method (Which learner characteristics help you decide what kind of grammar teaching is most appropriate for your students?). The third question asked the respondents to state which of the two methods would be suitable for focusing on their students' grammatical errors (Which method – explicit or implicit – do you think would be more suitable for correcting students' grammatical errors? Why?).

2.4 Validity and reliability

The study instruments were checked for validity by a panel of practitioners and specialists in EFL teaching and education. The Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient of the Likert-type attitude scale questionnaire was found to be .83 for teachers and .89 for students (Al-Kalbani 2004).

2.5 Statistical analysis

The pre-service student teachers’ responses to the 29-item close-ended questionnaire were analysed statistically (t-test and ANOVA). Their responses to the open-ended questionnaire were analysed qualitatively.
3. Results and Discussion

Table 2. Pre-service Student Teachers' Perceptions of Grammar Instruction (N=58)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Attitudes</td>
<td>3.1646</td>
<td>.48028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Instruction</td>
<td>3.6364</td>
<td>.36244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Instruction</td>
<td>3.9167</td>
<td>.54634</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With reference to research question 1, the results reveal, as shown in Table 2, that the pre-service student teachers rated the importance of teaching grammar as high with a mean of 3.165. This suggests that the student teachers' general attitude towards grammar instruction is quite positive. That is, the student teachers generally see teaching grammar as being quite important, a finding which is also supported by other studies (e.g., Borg, 2003; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Ellis, 2006; Petraki & Hill, 2010).

Table 3. Pre-service Student Teachers' General Attitudes towards English Grammar Instruction (N=58)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. I believe that students' language improves quickly if they study and practice English grammar.</td>
<td>3.7759</td>
<td>1.02672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Students generally like the study of grammar.</td>
<td>2.8276</td>
<td>.93917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Grammar study is the basis of fluent English.</td>
<td>2.8103</td>
<td>1.09955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. There should be more formal study of grammar in the English language class.</td>
<td>3.0517</td>
<td>1.01605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Grammar study is effective for fostering students' English writing ability.</td>
<td>4.1034</td>
<td>.71793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Grammar study is effective for fostering students reading ability.</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>1.09224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Grammar study helps students to get high scores on the English examination.</td>
<td>3.5000</td>
<td>1.08012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Grammar study slows down students' English communicative competence.</td>
<td>2.5345</td>
<td>1.11159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Grammar study is the basis of students' listening ability.</td>
<td>2.7241</td>
<td>.93270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Grammar study is the basis of speaking ability.</td>
<td>3.6207</td>
<td>.95196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Learning grammar is not very beneficial as students can't apply grammar knowledge to spontaneous conversations with others.</td>
<td>2.8621</td>
<td>1.17650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Giving students more opportunities for communication practice leads them to naturally understand English grammar.</td>
<td>4.1034</td>
<td>.80980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.1646</td>
<td>.48028</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 shows that, in general, the pre-service student teachers surveyed had a moderately favourable attitude towards grammar instruction. Two statements, however, produced a mean of more than 4 – Statement 22 (Grammar study is effective for fostering students' English writing ability) and Statement 29 (Giving students more opportunities for communication practice leads them to naturally understand English grammar). This suggests that, in the perception of the pre-service student teachers, there is a strong link between one's writing ability and grammatical knowledge. The high mean for Statement 29 (4.103) suggests the responding teachers' strong belief that communication practice would naturally lead to an understanding of grammar. It is also interesting to note that Statement 25 (Grammar study slows down students' English communicative competence) produced the lowest mean (2.535) for the statements about the general attitudes. The mean scores for these two complementary statements, i.e. 25 and 29, suggest that, in the pre-service student teachers' view, communication practice should precede grammar instruction. Likewise, in the study by Borg and Burns (2008), respondents from 18 countries reported a high degree of integration of grammar and skills teaching and did not agree with the idea of teaching grammar in isolation.

Table 4. Paired Sample t-test for the Comparison between Pre-service Student Teachers' Perceptions of Explicit and Implicit Grammar Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Instruction</td>
<td>3.6364</td>
<td>0.36244</td>
<td>-16.691</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Instruction</td>
<td>3.9167</td>
<td>0.54634</td>
<td>-16.691</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With reference to research question 2(a), Tables 2 and 4 show that a relative degree of importance was cited according to the type of grammar instruction. When it comes to the emphasis on the type of instruction, the findings show that implicit grammar instruction received the highest rating with a mean of 3.917, whereas the mean for explicit grammar instruction was 3.636. It is found that the pre-service student prospective teachers place more importance on teaching grammar implicitly than explicitly.
Table 4 shows a significant difference in student teachers' opinions in relation to the type of grammar instruction. They have a very strong preference towards implicit/inductive grammar instruction over explicit/deductive grammar instruction on .01 level. This finding is in contrast to that of Al-Kalbani (2004) with school teachers.

Table 5. Pre-service student Teachers’ Attitudes towards Explicit Grammar Instruction (N=58)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Through my explanations students are more able to understand English grammar.</td>
<td>3.7759</td>
<td>.85928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students learn English grammar better when I give them explanations of grammatical rules before they do the exercises.</td>
<td>4.0690</td>
<td>.83481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Giving students grammar explanations is not helpful.</td>
<td>3.1897</td>
<td>1.06716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I believe when I give students explicit grammar explanations they will not forget the learnt grammar easily.</td>
<td>2.5862</td>
<td>1.07662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My explicit teaching helps students to understand</td>
<td>3.4828</td>
<td>.84275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Students can improve their grammatical accuracy through frequent practice of structures in the classroom.</td>
<td>3.9310</td>
<td>.61735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Students need conscious knowledge of grammar in order to improve their language.</td>
<td>3.8621</td>
<td>.90705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Explicit discussion of grammar rules by students is helpful for them.</td>
<td>3.8103</td>
<td>.66112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Comparison and contrast of individual structures is helpful for students to learn grammar.</td>
<td>3.7069</td>
<td>.67561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teaching grammar produces language knowledge which students can use in natural communication.</td>
<td>3.6379</td>
<td>.87255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Students need to be consciously aware of a structure's form and its function before they can use it proficiently.</td>
<td>3.9483</td>
<td>.86699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.6364</td>
<td>.36244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows that eleven items were constructed to tap/probe English pre-service student teachers' preferences of the type of grammar instruction. The fact that the overall mean of this dimension is 3.636 indicates that the pre-service student teachers are moderately but not very strongly in favour of teaching grammar explicitly. Only one item received the highest means (X= 4.0 and above), namely Statement 2 (Students learn English grammar better when I give them explanations of grammatical rules before they do the exercises); only one item
(Statement 4) obtained a mean of 2.586 (*I believe when I give students explicit grammar explanations, they will not forget the learnt grammar easily*). The discrepancy between these two mean scores is surprising, as the two statements essentially convey the same approach or belief. The results suggest that explanation of rules, conscious grammar teaching and emphasizing grammar practice are techniques favoured by most pre-service student teachers. They also suggest a tension between this deeply “entrenched habit” and belief that “explicit grammar teaching is necessary and effective” (Murphy & Hastings, 2006, p. 9) on the one hand and on the other the need to adopt a more implicit approach as learnt from the methodology courses on the pre-service education programme.

Table 6. Pre-service Teachers’ Attitudes towards Implicit Grammar Instruction (N=58)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implicit Grammar Instruction</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. I am confident that students can figure out the grammatical rules by themselves, without my explanation.</td>
<td>3.7241</td>
<td>1.03945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I prefer asking students to figure out the rules from a discussion with classmates.</td>
<td>3.8276</td>
<td>1.09445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I believe when my students figure out the grammatical rules by themselves they can remember these rules for a long time.</td>
<td>4.0517</td>
<td>.80399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Students learn grammar successfully if it is presented within a complete text.</td>
<td>3.6724</td>
<td>.96223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Students can learn grammar through exposure to language in natural use.</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
<td>.72548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Participating in real-life tasks with language is the best way for students to develop their grammatical knowledge.</td>
<td>4.2241</td>
<td>.62248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.9167</strong></td>
<td><strong>.54634</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows that this dimension obtained a very high overall mean (X=3.917). This was in turn reflected in the individual items where the mean ranges from 3.672 to 4.224. The item that reflects a more authentic way of teaching the language received the highest mean of 4.224 (*Participating in real-life tasks with language is the best way for students to develop their grammatical knowledge*). This suggests that student teachers strongly believe that teaching the language should take the form of real-life oriented tasks and not superficial practice exercises that are consciously designed for the purpose of teaching grammar.
Statement 15 (*Students learn grammar successfully if it is presented within a complete text*)
received the lowest mean score (3.672) of all the items in this dimension. Varying degrees of implicit teaching can be found among the items in this dimension, from a strong emphasis on more implicit type or natural language learning to less systematic implicit grammar teaching.

Generally, Tables 5 and 6 together give a clear picture of the pre-service student teachers' preferences in teaching grammar. It can be concluded that, besides their overall positive attitudes towards grammar instruction, the pre-service student teachers have a strong preference for teaching grammar implicitly over explicit grammar instruction. They think that it is better for the students either to figure out the rules by themselves or from their discussion with their classmates, as this would lead to their remembering the rules and retaining them for a long time. They also believe that presenting grammar within a context would lead to more successful learning by students. The findings also indicate that the more natural the context, the stronger the pre-service student teachers' preference, which in turn would lead to more and better learning due to the natural exposure this situation allows for language learning. In addition, they have the strongest preference towards the idea of getting students to participate in real-life tasks. Such tasks are the best means of developing students' grammatical knowledge.

One of the reasons for this could be that the pre-service student teachers may still be influenced by the theoretical courses they have attended. That is, the ideas are still fresh in their minds. The pre-service student teachers are still active and enthusiastic to teach using the methods they studied not long ago. In fact, teaching grammar implicitly requires more effort and time. Teachers need to choose the best context that allows exposure and would give away the meaning of the structure. They also need to be as creative as possible to demonstrate and provide life examples and situations in order for the students to grasp the meaning of the structure and recognize the form as well as be able to use it. However, teaching grammar deductively is easier in the sense that the teacher simply states the rules and gives examples and practice exercises. In their response to the open-ended question, the pre-service student teachers agreed that the explicit method "is less time consuming" and "is [a] very easy and direct way (common way) to teach grammar."
With regard to research question 2(b), interestingly, when some of the subjects of the study were asked to respond to an open-ended question about the reasons for their preferred method of grammar instruction, those who preferred the explicit method gave the following reasons:

- "It [insures] ensures that students understand the rule. Then mere applications are needed."
- "Students will understand more if they know the rule before."
- "Students can focus more and understand well."
- "The students will learn more if I give them the rule."
- "It's helped students to answer the exercise."
- "Most students will not response [respond] to the activities without explanation [of] the rule first."

Those responding pre-service student teachers who preferred the implicit method said it would help students to learn grammar naturally through class participation, thinking and discovering for themselves, which would in turn facilitate long-term retention:

- "The implicit method makes students discover rules by themselves which help them to understand much more."
- "Self-discovery of grammar instruction helps students not to forget them easily."
- "It encourages the students to think and infer the rules."
- "It's going to be more natural."
- "They will not forget it if they discover it by themselves."
- "It helps students to think and use their mind and be participants in the class."

The teachers also said that "Students can learn better and acquire the language smoothly" and "It will develop their English more and faster." One of the respondents clearly said that she would use both the methods because of the level of the students.

In relation to the research question 2(c) regarding the choice of the method for focusing on students' grammatical errors, the explicit method was preferred by most of the subjects as being more suitable for correcting students' grammatical errors, as it is "more simple", "direct", "more clear" to students, and helps students to avoid such mistakes/errors in future. One of the respondents even said, "The explicit way is better because I think it should only have this job of correcting."
In response to the open-ended question about which learner characteristics help the subjects decide on the kind of grammar teaching most appropriate for their students (*research question* 2(d)), the respondents said that learners’ age and background would determine which of the two approaches would be more suitable. Besides, teachers’ decisions will also be influenced by their learners’ level of understanding the grammatical areas presented. Finally, such decisions will also be affected by the students’ level of motivation, self-confidence, and willingness to participate in classroom activities relating to grammar.

| Table 7. T-Results of the Comparison between Male and Female Pre-service student Teachers |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Gender                         | N       | Mean    | SD      | F       | t       | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| General attitudes              |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Female                         | 39      | 3.1608  | .49463  | .267    | -.085   | .933    |
| Male                           | 19      | 3.1722  | .46245  |         |         |         |
| Explicit instruction           |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Female                         | 39      | 3.6830  | .32968  | .437    | 1.416   | .162    |
| Male                           | 19      | 3.5407  | .41491  |         |         |         |
| Implicit instruction           |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Female                         | 39      | 3.9658  | .56218  | 1.552   | .981    | .331    |
| Male                           | 19      | 3.8158  | .51188  |         |         |         |

In regard to the *research question* 3, Table 7 shows that there are no significant differences between male and female pre-service student teachers' general attitudes towards grammar instruction and explicit and implicit grammar instruction. Generally, the findings show that both male and female pre-service student teachers hold similar degree of positive attitudes towards teaching grammar (Males X=3.17; Female X=3.16). This is also true in the case of their views on explicit grammar instruction (Males X=3.54; Females X=3.68) and implicit grammar instruction (Males X=3.82; Females X=3.97), where the differences in means are similar and show no significant difference between male and female groups.
Table 8. One Way ANOVA for Comparing Pre-service student Teachers’ Attitudes according to the Level Taught

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit instruction</td>
<td>Cycle 1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.7727</td>
<td>.28693</td>
<td>2.914</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle 2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.5266</td>
<td>.40025</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post Cycle 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.7212</td>
<td>.29451</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.6364</td>
<td>.36244</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit instruction</td>
<td>Cycle 1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.7500</td>
<td>.46570</td>
<td>4.149</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle 2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.8276</td>
<td>.56604</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post Cycle 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.2444</td>
<td>.46234</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.9167</td>
<td>.54634</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General attitudes</td>
<td>Cycle 1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.2857</td>
<td>.61540</td>
<td>.581</td>
<td>.563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle 2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.1223</td>
<td>.40676</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post Cycle 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.1333</td>
<td>.48698</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.1646</td>
<td>.48028</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 8 shows, there are no significant differences in the pre-service student teachers’ perceptions attributed to the level they teach with regard to their general attitudes towards grammar instruction. There are, however, significant differences with regard to their attitudes towards implicit grammar instruction at the level 0.05 between Post Cycle 2 and Cycles 1 and 2 in favour of Post Cycle 2.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The pre-service student teachers’ general attitude towards grammar instruction is positive, suggesting they perceive it to be important and useful. With regard to the method of teaching grammar, however, they seem to favour the implicit / inductive method over the explicit / deductive. The difference in their attitudes towards these two methods is significant. They also believe that presenting grammar through real-life tasks would lead to more successful learning of grammar by students. However, some explanation of rules and emphasis on grammar practice is felt to be necessary by the pre-service student teachers. There is no significant difference in the pre-service student teachers’ general attitudes towards grammar
instruction as well as implicit and explicit methods of instruction based on their gender or the level they taught in their practicum, despite what they have learnt in the methods courses.

Although the findings suggest a significant difference in the pre-service student teachers' attitudes towards explicit and implicit methods of grammar instruction, the fact that the overall mean scores for both the methods are still high is a matter of some concern for teacher educators. It implies that methodology courses should draw a distinction between the two methods more sharply so that the underlying theoretical assumptions and principles are foregrounded. Some of the responses to the open-ended questions also suggest the need for such clarification.

This has implications for curriculum designers as well in that specific ideas and practical suggestions need to be provided to teachers, especially when the teachers are required to use the implicit method for teaching grammar, as it calls for creativity and resourcefulness on the part of teachers to devise classroom techniques and activities that would enable students to derive grammatical understanding from communicative use of English.

Although the present study is limited to pre-service student teachers in one university, which is the only public institution offering the pre-service education programme in Oman, the findings can be reasonably generalized to a wider context, as evidenced by their conformity with the findings of other studies cited. The study also suggests the need for further research in this area to investigate whether practising teachers in schools and colleges responsible for teaching Arab learners have such an ambivalent attitude towards the two methods. Perhaps there is some confusion between planned focus on form within a communicative approach to teaching English as a foreign or second language (as opposed to incidental focus) and an explicit method of grammar instruction.
References


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Chatting for Improving English Speaking Skills 
in a Thai Context

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_Suranaree University of Technology_
and
Suksan Suppasettere 
_Suranaree University of Technology_

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate if the online chatting used by forty EFL students improved speaking skills. Before and after chatting, the students took pre- and post-speaking tests. Then, they were assigned to chat in a group for two and three times on each topic for ten weeks. The results showed that the mean of the post-speaking test scores was higher than the mean of the pre-speaking test scores. The mean of the post-test scores, the number of sentences and the number of correct sentences produced by students increased in ten weeks respectively. From the questionnaires, it appeared that the students thought that their language skills and typing skills had improved. They had more fun learning and their self-confidence in using English had increased. Based on the results, online chatting can be a technological tool for motivating students to produce and practice language in real-time. It provides a chance to use and practice the language outside the classroom with non native or native speakers in real-life.

**Keywords:** Online chatting, SCMC, Speaking skills, Motivation
1. Introduction

In Thailand, students study English as a foreign language and as a compulsory course. However, they have fewer chances to use English compared to countries where English is taught as an L1 or L2. Also, they have limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge which affect their self-confidence to speak in English (Sangarun, 2003; Suppasetserree, 2000; Usaha, 2000, Wannarak, 2001). In order to help students gain more self-confidence in speaking English, technological tools can be used to possibly eradicate the problems. Related studies about Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (SCMC) in language classroom suggest that online chatting, which is a kind of SCMC, can motivate students to produce language in real-time (Alahmadi, 2009; Almeida d'Eça, 2003; Yuan, 2003).

SCMC is real-time communication via a computer network. Online chatting is a kind of SCMC that is available on the Internet where users around the world communicate in real-time (Almeida d'Eça, 2003; Böhlke, 2003; Spencer & Hiltz, 2002). The related studies suggested combining online chatting into the language classroom to improve language skills (Abrams, 2003; Compton, 2004; Kitade, 2000; Lai & Zhao, 2006; Paulus, 2007; Satar & Özdener, 2008; Yuan, 2003). Kitade (2000) proposed that online chatting could promote self-correction while chatting. The conversations in chat rooms allowed students to scroll back and rethink what had been discussed and reformulate their own conversations before posting it into the chat rooms. Abrams (2003) confirmed a previously reported increase in quantity of language produced by students in the synchronous CMC group. The analyses of the quality of language indicated no significant difference in terms of lexicon or syntax. Furthermore, the students could participate equally in the conversations in chat rooms. Yuan (2003) investigated the error types produced by participants. The participants could correct their own errors from chat conversations and they could improve their grammatical knowledge. Compton (2004) showed that the students could transfer their own output and their partners’ output from chat rooms to their own speaking skills. Lai and Zhao (2006) examined whether online chatting could promote learners to notice the problematic language productions and interactional feedback from their interlocutors better than face-to-face conversations would, especially in terms of noticing the linguistic mistakes. Paulus (2007)
mentioned that online chatting could allow the students to participate equally in conversations. It could be a technological tool to encourage students to produce language. The students could be active while chatting. Moreover, Satar and Özdener (2008) proposed that the speaking proficiency of both experimental groups (text chatting and voice chatting) increased, whereas there was a decrease in the anxiety levels only for the text chat group.

Online chatting is a technological tool that occurs in real-time and allows the users to use spoken language in the same manner as face-to-face interactions. This study uses it to improve EFL students’ speaking skills and to encourage them to produce and learn language in a positive learning environment.

2. Purposes of the Study

This study attempts to:
(1) compare students’ English speaking skills before and after using online chatting;
(2) investigate the number of sentences produced by SUT students while chatting;
(3) investigate the number of correct sentences produced by SUT students while chatting; and
(4) explore students’ opinions of using online chatting to improve their speaking skills.

3. Research Questions

The following questions guide the research:
(1) Can online chatting improve the English speaking skills of SUT students?
(2) Can online chatting increase the number of sentences produced by SUT students while chatting?
(3) Can online chatting increase the number of correct sentences produced by SUT students while chatting?
(4) Do SUT students have positive opinions of using online chatting to improve speaking skills?
4. Participants

The participants were forty students at Suranaree University of Technology (SUT), Thailand who were studying English 1 during the first trimester. They were randomly separated into small chat groups and each group had four members. Their language abilities were mixed.

5. Instruments

5.1 Pre- and post-speaking tests were used to measure the speaking skills before and after chatting. The speaking test scores were based on language production and accuracy in terms of grammar and vocabulary accuracy that followed the language points of the English 1 course outline and their textbook.

5.2 Online chatting in Moodle was a tool to allow the participants to type the messages in a chat box. The conversations from the chat box were saved automatically as chat scripts. Then, they were separated into two parts: one part was the number of sentences and the second part was the number of correct sentences that followed the language points of the course outline and the textbook.

5.3 Questionnaires were used to explore students’ opinions of using online chatting. The questionnaires were separated into two parts: the closed-ended questionnaires explore their experiences about using online chatting and the opened-ended questionnaires explore their opinions, comments, and suggestions after chatting.

6. Methodology

In order to fulfill the goals of the current study, these four steps were conducted:

6.1 Taking pre-speaking test

Forty participants were separated into small groups to take the speaking test. The test consisted of 7 minutes of discussion or face-to-face interaction before chatting. They randomly chose a topic for the speaking test from their textbook such as all about you, my
favorite people and celebrities, routines, and my free time and hobbies. The speaking test scores were based on the language points followed in the course outline of English 1.

6.2 Chatting

After taking the pre-speaking test, the participants chatted in a group. Each chat group had four members. The chatting topics were from the textbook as well as the pre- and post-speaking tests. They were assigned to chat for two and three times (50 minutes per time) for each topic in ten weeks without any absence.

6.3 Taking post-speaking tests

After chatting, the participants took the post-speaking test for 7 minutes to measure their speaking skills. They randomly chose the topic for this test. The topics were the same as those in the pre-speaking test, the textbook, and chatting.

6.4 Answering the questionnaires

The students answered the questionnaires after chatting. These questionnaires explored their opinions, comments, and suggestions about using the online chatting.

7. Data Analysis and Results

The data obtained from the different instruments was analyzed and the results of each research question are shown here:

**Question 1: Can online chatting improve the English speaking skills of SUT students?**

To answer question one, the data was taken from the scores of pre- and post-speaking tests. These scores were based on language points from the course outline of English 1 such as sentence forms, word selection, subject and verb agreement, plural forms, possessive adjective, adverb of frequency, and time expression. This data was analyzed according to the mean presented in table 1.

The post-speaking test scores in table 1 were equal to and/or higher than the pre-speaking test scores. Therefore, the mean of the post-speaking scores was higher than the mean of the pre-speaking scores (17.55>14.20).
Table 1. Pre- and Post-Speaking Test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Pre-test scores</th>
<th>Post-test scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>....</td>
<td>....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 40</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>14.20</td>
<td>17.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2: Can online chatting increase the numbers of sentences produced by SUT students while chatting to improve speaking skills?

To answer question two, the data used were from the conversations in each chat room that the students produced. The conversations were analysed including the total number of sentences that each student produced and not focusing on correct and incorrect sentences. The mean of the number of sentences for each student was calculated and presented in table 2.

Table 2. Mean of the Numbers of Sentences in 10 Weeks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Week1</th>
<th>Week2</th>
<th>Week3</th>
<th>Week4</th>
<th>Week5</th>
<th>Week6</th>
<th>Week7</th>
<th>Week8</th>
<th>Week9</th>
<th>Week10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 indicated that the number of sentences produced by the students increased. The mean number for each week also increased and confirmed that the online chatting could motivate them to produce more language within ten weeks.

**Question 3: Can online chatting increase the numbers of correct sentences produced by SUT students while chatting to improve speaking skills?**

To answer question three, the conversations of each student were categorized as correct sentences in terms of grammar and vocabulary accuracies that followed the language points of the course outline of English 1 (e.g., sentence forms, word selection, subject and verb agreement, plural forms, possessive adjective, frequency adverb, and time expression). The mean of the number of correct sentences was calculated and presented in table 3.

**Table 3 Mean of the Number of Correct Sentences in 10 Weeks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Week1</th>
<th>Week2</th>
<th>Week3</th>
<th>Week4</th>
<th>Week5</th>
<th>Week6</th>
<th>Week7</th>
<th>Week8</th>
<th>Week9</th>
<th>Week10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Means</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.12</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.47</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.37</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.67</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.77</strong></td>
<td><strong>20.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of correct sentences for each student was equal to and/or higher at the end of ten weeks. Table 3 indicated that the mean of the number of correct sentences increased respectively during the period of ten weeks.
Question 4: Do SUT students have positive opinions of using online chatting to improve speaking skills?

Part 1: Personal information
The participants were first year students studying English 1 during the first trimester. The forty students included 11 men (27.5%) and 29 women (72.5%). Thirty-nine students were majoring in Information Technology (97.5%), and only one student (2.5%) was majoring in Agricultural Technology. Nine students were 17 years old (22.5%), twenty-one students were 18 years old (52.5%), and ten students were 19 years old (25%). The mean age was 18, with an age range of 17-19 years old.

Part 2: Results of students’ experiences in using online chatting
The results of students’ experiences displayed in table 4 showed that all students had experienced using online chatting before participating in this study. They used the free chat programs on the Internet such as Yahoo Messenger, MSN, QQ, and small chat rooms in FaceBook.

Table 4. Students’ Experiences in Using Online Chatting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ experiences</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Never used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free chat program</td>
<td>40 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahoo Messenger</td>
<td>17(42.5%)</td>
<td>3 (57.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSN</td>
<td>40(100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICQ</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>40 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QQ</td>
<td>21(52.5%)</td>
<td>19(47.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small chat room on FaceBook</td>
<td>35(87.5%)</td>
<td>5 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other chat programs</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>40 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 3: Results of frequency in using online chatting

Table 5 showed the frequency in using online chatting to communicate in real-life. The results also indicated that they used online chatting inside and outside the classrooms.

Table 5. Frequency in Using Online Chatting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency in using online chatting</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The uses of online chatting to communicate with friends</td>
<td>23 (57.5%)</td>
<td>14 (35%)</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The uses of online chatting to communicate with foreigners</td>
<td>15 (37.5%)</td>
<td>16 (40%)</td>
<td>6 (15%)</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The uses of online chatting to study English inside and outside the classroom</td>
<td>25 (62.5%)</td>
<td>10 (25%)</td>
<td>5 (12.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 4: Results of online chatting effects on language improvement

Table 6 showed that most students strongly agreed that online chatting could affect language skills, typing skills, and improvements in self-confidence. They had positive opinions about using online chatting for learning language.

Table 6. Effects of Online Chatting on Language Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects of online chatting</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language skills improvement</td>
<td>24 (60%)</td>
<td>14 (35%)</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typing skills improvement</td>
<td>18 (45%)</td>
<td>15 (37.5%)</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence improvement</td>
<td>25 (62.5%)</td>
<td>10 (25%)</td>
<td>5 (12.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 5: Results of opened-ended questionnaires

The students’ opinions from opened-ended questionnaires were coded and grouped as following;

Students’ opinions on advantages and disadvantages of using online chatting

For the advantages, the students believed that they could improve their language skills (vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, writing, speaking, and reading skills) and learn the target language more easily by chatting. They said that their typing skills and their self-confidence also improved. They also enjoyed their chatting experience. For the disadvantages, they noted that they could not practice pronunciation and listening skills while chatting.

Students’ comments on problems while chatting

First, technological problems occurred while they were chatting. For example, the Internet became too slow when a lot of students signed into a chat room at the same time or the Internet would be disconnected. Second, they thought that they had limited vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, reading skills, and typing skills while chatting. These affected their self-confidence in their ability to produce the language. Lastly, they mentioned that they had poor typing skills. They sometimes could not continue contributing to the conversations because their friends typed faster.

Students’ suggestions about using online chatting

The students wanted to chat again in the next term because they enjoyed chatting. They suggested adding more members and they wanted to chat with their friends in other groups because they needed a friendly environment. Another suggestion made was they wanted to try the other chat programs that offer more functions than the chat room in Moodle (i.e. colorful chat boxes, voice-chatting, and webcam). One suggestion was that they need to use high speed Internet. They wanted feedback from teacher or friends to enhance and improve grammar knowledge. Also, they suggested integrating the online chatting into the other courses to reduce shyness when asking the teacher some questions.
8. Discussions

The overall results of the study led to the discussions which deal with the research questions. The results of this study are discussed in connection with other studies.

8.1 Students’ speaking skills improvement by using online chatting

According to the results of the students’ pre- and post-speaking scores, their speaking skills improved. To support this, Satar and Özdener (2008) proposed that the mean scores of speaking tests would increase, whereas the anxiety level of the text-chat group would decrease. The online chatting could encourage students to produce and practice language. One reason that Seferoglu (2007) mentioned was oral proficiency results based on the comparison of pre- and post-speaking test scores could improve after chatting. Online chatting could encourage students to practice the spoken language in real-time by using written-like-spoken language in the same manner as in face-to-face interactions. Abrams (2003) mentioned that the students who used online chatting could transfer the spoken language from the chat room to speaking in face-to-face interactions. To support the idea that speaking skills could improve in terms of language production and accuracy, the numbers and means of sentences and correct sentences produced by students increased respectively in ten weeks. The students in the current study were encouraged to produce the language and they had more chance to practice the target language by using online chatting. One reason Shekary and Tahririan (2006) mentioned is that online chatting could promote recognition of target language forms. The participants could produce correct sentences and the number of words increased in the post-tests. These studies supported the idea that online chatting had positive effects on speaking skills improvement.

8.2 Opinions on using online chatting

The results of the questionnaire revealed that the students had positive opinions about the advantages of using online chatting and thought they could use this to improve writing, reading, and speaking skills. They believed that they had more self-confidence in using and
producing the language. Another opinion expressed was that they enjoyed chatting and had fun learning the language. As mentioned above, online chatting could encourage students to produce and practice the target language. The studies supported the notion that it could encourage students to learn vocabulary and grammar with authentic input and output. The students practiced spoken language in the same manner as they would in face-to-face interactions. They paid more attention to both forms and meanings while chatting (Kötter, 2001; Lee, 2002). It also allowed students to participate equally in the conversations. They competed to produce language in chat rooms and they had more self-confidence to use English without shyness (Tudini, 2007). These studies supported the idea that the students could improve their typing skills after chatting because they felt free to type the conversations. They also competed with their friends in typing quick responses. However, the students gave opinions about the disadvantage that they could not practice listening skills and pronunciation. Online chatting, specifically text-chatting, allows students to use spoken language by typing messages but it cannot replace the face-to-face interactions in terms of pronunciation and listening practices (Volle, 2005). However, the voice-chatting can be used to overcome this weak point of text-chatting.

Furthermore, the students commented about the problems they encountered while chatting. First, they said that their language abilities, i.e., limited knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, poor reading skills, and poor typing skills, influenced their language production. They also had a lack of self-confidence while chatting. An idea proposed by Yang and Chen (2007) was that limited language skills could affect the understanding of and replying to conversations. Moreover, if the students typed slowly while chatting their motivation to produce the language could be reduced. One example given by Kitade (2000) stated that typing the wrong words could make other members in the same chat rooms misunderstand the conversations. Moreover, poor typing skills and limited language abilities discouraged them from producing the language. The last problem was the slow Internet connection while chatting. The reason was sometimes technological problems that occurred unexpectedly while using the technological tools. To support this, Yang and Chen (2007) mentioned that
slow Internet connections could interrupt the conversations while chatting and it could reduce the enjoyment and motivation.

From the suggestions, time and topic in setting chat rooms could also affect the EFL students. Although the students wanted to extend the time and topics for chatting, the researcher should consider the approximate time which is appropriate for the content and the target language. Park and Bonk (2007) mentioned that online chatting could not be applied into all learning contents but it could be used for short time exercises. An increased duration of this type of task might have some negative effects on the learners’ level of attentiveness or alertness. It affected the language ability and contents of tasks. It also depends on the students’ needs.

Another suggestion was about the number of members in the chat rooms. They suggested adding more members because they thought that a lot of members could motivate them to produce more language. However, one chat room should be limited to a small chat group with a few members (e.g., three to five students) to encourage all of them to participate equally in the conversations (Almeida d'Eça, 2003; Park and Bonk, 2007). One reason is that a lot of members could make the conversations in a chat room confusing (Xie, 2002). To motivate students to participate in conversation, one chat room should have four to five members. The last suggestion was that they integrated online chatting into the other courses. The students thought that it helped them to ask the teacher questions without being bothered by their shyness. This suggestion could be possible as Schultz (2003) explored the combination of online chatting in a MBA course. The results showed that the students were enthusiastic. However, the post-test scores of the experimental group during his study were not different from the traditional group.

The results and discussions of the current study indicated that the EFL students could improve their speaking skills and they had positive opinions about using online chatting in language classrooms. However, this study had some limitations that are presented in the next section.
9. Limitations of the study

The participants of this study were forty students at Suranaree University of Technology (SUT), Thailand. This study only involved the EFL undergraduate students. The topics and contents covered were in the English 1 course outline for only the first trimester, the time the data was being collected. Therefore, the result cannot be generalized to other populations.

Due to the time constraints for the participants and the researcher, this current study was limited to ten weeks, which might not have been enough for the researcher to see the expected progress of the participants. Also, the topics were limited by the contents in the textbook and were limited by time (10 weeks), which might not have been enough for the participants to fully discuss the topics.

The current study did not take gender into consideration. It was unknown whether the gender of the participants (e.g., a mixed gender dyad or the same gender dyad) had an impact on each dyad’s language proficiency during each session of their conversations. Moreover, the background knowledge of the participants was not considered. It might have affected the language production when using online chatting and taking the speaking tests.

The results and the limitations of the current study could provide topics for further research to study more about the use of online chatting in language classroom as presented in the next discussion section.

10. Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the results of the study, future research should investigate more about language proficiency in terms of the language production and the language accuracy produced by students. Moreover, the incorrect sentences should be investigated by categorizing the error types of linguistic mistakes, e.g., tense, nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives, so that an instructor would have an opportunity to give correct feedback to the students for improving grammar.
The future research should also examine how different language proficiency or grade level EFL students are affected by participating in the online chatting environment. It would be useful if the study focuses on which proficiency or grade level of students benefit the most in the online chatting environment. Similarly, future research should investigate how differently learning styles, culture, gender, and native language of students would impact attitudes towards participating in online chatting.

As a last suggestion, the future studies should compare how useful different online chat programs that refer to text-chatting and voice-chatting are for improving speaking skills or other language skills for EFL students. The students’ opinions after using different chat programs also should be explored.

11. Conclusions

This study aimed to investigate the improvement of speaking skills by using online chatting as a technological tool for EFL students. The participants of the current study were students in SUT, who were studying English 1 during the first trimester. Before and after chatting, they had to take the pre- and post-speaking tests. Then, they chatted in a small group with their classmates for ten weeks. After chatting, they answered questionnaires to explore their opinions. The results of the current study showed that the mean of the post-speaking test scores was higher than the mean of the pre-speaking test scores. The means of the numbers of sentences and correct sentences increased respectively in ten weeks. Finally, the results of questionnaires indicated that they had positive opinions of using online chatting for improving speaking skills and other skills. They believed that online chatting could increase their self-confidence, while reducing the stress during language production. These results suggested that online chatting can be applied to the language classroom to improve language skills and to motivate students to learn the language in a positive learning environment.
References


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Book Review

Title: Discovering Statistics Using SPSS
Author: Andy Field
Publisher: CA: Sage Publications (2009)
Number of pages: 821 pp.
Price: $71.98
ISBN: 978-1-84787907-3
Reviewer: Nattama Pongpairoj
Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University

It is crucial that researchers as well as students in the area of Applied Linguistics such as First/Second Language Acquisition, Discourse Analysis, Sociolinguistics and Psycholinguistics have good background knowledge in statistics before they conduct quantitative research. Common problems usually arise due to the lack of solid statistical training. Many people feel that statistics is inaccessible due to the complex concepts and complicated procedures involved. Some even have a phobia about statistical methods. At present, thanks to SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), a computer program for running statistics, life is much easier when it comes to conducting statistical data analysis. As Field (2009: xx) states, “The advantages of learning statistics now rather than 10 years ago is that these packages are now considerably easier to use…” and then specifically mentions SPSS in that it is “the best of the commercially available statistical packages and is commonly used in many universities” (Note that although this computer program was originally designed for research in the social sciences, there is no barrier to using it in Applied Linguistics, a field in humanities).
There are actually some good books on statistics such as Howell (2002) and Wright (2002). However, while these books concentrate on statistical theory, the use of computers is not central to the discussion. Similarly, quality books on SPSS have been written (e.g., Kinnear & Gray, 2000; Foster, 2001), but the main focus of these publications is on the practical use of SPSS rather than the theory behind it.

Given that the field of statistics contains mathematics and technical jargon, researchers are usually confronted with fear, anxiety and nervousness whenever they have to conduct statistical analyses. Simply put, to them, statistics is intimidating. Worse than this are situations where researchers have to apply statistical theory to running SPSS. If they possess no solid background in statistics, how can they move on to doing any analyses with SPSS? It is well-attested that, without an adequate background both in statistics and the techniques of running SPSS, analyzing quantitative data is of course, virtually impossible; as Field (2009: xx) notes, “Using SPSS without any statistical knowledge can be a dangerous thing”.

*Discovering Statistics Using SPSS* by Andy Field provides an excellent combination of statistical background and the techniques of using SPSS.

The book is divided into 17 chapters. The first chapter gives an overview of important statistical background information such as populations, simple statistical models, confidence intervals and effect sizes. Chapter 2 provides a basic introduction to the techniques of using SPSS. From this chapter onwards, Field uses screen images of SPSS to accompany examples and explanations.

After the necessary concepts of statistics and background information of SPSS have been introduced, Field sets out to explain how to explore data properly in Chapter 3, e.g., screening data, exploring groups of data and testing for homogeneity of variance, and then running data on SPSS. In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, Field provides an indispensable foundation in statistical issues, i.e. correlation, regression and logistic regression, respectively.
From Chapter 7 onwards, Field presents research methods for different scenarios. In these later chapters, Field explains how to do each method on SPSS, how to analyze the data on SPSS, and how to interpret and report the result.

Chapter 7 starts off with methods of comparing two means and statistical procedures for analyzing data of this kind, i.e. the independent \( t \)-test for independent designs and the related \( t \)-test for repeated-measures designs. Chapters 8 and 9 are then devoted to statistical methods that compare several means, i.e. analysis of variance (ANOVA) in Chapter 8, and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) in Chapter 9. The concepts of ANOVA have been extended to other types: Factorial ANOVA (Chapter 10), repeated-measures ANOVA (Chapter 11), and mixed design ANOVA (Chapter 12).

In Chapter 13, Field focuses on other types of statistical tests, i.e. non-parametric procedures such as the Mann-Whitney test, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and Friedman’s test. Chapter 14 is an extension of the ANOVA to MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance). In Chapter 15, Field explains exploratory factor analysis and Chapter 16 is devoted to categorical data and the chi-square test, which is used for this type of data. Field ends the book with an epilogue in the last chapter.

Throughout the book, Field describes and explains the ideas using a simple and accessible approach. He employs simple language and includes tangible examples and vivid illustrations to help facilitate the reader’s understanding. What is more, Field blends the academic content with his sense of humor in an entertaining style, which helps in lightening the heavy stuff and making the reader feel motivated to want to follow the message. Field also recapitulates the content and summarizes key terms at the end of each chapter. With these approaches and the particular style of the writer, I think he successfully and convincingly conveys the complex message and technique he intends to bring to the reader, making *Discovering statistics using SPSS* such an insightful and appealing book.
I have enjoyed reading this book and have made use of it immensely not only in interpreting data from some research articles I have read, but also in analyzing data from my own quantitative research work. It is a valuable resource for me whenever I need a helping hand for my research. Indeed, reading this book can help transform initial feelings that statistics and SPSS are like your opponents into a positive impression that you can be friends with them. Ultimately, readers of this book will gain a solid grounding in statistics using SPSS and it is a must-have and inspirational book for researchers in the field of Applied Linguistics.

References:


About the Reviewer

Nattama Pongpairoj received her BA (English) (first-class honors) from Chulalongkorn University, MA (Linguistics) from the University of Oregon and PhD (Linguistics) from the University of York. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. Her research interests include interlanguage and L2 acquisition of functional morphology.
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6. Endnotes, when used, should be typed at the end of the main text (before references). Use superscript numbers in the manuscript text for these endnotes.

7. Follow the APA style (American Psychological Association – 6th ed.) for in-text citations and the references list. For information, visit the APA website.

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