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Contributors

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Emily Seitz, a librarian and a graduate of the PhD program in Library and Information Science at Rutgers University (New Jersey), is interested in youth services in public libraries, school librarianship, and human information behavior. Her specific research interests include the role of libraries in the literacy practices of youth; gender in relation to literacy practice; the information behaviors of children and young adults; and children's and young adult literature.

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Introduction

Serafín M. Coronel-Molina

The *Working Papers in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education* (*WPLCLE*) is an annual peer-reviewed online publication that provides a forum for faculty and students to publish research papers within a conceptual framework that values the integration of theory and practice in the field of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education. The mission of this journal is twofold: (1) to promote the exchange of ideas and dissemination of research, and (2) to facilitate academic exchange between students, faculty, and scholars from around the world.

Publications in *WPLCLE* are full-length articles dealing with the following areas of research: first- and second-language acquisition, macro- and micro-sociolinguistics in education, linguistic anthropology in education, language policy and planning from local and global perspectives, language revitalization, pragmatics in language teaching and learning, literacy, biliteracy, multiliteracy and hybrid literacies, bilingual education, multilingual and multicultural education, classroom research on language and literacy, discourse analysis, technology in language teaching and learning, language and gender, language teaching professional development, quantitative and qualitative research on language and literacy education, language related to curriculum design, assessment and evaluation, English as a foreign or second language, multimodal literacies, new literacies or electronic/media/digital literacies. Among other areas of publication interest of the *WPLCLE* are the New Literacy Studies, home and workplace literacy, Indigenous literacies of the Americas, sociocultural approaches to language and literacy education, second-language instruction and second-language teacher education, literacy as social practice, critical literacy, early literacy, practitioner inquiry/teacher research, children's literacy, African-American literacies, Latino/Hispanic literacies, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural literacy practices, heritage language and culture maintenance and loss, and local and global (transnational) literacies.

This volume marks the fifth collection of seven essays and three book reviews chosen from an array of submissions for our 2017 publication. The first article, titled "Gender Labeling of Children's Books and Reading Preferences as Represented through the KidLitosphere," was written by *Emily Seitz*. This article describes just how pervasively and unconsciously gender enters into pedagogy, even to the level of children's literature. The author studies a number of blog entries from a blog-aggregating site called KidLitosphere to evaluate the gender labeling of children's books, in terms of what characteristics are generally assumed to be preferred by boys or girls, respectively, in their reading material. She also examines blog entries that seem to resist these general assumptions either by speaking out against the practice of gender labeling of reading material, by commenting that a child's sex is irrelevant to reading preferences, or by educators not buying into the assumptions of "girl-preferred" and "boy-preferred" texts.

The second article, *Mathew Bumbalough's* "Language and Sexuality in South Korea: A Case Study," examines "sexuality as a marker of identity" through current literature, theories, and interview data. The author bases his definition of the subject's sexual identity on the latter's own "subjective reality … as he expresses his 'true' self" across a range of social contexts in different countries and different languages. The article is, in essence, a discourse analysis based on "a single interview to see how pronoun selection, language selection, speech intonations and inflections … inform current research in Korean Studies and gender discourses."

The third article, "'*Estas rimas son para ti*: Exploring Learners Comprehension of Spanish Language Music Containing Dialectical Features" by *Avizia Yim Long and Megan Harsh*, reports on the impact that Caribbean dialectal features have on Spanish-language learners' comprehension of music from the Caribbean region. The study was conducted among undergraduate-level students who were native English speakers in advanced level Spanish courses. Results indicated that unfamiliar dialectal features and vocabulary items impeded comprehension of the music's lyrics.

The fourth article, "Chinese Students Negotiating L2 English Writing Identity: Navigating Introductory Composition at a U.S. University" by *Jennifer Lund*, is a small ethnographic study exploring identity negotiation by Chinese students writing in English in an introductory composition course at a US university. Both interviews and classroom observations were used to investigate student attitudes towards L2 academic literacy acquisition, and the latter's impact on how the students define their "imagined communities" with respect to the L2.

The fifth article, "Exploring Approaches to Teaching Bilingual Education in countries where English is a first language: a study in East London" by *Mohammad Rasel Howlader*, attempts to identify "literacy practices of the ethnic minorities and find suitable teaching approaches in a multilingual context in London." The article revolves around the need to recognize the students' own perceptions of and need (or not) for their native or heritage languages in the school environment. Data was gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and analysis of published books and articles. The article draws conclusions and makes recommendations for possible improvements in bilingual teaching that would facilitate students' learning.

The sixth article, "International Student Academic Support: Academic Support given to Chinese International Students from Teachers" by *JesAlana Stewart*, looks not only at foreign college students' language acquisition in the US university environment, but also at the overall experience of education and learning in the Western academic system. The author recommends "an academic cultural ambassador to guide them in this setting," and suggests that teachers are the most appropriate resource for this. The article follows four instructors of freshman composition for international students to determine the various strategies these teachers use to facilitate the students' learning process and adaptation to and unfamiliar learning system, as well as the teachers' personal observations on what resources international students ultimately make use of in this process.

The final article, by *Heath Harrison*, is entitled "Linguistic Equity: India's Path to Social Justice." It is essentially a case study that examines recent legislation in India to promote higher levels of participation in public education, explaining the passage of the law and its subsequent effects on participation in education at all levels of society, increasing levels of literacy and education, and the citizens' own beliefs in the importance of education.

This fifth volume of *WPLCLE* ends with three book reviews. The first is by *Vesna Dimitrieska* on the book *Promoting Teacher Reflection in Second Language Education: A Framework for TESOL Professionals*, by Thomas S. C. Farrell. The second one is by *Chaoran Wang* on the book *The Multilingual Turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL and Bilingual Education,* edited by Stephen May. And the last is by *Zawan Al Bulushi* on the book *Virtual Literacies: Interactive Spaces for Children and Young People*, edited by Guy Merchant et al.

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Last but not least, we are very grateful to all the contributors to this volume for choosing *WPLCE* to publish their work. Our gratitude also goes to the Department of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education in the School of Education for hosting the *WPLCE* website and for supporting this publication venue. Without the generous assistance of all these fine people and institutions, *WPLCLE* would not be a reality.

Note from the Editor

This will be the last volume of this publication under the title *Working Papers in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education (WPLCLE)*. Starting in Fall 2018, it will become the *International Journal of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education (IJLCLE)*.

Gender-Labeling of Children's Books and Reading Preferences as Represented through the KidLitosphere

Emily Seitz

Abstract

This article discusses a qualitative study conducted as part of a dissertation on gendered literacy. The findings are based on sampling and analysis of data drawn from 23 blogs that are part of the KidLitosphere, a website aggregating blogs dealing with children's literature. It discusses the primary findings relating to the gender-labeling of children's books, including 1) bloggers' and commenters' direct labeling of books as "girl"- and "boy"-preferred; 2) educators' expectations of boys' reading preferences; 3) bloggers' and commenters' consistently mentioning certain books and/or series, coded "iconic boy books," in reference to boys' reading; and, 4) educators' expectation that boys prefer male protagonists and girls prefer female protagonists. It also discusses resistance to these themes in the form of 1) bloggers' and commenters' speaking directly against the labeling of books as "girl"- and "boy"-preferred; 2) bloggers' and commenters' expressing the belief that a child's sex should not influence the child's reading preferences; and, 3) educators' not expecting girls to prefer what are perceived to be "girl"-preferred texts, or boys to prefer "boy"-preferred texts.

Keywords: blog, gender, KidLitosphere, literacy, reading

Introduction

This paper is based on a dissertation observing conceptions of gendered literacy as represented through blog narratives. Scholars have used the term "gendered literacy" to describe attitudes toward literacy and behaviors they have observed through empirical research. Therefore, the phenomenon known as "gendered literacy" has been discussed from many different angles; however, the scholarship to date has not produced a complete conceptual model of gendered literacy. For example, Orellana (1995) presents "gendered literacy" as a concept relating to gendered texts produced by children in the classroom. Like Orellana (1995), Sanford (2005/2006) and Bausch (2014) (who focuses on boys' literacy) present students' production of gendered texts as a function of "gendered literacy." However, Sanford also examines "gendered literacy" in relation to teachers' perceptions of students' enjoyment of reading (girls enjoyed reading, but boys did not), and of students' attitudes toward school and the reading of textbooks (girls had more positive attitudes toward school than boys and enjoyed reading textbooks more than boys).

This article first discusses the understandings of "gender" and "literacy" underpinning the study (within the U.S. and other Western contexts) and the literature relating to "gendered literacy" from previous studies. It then describes gendered literacy as it was observed through narratives sampled from 23 blogs that are part of the

KidLitosphere, a website aggregating over 550 blogs treating various aspects of children's and young adult literature. The paper describes the main findings of the dissertation study relating to the gender-labeling of books for young people, including direct labeling of books as "boy"- and "girl"-preferred; educators' alignment of boys' reading preferences according to traditional notions of boys' reading preferences; and, the consistent mention of certain books and/or series, coded "iconic boy books," in reference to boys' reading.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of the study, gender is understood as a socially-constructed phenomenon, which children learn as they grow into adulthood. Such an understanding of gender is informed by the work of Bem (1993), who describes gender as a kind of cultural knowledge that children learn through social practices. Bem perceives that children are not passive recipients of cultural knowledge of gender; rather, they are constantly both taking on and constructing meanings about gender through "culturally significant social" practices (pp. 140-141). The study discussed in this paper approaches literacy as one such "culturally significant social practice" through which gendered meanings are formed.

Similar to the understanding of gender, for the purpose of this study, literacy is understood to be a social phenomenon, and literacy is learned through social practice (Gilbert, 2003; Long, 2003; Millard, 2003; Orellana, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978). A broad definition of literacy as the reading, writing, and creation of a diversity of texts informed this study (i.e. Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). However, the literacy practice mentioned most frequently in the blog narratives sampled and analyzed for the study was the reading of traditional print books.

For the most part, gendered literacy has been conceived as the association of literacy (particularly school-based literacy) with femininity. Millard (1994), for instance, states that "in Western societies, reading is presented largely as a girl-preferred activity" (p. 96). Rowan, Knobel, Bigum, and Lankshear (2002) describe the association of literacy with femininity in the developed world as linked to the predominance of female schoolteachers (p. 40). Likewise, other scholars have documented the rise of women in terms of representation among schoolteachers (i.e., Conway, 1974; Hansot & Tyack, 1988; Monaghan, 1994) and also as authors of story-focused primers (Monaghan, 1994).

Literature Review

The relationship between gender and literacy has been described according to the following themes:

1. Gendered literacy as performed by multiple actors, including children and young adults, literacy educators, and those in the publishing industry.

Studies relating to this aspect span more than 20 years of scholarship and treat children's gendered reading preferences and approaches to literacy. The majority of these studies have taken place within the school setting (i.e. Bausch, 2014; Chapman, Filipenko, McTavish, & Shapiro, 2007; Maynard, 2002; Millard, 1997, 2003; Moss, 2007; Orellana, 1995; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). In contrast, the study described in this article analyzes blog data as a site in which to encounter young people's reading experiences and perceptions of those experiences outside of school, and the blogs represent a naturalistic setting in which to gather data.

The studies suggest that girls and boys tend to read and write differently and assume differing relationships to school-based literacy activities. In this sense, researchers perceive children as enacting a gendered literacy – that is, exhibiting differing literacy practices according to gender and behaving in ways that are interpreted as gender-stereotypical. Review of the literature reveals two salient ways in which researchers portray children's enactment of gendered literacy: 1) through boys' resistance to formal, school-based literacy in comparison to girls' more enthusiastic adoption of formal literacy practice; and, 2) through girls' and boys' differing literacy preferences.

Although it is often claimed that the children's publishing industry is female-dominated, statistics are scarce. However, an analysis by VIDA: Women in Literary Arts organization (2014) tallying numbers of female versus male authors of children's and young adult literature among winners of book awards found that female authors were prominent, and so it seems there is a basis for such claims, at least in terms of author recognition.

2. Gendered literacy as a quantifiable achievement gap between male and female students.

This strand of research points to differences between boys and girls in terms of achievement measured through test scores. For example, for the reading assessment that is part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, informally known as the "Nation's Report Card" for the United States, an achievement gap in reading between girls and boys has been consistent and measured over time since 1971. And, on the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2012, the results for approximately 510,000 students in 65 countries and economies showed that, "on average across OECD countries, girls outperform boys in reading by 38 score points" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2014, p. 199).

3. Gendered literacy as the result of biologically-based cognitive differences between males and females.

This trend includes popular works (i.e. Gurian, 2011; Sax, 2005) marketed toward educators, which, drawing from research in neuroscience, favor a biological determinist approach to cognitive differences between males and females. Such works exaggerate these female/male differences and also use the differences to explain gendered behavioral differences.

4. Gendered literacy as the remnant of the historically gendered educational system (in the U.S.).

This scholarship follows two main themes: 1) the feminization of the teaching profession and 2) a historical pattern of boys' under-achievement. In terms of the feminization of the teaching profession, according to Monaghan (1994), in the U.S. for much of the 19th and

20th centuries, women dominated the elementary school teaching profession (p. 30). Women also were the main authors of elementary primers (Monaghan, p. 32). Regarding a legacy of boys' under-achievement, Hansot and Tyack (1988) cite evidence showing that by the mid-19th century in the U.S., in coeducational school environments, girls proportionally received higher grades than boys; girls were more likely than boys to be promoted to the next grade; and more girls continued on to high school (p.758).

The studies discussed briefly above address the gendered dimensions of literacy practice that children learn as they become literate, particularly within the school context. However, individually they do not present a summary of what gendered literacy is, and they only scratch the surface as to gendered literacy as a cultural practice is maintained.

Blogs included in the KidLitosphere, a website bringing together blogs relating to children's and young adult literature (especially reviews), were chosen as the setting in which to observe the social performance of gendered literacy. The KidLitosphere is an important site in that it represents a social networking space within the blogosphere for people whose primary work and/or recreation center around literature for children and young adults.

Research Questions

Four research questions guided this study:

- Research Question 1: What are the conceptions of gendered literacy among literacy educators (parents, public librarians, school librarians, and teachers); creators of texts for children (published authors, editors, and published illustrators); and, children/young adults, as represented in their blogging activities?
- Research Question 2: How do the conceptions of gendered literacy identified through the blogging activities of literacy educators, creators of texts for children, and children/young adults compare to the theoretical conceptions identified in the literature review?
- Research Question 3: What similarities and differences, if any, are represented in conceptions of gendered literacy among literacy educators; creators of texts for children; and, children/young adults, as represented in their blogging activities?
- Research Question 4: What patterns, if any, of resistance to the dominant conceptions of gendered literacy may be found among the blog posts analyzed?

Methodology

A review of the previous scholarship determined the groups to be studied: literacy educators (parents, public librarians, school librarians, and teachers); creators of texts for children (published authors, editors, and published illustrators); and, children/young adults. The KidLitosphere was chosen as the site of the study for two reasons: 1) the KidLitosphere represents a natural setting in which themes of gender and literacy are prevalent; and 2) the bloggers contributing to the KidLitosphere include all the perspectives of interest.

This qualitative study takes the approach referred to by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as naturalistic inquiry, the principles of which include the use of a human instrument in the investigation of a natural setting; purposive sampling; emergent study design; inductive data analysis; and tentative application of the study's results (pp. 39-43). Twenty-three blogs were selected for analysis from the KidLitosphere. In choosing these twenty-three blogs, representativeness of the groups of interest was a consideration, along with including blogs authored by key participants in the 2012 KidLitosphere conference (attended by the principal investigator). For example, one of the blogs from which data were sampled was by the conference organizer, the head of youth materials selection for a large public library system in the U.S. Other blogs selected for sampling included a conference panelist's blog, a blog that was mentioned as frequently read by conference panelists, as well as blogs listed on the blogrolls of blogs that had already been selected for sampling.

Blogs also had to have been updated within the past month at the start date of data collection (January 2, 2013) and yield meaningful results (that is, relating to the conceptual model of gendered literacy introduced in the literature review; or presenting new or resistant dimensions of it) when searched with the keyword search, "boy girl read." Blog posts and comments were then sampled from those blogs using the keyword search, "boy girl read." For two blogs, when a search of "boy girl read" yielded no results, the search terms were truncated to "boy" and "girl," and two separate searches were conducted (in these cases, using "read" as a separate search term retrieved too many results to be useful). In the case of one blog, no search function existed within the blog itself, and so blog posts and associated comments were collected by scrolling through the blog page by page doing separate searches on "boy," "girl," and "read" for each page. Data were analyzed inductively using the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to identify themes, which were then coded to facilitate analysis. Because this was a naturalistic study, conclusions made based on the findings are limited in scope. However, the study provides a rendering of the KidLitosphere context through detailed data description, with the goal of facilitating transferability to research in other social contexts. The findings are trustworthy in that the data analyzed, quoted extensively in the reporting of the study results, present the phenomenon of study – gendered reading – from the perspective of the bloggers and commenters.

This study is limited in its focus on blogs, which are only one sociocultural site in which gendered literacy may be observed, and in the fact that blog narratives represent an often indirect sociocultural view of gendered literacy – for example, the bloggers' commentary more often reviews literature for young people than directly discusses literacy as gendered. However, qualitative content analysis of blog posts allowed for unobtrusive study of gendered literacy and the examination of multiple perspectives. Interviews with individual bloggers and one author outside the KidLitosphere were also used to triangulate data sources.

Types of Bloggers Represented Among the Blogs Selected for Sampling:

Blog	Blogger Type
B1	Child (F)
B2	Young adult (F)
B3	Public Librarian, Youth Services (M)
B4	Parent (F), editor (but not of children's books)
B5	Teacher (F)
B6	Teacher (M)
B7	Public Librarian, Youth Services (F)
B8	Public Librarian, Youth Services (M)
B9	School Librarian (F)
B10	School Librarian (M)
B11	Parent (F)
B12	Parent (M)
B13	Parent (M)
B14	Author (F)
B15	Author (M)
B16	Illustrator (F)
B17	Illustrator (M)
B18	Author/Illustrator (M)
B19	Editor (F)
B20	Book Designer/Editor (M)
B21	Blog of a well-known literary magazine focused on reviews of children's literature; includes posts by the editor
B22	Public librarian (F, without MLS; however, in data analysis – treated as a librarian); library consultant; mother of 2 sons
B23	Academic librarian (F, without MLS; however, in data analysis – treated as a librarian)

The following are coding examples for the claims made regarding the dissertation findings that are discussed in this article:

Claim/Sub-Claim	Example from the Data
Educators label books as "girl" and "boy"-preferred.	B4 (2010): "Put him near any new books, even ones for his sister, and he practitcally (*sic*) starts twitching with anticipation of getting his hands on them." (parent, F)
Educators align boys' reading preferences with the following: stories with male protagonists, comics, graphic novels, science fiction, adventure, non-fiction, sports, fantasy, gross humor, stories featuring vehicles, and magazines.	B3 (2010): "Why is it cool for boys to read realistic fiction--books with no aliens or magicians, no world-dominating villains, and nothing blows up?" (librarian, M)
Bloggers and commenters consistently mention certain book series, coded "iconic boy books," in reference to boys' reading.	B3 (2008): "What books would you recommend for boys?...there are some great series out there. On one extreme, easy to read and extremely funny are the *Captain Underpants* books." (author, F, in response to a question posed by a male librarian)

Findings

The most prominent findings relate to the gender- labeling of children's books. This gender-labeling is manifested in four main ways: 1) bloggers' and commenters' direct labeling of books as "girl"- and "boy"-preferred; 2) educators' expectations of boys' reading preferences; and, 3) bloggers' and commenters' consistently mentioning certain books and/or series, coded "iconic boy books," in reference to boys' reading; and, 4) educators' expectation that boys prefer male protagonists and girls prefer female protagonists. Resistance to gender-labeling of children's books was, however, also important among the data sampled. Resistance took the following forms: 1) bloggers' and commenters' speaking directly against the labeling of books as "girl"- and "boy"- preferred; 2) bloggers' and commenters' expressing the belief that a child's sex should not influence the child's reading preferences; and, 3) educators' not expecting girls to prefer what are perceived to be "girl"-preferred texts, or boys to prefer "boy"-preferred texts.

Gender-Labeling of Children's Books

Bloggers' and commenters' labeling of books as "girl"- and "boy"-preferred (72 examples). Among those engaged in labeling, comments by librarians and parents were represented the most, followed by teachers, authors, and children/young adults. Overall, 31 examples refer to "boy" books, 25 to "girl" books, and 16 to both "girl" and "boy" books.

A female public librarian refers to a "boy" book as follows:

> On the funny side, I've brought book one in the series *Nathan Abercrombie, Accidental Zombie*, by David Lubar….David Lubar is the guy who wrote the *Weenies* books, which, if you were a 9-year-old boy, might be all you needed to hear. (B22, 2010)

The librarian labels "a 9-year-old boy" as the typical audience for this book and a series by the same author. The direct labeling used here as a presumed aid to reader's advisory is found in several other examples. One example by B6 blogger, a male teacher, directly invites girls to read a book he has just reviewed (B6, 2010). As in the previous example, the label is offered in the context of reader's advisory. The teacher labels the book for girls and also directly addresses "girls" as the book's perceived ideal audience.

In the following example a mother, also a homeschooler and previously a classroom teacher, comments on a request for reading suggestions for a girl, and, in doing so, refers to both "boy" and "girl" books:

> She might try Cynthia Rylant's *Cobble Street Cousins*. Girly, but with different types of girls. Also, since she's into books that are traditionally "boy" books, my son went from *Fly Guy* right into Dav Pilkey's *Ricky Ricotta* series and those were the books that really catapulted him into reading independently this year. Another traditionally "boy" series she might enjoy is *Nate the Great* and that's not such a big leap from *Fly Guy*. (B4, 2010)

Although the mother, engaging in reader's advisory as in the previous examples, recommends "boy" books for a girl, she still makes a strict demarcation between "girl" and "boy" books, labeling them "girly" and "traditionally 'boy.'"

Another mother refers to "in between" books that should appeal to both boys and girls, but while claiming to be an "idealist," still notes a distinct separation between "boy" and "girl" books, stating: "I feel like there are very girly books and very boyish books and then there is everything in between and that should all be fair game. *sigh* I guess I am an idealist" (B4, 2010). In this sentence it is unclear if the mother is stating that "all" the books should be "fair game," meaning they can be read by both boys and girls, or if only the "in between" books should be "fair game." In either case, although she presents herself as an "idealist," gender-labeling of young people's reading materials helps construct her worldview.

Bloggers' and commenters' speaking directly against the labeling of books as "girl"- and "boy"- preferred (21 examples). Despite the gendered expectations of educators toward children's reading preferences demonstrated in the sample, examples of resistance are also found. Bloggers and commenters resist the labeling of books as "girl"- and "boy"- preferred. The greatest number of examples of resistance to the labeling of books as "girl"- and "boy"- preferred represent the perspectives of parents and focus on not producing gender-based reading lists for boys and girls; not expecting that boys will not want to read books with female protagonists; encouraging children to read whatever they find interesting; and, commenting in relation to experiences of reading with children and seeing that their reading preferences do not follow rigid gender demarcations.

Comments by other adults, designated "miscellaneous" because their roles cannot be determined from the information available, follow the same patterns as those made by parents, but also include 2 very specific comments – one, a reaction to a talk given by Jon Scieszka at the American Library Association conference, and the other, a comment regarding the rigid preservation of social norms relating to masculinity.

The reaction to Jon Scieszka's speech is in the form of a letter, written by an adult female. In the letter, she responds to Scieszka's talk and to the concept behind his "Guys Read" movement, stating that the gender roles Scieszka described do not depict all boys (stating, for example, that not all boys are hockey fans). She also notes that if books are marked or categorized as "guy" books, girls will be less willing to read them, and some boys will still not be interested in them (B21, 2012). This letter represents active resistance to Scieszka's labeling of books as "boy" – preferred, and it also connects gender norms in relation to other activities, (i.e. invoking hockey as an example of a "boy" – preferred sport) to gender-labeling of books.

The other comment, focusing on the rigidity of social norms surrounding masculinity, presents the gender-labeling beginning with insistence on gender-appropriate clothing for baby boys as morphing into the gender-labeling of children's books:

> It just seems that, around what we currently teach very small children, the rules bend easier for girls than boys. Baby girls might be dressed in blue overalls, but a baby boy won't be put in pink ones. A 3 year old girl dressing up as a construction worker would get a smile, while a 3 year old boy dressing up as a princess would be told "oh, don't let your dad see that, ha, ha, ha." And on and on and on. Until we end up talking about "girl" books and "boy" books as though the books had genders themselves. (B4, 2010)

In this excerpt the adult female commenter's perception that the taboo against boys' violation of social norms associated with masculinity is stronger than that of girls violating the rules of femininity is also evident. Although this commenter draws a connection between gendered clothing, beginning in infancy, and the gender-labeling of children's books, she discusses the stronger taboo against the violation of social norms associated with masculinity only in relation to gendered clothing. Subsequently, the theme of a social taboo against boys reading feminine books will be taken up, discussing the expression of the belief that a child's sex should not influence the child's reading preferences.

Like the commenter's letter to Jon Scieszka described above, a female librarian's comment to a parent in the library represents active resistance to the labeling of books as "girl" and "boy" books. The librarian, upon overhearing a father in the library reprimanding his preschooler son for choosing "girl" books from the shelves, approached him and, upon seeing that the boy had chosen *Olivia* (Ian Falconer), assured the father that *Olivia* is everyone's favorite. She also expresses dismay that the father is upset at the choices of such a young child (B7, 2012). This librarian thereby challenges the father's notion that the well-known *Olivia* book is for girls, resisting his gender-labeling of the books his son is choosing in the library.

Two comments coded according to resistance to the labeling of books as "girl" and "boy" books are by teachers. One notes that in her 28 years of teaching and her experiences reading with her own children and grandchildren, gender-labeling of books is meaningless and unnecessary. Moreover, she recognizes the taboo against boys reading books that might be considered feminine, expressing her distaste for boy-centered reading lists, which she feels contribute to boys' feeling shame over enjoying reading books that would be considered appropriate for girls. She adds that in her experience of reading aloud with children, the books they chose as their favorites were the ones with the most interesting stories, unrelated to whether the protagonist was male or female (B21, 2012). The teacher here comments on the concept of "boy" books, legitimized through lists of recommended reading for boys, lists which she perceives as causing boys to understand that they are not allowed to read books that would be considered more appropriate for girl readers. The teacher also stresses the importance of story quality as an indicator of whether children will enjoy the story over whether the protagonist is male or female.

The one comment by an author (Lenore Look) relating to resistance to the labeling of books as "girl" and "boy" books highlights an editor's request that she write a "boy" book:

> My editor asked me to write a "boy book" like my Ruby Lu books. "Just make him like Ruby, except a boy," she said. But I didn't want to do that. How can you make a boy like a girl? You can't. (B3, 2012)

Here, Look highlights the role of the publishing industry in gender-ing books through requests made of authors. Although she later states, "BTW, Alvin isn't a 'boy book' any more than Ruby Lu is a 'girl book.' If guys limit themselves to reading only about guys …, they'll miss out on some really fantastic books, including Ruby Lu" (B3, 2012), she nevertheless upholds the notion of inherent differences between girls and boys in describing the impossibility of making "a boy like a girl" (B3).

The one comment by a child, a tween girl (B1 blogger), coded according to resistance to the gender-labeling of books, equates her resistance with feminism:

> Gary Paulsen has a reputation of being an author for boys. In fact, my brother is a big fan of *Lawn Boy* (even though he really doesn't like to read). But, I do not like being told what is a boy book and what is a girl book, I am a feminist, as you probably guessed already. (B1, 2011)

B1 blogger specifically resists the notion of "boy" and "girl" books, relating it to her stance as "a feminist." She also notes that her brother, whom she characterizes as a reluctant reader, enjoys reading books by Gary Paulsen, whose books are generally perceived as being more appropriate for boys than for girls.

In summary, 72 examples of educators' labeling of books as "girl"- and "boy"-preferred are evident among the data, and most of these are by librarians and parents. Moreover, in two cases in which mothers claim to be more balanced in their views, they still rely on rigid differentiation between "boy" books and "girl" books in recommendations for reading. However, 21 examples of resistance to gender labeling are also found, and they range from suggestions, such as doing away with gender-labeled reading lists or encouraging children to read what interests them, to more active opposition, as in the librarian's directly challenging a father's insistence that his three-year-old son not choose "girl" books in the library. Other themes include the following: a social taboo against boys' violating masculine norms that is perceived to be stronger than for girls' violating feminine norms; and the perception that masculine social norms are enforced from the time of infancy (as in, gendered clothing).

Educators' expectations of boys' reading preferences (53 examples). In the data sampled for this study, educators align boys' reading preferences with the following: stories with male protagonists, comics, graphic novels, science fiction, adventure, non-fiction, sports, fantasy, gross humor, stories featuring vehicles, and magazines. Most examples are reading suggestions and reviews of books matching what are perceived to be "boy" preferred categories. The research literature (i.e., Davies & Brember, 1993; Millard, 1994; McKechnie, 2006; Moss, 2007) on children's reading preferences documents, to some extent, the notion that these categories tend to be boy-preferred. However, some scholars (i.e., Chapman et al., 2007) suggest that children's self-described preferences may differ from that which children perceive to be gender-appropriate. In this sense, the relationship between individual reading preference and social perceptions of children's reading preferences remains unclear. Moreover, the work of Dutro (2003) with African-American male students shows that children can be encouraged, within certain contexts, to step outside gendered reading boundaries.

Librarians account for most of the examples describing boys' reading preferences according to themes perceived to be "boy"-preferred, followed by parents, and teachers. Of the examples representing the perspectives of librarians, 23 are from B3, a blog written primarily with an audience of boys in mind, and the bloggers are two male public librarians working in youth services. A typical example from B3, which is a review of a graphic novel, reads: "If you like high action, plot twist, great artwork, space adventure, green slime and a mouse with a mission, this is definitely the Graphic Novel for you!!!!! Great stuff!!!!!!!" (B3, 2010). At times, B3 blogger directly addresses boy readers, as in: "one of your fellow reader guys, Jedi-J.T, wrote a review of the first *Barnstormers/Sluggers* book" (B3, 2009). Moreover, the reviews are of books the librarians presume would be "boy"-preferred. Overall, in terms of the alignment of boys' reading preferences with texts that are traditionally perceived as "boy" texts, the perspectives of librarians are best represented among the data sampled.

Iconic boy books (42 examples). Bloggers and commenters also consistently mention certain books and/or series, called “iconic boy books” in this study, in reference to boys’ reading. Books identified as “iconic boy books” are those that are frequently mentioned and almost always mentioned in relation to boy readers. They include the following: Dav Pilkey’s *Captain Underpants* series (19 examples), Jeff Kinney’s *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series (10), Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series (9), and Gary Paulsen’s *Hatchet* (4). In this section, *Captain Underpants*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* will be discussed.

A male school librarian states outright that from what he has seen, most readers of *Captain Underpants* are boys (B10, 2012). A mother’s comment about the *Captain Underpants* series – “My son absolutely loves *Captain Underpants* books, and they are the first series of books that he has wanted to read completely independently” (B4, 2010) – is typical of other comments about the series, in which it is described as a gateway to solo reading for boys (particularly for those who are reluctant readers). However, unlike the example just mentioned, some examples of *Captain Underpants* disparage it as potty humor unworthy of adult attention and a popular text that should only be used as a catalyst to encourage reluctant reader boys to read better, more serious literature. For example, in the course of criticizing a teacher for discouraging a young boy from reading *Captain Underpants*, a mother states:

> I think *Captain Underpants* is dreadful with it’s [*sic*] lowest common denominator kind of potty humor, but I would recommend it to a reluctant reader who likes that kind of book. The graphics, the actual kinesthetic appeal to the book, all make it worthy of being read. If a child is reading, I saw [*sic*] it's a good thing. Lay off the judging. (B4, 2010)

Although the mother, in this statement, is critical of the teacher, she is also critical of the *Captain Underpants* series, calling it “dreadful,” and describing the humor as appealing to the “lowest common denominator.”

Like the *Captain Underpants* series, Jeff Kinney’s *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series stands out as an iconic boy text. Among the data sampled, it is frequently mentioned as a boy favorite. For instance, a boy, whose review of the book is posted to blog B3 (maintained by male librarians, working in youth services in a public library), writes:

> Jeff Kinney really writes funny stuff! (My Nannah doesn't get some of it, but that is okay, because she is a girl.) Greg Heffley is the boy writing the diary about his day to day life. He writes about his family and friends and stuff that happens to him in school. It has lots of funny cartoons in it too. Two of my favorites were about a guy riding a skateboard and the second is about the things you can get away with saying when there is a substitute teacher. I can hardly wait to read the next book about Greg and his brother Rodrick. (B3, 2008)

Notable in this review of the first book in the series is the boy’s comments that his “Nannah” (presumably his grandmother) does not understand it “but that is okay, because she is a girl,” (B3, 2008), thereby presenting the book as a for-boys-only text. The boy reader’s focus on the male protagonist (Greg) and the cartoons reiterate assumptions about boy-preferred themes.

Boy readers and parents give positive reviews of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. However, a female librarian/mother, B22 blogger, is critical of the series, particularly because of what she sees as a lack of moral character demonstrated by the protagonist – a middle school boy. The one concession she makes, and at the same time comparing the series to *Captain Underpants*, is that the series can serve as a catalyst for the reading of reluctant boy readers, who would otherwise choose not to read:

> When I initially reviewed this book, my main reaction was: *Ick* [emphasis in original]. As the mother of boys, I imagined my own children exhibiting the unremitting lack of consideration that mars Greg's every action, and it broke my heart to think of a child so devoid of empathy. Doesn't mean I haven't recommended the book. There are some middle grade boys - boys who think fantasy is a ridiculous waste of time, boys who read *Calvin & Hobbes* and maybe *Captain Underpants* - and when I see those guys, I press *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* into their hands.

This mother/librarian finds *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* so questionable that she would recommend it only as an option for boys who might otherwise read only comics or *Captain Underpants*. In this paragraph, the mother/librarian disparages two "iconic boy books," *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Captain Underpants*, and, in scorning *Calvin and Hobbes*, also does not count comics as a valid reading choice for boys.

As with the *Captain Underpants* series, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, even when presented in a favorable way, is still linked to reluctant boy readers. For example, a mother writes:

> *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Definitely! These are the perfect book for such a kid. Just enough text to keep it book-like, but also enough art to keep it visual. Hilariously funny - my husband read them as well, chortling to himself the whole time. Also is a bit naughty and has cool-factor for reading at school. All this and a movie tie-in too...what more could a reluctant reader want? :) My son has also lately been enjoying *Zac Power* books. I haven't looked at them too closely, but they seem to be more on the action side than the funny side. (B4, 2012)

Referring both to her husband and son's reading of the series, this mother's comments support the notion of the series as an "iconic boy book." In noting that the series is "cool" enough "for reading at school," and there is "a movie tie-in," she adds to the perception that even boys who would not otherwise want to read (or would be embarrassed to be caught reading books) will read the series.

Examples mentioning the *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series are primarily written by boys (5), although there are also 3 examples by librarians, and 1 by a parent. The comments written by boys are reviews of books in the series posted on B3, a blog with an intended audience of boy readers and hosted by male public youth services librarians. A typical example reads:

> One of my favorite books that I read was the *Percy Jackson* series. Percy is a teenage boy who is a Greek demigod. He goes to a camp called Camp Half-Blood and trains there for fighting because Percy goes on multiple quests. He meets two friends at Camp Half Blood; Grover and Annabeth. The three friends go on quests everywhere….I liked this series because ther [*sic*] is action on every page. Plus I never stopped reading Riordan's books [*sic*]. Rick Riordan is my favorite author. (B3, 2012)

In this review, the boy, noting that one of the books in the series is a "favorite," focuses on the constant "action" in the plot as his main reason for liking the series. He also states that Rick Riordan, the author of the series, is his "favorite author."

A review by a male public youth services librarian (posted to B3) of another book (Grace Lin's *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*) with a female protagonist references the

Percy Jackson series as an incentive to encourage boys to read the series, stating:

> Does Minli ever get to change her family's fortune? You'll just have to read to find out!! But I will tell you this – things change in a way Minli could never have predicted!! This is *one terrific book*, guys! It's not a slam-bang action fantasy like *The Lightning Thief* but it will keep you turning pages. (B3, 2009)

This comparison to *The Lightning Thief*, the first book in the *Percy Jackson* series, in an attempt to entice boy readers to try a book with a female protagonist, supports the iconic status of the *Percy Jackson* series as a "boy" series.

Among the blog data sampled for this study, there are also a few cases in which girls write reviews of these "iconic boy books" or adults mention them as children's favorites without labeling them "boy" books. For example, a reference to *Captain Underpants* made by a mother – addressing what she imagines as other parents' frustration with the series as something they hope their children quickly grow out of liking– does not specifically refer to boy readers. However, like the other examples, it refers to the series as a gateway to books that are perceived to be more sophisticated and of higher quality (B11, 2007).

Five references to *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and three references to *Percy Jackson* among the data sampled are by female readers. However, two of the references to *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* are actually reviews of another series called *Dork Diaries*, in which *Dork Diaries* is presented as a sort of "girl" version of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, as in, "I really like *Dork Diaries*. It's a GREAT BOOK! I like it because it's like *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and I like that. It's about a girl named Nikki Maxwell who goes to a new school" (B3, 2011). Reviews of the *Percy Jackson* series by girl readers are similar to those written by boy readers – positive reviews focusing on the novels' suspenseful, exciting plots.

The discussion of the "iconic boy" series, including Dav Pilkey's *Captain Underpants* series (19 examples), Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series (10), and Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* series (9), described above as "boy" series because of the number of times they are mentioned among the data sampled in reference to boy readers, illustrates educators' insistence on gender-labeling of books, particularly of "boy" books. In that these series are mentioned as "boy" favorites, not only by educators but also by boys themselves, indicates that boys may have internalized the gendered labeling of these books.

Educators' expectation that boys prefer male protagonists and girls prefer female protagonists (22 examples). Review of the data provides evidence that educators, including parents, librarians, and teachers, expect boys to prefer male protagonists and girls to prefer female protagonists. They also assume that girls are more likely than boys to read a story featuring a protagonist of the opposite sex. In some cases, the blogger/commenter's statement is an expression of the appropriate audience for a particular book:

> Throughout the adventure, Will Parker is a wonderfully flawed hero on which to rest the hopes of mankind. He is often petty and too quick to temper, sometimes childish and even lazy. He is, thus, easy to identify with. A young man will recognize his own flaws in Will (as will a still-seeking adult) even as Will becomes more and more aware of these deficiencies and learns to correct them. (B13, 2009)

In this example, B13 blogger, a father, pinpoints whom he believes to be the book's target audience – "a young man" – and explains why this audience will identify with the book's male protagonist. In other cases, a comment speaks to the commenter's previous experience of girls' preference for female protagonists and boys' preference for male protagonists, as in this mother's comment: "Brynn prefers to read books about girls, because she's such a girly-girl, but she will happily read books about boys if they are good. But I'm not sure the opposite is true. My little brother wouldn't read "girl books" no matter what" (B4, 2009). In this comment the perception that the taboo against boys' reading "girl" books is stronger than girls' reading "boy" books is also evident.

Bloggers' and commenters' expressing the belief that a child's sex should not influence the child's reading preferences (15 examples). The greatest number of examples of resistance come from parents, while children and young adults are second. Also represented are one illustrator and two adults whose roles are not able to be determined from the text. Salient among these examples is the notion that a gender neutral approach to young people's reading preferences is particularly important in terms of boys' reading, given that the taboo against boys reading what are perceived to be "girl"-preferred texts is stronger than against girls reading what are perceived to be boy-preferred texts. A blog post on B21 (the blog of a prominent literary magazine focused on reviews of children's literature) written by a mother (who is also founder and president of a library board and informal teacher), illustrates that theme. The mother perceives boys, due to homophobia and a lack of tolerance for boys' behaving in ways that would be considered effeminate, as facing much stricter reading taboos than girls, so that it is much more difficult for boys to read any book that would be considered feminine. In contrast, girls, due to feminism, have a broader range of choices. She mentions classics as an example, stating that no one would have a problem with girls reading *Sherlock Holmes*, *Homer Price*, or works by Mark Twain or Robert Louis Stevenson, but boys reading Jane Austen, the Brontës, or Louisa May Alcott, might be ridiculed. The mother's resistance to the gender-segregation of children's reading choices focuses on allowing boys to read books (all classics mentioned in this example) featuring female protagonists, but she also calls for greater general acceptance for both boys' and girls' reading choices, warning against the tendency to gender-label books (B21, 2012).

Another example written by a young adult in Australia, relates her experience working in a bookstore, in which she regularly meets parents who are concerned with purchasing books that are gender-appropriate for their daughters and sons. She offers a composite of her experiences, stating that if she recommends that a parent buy the *Percy Jackson* series for a girl, the parent will often respond that *Percy Jackson* is a "boy" book and then ask her to recommend something more appropriate for a girl. Even when she tells the parent that she herself really enjoyed the series, the parent refuses her suggestion and buys something with sparkles – typically girly. She notes parents reacting in a similar manner when she recommends *The Sisters Grimm* series for a boy. The young woman/bookseller vehemently opposes the notion of "boy" books and "girl" books, expressing how much the parents' rigidly defined gendered conceptions of what their sons and daughters should be reading bothers her. She also actively resists perceptions of the gender-appropriateness of books in recommending (through her work in a bookstore) books to parents that they perceive to be gender-inappropriate for their daughters and sons (B21, 2012).

Another example is from a much younger child – a boy. Although this example is written by a mother, it is treated here as representing the child's perspective. The example is a mother's description of her young son's enjoyment of a series about fairies; his subsequent realization that the books would be perceived by outsiders as inappropriate for him (as a boy) to read (resulting in his hiding the books before a friend came over to play); his fear of the shaming he might face from other children as a result of having the books in his possession; and his moving beyond the limitations of those expectations. Later, her son resumes his resistant, voracious, and omnivorous reading practices, reading anything he himself deems interesting, regardless of whether or not it would be considered appropriate for a boy. In this example, the strong taboo against boys reading what would be perceived as girl-appropriate books is also evident (B21, 2012).

Educators' not expecting girls to prefer what are perceived to be "girl"-preferred texts, or boys to prefer "boy"-preferred texts (13 examples). Another form of resistance to the notion of gendered reading preferences is educators' refusal to expect girls to prefer what are perceived to be "girl"-preferred texts, or boys to prefer "boy"-preferred texts. Most of these examples represent parents' perspectives, followed by librarians and teachers. In one example, a mother writes that it would be a shame, if, due to gender-labeling of books, girls would not read classics like *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Treasure Island*, or that boys would not read works by Laura Ingalls Wilder and Louisa May Alcott. She also states that when choosing books to read to her sons when they were young, she took a gender-neutral approach, not focusing on the sex of the protagonists but simply sharing many good stories with them (B21, 2012). The mother expresses dismay over the gendered expectations regarding reading audiences for childhood classics and tells of her own commitment to reading many different stories to her own sons, without presuming them to prefer stories with male characters.

However, even the examples that are resistant, in that the blogger or commenter, for instance, is encouraging children to broaden their reading preferences, can still be gendered in the expectations expressed. For example, a book review by B6 blogger, a male teacher, resists gendered norms of reading by encouraging boys to read the book, but also labels the book as more appropriate for girls than for boys (B6, 2011).

Discussion

Summary of Findings

Gendered literacy reflects the gender divisions in society and creates a "safe" way in which to approach young people's reading by conveniently dividing the myriad of possible reading choices for youth into "boy" and "girl" books and themes. Gendered literacy is thereby evident both in terms of reading choices encouraged by literacy educators and in children's reading choices. Gender divisions are also used by creators of young people's reading materials to produce and market gendered materials. This article examines gender-labeling of youth literature as a way in which gender divisions relating to literacy practice are enacted. On the other hand, children's reading choices and choices encouraged by educators, publishers, and creators of children's reading materials are also a means by which notions of gendered literacy are disrupted. Resistance involves the refusal to label texts as "boy" or "girl," adjusting expectations regarding what girls and boys may prefer to read, and, more generally, separating the notion of whether a child is male or female from reading preference.

Examining the data sampled and analyzed for this study overall, librarians and parents are the main commenters regarding the gender labeling of children's books and reading preferences. Because librarians and parents are among children's primary literacy educators, gendered literacy as a cultural practice is difficult to disrupt. Nonetheless, resistance to the dominant perceptions of literacy as gendered is also evident.

In terms of patterns of resistance, the most prominent form of resistance to the perception of gendered reading comes from educators in response to the labeling of books as "girl" and "boy" books. Of these resistant comments, most represent the perspectives of parents, followed by adults of undetermined role. Another important form of resistance is expression of the belief that a child's sex does not and/or should not influence their reading preferences. Among these comments, parents are best represented, and children and young adults are second. Another form of resistance represented among the data sampled is educators' not expecting that girls should like what are perceived to be "girl"-preferred texts and that boys should like what are perceived to be "boy"-preferred texts) (13), and as in the other two forms of resistance, parents are the main commenters.

Although what is most evident among the data is the labeling of young people's reading preferences and of texts according to "boy" and "girl," broader issues are also evident. Educators' gender segregation of young people's reading preferences devalues certain text types that are tolerated only as bridge texts to help reluctant boy readers learn to enjoy reading including, for example (and as discussed in the article), the "iconic boy books" *Captain Underpants* and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, as well as non-fiction, comics, graphic novels, and gross humor.

Recommendations for Practice

In relation to this study's findings, recommendations for practice include avoiding the labeling of books according to boy/girl, in reading lists and in talking about books with children and young adults. When choosing books to be included in the curriculum, educators can choose materials that are more gender-neutral in terms of their appeal. Because there are a large number of examples relating to educators' perceptions of boys' reading preferences according to certain categories that are considered traditionally male-preferred: stories with male protagonists, comics, graphic novels, science fiction, adventure, non-fiction, sports, fantasy, gross humor, stories featuring vehicles, and magazines and "iconic boy books," it is also recommended that educators broaden their perspectives relating to what boys will enjoy reading.

Educators who work closely with children to foster their literacy development may recognize that they are uniquely positioned to be change agents in regard to encouraging both children and educators to read more broadly and to cross gender barriers. They can do this through blogging; writing reviews of materials for children and young adults; compiling reading lists; serving on book award committees; organizing both virtual and physical displays; selecting and purchasing materials; developing curricula and programs; and influencing those who produce materials for young people. B7 blogger provides a model of how to do this. She is materials selector for the youth services department of a major library, blogs about youth literature, reviews materials for youth for major publications, and is the author of an illustrated children's book. She has many acquaintances in the publishing world and attempts to wield influence, as when she pushes for a re-illustrated version of *William's Doll* or a pink cover for a book in the series, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. In another case, a female librarian commenting on B7 demonstrates how educators may challenge parents' preconceived notions of which materials are suitable for girls versus boys, recounting how, after hearing a father scolding his son for selecting "girl" books, she went over to them and assured the father that *Olivia* is a book that everyone likes (B7, 2012).

The data suggest that youth reading is gendered. However, the data also indicate that literacy educators can disrupt gendered literacy as a cultural practice. Virtual spaces like the KidLitosphere (or, alternatively, physical spaces) have the potential to facilitate dialogue and debate regarding gendered literacy as a cultural practice. Literacy educators can also disrupt gendered literacy by better equipping themselves to advice readers by branching out and reading things they would not normally read. They can also encourage the forms of resistance identified in the data, including: a refusal to label books as "girl" and "boy" books; the belief that a child's sex does not and/or should not influence their reading preferences; and a refusal to expect that children should like texts that are considered normative in terms of boy and girl-preferred texts.

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Language and Sexuality in South Korea: A Case Study

Mathew Bumbalough

Abstract
This case study examines the language and sexuality of a gay man living in South Korea, exploring current literature, theories, and interview data as a way of investigating sexuality as a marker of identity. I define sexual identity in this case through the subjective reality of the participant as he expresses his 'true' self in the lived experience of his travels to different countries and speaking multiple languages. The aim of this study then is to analysis the discourse using Philip and Jorgensen's (2002) method of critical discourse analysis from a single interview to see how pronoun selection, language selection, speech intonations and inflections in his speech to see how it informs current research in Korean Studies and gender discourses.

Keywords: discourse analysis, sexuality, language, culture, South Korea

Introduction

Scholars have been taking note of issues of gender, sexuality, and language for quite some time (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Cameron, 2005; Cameron & Kulick, 2003; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004 for example), but there is still quite a lack of research using discourse analysis (DA) to analyze this topic. While critical DA (CDA) has attempted to take up the mantle of responsibility for social empowerment of participants in studies, there is still some confusion about where this topic fits in to the large landscape of DA work. Additionally problematizing the issue is the focus on heteronormative (sexuality as reducible to heterosexuality) research which depends on reducing linguistic and language habits to a set of rules where these topics are often times ignored. As well, much of the research is still stuck in conversations around larger, more generalizable, data sets with quantitative analysis that seeks to normalize language into tidy neat packages. Furthermore, since most work in sexuality and language come from a Western perspective, there is a great need to studies that examine the nuances of sexuality and language from non-Western participant. King (2008) was one of the first western researchers to examine sexuality and language in Korean participants, and he shows how the marginalization of his participants in Korean society based on their sexuality limited their exposure to the LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning (henceforth: queer)) communities that are fairly common in Western society, shaping their experiences into something not quite resembling Western notions of sexuality.

What this study hopes to accomplish then is to examine the discussion of sexuality and language in a CDA framework focused on identity as a discourse marker of language; further exploring King's work where the participant is both able to tell their story. What's more, I hope in the future to explore other studies of sexual identity in current Korean studies to see how King's notion of marginalization and limited access to queer communities affects language use in practice.

Literature Surrounding Language and Sexual Identity

It is important to first of all examine some of the recent literature surrounding language and sexuality before moving further. King (2008) conducted a study in which he provides a qualitative analysis of three South Korean gay males to see how they use English in naturalistic settings. While he does not have a concrete set of research questions, he explores the impact of Western-centric heteronormative thought on the real-life interactions of his participants. The participants themselves had widely different views on what it meant to be gay in Korea, and they all described the impact that traditional Korean culture had on them expressing their sexuality. All of the participants agreed that Korean culture did not encourage relationships that went outside the 'traditional' man-woman relationships, and many of them were using English as a means of finding community from without their society.

King uses the term 'imagined communities' to describe how they interacted with other speakers of English to build their social networks. Anderson (1991) was the first to describe what an imagined community is, and while he focuses on the nation-state as an example, King uses it to describe the gay community in Korea as existing only in the minds of his participant, with the intent on joining the community to express solidarity (even if they don't know any other gay males in South Korea). So, the queer community in Korea, such as it is, is more of a social construct, relying on poststructuralism to describe the amorphous nature of a community that is an idea, and not reality. I focused on King's study the most as it is similar to mine, but the methodology relies mostly on narrative inquiry and not CDA as total package of analysis. I therefore seek to further this work into the realm of CDA studies.

Sexuality in Western Cultures

Many studies have also examined the discourse surrounding sexuality in queer communities (Eckert & McConnell, 1992; Jacobs, 1996; Blackburn, 2005; Huffaker & Calvert 2005, for example), but much of this work focuses on the qualitative nature of language to provide generalizable results surrounding the words and intonations used in queer communities, and not necessarily on using sexuality as a marker to describe language in use. Bucholtz and Hall (2004) noticed this in their research and call for a theoretical "desire centered view" of identity (similar to Cameron and Kulick's) that takes into consideration social subjectivity which would describe identity as not something objective (free from individual influence), but highly contingent upon the desire of a subject to belong to a certain group.

The idea of subjectivity brings to mind the theory of 'otherness', defined by Duff and Uchida (1997) as objective stereotypes about identity. Otherness would then conflict with the subjectivity that Bucholtz and Hall describe, where come of the current research seeks to define language and sexuality as a set of rules that whole groups would fall into, while ignoring the individual and his or her desires. This research could be described as part of the academic or linguistic capital that researchers have when defining queer communities, described by Bourdieu (1991) (in terms of sexuality) as "the adoption of the dominant style is seen as a denial of social and sexual identity, a repudiation of the virile virtues which constitute class membership" (p. 88). However, in the queer community, linguistic capital could take a very different form, with members of the community using those infections, words, and pronunciations in order to fit in to the larger queer community.

While Bucholtz and Hall see current trends in language and sexuality studies as focusing on sexuality removed from desire and call for a focus on social subjectivism, King calls for a type of 'strategic essentialism' (p. 235) that seeks to examine sexuality as a marker of identity, but not reflective of the participant's identity as a whole. Foucault (1978) would agree somewhat with this notion as he sees identity as "neither uniform not stable" (p. 100). But how can researchers approach the issue of sexuality and language without becoming essentialist, and also taking into consideration the continual shifts and evolution of identity? Norton (2000) defines identity as immersed in language and society, and as one changes, so does the other. So, as a reflexive statement, sexuality becomes but one lens to view identity, and therefore language and society.

Sexuality in South Korea

Describing the current state of views of sexuality in South Korea is somewhat difficult to do. Most research still approaches the topic with Western ideology and is difficult to escape, which is why this literature review examines several Western studies. Dong-Jin (2001) provides a good start for reading about public and governmental views of sexuality, but since his article much has changed, with popular culture (movies, TV shows, and music) contributing toward less dogmatic stances. Despite the emergence of popular stars and icons who are now 'out' (revealing their sexuality) much of the discussion on sexuality has had a negligible impact on laws and Confucian views on what constitutes a family. Dong-Jin postulates that the absence of laws and public discourse on sexuality is simple a part of a bigger pattern that ignores homosexuality as having little to no impact on day to day life (p. 67). One thing to note is that while discrimination against homosexuality became illegal in 2006, it was later repealed in 2007 after interest groups protested the law. As a result, both Dong-Jin and King notice that the lack of attention queer communities in Korea receive has led to an import of Western thoughts and ideas by the fledgling queer communities to grasp on to a culture that is lacking in South Korea. They both also comment that many of the Western words used to describe homosexuality in the West (gay, butch, femme, etc) are used by these communities and are now part of the standard lingo used to describe each other (p. 76). Aside from Western words, social media has also played a large role in shaping these communities, with sites like buddy79.com and queerkorea.org offering both English and Korean functions to their members. In fact, it is easy now to find gay bars and people who adopt Western ideologies as a means of expressing their self.

Despite this, Dong-Jin, through his research found that there is still a high amount of dissatisfaction with queer communities in South Korea. Most of this stems from the fact that being homosexual in Korea is still viewed by many as being deviant. A poll conducted in 2013 found that 39% of South Koreans believed homosexuality could be accepted in South Korean society; compared with only 18% in 2007 (Ipsos, 2013). While this might show an upward trend, it still reveals that there is still quite a way to go with acceptance of queer rights. Most of this still stems from the fact that South Koreans are expected to marry and have children, and even those who are homosexual are pressed into doing this to continue their family line. Also, the queer communities in South Korea are still relatively small, and many do not wish to participate as it might ostracize them from others. Dong-Jin says that this might be a result of the Confucian ideals of the East competing with Western ideals of queer right; a social conundrum where it is easier to be 'stereotypical' than to try and create or join an queer community (p. 78).

Outside of laws, public perception, and the conflict between Western and Eastern thought, there is also a lack of Korean research from universities of higher education which focus on homosexuality. Most of the research that I found was written by South Korean with the intent of publishing in Western journals, while Korean language research is difficult if not impossible to find because of pay walls and the need to have a Korean ID to access many Korean educational journal sites. So we are stuck with research usually set in a Western paradigm that ignores Eastern thought. Many questions remain then of how to define sexuality in South Korea. How to those on the spectrum of sexuality perceive themselves? How do they connect with and join groups when there is such a push-back from society? I believe these questions will help to show just how difficult it is to research a topic without much empirical evidence to rely on.

Defining Identity

I find myself drawn to Norton's (2013) notion of identity as bound in relations of power, continually in flux and shifting depending on time and place. By focusing on sexuality in particular, I noticed how much power does come into play in language choice and expression of self, either hiding sexuality from the participant's Korean friends or family, or bragging about dates in English to his Western friends. Overall, I felt that the informal interview helped to, as King (2008) notes; encourage relating experience with the language in practice. I therefore use the term identity 'marker' in this case as the instances within the discourse that relate to the participants sexuality.

Benwell and Stokoe (2006) would define this identity broadly as "an 'essential', cognitive, socialized, phenomenological or psychic phenomenon that governs human action" (p. 3). This identity may be hidden from public view, or come out when around certain people are around to show their 'real' self. This identity would also determine what they do in certain situations; for example someone might draw on their religious identity when attending a synagogue, but then go out for pizza with graduate friends afterwards, drawing on their identity as a scholar or friend while the religious might take back seat. So, I view identity as constructed differently in different spaces, and should find that the social makeup of different groups will determine which identity is expressed.

Sexual Identity

Jackson (2014) says that sexual identity is "how one thinks of oneself in terms of who one is sexually and romantically attracted to" (p. 147). This definition, while simplistic, is used by scholars in the field when describing sexuality. However, it can go further than simple romantic attraction, and argue (as have others) that sexuality is more of a spectrum, where some individuals might not feel sexual attraction at all. This definition then *is* too simplistic, and adds more to the heteronormative view of sexuality as a dichotomy (i.e. 'normal' vs. homosexual) than something which is very individualistic and part of a changing identity.

Others offer a more nuanced definition with Cameron and Kulick (2003) defining sexuality as not simply romantic attraction, but also; what they desire to do, how they define themselves, and the cultural and historical practices of which they are a part of (p. 8-9). King (2008) also takes their view of sexuality, but also finds that it is important to examine how the English words used in the queer community go across the Pacific and are used in Korean queer communities as well. Words like queer, gay, and lesbian are used by these communities as a way of identifying themselves, with the native Korean words still holding some negative connotations. King looks as sexuality through a poststructuralist lens where sexual identity is only one small part of the identities of his participants, continually evolving as they socialize with others (p. 232-233). So words that still might hold some negative connotations in the West (i.e. queer (until recently), dyke, homo) are used by Koreans to describe themselves, and are used much more freely by the Korean queer communities. My own lens then views sexual identity as but one small discourse marker (defined as words being said connected to the larger whole) to examine the larger phenomenon of English use by Koreans as they explore their sexuality in conversation.

Theoretical Perspective

Theoretically, I situated my study within a CDA framework (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002), seeking to understand how sexual identity is apparent in the spoken conversation with my participant. As the study is situated around one conversation, I felt that this framework fits in the best with this case study. Phillips and Jorgensen describe CDA as "empirical study of the relations between discourse and social and cultural developments in difference social domains" (p. 60). They also provides five common features that researchers use to approach CDA work (p. 5):

1. The character of social and cultural processes and structures is partly linguistic-discursive
2. Discourse is both constitutive and constituted
3. Language use should be empirically analyzed within its social contexts
4. Discourse functions ideologically
5. Critical research

In this study I examine the spoken conversation in an informal interview as discourse data that can be applied to similar studies that examine sexual identity as a discourse marker, therefore staying mostly within features 3-5, but also pays attention the linguistic function of discourse markers.

Method

Research Questions

The purpose of this case study is to explore the markers of sexual identity in the English language use of a South Korean male through a CDA of a semi-structured interview discussing his language regarding his sexuality. I pose the following questions in order to guide my data collection and analysis:

1. How does the participant use his languages (Korean or English) in expressing his sexual identity in conversation?
2. Does the participant's discourse markers match up with the social and cultural realities current studies explore related to sexuality in South Korea?

Participant

This case study follows one participant, Kris (pseudonym), who identifies as a homosexual male living in South Korea. I met Kris during my time spent in South Korea as a translator and administrator for public schools in Seoul. I have remained in contact with him for the past four years since my departure from Korea on social media and through emails. Kris came out to me several years ago and I was fascinated with the pressure that he felt from Korean society to remain 'in the closet' (hiding his sexuality) from his family and many of his close friends. I also noticed that he was more likely to come out to people from Western countries, and he maintained several relationships only with Westerners both in Korea and when he traveled overseas. He is now 27 years old and still living with his family near Seoul, having just come back from an internship in Australia, with plans to return overseas in the near future. He graduated with a BA in Romanian and Linguistics after a two year break to fulfill his military service, and has also traveled to many European countries. Aside from Korean and English, he also speaks Romanian and Italian.

Data Samples

Since I am interested in examining sexuality as an identity marker, I conducted a semi-structured interview (in English) with my participant in the Fall of 2014 through Skype. I then transcribed the interview using Jeffersonian Transcription, paying special attention to intonation and inflection, as well as the pauses between questions and responses, as well as pauses in the responses themselves. During the interview, I focused on the languages he speaks, as well as which language he felt more comfortable with in expressing his sexuality. Since language and culture cannot be removed from each other, we also discussed which countries he has lived in and his experiences in expressing his sexuality in each of these cultures.

Analysis

In order to conduct discourse analysis using CDA I focused on the relevant excerpts from transcript data from the interviews and grouped them into thematic units using Creswell's (2008) method of thematic analysis. As I compiled and analyzed my data, I took note of the following in relation to sexuality as an identity marker:

- How sexuality is expressed in English throughout both texts
- How images and postings reflected sexual identity
- How the participant negotiated his 'Korean-ness' while living in Western countries
- How the participant defined his own sexual identity
- How the participant negotiated relationships; and
- How the participant described English as a language of power

I present my findings around four wide-ranging themes that I noticed in the data; 1) The role of language choice in expressing sexuality; 2) expressing sexuality in different cultures; 3) making relationships; and 4) language and power.

The Role of Language in Expressing Sexuality

To begin, I examined how Kris talked generally about using different language when expressing his sexuality within the interview. Overall, I found that while Kris was a native speaker of Korean, he felt most comfortable talking about his sexuality in English, both in the language and in Western cultures, which shows that speaking English for him acts as an identity marker when showing his 'real' self to others who also spoke English or were in Western cultures. I was especially interested in how he navigated his sexuality when talking about his Korean family and acquaintances; hiding it from them and being very explicit that his sexuality was a 'taboo' subject that he would never bring up in Korean or with Koreans with whom he was not familiar.

I first brought up the topic of languages when expressing sexuality further into the informal interview, making sure that he felt the conversation was a safe space where he could talk without fear of really expressing his sexuality. In the conversation then, sexuality as identity didn't really come up until later on until we both felt comfortable with each other and how we would engage in a frank conversation surrounding, what was for him, a topic that is continually shifting and changing depending on the language and culture. Therefore, language expressing sexuality in an Eastern context is supported by the existing literature from King (2008) and Dong-Jin (2001) as exemplified by Extract 1.

Extract 1

In regards to sexuality:

[00:27:37.02] Kris: Hmm:: (1.0) well:: (1.0) >Ok so speaking about like< (.) uh (1.0) like (.) sexuality ↑
(1.0)
[00:27:48.04] Interviewer: Hmmhmm.
(.5)
[00:27:48.04] Kris: In Korean (.) is kind of like ↓ taboo in society (.)↓ You don't= you rarely talk about these things
(1.0)
[00:27:54.13] Interviewer: Ok
(.5)
[00:27:55.13] Kris: But in English↑ I think that it's much more common and people talk about (.) talk about it much more freely ↑ (.) So (.) um (1.0) yea (.) so those are (.) topics (.)< that's kind of> (.) um (.) That I rarely talk in Korean ↑
(1.0)
[00:28:11.28] Interviewer: Ok

(.5)
[00:28:12.29] Kris:> I don't really talk about like sexes or like sexuality or like someone's sex Like< (.) >Or you know just anything related to sex in Korean< (.) it's just really: (.) I don't really talk about it.[Like]
[00:28:22.19] Interviewer: [Ok]
(.5)
[00:28:22.19] Kris: So: (.) Yea >but in English I think that I have< had uh (.) lot of (.) chances to speak about them ↑ when I'm with my friends or [whatever]
[00:28:34.12] Interviewer: [Right]
[00:28:34.12] Kris: when I'm meeting someone (.) So (.) yea (.) I think that's (.5) the difference ↓

In Extract 1, Kris constructs language as indicative about what he will or won't talk about in Korean versus English. He follows with a general example about what he will not talk about specifically in Korean, saying that sexuality is a taboo subject and not up for discussion. However, when speaking English he feels as though he can talk about this topic with friends. The word 'taboo' was used later on in other parts of the conversation, always when talking about what not to say in Korean specifically, while the word 'blunt' was used more often when talking about English when discussing sexuality. Also, it is interesting to note the use of the pronoun 'you' when talking about Korean when expressing sexuality, and 'I' when talking about English, perhaps indicative of giving general advice to the interviewer about how 'proper' Koreans should act, or how a visitor to the country should act when talking about sexuality. Throughout the interview data the theme of using the pronoun 'you' when Kris described sexuality in Korea was most apparent, showing how he hid his own sexuality from others, and when using English he used the pronoun 'I', reflecting his non-hidden, perhaps more 'real' identity to Western speakers of English.

Further exploration of the link between languages and expressing sexuality were apparent earlier on in the conversation, as noted in Extract 2.

Extract 2

[00:21:00.22] Kris: Um (.) I think that um (.) because Korean and English ↑ (.) these are two completely different language↑. So (.) when I:: uh (.) learned English (.5) it kind of ↑gave me the feeling that I can (.) express things really (.) straight-forward ↑(.5) without really beating around bush=Because in Korean (.5) I think ↑ >it's kind of like like a little< bit social (.) atmosphere or whatever because um there too many (.) polite forms (.) and too many different ways of saying stuff in [Korean]
[00:21:36.27] Interviewer: [Right].
(1.0)
[00:21:37.07] Kris: So times it gets really difficult for me to speak the (.) speak the things I want ↑ when I'm speaking with the person that> I just met= or like when I'm speaking with< (.) like(.) older:: (.) guys or whatever
(1.0)
[00:21:51.28] Interviewer: Yeah
(1.0)
[00:21:52.04] Kris: So (.) but English(.) it's just simple. Like (.) you just say:: (.) >I mean of course< there are also polite ways of saying (.) things in English (.) Like please sir (.) ma'am (.) whatever (.) But (.) like other↑ than that you just say (.) the on- you know (.) There's no like (.) You don't really have to twist it around. ↓ It's just the same I guess. So::
(1.0)
[00:22:16.24] Interviewer: Ok.
(1.0)

[00:22:16.24] Kris: Um (.) yea so I think that it's kind of: (.) I (.) like (.) I guess I learned (.) the way (.) I want to speak things (.) much more um (.) um (.5) bluntly↑ I[guess] ↑

In extract 2, Kris compares English and Korean specifically. When describing Korean, he focuses more on Korean society as a means of expressing sexuality, while English is more about the words. Politeness studies in Korean is a major theme of research, where verb endings in speech determine the level of politeness when talking to others, whereas English does not have this linguistic feature. The use of the pronoun 'you' in this context when describing English compares the interviewer's speech to Kris's speech, describing the cultural differences of English. The use of the words 'straight-forward' and 'bluntly' further help to show the differences between English and Korean, with words like 'polite' and 'difficult' used to describe talking about sexuality in a Korean context. Therefore, the use of English in expressing sexuality and identity are more apparent and open than expressing the same concepts in Korean, further matching up with existing literature. Extract 3 confirms this sentiment as seen below.

Extract 3

[00:34:39.00] Interviewer: Yeah (.) So as far↑ as expressing your (.) your sexuality then (.) which language and culture do you feel most comfortable doing it in? ↓
(1.5)
[00:34:47.08] Kris: Um (.) I think that English is more: (.) is (.) is really easy ↑ (.) Cause (.5) I don't know like (.) I think that (.) like (.) >I don't know<= For me I (.) use English the most whenever I: (.) talking about this stuff (.) this stuff↑
(.)
[00:35:09.16] Interviewer: Ok
(1.0)
[00:35:09.16] Kris: I rarely↑ talk about this when I was speaking Korean or when (.) I don't know like in other languages ↑ (.) So I think that English much more (.) easier (.) and comfortable for me to talk about my sexuality.

Extract 4 is interesting when examining inflections and intonations. When speaking about English, Kris talks more quickly and freely, with words like 'easy' and 'stuff' (in regard to sexuality) rising in intonation, reflecting that English is indeed more comfortable for him to speak about the topic of sexuality. However, when talking about Korean when expressing sexuality, the word 'rarely' is highly inflected and the intonation rises, symbolizing how Korean is not used to discuss sexuality. As well, the speed with which he talks about Korean language and expressing sexuality is much slower, with his response coming quicker after the question by the interviewer, showing how it is imperative that Korean is not conducive to expressing sexuality.

Overall, the data surrounding sexuality and language in use shows that English is more favorable when expressing sexuality, whether the speaker was in Korea with English speaking friends, or outside of Korea with English speaking friends. As such, the use of language in different cultures became the next topic we discussed.

Expressing sexuality in different cultures

The next part of the informal interview focused on expressions of sexuality both inside and outside of Korea. Much of what I found is that Kris's experience matches up with what King (2008) describes as a dissatisfaction with the queer community in Korea (p. 241), and what Dong-Jin describes as the borrowed culture from the West which helps to shape the imagined queer community in South Korea (p. 70). Extract 4 revolves around expressing sexuality in South Korea.

Extract 4

[00:29:37.00] Interviewer: Alright (.) What was there like someone you would tell (.) like would you (.) a-as far as language goes then (.) were there certain groups of people (.) who you would tell↑(.) and certain groups that you wouldn't tell about your sexuality or would you just kind of (.) only told specific people?
(1.0)
[00:29:48.27] Kris: Uh:: (.) I:: =need (.) definitely would never (.) Like I don't really talk like (.) I would never and ever (.) tell my sexuality to someone (.) like elders↑ in Korea (.) Korean elders ↑ (.) Because they are: really conservative (.5) But I usually ↑>talk about my sexuality now really freely< <when I’m with my friends> (.) W-With my Korean friends=Like if (.) like if (.) they are really close to me↑
(.5)
[00:30:20.07] Interviewer: Ok.
(1.0)
[00:30:21.21] Kris: So yea (.) All of my: um (.) definitely like all of my close friends in Korea they know (.) now

Extract 4 focuses on the need for politeness in Korean culture, and how the concept of sexuality is not spoke about to ‘elders’. The significance of this word, inflected and rising in intonation in each use, is important as shows the generational gap between Kris and the rest of the imagined Korean society. While not all elders in Korea embrace the ‘conservative’ nature that Kris describes, it is important for him to distinguish between them and those of his generation, who might be accepting of his sexuality. Also, he puts heavy emphasis on ‘never and ever’, repeating ‘never’ when talking about expressing sexuality in South Korea, slowing down his speech with pauses, but when talking about friends, speeding up his speech. This is noticeable in much of the interview, when he feels more ‘free’ to express his sexuality he usually speeds up his speech.

The next extract compares his initial traveling overseas, and how he was able to express his sexual identity in other countries.

Extract 5

[00:31:50.00] Interviewer: Alright (.) Alright (.) yea (.5) Um (.) so <when you’re talking> uh:: (.) about your sexuality then= ho-how was it different when you traveled overseas as compared to being in Korea? ↓(.) Did people seem to care more or less= or were you able to express yourself differently in different languages when you talked about it? ↑
(1.0)
[00:32:09.28] Kris: Uhm: (.) When I was in Europe (.) it was (.5) way much more easier↑ (.) um (.) to be just open↑(.) But >like in Romania when I was in Romania< (.) I (.) I didn’t (.) feel like it was kind of like an open (.) or like gay friendly society at all↑(.) Because (.) <I think that > (.) it’s kind of related with (.) countries (.) um (.) economy status↑
(0.5)
[00:32:36.20] Interviewer: Ok
(.5)

[00:32:37.05] Kris: If you: (.) are in=I mean the richer (.) they're (.) they more (.) they accept you more ↓ (.) I think (.) that's how I think↓

In Extract 5, Kris talks about traveling to Europe and Romania. From his speech, he constructs sexuality as reflective of a countries economic status. Where most countries in Europe that he traveled to (Spain, Italy, and France) were more accepting of his sexual identity, whereas places like Romania, with a lower economic status (as he described it), were less accepting. Extrapolating from this speech, Kris then is equating South Korea as a country with a developing economy, and therefore less accepting as more prosperous countries. The community he imagines then a one where more money equals greater acceptance. Paying attention to the inflections he uses when describing Romania ('all', 'status'), he appears to question his own thoughts, suggesting that what he says might not be true, but it is what he feels to be true; this is also supported by the heavy emphasis on 'I' at the end of the excerpt.

Moving onward, Excerpt 6 provides a glimpse at how Kris felt to visit perhaps the most gay friendly city in the world, San Francisco.

Extract 6

[00:33:52.21] Interviewer: Alright (.) >So when you traveled to San Fran< (.) what was that like? (1.5)
[00:33:54.18] Kris: It was (.) uh (.) like (.5) <Like I felt I could (.) really be who I am> (.) ↓That's (.) um (.) the best: (.) >I don't know like how to express <=I think I could be much more who I am↑(.) Like (.) without thinking anything like (1.0) I don't know (1.0) I don't know=I felt much more free(.) [Laughs]

Excerpt 6 is interesting as it has speech which is sped up through most of the response to the interviewer's question about being in San Francisco. This seems to match up with other instances of speech in the transcript where when Kris feels comfortable with a topic, he will speed up his response, with less pauses. Also, he laughs at the end, similar to how he addresses similar questions about being in Western countries where he could "(feel) much more free". Other phrases seem to confirm this, such as "really be who I am", and the use of the pronoun 'I' seems to indicate ownership of his sexuality in this context; compared to similar excerpts where describing sexuality in Korea seems to focus mostly on the second person. This seems to be a theme in the data as well, as I followed Kris from his arrival in Australia to when he left to go back to Korea.

Overall, expressions of sexual identity seem to be much easier for Kris to express when he is in a Western culture, supported both by the interview data and the data. This seems to match up with the literature from King (2008) and Dong-Jin (2001) when they found that their participants were more likely to express their sexuality when traveling. This brings us to the next theme in the data, making relationships with others.

Making relationships

The next collection of data focuses on making relationships with others, something King (2008) notices in his data as important since all of his participants tried to make relationships with others from Western Countries.

Throughout the interview, Kris details who he made and maintained relationships with, explaining why he made them and whom he made them with as seen in Extract 7.

Extract 7

[00:37:43.02] Interviewer: So wh- why do you think that is?= That you (.) you only had um: (.) boyfriends from: (.) a different countries and not your own? ↑
(2.5)
[00:37:48.24] Kris: I:: (.) think that (.) I don't' know=It feels (1.0) I (.) I mean there are many guys that I= >not many but like< (.) there were some guys that I (.) uh (.) that I had a crush on (.) in Korea↓ (.) I mean they were Koreans=But like (.)I would never imagine myself like (.) dating↑ with them because (.) first it's just so difficult in Korea=Second (.) I mean (.) you're not going to get married anyways (.) so what's the point of doing it? ↓

In Extract 7, Kris explains why none of his relationships were with other Koreans, but instead were with males from Western, mostly English speaking countries. Of note here is his explanation of why he would not date someone from Korea, with the words 'in' and 'dating' highly inflected, suggesting that the idea of getting into a relationship with someone in Korea would be problematic. This is supported from Dong-Jin's (2001) explanation that the laws in South Korea are of such a nature that those in the queer community find it hard to build relations with others as the Confucian model of family is ingrained in the culture. While Kris had several 'crushes' on other Koreans, he felt he could not pursue them as ultimately the law would not allow him to get married and form a strong and lasting relationship. Also, Kris's choice in language (English) and culture (Western) where he did seek out relationships pinpoint the need for Kris to find acceptance in his relationships outside of the Korean community at large. The idea of English being able to express more closely Kris's 'real' identity can be explained through his thoughts of English as a language of power.

Language and Power

Through the interview data, Kris was able to explain why he felt that English was a language where he could express himself in ways that Korean could not, showing how very real to him the conflicting identities he felt as a gay male living in South Korea. Extract 8 comes from near the end of the interview.

Extract 8

[00:40:18.12] Kris: I think it's because (.) um (.5) English is kind of like a global language right now and (.) at this point (.) Like everyone speaks English wherever you go= It's like the language you can (.) communicate with anyone in the world ↑ (.) You (.) so (.) that's number one (.) And second I think that (.) America: (.) and: (.) well back in the past (.) well (.) the UK was kind of like the (.) the leading nation (.) his-historically ↓
(1.0)
[00:40:47.07] Interviewer:[Right]
[00:40:47.07] Kris: [But] now (.) America is (.) um (.) the one who is leading the world↑(.) so (.) um (.) I think that their: (.) economy (.) uh (.) status is definitely affecting the reason why people (.) study English ↑ and why people are obsessed with (.) um (.) speaking it in Korea and using it (.) and: (.) Yea (.) I think that's the (.) main [reason]

Extract 8, while not focusing on sexuality in language use, shows why Kris thinks that English is a language of power, both within and without Korea. Once again, he mentions that English use is tied up with economic capital, and that those who speak English are better able to position themselves in jobs and society. His emphasis on 'English' near the end seems to put the word above speaking Korean, although the word itself is not spoken. This also points out once again that Kris feels as though Korea might be lower economically speaking, and that is why so many people try to learn English in Korea. Perhaps most interesting, while not explicitly stated in the data, is that if Korea gains a higher economic status, then maybe sexuality might not be as big as an issue as it is now as the culture of the English language is most often imported with the language with those who use it in daily practice.

Discussions and Implications

As with any research, the position of the researcher brings subjective realities to how he or she analyzes and orients themselves to the discourse. In this case, reading the literature surrounding queer issues in South Korea, definitions of sexuality, and trying to understand what it means to be queer in eastern cultures when in fact I am a straight identifying male from the West. This case study is well outside any current research I have conducted and therefore my own lens regarding gender studies is still quite new although I consider myself part of the queer movement. Therefore, this study has resulted in much introspection and while I feel I am able to understand the issues around sexuality in South Korea, it is something that is so removed from my own life that I hope I am able to present it in such a way that does more good than harm.

Across the data, I focused on expressions of sexuality within the interview data in an attempt to establish which language led Kris to express his 'real' identity, both inside and outside his home country. How he constructed his own subjective reality matched up nicely with the other very few studies into sexuality in the context of Korea, helping to support those claims. Kris's definition of his sexuality through the interview data verified this as well, and suggests that sexuality is most certainly defined differently in language and culture.

As far as the implications of this study, it is related to those who might be interested in gender studies, as well as those who seek to understand how students or participants in a study express themselves differently on an online environment by examining identity markers in a subjective manner which allows them to see how it evolves through time and space. For example, Bucholtz and Hall (2004) pay attention to the desire-centered view of sexuality, which suggests that sexuality is not something then that is as easily defined as simple romantic attraction to another, but is also contingent on language, society, and desire to fit into a community (real or imagined).

Therefore, researchers should take a subjective approach to the subject of sexuality and realize that it should be defined by the individual, not as an objective 'truth' of stable identity. The chore of future research then would be to examine constructs of identity as being situated through the desire, of course, of the individual, but also examining how that desire shifts through language selection and use in context. Additionally, if the focus on sexuality serves but as one identity marker, it is also fair, and expected, that the opportunity for examining other identity markers in similar studies would help to construct in what ways sexuality is challenged or normalized in others instances of speech or text. As a final point, what this study finds then is that the interpretation of sexuality is bound in the subjective (lived experience of the individual), while always competing with the presumably objective truth of social and cultural practices.

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Estas rimas son para ti: Exploring Learners Comprehension of Spanish Language Music Containing Dialectical Features

Avizia Yim Long and Megan Harsh

Abstract

This paper reports the findings of a study that examined native English-speaking learners' comprehension of Spanish language music containing Caribbean dialectal features. Twenty-one learners enrolled in 300- and 400-level Spanish content courses at a large, Midwestern public university in the US participated in this study. Each participant completed the following five tasks: (1) listening task, (2) listening task difficulty questionnaire, (3) vocabulary familiarity task, (4) Spanish language proficiency test, and (5) background questionnaire. The listening task contained short clips of Spanish language music, several of which contained dialectal features present in Caribbean speech and music. The results revealed that comprehension accuracy was very low on the listening task, and listening task items containing dialectal features were more difficult to comprehend for learners. Additionally, listening task scores were significantly correlated with knowledge of vocabulary items present in the music lyrics.

Keywords: dialectal features, listening comprehension, music, second language, Spanish

Introduction

Listening in a second language (L2) represents a multicomponential process that, as pointed out by Carrier (1999), involves two important dimensions. The first is a psycholinguistic dimension, of which previous research has focused on factors such as memory and speech rate in the comprehension of L2 speech (e.g., Call, 1985; Conrad, 1989). The second is a sociolinguistic dimension, of which previous research has examined factors such as topic familiarity (e.g., Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994), dialect familiarity (e.g., Schmidt, 2009), speaker accent or dialect (e.g., Eisenstein & Berkowitz, 1981; Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta, & Balasubramanian, 2005; Wilcox, 1978), and individual characteristics of the listener (e.g., anxiety: Elkhafaifi, 2005; Yang, 1993; gender: Bacon, 1992; self-confidence: Fujita, 1985). Fewer studies have examined the impact of dialectal or regional features on learners' comprehension of L2 speech (e.g., Major et al., 2005; Schmidt, 2009), and, to the best of our knowledge, no study has investigated L2 learners' comprehension of music that contains dialectal features. In the case of classroom learners, music offers a readily available source of input that reflects a broad range of regional dialects and may demonstrate notable linguistic variation. The dialectal and regional variation that is present in music, however, may be difficult for learners to understand. Thus, including music in the L2 classroom may be challenging as it is unclear what aspects of music may impede learners' comprehension of it. The goal of the present study was to identify the difficulties students of Spanish encounter in their comprehension of music representing Caribbean Spanish dialects.

Background

Sociolinguistic Competence in L2 Learning

It has long been recognized that acquiring and using a L2 involves not only knowledge of grammar and discourse but also sociolinguistic aspects of the L2 (Canale & Swain, 1980). Native speakers vary their language in response to a complex host of linguistic and social factors, several of which they may not even be aware. For example, how one greets their neighbor (e.g., *hello, hey, hi, howdy, sup?,* etc.) may vary as a function of the speech setting (e.g., on campus vs. in church), the interlocutor's age (e.g., child vs. elderly adult), dialectal or regional differences (e.g., New England vs. Southern US states), and so forth (Geeslin & Long, 2014, pp. 3-4). What this means for the L2 learner is that he or she must learn to demonstrate sensitivity to the linguistic and social factors influencing the target language, both in perception and production.

Sociolinguistic competence is equally important for learners' comprehension of music in the L2. As mentioned in the Introduction, music often contains language features that demonstrate variation (i.e., have more than one "correct" way of being expressed). Music artists include such features in their music, either knowingly or unknowingly, to convey a particular message to their listeners. In the case of L2 learners, it is not likely, particularly at early stages of learning, that they "pick up" on the sociolinguistic aspects of that message. Therefore, being aware of and understanding the sociolinguistic variation present in music (much of which is also present in the everyday speech of native speakers) is an important component of L2 learning that the present study seeks to address.

Previous Research on L2 Listening Comprehension

Given the focus of our study on sociolinguistic aspects of L2 listening, in this section we concentrate our review of relevant literature on studies that have examined the sociolinguistic dimension of L2 listening.

Rubin (1994) notes five factors that contribute to the difficulties learners encounter when listening in the L2, two of which involve the sociolinguistic dimension of L2 listening comprehension and are of importance in the present study: listener characteristics and text characteristics.[1] With regard to listener characteristics, previous research has investigated individual characteristics of the learner such as age (e.g., Seright, 1985), anxiety (e.g., Elkhafaifi, 2005; Yang, 1993), gender (e.g., Bacon, 1992), and proficiency in the L2 (see Rubin, 1994, for a review). This strand of research has shown that a host of individual characteristics indeed play a role in L2 listening comprehension, although that role may not be direct (e.g., gender; Bacon, 1992). However, the learner's proficiency in the L2

[1] The other factors outlined by Rubin (1994) in her review of L2 listening comprehension research included interlocutor characteristics, task characteristics, and process characteristics

undoubtedly plays a role in L2 listening comprehension, to the extent that Rubin (1994) recommends that any study of L2 listening examine or assess the effect of L2 proficiency in some way. In the present study, we employ an independent measure of L2 proficiency and statistically examine the relationship between this learner characteristic and performance on the listening task in our study. Another learner characteristic we examine in detail is listening anxiety. Elkhafaifi (2005) reported a correlation between general foreign language anxiety and foreign language listening anxiety for classroom learners of Arabic, and his study also demonstrated an effect for both measures of anxiety on learners' comprehension of spoken Arabic. Following Elkhafaifi (2005), we also examine the effect of learners' listening anxiety to determine whether previous findings can be extended to learners of a distinct target language (i.e., Spanish).

Regarding text characteristics, text type has been shown to affect L2 listening comprehension (Rubin, 1994). For example, Shohamy and Ibar (1991) found that a news broadcast was most difficult for Israeli English as a foreign language (EFL) students to comprehend, followed by a short lecture then a dialogue. Another aspect of the text that has been examined in previous L2 listening comprehension research is the speaker's dialect or accent. An early study by Wilcox (1978) showed that learners of English comprehended the speech of speakers who shared their accent background (Singaporean-Malaysian) easier than native speakers of American English, Received Pronunciation (i.e., British English), or Australian English. Eisenstein and Berkowitz (1981) uncovered that learners of English found the standard variety of American English to be more intelligible than working-class (New York) English and foreign-accented English. Major et al. (2005) similarly found that learners of English found the standard variety of American English to be more comprehensible than regional (e.g., Southern English), ethnic (e.g., African-American Vernacular English), and international (e.g., Indian English) varieties. In a study involving English-speaking learners of Spanish, Schmidt (2009) found that exposure to the Dominican variety of Spanish (after 3 weeks of time abroad in the Dominican Republic) led to improved comprehension of spoken Dominican speech by learners. Dominican Spanish, like many Caribbean dialects of Spanish, shares a host of variable, phonetic phenomena (e.g., /s/ aspiration: *hasta* "until" > [ˈah.ta]; intervocalic /d/ deletion: helado "ice cream" > [e.ˈlao]) that have been suggested to pose challenges in listening comprehension for L2 listeners (Schmidt, 2009). These features, along with others, will be reviewed in detail in the Caribbean Dialectal Features section.

In addition to characteristics of the text and of the listener, it is widely accepted that the knowledge a learner brings to the task of listening also has an impact on L2 listening comprehension. This impact is positive, with previous research showing that background knowledge—be it cultural (e.g., Johnson, 1982), vocabulary (e.g., Johnson, 1982), or topic familiarity (e.g., Bernhardt, 1991; Hammadou, 1990; Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994)—aids comprehension of L2 speech. Schmidt-Rinehart (1994) further demonstrated that topic familiarity and L2 proficiency had an impact on L2 listening comprehension, although she found no interaction of the two variables. Given the importance of background knowledge demonstrated in previous research, the present study also investigates the effects of this factor on learners' comprehension of Spanish language music—specifically, vocabulary knowledge and topic familiarity (in the form of familiarity with music genres).

Previous Research on L2 Listening and Authentic Sources

Few studies have examined the impact of authentic sources of oral input on L2 listening comprehension. Herron (1991) found that guided instruction (over a 15-week period) using unedited radio speech positively aided French learners' comprehension of unedited native speech. With regard to music, scholars have consistently pointed to its potential benefits as a tool for exposing classroom learners to authentic, target language input (e.g., Auger, 2003; Failoni, 1993; Garfinkel, 1972; Geeslin & Long, 2014). For example, Garfinkel (1972) outlined a radio program, which included Spanish language music, and suggested that it could be used to improve learners' listening abilities. Garfinkel also indicated that popular music was included in the program with the hope of enhancing positive attitudes toward Spanish. In line with the goals of the present study, Geeslin and Long (2014) suggest that authentic sources of input such as music be incorporated into classroom instruction to expose learners to a wider variety of input. This input, as pointed out by Geeslin and Long, will demonstrate the variation that is inherent in the L2. What remains to be examined in detail is the extent to which dialectal features affect L2 listening comprehension, and what this means for incorporation of music containing dialectal features the L2 classroom.

Caribbean Dialectal Features

Caribbean Spanish is known for a wide range of dialectal features that distinguish it from other varieties of Spanish (e.g., Mexican Spanish, Argentine Spanish). As mentioned previously, there are a wide variety of variable, phonetic phenomena that may prove difficult to L2 learners in listening comprehension. The first is /s/ weakening, a term that encompasses elision (e.g., *gatos* "cats" > [ˈga.toØ]), aspiration (*gatos* > ˈga.toh]), and reduction of /s/ of any sort in coda position. Previous research has shown that, for L2 learners, accurate identification of /s/ aspiration as *s* increases as experience with Spanish increases, and learners who have been exposed to /s/-weakening dialects are more accurate in identifying the aspirated variant (Schmidt, 2011). Additionally, learners produce weakened variants of /s/ at very low rates (Geeslin & Gudmestad, 2011). Another phonetic phenomenon of relevance is intervocalic /d/ elision or deletion (e.g., *hablado* "spoken" > [ha.ˈβlao]). Of note, both /s/ weakening and intervocalic /d/ elision are not restricted to Caribbean dialects (see Hualde, 2014). A third variable, phonetic phenomenon is related to the broader liquids sound category—namely, lateralization (e.g., *puerta* "door" > [ˈpwel.ta]) and neutralization of /l/ and /ɾ/, for example, to [l] (e.g., *arma* "arms" and *alma* "soul" > [ˈal.ma]) or [y] (e.g., *celda* "cell" > [ˈcey. ða]; Guitart, 1997). A final phenomenon of note is velarization of [n] in word-final position (e.g. *pan* "bread" > [ˈpaŋ]). These variable phonetic features, while not representative of an exhaustive list, are conditioned by a variety of linguistic and social factors in the speech of native Caribbean speakers. The task of the learner then is a complex one because not only is accurate perception of these segments necessary but appropriate comprehension and subsequent interpretation (not under study in the present paper) of speech containing these segments is also key.

The Present Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze the comprehension of Spanish language music by classroom learners. As mentioned previously, Spanish music tends to have variable linguistic and regional features that may be difficult for L2 learners to understand. As a result, incorporating music into the L2 classroom may be challenging, as it is unclear what aspects of music—specifically, what dialectal features—may impede learners' comprehension of music lyrics. Therefore, this study is important because we aim to identify the difficulties students of Spanish encounter in comprehension when listening to Spanish language music from Caribbean Spanish dialects and address what this means for Spanish language learning and pedagogy more broadly. With these goals in mind, the specific research questions guiding this study are:

1. With what accuracy do learners of Spanish enrolled in 300- and 400-level courses comprehend Spanish language music lyrics containing Caribbean dialectal features?
2. What aspects of Spanish music (e.g., presence of specific dialectal features) predict accurate comprehension of music lyrics by learners of Spanish?
3. What learner characteristics (e.g., reported comprehensibility of lyrics, proficiency, reported study abroad experience, etc.) predict accurate comprehension of Spanish music lyrics?

Methodology

Participants

The participants of this study were 21 native English-speaking learners of Spanish enrolled in 300- or 400-level Spanish content courses (linguistics and/or literature) at a large, Midwestern public university. Thirteen of the participants were enrolled in 300-level courses and the other eight were enrolled in 400-level courses. Their average reported age was 19.85 years (SD = 1.42). Seven of the learners were male, and, the other 14 learners were female. Several of the participants reported knowledge of additional languages, such as Portuguese (n = 5), French (n = 1), German (n = 1), and Mandarin (n = 1). Nearly half of the learners also reported spending time abroad in a Spanish-speaking country (n = 9; M = 0.56 years, SD = 0.58 years, Min. = 7 weeks, Max. = 2 years).

Pertinent to the present investigation, nearly all of the learners reported listening to Spanish music, either weekly (n = 6), monthly (n = 5), or a few times a year (n = 8). Only two of the participants reported never listening to Spanish music. The types of Spanish music participants reported listening to included alternative, bachata (n = 1), cumbia (n = 1), folk/traditional (n = 2), hip hop (n = 2), mariachi (n = 1), pop (n = 8), rap (n = 2), reggaeton (n = 5), rock (n = 8), and salsa (n = 1).

Materials

The experimental procedure for this study was largely motivated by Schmidt (2009)—who also examined listening comprehension of dialectal features by L2 Spanish learners—and consisted of the following five tasks: (1) listening task, (2) listening task difficulty questionnaire, (3) vocabulary familiarity task, (4) Spanish language proficiency test, and

(5) background questionnaire.

Listening task. The listening task consisted of 43 short clips of music, five of which were practice items (and not included in data analysis). Each clip contained eight total words or less to control for phrase length of each task item. For this task, participants were instructed to listen to each music clip, write down word-for-word what they heard in Spanish, and then translate it into English (see Figure 1). Participants had to listen to each music clip two times before the task allowed them to advance to the next item. Following the translation into English, participants were instructed to rate the comprehensibility (i.e., how easy to understand) of each music clip on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*easy*) to 5 (*difficult*). The listening task was self-paced, and participants recorded all of their responses on a separate answer sheet provided by the researchers (see Appendix A). Additionally, the clips included in the listening task (including practice clips) were organized by artist into four distinct sections. Each section began with a 10 s clip from a song by the music artist "featured" in that section. This aspect of the design of the task was carried out so that participants would have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the genre of each musical artist before listening to the clips of that artist for comprehension, thereby addressing the potential influence of music genre on listening comprehension.

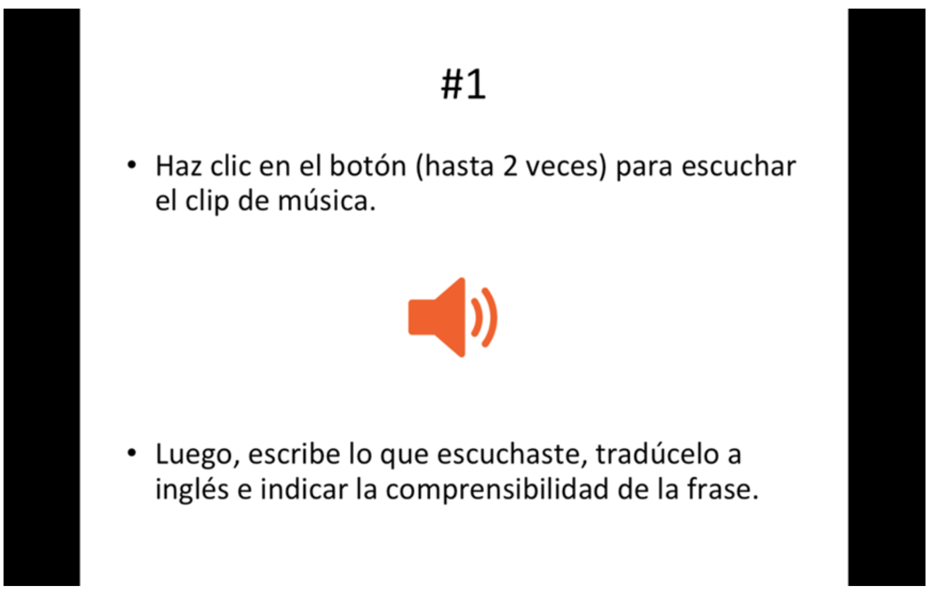

Figure 1. Screenshot of listening task item

With regard to the music included in the listening task, four distinct artists were featured in the listening task: Calle 13, Elvis Crespo, Buena Vista Social Club, and Gente de Zona. These artists were selected because they are representative of three popular Caribbean music genres—merengue, reggaeton, and son. Table 1 outlines the artists and genres corresponding to each set of items on the listening task, as well as the song titles from which music clips were sampled and the dialectal features present in those clips (a more specific list of which features presented in each individual item of the task can be found in Table 3 of the Results section). There were also a number of items from each artist that did not contain the specific dialectal features under study but were included as filler items (marked as "none" in the dialectal features column of Table 1). Finally, three of the items on the listening task contained two dialectal features: one item by Buena Vista Social Club, one by Elvis Crespo, and one by Gente de Zona.

Table 1. Overview of listening task items and examples

Listening task items	**Artist (genre)**	**Song titles (item number)**	**Dialectal features (*n* items)**	**Example item**
1-8	Calle 13 (reggaeton)	*Persiguido* (items 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8) *Adentro* (item 2) *Muerte en Hawaii* (items 3 and 6)	*para* reduction (2) /d/ elision (2) /s/ reduction (3) none (1)	Item 2 *Estas rimas son pa' ti* "These rhymes are for you" (*para* reduction)
9-16	Elvis Crespo (merengue)	*Pegaito suavecito* (items 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, and 16*) *Conmigo contigo* (items 11 and 14)	*para* reduction (1) /d/ elision (2) /s/ reduction (3) *para* reduction + /s/ reduction (1) lateralization (1)	Item 13 *Que tú mueves tu cuelpo* "That you move your body" (lateralization in *cuerpo*)
17-26	Buena Vista Social Club (son)	*El carretero*; *De camino* (items 17 and 18*) *El cuarto* (items 25 and 26) *Guateque campesino* (items 23 and 24) *Candela* (items 19, 20, 21, and 22)	*para* reduction (2) /d/ elision (2) /s/ reduction (1) /d/ elision + /s/ reduction (1) lateralization (1) none (3)	Item 26 *Yo trabajo sin reposo* "I work without rest" (none)
27-38	Gente de Zona (reggaeton)	*Habanero* (items 34*, 36, 37, and 38) *El cabaret* (items 27 and 28) *Ella tiene el pelo largo* (items 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 35)	*para* reduction (1) /d/ elision (2) /s/ reduction (3) *para* reduction + /s/ reduction (1) none (5)	Item 32 *Ella te dice cuando está enamoraa* "She tells you when she's in love" (/d/ elision in *enamorada*)

Note. * indicates an item that contained two dialectal features.

Listening task difficulty questionnaire. Following completion of the listening task, participants completed a listening task difficulty questionnaire. This questionnaire asked them to rate, on a Likert scale from 1 (*easy*) to 5 (*difficult*), how difficult they thought the listening task was and how long they think it took them to complete it. These two measures of perceived task difficulty were incorporated into the design of the study following Baralt (2010) as two independent ways of assessing potential difficulty associated with completing the listening task. At the end of this questionnaire, participants were also asked if they recognized any of the songs, artists, or dialectal features present in the listening task.

Vocabulary familiarity task. Participants were instructed to rate their familiarity with 20 words found in the music clips included on the listening task. Ratings were conducted using the following scale: 1 = *I have never seen or heard the word before*; 2 = *I have heard the word but do not know its meaning*; 3 = *I know the meaning and can provide an English equivalent*. Space was provided on the task sheet to write the English equivalent of words for which "3" was selected. The vocabulary task did not include every word from each music clip included on the listening task, only vocabulary for which the researchers judged to be potentially challenging for the learner group targeted in the present study. The words included on the vocabulary task, along with their English translations, can be found in Appendix B.

Proficiency test. Participants completed a proficiency test to see if their proficiency level was comparable to other participants at their course level. The test consisted of 25 multiple choice items that fill in blanks of a short story. The story, about a Hispanic female college student, contained familiar vocabulary for students. The proficiency test focused on grammatical structures that are known to be challenging for learners of Spanish (e.g., use of *ser* vs. *estar*, preterit vs. imperfect, indicative vs. subjunctive; Geeslin, 2014). Each blank contained three response options. The first two sentences of the proficiency test are presented as a sample in Appendix C.

Background questionnaire. The background questionnaire elicited basic demographic information from each participant, as well as information about previous Spanish language study (in a classroom setting and abroad), use of Spanish outside of the classroom, knowledge of other languages, perceptions of Spanish language ability, and experience with Spanish language music both inside and outside of the classroom. The background questionnaire also included a foreign language listening anxiety questionnaire, adapted from Elkhafaifi (2005), to examine the relationship between learners' listening anxiety and performance on the listening task. Participants were instructed to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the 18 statements provided (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Items from the listening anxiety portion of the background questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Procedure

Before participating in the study, learners reviewed and provided consent for participation. Participants then completed each task in the order described previously. Participants took 30-40 minutes to complete the listening task and 15-20 minutes to complete the other four tasks. All tasks were completed outside of class in a quiet laboratory. To complete the listening task, participants were instructed to use the headphones provided with the laboratory computer and write their answers on an answer sheet provided by the researchers (see Appendix B). The remaining tasks were also completed on paper and provided by the researchers only after completing the listening task.

Data Coding and Analysis

For the listening task, following Schmidt (2009), participants were given 1 point for each item if their English translation of the Spanish music clip was correct (i.e., comprehension of the entire phrase). Partial credit was not assigned, and participants did not receive points for providing the correct Spanish lyric without also correctly providing its corresponding English translation. In determining what was considered "correct" in the English translations, we focused on content words (e.g., nouns, verbs) more than words that carry less meaning (e.g., articles). For example, for *tengo una vida loca*, if a participant translated this phrase as "I have the crazy life" instead of "I have a crazy life," they were still given 1 point for comprehension of the phrase.

For the vocabulary task, participants' responses were coded as rated ("1," "2," or "3"). However, if participants rated their familiarity of a vocabulary item as "3" (*I know the meaning and can provide an English equivalent*) but provided an incorrect English equivalent, their rating was changed to a "2" (*I have heard the word but do not know its meaning*).

For the proficiency test, participants' responses were coded as correct or incorrect based on the multiple choice option selected. No partial credit was given for this task, as each question contained only one correct answer. Scores were determined by adding the number of correct responses, with a maximum score of 25 points.

Finally, for the listening anxiety section of the background questionnaire, participants' ratings were converted into points to yield a listening anxiety score. The points assigned for ratings of positively worded statements corresponded to the number of rating itself (e.g., a rating of 5 yielded 5 points), whereas points assigned for ratings of negatively worded statements were reverse coded (e.g., a rating of 5 yielded 1 point, 4 yielded 2 points, etc.). Using this method, the minimum possible score was 18, corresponding to low listening anxiety, and the maximum possible score was 90, corresponding to high listening anxiety.

To answer the first research question, we (a) examined the frequency of accurate and inaccurate responses on the listening task by participant as well as by participant course level (300- or 400-level); (b) analyzed the frequency of accurate responses on the listening task by item to identify the dialectal features that appear to be more challenging to the learners in their comprehension of the Spanish music lyrics; and (c) performed correlation analyses to examine the relationship between accuracy on the listening task and learners' self-reported ratings of comprehensibility, task difficulty, and vocabulary knowledge. To address the second and third research questions, we conducted a binary logistic regression analysis to identify the factors (related to the music included in the task and to the learners) predicting accurate comprehension of Spanish music lyrics.

Results

Listening Comprehension Accuracy

Across all participants, the average rate of accuracy for comprehension of listening task items was very low, at 10.9% (approximately 4/38 items; *SD* = 3.96). There was, however, a wide range of variability in performance, with a minimum observed score of 1 (2.6%) and a maximum score of 18 (47.4%). Nevertheless, from Figure 2 it is evident that most participants (*n* = 16) scored well under 5 points on the listening task.

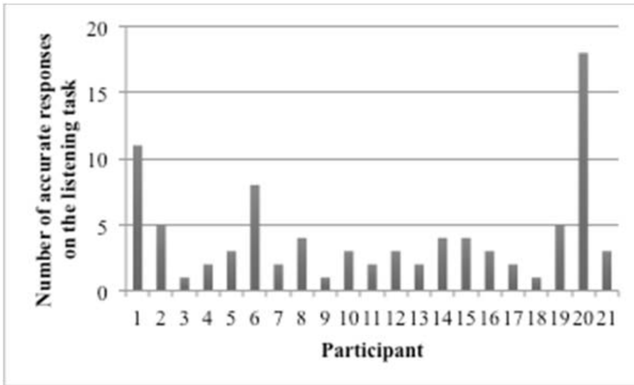

Figure 2. Distribution of Accurate Responses on the Listening Task by Participant

Table 2 presents the distribution of accurate and inaccurate responses on the listening task by participant course level (either 300- or 400-level).

Table 2. Accuracy on the Listening Task by Participant Course Level

Course level	Inaccurate responses		Accurate responses	
	N	%	*N*	%
300	462	93.5	32	6.5
400	248	81.6	56	18.4

The findings in Table 2 reveal that accuracy on the listening task was higher for 400- than for 300-level learners. A one-way ANOVA revealed that this difference was statistically significant, $F(1, 796) = 28.26$, $p < .001$.

Before turning to our examination of factors related to successful comprehension of the Spanish language music lyrics tested in this study, an analysis of accuracy by item is outlined. Table 3 provides accuracy rates on the listening task by item and course level of the participants.

Table 3. Accuracy on the Listening Task by Item and Participant Course Level

Item	Dialectal features present	Accuracy			
		300-level (*n* = 13)		400-level (*n* = 8)	
		N	%	*N*	%
1	*para* reduction	0	0	3	37.5
2	*para* reduction	0	0	2	25.0
3	/d/ elision	0	0	3	37.5
4	/s/ reduction	0	0	2	25.0
5	None (filler item)	0	0	0	0
6	/d/ elision	0	0	1	12.5
7	/s/ reduction	2	15.4	2	25.0
8	/s/ reduction	2	15.4	3	37.5
9	*para* reduction	0	0	1	12.5
10	/s/ reduction	0	0	0	0
11	/s/ reduction	0	0	0	0
12	/d/ elision	0	0	2	25.0
13	Lateralization	5	38.5	6	75.0
14	/d/ elision	0	0	0	0
15	/s/ reduction	3	23.1	2	25.0
16	*para* reduction /s/ reduction	2	15.4	6	75.0
17	None (filler item)	0	0	3	37.5
18	/d/ elision /s/ reduction	0	0	0	0
19	/s/ reduction	0	0	0	0
20	*para* reduction	0	0	0	0
21	Lateralization	0	0	0	0
22	None (filler item)	0	0	0	0

Item	Dialectal features present	Accuracy			
23	/d/ elision	0	0	1	12.5
24	/d/ elision	0	0	0	0
25	*para* reduction	1	7.7	1	12.5
26	None (filler item)	4	30.8	4	50.0
27	None (filler item)	0	0	0	0
28	*para* reduction	0	0	1	12.5
29	/s/ reduction	0	0	0	0
30	/d/ elision	0	0	1	12.5
31	/s/ reduction	0	0	0	0
32	/d/ elision	0	0	0	0
33	None (filler item)	0	0	3	37.5
34	*para* reduction /s/ reduction	0	0	1	12.5
35	None (filler item)	0	0	0	0
36	None (filler item)	0	0	0	0
37	/s/ reduction	0	0	0	0
38	None (filler item)	13	100	8	100

There are several trends from Table 3 that are worth pointing out. First, the 400-level learners outperform the 300-level learners on each item of the listening task. Second, it is not always the case that learners (regardless of course level) demonstrate higher accuracy rates for items that do not contain dialectal features. As can be seen in Table 3, there are several filler items for which learners did not demonstrate accurate comprehension of the music lyrics (e.g., Items 5, 22, 27, 35, and 36). However, there are two filler items for which 400-level learners outperform the 300-level learners (i.e., Items 17 and 26), in addition to one filler item that all learners (irrespective of course level) comprehended accurately (i.e., Item 38). This finding will be addressed further in the Discussion section. Third, all learners demonstrate greater comprehension of music lyrics containing reduction of *para* to *pa'*, in general, than of lyrics containing /d/ elision and/or /s/. There are a few exceptions to this trend (see Items 7, 8, and 20), which suggest that other factors may be in play. Finally, the two task items that contained lateralization demonstrated divergent accuracy patterns:

Learners performed better on Item 13 (38.5% accuracy for 300-level; 75.0% accuracy for 400-level) than on Item 21 (0% accuracy for 300- and 400-level).

The Role of Comprehensibility, Vocabulary Knowledge, and Task Difficulty in the Comprehension of Spanish Music

Recall that all participants rated the comprehensibility (i.e., ease of understanding) of each item in the listening task, as well as completed a vocabulary knowledge task and task difficulty questionnaire. With regard to comprehensibility, the average rating across participants was 3.89 (SD = .42; N = 20),[2] which corresponds most closely to the *somewhat difficult* point of the comprehensibility rating scale. A Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis revealed a nonsignificant, negative correlation between participants' listening task scores and comprehensibility ratings, $r_s = -.42$, $p = .069$.

Regarding vocabulary knowledge, the average rating across participants was 2.15 (SD = .37), corresponding to the *I have heard this word before, but I don't know what it means* point of the rating portion of the vocabulary knowledge task. In fact, an average rating of 2.00 or lower was observed for six participants only, and the lowest average rating was 1.47. These findings suggest that most of the words were familiar and/or known to participants. There was a significant, positive correlation between participants' listening task scores and vocabulary knowledge ratings, $r_s = .62$, $p = .003$. In other words, higher ratings were significantly related to higher scores on the listening task.

With regard to task difficulty, the average rating across participants was 4.81 (SD = .51), which falls closer to the *difficult* point of the rating scale. Interestingly, all but three participants rated the task at 5 (*difficult*); two participants rated the difficulty of the task at 4 (*somewhat difficult*) and one participant rated it at 3 (*neither difficult nor easy*). There was a nonsignificant, negative correlation between participants' listening task scores and task difficulty ratings, $r_s = -.13$, $p = .567$.

Factors Predicting Accurate Comprehension of Spanish Music

To identify those factors that predict accurate comprehension of items included on the Spanish music listening task, a binary logistic regression was conducted with accuracy (1 = correct, 0 = incorrect) as the dependent variable. The predictor variables included in the regression model were as follows: dialectal feature(s) present, comprehensibility of the music lyrics, proficiency score, frequency of listening to Spanish music, and whether or not the participant reported studying abroad in a Spanish-speaking country.[3] Table 4 outlines the results of the binary logistic regression model.

Table 4. Coefficients of the model predicting whether learners accurately comprehended the Spanish music lyric

[2] One participant misunderstood the listening task answer sheet. Consequently, her ratings were not included in this analysis.

[3] To determine which predictor variables to include in the binary logistic regression analysis, we examined best-fit (χ^2) statistics for each predictor variable. The following predictor variables were not included in the binary logistic regression analysis because they did not significantly improve the model (i.e., $p > .05$): music artist, music genre, and listening anxiety.

Variables included in model	*B*	*p*	Odds	95% confidence interval Lower	Upper
Constant	-1.60	.107	0.20	-	-
Comprehensibility (reference = easy)					
Difficult	-3.72	< .001	0.02	0.01	0.05
Neither easy nor difficult	-1.63	< .001	0.20	0.08	0.49
Dialectal features (reference = no)	-0.97	.003	0.38	0.20	0.72
Proficiency score	0.05	.419	1.05	0.94	1.17
Study abroad (reference = no)	0.89	.018	2.43	1.16	5.07
Music listening (reference = few times a year)					
Monthly	0.98	.021	2.66	1.16	6.14
Never	1.48	.033	4.38	1.13	17.05
Weekly	1.38	< .001	3.98	1.85	8.56

Note. R^2 = .65 (Hosmer & Lemeshow), .24 (Cox & Snell), .49 (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi^2(8) = 210.44$, $p < .001$.

With the exception of participant proficiency score, all of the predictor variables included in the model significantly predicted accurate responses on the listening task. With regard to comprehensibility, participants were 0.02 times less likely to demonstrate accurate comprehension of the Spanish music lyric when they marked the lyric as difficult to understand rather than as easy to understand. Participants were similarly 0.38 times less likely to demonstrate accurate comprehension when the lyric contained dialectal features than when no such features were present. Learners with study abroad experience were 2.43 times more likely to demonstrate accurate comprehension on the listening task than those who didn't report such experience. Finally, learners who reported listening to Spanish language music weekly or monthly were 3.98 and 2.66 times more likely, respectively, to demonstrate accurate comprehension than those who reported only listening to Spanish music a few times a year. However, participants who reported never listening to Spanish music were also more likely to demonstrate accurate comprehension than those who only listen to it a few times a year. This finding, although seemingly contradictory, may suggest that a different factor may be at play or interacting with reported frequency of listening to Spanish language music.

Discussion

As a reminder, this study was guided by three research questions (see The Present Study section). In response to the first research question, our findings showed that both 300- and 400-level learners demonstrated low comprehension of Spanish language music containing Caribbean dialectal features. Specifically, the average accuracy rate for comprehension of the listening task items was only 10.9%, representing approximately four out of the 38 items total. As seen in Figure 2, the majority of learners (16 of 21 participants), from both 300- and 400- levels, scored lower than 5 on the listening task. The low comprehension scores observed across learner course level on the listening task suggests that listening to music in Spanish is difficult regardless of the dialectal features that are present or the genre of music that is played. In fact, the items with dialectal features were not always the most difficult for learners to comprehend. Furthermore, there were several filler items that learners, regardless of course level, failed to comprehend. Taken together, it may be that music represents one of the more difficult sources of input in terms of L2 listening comprehension. Nevertheless, several factors, in addition to dialectal features, should be taken into consideration in the examination of L2 comprehension of music.

In terms of the dialectal features present in the listening task items, this study showed that, in general, learners comprehended items demonstrating *para* reduction more than items containing other dialectal features (e.g., /d/ elision, /s/ aspiration). This finding could be attributed to the frequency with which speakers of Spanish, and across dialectal or regional varieties of Spanish, employ *para* reduction in speech (Diaz-Campos, Fafulas, & Gradoville 2012). However, the few exceptions to this observation, again, suggest that additional factors are at play in the comprehension music lyrics containing dialectal features.

Other factors examined in relation to the accuracy of learners' responses on the listening task were the reported comprehensibility of the music lyrics and task difficulty. Though expected to play a more significant role in learners' performance, both of these factors proved to be insignificantly correlated with accuracy on the listening task. We also found that, with regard to comprehensibility, no specific artist or music genre appeared to be more comprehensible than the others. In terms of task difficulty, all but three participants rated the overall task difficulty at 5 (*difficult*), which suggests that comprehension of Spanish music lyrics is difficult in terms of L2 listening. One explanation for the nonsignificant correlation between task difficulty ratings and listening task scores may be the overall difficulty of the task. If the task were easier, a wider range of difficulty ratings may have been possible, thus allowing for a better analysis of the role of task difficulty in the comprehension of music. Nevertheless, the findings for task difficulty in this study suggest that the listening task was complex, and future studies would do well to compare performance on the listening task with performance on a less complex version of the task (cf. Baralt, 2010).

Vocabulary knowledge, on the other hand, was significantly correlated to listening task scores. In other words, learners who were more familiar and/or knowledgeable of specific words included in the vocabulary task were more likely to score higher on the listening task. This finding confirms previous research that has demonstrated a positive impact of vocabulary knowledge on L2 listening comprehension (e.g., Johnson, 1982; Schmidt, 2009). Nevertheless, most participants, regardless of their enrolled class level, were familiar with the majority of the words. This result suggests that vocabulary knowledge, though important in relation to accuracy on the listening task, may not have been the major hindrance given that most participants were, in fact, familiar with the words.

In response to the second research question, which addresses the specific characteristics of music that predict accurate comprehension, our study demonstrated that items with dialectal features proved to be more difficult for learners to comprehend. This finding is in line with previous research that has demonstrated low accuracy in the comprehension, identification, or production of dialectal features by learners without experience in a particular dialect (e.g., Geeslin & Gudmestad, 2011; Schmidt, 2009, 2011). Interestingly, learners comprehended one item with lateralization accurately and consistently, but not the other item with this same feature. On the basis of this finding, we recommend that future studies focus on a single dialectal feature (i.e. lateralization) in a number of differing contexts to better understand inconsistency in the comprehension of a particular dialectal feature.

The third and final research question guiding this study asked which learner characteristics predict accurate comprehension. First, 400-level learners consistently comprehended more items than the 300-level learners, although proficiency (as determined by an independent measure) did not significantly predict accuracy of listening comprehension. Other important factors included study abroad experience and frequency of listening to Spanish music: Learners who spent more time abroad and listened to Spanish music more frequently were more likely to have higher listening comprehension scores. These results suggest that learners with the most authentic input from multiple sources are likely to demonstrate more accurate comprehension of Spanish music. The learners' comprehension also complements the suggestion of incorporating music into the classroom made by Geeslin and Long (2014). Given that learners with more authentic input from more time spent were are more likely to have higher comprehension scores on the listening task, the same music could be introduced into the classroom as another source of authentic input. It is also worth noting that none of the learners from this study reported studying abroad in the Caribbean where they would have likely gained authentic exposure to the dialectal features under study.

Interestingly, all learners accurately comprehended one of the filler items (Item 38) on the listening task. The phrase of that lyric was *tengo una vida loca* "I have a crazy life," which is likely to be a very familiar phrase to learners. It may be that greater experience with or exposure to certain phrases may be more beneficial in the comprehension of L2 music than knowledge of individual words. Such experience may be particularly helpful when additional noise (in this case, the background music) is present in the speech signal. A recommendation for future studies would be to assess learners' familiarity with phrases or word pairs in addition to individual words in isolation to better understand listening comprehension of L2 music.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this study that are important to address and improve upon in future research. First, given that the speech samples included in the listening task were embedded in music, phonetic analysis of the music lyrics was not possible. Consequently, the researchers classified the dialectal features in each listening task item impressionistically. If possible, in future studies, researchers should attempt to separate the lyrics from the background music in order to more accurately identify dialectal features in the lyrics.

Second, our findings did not suggest a relationship between the distinct artists or genres represented in the listening task and accurate comprehension of music lyrics; rather, individual task items and word clusters had more of an effect on comprehension than any broad explanation of the comprehensibility of certain genres or artists. It is possible that the listening task could have been made easier (or more difficult) by either including simply one genre and/or artist. Because genre and artist were initially expected to be a factor in comprehension, information about the specific musical features of each clip of music was not included. For future studies, it would be useful to ask learner participants to indicate, along with the comprehensibility of each item, what it was about each music clip that made it easier or more difficult to understand than others. Another recommendation would be to include clips of native Spanish speakers (of Caribbean Spanish) reading the same words present in each clip in order to further understand learners' comprehension of the music lyrics. This methodological addition could further serve as a listening proficiency task, to clarify learners' abilities in the L2.

Finally, the present study examined comprehension of music by only two levels of learners. Although the results of this study did show that the 400-level learners outperformed the 300-level learners, there are more learner levels that would be interesting to investigate. Future studies should include more advanced learners (e.g., graduate students) and native speakers of Spanish to provide more insight into the development of comprehension of Spanish language music containing dialectal features.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify the difficulties students of Spanish face in their comprehension of music lyrics containing Caribbean Spanish dialectal features. This study addressed factors such as learner characteristics (i.e., reported time spent abroad, listening anxiety, proficiency), vocabulary knowledge, music genre (i.e., reggaeton, son, merengue), and Caribbean dialectal features (i.e., /d/ elision, /s/ aspiration). By investigating these factors, we contribute to multiple bodies of literature in second language acquisition and, importantly, show that comprehension of L2 music appears to be a difficult task for learners.

To conclude, we want to highlight the practical importance of the present study. Instructors would do well to include music in the L2 classroom for several reasons. First, as shown by participants' scores on the listening task and listening task difficulty ratings, Spanish music lyrics as a text type appears to be very difficult for learners. Incorporating Spanish language music in the classroom, along with guided instruction, may allow for improvement of L2 learners' listening comprehension. Second, using Spanish language music in the classroom is an authentic, creative way to introduce the inherent variation that learners will encounter in the L2 (Geeslin & Long, 2014), without physically traveling to a Spanish speaking country. Further, just as students with more diverse, authentic sources of input (i.e., those who studied abroad, listened to Spanish music more often in the present study) scored higher on the listening task, students who listen to more music—and therefore receive more varied input—may be able to improve their listening skills in the L2 overall. Finally, incorporating Spanish language music in the classroom has the potential to act as a cultural bridge, providing common ground and interest for classroom learners and students who have the opportunity to study abroad in the future.

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Appendix A

Listening Task Answer Sheet (English Translation)

	WHAT YOU HEARD	TRANSLATION	COMPREHENSIBLE? (*easy to understand*) Easy	Somewhat easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Somewhat difficult	Difficult
P			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix B

Vocabulary Task Words and Translations

Word	Translation
Aflojar	To lessen, reduce
Velocidad	Speed
Cáscara	Shell, peel
Rimas	Rhymes
Enfrentarse	To confront
Compadre	Buddy, friend
Atrasado	Late, behind
Sencillo	Simple
Asfixiado	Suffocated; overwhelmed
Merengue	Merengue (music genre)
Heridas	Wounds
Cintura	Waist
Voltear	To turn around
Pegado	Close, stuck
Pared	Wall
Reposo	Rest
Puerco	Pig
Monte	Mountain, hill
Botado	Good-for-nothing, useless

Appendix C

Spanish Proficiency Test (Sample)

Creo que es muy interesante ______ (hablo / hablar / hablando) de los hábitos de la gente.

Yo, por mi parte, ____ (soy / estoy / tengo) vegetariana.

Translation: "I think it is very interesting to talk about people's eating habits. I, for my part, am vegetarian."

Appendix D
Listening Anxiety Questionnaire

Participants were instructed to complete these items using the following scale: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*.

1. I get upset when I'm not sure whether I understand what I'm hearing in Spanish.
2. When I listen to Spanish, I often understand words but still can't quite understand what the speaker is saying.
3. When I'm listening to Spanish, I get so confused I can't remember what I've heard.
4. I feel intimidated whenever I have a listening passage in Spanish to listen to.
5. I am nervous when I am listening to a passage in Spanish when I'm not familiar with the topic.
6. I get upset whenever I hear unknown grammar while listening to Spanish.
7. I usually end up translating word by word when I'm listening to Spanish.
8. By the time you get past the unfamiliar sounds in Spanish, it's hard to remember what you're listening to.
9. I am worried about the new sounds you have to learn to understand spoken Spanish.
10. I enjoy listening to Spanish.
11. I feel confident when I am listening to Spanish.
12. Once you get used to it, listening to Spanish is not so difficult.
13. The hardest part of learning Spanish is learning to understand spoken Spanish.
14. I would be happy just to learn to read Spanish rather than having to learn to understand spoken Spanish.
15. I don't mind listening to Spanish by myself but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to listen to Spanish in a group.
16. I am satisfied with the level of listening comprehension in Spanish that I have achieved so far.
17. Spanish culture and ideas seem very foreign to me.
18. You have to know about Spanish history and culture in order to understand

Chinese Students Negotiating L2 English Writing Identity: Navigating Introductory Composition at a U.S. University

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Abstract

This small scale ethnographic study explores the L2 English academic writing identity negotiation of three Chinese students within the context of an introductory composition course at a U.S. Midwestern university focused on the needs of international students. Through individual interviews and classroom observations, it was investigated whether participants' previous language learning experiences and current language ideologies play a significant role in their attitudes towards acquiring L2 academic literacy skills in English. Another point of interest was how these students shape their 'imagined communities' in respect to second language writing and whether they experience any kind of 'inferiority of identity'. Results concluded that students were implicitly and explicitly aware of English as a dominant discourse and were able to describe specific stylistic differences between Chinese and English argumentative writing that seemed to have some effect on their conscious development of thought patterns in organizing writing assignments in a given socio---cultural setting. Further notice of how L2 students accommodate or resist English academic writing conventions and how they may self---marginalize their own L1 merits greater attention.

Keywords: multilingual writers; first-year undergraduates; identity investment; imagined communities

Introduction

In the past decade or so there has been an influx of Chinese undergraduate international students in U.S. universities. According to the most recent 2013-2014 Open Doors Report from the Institute for International Education, there were 274,439 Chinese students (comprising 31 percent of total international students in the U.S.) studying in U.S. colleges and universities, which makes China the leading country of origin in front of India, South Korea and Saudi Arabia. As noted in Chowdhury and Phan (2014), reasons for this phenomenon may include educational factors such as crowding at top universities in China and pressures in achieving high scores on the College Entrance Exam (Gao Kao exam). The authors also cited high rates of youth unemployment in China as another factor along with the possibility of increasing the student's marketability by studying abroad. Studying abroad can be seen as a way to increase chances of getting employment back in China upon graduating from a well-regarded U.S. university.

As an instructor at a research university where the international Chinese student population is steadily increasing in line with current trends amongst major research universities across the U.S., my first-year undergraduate composition course titled "Reading, Writing, and Inquiry" designed for English L2 writing students is comprised of mostly Chinese students. Furthermore, this course, which involves mastering fundamental skills in English academic reading and writing, serves as a gatekeeper for full admittance to programs in the School of Business, which are generally highly-regarded by Chinese international students pursuing undergraduate degrees abroad. Students who succeed with a B or better in this course qualify for admittance to the Business School provided that they also do just as well in their other courses. Therefore, the introductory composition course has a powerful connection to gaining what Bourdieu (1991) would term linguistic capital associated with the dominant discourse of English in academic circles in the most economically developed countries around the world. In the current study, I am primarily interested in how international Chinese students negotiate forming their identity as L2 writers of academic English under the circumstances highlighted above. This involves determining what kinds of investment they have in joining imagined communities that they may believe will bring them economic, academic, and social success both in their study abroad environment of the U.S. and back in their homeland of China. In addition, there has been little speculation as to how the dominant language ideology of English in Western universities may be affecting students' overall language identity. It can be questioned whether these students will be made to feel perpetually inferior as "others" in an English dominant society where a knowledge of English has become ever more prominent in these students' ideal image of success.

Literature Review

The concept of identity can be approached from several angles, but this literature review will focus on how it may be constructed by L2 language learners in a higher education setting. To begin, Norton (1997) provided a coherent link between multilingual learners' identity and the concept of symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991). Norton (1997) explained that attaching a value to a certain kind of speech (or writing) results in unequal power structures between dominant and less dominant discourses. She defined identity as "how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across space and time, and how people understand their possibilities for the future" (p. 410). For example, investment as intertwined with learners' self-image in gaining competence in the target language of English has to be considered through the lens of "multiple desires" that shape each individual's social identity (p. 411). Norton and Toohey (2011, p. 411) also maintained that learners can be very flexible in changing their identity options to move closer to the inner circle of participation in communities of practice regarding the target language of English. By making an effort to participate more fully in the community of practice of native speakers of English, they were given legitimacy to gain symbolic capital in the form of social and linguistic capital.

Chiang and Schmida (1999) took things one step further and considered how linguistic identity affects Asian American students studying in the College Writing Program at UC Berkeley. The authors focused on, among other things, the "impact of the disharmony among language use, language identity, and language ownership on their development as English language users" (p. 91). By using a constant comparative method, the researchers created their own "tentative" theories and then accepted or rejected them based on the collected data, which took the form of an open-ended survey, interview questions, and student writing portfolios. Through these methods, they found evidence of conflict between linguistic identity and linguistic ability in writing practices. Several themes emerged such as bilingual identity versus bilingual literacy and native versus nonnative identity issues. For example, one student commented:

> How can I give myself an American identity if I cannot even feel connected to the American language myself? By saying connected, I mean the feeling of owning the language and, therefore having full authority over it. It does not matter how frequently I use English, somehow I can never feel that I own it (p.89).

This quote challenges seemingly black and white concepts of native versus nonnative and what bilingual actually means. It is another example of how the borderlines between languages in multilingual writers are blurred both culturally and linguistically.

Furthermore, L2 writers are constantly adjusting their social and linguistic identities due to their investment in what Norton (2001) termed 'imagined communities', which could be defined as groups of people that an individual connects with through the imagination in an intangible way. How L2 writers position themselves in such imagined communities gains in importance when considering an individual's investment in developing and negotiating a writing identity in a given language. Canagarajah (2004) investigated how L2 writers strategize writing voice to conceptualize their identity in academic discourse by using Atkinson's (1999) instrument of rhetorical analysis to analyze the following: patterns of avoidance in integrating self-identity with the dominant discourse, transposition of self-identity with the dominant discourse, accommodation to consciously adopt dominant discourse, and conscious opposition to the dominant discourse. He concluded that voice is indeed negotiable when in the context of identity construction and dominant discourses should be analyzed critically.

To complicate the issue further, it can be understood that L2 writing identity must be viewed in a unique way that is different from a monolingual perspective. Liu and Tannacito (2013) explored how the dominant discourse of academic English may or may not influence Taiwanese second language learners in a U.S. university Intensive English Program to reconstruct their identities. The authors looked at racial and language ideology influences such as language privilege and White Prestige Ideology. They also considered how various forms of social and linguistic capital may affect students' motivations to invest in the imagined community of the American university. Results of this qualitative study indicated that L2 writers of

English do indeed express elements of resistance to the dominant discourse of standard written English, but that this also depended on their level of investment.

Background on the Chinese Educational System

Kipnis (2011) provided an in-depth look at educational desire within a Chinese primary and secondary educational context and gives a vivid portrayal of how culture can manifest itself within the classroom. He discussed the importance placed on handwriting Chinese calligraphy and characters as a way of showing the "quality" of the student. In this text, education for quality refers to the development of one's character through creativity classes at the primary school level and an attempt to promote more critical thinking skills in reading and writing classes. The author mentioned how the implementation of the one-child policy in 1981 has many parents anxious for their "son to become a dragon" and " their daughter a phoenix", a popular saying meaning they want them to be as powerful as imperial royalty. Interestingly, the text goes on to explain that this desire for greatness seems to be manifested as possible through educational glorification. It stated that 100 percent of parents surveyed in both rural and urban and rich and poor areas of China agree that higher education is the most important thing for their children, regardless of whether it will get them a job. Kipnis (2011) also emphasized the role of the teacher as model and the importance of speaking and writing Standard Mandarin as part of a nationalistic and Pro-Party curriculum. He also mentioned the absence of a school counterculture. While he does acknowledge an anti-rural prejudice, there is an absence of working class anti-school culture. Whether such cultural constructions in the Chinese educational system filter down into the mindsets of Chinese international students studying in the U.S. remains to be investigated in the following analysis.

Theoretical Framework

Studying identity construction in L2 English writing is important because it has sociopolitical undertones and ideological implications in how authorial voice is regarded as acceptable or non-acceptable in the dominant discourse. Bourdieu's (1991) theories regarding various kinds of capital (social, cultural, and linguistic) and habitus are useful in taking a critical approach to writing instruction. One way of approaching this is to consider how the legitimacy of language use may be connected to "self-marginalization". Kumaravadivelu (2006) described this as legitimating the hegemony of the dominant discourse and a "superiority of Western methods over local practices" (p. 219). In this way, the habitus of English academic writing practices in the western university positions the English L2 student as an 'Other' or outsider. This is helpful when considering how L2 writers may think of themselves in the context of a U.S. university introductory composition course.

In order to explore this further, the current study will consider the following research questions:

1. Do Chinese students' language learning backgrounds play a role in their attitude towards acquiring L2 English literacy skills?

2. How do Chinese undergraduate L2 writers at a Midwestern U.S. university negotiate their academic writing identity in the context of an introductory composition course designed for international students? Is there any evidence of resistance by Chinese international students to academic writing conventions within an introductory composition classroom?
3. Is there any indication of an "inferiority of identity" amongst Chinese international students in an English dominant university setting?

Method Setting

The site for this study is a public research university located in the Midwestern United States. The university has a high enrollment of undergraduate international students with the most significant number coming from China. The classroom setting within this university was an English Department introductory composition course termed as designated for 'multilingual' students and typically populated by freshman and sophomore students. In this case, the term 'multilingual' refers to students whose first language is not English. The course is meant to provide rigorous training in college-level writing and research with an emphasis on critical thinking, analytical writing, and synthesis of ideas from secondary sources. While it is designed to model a similar course for undergraduate native speakers of English with similar course assignments and workload, the multilingual version provides more support in understanding conventions of western academic writing style and a greater focus on specific lexical and linguistic concerns. Students take part in a sequenced writing project that culminates the course where they choose and introduce a debatable issue, conduct research on it, and then write a persuasive argument using secondary sources as evidence (see Appendix A). The course is required for all incoming freshman and serves as a gateway to the Business School which requires a grade of B or better on all courses in the first year of studies for full admission to their programs of study. Unsurprisingly, business is the most popular choice of major with international Chinese students.

Participants

The three focal participants were recruited from the above mentioned introductory composition course that consisted of 14 students total (12 Chinese, 2 Koreans). As noted in the table below, all three participants were freshmen undergraduate Chinese students. Students had a choice between selecting pseudonyms in Chinese or English. Interestingly, all three students self- selected fairly uncommon English pseudonyms: Fiona, Kelvin, and Levitt. (See Table 1 below).

Table 1

	Fiona	**Kelvin**	**Levitt**
Age	19	19	19
Gender	Female	Male	Male
City/Country of Origin	Shenzhen, China	Anhui, China (birthplace) Ningxia Autonomous Region, China (currently)	Beijing, China
Native Language	Cantonese	Mandarin	Mandarin
Year at university	Freshman	Freshman	Freshman
Major at university	Art Management	Business	Business
Spring 2014 university coursework	Museum Management, Art History, Economics, French, English composition	Microeconomics, other undetermined, English composition	Accounting, Computer Science, Astronomy, Art History, English composition
Primary/Middle School Educational Setting	British International Middle School in Beijing-1 year (instruction in English), Chinese public middle school in Shenzhen-2 years (instruction in Mandarin)	Chinese public middle school-3 years (instruction in Mandarin)	5th grade of primary school – 4 native English speakers taught courses in English at his school
High School Educational Setting	British International High School in Shenzhen-3 years (instruction in English)	Chinese public school-1 year American public school in San Jose, CA-1 year American private Catholic school in Fresno, CA-2 years	Private High School in Beijing (instruction in Mandarin) – 3 years

Data Collection

Data were collected using ethnographic methods including classroom observation, field notes, and one-on-one interviews. The observations were conducted during nine regular class sessions after gaining permission from the instructor whose native country of origin was Singapore. During the initial first few observations, the main objective was to take detailed notes and gather a rich description regarding teacher-led and student-led classroom activities such as students' interactions within groups, languages used, student interactions with the teacher, body language, and apparent engagement or disengagement with the task at hand.

Subsequent observations focused on the three focal students (see Table 1) who agreed to take part in the study and included the same objectives as mentioned above. Before collecting observation or interview data, the three participants were invited to sign a consent form allowing me to observe them during 2-3 class sessions and asking them to participate in three 30-40 minute individual interviews (two longer interviews in Fiona's case) at a time of their choosing.

The semi-structured interviews were held in a small room near the classroom site that afforded privacy and confidentiality to the participants. They were conducted in English, the common language of the researcher and participants, and digitally recorded using a voice recorder on an iPhone. Handwritten notes were also taken as a backup to the recording. The focus of the first interview centered on extracting biographical information regarding educational background and language learning experiences prior to attending university. Then the focus turned to their current goals of learning English and questions related to English academic writing and personal writing identity. The second interview focused more on similarities and differences between English and Mandarin academic writing. Finally, the third interview inquired about the curriculum and assignments in their composition course. Guided by the three groups of questions, students were encouraged to elaborate on certain questions more than others and as time went on, certain questions were found to be redundant and were dropped. (See Appendix B for a list of interview questions).

Data Analysis

Descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2009) was used throughout the analysis of interview transcriptions to look for themes that appeared to be central to the focus of the research questions. An analysis of emerging themes from the descriptive coding of interview transcriptions will allow for discussion of the interview data. Triangulation was achieved primarily by using this method with field notes, interviews with participants, an interview with the instructor, and member checking of interview data during the course of the interview by asking the same question in different ways to be sure answers remained consistent.

Findings

Recognition of English as a Dominant Discourse

In analyzing the interview transcripts of the three participants, the importance of learning English because of its global role as a dominant discourse in education and business was one of the first major themes to emerge. This became evident in the first interview when each student's language learning backgrounds were explored. The following will provide a brief summary of each participant's language learning background and ways in which the dominance of English was acknowledged during these conversations and intertwined with each individual's language ideology.

Fiona

As each of the three participants was asked to elaborate on their experiences learning native and additional languages both inside and outside the classroom, Fiona's case was particularly interesting because of both parental influences and the variety of language learning settings she experienced in middle and high school. Her Cantonese mother born in Hong Kong used to live and work in Switzerland where she spoke French and her mainland Chinese-born father studied abroad in Canada and spent time working in Singapore. In addition to her parents' international experiences, Fiona grew up observing her father who made part of his living as an antique dealer in Beijing and often made business transactions in English. As a result of her father's hobby collecting antiques in Beijing, Fiona was given the chance to study at an international English-medium middle school in Beijing for one year before returning to a Mandarin-medium middle school in Shenzhen for another year. During her high school years she transferred again to a British English-medium international school where she recalled several negative interactions with one of her English teachers who she described as being strict for enforcing an English-only rule in the classroom with severe repercussions for speaking Chinese. However, she acknowledged the importance of using English in an English-dominant environment with the example of a friend who had gone to study in the U.K. and returned to China with little improvement in his English speaking skills. She saw mixed L1 classes as being more beneficial to encourage more English use in the classroom and seemed disappointed that her U.S. university composition course was composed primarily of Chinese L1 students, forcing her to sometimes interact in Chinese during the class when prompted by her peers. In addition, she saw her education in a U.S. university as an "investment" because of the "high quality of education", making her feel it even more necessary to be proficient in the dominant language. Therefore, she explained further that her English writing ability takes dominance over her Chinese writing ability in an American context.

Kelvin

Kelvin's language learning background was also spent largely in an English dominant environment because he attended three years of high school in the U.S. by what he says was his own choice. After one year in a public high school in China, his first year in the U.S. was spent at a public high school in San Jose, California with a transfer to a private Catholic school in Fresno, California for his final two years. Similar to Fiona, he enjoyed being in an English dominant environment because of greater opportunities to improve his speaking skills. He also acknowledged that "you learn more cogent things for high school", which could be interpreted as meaning that his high school education in the U.S. was deemed to be more useful to him. This could stem from Kelvin's remembrance of his father's description of the U.S. as "the head of our country like 20 years or 10 years". He goes on to say that "if you learn…take the education there (U.S.) you would…might have more future vision than other Chinese people". This statement seems to indicate a powerful parental influence in shaping his beliefs about the value of a U.S. education and the necessity of immersion in an English dominant environment to provide perceived benefits in gaining a more forward thinking ideology. It's not clear, however, what exactly he meant by "future vision".

Levitt

With his primary and secondary education in Beijing, Levitt spent all three years of high school at a private school in Beijing with Mandarin as the language of instruction. While he benefited from native English speaking teachers for his English courses in primary school, he had a strong grounding in Chinese argumentative writing in high school to a much greater extent than Fiona and Kelvin. In addition, he spent his high school years preparing to take the TOEFL and SAT in order to gain admittance to an American university. Perhaps because he grew up learning English in an EFL context, he mentioned the importance of understanding English culture in addition to improving speaking and writing skills. While what he means by "English culture" would need to be defined further, it is interesting that he recognized language learning as being attached to culture in an environment where a focus on grammar and rote learning is prevalent (Kipnis, 2011). In addition, this is surprising considering his understanding that correct grammar is weighted more heavily on the English exam (not clear if he meant the Gao Kao or the TOEFL). One interpretation of this could point to his understanding of the dominance of English on a global scale and his individual need to understand it on a level outside of standardized exams. Further evidence of this belief can be found in his statement that "more people can read English than Chinese in different countries around the world". He also recognized that academic English is "standardized and a formal and official way of writing".

Furthermore, he talks of using writing as a tool and explains that because he is studying in the U.S., English writing is used more frequently than Chinese and, as a result, has become more important to him. He has noticed that his Chinese writing has deteriorated because he hasn't practiced it in over a year. This seems to be in line with both Fiona and Kelvin's statements that English speaking and writing must take precedence over Mandarin because of their need to succeed in a U.S. university context.

Awareness of Style Differences between Chinese and English Argumentative Writing

In the second interview (first interview for Fiona), all three participants seemed to have a keen awareness of style differences between Chinese and English argumentative writing, which is a genre closely associated with academic writing and one that requires mastery for standardized exams such as the TOEFL, the Chinese University Entrance Exam (Gao Kao), and U.S. university introductory composition courses. Style can be associated with such factors as coherence and cohesion, citation formats, sentence structure, syntax, word choice, grammar, punctuation, and level of formality (Farris, 2014). Additionally, only Kelvin had formally practiced citing sources before taking introductory composition at the university level because his U.S. high school teacher insisted on giving students exposure before college.

The importance of "grammar" in English academic writing was a topic mentioned by more than one person. I put the word "grammar" in parentheses because upon further questioning I came to realize that what the students were calling "grammar" actually meant organizational factors related to coherence and cohesion, such as use of transition words, rather than syntactical constructions. Kelvin explained that Chinese writing is more "freestyle" at the high school level to prepare students to take the Chinese writing portion of the university entrance exam. When pressed what "freestyle" means, he said that it related to the logic or organization of the writing.

One of the most interesting findings in this category, however, had to do with each participant's overall agreement that Chinese argumentative writing is not only "freestyle", but also what Levitt termed as "ambiguous". While Levitt defended this "weakness" (his words) of Chinese argumentative writing as dependent on cultural context, he also said that English is a "faster way to communicate" and not as "indirect" as Chinese. Fiona backed this up by noticing that U.S. students in her mainstream university courses have "really clear organization", which could be interpreted to mean that they get their points across concisely and in a logical manner that is easily understood. Levitt shed more light on this by saying that Chinese argumentative writing is more tolerant of a narrative style and legitimate evidence could include the insertion of the writer's own experiences as opposed to what he terms the formulaic writing style of English argumentative writing that is based on scientific logic with less "esoteric" word choices, which he judged to be easier for readers to understand and follow. While he seemed to recognize certain benefits of writing in an English argumentative style, an internal conflict of style choice between Chinese and English argumentative writing often made him feel "restricted" (my words) when writing in English as illustrated in the following quote:

> …it's hard for me to choose between the formula I always follow (formulas he learned from his high school English teacher to prepare for the TOEFL exam) as opposed to the exposure of my own experience. (Levitt, Interview 2)

Fiona also seemed to make a similar realization by noting how style affects the audience's reception of the writer's ideas and how what she termed as the "U.S. professional structure" makes it easier to understand "lots of information". Kelvin put it the most bluntly in saying that "the logic between Chinese people and Western people is different". The fact that he chose to polarize writing into what he called "Chinese" and "Western" shows that he does seem to distinguish some kind of style distinction between his L1 and L2 and this could be key in how he chooses to negotiate his writer identity. In the meantime, it can be ascertained that all three participants could identify key style differences between Chinese and English argumentative writings and were trying their best to find a way to cope in the socio-cultural environment of a U.S. university setting as L2 writers. Some examples of coping skills mentioned in the interviews included getting help from the instructor, comparing their papers with those of native English speakers, and reading what Kelvin dubbed "outstanding writings" to notice style differences. Interestingly, Fiona who is studying French in a U.S. university context mentions the role of the Alliance Française in France to enforce standardization of French formal written discourse. In agreement with the premise behind this French institution to regulate French written discourse to uphold a certain level of formality, she believes that there should be some kind of standard to uphold for every language because it helps others learning the language. This reasoning seems to be in direct opposition to what Canagarajah (2013) would define as a more translingual practice where acceptance of different writing styles is accepted and encouraged even in formal discourse.

Negotiation of L2 English Writer Identity

Throughout all three interviews (two longer interviews in Fiona's case), there were many references made to negotiation of writer identity. While some of the above discussion on Mandarin and English argumentative writing styles could also pertain to identity construction, this category on negotiation of L2 English writer identity will focus more on specific references to writing identity and its development in the context of a university-level introductory composition classroom.

To illustrate one overlap with the previous category on writing style, Levitt's agreement with me that he felt "restricted" (my words) shows his possible aversion to what he perceived to be the formulaic style of English academic writing versus what he termed as the more narrative style used on the Chinese writing portion of the Chinese university entrance exam. The following quote provides further evidence of this:

> If we just randomly write in our own way, it probably will be better for us to express our ideas or our experience. It provides us with more space for imagination and to reveal what we really thought about the topic. (Levitt, Interview 2)

However, his concession, which was similar to Fiona's regarding the Alliance Française, that a "specific like structure" is better for readers of different backgrounds trying to understand his thoughts points towards a writing identity that is in a process of transition and negotiation.

Beyond noticing certain benefits of one writing style or another, Levitt also mentioned the idea of adjusting actual thought patterns for organizing argumentative writing in explaining how it is useful to read works by native English speakers in order to "adjust logics". This idea surfaced even more in Kelvin's reflection on the process of writing a critical argument paper for his introductory composition course at a U.S. university:

> …learn writing in English make me change my thoughts sometimes. Like when you write, you don't think Chinese way. You think Western way like how Western people may see these questions…you just write down…you don't have Chinese in your thoughts and then translate to English. You don't do that. You will look at the problem in an American way. (Kelvin, Interview 1)

It can be taken for granted that this ability to think in a "Western way" likely has something to do with the language learner's level of English proficiency. Fiona, who acknowledged that she never spent much time writing in Chinese due to her years spent in international schools, noticed that she had difficulty understanding her Chinese roommate's paper. Her roommate told her that she thinks in Chinese first and then translates into English when writing. Fiona discovered that when she thought of it in a Chinese way, she could make more sense of it. Therefore, this seems to point towards not only L1 interference from a syntactical standpoint, but also a socio-cultural influence in how international students might approach L2 writing within a given context.

Fiona's superior exposure to the L2 environment previously in China may have made her doubly sensitive to a given socio-cultural context when writing and allowed her more chance to develop a stronger L2 writing identity. She also recognized that her critical writing skills in English helped her critical thinking skills, which she claimed were a result of developing her English academic writing skills in high school. The following is an anecdote regarding her shift in viewpoint towards China's one-child policy:

> When I came to American, there is lots of people ask me … 'do you have a sister or brother?' I always say, 'no, I'm the only child in my family.' I feel really weird because they all have sister or brother here.
>
> Before I learned critical writing in my high school, one-child policy is not a good thing. It's unfair for most of people in China because they not let the…because lots of children in China will become very selfish because they are only one child. And after I write critical thinkings, I talk about some good things of this policy and some bad things. It's more influence the way I'm thinking. When I met some problems, I won't say only from one aspects of the issue. I probably will stem out of the issue and more aspects of the things. (Fiona, Interview 1)

One caveat here is the fact that regardless of whether her critical writing skills play a role in the development of her critical thinking skills, this in no way assumes that writing in English is a key factor. It is possible that her critical writing skills would have become just as developed in Chinese had she had more exposure. What is evident here is that her thought processes expanded, or "stemmed out" as she said, as a result of developing her writing skills in the genre of the argument paper. Further research would be needed to determine if this development of critical writing skills could take on a different form in an L1 such as Chinese versus an L2 such as English.

Discussion

In light of the evidence presented above, it seems that all three participants drew on various socio-cultural influences in their family and previous language learning environments to have both positive and negative effects on their attitudes towards developing their L2 English literacy skills. To highlight one example, Fiona's learning experiences in English-only classroom settings seemed to have a positive effect in that they helped her gain confidence in her oral and written language skills and instilled an importance of allowing opportunities to practice English. This was also evident during classroom observations of her U.S. university introductory composition course where she was frequently observed asking and answering questions voluntarily during full class feedback sessions and made an effort to speak English during class sessions. She was, however, sometimes noted to be speaking Chinese with other group members, but this could also be because her instructor, a

Singapore-born English speaker who I also interviewed, stated that she did not discourage students from speaking Chinese during class sessions. On the other hand, the strict English-only atmosphere at her British-medium high school seemed to affect her negatively and ultimately discouraged her from studying in the U.K.

In looking at negotiation of identity and investment in L2 English academic writing, Bourdieu's (1991) notion of linguistic capital appears in the foreground in numerous references by each of the three participants regarding the dominance of English on a global scale. From Fiona's experience with an EFL teacher in China enforcing an English-only classroom to Levitt's desire to understand more about English culture to gain entrance to an imagined community, there seems to be a conscious recognition that English is a form of linguistic capital to be gained. The interview with the students' university composition instructor also revealed that students were generally compliant by unquestionably following writing assignment descriptions, structuring logical arguments, and conforming to APA or MLA citation formats.

Classroom observations also revealed that the focal students in this study appeared invested in learning the material presented and remained on task and focused for the most part. Likely because of their high levels of investment in learning standard academic English (Norton, 1997; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Liu & Tannacito, 2013), all three participants were more accommodating rather than resistant to adhere to the standards of English academic written discourse. As mentioned above, Kipnis (2011) describes Chinese education as relying heavily on the teacher as an exemplary model and figure of authority. In agreement with this notion, all three interviewees seemed puzzled when asked if they had ever thought to do something in a different way than what the teacher asked. Kelvin summed it up by saying, "my teacher wants this right. I don't think about doing other ways. I always follow the teacher. I think most students don't have that kind of feeling to insist to write it their way". Furthermore, both Fiona and Kelvin's parents were described as viewing the U.S. as having more symbolic power than China in the way of educational returns and this likely had a strong effect on how these students shaped their own imagined communities within a U.S. university context.

Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, there were signs that the three participants felt what Liu and Tannacito (2013) would call an 'inferiority of identity'. For example, all three students were in the process of negotiating their L2 writing identity and seemed in agreement, overall, that English argumentative writing is easier for the reader to understand than Chinese argumentative writing. Levitt described Chinese writing as "weak" because the relationships between ideas were not as direct as in English. While he recognized that this so---called "weakness" is dependent on cultural context, he also pointed out that more people can read English than Chinese on a global scale and English is just a "faster way to communicate" because it is easier to learn than Chinese and more direct. All three participants also noted that their Chinese writing skills had deteriorated due to their concentration on English writing. This seems to underline Kumaravadivelu's (2006) premise that Western methods take precedence over local practices and the hegemony of English as the dominant discourse becomes reified and legitimated.

Conclusion and Future Directions

There were several limitations to this study that bear some explanation. First of all, it is obvious that analyzing data from three participants is in no way conclusive evidence to support or refute the main research questions in this study. However, it is hoped that this small---scale ethnographic study provides a starting point for further exploration of L2 English identity negotiation by Chinese language learners studying in the U.S. and fulfilling their introductory composition course requirement. Another caveat lies in the fact that the composition course in question serves as a gatekeeper for admission to highly coveted spots in the Business School. Students are not likely to show much evidence of resistance to teaching methods when they know they need to achieve a B or better to qualify for admission. Furthermore, member checking of interview data was less than ideal due to the students' return to China for the summer after the end of the semester. More discussion of the transcripts and the results of the data analysis with the participants would be useful at a later date to better clarify some of the points made beyond asking multiple questions in a similar way during the interview itself. Another weakness of this study was the short time frame. Constraining the study to a single semester did not allow for a more longitudinal observation of students' progress and comparison of their perspectives over different points in time. In the future, it would also be interesting to include examples from student papers to provide further triangulation of the data.

To conclude, there is no doubt that English academic writing will remain an important determiner of success for L2 English university students studying both in the United States and their home countries. A majority of Chinese students and their parents will also likely continue to view studying abroad in English---medium higher educational institutions as helpful to gaining better employment opportunities. This small---scale study serves as an important reminder that Chinese international students are not a homogenous entity, but each one comes with a unique package of educational desires, imagined communities, and views on schooling. While there were no extreme differences in opinion between the three students interviewed here, it is still evident that they had unique perspectives and goals for learning English and different degrees of inferiority or 'othering'. Future research exploring the extent to which they self---marginalize or feel positioned as an 'Other' or outsider in the community of practice of a U.S. university or their own imagined communities both within and outside the composition classroom merits continued investigation.

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Appendix A

Essay 3: Argument

A 1400---1600 word paper, with an APA---formatted Works Cited page
All of the sources (5---7) from your annotated bibliography

The Assessment

To construct an insightful, argumentative response to your "research question." As the final step in your sequenced writing project, you will offer a **"critical stance"** on the issue through a thesis stating your claim. The critical position you take should demonstrate how deeply you have investigated your issue.

Strategies

- Write an informative (and brief!) introduction in which you frame your argument, orient an unfamiliar reader to the issue, discuss and justify its need or significance, and clearly articulate your position (your "main claim").
- Develop your position with three-four reasons to support your thesis that are interesting, original, and effective (and based on your research!). Each of these reasons should represent ideas or perspectives that are necessary for the reader to understand your claim. They should not simply summarize the main ideas of the sources you have read.
- Discuss the connections between your sources for each of the reasons you give (*synthesize* the sources to support each reason using the Sandwich Model).
- Include a counterargument and then respond to it with evidence or examples (this is sometimes called "counterarguing").
- Write a conclusion that "echoes" the introduction and leads the reader to a new point or realization about your argument. This can include a call to action, a suggestion about what needs to be done next, a new critical question, or any other strategy that helps the reader understand "Why should I care about what I have just read?"

Criteria for Evaluation

1. <u>Analysis</u>: Does the paper demonstrate true insight in terms of *how* it draws upon outside sources to support the author's "thesis statement"?
2. <u>Structure</u>: Does the paper's orchestration of the different outside sources and voices it draws upon seem as elegant and logical as possible?
3. <u>Language</u>: Has the author dealt with both his/her own argument as well as other authors' arguments with seriousness and respect at an appropriate academic register with varied vocabulary?
4. <u>Style</u>: Is the paper's "scaffolding" well-constructed (including enough "attributive tags", signal phrases, transitions)

Appendix B

Sample Interview Questions – Student Participants

First Interview

- What is your purpose/goal of learning English?
- What does better English mean to you?
- Why do you learn English academic writing?
- In your opinion, what comprises good writing?
- What do you expect to learn in the writing class?
- How does learning how to write in English affect your thinking and identity?

Second Interview

- What are the similarities and differences between English and Chinese writing styles?
- What are some difficulties you encounter in writing in English?
- Can you express your personal thoughts and feelings in English writing?
- How would you write about this (one of the students' writings) in your first language?
- Why would an American professor or your writing teacher accept some writings and not other writings?
- What are the differences between your essays and academic discourse?
- What are the strengths/limitations of both discourses?

Final Interview

- What is taught/learned in the class?
- Can you talk about the organization/textbooks/assignment/activities of the class?
- Which subject or what content in the textbook do you enjoy the most? Which do you think is the most useful?
- Which assignment or project do you work the hardest? Which do you think is the most useful? (If necessary, please define useful.)
- How much effort do you put into the course outside/inside the class?
- Are you satisfied with the curriculum/pedagogy of the course?
- What suggestion would you give to improve the course?
- Can you recall a situation when you insisted on doing things your teacher doesn't like in class or in English writing?

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Exploring Approaches to Teaching Bilingual Education in Countries where English is a First Language: A study in East London

Mohammad Rasel Howlader

Abstract

The aim of the study is to recognize literacy practices of the ethnic minorities and find suitable teaching approaches in a multilingual context in London. The main research question is: How do the ethnic minorities in London want their heritage languages to be recognized in their mainstream schools? Primary research has been carried out through questionnaires and structured interviews and secondary research has been carried out through analyzing published books and articles. In breaking the silence of the bilingual children, it has been suggested that a post communicative approach would be convenient to teach ethnic minority languages and activities like pair work, group work, role play, brainstorming, multiple choice and filling in the gaps would be suitable in bilingual learning. Results show that bilingual learning can be enhanced through parental support, social media, storytelling by grandparents and the inclusion of a bilingual syllabus in the National Curriculum in England.

Keywords: bilingual learning, breaking bilingual silence, recognize literacy practices, post communicative approach

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to find different ways to recognize literacy practices of the ethnic minorities and teach their heritage languages in East London. The main focus has been given to British born Asian children who are studying in mainstream schools. I have chosen this research topic to break the silence of the ethnic minority children in London and to show their multilingual identity without any hesitation in a multilingual society. The main research question is: How do the ethnic minorities in London want their heritage languages to be recognized in their mainstream schools?

The study has been carried out using a mixed method. I have used qualitative method such as structured interviews, observations and quantitative method such as questionnaire to collect primary data and to find out different ways to recognize and teach heritage languages to multilingual children in London. The current research is not focusing on a large scale investigation but on a small number of students where closer attention has been given to collect realistic data from the respondents of this study.

Theoretical Framework

English has become a powerful global language since its colonial power with language influence in America, Australia, India and many other countries of the world (Harmer, 2003, pp. 14-16). English language teaching is sometimes viewed "as a form of cultural or linguistic imperialism" (Harmer, 2003, p. 16, Phillipson, 1992, Pennycook, 1994). English is used to promote military, cultural and economic hegemony (Said, 1978, Harmer, 2003, p. 16). Harmer (2003) believes that non-native speakers of English are victims of linguistic and cultural imperialism or linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Harmer (2003) is concerned with language loss as "language death is frightening .....and its loss takes with culture and customs"(p. 16). Some countries like Nigeria have taken initiatives to keep other languages alive (Harmer, 2003). He also shows that there are more than one languages being operated in Nigeria. English is the key language and other languages are surviving depending on the situation. Extraordinary Nigerian writers like Achebe, Soyinka and Ngugu do not write in English (Harmer, 2003, p. 16). Multilingualism is acceptable in Nigeria.

London, a multilingual city, has many complementary schools. For example, there are 90% Bengali speaking people in the Tower Hamlets area. Bengali is spoken in the wider society (Kenner & Ruby, 2012). Unfortunately, Bengali is not spoken overtly in the main stream schools. Most of the school children are keen to show their identity in the dominant English language. Some private initiatives have been taken to legalize the ethnic minority languages like Bengali and Urdu. Apart from learning Bengali, Muslim students learn the Arabic language to perform their religious activities (Kenner & Ruby, 2012).

There is no denying the fact that English is the "linguistic capital" (Bourdieu, 1991) and highly accepted "legitimate language" (Kenner & Ruby, 2012) in the school curriculum in the UK. However, there are strong grounds to argue that multilingual learning would not affect or belittle this "legitimate language" (Kenner and Ruby, 2012) in wider society. In fact, the prestige and honor of the influential language will be uplifted in the sense that it is generous enough to provide with "consent" (Said, 1978) for creating rooms for multilingual learning. The United Kingdom is a multilingual and multicultural country (Kenner & Ruby, 2012). However, children's heritage languages are at risk of extinction. It is widely accepted that multilingual learning can enhance second language learning (Kenner and Ruby, 2012, Cummins, 1984, Baker, 2011).

L1 can help to improve L2

There are some common rules of grammar in all languages. For example, in Bengali the subject comes at the beginning of a sentence and the adjective comes before noun. In Bengali sentence, "Peter hoy akjon valo manus", Valo=adjective (good), manus=noun (Noun). The same pattern can be observed in English. For example, in the sentence "Peter is a good man", Peter (Sub)+ is (be verb)+ a (article) + good (adjective)+ man (noun). Their existing knowledge can help them to improve learning second languages. Anderson and Obied (2011) have positively underpinned socio-constructivism theory of Vygotsky, Bruner and Mercer (p.16). According to them new ideas and knowledge are built on existing knowledge within "the Zone of proximal development (ZPD)", more capable peer can help the less capable peer to develop language learning. Anderson and Obied (2011) believe "scaffolding strategies play an important role in mapping pathways and developing confidence" (P. 19). Therefore, heritage language is the strong basis to learn further languages.

Scaffolding and teaching assistant

The previous paragraph underpinned the ideas of ZPD and scaffolding. The idea of employing heritage language teaching assistants in mainstream schools should not be ignored as they could be ideal figures of more capable peers according to Vygotsky's ZPD and Bandura's scaffolding. Miller (2010) shows Vygotsky's understanding of the Tools of development. Adults can guide children about how to use different tools of the environment. Proper mediation between the child and the environment is worth considering. Tools develop different factors in the child's mind. The environment provides all sorts of facilities for the child. Through a proper association between the child and the society development happens. There are two types of tools which aid us in our mental functioning. Firstly, psychological tools which include language systems, counting systems, writing and works of art. These are used to control thought and behavior. In the classroom, a teacher can show the process of writing a paragraph. Children can observe their teacher and take initiatives to write their own. Secondly, technical tools are used to control nature these are pen, computer for example.

Vygotsky believes that language, the psychological tool, enables a child to depict the time variation including the past, present and future. In Vygotsky's words, "just as mole gives shape to a substance, words can shape an activity into a structure" (1978, pp. 28 in Miller 2010, p. 384). Central to Vygotsky's theory is the child's engagement in cultural activity with guidance from more skilled others-peers and adults alike. Therefore, the teacher and knowledgeable peer is a facilitator in children's learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Collaboration with adults and with other children plays a central role in the cognitive development of children. Therefore, working with the assumption that learning occurs primarily in social interaction, when learners interact collaboratively with more knowledgeable others while passing on to the child the cultural tools required in the specific society.

Ethnic minority children in the UK should not be pressurized to learn only the "legitimate language" (Kenner & Ruby, 2012). It affects their cognitive development. Children in the main stream schools do not get the opportunity to express their multilingual identity. There should be suitable rooms for the bilingual children in the wider society. Policy makers in the curriculum should consider that children's heritage language can develop second language learning. All language learning starts from the same "engine" (Cummins, 1981a) or "Language Acquisition Device" (Chomsky, 2007). Children can develop their cognitive development nicely through acquisition of heritage language. Multilingual identity should be respected everywhere as the UK is a multilingual and multicultural country. Children should feel at ease with their heritage culture, language and identity. It will strengthen their sense of individual identity in this country.

Baker (2011) suggests that cognitive development advances when children become relatively balanced bilingual (p. 165). His research suggests that bilingual education including "immersion" and "heritage language bilingual education" (Baker, 2011, p. 165) result in performance enrichment in two languages and in general curriculum performances compared to monolingual education. The brain in human head has ample space for language skills. Baker (2011) emphasizes that language learning does not occur separately but there is "a common underlying proficiency" (Baker, 2011: 165) which is interactive. Therefore, ideas learnt in one language can be easily transferred to another language. In this instance, there is no separate feeling of an Urdu part of the brain or Russian part of the brain in terms of school lesson learning. Baker (2011) appreciates Cummins' (1981a) "Common Underlying Proficiency" model as its concept is easy to understand pictorial representation of two icebergs. Two icebergs are separate above surface of water. However, they have close link with each other through the surface. Underneath the surface two icebergs are completely fused and interactive. Similarly, two languages do not function separately. They function and operate through the same central processing system. Therefore, the central processing engine can operate more than two languages. It can easily result in multilingualism (Baker, 2011: 167).

A bilingual child's mind is ready to receive skills and metalinguistic knowledge through the interference of first and second language (Cummins, 1981). In relation to this, Cummins (1981) argues that this interference occurs due to the "common underlying proficiency" which is like two ice bergs floating on the same water level. His theory leads to acceptable circumstance that learning one language will have a positive impact on the additional language learning.

Research methodology

I carried out the study using a mixed method. I used qualitative method such as structured interviews and observations and quantitative method such as questionnaires to investigate the current situation of the ethnic minority children in London and find out suitable approaches to develop multilingualism. Throughout the study I maintained confidentiality while collecting personal data on bilingual issues.

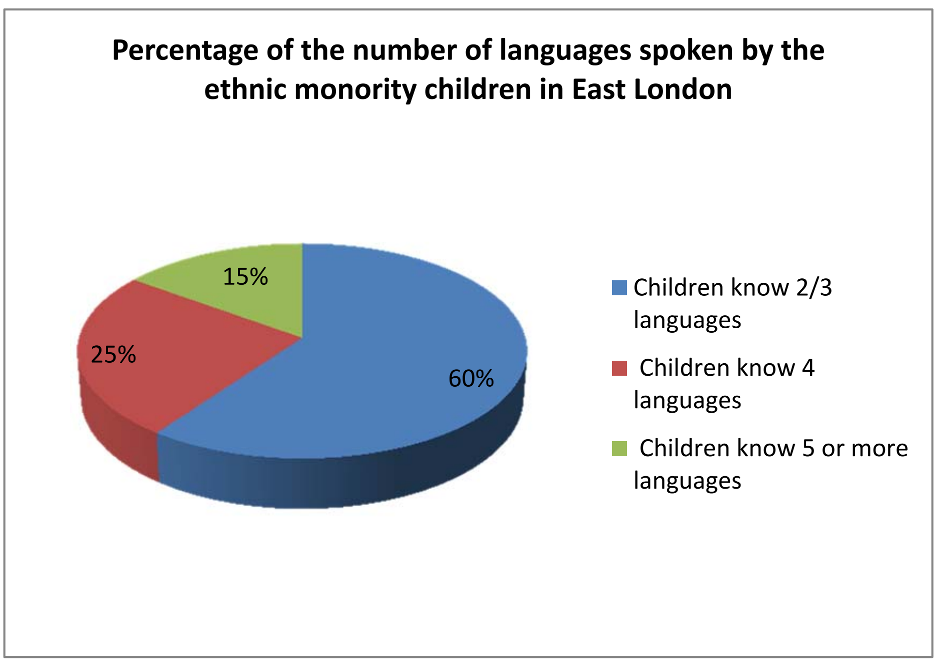
Thirty informants took part from different mainstream schools in East London. Most of the respondents belong to the British born Asian community in London. Informed consent via mobile phone has been sought for the questionnaires and structured interviews. Before sending out questionnaires, I made sure that all the respondents understood the research questions. Piloting of some questionnaires made me clear that the respondents understood questionnaires. Apart from this, I collected recorded consent from four interviewees. I maintained confidentiality in all cases. For example, all the respondents were assured through written statements that their real name will not be used in the study. I have consulted British Educational Research Association (BERA) website to ensure that all ethical issues have been maintained while conducting this research study.

Results and findings

I carried out the study with thirty four respondents. Thirty respondents participated in the questionnaire and four respondents took part in the interview sessions. Most of the respondents are British-born Asian children and a minority of the respondents are British born Polish, Somali, Arabian and Jamaican children. Most of the children's ages range from nine to thirteen. The majority of them are studying in mainstream school and some of them are studying in Muslim school. I prepared suitable questionnaires and structured interviews for these children so that they could understand the research clearly. Most of the respondents came forward to share their bilingual identity.

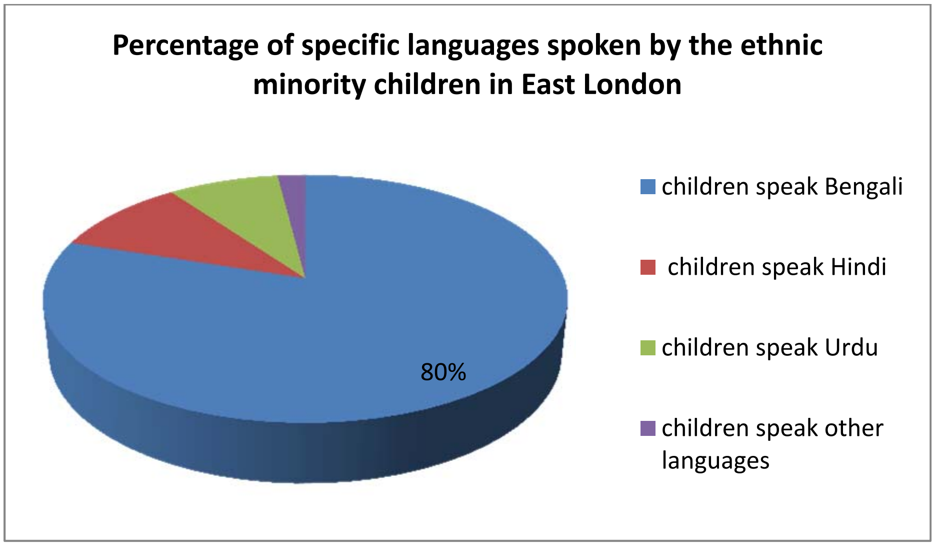
Questionnaire analysis

Multilingual identity



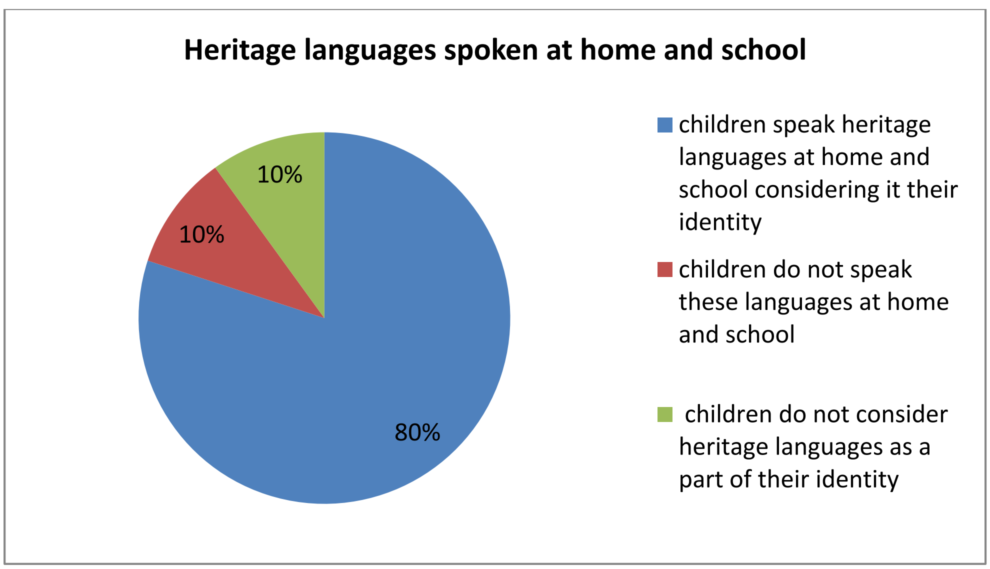
Pie chart no---01

The study has identified remarkable increase of bilingual speakers in East London where ethnic minorities knowing two languages are more dominant. This study was carried out in East London area where most of the respondents are British born Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani.



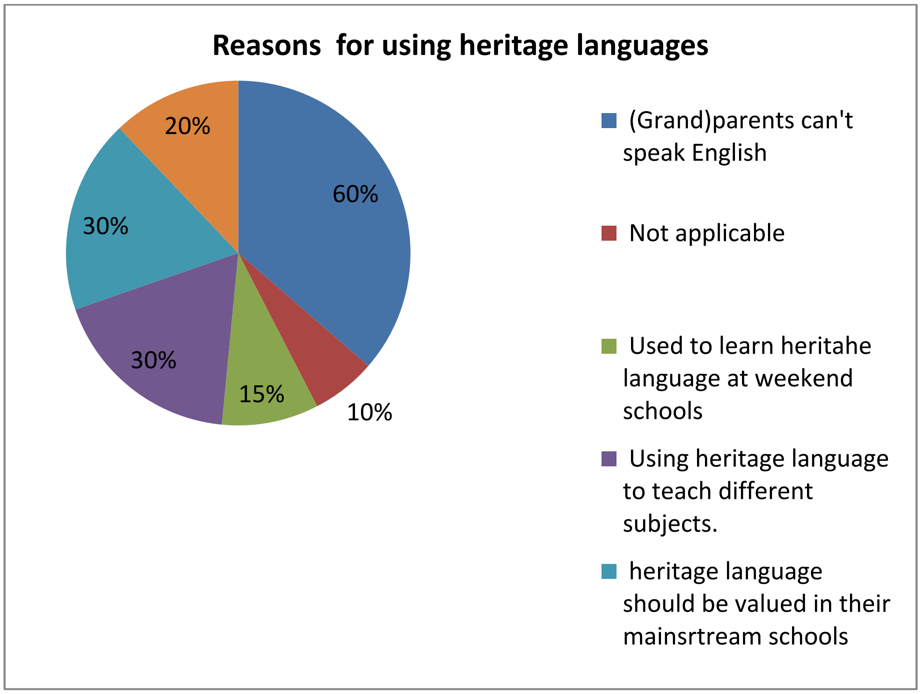
Pie chart no—02

There are more Bengali heritage speakers in East London noticeably in Tower Hamlets area. There are Urdu, Hindi and other speakers in small proportion as well.



Pie chart no—03

Most of the ethnic minorities in East London consider their heritage languages as part of their identities. They find possible ways to apply their heritage languages both at home and schools depending on situations. A small number of ethnic minorities are reluctant to use their heritage languages. Data analysis reveals that some mainstream schools in the UK have restricted heritage language use where “symbolic violence’ could take place (Bourdieu, 1991). These children do not feel the urge to practice heritage languages at home. They are more used to the standard variety of English (Kenner & Ruby, 2012).



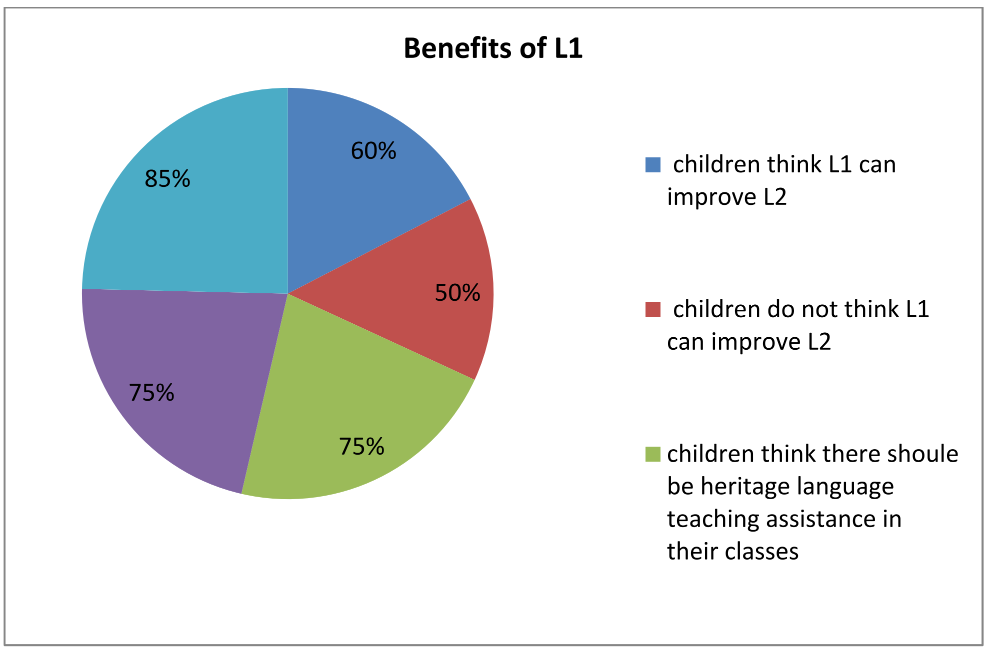
Pie chart no-04

Most of the children are second or third generation British born Asian children. Most of their parents or grandparents cannot speak English. But they allow their children to study in mainstream schools to secure a place in job market (Kenner and Ruby, 2012). Their children are bound to face the challenges in two ways. Firstly, they have to speak their heritage languages at home to communicate with their parents and grandparents. Secondly, they have to learn standard variety of English to show they are more British (Kenner and Ruby, 2012).

The graph shows that 30% children with the same cultural and linguistic background used to attend weekend schools to learn heritage languages. For example, in the Tower Hamlets area, there are many complementary schools. Most of the students are Bengali. They learn their heritage language to interact and have daily conversations with their parents and grandparents.

The graph shows that 30% children consider that their heritage languages should be valued in their mainstream schools. Sometimes, there can be a couple of children from the same cultural and linguistic background. They might feel it is convenient to share their experience of study in their heritage language. In this circumstance, other monolingual children should not mock the ethnic minority children. They feel that their school authority should take initiatives so that other students do not bully ethnic minority children. Such as, they think that their heritage languages can be used to teach other subjects religious studies or literature. They can interpret one object in two or more words. Their understanding of study will be enhanced more following inclusion of their heritage languages to teach other subjects (Kenner & Ruby, 2012).

This pie chart also demonstrates that 20% children are attending weekend schools to learn their heritage languages. They consider their heritage languages important in their lives. They feel that their parents or grandparents cannot speak proper English. They can express their cultural and linguistic experiences with their parents and grandparents. There are qualified teachers for heritage languages. Most of them have qualification from their home country (Kenner & Ruby, 2012). Some of them have gained additional qualification in the UK like PGCE. They collect course materials from their home country and teach in weekend schools (Kenner & Ruby, 2012). However, materials collected for teaching heritage languages are not sufficient. Materials produced in the UK for teaching heritage languages might enhance bilingual learning.



Pie chart no-5

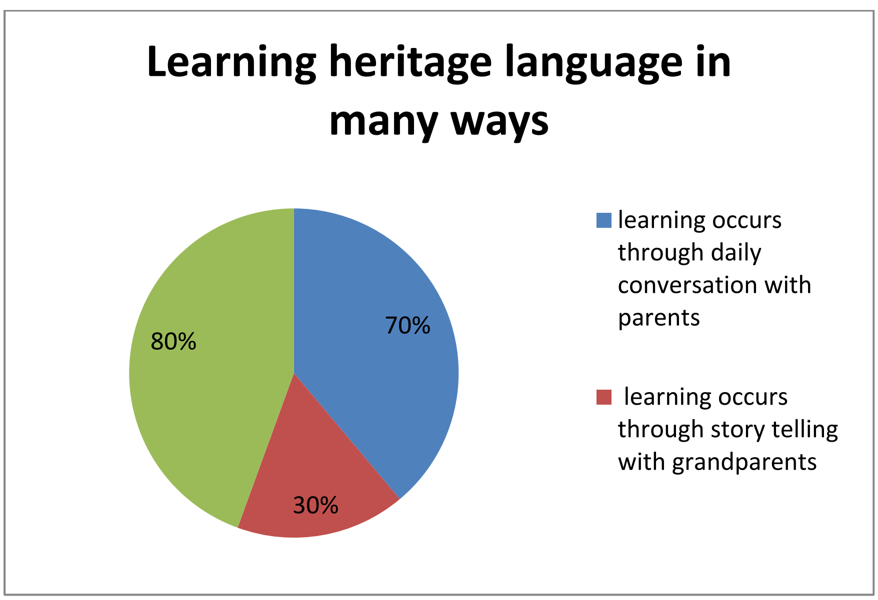
Most of the children in this study believe that employing heritage language teaching assistants would contribute more to their cognitive development. Children use their heritage language to gain linguistic smartness, to translate other languages and to secure a job. For example, when they become adult, they can do interpreting job. Many visitors come to the UK every year for treatment or business purpose. They can earn a lot of money by working as interpreters. They do not want to lose their bilingual identity in the monolingual influential society. Bilingual identity can enhance their professional development in future as well.

Inclusion of heritage languages in curriculum

This pie chart also shows that 75% children want their heritage languages as a part of national curriculum. Although British curriculum allowed some dominant minority languages like French and Spanish in the national curriculum, recent report on education suggests that the government of the UK will allow other languages to be a part of the national curriculum. Children feel that inclusion of their heritage languages in the national curriculum of the UK would make them more in their education.

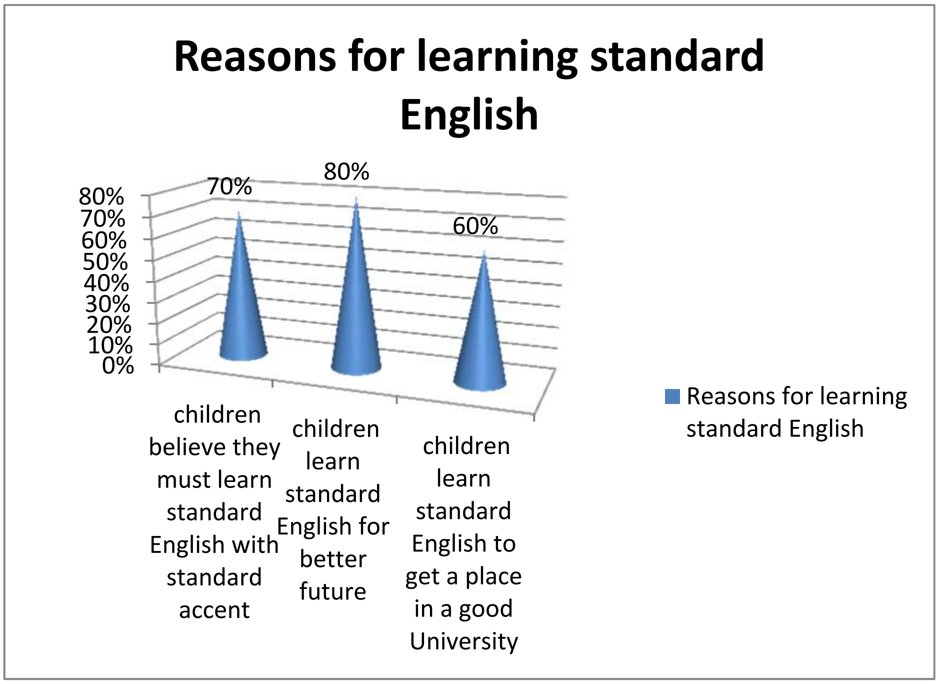
85% children do not show their bilingual identity because of the monolingual environment in mainstream schools. They are more interested to show their multilingual identity provided that they get suitable room to do so. Their monolingual silence (Kenner & Ruby, 2012) can be broken by including their heritage language in the national curriculum of the UK and keeping teaching assistants in their respective heritage languages. However, I believe that it is not possible to keep heritage language teaching assistants for a very small number of ethnic minority children. It would probably be logical to keep heritage language teaching assistants for a good number of ethnic minority children.

Some children in the questionnaires (question no-14) have commented that they are learning the dominant English language for future professional development. Similarly, British children can try to learn Bengali language for cognitive development and getting job of interpreter in future. Therefore, language learning does not go in vain. If this reciprocal learning process continues, ethnic minority children can remove their bilingual shyness.



Pie chart no-06

This pie chart shows that 70% children learn their heritages languages through daily conversation with parents and 30% learn by storytelling from grandparents. East London is a place where most of the Asian people live. Therefore, 80% children do not see any problem using their heritage languages in the place where they live.



Graph no—01

More than 70% ethnic minorities in East London acknowledge that they must learn Standard English with standard accent. They need Standard English for a better future. In this regard, the percentage stands at 80%. On the other hand, 60% children learn Standard English to secure a place in a good University. They all are concerned about learning Standard English with Standard English accent. Mainstream schools are the only places for them to develop standard variety of English. Moreover, a good number of children feel that they can contribute more to the place where they live by learning their heritage languages. They can retain their respective culture and identity in their respective living place by improving their heritage languages.

Structured Interview

The study conducted four structured interviews from three primary schools in East London. Previous paragraphs discussed the need of Standard English for a better future and heritage languages for communicating and interpreting purposes. Most of the major dialogues of the respondents show the same concern. Major dialogues have been presented below without any alteration.

Interview 1

Interviewer: Rasel, Participant: Ibrahim
Rasel: Are you interested in speaking more than one language? Which languages?
Ibrahim: Yes, Sometimes, if it is easy, I will be able to learn quickly and learn more

languages….
Rasel: Which languages?
Ibrahim: Urdu! And Arabic…..I wanna go to foreign places like Saudi Arabia and Middle East and Bangladesh…… …… …..
Rasel: Why Bengali?
Ibrahim: Bengali is my heritage language. My forefathers and father used to use Bengali language
Rasel: Why do you use more than one language?
Ibrahim: I wanna go to other country. I can't speak their language. I will be able to communicate with some many people.
Rasel: Which language do you usually speak at home and why?
Ibrahim: English……I speak English. Because everyone knows a lot of English and feel comfortable with English.
Rasel: Why are you not comfortable with heritage language?
Ibrahim: Because, I don't feel comfortable, when I was a baby I was bought up in English, I wasn't brought up in Bengali, So I feel weird speaking Bengali. I know my mom and aunty speak English.
Rasel: Do you use your heritage language in the place where you live? When and in which situations?
Ibrahim: I do…..like I already said; my dad and my grandparents speak heritage language, Er… I speak heritage language when I go to Bangladesh.
Rasel: If you were given the opportunity, which language would you want to be included in the school curriculum apart from English?
Ibrahim: Arabic……we believe life after death……. So If I learn Arabic, I will be able to answer questions in Arabic in the day of judgement….it is the language of the Holy Quran.
Rasel: What do you think students learn Standard English in school?
Ibrahim: Because, students should learn standard English…the whole world English! English! , when you go for a job, you need English, you should speak fluent English.
Rasel: Are you comfortable with your bilingual identity?
Ibrahim**:** Yes. But sometimes different words confuse me.

Interview 2

Interviewer:Rasel, Participant: Redwan
Rasel: Are you interested in speaking more than one language and which languages?
Redwan: Yes
Rasel: Which languages?
Redwan: Arabic,Bengali,quite a few different languages…because if I go to another country , I don't know their languages..because I can't communicate…
Rasel: Why do you use more than one language?
Redwan: Because, sometimes people talk English with me…but what happens…if I go to Hong kong , ..Something bad if I don't understand their language
Rasel: Which language do you usually speak at home and why?
Redwan: I speak Bengali and English…my dad and grandparents , they speak Bengali and they brought up from Bangladesh…
Rasel: Do you use your heritage language in the place where you live? When and in which situations?
Redwan: I do sometimes…quite a few places, if it is necessary I don't use it…when I come home, I use it with my dad and grandparents
Rasel: If you were given the opportunity, which language would you want to be included in the school curriculum apart from English?
Redwan**:** Yea, there is a few languages I want to know: Arabic, Bengali. I will choose Arabic, because the Holy Quran is written in Arabic, so that's why I wanna learn Arabic.

Rasel: What do you think students learn Standard English at schools?
Redwan: It's good to know Standard English….people might not understand poor English

Interview 3

Interviewer: Rasel, Participant: Sania
Rasel**:** Are you interested in speaking more than one language and which languages?
Sania: Yea…Italian, Bengali and English
Rasel: Why do you use more than one language?
Sania: I born in Italy and it is my native language, I need more than one language for better Communication.
Rasel: Which language do you usually speak at home and why?
Sania: I speak Italian at home. It is native language. My parents are fluent in Italian.
Rasel: Do you use your heritage language in the place where you live? When and in which situations?
Sania: I don't …people don't understand Italian
Rasel: If you were given the opportunity, which language would you want to be included in the school curriculum apart from English?
Sania: Definitely Italian, I feel comfortable with Italian Language,
Rasel: What do you think students learn Standard English in school?
Sania: I need it for my education. I can get a good future with good English

Interview 4

Interviewer:Rasel, Participant: Hisham
Rasel: Are you interested in speaking more than one language and which languages?
Hisham: Yea…Bengali and English
Rasel: Why do you use more than one language?
Hisham: I use English for my school, they don't get my heritage language. I use Bengali for my home.
Rasel: Which language do you usually speak at home and why?
Hisham: As you know, my parents does not understand good English. I must speak Bengali with them.
Rasel: Do you use your heritage language in the place where you live? When and in which situations?
Hisham: Yea…I use it quite often.I have many friends who speak Bengali.I do social chat and do fun
Rasel: If you were given the opportunity, which language would you want to be included in the school curriculum apart from English?
Hisham: Bengali, we can learn heritage culture more when it is included in school curriculum
Rasel: What do you think students learn Standard English in school?
Hisham: I want to study in a good university and I need good English for that.

Pedagogical approaches and suggestions

Research in the teaching of heritage languages is "limited" (Anderson, 2008, p. 83). However, recent development in the theoretical pedagogical approaches has suggested the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach to teach heritage languages (Anderson, 2008, Kenner & Ruby, 2012). Recent development of the CLT has focused more on the role of grammar in the language classroom. Because of this development, some researchers refer CLT to post-communicative approach (Pachler, 2000 in Anderson, 2008, p. 84). The researcher would like to concentrate on post-CLT in teaching ethnic minority languages.

I would like to discuss communicative approach in brief before providing suggestions in the light of findings. The development of CLT dates back to the 1960s. Its aims have become much broader and the means of achieving these aims have become clearer with a more authentic focus on the role of grammar (Anderson, 2008). The main secret of CLT is "the communicative competence" (Canale, 1983). CLT focuses on the four language skills: Reading, Writing, Listening and speaking in real life situations. It investigates the functional, communicative and structural aspects of languages. Broadly, CLT emphasizes meaning in communication in real life situations through using it. It also applies translations and whatever things are needful for the effective and appropriate use of languages. CLT has developed strong connections with the socio cultural contexts. It enables language learners authentically to when, where, how and to whom use the target language with communicative competence. In order to show a more advanced insight of CLT, Canale and Swain (1980 in Canale, 1983) developed four dimensions of communicative competence: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, Discourse competence and strategic competence. Briefly, the communicative language teaching approach is much more learner-oriented (Anderson, 2008: 86).

I identified a number of useful suggestions to teach heritage languages in the light of literature review and analysis of questionnaires and interviews. I believe that brainstorming, directed activities related to texts, collaborative project work (Anderson, 2008), use of social web, parental support, storytelling by grandparents (Kenner & Ruby, 2012) can contribute much more to the cognitive development of the multilingual learners. Moreover, activities like role play, pair work, group work and drama are worthwhile in developing literacy practices of the ethnic minorities in London.

Scaffolding and Social interaction

Coyle, Hood & Mash (2010, p. 29) underpin the notion that more capable children or adults should provide scaffolding for children's endeavors. Children should be given support when needed. The adult should modify the amount of help that a child is given in scaffolding mode. Nevertheless, an adult person should intervene to prevent the child regressing (Bruner, 1978), while over the time, the child will become less reliant on others to perform the task correctly. During the presentation of Montessori materials, the teacher always modifies how much help the child is given. It depends on the teacher's close observations and knowledge of the child. In this regard, Rogoff attempts to modify Bruner's deficiencies while building on Vygotsky's ZPD. However, Rogoff criticizes scaffolding and ZPD for the weighing of control towards the adult; she affirms that the child's cognitive development is embedded in the context of social relationships and sociocultural tools. Accordingly, Rogoff (1990) developed the concept of guided participation; which is a form of an apprenticeship. It is based on Vygotsky's social construction where the knowledge is socially constructed and a product of culture. This idea involves the collaborative process which happens between children and adults.

Guided participation is a very effective way to teach early years children. The following activity can clarify this process.

Teacher/Capable peer: Teacher cuts a piece of paper in the shape of a Bengali letter [ন] which represents the "N" sound in English. He shows it to his students.
Child: The child looks at the shape and tries to make one by himself. He asks the teacher the name of the Bengali letter.
Teacher: The teacher explains [ন]=N. The teacher shows other Bengali letters which are similar in meaning and pronunciation.
Child: The child is aware of the two different letters with similar meaning and pronunciation. It eases his learning of heritage language alphabets.
Teacher: Teacher shows other Bengali letters
Child: He tries repeatedly and gets ideas of Bengali letters.

This conversation shows that teacher's or more capable peer's assistance in teaching heritage language can benefit early year's children. Once memorization is completed, children's competence in Bengali language alphabets becomes stronger. After this competence, ideas of Bengali word formation can be shown. For example,

Bengali **English**
বাবা(Baba) = Father
মা (ma) = Mother
বোন (Bon) = Sister
ভাই(Bhai) = Brother
বন্ধু (Bondhu) = Friend

Teachers can ask students to bring some family photos. Later, teachers ask the students about the people in the picture. Teachers explain the relationships in the picture in Bengali for example. These students are aware of words which show relationship. Most of them use this heritage language words like grandmother (নানী, father বাবা) at home. Now they are aware of their use of words in the heritage language. Their concept of heritage language words start developing. Once they have good command of word formation, teachers take initiatives to start teaching sentence formation in heritage languages which shows authentic context and helps students to achieve communicative competence.

The following example shows how teachers can teach heritage language with the help of English sentence formation:

Sentence formation in Bengali and English

Subject+Verb+Object (English)	Note: we add s/es with the verb if the subject is like"He/She/it/Peter"	কর্তা(S)+কর্ম(O)+ ক্রিয়া(V) (বাংলা)Bengali	Note: the verbs in Bengali do not take s/es like English
I eat rice.		আমি ভাত খাই (I rice eat) The meaning in Bengali is logical. However, it shows illogical sentence formation in English	

Teachers can teach these differences very easily. Teachers can first write the subjects of both languages and then verbs and then objects on white board and explain orally the meaning of each sentence in Bengali and English. Students will be aware of the differences of the two languages.

The analysis of word and sentence formation enables students gain some competence in both heritage and the English language. The next step is to involve students in many communicative activities through storytelling. Popular stories told by children's grandparents should be collected for children's bilingual development.

The following are the examples of two Bengali popular folk stories:

The Fox and the Crocodile- a folk story from Bangladesh
"A long time ago, near a small village by a shimmering lake, in the shadow of the green mountains, there lived a clever fox and his faithful friend, the crocodile…" Full story can be retrieved from: http://www3.hants.gov.uk/story-2.pdf .

Buri and the Marrow in English & Bengali-a folk story from Bangladesh
"An old woman travels through the forest to meet her daughter. On her way she meets a fox, a tiger and a lion - and they all want to eat her! Buri tells them to wait until she returns, when she'll be nice and fat. When it is time to go home, her daughter thinks of a plan to outwit the tiger and the lion. But will the fox be fooled? Full story can be retrieved from http://www.languagelizard.com/Buri-and-the-Marrow-p/buri.htm .

Teaching Language through Literature
Popular traditional folk stories are good source of literature. Most of the children in early year's schools are familiar with the traditional folk stories. The previous paragraphs showed word and sentence formations of Bengali language. Children can be involved in pair work, group work and brainstorming through traditional literature reading.

Transliteration and translation
Traditional folk stories can be transliterated in heritage languages. It will develop children's existing knowledge. Children's knowledge with word and sentence structure can be enhanced by transliteration system. For example the folk story "Burry and the Marrow" can be transliterated and translated into Bengali. Below is the shining example of this:

> "এক বুরি তার মেয়ের সাথে দেখা করার জন্য বনের ভিতর দিয় পার হচ্ছিল। পথে তার বাঘ,শিয়াল আর শিংহে সাথে দেখা হল। সবাই তাকে খেতে চাইল। বুরি তাদের অপেক্ষা করতে বলল যাতে সে মটা তাজা হয়ে আসতে পারে। ফেরার সময় হল। তার মে একটি পরিকল্পনা আটল যাতে সবাই বোকা হয়। কিন্তু শিয়ালকে কি বোকা বানানো সম্ভব ?.."
>
> Transliteration
>
> ek buri tar mer sathe dakha korar jonno bonar vitor dia jassilo. Pothe se akti bug, shingho abong sial delklo jara takhe khete chailo. Buri bollo se tar mer bari theke khei mota hoye asbe. Tokhon tara kheye moja pabe……

Children can be asked to read the English version of the story first. After that they can read the transliteration and finally read the translation in Bengali. It is also possible to show in other languages. After getting the clear idea of the story, they become ready for different communicative activities like matching words, fill in gaps, answering to questions and multiple choices.

Pair work

Teachers can make pairs of the students of his class and ask them to talk to his peer about the story. It is a five minutes activity. Students participate in pair work and try to find out the Bengali meaning of the story.

Word matching

After that, the teacher asks all the students to come to the white board one by one and write the Bengali or the English word they discussed and learned.

For example,

পত্নী (Old woman)
তার (?)
মেয়ে (Daughter)
(?) Forest
মা (Mother)
শিয়াল (?)
বাঘ (Tiger)
সিংহের (Lion)

Writing

After that, the teacher can ask the students to write answers to some questions. For example,

Where was the Buri (old woman) going? (বুরি কোথায় যাচ্ছে?) (buri kothai jasse)
What was the problem on her way? (তার পথে সমস্যা কি ছিল?) (ter pothe ki somasha hoyechilo)
How did she survive? (সে কিভাবে বেঁচে ছিল?) (se ki vabe bechechilo)

Students can be given fifteen minutes to write answers to these questions. The teacher can silently monitor their progress. Finally the teacher checks spelling and grammar. In this section, there is special emphasis on Bengali and English grammar in an authentic context.

Grammar in authentic context

স্কুলের পরে, আমি বাড়িতে যাব
Skul er pore ami bari jabo
After school I **will** go home.

During the class, the teacher explains the use of future tense in Bengali and English. For example, in the above sentence, **"will"** in the English sentence and "**ব**" in the Bengali sentence indicate future. The teacher also explains that there is no adding of s/es with verbs in Bengali. Therefore, students can use all verbs with all subjects. Students become aware of future tense and third person singular number. Later, the teacher can ask the students to bring ideas of another popular folk story and describe it in the next class with proper use of tense and number. Finally, the teacher asks students to describe their daily routine following tense and number in their heritage languages. The teacher monitors their mistakes and corrects them.

Parental support in Bilingual learning

Parental support is very important in developing a child's bilingual mind. Daily conversation is very effective. It helps in habit formation. Parents should keep contact with their children's respective school and follow up children's bilingual development. They should speak in a standard form of heritage language at home. This will develop children's bilingual mind. Parents can select interesting heritage stories and tell their children in their free time. However, it may raise issues for parents who cannot speak both standard heritage language and the English language. In this situation, social media can be a good solution.

Social media in teaching heritage language

Social media is very important in teaching and learning languages. There is a wide range of social media on the internet. However, popular social media are Facebook, Google Plus, YouTube, Twitter, Linked In, and institutional social blog. Social media challenges traditional models of literacy and allows people to communicate and collaborate. It also gives people an audience and removes hierarchy as it is built from the bottom up. Social media is open and transparent.

Schools in ethnic minority areas can activate some types of social media like blogging to enhance learning and teaching. It allows less capable learners to communicate with more capable peers and teachers. It creates a social bond. Social web browsers can write their own problem of learning. They can sometimes use their heritage language in transliteration in their school blog and get feedback in the same language. Ethnic minority children can communicate and find friends with the same language community. Children are engaged and more fascinated by popular social media like "Facebook". They can create ideas for using Facebook. The structured interview and questionnaires I have used in this study show that most of the children use Facebook and communicate with their heritage language community. Facebook has a translation system. They can use their heritage language, English or transliteration on the Facebook wall and keep in touch with their friends and family. Therefore, the use of social media for whole school communication needs to be included within the whole school communications policy. Collaborations between schools and parents can enable children to upload family pictures on social media and write comments in their heritage languages.

Inclusion of heritage language in the national curriculum

Inclusion of heritage languages in the National Curriculum of England for primary schools would greatly benefit ethnic minority children. This would allow mainstream schools to engage ethnic minority children in communicative heritage language activities. This would also promote children's confidence that their heritage languages are respected in mainstream schools and they will feel that they are a part of the wider society. This would also increase the opportunity to use and develop their knowledge and skills in their first languages. Professionals in bilingualism have come "to recognize the importance of first language development for children learning English as an additional language (NALDIC, 2009, p. 1)". Adopting a bilingual pedagogical approach in early years would subscribe to the view that a bilingual pedagogy is beneficial to all children and young people, those who are bilingual and monolingual and those who are learning EAL. Many bilingual staff in mainstream schools should provide valuable bilingual support to learners, helping them and their parents access the curriculum and the routines and procedures of the schools in early years setting (NALDIC, 2009, p. 2).

Conclusion

The study attempted to find an acceptable approach to teaching multilingualism in a primary school context in East London. A number of suggestions have been underpinned to break the silence of bilingual children (Kenner & Ruby, 2012). In addition, the need for collaborations between mainstream school and complementary schools in East London has been emphasized. This study has suggested suitable approaches to teaching heritage languages to ethnic minority school children in multilingual contexts and data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and a literature review. It also focused on the role of policy makers forming a bilingual school curriculum which could create room for the bilingual children. It showed how heritage languages can be helpful in developing the target language. The study also showed how learning reaches a successful level when it is scaffolded onto existing knowledge (Hall & Cook, 2012).

Bilingual children can therefore show their identity in the wider society through respect and recognition. Inclusion of a bilingual syllabus in the early years would be helpful as most of the acquisition starts from childhood (Krashen, 1982). Mainstream school teachers should sometimes visit complementary schools to see the progress and situation of ethnic minority children (Kenner & Ruby, 2012). This would increase the level of confidence of the ethnic minority children to use their heritage languages in mainstream schools. A bilingual curriculum would probably help prevent school bullying of ethnic minority children.

It is very important that different approaches and methods should be used to teach ethnic minority languages. I considered a post communicative approach to teach ethnic minority languages. Activities like pair work, group work, role play, brainstorming, multiple choice and filling in the gaps have been suggested in this study. Moreover, parental support has been considered very important in developing children's bilingual mind. Social media like Facebook and School Blog have been emphasized. Children feel curious and interested in online learning. Therefore, learning can occur in a number of ways like blogging on the school social web, personal information exchanging on a Facebook wall, transliteration on a social web, writing heritage language in Facebook and Twitter. This would promote bilingual learning. Storytelling from grandparents can be a good source of fun and entertainment for bilingual children. It would enhance bilingual learning to a great extent. Finally, a convenient environment of bilingual learning could be established through the inclusion of a bilingual curriculum in early years. Bilingual children should also be aware of the competition of the wider society and prepare themselves to be competent participants in the job market and business.

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Appendix

Questionnaire on Multilingualism

1. How many languages do you speak?
   A. 1 B. 2 C. 3 D. 4 E. 5 or more
2. Apart from English what other languages do you speak?
   A. Bengali B. Hindi C. Urdu D. specify…..
3. Do you speak this language in your daytime school?
   A. Sometimes B. Not at all

If the answer is B, could you tell me why do you not speak the heritage language in daytime school?

4. Do you think your heritage language is related to your identity?
   A. Yes B. No Give a reason……..
5. Do you speak your heritage language at home?
   A. Not at all B. Sometimes C. Always
6. Why don't you use English at home?
   A. My parents can't speak English B. My grandparents cannot speak English C. Not applicable
7. Do you learn your heritage language in a weekend complementary school?
   A. Yes B. No C. Used to
8. Why do you learn this language?
   A. To retain my bilingual identity B. To communicate with my grandparents C. Not applicable
9. Do you think your heritage language should be valued in your daytime school?
   A. Definitely B. Sometimes C. No. Give reasons…..
10. Do you think knowing your heritage language can be used to teach different subjects?
    A. No B. 30% C. 40% D. Specify….
11. Do you think heritage language can help you improve your English?
    A. Yes B. No C. Give a reason…..
12. Do you think there should be a teaching assistant in your heritage language in your classroom?
    A. Yes B. No C. Give a reason…….
13. Do you think your heritage language should be included in your school curriculum?
    A. Yes B. No C. Give a reason…..
14. If you were given the opportunity, would you be interested in showing that you know more than one language?
    A. Yes B. No C. Give a reason…..

15. If you do not attend a complementary school, how do you learn your heritage language?

A. Story telling by grandparents B. Daily conversation with parents C. Internet and media D. Other…..

16. Do you see any problem with using your heritage language in the place where you live?

A. No B. Yes C. Give reasons…..

17. Are you afraid of speaking your heritage language in your school?

A. Yes B. No C. Give reasons…..

18. Do you think you must learn Standard English with a Standard English accent?

19. Yes B. No C. Give reasons……

20. Why do you have to learn Standard English at school?

A. Better future B. to get a place in a good university C. Specify…..

21 Do you think you can contribute more to the place where you live by learning your heritage language?

A. Yes B. No C. Give reasons……..

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International Student Academic Support: Academic Support given to Chinese International Students from Teachers

JesAlana Stewart

Abstract

With the large flux of international students attending American universities in order to achieve a higher level of education, it is imperative that these institutions provide sufficient resources to enable them to succeed. The vast majority of these students have had no experience with the western academic system, and they need an academic cultural ambassador to guide them in this setting. The foremost resource in helping these non-native students to navigate academia is the teacher. This study takes a qualitative approach of four case studies of freshman composition instructors of international students in order to develop the perspective of a first line of defense. This research finds many commonalities among the perspectives of these teachers, particularly in how empathic these instructors are towards their non-native students, and it reveals many forms of accommodations that they make in order to help their students succeed. It discovers that from the perspective of these teachers, this particular group of students will only use the resources that they are encouraged to utilize by each individual instructor (even when there are other known services available to them). Furthermore this study calls for more research into the available resources that international students use, more training for teachers who are going to instruct this very diverse population, and it advocates for the development of further resources for the future.

Keywords: international students, English composition, western rhetoric

Introduction

With the rise of international students coming to the United States for higher educational purposes, and a majority of these students being Chinese, there is an increased need for an understanding of how to accommodate the academic requirements of these students. In order to truly facilitate the educational growth of this specific group, it is essential to first recognize the various difficulties that they encounter, and to assist students in coping with these difficulties. Those who are aware of these struggles are essentially the first line of defense for international students. They know these students as individuals and realize the different challenges that they face as non-native speaking (NNS) students. Finally they combat stereotypes and guide these disenfranchised students through a new and complicated system of education. They are the teachers.

Literature Review

When looking at the academic support given to students directly from teachers it is important that both students and instructors have a heightened awareness of and respect for the rhetorical differences of the two cultures. For example, the conventions of writing in regards to plagiarism, supporting evidence, and the logical progression of thought, are all vastly different depending on the culture. Thus it is important to understand these differences, which is best accomplished through an orientation that does not disregard either culture as a deficit, but rather allows for the positive transfer of strengthened rhetorical devices from L1 Chinese, in combination with an understanding of the appropriate writing conventions of native speakers (NSs) in L2 English. This, therefore, leads to a stringent dichotomy in the teaching of English composition. Either the instructor must teach students a Standard English while avoiding cultural disenfranchisement, which is most successfully accomplished through an intercultural rhetoric (IR) perspective (Connor, 2011), or they must teach them how to navigate translingual practices (Canagarajah, 2013), where students may incorporate all language practices that they are aware of, to develop a new and interesting type of personal rhetoric.

It is important when dealing with the dichotomy between Intercultural Rhetoric and Translingual Practices that both theoretical orientations work together to keep each side in check. It is because the weakness of one theory is the strength for the other that these ideas could work together in practice to fulfill the needs of both students and audience, without disenfranchising either one. For example, the foreseen difficulty of Translingual Practice is the possibility for the incomprehension of a native readership, which Intercultural Rhetoric attends to, while the criticism of Intercultural Rhetoric is the disenfranchisement of the student, which Translingual practice appeases. So rather than discount both as inadequate theories, it stands to reason that the interplay between the two theories, and the exchange of various cultures and rhetorical traditions, could be a beneficial combination and the orientation needed to create validity and acceptance of international students' writing.

In other words, when the writing of an international student is found to be near incomprehensible to a native speaking readership of English, perhaps this learner would benefit from the overt instruction of IR. If, however, this form of writing exhibits interesting and culturally enriching rhetorical moves and is simultaneously understood by a sympathetic native audience, then a Translingual approach would be more suited. These examples, of course, are the two extremes and any combination of the two theoretical frameworks would be of great benefit to NNS English compositions.

Thus, there has been a call for research in how to teach NNS's English composition in a way that does not marginalize or patronize them. Mina Shaughnessy has advocated research since the 1970's that not only looks into pedagogies that work for both the students and the teachers who “grapple with words and methodologies they don’t understand, experiencing as they do all the frustrations and embarrassments of the person who must say something important in a strange language” (Shaughnessy, 1973); but that also highlights the need for formal training of teachers who instruct writing to various disenfranchised students (Shaughnessy, 1998). She highlighted the growing phenomenon of diversity in the classroom, and how many of these students “shared the experience of having had their language differences ignored or treated as a disadvantage, (and) of having had the fun and pride of language drained out of their school lives” (Shaughnessy, 1998). Finally, she discussed the tendency of teachers to have “fatalistic views about many of their students difficulties” (Shaughnessy, 1977) because there is a lack of scholarship on the generalization of rhetorical moves and differences, which may help to instruct such students. The need to address all of these issues still exists.

Scholars in the United States such as Thonus (1993; 1999; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004), Severino (2004), and Williams (2002) have attempted to address such issues, particularly in relation to help given to students in learning and tutorial centers. Even more authors still, have attended to the question of how to instruct international students with articles written as guides to tutors and teachers (Nan, 2012; Williams, 2002). Thonus (1993) even advises tutors to use Contrastive Rhetoric (mentioned above, as its newer form IR) as a means to raise consciousness in students, and to focus on the student’s ability as a reader. These authors give a list of *do’s* and *don’ts* as a checklist in how to deal with NNSs, and these suggestions are far more helpful than simply instructing a NNS as one would a NS. However, these writers do not actually provide any solid theory or practices that are guaranteed to work for NNSs, and many of these suggestions go against the writing center methodology, or mythology according to Thonus (2001).

This situation further complicates the question of where NNS typically go for help, and whether they prefer tutorials from English Composition Instructors or from the Writing Center Tutorials. Do these students simply go to the form of academic support that they know about, or that is recommended to them? Do they seek out help, and for what reasons? If these students try to get help from unreceptive instructors, will they still be willing to go to tutorial services, or vice versa? Many of these questions go unanswered in the literature.

In order to appropriately answer these questions and to address the needs of NNSs, Thonus (2003) suggests that “by focusing learners’ attention on how to write rather than what to write for a particular assignment, by emphasizing a balance between correct grammar usage and sound rhetorical style, and by offering learners explicit direction,” instructors have the ability to advance the English writing of NNSs. These suggestions, along with the right attitude towards international students may lead towards positive advancements in teaching of these disenfranchised students, and they all begin with the instructor.

Many authors assert that knowing specific cultural information, particularly about the Chinese rhetorical tendencies and cultural practices, is essential for teachers to be able to assist these learners in a more meaningful way (Connor, 2011;

Nan, 2012; Severino, 2004; Thonus, 2003; Williams, 2002). In knowing more about the culture and its various rhetorical strategies, teachers are better prepared to attend to these differences. They are more capable of recognizing the rhetorical patterns and highlighting the differences in cultural writing styles, in order to give more effective suggestions (such as those given by Thonus) on how to navigate these distinctions for the L2 writer in a culturally sensitive way.

This entails the differences between the cultures that merge within the classroom. Chinese culture, for example, is often times viewed as a polite culture in contrast to the more abrasive American persona. Since this is the overarching culture of international students at American universities currently, it is essential for researchers to explore the possible forms of dominance between the two cultures. One such example of Chinese polite culture within a tutorial is when "Student K interpreted (the tutor interrupting) as signaling his interest, consistent with her NNS positive politeness culture, which views face-threatening acts by role superiors more positively than in Western cultures" (Thonus, 2002). Although the instructor interpreted his own behavior as abrasive and forceful, the student rather interpreted his actions as helpful and normal.

Finally, it is also important for teachers to know the difficulties that international students face, because these students are constantly learning new intricacies to a language in which they are expected to write at a higher academic level, which may lead to various misunderstanding. For example, whereas tutorials with NS are dominated by niceties and tactful polite speech, for many "NNSs, this politeness strategy can be a barrier to comprehension" (Thonus, 2004) and actually impedes understanding. In fact Thonus, premeditated this finding with her 2003 research, suggesting that NNS of English actually prefer overt instruction rather than polite suggestions, because this means of educating in a more blatant form is more conducive to their understanding of the new rhetorical strategies in English. Additionally, this form of direct instruction from teachers is more beneficial than harmful to these students. However this places the teacher in a particularly difficult position where they must choose between the dichotomy of being polite while having students misunderstand, or of being direct and having students understand with the possibility of being offended (Thonus, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

It is evident that a call has been made for better practices in the teaching of English composition to international students in a more effective and responsible manner. However, very little research has looked into the beliefs and expectations of current instructors of this population. Therefore, in order to better understand what perceptions current instructors have of international students and the challenges they believe are prevalent, this research took an ethnographic perspective to collect data and used grounded theory to analyze it. Through this methodology, and in conjunction with the researchers beliefs, this study found three theoretical perspectives working throughout the teacher's perceptions.

Firstly, a Vygotskian method was found to be useful in the instruction of all students, especially international students. Nakamaru (2010) states that having a Vygotskian orientation can help teachers and tutors enable their students to improve their writing through "scaffolding in expressing what they want to say in the first place, e.g., by providing appropriate vocabulary or modeling the use of idiomatic lexical chunks and sentence patterns." This is echoed to a great extent by Jessica Williams' (2002) study:

> The zone of proximal development emerges collaboratively and individually and is subject to constant change. Some learners may be almost ready for self-regulated activity, requiring only the most implicit guidance. Other learners may need far more—and more explicit—assistance and continued reliance on an expert for *scaffolding* of new knowledge. Scaffolding is the support provided by the expert that allows the learner to perform the new task. (p. 85)

Thus, the use of the Vygotskian zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding provides teachers with the ability to motivate students through knowledge that they already have in order to obtain new information that they may not have been able to achieve on their own. Through this orientation and with the various suggestions that these writers have provided, perhaps teachers in using these techniques will help NNS students to improve in their academic writing abilities. Therefore this study uses a Vygotskian lens to analyze and interpret data gathered from teachers in regards to how they instruct international students. This study particularly focuses on the Vygotskian approach in relation to the means of accommodation that teachers provide students in order to help them achieve a higher level of academic writing.

In conjunction with Vygotsky and his ideas of the ZPD and scaffolding, this research uses the work of Connor (2011). Connor also contributes to the ongoing discussion of accommodation and she further addresses how stereotypes are present in the writing classroom. She therefore uses intercultural rhetoric as a means of appropriately constructing written language depending on the various contexts merging in a writing classroom designed for international students. She explains that in "intercultural rhetoric: (1) texts need to be seen in their full contexts, including their visual rhetoric; (2) small and large cultures interact in complex ways; and (3) interaction in intercultural communication requires accommodation and negotiation, which also requires cultural sensitivity and effective communication strategies" (Connor, 2011). Therefore, this research uses Connor's work as a means for understanding the various contexts that these teachers face, the accommodations that teachers make, and the stereotypes that both emerge in the data and that teachers combat.

Finally, an influential theoretical framework that this research draws from is the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1991). This work deals with the idea of "habitus" and its socially constructed nature, in relation to the linguistic differences of language. These concepts help to analyze coinciding data provided by teachers in regards to their empathy towards students, particularly when the teachers themselves had experienced a shift in their own linguistic habitus. Bourdieu (1991) states, habitus "involves both the linguistic capacity to generate an infinite number of grammatically correct discourses, and the social capacity to use this competence adequately in a determinate situation." (p. 37) This concept highlights the difficulty of infinite possibilities when writing in a foreign language, and the necessity for social competence. This need falls on the teachers of international students, particularly in writing, to adequately instruct the context of this new habitus.

These theoretical frameworks, although seemingly very different, function together harmoniously to help analyze emergent data surrounding the accommodations, stereotypes, and empathy that teachers experience with their international students in merging multicultural contexts. The teachers acknowledgement of the various habitus at play in an intercultural writing classroom brings forth an empathy for the difficult context of students, which leads to accommodation in instruction through means of scaffolding, and a struggle against stereotypes that come from the friction of distinct habitus and intercultural rhetorical differences at play in such a context. Thus it is evident that this study draws from each theoretical framework to unearth the cyclical situation and concerns of teaching international students to write in English in a western academic setting. This literature, although vast, does present a few gaps. Therefore, this research will address the following questions:

1. How do teachers understand the positioning of their students as internationals studying abroad and what actions do they take to help this population?
2. In what ways do teachers of this international student population adapt their instruction for their students?
3. According to teachers, where do international students go to for help in their writing of English?
4. Finally, what perceptions do teachers have of both their international students and their job instructing them?

Methodology

Over the course of a year, a qualitative classroom ethnography was conducted in the form of four case studies. The participants were instructors of a freshman composition course for international students, both the spring and the fall of 2014. In order to properly triangulate all data gathered, multiple forms were collected. These participants were willing to be both observed and interviewed, while also open to providing course artifacts such as class rosters, syllabi, assignments, presentations, and lesson plans. Therefore each instructor was observed multiple times both in the classroom and in office hours while field notes were being gathered, and they were audio recorded during semi-structured interviews. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, questions were developed in advance (see appendix A), however, additional questions and prompts were asked to clarify. Finally, all interviews went through a rigorous process of member checks where participants approved transcripts and field notes and provided additional information in personal communications.

Participants

Four instructors of a freshman composition course geared toward international students volunteered for this research. Two of the instructors were female and two were male, they were chosen based on their veteran status of teaching English composition and diverse backgrounds. A description of each instructor and their teaching mentality follows:

J is a female instructor of this English composition course with a background in TESOL and a focus on identity discourse. She has several years of teaching experience, particularly with international students, and at multiple large midwestern universities. Her enthusiasm for her work and the empathetic approach to the students makes her both highly accessible to and valued by her students. She is very receptive to all students and has a motherly and accepting demeanor towards each of them as individuals.

L is also a female instructor with a background in veteran discourse. She too has had many years of experience in teaching English composition, however, her primary experience has been in teaching domestic students. She is the kind of instructor that will highlight a student's good work in order to praise all students on their attempts of a similar construct. She is incredibly attentive toward her students, and adept at anticipating their questions. She is a highly knowledgeable instructor with great concern for the academic development of her students.

M is a male instructor with a background in medieval literature. He has an enthusiastic personality, which creates an atmosphere of trust in the classroom and makes him easily approachable. He teaches in a very student centered way, and hopes to bring fun to the classroom through various teaching techniques that he has developed over the years.

Finally, T is a male instructor from Second Language Studies who identifies as a linguist. He takes a more structured approach to instructing the course that is teacher centered. He is highly knowledgeable in the differences of rhetorical devices from L1 Chinese to L2 English, and excels at explaining and conveying these differences to his students. He hopes by breaking down these writing constructs effectively to his students that they may in turn be more successful not only in his class but also in school in general.

Environment

Despite the fact that every instructor teaches in a different classroom on a large midwestern university, each location maintains a degree of uniformity from one place to another. According to fieldnotes, all the classrooms are rectangular in shape, contain at the bare minimum one chalkboard, and one computer with a projector and screen, and has some degree of windows located within the room. Each classroom contains anywhere from 16-42 desks with attached chairs for the students and some kind of table or podium for the teacher. The classroom that instructor M has contains a large, rather distracting table, which is shoved to the far side of the room underneath the windows.

In addition to the classroom observations, teachers permitted the researcher to sit in on office hours. All four of the teachers had their office hours directly after class. J and M stayed in the same classroom, if there were no classes scheduled to meet in the same room the following hour. L and T chose to have office hours at a different location. Instructor L had office hours in an office with comparable amenities, which was simply smaller and still in the same building as her class. T also relocated his office hours to a study area/dining area, which again was in the same building as his class. It was understood that the coordinator of this course asked teachers to have office hours in an appropriate public space that would make students feel more comfortable, and that enabled the safety of all parties (document provided by participant).

Outcomes

To answer research question one, the most salient threads of discussion that ran throughout the interviews with the teachers, revolved around their inherent desire to help their students. M explained his perspective of what his students are going through by saying in an interview, "They are trying to navigate the academic world as an exile. They are fundamentally outside of the academic world, yet they have to work in it" (transcript 3A, p. 8 / audio 27: 41). His concern for his students and the difficulties that they face were the same concerns expressed by all of the teachers, and these concerns led to recurring topics in each of the interviews, such as: empathy, accommodation for the type of instruction their students both want and need, and where to send their students for additional help. There were also discussions of various stereotypes they either fight against or have heard from others, along with a call for help in not only eliminating these stereotypes but in assisting international students in general. These themes resonate directly with the research questions of this study.

These four instructors understand the difficulties that international students face from first hand experiences in their classrooms, which among the many commonalities in the interviews became apparent. Therefore, in response to research question number one, many forms of empathy were noted in interviews, classroom observations, office hours, and personal communications. This empathy emerged from the knowledge of various linguistic *habitus* being used and formed by students in the writing classroom and is viewed as one of the greatest tools teachers use in order to help their students in the course. According to McAllister and Irvine (2002), "Empathy involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral components that teachers believed were manifested in their practice." One instructor in particular, J, explained in an interview that her own difficulties in learning to communicate in another language helped her to develop this sense of empathy towards her students and gave her personal experience with which to draw from as a means of identifying more with international students. She stated, "I just try to give them pep talks like that…because it's frustrating. I know, and I tell them, too, about my experiences writing in French, and my frustration of not saying things the right way" (transcript 1A, p. 7 / audio 24:59). This expression of divergent habitus between L1 and L2 linguistic codes demonstrated that J had to overcome similar struggles to those of her students, which in turn constructed a deep sense of empathy for her current students.

The other instructors exhibited empathy, as well. L showed immense empathy, not only in her interview and classroom, but also in her office hours. After one particular office hour session with an overly concerned student, L clarified, "we do typically get to some life issue – my goal is to say 'it is not you it's everybody and it's just college'" (fieldnotes-04/28/2014). The male instructors too showed great empathy. M demonstrated this empathy in the way that he encourages students with their topics of interest, which he both demonstrated in class and mentioned in one of the interviews. He stated, "I have adopted a *Dead Poet Society* mentality of support at all costs… So I find that if I can give any encouragement at all about a topic that usually suffices" (transcript 3A, p. 13 / audio 46:53).

This empathy goes further than simply comforting students through possible stages of culture shock, but also acknowledging that students may need help beyond what they are communicating they need. For example, each of the four teachers agreed that students most often express that they need help with sentence-level errors and grammar, however it is apparent that these students are in need of help in the global rhetorical concerns of writing in western academic speech, which is also a concept from Connor's Intercultural Rhetoric. T explained in an interview:

> "I think a lot of them have expressed that they feel that they're not good at writing in English and have trouble with grammatical issues… a lot of them really are thinking in Chinese, and then writing in English. More than that, however, I think one of the biggest things is writing in a western style. In other words, really putting a lot of emphasis on having a coherent main idea, and really supporting that through evidence" (transcript 4A, p. 1 / audio 2:23).

Beyond understanding what the students overtly ask for help with and indirectly need assistance in, there was an overwhelming commonality of accommodation from the instructors for their students. Therefore, answering research question number 2, each instructor discussed the adaptations that they made to their instruction to help these students. M said in an interview, "I find that the more jargon I throw at the students the less they understand" (transcript 3A, p. 2 / audio 5:05). J also accommodates her speech, in an interview she explained, "I annunciate things and I talk kind of slower…like…this, sometimes" (transcript 1A, p. 6 / audio 21:19). By adjusting their speech these instructors use terms to scaffold information so that it becomes more accessible to their students. In addition to their speech, many of the teachers incorporate various forms of technology to supplement their instruction and to give students a visual representation of things happening in the course. Again, by using familiar technologies, these instructors use the ZPD to make course objectives more accessible to students. For example, T helped his students more through emails (document); M through texts (interview); J through PowerPoint's, Google calendar, and visuals (interview); and L through PowerPoint's and online course tools such as a class wiki for peer reviews (documents). Beyond technology, many of the instructors insisted that reading was the best way to improve their students writing. J stated, "I tell them a lot... that I learned to be a good writer because of reading" (transcript 1A, p. 6 / audio 22:55).

The four participants also helped students by accommodating various schedules including offering more of their own time. For example, the three teachers (J, L, M) who advocated office hours and encouraged students to meet with them were consequently the instructors that saw more of their students in person. These three expressed that they believed students would come to them for help first (answering research question number three), because they made explicit that they preferred students go to them rather than other resources. Although they did express that they made other options available to their students. L said in an interview, "I want them to come to me first, because I'm going to know their work better than anyone else and that's what my office hours are for" (transcript 2B, p. 14 / audio 17:31). J reiterated the same point in saying, "I definitely want them to come to me *first*!" (transcript 1A, p. 5 / audio 16:23). M too expressed, "I do make sure to not only advertise my office hours, but also just plain lunch hours" (transcript 3A, p.3 / audio 6:28). These lunch hours were times that he made available to students beyond office hours.

T, on the other hand, interacted more with his students via email, and encouraged his students to either go to writing tutorial services or to ask a native speaker for help. For T, encouraging his students to email him, go to writing tutorial services, or cultural centers may have resulted in him seeing less of his students in person, but it did result in more discussion from his students about the various other resources at the university. Students attended tutorial services instead of office hours, and inevitably talked about the efficacy of these resources to their instructor. Regardless of what form of additional help that these instructors urge their students to use, all these teachers did volunteer more of their own personal time to work with students individually both inside and out of class time, and they use various means to help these students cope with the different academic expectations that they are now facing.

Thus these teachers believe that students will essentially get help from the resources that are made overtly available to them. The instructors that encouraged students to ask them for help also stated in interviews that regardless of race or gender, particular students tend to be more adamant about receiving additional help, and they tend to be of a specific personality or demeanor. J explained that in regards to her own students "there are some that are just really proactive… usually it's the ones that are really worried about their grade" (transcript 1A, p. 3 / audio 9:57). T echoed the same notion in saying "I think the students who really are trying to get a certain grade" are the ones that will "usually come in" (transcript 4A, p. 2 / audio 6:17). Even M stated, "I find that the students who are the most interested, whether male or female, are usually the ones who are self-starters" (transcript 3A, p. 12 / audio 42:23). The only slight discrepancy about how these students approach their teachers was in the number of students who would do so. One teacher explained a unique trend of her students feeling more comfortable when going in groups to get such help. J explained, "They come in pairs, because they don't want to come alone… I think probably in China and Korea you don't go individually to ask the teacher questions because you feel like you're imposing on their time" (transcript 1A, p. 3 / audio 9:41). However for L and M, students typically came to office hours alone (personal communications).

As Intercultural Rhetoric suggests and in answer to research question number four, these instructors all recognized the challenges that they face with international students and the possible stereotypes that they, themselves, may have. L exemplifies this complexity in a reflection of her own teaching experience, with a student that wanted to discuss the flux of information that was now available to him, in stating: "My own ethnocentric bias prevented me from thinking about the information environment and the realities of censorship in China and that is an issue that he cares a lot about" (post-office hour conversation with researcher: Fieldnotes-04/23/2014). In acknowledging her own bias in an office hour meeting, and in turn through reflective teaching practices, she pushed against creating and perpetuating stereotypes. Such stereotypes are hard to combat and may even emanate from colleagues. For example, L reiterates that she "heard from people that these students don't want to talk one on one and that they do better in groups" (transcript 2B, p. 8 / audio 2:13). M also heard a similar stereotype, but fights against it in his remark, "I like the interaction because they are much more interactive than anybody would proclaim that they are" (transcript 3A, p. 3 / audio 6:28). However, no matter how well intentioned teachers may be, stereotyping is a slippery slope that can easily begin with a simple comparison of assumptions about the two different cultures, which can turn into marginalization. One of the participants accidentally fell into this, and only upon reflection of the original transcript noticed the possible marginalization. This person gave permission to include the quote with added anonymity.

> I know that most of these kids were sitting down at desks, just like these that we are sitting at and they were learning, for twelve hours a day. I gotta say some of these kids have PTSD. Some of these kids are basically abused children, they have not had childhoods, they have not had time to grow their brains, and this is one of the last chances we will have as educators to do something about that. And so, the more I can do about that the better I feel, and the more they all learn and end up being successful emotionally well rounded and interesting human beings as a opposed to drones (transcript X, p.8 / audio 28:30).

Although this instructor had good intentions, they unintentionally belittled the previous educational system of the international student population.

Additionally, answering question number four, these instructors found that this particular teaching situation was one of the most rewarding. M was enthusiastic in his ability to teach international students new concepts that they had yet to be exposed to, and he expressed this opportunity in stating, "Hey! Perfect, you will be our blank slate! Let's fill you up with some stuff" (transcript 3A, p. 11 / audio 38:00). The idea that international students lacked exposure to certain American academic constructs was a smaller theme that many of the instructors noticed. In the context of new and exciting ideas, this blank slate mentality can be seen as an opportunity. However, many teachers of international students take this blank slate mentality to the extreme where the held belief is that students do not bring any viable information with them from their home countries (Pinker, 2003). This deficit model of international students is a fallacy that all of these participants have been fighting against.

In fact, L in fighting against this model went as far as to include particular rhetorical strengths that she has witnessed solely in her international student population. She describes a tendency of her students to include a poetic phrase towards the end of an essay in which "every single word is lifting weight in the sentence" (transcript 2B, p. 6 / audio 11:40). She explains that this sentence is something that she highlights to her students as beautiful, and that is completely characteristic of their own personal rhetoric much like what Canagarajah argues for. She states:

> When I encounter that sentence, I always have a joyous comment to the student because I want them to see just how excited I am about it. I will usually let them know that American students are not gonna do this, this is something that is to me an identifying move of a strong L2 writer… it's really an indication that they've kind of internalized certain western academic moves without having those moves replace the perspective that they bring (transcript 1A, p. 5 / audio 17:48).

Each of the four instructors who participated in this research echoed much of what previous scholars have discovered. For example, all of the teachers who had any experience in tutoring recognized that this training had positively affected their teaching abilities in the composition classroom, which is in support of the scholarship done by Shaughnessy (1973; 1977; 1998), Thonus (1993; 1999; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004), and others. These authors and the participants agree that any training they can obtain positively affects their abilities in the classroom. In regards to tutoring guiding the instruction of the course, M said, "I have interacted on a one-on-one basis and I kind of like that format" (transcript 3A, p. 5 / audio 14:25). J agreed by saying, "a big part of my teaching this class is tutoring" (transcript 1A, p. 5 / audio 17:48).

In addition to teachers asking for help in their training of how to engage with and better teach international students, teachers have also been calling for more supportive services for these students. J stated in regards to the resources currently available for NNS students "there aren't that many" (transcript 1A, p. 4 / audio 14:05). So instead, she encourages them to come to her. However, teachers cannot remain the sole ambassadors to a western academia, if the universities continue to recruit such a vast number of international students.

Finally, again in response to question number four, each of the participants acknowledged that although difficult at times, especially due to the amount of time students require of them, their position as an international student instructor of English composition was one of the most important and rewarding positions available. For L, who dealt primarily with American students in English composition before switching to the international section of the course, she found new and interesting combinations of uses of the language "I think it's this nice hybrid of English or western syntax and argument and eastern sensibility" (transcript 2B, p. 6 / audio 13:00). For J, who had only ever worked with international students, it has always been extremely rewarding to see the immense growth of her students over the course of a semester "they're a pretty high level, which is FUN!" (transcript 1A, p.

6 / audio 21:36). Finally, M declares: "I am so blessed to have *these* students!" (transcript 3A, p. 8 / audio 26:50).

Implications

Through the perspective of the four participants, this research has inductively discovered several common threads in the assistance of international students. The first line of defense for such students is the teacher, specifically of freshman English composition. Both in class and in office hours these teachers helped students to not only navigate writing in their non-native language, but also to cope with western academic expectations. It is in the opinion of these teachers that students will go to office hours for additional help, when specifically encouraged to do so, and they will gravitate more towards office hours that are more convenient for them, which tends to be right after class in the same location. If, however the teacher encourages them to go to writing tutorial services, then they will more likely seek help there.

In addition to the instruction that these teachers provide, any resources that they used to supplement the students education was viewed as incredibly helpful and appreciated. Teachers noticed that students responded well to the added technology in the classroom, due to the need of visual accommodation and repetition in the course. These resources not only reminded students of the course schedule but also enabled students to see the content of the course that they possibly missed orally. Teachers also accommodated students by slowing down their speech and eliminating unnecessarily difficult jargon, in an attempt to make the information more accessible to their students.

It is obvious that the degree of empathy held by these instructors for their students led them to not only accommodate for, but to also stand up for, the disenfranchised population of students. Beyond what these teachers did for their students on the classroom front, they combatted several stereotypes that have been perpetuated about international students. They resist comments and misperceptions that emanate from other instructors of other fields. They combat different prejudices that occur within their own classrooms. They even struggle against their own bias and ethnocentric assumptions. Finally, they view these difficulties not only as challenging but also as rewarding, because their position of instructor for international students to them is one of the most important and gratifying positions available.

This study, did, however experience some limitations. For example, the overwhelming acceptance of western methodologies, or the assumption that one methodology does in fact fit all, is both counterintuitive and damaging towards the internationalization of methodology (Gobo, 2011). Having said that, there is a long road ahead before these forced methodologies can be adapted or replaced to suit each research contexts needs. Therefore, while I understand that this framework comes from a primarily western perspective of research, I do also acknowledge that recognition is the first step in broadening this study's horizons. Additionally, a discrepant case analysis was conducted in tandem with the survey, however proved to be unsuccessful. Perhaps the most damaging limitation was that of technological malfunctions. The audio recording device timed out during an interview, which lost valuable data. Finally, the administrative or student perceptions were not included, although these perspectives will be anticipated in future studies.

Future directions

This article is the first in a series of articles by the author, which attends to the difficulties international students face in American Universities; along with the various resources that they use in order to cope with these difficulties. After assessing the first form of academic support found in teachers of multilingual freshman composition, and understanding that they are the first line of defense for students, it is essential to take the next logical step of researching other resources used by international students. In order to discover what resources are known and used by international students, data must be collected from the students to lead to necessary resources that should be assessed. Scholars should not only consider the academic resources that institutions provide their international student population, but also the social support. This will ensure that the current resources are fulfilling the needs of the students, while also leading towards great advances in the formulation of future resources for these disenfranchised students.

Furthermore, scholars should look beyond what has simply been done in an American academic context, in order to discover new and useful tools that are more familiar to the cultures of these students. For example, Gairín, Feixas, Franch, Guillamón, and Quinquer (2002), made very astute claims in support of more resources for NNS, not only for academic support (like teachers, tutors, and the various forms of academic development that they may provide) but also for sociological support such as: linguistic competence, integration, adaptation to academia, relationships with peers, etc. Additionally, Ramsay, Jones, and Barker (2007) in Australia also acknowledge the need for both academic and social support. These studies are just the beginning.

In addition to this call for action, many questions are waiting to be answered by future research. For example, there is a lack of discussion on reading as a tool for the learning of international students particularly in tutorials, as J stated, which is only supported by only Williams and Thonus. Additionally, there is a large gap in the literature on the miscommunications and the interplay that happens between international students and the various resources that they use. If anyone resource is unreceptive to non-native speakers of English, what effect or impact will this have on the students? Will they be willing to try again, or go to a different resource? Are these various resources trained to help international students? Very little is known about the resources that these international students actually use, let alone what NNS student preference of resources may be. These are immense gaps in academic literature, which further research must attend to, and are the arenas where I hope to spark discussion and engage in future studies.

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Appendix A

Interview questions for English W-131 Multilingual Instructors:

1. How many students do you have?
2. What nationalities are they?
3. How old are they (what grade level)?
4. What kind of help (in your own opinion) do they most often need?
5. What kind of help do your students think they most often need?
6. How often do they ask for this kind of help? (For help with grammar?)
7. How much assistance do you provide students in this area?
8. Do you have experience in tutoring English? Do you find teaching different than tutoring?
9. When during the course of an essay do students tend to ask for your help the most?
10. Do you encourage your students to get help from other resources? If so, where?
11. How often do they go to your office hours? To Writing Tutorial Services (that you know of)? To the Asian Cultural Center (that you know of)?
12. What gender of student most frequently comes to your office hours? Can you give me a ratio?
13. Which students tend to be most adamant about getting your help?
14. Is there a difference between the way men ask for help versus the way women ask for help? What about nationality?
15. What teaching strategies have you adopted to help this population of students?
16. Tell me a time when you had to help an international student cope with writing in their non-native language (English)…

Linguistic Equity: India's Path to Social Justice

Heath Harrison

Abstract

In 2009 India passed The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act. This may be the most important legislation for democracy in India's history. As a result of this law, the people of India have demonstrated the belief that democratic education is truly the answer to freedom and equality for every Indian citizen as 96% of all of their eligible primary aged students are currently attending free and compulsory schools (Education in India, 2014). This Constitutional law and its practical fulfillment can be clearly seen through the integration of each of India's spoken and written languages on Nationwide Standardized Exams, in National Textbooks, and within Teachers' Classroom Practice which will reveal how citizenship education is redefining democracy in India through linguistic equity.

Keywords: linguistic equity, free and compulsory education, constitutional equity

Introduction

India is the second most densely inhabited nation on earth. Its population exceeds 1.2 billion citizens (Background, (n.d.)). As a result of its voluminous population, and its unique historical background, there are well over 1000 languages spoken throughout this diverse nation. Of the multitude of languages spoken in India, their constitution recognizes 22 distinctive languages in 29 different states within seven different union territories (States and union territories of India, 2014). India practices more than eight different religions which through the centuries have led to multitudinous variations and conglomerations of cultural, lingual, and ethnic practices, and even though it is united by law, by land, and by a shared history, the challenges of effectively enacting democracy in the midst of so many different languages, cultures, and religions are unique and seemingly impossible (Religion in India, 2014). In his book, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, Nirad Chaudhuri recognizes that there are many pitfalls which lie in the path of the individual who dares to discover the truth about contemporary India (Chaudhuri, 1989). These significant perils include the staggering literacy rate of less than 75% (Literacy in India, 2014), the fact that over 20% of its citizens suffer from abject poverty (Poverty in India, 2014), and the disconcerting sustained existence of the antiquated hierarchical caste system that has long subjugated unfortunate individuals born on the proverbial wrong side of socially constructed tracks. Each of these issues appear irresolvable because the needs of many are so urgent and so dire: "The service of India means the service of millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity" (Prior, 1996, p. 63). How then can true democracy and equal opportunity become a reality for every citizen of this matchless and multifarious nation? The answer is the equitable treatment of all Indian languages in education.

Among the manifold issues with which India is confronted, the single most perplexing matter that works against democracy yet simultaneously exhibits it is the fact that there are so many different legally recognized languages spoken in India. How can the voices of all of India's multilingual population be equally recognized and united under one flag? Each state in India speaks multiple languages, yet even to this day some of the languages carry greater cultural, religious, and societal significance over others. In order to comprehend the significant role of verbal and written communication in India, an understanding of the roots, foundation, and formation of Indian languages and how this also shaped its cultural history must be acquired. There must also be concurrent consideration as to how language and religion were and are inextricably bound in the development of this dialectically diverse nation. Additionally, examination of carefully crafted constitutional directives will show how lawmakers were able to begin the process of exacting democracy through the educational system of India by equally recognizing each significant language family in schools across the nation. These laws and their practical fulfillment can be clearly seen through the integration of each of their spoken and written languages on nationwide standardized exams, in national textbooks, and within teachers' classroom practice which will reveal how citizenship education is redefining democracy in India through linguistic equity.

The Roots of Language and Its Impact on Indian Society

Samuel Johnson's assertion that languages are the pedigrees of nations fits Indian conditions perfectly. Each language reveals a specific historical past. The Indian subcontinent was once an ancient cultural crossroads that ushered in five distinctive racial groups from specific parts of the world, and as they came, they brought their languages, cultures, and customs (Dutt, et. al., 1985). Although Indian languages have basic roots in five racial groups: Negroid (Andamanese), Austro – Asiatic, Mongoloid (Tibeto – Burman), Caucasoid Dravidians, and Caucasoid Aryan (Indo – European) it is the last two groups that dominate the country in terms of the languages that are currently spoken in India. Sanskrit based Aryan languages of the North and Dravidian languages of the South have derived their writings from a common source – the 3rd and 2nd century BC Brahmi (Dutt, et. al., 1985). The influence of so many different races, languages, and religions have shaped India into an unparalleled democracy. These unique and ancient origins of Indian language and culture have profoundly influenced the way that customs in India are enacted today.

The heavy influence of Caucasoid Aryan / Indo – European and the Caucasoid Dravidian has made those whose derivative languages that were shaped from other racial group's languages linguistic minorities. Over time societal status in India became associated with those who spoke more widely used or prevalent languages, and through these differences language began to separate society "by dividing states along linguistic lines and by recognizing several regional languages as official languages" (Arthur, 2008, p. 178). These linguistic divisions have shaped Indian society into the most socially and culturally diverse nation in the world. It must be understood that even today, throughout India, linguistic minorities live under state demographic and social norms that are dominated by majority linguistic groups (Bhattacharayya, 2003). For example, Tamil speakers, numbered 3,975,561 citizens or (7.1%) of India's population in 1991, and Kannada speakers numbered 1,208,296 which was (2.2%) of India's population. Although these numbers might be much more significant in less populated countries, their smaller percentages of the overall population made these languages seem insignificant.

More importantly it made the people who used these languages seem less important than people who spoke languages which were more commonly spoken throughout India. Occasionally, minorities speaking less recognized languages have demanded greater recognition and voice throughout the country with varying degrees of success. Such demands have often been made by those linguistic groups mainly concentrated in a specific region of a state where the group has a strong sense of its idiosyncratic identity. The success of such movements has depended on the strength of the political formulation of their demands by the elites and a host of other factors. Most of the states have some dominant ethno – linguistic and ethno – religious groups (Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir in the North - East), although within each of them there are religious and linguistic minorities, and this created tensions that were challenging to substantiate (Bhattacharayya, 2003, p. 153).

The formation of India by immigrants who brought their own cultures and traditions undoubtedly makes India's diversity one of a kind. Not only has language played a significant role in the formation of India as a whole, but religion has also shaped the infrastructure of India's hierarchical society. Although India is predominantly inhabited by over 82% of people who practice some form of Hinduism, generally these individuals are regionally rooted and are often recognized by their pluralistic beliefs and practices. India's populace also includes a large population of approximately 12% Muslims, as well as Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians and Jains. Not only has religion played a significant role in defining different societal rules of Indian culture, language and religion are often inseparably linked. (Bhattacharayya, 2003). Many people who practice Hinduism also speak Hindi (particularly in northern regions) which is also the official language of the Union Government, and is the most predominant mother tongue as more than 30% of the country's people speak this language (Dutt, et. al., 1985). How this plays out in classrooms across the nation will be the impetus for democracy in the twenty first century and beyond.

One of India's most difficult roadblocks to democracy is language, and the religious connections that are associated with dominant languages have created a social hierarchy known as the caste system. Democracy in India is not necessarily defined by Western notions of the "Liberal Tradition or the Civic Republic Tradition" (Heater, 1999), but many different strata of society have been shaped by language, religion, and the connection or the link between the two. The most recognizable and infamous of these social divisions is the Hindu caste system which "may be defined as a hierarchy of endogamous divisions in which membership is hereditary and permanent" (Berreman, 1960, p. 120). It is the arrangement of transmissible groups into a hierarchal social order. The hierarchy of the caste system is divided into four classes or varnas. At the highest level are the Brahmins who are primarily known as priests and scholars. Beneath the Brahmins come Kshatriyas, the classes of rulers and warriors. Next come the Vaishyas, which are generally merchant and farmer classes. The lowest class is the Sudras, the menial and servant classes. The Untouchables are generally considered to be outside the four – tier caste system and are often referred to as "outcastes". The Untouchables were considered to be polluted and were assigned menial tasks such as sweeping and toilet cleaning.

In Hindu religious thought the four varnas emanate from the body of Purusa, the Lord of beings. His mouth was portrayed as the Brahmins, his arms became the Kshatriyas, his thighs became the Vaishyas, and his feet became the Sudras (Prior, 1996). What has remained insignificant, however, is that the figure of a complete human body represented by the four parts, symbolizes a sense of unity within diversity. The caste system was initially born with an eye to specialization in certain work fields. The Brahmins were expected to take care of education, the Kshatriyas would focus upon the safety of the nation, the Vaishyas would look after trade and commerce, and the Sudras would form the mass work force (P. Chaterjee, personal communication, November 17, 2014).

Getting people to go against cultural and religious beliefs is one of the greatest and most difficult challenges that faces those who would dare to attempt democratic education in India. In order to enact it, the caste system is going to have be eliminated, but belief in a tradition dies hard. One of the only ways to eliminate the caste system is to use the same weapon that was used to create it… language. This time instead of categorizing people through language the means to equality will be uniting them through it. India is aware of this reality, and she has taken specific and definitive steps to ensure that the voices of every group are heard in the law – making process as well as in universities across the country. "In India's education system, a significant number of seats are reserved under affirmative action policies for the historically disadvantaged scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other backward classes. In universities, colleges, and similar institutions affiliated to the federal government, there is a minimum 50% of reservations applicable to these disadvantaged groups, at the state level it can vary (Education in India, 2014).

Ethnically or religiously based parties serve as vehicles of regional identity within a united India, but they can also threaten cultural minorities by wielding native's appeals to local 'sons of the soil' whose interests are supposedly being endangered by migrants from other parts of India or indigenous religions and linguistic minorities. Liberal democracy stands or falls according to its ability to elicit a dual commitment to both majority rule and minority rights a challenging balance to strike. The legitimacy of a majority at any given time depends on the maintenance of an open marketplace of ideas, free and periodic elections through which the majority can be challenged, and guarantees of basic human rights for all. But how and in what form are minority rights to be protected? Liberal democracy is classically expressed in terms of individual rights, and the Preamble to the Indian Constitution embodies a commitment to justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity for the individual. Yet minority interests are typically expressed in terms of group identity, and political demands which call for the protection or promotion of language, religion, and culture, or of the 'group' more generally in ways that conflict not only with 'the will of the majority,' but with constitutional guarantees of individual rights and equal protection.

This tension, and the problems it causes, can be seen in India in three different contexts. The first is ethno-linguistic regionalism and separatism, the second is the caste – based reservation, and the third is secularism and Hindu – Muslim communal relations (Hardgrave, 1993). Although India recognizes that change is essential for democracy to thrive, it is clear that the challenge of balancing individual rights against majority rule is a daunting task. "Fifty – three years of almost uninterrupted democratic rule in India have done little to reduce the political, social, and economic marginalization of India's popular classes" (Heller, 2000, p. 484). How then can change take place in India that is genuine and long – lasting? The answer comes through laws that revolve around language equity, through national enactments of those laws in classrooms across India, and how teachers implement those laws into their teaching practice to endorse language equality for all Indian people.

How Language Equity Is Enacted Nationally

The realization that language, religion, the connections that exist between them, and how those have led to stratified social structures is key to understanding how India has strategically made the classroom the place where enacting legal equality in India a legitimate possibility. The only way that equality can exist in Indian society is through the laws that can be enforced in a broad sense and across the entire nation. The best way to enact laws that demand equity for every Indian citizen is through laws that can be followed by educators in classrooms across the nation. India has gone to the highest court in their land to accomplish the changes necessary to combat the role difference plays in their society.

"The Indian Constitution can be said to be a multicultural document in the sense of providing for political and institutional measures for the recognition and accommodation of the country's diversity" (Bhattacharayya, 2003, p. 148). The two ways these laws are enacted nationally are through nationwide standardized exams and through national textbooks that are written in all 22 constitutionally recognized Indian languages. In 2009, India passed The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act. This may be the most important legislation for democracy in India's history. As a result of this law the people of India have demonstrated the belief that democratic education is truly the answer to freedom and equality for every Indian citizen as 96.5% of all of their eligible primary aged students are currently attending free and compulsory schools (Education in India, 2014). The fact that so many eligible students are currently attending schools reveals that India knows that the answer to their issues is through language equity in schools. The 2009 law that was passed was a culmination of laws that have been made all the way up to that time paving the way for this monumental legislation that will be their source of transformation.

Language has always played a role in dividing India. Because of this situation, the 1968 National Policy Resolution of 1968 enunciated the three – language formula. This is a formula of language learning formulated by the Union Education Ministry of the Government of India in consultation with the states. This resolution stated that children in the Hindi – speaking states are to be taught three languages: Hindi, English and one of the local languages. The children in non – Hindi – speaking states were to be taught the local language, English and Hindi. (The Three – Language Formula, 2014). The formula played a significant role in paving the way for equality for every citizen of India no matter the state from which they came or the language they deemed to be their mother tongue.

In order to understand how this plays out nationally, the structure of the Indian educational system has to be defined. Pre – Primary children attend what is considered to be kindergarten in the United States at the age of five. After pre – primary comes the primary grades which include grades one – five. The upper primary are grades six – eight and traditionally at the end of the eighth grade year most students have reached the age of fourteen which is also the year that the government no longer funds a child's education, and the reach of the 2009 Act ends. The next step in the Indian educational process is the secondary level which includes grades nine and ten. Finally, eleventh and twelfth grade students attend upper secondary school. (P. Chatterjee, personal communication, November 17, 2014).

At each level of schooling, there are two common threads in terms of democratic citizenship education in India, the first is civics education which could also be termed social studies that explores the inner workings of the government, and the history of India from ancient times to the present both in a local and national context. Students in grade one begin this process by getting to know their local history through speaking with their elders, and by the end of grade four students thoroughly explore a history of their own locality. By the time students reach the fifth grade, they start to examine India in the world with a focus on unity and ways to unite such a culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse nation. The curriculum always mentions that classroom teaching must highlight the secular, democratic, and culturally integrated spirit of India. Traces of the tracking system also begin to emerge in the ninth and tenth grade secondary levels as students take all of the same classes, but the curriculum is often subtly and sometimes overtly dissimilar. (P. Chatterjee, personal communication, November 17, 2014). "The National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education developed in the 1988 crystallized government efforts to ensure objectivity in the classroom by requiring that the teaching of history to be free of communal, religious or class bias" (Antal, 2008, p. 89).

It is incredibly important to point out that even though the law states that the teaching of history should be 'free of communal, religious or class bias' that is not always the case, this fact shows how important individual teachers are when they are teaching history. If the teacher is affiliated with certain religious groups, and also has any bias with which they were raised, the practice of this law may be lost in translation. Teachers in India must be the ones who truly want to bring about equality for all.

Even if some educators do not want to bring about the kinds of change necessary to transform India, the government has seen to it that secondary students are exposed to linguistic impartiality through standardized examinations at the end of the secondary and the upper secondary levels that determine students' college selections and ultimately their career paths. This example of language equity can be seen through a nationally recognized standardized exam overseen by the Central Board of Secondary Education that all students take at the end of their tenth grade year. It is fascinating and exceptional to note that this exam is administered in all of India's 22 constitutionally recognized languages. This is a very powerful statement because it speaks to a level playing field for all students no matter their lingual background. (P. Chatterjee, personal communication, November 17, 2014).

In addition to the exam students take at the end of their secondary year in school, the higher secondary students take a national exam known as the Joint Entrance Exam which assesses students whose aptitudes suggest they are suited to pursue scientific, technological, engineering, or mathematical fields. Although it is less inclusive as the post – secondary examination that accounts for all 22 languages, this test is still administered in five different languages: English (the official second language of India), Hindi (the national language of India), Nepali (the language of the dominion state), Urdu (the language most spoken by Muslim people), and Bengali (as candidates from Bengal are in abundance) (P. Chatterjee, personal communication, November 17, 2014). The recognition of multiple languages on nationally administered standardized exams that determine the collegiate and ultimately the professional paths of students who graduate from schools in India is one way they have tried to demonstrate equity through language. Every state in India has multiple colleges which students can attend whose dominant language is spoken by students in that state; consequently, students who attend colleges in India have the chance to demonstrate their knowledge of specific content in a language they grew up speaking so that they can show what they truly know - not how well they have mastered a language other than their mother tongue. (P. Chatterjeee, personal communication, November 17, 2014).

Another way that democracy can be seen through equity in language is through the publication of state textbooks. In the 2005, the National Curriculum Framework the three – legged language policy was further defined and clarified. The recognition for ending inequality in India through democratic citizenship education can best be seen through its administration of textbooks in the dominant languages spoken in each state. Take for example West Bengal which publishes textbooks in Santhali, Nepali, Urdu, English and Bengali. Or another state such as Kerala where textbooks are published in English, Tamil, Malayali, and Hindi. Each state publishes textbooks in dominant languages of that state as well as English (a common linguistic thread throughout India). Additionally, when it comes to 'National Textbooks' printed by the National Textbook Council, all textbooks come in all 22 nationally recognized languages (P. Chatterjeee, personal communication, November 17, 2014).

The government's responsibility for free and compulsory education ends at the age of 14 or the eighth grade year for students in India, and so the argument that standardized tests which cater to college bound students is not as strong as the fact that all textbooks are printed in the dominant languages of every state. Leaders of minority groups (particularly Muslims) may argue that primary and secondary textbooks have portrayed all communities other than the Hindus as foreigners in India as well as wrongly describing the medieval epoch as the Muslim period and following the footsteps of the British by portraying the period as one of great oppression and decline. These books, in the name of instilling patriotism and valor among Indians, spread falsehoods, treat mythological religious figures like actual historical figures and make absurd claims. (Delhi Historians Group, 2001). The state could certainly use these textbooks to perpetuate major party supremacy (as textbooks often do), but the fact that students can read them and process the information can and ultimately will lead to the change necessary in India through equity in language.

How Language Equity Is Enacted Locally

National and official enactment of legal demands in the classroom are often sound in theory; however, the way they are carried out in the classroom boils down to how teachers interpret and disseminate their understanding of the laws as well as the curriculum that they are given to teach which can often be politically charged and hegemonic in nature. So even though the inclusion of multiple languages on standardized exams and within the pages of textbooks is a great start, how can teachers bring about the modifications that India desperately needs? There are three specific means teachers can accomplish genuine change in their daily instruction and in how they assess their students in the classroom.

The first of the ways that teachers can change India one student at time is in the language they choose to instruct their students. Indian teachers have not always had a choice in what language they could instruct their students, but since they have been given clearance to teach students in their mother tongue (even if that language is not the dominant language of the state) they can reach all of their students. The verbiage in chapter five, section 29, subsection two (*f*) of the 2009 The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, states that the "medium of instructions shall, as far as practicable, be in child's mother tongue" (The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, p. 9). One significant roadblock to this notion occurred in 1992 when the government stated that all instruction must be in English, and Indian students were immersed in English; however seeds of legal change for the 2009 The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act began in 2005 in the National Curriculum Framework that stated "care must be taken to honor and respect the child's home language(s) / mother tongue(s)" (National Curriculum Framework, 2005). Teachers in India not only needed to understand that the judicious use of the mother tongue was important to reach all of their students, it was also used to scaffold important linguistic divides that would give Indian students the ability to better learn any content (P. Chatterjee, personal communication, November 17, 2014).

This significant legal change gave teachers the freedom they needed to reach all of their students… no matter what language they spoke. Additionally, research has demonstrated that an education which begins in the mother tongue and builds competence in the second language before using it as the medium of instruction, reduces the linguistic and cultural barriers faced by students when entering school, as such this is a key component in increasing the educational attainment of speakers of minority languages (Mackenzie, 2009).

The second way teachers can exact the kind of subtle change to make India an egalitarian society is based upon how they assess their students. Whenever teachers create assessments in their classrooms, they must write their questions in all of the languages that their students understand so that the teacher can assess what they know and not whether or not students have mastered the dominant language of a given state. Not all teachers use all of the languages that their children speak on their assessments, but when they do so more readily, the message that is communicated to students is that no matter what language they speak, they (the students themselves) are of value. In the past it would not be unusual for teachers to include only the dominant languages on assessments, but when teachers step out of their comfort zones into a realm of love, compassion, and care for all of their students, then real long - lasting change can occur (P. Chatterjee, personal communication, November 17, 2014).

Creating manifold assessments in multiple languages seems highly impractical and arduous. It is difficult enough to create quality classroom assessments, yet asking teachers to create additional assessments on top of the ones that they have already created is a daunting task, but this is another subtle yet powerful means of bringing about impartiality through language equity.

The final way teachers can foster democracy through linguistic impartiality is by being multicultural practitioners through including multiple cultures and languages into classroom instruction. In most societies it is generally acceptable and conventional for teachers to select content that highlights the accomplishments of the dominant culture of the place where they are teaching. Few would fault a teacher for teaching things with which they feel most comfortable, or are more acceptable in a given place. It takes courage to step out of acceptable curricular norms to highlight works from cultures that have been hidden in the shadows of the principal party of society. Teachers must be willing to take carefully selected and purposeful risks in their curricular selections. This may require extra work that will not necessarily be rewarded by administrators, people within the dominant culture, or students who come from that same dominant culture, yet this is how teachers can impact each and every one of their students. Becoming multicultural practitioners is one additional way Indian teachers can boost the self – esteem of those students whose families have been subjugated for far too long. These specific and definitive teacher choices will also give students within the dominant culture a broader view of their local world (P. Chatterjee, personal communication, November 17, 2014).

Because of India's significant population, the teaching force in India is insufficient, and more teachers are needed. Additionally, there needs to be ongoing fortification for current teachers and minimal training must become readily available for untrained teachers who hold positions without any pedagogical preparation (Shah, 2013). When instructing their students, trained and untrained teachers alike are going to do what worked for them when they learned, and they are going to go with what they feel most comfortable teaching. Teachers in schools across India are the ones who are charged with getting their minority students to believe that they matter, all the while demonstrating to their students who come from dominant cultures that their peers are of value and that minority students should not be categorically dismissed from front and center conversations just because that is the way things have always been.

> The good news is that in the past progressive legislation has provided an impetus to social transformation – not a guarantee. The study of social struggle has shown that a change in discourse does not automatically lead to structural transformation – more simply put, talk does not always lead to action. Moreover, we know that legislation that seeks to end inequality and injustice more often than not has come about through progressive social movements and other forms of popular or collective participation (Thapliyal, 2012, p. 65).

Those reformists in this case are educators. The languages in which they choose to instruct and assess their students, as well as the content they choose to use to communicate in their daily lessons will be the means of taking legislation and putting it into practice. Since most teachers are local, they know the local languages and cultures; as such they are the ones who will bring about true social change in India through linguistic equity in their classrooms.

Conclusion

Practical application of Indian law is being realized through the incorporation of multiple constitutionally recognized languages on nationwide standardized exams, in national textbooks, and within teachers' classroom practice. Each of these different means of linguistic equity within Indian classrooms will be the impetus necessary to redefine social justice in a country that is notorious for social injustice and cruelty to its own citizens. The linguistic diversity of India poses complex challenges, but it also provides a vast range of opportunities. India is unique not only in that a large number of languages are spoken there, but also in terms of the number and variety of language families that are represented in those languages. There is no other country in the world in which languages from five different language families exist. Even though they are so structurally distinct as to merit classifications as different language families, (Caucasoid Aryan (Indo – European), Caucasoid Dravidian, Austro – Asiatic, Mongoloids (Tibeto – Burman), Negroid (Andamanese), and Dravidians) they constantly interact with each other. There are several linguistic and sociolinguistic features that are shared across languages that bear witness to the fact that different languages and cultures have coexisted in India for centuries, enriching each other despite their fundamental differences. (National Curriculum Framework, 2005). Even though, language has been a roadblock to equality in India, it can become the forward motion to true unity in a country that has used language, religion, and the connection between religion and language as a means of oppression, stratification, and social order.

Indian students of today enjoy a tremendous advantage over their peers in other countries because of the role that language plays in their lives. Their complex linguistic culture allows them to be cosmopolitan citizens who are diverse and versatile enough to go anywhere in this world and blend in to that society. It is known for certain that bilingualism or multilingualism confers definite cognitive advantages (Adesope et al., 2010). India's three – language formula is an attempt to address the challenges and opportunities of the linguistic situation in India. It is a strategy that should really serve as a launching pad for learning more languages and for leveling the playing field for all Indian citizens no matter what language they speak (National Curriculum Framework, 2005). Regardless of the challenges that confront India from realizing true democracy, it is certainly a lighthouse that all other nations should look to in order to bring about social justice and equity. Former ambassador to India Robert Blackwill could not have said it any better as he left his post in India in 2003: "India is a pluralistic society that creates magic with democracy, rule of law, and individual freedom, community relations and cultural diversity. What a place to be an intellectual! I wouldn't mind being born ten times to rediscover India" (Guha, 2007, p. ix).

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Book Reviews

Promoting Teacher Reflection in Second Language Education: A Framework for TESOL Professionals, by Thomas S. C. Farrell. New York: Routledge ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series, 2015, 138 pp., ISBN 978-1-138-02504-2. (reviewed by Vesna Dimitrieska).

Promoting Teacher Reflection in Second Language Education: A Framework for TESOL Professionals is a book that provides a framework for using reflective practice among TESOL professionals at different stages of their educational and professional careers. Reflective practice, both as a concept and as an activity, has had its share in influence on lives and practices of teachers. The author of the book befittingly pinpoints that both novice and experienced teachers have been engaging in some form of reflective practice through their teacher education programs and their professional development programs, respectively. Farrell's extensive, three-decade work on reflective practice and teacher reflection has resulted in the development of his framework for TESOL professionals that he proposes and explains in this book. His book fills the gap in the existing literature on reflective practice in that it proposes a framework that can be used not only for novice teachers, but also for teachers of varying years of experience. Even though there is a plethora of definitions and research on reflective practice in the field of education, in his book, Farrell chose to focus only on the authors that he himself found beneficial and that have influenced the development of his framework on reflective practice in second language education.

Farrell's book content is organized in nine chapters. The first chapter, *Getting into Reflective Practice*, provides background information on the development of the framework and explanation on how it is different from other similar frameworks. First, he describes the experiences from his own professional life that have led him to reflect more on his teaching. Second, the author provides rationale for having Schön and Dewey as primary figures who have influenced his work and delineates the importance of his framework as a single framework for teachers with a range of teaching experiences. The second chapter, *Contemplation and Reflection*, elaborates on the differences between contemplation, reflection, and reflective practice, and clarifies the main concepts of teacher reflection inside and outside of the field of TESOL. More specifically, unlike in contemplation, in reflection there is a distinction between the thinker and the subject and both contemplation and reflection can result in self-awareness. Furthermore, a succinct overview of levels, approaches, purposes, and models of reflection is provided.

The third chapter, *Framework for Reflecting on Practice*, introduces the five stages of the framework (i.e. Philosophy; Principles; Theory; Practice; and Beyond Practice) and it more thoroughly explains how each of those levels can be accessed and how the framework can be used. The fourth chapter, *Philosophy*, describes the first level of the framework and addresses the central role of a teacher's philosophy on their professional development from the beginning of their career and beyond.

Teacher-as-person stance is central in this chapter and possessing self-knowledge and awareness about the inner self are seen as crucial for shaping the philosophy of every individual teacher. In addition, teacher narratives are suggested as tools to access the philosophy level of Farrell's framework. The fifth chapter, *Principles*, is the second level of the framework and it examines the assumptions, beliefs, and conceptions that shape the principles that guide teachers' practice. The author provides clear definitions of the three concepts and proposes tools how to examine them as separate 'points on the same continuum of meaning related to gaining more self-awareness' (Farrell, 2015, p.64)

The sixth chapter, *Theory*, is the third level of the framework and it investigates ways in which teachers can access and think more closely about their theory. By answering the "why?" question, according to Farrell, the knowledge of teachers' practice is increased. In order to reflect on theory, the author proposes the use of reflection on teacher planning, critical incidents, and cases. The seventh chapter, *Practice*, is the fourth level of the framework. It deals with reflecting on teachers' practice and its importance in the entire framework suggested in the book. Classroom observations and action research are the means to systematic reflection as an end that Farrell emphasizes in this chapter.

The eighth chapter, *Beyond Practice*, is the fifth level of the framework and it addresses ways teachers can examine the effects of sociocultural, moral, and emotional aspects of reflection on their practice. Unlike the first four levels of the framework that deal with the technical aspects of practice, the fifth level, *Beyond Practice*, in line with its name, entails critical reflection (i.e., 'an understanding of personal experiences within social, cultural, and structural contexts', Fook & Askeland, 2007, p.3) that goes beyond one's own practice. Dialogue is foregrounded as a tool for engaging in critical reflection. The ninth chapter, *Navigating the Framework*, further elaborates how teachers with no, some or extensive experience can use the framework in a way that suits their developmental needs the most. Namely, as a holistic reflective practice tool, the teachers or administrators themselves can opt to use Farrell's framework in three ways: theory-into- (beyond) practice, (beyond) practice-into-theory or a single stage application.

By its nature, reflective practice is inherently complex and, according to Farrell, no agreement exists among the academic community on how to define it. More specifically, the mainstream teacher educators' perspective recognizes the importance of reflective practice. In addition to the plethora of definitions of the concept, there has also been a multitude of approaches and strategies associated with it in the fields of general education and second language education. However, the lack of a unifying definition and a proven effective and consistent strategy on how to engage in reflective practice further emphasizes the need for a general framework that can be implemented by teachers at different stages in their teaching careers. By developing his framework, Farrell has advanced the field of second language education further.

The development of the current framework on teacher reflection has been an extensive and elaborate process that has spanned over 3.5 decades. In his work, Farrell has been influenced by the work of both John Dewey and Donald Schön due to their pragmatic stance to 'help practicing teachers on the frontlines rather than impress academics' (p.3). Farrell adopted the notion of reflective practice as 'a form of systematic inquiry or evidence-based reflective practice' from Dewey, and he found Schön's concept of reflection-in-action of utmost importance to his framework. Moreover, his own teaching experiences in various parts of the world have helped him stay connected to the language classroom realities, and thus develop a framework that will be beneficial first to the teachers, and then to everyone else. Farrell's work reflects his own conviction as well as Dewey's and Schön's legacies that, in order to provide suitable solutions, reflective practice has to entail more structured and 'more rigorous form of reflective thinking' (p.3).

The target audience for the book, as identified by Farrell, involves novice teachers who are either taking University of Cambridge's CELTA and DELTA teaching qualifications or students enrolled in MA programs in TESOL, experienced teachers who are engaged in some form of professional development and program administrators and supervisors. The author's framework and explanation do an excellent job in serving as a springboard for the novice teachers to start making the necessary connections between what they learn and what they do in the classroom on the one hand and how they can incorporate reflective practice in their everyday teaching on the other hand. The reflective tools that he provides can be also used for experienced teachers who can choose to either use individual stages or the framework as a whole. The common aspect for both novice and experienced teachers is the outcome of using the framework, i.e. the idea of change in the awareness of their practice. However, Farrell fails to elaborate how program administrators and supervisors can use his framework in their respective contexts. Apart from listing them as the readership of his book, there are no suggested guidelines on how they can benefit from this framework. As a result, one might infer that the novice or experienced teachers are the only ones who can plant the seeds of reflective practice after they themselves have chosen to do so.

Also, Farrell is modest in recognizing the importance of his book for teacher researchers and teacher educators in the field of second language education. Even though he incorporates action research as a component of reflective practice, Farrell does not see how beneficial his book and his framework is for other teacher researchers. Due to its purpose to serve both novice and experienced teachers, teacher researchers might find his framework useful when, for example, comparing the reflective practices of the two groups of teachers. Furthermore, teacher educators in the field of second language education might use the framework themselves while engaging in teacher training or teacher preparation programs and thus, see how the framework operates while they are preparing future language teachers. In addition, even though the title suggests that the framework is for TESOL professionals, one cannot help but see the benefit of Farrell's framework for other foreign and second languages, as well as less commonly- taught languages.

The strengths of the book are associated with its several features that make it unique and different from other books that have been written on the same topic.

First, as Farrell himself claims, the book is written in a very accessible style and no prior knowledge of language teacher education or reflection is necessary. As a result, both native and non-native speaker teachers can find his precise writing with no redundant metalanguage easy to read and thus, much more readily accept the guidelines associated with the separate stages of the framework. Second, the book consists of numerous Reflective Moments that encourage the reader/teacher to answer reflective questions that are related to the content that has been presented. Thus, the author does not only talk about reflective practice but rather expects the reader/teacher to engage in it while reading the book. This expectation is in line with Kumaravadivelu's (2012) view of teaching as a reflective activity that simultaneously 'shapes and is shaped by the doing of theorizing which in turn is bolstered by the collaborative process of dialogic inquiry.' (p.95). Third, Chapter Reflections provide a succinct summary on the content of the entire chapter and suggest other ideas the reader/teacher may reflect on. Fourth, the book abounds with reflective tools that are aimed to facilitate the reflective practice process. Thus, Farrell makes use of questionnaires, inventories and other tools that have been used by other researchers who have carried out research on the separate areas of his framework. Some of those tools are: teaching maxims (Richards, 1996; Wilkins, 2009); Teacher's Beliefs Inventory (Johnson, 1991); critical incident questionnaire (Brookfield, 1995); interactional styles (Richards & Lockhart, 1994) etc. Fifth, the personal examples from Farrell's own engagement in reflective practice add even more clarity in the framework and show how it has been used in his own teaching.

Farrell's book fails in two respects. The first one is associated with the lack of detailed rationale for the benefits of reflective practice. Namely, Farrell assumes that the readership would know all the benefits of engaging in reflective practice. However, the reader will find it even more useful if the benefits of reflective practice with regard to language learning, students themselves, and advances in the field of reflective practice in general are more clearly outlined and elaborated on. As it is, the teachers who engage in reflective practice seem to be the biggest beneficiaries of the reflective process. The second one is related to the insufficient attention to the social aspects that influence teacher's reflective practice in all stages of the framework. Farrell does address the importance of examining the social and cultural aspects of reflective practice in the *Beyond Practice* stage of his framework and he even encourages a teacher to engage in numerous reflective practices with peers. However, the social and cultural aspects should be examined and acknowledged within all the stages of the framework.

Every language teacher should consider owning Farrell's book. Regardless of one's previous experiences with reflective practice, the framework and the book with its ease of reference can prepare and follow every language teacher's activities and steps as he/she moves from one stage of the framework to the next. Also, depending on the prior teaching experience and the stage of professional development, every individual language teacher can choose whether to use Farrell's framework deductively or inductively. The former is associated with going from theory-into-(beyond) practice stages, whereas the latter follows the (beyond) practice-into-theory pattern. In addition to these two ways, a language teacher can choose to focus only on a single stage of Farrell's framework. Also, even though reflective practice is inherently cognitive and associated with the individual, individual teachers, pairs of teachers or groups of teachers may choose to use Farrell's framework on reflective practice. This descriptive framework that is holistic by nature due to the stages that it consists of is an invaluable reflective tool for novice teachers, experienced teachers, teacher researchers and teacher educators in second language education programs.

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The multilingual turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL and bilingual education, edited by Stephen May. New York, NY: Routledge, 229 pp. ISBN 978-0415-53432-1 (reviewed by Chaoran Wang).

Stephen May is a professor from The University of Auckland, New Zealand, who publishes in the areas of language diversity, language rights, bilingualism, and multiculturalism. His recent edited book *The Multilingual Turn,* collecting recent works by many important scholars in applied linguistics and multilingualism, attempts to justify and promote "a turn from monolingualism to multilingualism" that emphasizes social-cultural aspects in the studies of SLA, TESOL and bilingual education (p. 2). In order to advocate this "multilingual turn", the book explains how multilingual speakers differ from monolingual speakers and why it is significant and necessary to examine bilingualism and multilingualism from a social-cultural point of view. In recent years, as ongoing research shows that bi/multilingual learning is not purely cognitive language acquisition (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Garcia, 2009; May, 2014), more and more scholars have been paying attention to the correlation between bi/multilingual speakers and the bi/multilingual communities. *The Multilingual Turn* is one of the representative works speaking for many scholars in this field, such as Canagarajah, García, Kramsch, Pennycook.

This edited book is composed of three sections, namely SLA, TESOL, and bilingual education. Each part has a combination of theory and practice in its specific field, which makes the author's argument particularly strong. From the beginning to the end, May and other authors try to offer a critical view of the ongoing dominant monolingualism, as well as apply "a more additive bilingual approach" to each of the three fields (p. 23).

In the first chapter, May points out the limitations of the foundation and construction of the disciplines of SLA and TESOL themselves. He uses a critical analysis of the history of the three disciplines and reevaluates their hierarchies and structures. Dating back to the 1990s, the problem of "monolingual norms" in traditional bilingual/multilingual research was first raised by Kachru (1994). Based on her observation of speakers learning English as a second or additional language, Kachru attributed the "the monolingual bias" to the dominant interlanguage theory in the field of SLA research (Kachru, 1994). She proposed that instead of focusing on second language learners' linguistic errors (May, 2014), scholars should study bilinguals' language competency in real bilingual communities from different countries around the globe and establish a bi/multilingual perspective on SLA. From then until now, there have been continuing debates between the traditional monolingual and linguistic view and the new rising social-cultural view of SLA and TESOL. Although the notion of multilingualism is highlighted in many recent studies such as transglossia and translanguaging (García, 2009), the establishment and confirmation of a multilingual approach have not been fully completed (May, 2014).

In the field of SLA, utilizing Bourdieu's concept of field and Bernstein's theory of classification, May argues that it is the linguistic-cognitive approach which views a multilingual's language competency from a monolingual perspective that confines the possibilities of establishing the bilingual principles (May, 2014). He criticizes that this approach, studying multilinguals' languages separately with an emphasis on each language's acquisitional stages, fails to see multilinguals' language repertoire as an integrity from which speakers can choose different codes and languages to suit their different communicational goals. I find it quite insightful because he questions the cornerstone of the traditional SLA discipline. Moreover, I appreciate his point of considering the politics of nationalism as part of the reason. He uses LEAP (Language Enhancing the Achievement of Pasifika), an online teaching resource for second language teachers in New Zealand, as an example. LEAP contains a lot of multilingual theories to inspire ESL teachers' teaching and aims to use Pasifika students' different language repertoires as resources. However, this trial is still within an English-dominant country which appreciates only English in education for the purpose of nationalism. Therefore, May (2014) indicates the necessity of a "wider and sociopolitical" change and the needed attention of "the value of bilingualism" (p. 25). To further develop the additive bilingual approach, in Chapter 2 Lourdes Ortega suggests "usage-based linguistics (UBL)" as a platform for SLA research (Ortega, 2014). Viewing grammar and linguistic knowledge as dynamic and experience-shaped construction, Ortega argues that the model of UBL can offer linguistic-cognitive researchers a way towards multilingual cognitive studies. Although different issues are addressed in each chapter of this section, the same emphases are made that monolingualism should be abandoned as the principle in the study of additional language learning.

In terms of TESOL in the second section of this edited volume, the concept of language competence of second language learners is reexamined by Suresh Canagarajah and Constant Leung. In Chapter 4, Canagarajah analyzes how African immigrants improve their "performative competence" through everyday translingual practices in English-dominant countries. He defines "performative competence" as a competence by multilinguals to "negotiate the diverse, unpredictable, and changing language norms in the contact zone" (p. 99). I find his notion of performative competence in alignment with Garcia's theory of translanguaging in the way that both concepts view a bi/multilingual's entire language repertoire not as separate systems but as an integrated system from which a speaker can flexibly select according to their specific communicative purposes (Garcia, 2009; Blackledge & Creese, 2010). Different from Canagarajah who focuses on multilingual practice in a broader social context, Leung (Chapter 6) looks into ESL learners' communicative competence in specific classroom settings. Extending the conventional notion of communicative competence as "language and language use related knowledge", Leung argues that communicative competence should consist of both students' language knowledge and their "participatory engagement" that shows social convention and social interaction (p. 142). What Leung and Canagarajah have in common is that they both emphasize the complexity of multilingual communicative competence. I quite agree with them because speakers have to deal with diverse language and cultural rules in a multilingual context, just as Canagarajah said, "The multilingual speaker engages with the shifting and fluid situations in everyday life to learn strategies of negotiation and adaptation for meaning-making…acquisition is social practice, not separable mastery of knowledge, cognition, or form." (Canagarajah, 2007, p. 933). I think, undoubtedly, their extension and development of the notion of communicative competence effectively challenges the traditional single, cognitive perspective of ESL learners' language competence. However, to some extent, this indicates that evaluations can only be made in a specific multilingual context because there are many elements such as participatory involvement, gender, power, and social values involved (Leung, 2014). Thus, in order to better examine and evaluate the communication process and the communicative competence, more empirical research projects are needed.

As to the field of bilingual education, I will focus on Chapter 8 *Who's Teaching Whom? Co-learning in Multilingual Classrooms* that discusses the issue concerning Chinese learners because this chapter focuses on a very representative population-children of immigrants and minority groups. In this chapter, Li Wei observes co-learning in Chinese complementary schools in UK. He finds that not only students but also teachers experience "co-construction of identity and cultural values" in these multilingual classrooms (p. 184). Li (2014) suggests that bilingual schools provide both teachers and students a good co-learning environment that helps them discover their new identities by exchanging different funds of knowledge. A reader may have the impression that this chapter has nothing to do with the main purpose of the book. However, actually this chapter not only is closely related to the gist that a social-cultural perspective is important in bilingual education, but also echoes the earlier chapter of Leung's "participatory engagement" theory that emphasizes the importance of students' life experience in the process of learning.

In conclusion, *The Multilingual Turn* is comprehensive because it covers the main fields of SLA, TESOL, and bilingual education in discussing the turn towards multilingualism both theoretically and empirically. Therefore, a reader can develop a very good understanding of the origin and the significance of the movement of multilingualism in second language studies and language education, as well as the current trials in favor of this movement. However, with each scholar arguing one particular issue in his or her field in each chapter, the book does not seem coherent enough in itself. It might be better if the author can show the connections of how one field in a chapter correlates, extends, or complicates another field in other chapters. On the other hand, this is also a virtue because the book is able to provide many specific contexts and fields from which we can see how bi/multilingual approaches are applied to and what can be studied for future research. For instance, the study of pedagogic strategies in multilingual classrooms as discussed in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8; learners' identity construction and negotiation through their multilingual practice as explored in Chapter 5, Chapter 8, and Chapter 9; bi/multilingual students' language competence and assessment as examined in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6; and multimodality in bilingual education as researched in Chapter 3. Overall, *The Multilingual Turn* is a good book that summarizes the most important multilingual theories and showcases some of the most current bilingual and multilingual pedagogical practices around the global.

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Virtual Literacies: Interactive Spaces for Children and Young People, edited by Guy Merchant et al. London: Routledge, 2014, 272 pp., ISBN 978-1-138-81059-4. (Reviewed by Zawan Al Bulushi).

Children and young people's participation in virtual online spaces has become a concern for educators and literacy researchers. Whether to consider these technologies as treasured elements in promoting literacy and to what extent they can be incorporated in school curricula is debatable in educational circles. It is this area that this book is dealing with. By drawing findings from a number of empirical studies conducted by the authors, the value of teaching and learning that takes place in these digital environments has been evaluated. It is possible to say that the book is distinguished by the positive tone that it advocates with regard to integrating virtual spaces in classroom practices, "It is now time for educators to harness such technology in meaningful ways before the *awesome disconnect* between home and school widens further" (p. 139). The editors: Guy Merchant, Julia Gillen, Jackie Marsh and Julia Davies are scholars in the field who themselves wrote extensively in the area of digital and virtual literacies. They, through the voices of multiple authors, collaborated in designing a body of work that explores and analyzes in-depth a number of widely used virtual spaces along with their implications in teaching learning settings. The content of this volume covers a wide range of new literacies that arise from children's engagement and interaction in everyday web 2.0 technologies.

The thematic division of the book takes the reader in a gradual exploration of meaning-making practices in virtual spaces starting with how online communities have developed through time (Part 1), then having these spaces being excessively used by young children outside school (Part 2), followed by perpetual inclusion in formal schooling (Part 3), and ending with the potential of these spaces to open gates for learning in this new media era (Part 4). It is no wonder then, given that these are social spaces, that the basic concepts of interaction, engagement, motivation and identity that are associated with these technologies have been examined from different perspectives. Based on these aspects, the contributors discuss and suggest means to cope with the challenges arise from diverse practices in virtual worlds.

The essence of the terms virtuality or virtual spaces is fundamentally driven from sociability-particularly presence in a social space. It is possible to say that in these spaces new forms of literacies evolve as a combination of communication and interaction. Pertaining this, Gillen and Merchant (Chapter 1) state issues related to the perceptions of differences between real and virtual and argue that these space are "an extension of the real world" (p. 10). Interesting is that the authors seem to be reasonable in making the connection when they claim that virtual worlds are rather genuine because children live in them as they are immensely engaged in activities in these worlds, hence, learning takes place. In a detailed analysis of this learning, the authors of chapters 2 and 3 remark on the knowledge that children acquire when engaged in social sites by looking at it from two different perspectives.

In the view of a sociocultural theory, Black and Reich (Chapter 2) offer helpful insights on how children learn in virtual worlds. By applying an educational lens, most games reinforce children's learning by offering a blend of instructions, texts, icons and video tutorials as well as providing feedback and scaffolding that contribute to users' cognitive development. Not all learning that happens in virtual playgrounds is constructive, Carrington (Chapter 3) moves beyond multimodality and sheds light on the kind of values and messages sent through some sites that shape identities and have a great influence on the childhood model that children adopt.

To explore the nature of literacy practices involved in virtual worlds outside educational settings, Beavis (chapter 4) designed a reliable model for video gaming literacy practices that serves two functions: (a) to show how players engage in the activities and what they do and (b) to be a source helping in curriculum planning and design. According to the author, a number of school-based projects that integrated online learning spaces in classrooms presented productive kinds of learning. In the same sense, Marsh (Chapter 5) reports on how her study of countering chaos in online games for children aged 5-11 revealed that children created a social order in a chaotic and complex game like Club Penguin. Another study that brought to light the productive nature of online literacies was the one conducted by McDougall and Kendall (Chapter 6) who analyzed Facebook posts of eight young people while playing a popular videogame, Grand Theft Auto IV, and provided insights on the interrelationship of progression through textual practices and agency.

Similarly, Colvert (Chapter 7) found that the little designers in her case study demonstrated skills, talents and knowledge particularly when asked to create rules for the game. In tracing children's activity in another project *@Classroom Tweets* (Chapter 8), it was apparent that the children acted more like contributors than consumers. In the same way, findings of projects in (Chapters 9 & 10) strengthen the contributors' arguments and reveal that children who are engaged in game designing are, in fact, putting into action decision making strategies and that literacy practices in schools should be relevant and extend students literacies outside school as well as to prepare critical thinkers to make reasonable decisions in the future.

The aspects of engagement and teamwork that are evident in the social media spaces are given a comprehensive analysis in Chapters (11-14). One key aspect is that the collaborative discussions that take place in virtual worlds are indeed authentic human interactions that should be considered as valuable literacies. From this it follows that such spaces can be used to integrate young people's interests and to bind the community through the negotiation of issues that concerns its members. The last part of the book reveals thirteen elements that were conveyed by children as important in engagement in online environments. These appear to be an appreciated resource for educationalists who are concerned with designing appealing gaming environments for children in formal settings.

Indeed, this book is a valued addition for academics, educationalists, teachers, students and researchers involved in the field of digital and virtual literacies. It is an addition to other scholarly work in this area- including but not limited to Burnett et al (2014) and Marsh (2011)-concerning children and young adults. The authors in this book do not only report but evaluate different kinds of literacy practices in online programs and games using different methods and settings. It is clear that the book achieves its aim by providing an in-depth exploration in the current tendency of children and young people towards virtual literacies. As this book is a collection of field projects by scholars working on exploring digital practices in virtual worlds, it successfully presents readers with the learning potential of these technologies and the extent to which the virtual spaces can be included in classrooms. The diversity of methods used to explore issues in different projects makes this volume an important resource for those interested in virtual literacies. It also directs readers to new dimensions and opens up new ideas and possibilities for further research.

Given the promising quality of these virtual literacies, the authors were also concerned about the insecurities in this open world for children. Throughout the book, there exists reminders that the contributors are aware of the problems emerging as a result of children's engagement in online spaces; issues like e-safety, privacy, oversharing. It is interesting to bring to light one of the authors' views in relation to this. In chapter 8, Waller states that not via "applying blocks, filters and other controls" (p. 130) that this problem would be solved, but by "Embedding a Web 2.0 system into the everyday practices would allow pupils the opportunity to learn safe practices within online mediated spaces within a real and meaningful context" (p.130). Therefore, the best solution, which indeed backs up the authors' argument, would be to make use of the new media that offers a lot of literacy opportunities in educational settings.

The practicality of some virtual spaces, as revealed by the researchers, has enriched the volume with a wealth of suggestions for workable applications in school settings. As a central point, implications for teaching and learning is widely referred to throughout the book in almost all chapters. Given its importance, though in the concluding chapter the editors hinted in the direction, nevertheless, a more detailed section would have been worthy including. To be fair, some topics in pedagogy and methodology were tackled generally but there are far more implications that readers could infer from the projects' discussions. For example, in the final thoughts the editors place "the blurring of distinctions between reading and writing" as one of the characteristics of new literacies (p.254). Elaborating on such significant features in a separate chapter could have contributed to a great deal to the readers understanding of their applications in classrooms.

Yet, this book is informative and valuable especially for those conducting research in the area of virtual online spaces. Media researchers, teachers and students can find it very accommodating to their needs and research directions. This book is recommended to those interested to find answers to how to bridge the gap between children and young learners' continuously growing interest in virtual literacies in and out of school settings. Teachers would find innovative ways to approach their classrooms since it has practical applications of online spaces and a wealth of methodologies. Future research in this field may explore other more current virtual spaces in different contexts and perhaps focus more on the adapted versions of these spaces in school settings that serve educational purposes.

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