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ARTICLES

A PROCESSING APPROACH TO PROFILING STAGED DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Abstract

This article aimed to determine the stages of development in syntax and morphology reached by a learner of English as a second language (ESL) at one specific point in time, according to predictions of Processability Theory (Pienemann, 1998, 2005). Spontaneous production data were elicited from a Chinese ESL learner who completed a picture task and an interview. The conversation was transcribed and analysed according to stages in the processing hierarchy of ESL structures predicted by Processability Theory. The learner was found to reach the final stages for both syntax and morphology; all predicted stages emerged except Stage 4 for syntax and Stage 2 for morphology, which was generally consistent with the predictions proposed by Processability Theory. However, an absence of the structures for Stage 4 for syntax and an oversuppliance for Stage 2 for morphology were also found which are ambiguities that require further research.

Keywords: Processability Theory, L2 acquisition, ESL development, learner's profiling

Introduction

The aim of this study is to determine the stages of morpho-syntactic development of one ESL learner. The theoretical framework used is Processability Theory (Pienemann, 1998, 2005), which regards language acquisition as a sequential and incremental developmental process. The emergence criteria stipulated in Processability Theory are used to determine whether a certain range of grammatical structures have emerged in the learner's interlanguage and identify the developmental stages of L2 acquisition process. A Chinese male student enrolled in a second year postgraduate course at an Australian university participates as the informant. He is a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese and has 14-years experience in learning English as a L2. Two methods, a picture task and an interview, are used for the data elicitation. Since the informant of this study is an ESL student, this project complements empirical studies that have investigated the acquisition outcome of L2 learners who have received formal instruction and been exposed to naturalistic input. This study describes how to profile the development of L2 learners' acquisition from a processing perspective. This study will seek to answer two questions:

- (1) What are the highest emerged stages of acquisition reached by the learner with respect to morphology and syntax?

- (2) Are all stages found in accordance with the predicted developmental hierarchy?

Theoretical context

Motivated by research on the existence of a natural order in the acquisition of L1 in young children in the 1970s (Klima & Bellugi, 1966; Slobin 1970; Brown 1973), a number of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers have started to address the developmental issues in L2 acquisition (Bailey, Madden and Krashen, 1974; Dulay and Burt, 1973, 1974, 1975; Krashen, Madden and Bailey, 1975; Rosansky, 1976). Unlike early SLA studies focusing on the systematic comparison between L1 and L2 (Contrastive Analysis) and the systematic investigation of L2 learners' errors (Error Analysis), these researchers aimed to describe and explain the orderly manner in which L2 learners go through the course of language learning. Early empirical evidence for the existence of the acquisition order of English grammatical morphemes in L2 learners of different L1 was provided by the morpheme order studies in the 1970s. They provided a new insight into developmental dimension in L2 acquisition. These studies confirmed that L1 influence is very limited in L2 acquisition. However, the morpheme order studies were subjected to fierce criticism due to limitations in their methodologies (see Gass & Selinker, 1994, pp. 85-87).

One subsequent study that is considered as a significant attempt to explain the observed sequence of L2 acquisition is the one by the *Zweitspracherwerb Italienischer und Spanischer Arbeiter (ZISA)* group in the early 1980s (Clahsen, 1980; Meisel, Clahsen, and Pienemann, 1981; Clahsen, Meisel, and Pienemann, 1983; Pienemann, 1980, 1981). ZISA project investigated the acquisition of German word order rules in naturalistic L2 acquisition, through informal interviews with 45 adult Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese workers in Germany who did not receive formal instruction in German (Meisel, Clahsen, and Pienemann, 1981, pp. 110-111). This project included a large-scale cross-sectional study of 45 learners and a two-year longitudinal study of 12 learners (but only including longitudinal data collection without analysis). A five-stage developmental sequence for German as a L2 word-order rules was found in the acquisition of participants in their cross-sectional study. The findings of the ZISA project were developed into the Multidimensional Model. This model considered L2 acquisition as a multi-dimensional process which includes two dimensions—development sequences and variation.

As a great contribution to SLA research, the ZISA group and its Multidimensional Model not only defined a series of developmental stages in L2 acquisition, but also provided an explanation of observed development in L2 learner's language. However, the ZISA's explanation involved a multitude of different factors such as linguistic structures, L1 transfer, and communication. This kind of explanation lacked clearly formulated, falsifiable hypothesis (see Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Jansen, 1991). Another problem is that their cross-sectional study of L2 learners was not verified by published longitudinal data.

To account for the L2 developmental sequences cross-linguistically, Pienemann (1998, 2005) developed the Processability Theory (PT) to explain how L2 learners' skills to process new grammatical structures develop and to predict which structures can be processed by L2 learners at a given stage of language development. This theory is based on a number of L1 speech production models (e.g., Levelt, 1989; Kempen and Hoenkamp, 1987), and is formalized within Lexical-Functional Grammar (Kaplan & Bresnan, 1982; Bresnan, 2001). The PT tenets are summarized in the following five aspects (see details in Pienemann, 1998; Pienemann, Di Biase and Kawaguchi, 2005; Bettoni and Di Biase, 2015).

The first key concept of Processability Theory is the exchange of information. Acquiring a L2 is considered as the acquisition of L2 processing skills involving the activation of information exchange procedures. These skills are the same as those L1 mature speakers develop for acquiring their native language. According to Processability Theory (Pienemann, 1998, p. 7), L2 processing skills are developed in a sequence that accords with the order of activation of processing resources in L1 mature speakers. Following Levelt's (1989) Model of L1 speech production, Pienemann (1998) postulates a sequence of activation of L2 processing procedures: "1. lemma access; 2. the category procedure; 3. the phrasal procedure; 4. the S-procedure; 5. the subordinate clause procedure—if applicable" (p. 7). The sequenced activation of those processing procedures allows for the production of language structures (Bettoni and Di Biase, 2015, p. 52). The language structures which do not require any exchange of information among constituents are produced at the beginning, followed by those structures that ask for information exchange at the phrasal level. The structures which require the exchange of information at the sentence and higher levels will not be produced until the end.

The second key notion is implicational hierarchy. According to Pienemann (1998), the sequence of activation of L2 processing procedures is implicational in nature. A processing procedure can be activated and the corresponding structure can be produced only if all the previous processing skills have been developed. For example, if a L2 learner is able to apply the processing procedure *a*, he or she will be able to produce the grammatical structure (morphological or syntactic feature) *b* through using the procedure *a*. Next, if the learner can use the processing procedure *a+1* to produce the structure *b+1*, he or she has already been capable of using the preceding procedure *a* and producing the corresponding structure *b*. The process of acquiring L2 processing procedures and grammatical structures accordingly is accumulated.

The third key concept is that L2 acquisition is perceived as a sequentially gradual development from one stage to another stage. The sequenced activation of the processing procedures (as illustrated above) determines that L2 learners have to go through sequential progression through a series of stages. Processability Theory accounts for the sequential progression of L2 morphology and syntax in the interlanguage development. L2 morphological progression is actualised through feature unification, and measured by different syntactic levels (such as phrase or sentence) at which exchange of grammatical information is required to achieve the

unification of diacritic features (Pienemann, 1998). L2 syntactic progression is operationalised on the basis of the correspondences of a- (argument), f- (functional) and c- (constituent) structures. According to Lexical-Functional Grammar, these three levels of syntactic structure are motivated independently but mapped onto one another. Accordingly, Processability Theory measures L2 syntactic progression based on possible markedness resulting from the mapping of c-structure onto f-structure and a-structure onto f-structure (Pienemann et al., 2005).

The fourth key notion is processing cost. During L2 sequential progression, different stages indicate different levels of exchange of grammatical information. The exchange of grammatical information is cognitively costly, as the grammatical information contained in one constituent needs to be stored in our short-term memory until it can be checked against its correspondent constituents. However, our short-term memory is limited in its capability. The more grammatical information is required to be exchanged, the longer it needs to occupy the space of short-term memory. Consequently, L2 learners need to pay more conscious attention, and the greater processing cost is involved for them. This set of psycholinguistic constraints determines that the grammatical structures requiring greater processing cost are more difficult in L2 learning, and they will develop later than those requiring less processing cost in the interlanguage.

The processing cost will decrease with automatization of L2 processing procedures. Once a processing procedure is frequently activated and becomes automatized, it does not need conscious attention anymore—namely, the processing of the structures at this stage does not occupy short-term memory (Pienemann, 1998, p. 7). Once the short-term capacity is freed up, the processing of the structures at the immediately following stage can proceed. The ability to activate the following procedures along their implicational sequence and the automatization of preceding processing resources are the prerequisites for the learners to progress in their L2 development path.

The implicational hierarchy of L2 development as hypothesised in Processability Theory has been extensively supported by empirical studies against typologically diverse languages, such as English (Pienemann, 1998, 2005; Dyson, 2009; Keßler, 2007; Pienemann and Keßler, 2011; Charters, Dao and Jansen, 2012), Chinese (Zhang, 2001; Gao, 2009), German (Pienemann, 1998; Håkansson, Pienemann and Sayehli, 2002; Jansen, 2008), Japanese (Kawaguchi, 2005), Italian (Di Biase 2007; Di Biase, Bettoni, and Nuzzo, 2009), Arabic (Mansouri, 2005), Swedish (Pienemann and Håkansson, 1999; Hakansson and Norrby, 2010), and Turkish (Ozdemir, 2004).

Based on the hypothesis that the processing procedures developed at one stage are a prerequisite for the following stage, PT predicts a hierarchy of processing procedures in morphological and syntactic development of ESL involving a six-stage model of lemma access, category, noun and verb phrase, sentence, and subordinate clause procedures (see Table 1). In the present study the first stage is omitted from the investigation because words and formulae at Stage 1 do not involve a processing

procedure, as they are chunks or formulaic expressions, which are irrelevant to the analysis of this study.

Table 1. Hypothesized processing hierarchy of ESL structures (adapted from Table 4.7 in Pienemann & Kessler, 2011, p. 63)

Stage	Processing procedures	Word order	Examples	Morphology	Examples
6	Subordinate clause (S') procedure	Cancel inversion	<i>I asked when he could come home.</i>		
5	S-procedure	Aux-2 nd Do-2 nd	<i>Why are you laughing?</i> <i>What do you do on Sundays?</i>	SV agreement	<i>She plays football.</i>
4	VP-procedure	Yes/no inversion Copula inversion	<i>Can you speak English?</i> <i>Are you there?</i>	+ to + V + Aux + -ing + Aux + past participle	<i>I want to leave.</i> <i>He is going home.</i> <i>He has gone home.</i>
3	Phrasal procedure	ADV-fronting WH-fronting Do-fronting Comp-fronting	<i>Later she could read.</i> <i>Why man sit on chair?</i> <i>Do you like meat?</i> <i>I know that he is sick.</i>	NP agreement	<i>ten bananas</i>
2	Category procedure	Canonical word order SV (O) Canonical word order SV (O)?	<i>I like football.</i> <i>You work here?</i>	Simple past – ed Progressive marking –ing Plural –s (on nouns)	<i>He wanted it.</i> <i>He going home.</i> <i>I love apples.</i>
1	Lemma access	Words/formulae	<i>How are you?</i>	Words/formulae	<i>Many thanks.</i>

In the area of morphology, five stages are predicted in the hierarchy (including structural examples):

Stage 1: words/formulae

Stage 2: simple past -ed, progressive -ing, plural –s (on nouns)

Stage 3: NP agreement

Stage 4: AUX=be + -ing, AUX=have + past participle

Stage 5: SV agreement (3rd ps sg. –s)

The developmental sequence of L2 morphology focuses on feature unification across different constituents—namely, exchanging grammatical information for the purpose of agreement (Pienemann, 1998). Grammatical information refers to features (such as person, number, or gender) and their values (such as third person, singular, or masculine) encoded in the lexicon. These features and values have to be unified or exchanged between different constituents in sentences in order to achieve agreement. The fact that the exchange of grammatical information appears at diverse levels of processing leads to the processability hierarchy for L2 morphological development.

At the first stage, L2 lexical items are stored without any grammatical information, and no any processing procedure is involved. L2 learners are only able to produce morphologically invariant forms (chunks or non-analysed material) such as single word ‘here’ or formulaic expression ‘many thanks’.

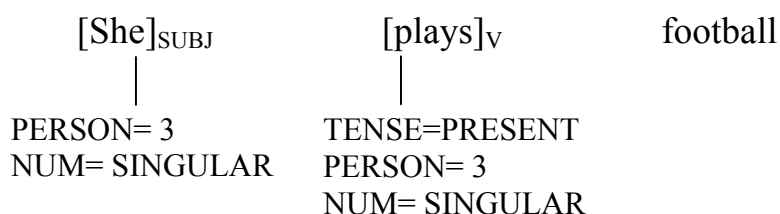
At the second category procedure stage, L2 learners are able to identify the categories of the lexical items such as nouns or verbs, but are unable to exchange grammatical information among each lexical item in the phrase or sentence structure. For L2 English, Processability Theory predicts no less than three separate morphological structures to emerge at this stage. ‘Plural –s on nouns’ describes the lexical nominal plural marking –s on nouns. ‘Simple past –ed’ refers to the regular past tense marker –ed. ‘Plural –s on nouns’ requires identification of the noun category of lexical items, while ‘simple past –ed’ requires the analysis of the verb category. Take the acquisition of ‘plural –s on nouns’ for example. L2 learners need to determine whether the referent is one entity or more (*monkey* vs. *monkeys*) and then differentiate whether the referent is countable or not from the perspective of semantics (*monkeys* or *water*). Next, L2 learners need to learn that this –s ending marker is associated with generic countable entities such as ‘they are monkeys’, but not with generic uncountable entities.

At the third stage, once the noun-phrasal procedure has been developed for the L2, diacritic features can be stored, exchanged and unified between the head of a noun phrase (NP) and its modifier. Grammatical information is therefore required to exchange within the NP to ensure the diacritic features of words in the phrase are unified. Processability Theory hypothesizes the phrasal plural marking –s (to achieve ‘NP agreement’) to emerge in this stage. Take ‘ten bananas’ for example. The plural feature appears in the head noun (the plural referent ‘bananas’) and its modifier (the numerical quantifier ‘ten’), and thus this information needs to be unified between two lexical items in this NP.

The fourth stage is the verb-phrasal procedure stage, which requires interphrasal agreement—namely, exchanging grammatical information within a verb phrase (VP). The morphological structure is hypothesized to emerge in this stage of L2 learners’ interlanguage is the VP composed by the auxiliaries (AUX) and their lexical verbs. In order to produce this structure, L2 learners have to learn to choose the AUX according to a range of temporal, aspectual or modal motivations (*be, have, modal*),

and then unify these features with the corresponding ones in the lexical verbs (*V-ing*, *V-en*, *V*).

Once the verb-phrasal stage is automatized, L2 learners are able to start processing the structures at the fifth stage—namely, the S-procedure. The activation of the S-procedure requires interphrasal agreement across different phrases—the subject (SUBJ) and the lexical verb (V)—within a sentence. As Processability Theory postulates, L2 English learners can produce the morphological structure the 3rd person singular marking –s in the simple present context, once they are capable of unifying the SUBJ feature information in the NP_{SUBJ} (PERSON=3rd; NUMBER=SINGULAR) with the associated V feature information (TENSE=PRESENT; SUBJ PERSON=3rd; SUBJ NUMBER=SINGULAR). The example of 3rd person singular marking –s is shown in “She plays football” as below:



In the area of syntax, six stages are predicted in the hierarchy (including structural examples):

Stage 1: words/formulae

Stage 2: canonical word order (e.g., SVO)

Stage 3: fronting (e.g., Adverb fronting, Do-fronting)

Stage 4: inversion (Yes/no inversion, Copula inversion)

Stage 5: Aux-2nd, Do-2nd

Stage 6: indirect questions (Cancel inversion)

Following the LFG framework, Processability Theory (Pienemann et al., 2005) expands its exposition of L2 syntactic development through incorporating the mapping of c-structure onto f-structure and the mapping of a-structure onto f-structure into its theory.

At the first stage, L2 learners have not developed any language-specific procedure, and thus are unable to access any syntactic information. They can only produce the single constituents which only require the activation of lemma access, such as ‘How are you?’ or ‘No’.

At the second stage, L2 learners can activate the category procedure, and start to distinguish between the verbal elements and the nominal elements. The learners are able to organize their utterances based on the canonical order found in the input from the target language--English. For English syntax, the canonical word order is the subject-verb-object (SVO) structure. At this stage, L2 learners of English can achieve

“a direct mapping of conceptual structures onto linguistic form” (Pienemann, 2005, p. 26). Thus, canonical word order SVO is hypothesized to emerge in this stage of L2 syntactic development, as exemplified in ‘I like football’.

Once the category procedure has been automatized, L2 learners can enter into the third stage—the NP-procedure. At this stage, the learners are able to place the non-arguments (e.g., the adjuncts) at the initial position of a canonical word sentence. The syntactic phenomenon ‘ADV-fronting’ is hypothesized to emerge by allowing the adjuncts such as time or place circumstantial adverbials to appear as in the initial position, as exemplified in ‘Later she could read’. L2 learners also can produce the structure such as ‘Do you like meat?’ by placing the auxiliary *do* in the initial position of the canonical order SVO (*you like meat*). This syntactic phenomenon is ‘Do-fronting’. However, the production of this structure does not indicate that the learners have developed the knowledge of the lexical features of the auxiliary *do* or the verb (e.g., PERSON, TENSE, NUMBER) and can achieve the agreement of these features. For example, at this stage, the learners are unable to produce the interrogative sentence such as ‘Does she have lunch?’. This is because the learners merely consider this ‘do’ as an additional XP element in the first position of the canonical sequence.

At the fourth stage, L2 learners can activate the VP-procedure. They can produce the syntactic phenomenon such as ‘Yes/No inversion’ and ‘Copula inversion’ in non-canonical sequences, by assigning the auxiliary or copula verb as the focal function to mark the whole sentence as a question. This results in the inversion between the subject and the auxiliary (or copula), as shown in the examples— ‘Can you speak English?’ and ‘Are you there?’.

At the fifth stage, L2 learners can activate the S-procedure and fully differentiate the topic from the subject. They are assumed to be able to conduct the procedure of inversion—namely, placing the auxiliary or copula before the subject. After learning to assign a focal element (e.g., WH-word) in the first position of a sentence, the learners are hypothesized to become able to produce the syntactic structures such as ‘Do-2nd’ and ‘AUX-2nd’, as exemplified in ‘What do you do on Sundays?’ and ‘Why are you laughing?’. In the meantime, the learners are also able to exchange the interphrasal information for agreement. They can unify the features (e.g., PERSON, NUMBER, TENSE) across constituent boundaries. Therefore, the learners are hypothesized to become able to produce the questions such as ‘What does she do?’ or ‘What did she do?’ by using the morphological form of *do* (e.g., *does*, *did*).

Once the S-procedure is automatized and L2 learners have developed all the previous processing resources, they are able to get into the sixth stage and activate the S’-procedure. The activation of this procedure requires the exchange of information between the main clause and the subordinate clause. At the previous stages, the learners have already learned to place the focal element (e.g., WH-word) at the initial position and keep the rest of the words in the canonical order. Thus, they are assumed to be able to produce the indirect question such as ‘I wonder why he sold that car’ by

allowing interclausal agreement between the verbs in the main clause and the subordinate clause. This syntactic phenomenon is called ‘cancel inversion’ in the processability hierarchy of L2 syntactic development. However, the S’-procedure is highly optional for L2 development. The syntactic constructions at this stage are rather rare even in the production of English native speakers and very difficult to elicit in L2 learners (Di Biase, et al., 2015, p. 99).

Methodology

Informant

The participant of this study was a 24-year-old Chinese male student, Tony, who came to Australia three years before the present study and had studied English for 14 years. During his schooling in China, he received formal instruction in learning English. He also practiced his spoken English through listening to English songs and seeing English movies. At the time of the present study he was undertaking the second year of graduate studies in a Master degree of microelectronics at a university in Australia where English is the medium of instruction. He attended the IELTS test with an overall band score of 7.0 four months prior to the current profiling.

Data collection

Morphological and syntactical structures were measured by administration of a picture task which was adapted from the Bilingual Syntax Measure (Dulay & Burt, 1974, cited in Gass and Selinker, 1994, p. 82) (10.16 minutes), and an interview (10.27 minutes) were used for data elicitation. First, the learner had an interview with the researcher. The interview was designed to induce the use of specific grammatical features, thus some questions about his past such as the description of his room and favourite people were prepared in advance so as to provide contexts for specific features. For example, the question “Did you receive any training in English?” (Line 29) was asked in order to elicit *simple past-ed* from the learner (see below). But unfortunately the informant did not provide the required morphological item in the conversation. Second, the learner was asked to choose one of two prepared pictures (see below), then he chose the picture A. He described his picture and then was asked to complete a “spot the difference” task. The purpose of these tasks was to try to elicit especially the types of structures such as plural, progressive, habitual, *wh*-questions, or *y/n*-questions.

(1) The excerpt from the interview task

29. *Researcher:* yep so um. did you. receive any training in English
um..including

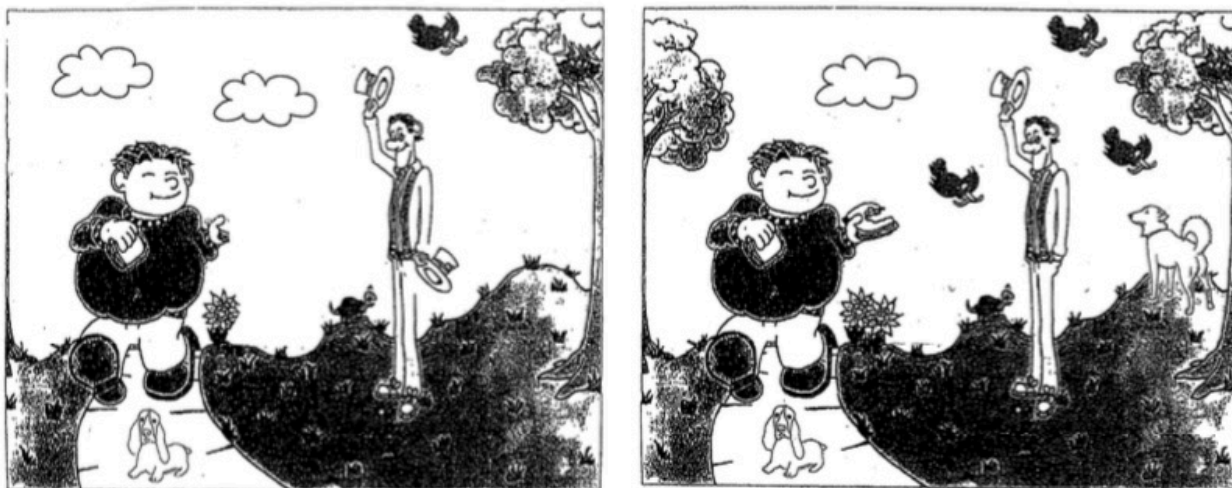
speaking or writing or something?

30. *Informant:* uh basically I uh...had English class in China since I was
like..very

young I mean..in nine. ten years old

To allow for analysis of the participant's interview responses, the recording was transcribed using the conventions described in Di Biase and Kawaguchi (2004, pp.99-102).

(2) Two pictures used in the second task (after Gass and Selinker, 1994, p. 82)



Data analysis and emergence criterion

A morpho-syntactic analysis was carried out according to the categories in “Hypothesized processing hierarchy of ESL structures” (see Table 1). Chunks and formulaic phrases (e.g., How are you?) that appear at Stage 1 of the processing hierarchy were not included in the analysis because they were not relevant to the aims of the present study. An array of identifying criteria was used to determine formulaic speech (Hall, 2010, p. 4): (1) multi-morphemic; (2) an identifiable invariance in respects of linguistic form; (3) retrieved from memory as a whole; (4) conventionalized qualities and contribution to perceived idiomaticity. According to these criteria, the utterances such as “it’s my pleasure”, “my name is Tony”, and “no worries” were identified as formulaic strings.

In the area of syntax, 11 structures in the five stages of acquisition were identified with different conventions in the form of brackets (e.g., the utterance including the item *canonical word order* is labelled as ‘svo[...]svo’). Relevant turn numbers containing the structure were recorded and tabulated. The emergence criterion (acquisition criterion, see Pienemann, 1998; Di Biase, 2000) to determine the stage of word order is that any one structure in any one stage suffices for that stage to be considered as having emerged, provided that it is produced creatively. For example, copying the researcher’s previous turn was not included in the tally, such as “I have a fat boy too”.

In terms of morphology, nouns and verbs with and without required morphemes in their obligatory contexts were coded with appropriate conventions. Cases of

overgeneralizations were also identified. Turn numbers containing the instances of suppliance, non-suppliance and oversuppliance were recorded and tabulated. The emergence criteria (Pienemann, 1998; Di Biase, 2000) were defined as: at least two tokens of the morphemes are supplied (this signals emergence) in a minimum of three obligatory occasions (this signals robustness of the data); at least one case should contain formal and lexical variation (this signals productive use); and there should be no instance of oversuppliance (this aims to ensure acquisition of the morpheme's function).

Results

Tables 2 and 3 display the summaries of the results for word order and morphology. Results from the syntactic analysis (see Table 2) showed that the required structures *SV(O)* and *SV(O)?* at Stage 2 were both supplied, while *SV(O)* appeared with a rather high frequency (97 tokens supplied). In Stage 3, the syntactic structures *ADV-fronting* and *Do-fronting* were supplied, while *Wh-fronting* and *Comp-fronting* were not produced in the data. The two required structures *Yes/no inversion* and *Copula inversion* at Stage 4 were neither produced. At Stage 5, *Do-2nd* emerged but *Aux 2nd* was not supplied. *Cancel Inversion* at Stage 6 appeared with only one token.

Table 2. Summary of results for syntax

Stage	Structure	Total
6	Cancel Inversion	1
	Total	1
5	Aux 2 nd	0
	Do-2 nd	6
	Total	6
4	Yes/no inversion	0
	Copula inversion	0
	Total	0
3	Adverb fronting	5
	Wh-fronting	0
	Do-fronting	2
	Comp-fronting	0
	Total	7
2	SV(O)	97
	SV (O)?	6
	Total	103

Results from the morphological analysis (see Table 3) showed that *to+bare verb* and *have+past participle* at Stage 4, and *simple past-ed* at Stage 2 were missing. All stages except for Stage 4 contained cases of non-suppliance. All stages had instances of suppliance. For instance, for the structure *3rd ps sg.-s* at Stage 5, the number of supplied was 4 tokens, while that of non-supplied was 2 tokens. The only case of overgeneralization occurred in Stage 2 (*lexical nominal plural*). Formal and lexical variation existed in all stages. For example, at Stage 2, “dogs” and “English songs” form a lexical contrast, while a formal variation exists between “dogs” and “the dog

”. At Stage 3, a lexical contrast occurs between “two dogs” and “two hamburgers”, while there is a formal contrast between “two dogs” and “the big dog”. At Stage 4, “is standing” and “is holding” form a lexical variation, while a formal contrast exists between “he is holding” and “each hand holds”. In the final stage, a lexical contrast appears between “my landlord lives” and “it walks”, while there is a formal contrast between “it walks” and “walking”.

Table 3. Summary of results for morphology

Stage	Structure	Total contexts	Number of Supplied	Number of Non Supplied	Number of Oversupplied
5	3 rd ps sg. -s	6	4	2	0
	Total	6	4	2	0
4	to + bare verb	0	0	0	0
	AUX=be+-ing	9	9	0	0
	AUX=have+ past participle	1	1	0	0
	Total	10	10	0	0
3	phrasal plural	24	23	1	0
	Total	24	23	1	0
2	simple past -ed	0	0	0	0
	progressive -ing	4	4	0	0
	lexical nominal plural	18	13	4	1
	Total	22	17	4	1

Discussion

The first research question of this project is to determine the highest emerged stages of syntactic and morphological acquisition in L2. The results of the syntactic analysis, showed that the highest emerged stage is the final stage of the processing hierarchy for ESL syntax (S'-procedure), because there is one token of the structure *Cancel inversion* that suffices for evidence of the emergence of Stage 6.

According to the results of the morphological analysis, the highest emerged stage was the final stage of the processing hierarchy for ESL morphology (S-procedure). Firstly, four tokens of the required morpheme 3rd ps sg.-s were supplied (signalling emergence) in six obligatory contexts (signalling robustness of the data). Secondly, there was at least one instance of formal and lexical variation (signalling productive use). For example, a lexical contrast occurred between “my landlord lives” and “it walks”, while there was a formal contrast between “it walks” and “walking”. Thirdly, there was no case of oversuppliance. Therefore, Stage 5 emerged as the highest stage of acquisition for morphology in the learner’s production.

The second research question of this study is to examine the presence of all stages the hierarchy of the learner’s production. Results showed that the stages were found to be generally consistent with the developmental hierarchy for ESL structures. In terms of word order, all stages except Stage 4 (VP-procedure) emerged in the L2 of the learner. Through all stages except Stage 4, at least one syntactic structure that suffices for evidence of the emergence was supplied. The required structures *Yes/no*

inversion and *Copula inversion* for Stage 4 were not produced in the data, indicating that this stage had not emerged under the predetermined acquisition criteria. However, according to PT, each stage is the prerequisite for the next stage. The learner cannot skip Stage 4 and go from Stage 3 to Stage 5. The absence of the supply for Stage 4 structures might be attributed to the simplicity of this conversation, namely, there was no contexts that triggered the supply of such structures. The fact that these two structures were not produced by the informant is not necessarily evidence for Stage 4 being skipped.

Another possible account of the absence is that the conversation was conducted as naturally as possible so that the learner tended to speak in an informal manner. Although the use of the picture task was designed to elicit the target structures such as *Yes/no inversion* and *Copula inversion*, the learner did not produce the required features perfectly as expected. Sometimes he preferred to express in a brief or incomplete way instead of using the complete form. For instance, the learner would have asked the researcher “is your boy fat right?”, but he eventually produced the sentence in an incomplete way (“you fat right?”). If the learner could speak the complete sentence, the structure *Copula inversion* that suffices for evidence of the emergence of Stage 4 would have been provided successfully. There is no evidence for non-emergence of Stage 4. Further consideration of this issue needs to be supported by more elicitation data.

In terms of morphology, all stages emerged under the criteria of acquisition and no stage was skipped. For each stage, at least two tokens of the required morphemes were supplied in at least three obligatory contexts (see Table 3). There was more than one instance of both lexical and formal variation for each stage. For example, for formal variation, the lexeme “dog” occurred in the form of “dogs” (Stage 2), “the dog” (Stage 2), “two dogs” (Stage 3), and “the big dog” (Stage 3). There were formal contrasts in Stage 4 for “hold” (“is holding” and “each hand holds”) and Stage 5 for “walk” (“it walks” and “walking”). In terms of lexical variation, the morpheme “plural -s” was attached to different lexemes such as “dog”, “song”, and “hamburger”. The morphemes “-ing” (the structure *be + -ing*) and “3rd ps sg -s” were used on the lexemes “stand”, “hold”, “live”, and “walk”, respectively.

One case of oversuppliance occurred at Stage 2 (“I was in undergraduate university”). From the grammatical perspective, “undergraduate” should have been used rather than “undergraduates” in this context. However, this oversupply of the *lexical nominal plural* should not be considered as violating the emergence of Stage 2. This may have been attributed to the learner’s “slips of the tongue”. As Corder (1967) argues, the L2 learner might exhibit such slips of the tongue when performing in his L2, resulting from external and internal conditions, such as memory lapses, physical states (e.g., tiredness and strong emotion). Therefore, this one instance of oversuppliance might result from a slip of the tongue, and if so, it cannot be treated as evidence of the non-emergence of Stage 2.

Conclusion

This study investigated the stages of acquisition with respect to morphology and syntax in one ESL learner's production using the processing hierarchy of ESL structures and theoretical principles in PT. The participant was found to reach the final stages of L2 English syntax and morphology. The acquisition stages were generally in accordance with the developmental hierarchy predicted by PT. Although the structures for Stage 4 in the acquisition of syntax did not emerge in the data and there was one case of oversuppliance for Stage 2 in the acquisition of morphology, this was not a convincing evidence for stages having been skipped. It can be assumed that these two issues might arise from the likely possibility of limited data and the learner's informal expression, and the learner's slips of the tongue, respectively.

This study is limited in scope, thus a fuller developmental profile of the learner cannot be established. More elicitation data needs to be collected. In future research, questions that are more generic can be asked, which could provide contexts for specific features in order to achieve more data density in required structures. For example, in order to elicit the utterances that involve the structure *copula inversion*, the researcher should re-address the incomplete question that was asked by the learner—namely, “you fat right?” This may remind the learner that he needs to compensate for the missing constituents in the original question. If the learner does not realise this problem, the research should further request for the clarification such as “what do you mean?” Once the learner pays his attention to the issue, he will probably ask a complete sentence that supplies the evidence for the required structure *copula inversion* such as “is your boy fat right?”.

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THE EFFECT OF TIMING ON THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF TEST-TAKERS' WRITING

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Abstract

Timed impromptu writing is widely used in the assessment of writing ability, but its validity has been questioned because of its “timed” feature. This study addressed this issue and investigated the effect of a timed testing condition on the quantity and quality of writing. The study involved 23 L2 learners sitting two essay writing tests: an untimed test followed by a timed one. The timed condition was operationalised as 70% of the time participants had spent on the untimed writing, so that the time allocated was an equal proportion of the time every learner needed. The essays were measured in terms of length, accuracy and complexity and were also analytically scored by a trained rater. The study found that the timed condition had a significant effect on the length and content quality, but did not impact on accuracy nor complexity of writing. Results suggest that time conditions might not be as much a threat to test validity as originally perceived. The study also portrays a more complex picture of the trade-off effect than that which has been described by current theories, and recommends further exploration on this issue.

Key words: Language assessment, time condition, writing

Introduction

Timed impromptu writing has been adopted for the assessment of writing ability by many large-scale language proficiency tests such as IELTS and TOFEL, where candidates are required to produce at least 250 words within 30-40 minutes. Concerns have been raised around the construct validity of such a method, that is, whether it involves the assessment of some extraneous variable (Weigle, 2002). Coffman (1971) pointed out that “what an examinee can produce in limited time differs from what he can produce in a longer time,” and the differences vary from one examinee to another (p. 276). This suggests that when test-takers are given less time than needed, a construct irrelevant factor – the test-takers’ ability to handle time pressure – may be included in the test, and the resulting scores may not reliably reflect their writing ability. However, limited research has been done to test this assertion and no consensus has been achieved.

Literature Review

Theoretical background

Writing is commonly described as involving three basic systems: formulation, execution and monitoring; each system involves two “basic level processes” (Kellogg, 1996, p.58), as illustrated by the model in Figure 1. This model also relates the cognitive process to Baddeley’s (1986) theory of working memory. Kellogg (1996) argues that learners’ working memory has limited capacity and that different sub-processes are activated simultaneously while writing and have to compete with each other for attentional resources, especially when a certain execution rate is required. The model predicts benefits in both text quality and fluency when there are fewer demands placed on working memory.

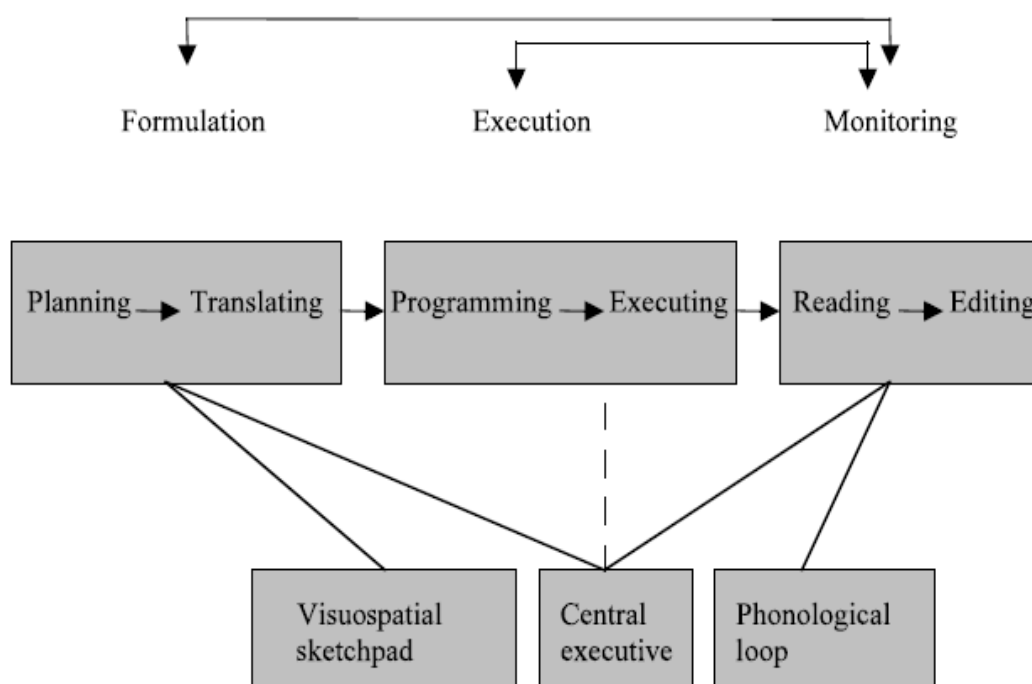


Figure 1. *Ellis and Yuan's (2004) adaptation of Kellogg's model of writing process.*

The information processing demands that a writing task imposes on learners' working memory constitutes the cognitive complexity of the task in task-based research (Robinson, 2001). Two competing theories of task complexity, Skehan's (1998, 2003) Limited Attentional Capacity model and Robinson's (2001, 2005) Cognition Hypothesis, have endeavoured to describe the relationship between cognitive demands and learners' performance. Although a writing task in a language test is not the type of task Skehan and Robinson refer to, their theories are applicable to the type of writing activity relevant to this study and outside of the narrower focus of task-based language teaching.

Drawing on Baddeley's research (Gathercole & Baddeley, 1993), Skehan (2003) proposed that learners' information processing capacity is limited. Thus, it is hard for learners to attend to both meaning and form during L2 performance, leading to a trade-off effect among the three aspects of language output: accuracy, complexity and fluency (Skehan & Foster, 2001). Skehan (1998) argued that greater time pressure directs learners to focus on task completion, thereby favouring fluency and resulting in fewer attentional resources allocated to linguistic form either in terms of accuracy or complexity. Robinson (2001) distinguished two dimensions of task complexity: resource-directing factors that make cognitive/conceptual demands (e.g. the availability of visual/contextual support) and resource-dispersing factors that make performative/procedural demands (e.g. the provision of planning time). When task complexity increases with the respect to the former, more accurate and complex language production is the predicted outcome; when it increases in terms of the latter, the quality of the output is predicted to suffer in terms of both accuracy and complexity (Robinson, 2005). Time allowance for task completion falls into the category of resource-dispersing factors. Thus, a shorter time limit is expected to result in lower accuracy and complexity of the output.

As can be seen, Skehan (1998, 2003, 2014) and Robinson (2001, 2005, 2011) disagree with each other regarding the aspect(s) of language that is compromised when a certain level of time pressure is imposed. Despite this, both theories predict a possible decrease for text quality when a shorter time allowance is given for writing, be it in accuracy or complexity or both. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that when the time allocated to a writing test is shorter than optimal, a decrease would be observed in accuracy and/or complexity. The present study aims to test this hypothesis by comparing the accuracy and complexity of learners' written output under two different time conditions.

The effect of planning

Since planning activities usually entail spending more time on a writing task, research findings on the effect of planning also provide some indirect evidence for the impact of longer and shorter time conditions. Task-based research distinguishes two types of planning: pre-task planning (PTP) and on-line planning (OLP). A few studies have investigated the effect of planning on writing tasks, and the results are quite mixed.

Ellis and Yuan (2004) examined the effect of both PTP and OLP, and found that in comparison with a no-planning condition, pre-task planning led to greater fluency and syntactic variety (a measure of complexity), while on-line planning resulted in greater accuracy. They therefore proposed that PTP promotes formulation and unpressured OLP facilitates monitoring. Later studies, however, generated different findings. Farahani and Meraji (2011) found a positive effect of PTP not only on

fluency and syntactic complexity, but on grammatical accuracy as well. Johnson, Mercado and Acevedo's study (2012) reported a small significant effect of PTP on fluency, but none on lexical or grammatical complexity. Ong and Zhang (2010) controlled the total time on task, and found a significant decrease in lexical variation and one of the fluency variables – number of words produced per minute in relation to time-on-task – when learners were given longer time to plan. They thus suggested that PTP hinders learners from writing fluently and using a variety of words.

Research on assessing writing: The effect of time conditions

Only a few studies have directly investigated the effect of different time conditions on the quality of writing, and the contradictory findings offer no consensus. Some support Coffman's (1971) statement (Biola, 1982; Power & Fowles, 1996; Younkin, 1986) suggesting that time limits do affect learners writing performance, while others contradict it (Hale, 1992; Livingston, 1987) reporting no significant effect for this variable. There are also studies (Caudery, 1990; Kroll, 1990) looking at this variable in a less formal setting, comparing learners' performance in classroom writing practice and in take-home assignments. In these studies the shorter time condition was set as 40 – 60 minutes, and the longer condition was 2 – 14 days. They found that students did benefit from the extra time, but the benefits were minimal and not statistically significant.

A more recent study by Knoch and Elder (2010) assessed the written output of L2 learners in a more comprehensive way. It aimed to address the question of whether the validity of a diagnostic writing test would be harmed if the time limit was cut from 55 to 30 minutes. Test-takers were given two counter-balanced verbal prompts, and required to produce one essay under each time condition. These essays were not only rated on fluency, content and form, but also analysed for a series of discourse features including accuracy, complexity and coherence among others. The results were quite mixed. On the one hand, test-takers' scores on the two tests significantly correlated with each other, indicating there was not much difference in performance across time conditions. On the other hand, discourse analysis revealed benefits for the extra time on some features (e.g. accuracy) but none on others (e.g. lexical complexity); results even suggested a negative effect on one aspect of complexity (i.e. syntactic complexity). The authors concluded in the end that time allocation was “not as influential a factor as it is sometimes claimed to be” (p.71).

One common feature among studies is that they gave all test-takers the same amount of time under each time condition. This could be problematic: if learners do vary from each other in writing speed, they must also vary in terms of productivity, which is the amount of output one can produce within a certain unit of time. Therefore, 40 minutes can mean different things to a quick writer as opposed to a slower one. To be specific, if a learner needs only 30 minutes to finish the essay, then 40 minutes will be more than enough for him/her; in contrast, if a learner needs 60 minutes for

instance and is given only 40 minutes, he/she will have to produce an essay in less than 70% of the time he/she needs. This means that the same time limit may involve different levels of pressure for different learners, and may push them to focus on fluency to varying extents. In this way, their test scores may counterbalance each other's, and exhibit no significant difference in comparison with scores from an untimed test. The present study endeavours to allocate the same level of time pressure that equally pushes learners to attend to fluency, by reducing 30% of the time they need for writing.

The present study

The study was designed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Does a timed testing condition (as opposed to an untimed one) have an effect on learners' writing performance in terms of the quantity of the written output?
- 2) Does a timed testing condition have an effect on learners' writing performance in terms of the quality of the written output as measured by a) accuracy and complexity and b) analytically rated scores from a trained IELTS rater?

Methodology

This quasi-experimental study followed a single-factor within-participant design. The independent variable was the time condition and the writing fluency that was anticipated to change accordingly; the dependent variables were the measures of quantity and quality of writing. The study involved 23 learners producing two essays on different topics: one under a timed condition and one with no time restriction.

Participants

The participants were 23 L2 learners from two private language schools in New Zealand. They were all adults aged 18-35 years' old, coming from a variety of cultural and learning backgrounds. They were in language programs of intermediate (n=10) and advanced level (n=13), which involved 20-25 hours' classroom time per week. The programs addressed all four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Writing practice was regular in and after the class, much of which took a form very similar to the IELTS writing Task 2. Participants had either taken the IELTS test before or planned to take it within the year, and were therefore familiar with and potentially interested in IELTS writing tasks. They were informed of the fact that their essays would be sent to experienced IELTS teachers for anonymous marking according to the IELTS rating criteria.

The writing task

The writing task (see Appendix A) was designed with the IELTS writing Task 2 as a model, which involved the test-takers responding to a verbal written prompt and

producing a short essay. It was hoped that such a choice of task and the corresponding marking would make the experiment a valuable experience for the participants because of its similarity to the experience of sitting IELTS. Two prompts were selected and adapted from the writing questions in Knoch and Elder's (2010) study, and counter-balanced to guard against the risk that they may vary in terms of difficulty. Prompt A asked about issues on children's education, while prompt B required a discussion about voluntary work. Adaptation was made in the format to make it look similar to an IELTS writing task. A word limit was set as 250~300 words for both tests. The purpose was to encourage participants to spend more time in the untimed test producing a text of equal length to that produced in the timed test. It was anticipated to result in a lower level of fluency in the untimed test, and to help to fulfil the premise for an investigation of the effects of timing on accuracy and complexity.

Procedure

Data collection was carried out in lecture rooms in the two participating schools, and lasted for about 3 weeks in total. Eleven testing sessions were arranged at different times of the week to suit the various schedules of the participants. For each participant, the experiment consisted of a background questionnaire and two tests. The first test was an untimed one: learners were given as much time as they wanted to finish the writing task. The precise time was noted down when they stopped writing. The second test was the timed one: this time, each learner was assigned with an individually calculated time limit, which was 70% of the time he/she spent in the first test. The two tests were organised on two separate days to avoid fatigue but occur within a two week interval. The two writing prompts were counter-balanced. Participants of each proficiency level were divided into two groups of an equal number. Within each level, one group was assigned with Prompt A for test 1 and the other with prompt B, and vice-versa in test 2.

Measures

Participants' written output was evaluated in terms of quantity, accuracy and complexity with the measures shown in Table 1. It was predicted that the timed condition would impact these aspects of writing through its effect on fluency, so the latter was also measured as an independent variable. As we can see from the table, complexity was operationalised in terms of three aspects: syntactic complexity, lexical variation and lexical sophistication. Syntactic complexity refers to the extent to which the learners use complex sentence structures; lexical variation reflects the range of vocabulary used; and lexical sophistication indicates the amount of low-frequency words the learners produce.

Table 1. Measures of quantity, accuracy, complexity and fluency

Fluency	Syllables per minute	
Quantity	Essay length ---- total number of words produced	
Accuracy	The percentage of error-free clauses	
Complexity	Syntactic complexity	Number of clauses per T-unit
	Lexical variation	Malvern and Richard's (2002) D-value: a calculation of Mean Segment Type-Token Ratio computed by Meara and Miralpeix's (2004) D_Tools programme (c.f. Read, 2005).
	Lexical Sophistication	Lambda, calculated by the Meara and Bell's (2001) P_Lex, a corpus-based computer programme measuring the proportion of low-frequency words in a given text (Read, 2005).

The quality of the essays was also evaluated through analytical rating by an experienced IELTS teacher according to the IELTS writing task 2 band descriptors (2016). This rating resulted in a separate score for each of the four following aspects of writing: task achievement, coherence and cohesion, lexical resources and grammatical range and accuracy. An overall score was also calculated on the average of the four. To avoid potential bias in marking, all names were removed from all essays and the two testing episodes were undifferentiated. About a month after the initial marking, 14 essays were randomly selected and sent to the same teacher for a second rating. The average intra-rater reliability rate was $r= 0.998$ ($p< 0.05$).

Data analysis

The main data consisted of 46 essays produced under two testing conditions. Several steps were taken in the process of data analysis. First, all the essays were written into word documents and then coded for syllables, clauses, error-free clauses and t-units. All errors in syntax, morphology, and lexical choices were taken into consideration (Ellis & Yuan, 2004). Inter-coder reliability checking was conducted for clauses and error-free clauses, and the rate was $r = 0.993$ ($p< 0.05$) and $r = 0.992$ ($p< 0.05$) respectively; disagreement was resolved through discussion. Proper editing was also carried out to prepare the texts for the use of lexical tools (D_Tools and P_Lex) (c.f. Read & Nation, 2006). Results for each measure were then calculated and keyed into SPSS for statistical analysis. The data were then screened to remove outliers and checked for normality. Where normal distribution was assumed, paired sample t-tests were computed; Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were employed, where the assumption of normality was violated.

Results

A paired samples t-test showed that the number of syllables produced per minute significantly increased from test 1 (M=8.695, SD=1.885) to test 2 (M=10.700,

SD=2.295), $t(22) = -8.010$, $p < 0.001$. The Cohen's d effect size was large ($d=0.853$) (Cohen, 1988). It was thus established that participants were indeed forced to write faster and attend more to fluency in the timed test as had been expected.

The effect on quantity

Results showed that essays produced in test 1 ($M = 268.77$, $SD = 40.184$) were significantly longer than those in test 2 ($M = 233.91$, $SD = 36.616$), $t(22) = 5.537$, $p < 0.000$; and the effect size was large ($d = 1.128$) (see Table 2).

The effect on accuracy and complexity

As for the accuracy and complexity measures, the descriptive and inferential statistics are presented in Table 2. As we can see, there were minor decreases in measures of accuracy and lexical complexity and marginal increase in syntactic complexity from untimed to timed tests. However, none of these changes were statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2. *Results on accuracy and complexity*

	Mean Untimed	SD Untimed	Mean Timed	SD Timed	t	df	p	d
Number of words	268.77	40.184	233.91	36.616	5.537	22	.000	1.128
Error-free clauses	43.7%	0.166	42.5%	0.135	0.668	22	.511	0.148
Clause per t-unit	2.048	0.303	2.093	0.3478	-0.487	19	.632	0.22
Lexical variation	76.560	16.254	73.795	19.145	0.765	22	.452	0.161
Lexical sophistication	1.056	0.266	1.015	0.316	0.647	21	.524	0.140

The effect on rated scores

Concerning the rated scores, tests of normality were violated for all four descriptors: Task Achievement (TA), Coherence and Cohesion (CC), Lexical Resources (LR) and Grammatical Range and Accuracy (GRA). Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were thus employed to compare the means. As illustrated in Table 3, a significant difference between time conditions were only found in terms of the TA scores, $Z(20) = -2.015$, $p = 0.044$; the effect size was $d = -0.311$. We can see that the p value was just below the alpha level .05 and the effect size was quite small. Thus, it can be claimed that there were statistical differences between the two groups of scores, but the differences were relatively limited.

Table 3. *Results on rated scores*

	Mean Untimed	SD Untimed	Mean Timed	SD Timed	Z	df	p	r
Task Achievement	6.167	0.796	5.330	0.845	-2.015	20	.044	-0.311
Coherence & cohesion	6.0	0.756	5.682	0.894	-1.615	21	.106	-0.244
Lexical variation	5.609	0.722	5.565	0.945	-0.243	22	.808	-0.036
Grammatical range & accuracy	5.717	0.864	5.435	0.788	-1.533	22	.125	-0.226
Overall	5.870	0.801	5.565	0.896	-1.909	22	.056	-0.281

Patterns in the scores of difference

To further explore the data for possible evidence of the trade-off effect, a “score of difference” is computed for accuracy and complexity measures. It is calculated by the formula “a learner’s score on a particular measure in test 1 (untimed) minus that in test 2 (timed)”, indicating the difference on a certain variable across time conditions. The data was examined with a more qualitative view, and was coded as illustrated in Appendix B. Relatively high positive values were labelled with “[P]” and shaded light grey, and negative values with “[N]” and shaded dark grey. The coding were based on a comparison among scores of difference on the same measure. The alpha level for a large value was set to be $|\alpha|=0.50$ for syntactic complexity; $|\alpha|=0.10$ for accuracy (range 0 – 1); 20.0 for lexical variation range (0 – 90) and 0.30 for lexical sophistication (range 0 – 1).

As we can see from Appendix B, large positive and negative scores coexisted for some participants (e.g. No. 3, 7, 10 and 17), indicating that there were decreases on some measures from the untimed to the timed test along with increases on others. Taking participant No.10 for example, his scores of difference on syntactic complexity were 0.89, which means that in the 2nd test the number of clauses produced per t-unit decreased by 0.89. On the other hand, his score of difference on lexical variation was -37.8, representing a major increase of the D value. A possible explanation of this phenomenon would be that when pushed to write faster, these participants focused on one or more aspect(s) of writing while neglecting others. In the case of No. 10, he might have focused on lexical complexity in the timed test (favouring D value) and allocated less attention to syntactic complexity. We can also see from the data that the aspects focused on were different from one learner to another, with no regularity observable, which suggests a possibility that different results may be generated with a different group of participants.

Discussion

As discussed previously, task complexity theories predict that the reduction of time allowance negatively impacts the quality of writing. Results from many previous studies (e.g. Hale, 1992; Knoch & Elder, 2010), however, fail to support such a prediction. It was suggested that a possible reason may be that the shorter time condition is not equally short for every participant, so that the results may balance each other out so that any effect is cancelled. To tackle this problem, the present study operationalised the timed condition as 70% of the participants' former spent time in the untimed test; the results however did not confirm the prediction as expected. A significant decrease in the timed testing condition was only found for quantity and for one measure of writing quality ---- the rated score on Task Achievement. As for other measures of quality, including accuracy and complexity, there was no significant effect for the reduction in time. These results were consistent with some of Knoch and Elder's (2010) findings, in that both of them suggested a significant effect on essay length but not on lexical complexity nor accuracy (as measured by the percentage of error-free t-units). However, the present study did not find the positive effect for time pressure on syntactic complexity reported by Knoch and Elder (2010).

A possible explanation for the unexpected results could be that we do not know how participants utilised the 30% "extra" time in the untimed test. According to Ellis and Yuan's findings (2000), different types of planning have different effects on writing performance: pre-task planning (PTP) promotes complexity while on-line planning (OLP) enhances accuracy. This means that if participants adopted different planning strategies in the untimed test, the effects of time reduction may be dispersed amongst the different aspects of language production and result in statistical significance in none of them. However, within the sphere of task-based research on planning, no consensus has been reached in terms of which aspect of language performance PTP benefits and how much the effect is different from OLP. For instance, Farahani and Meraji (2011) found a positive effect for planning on both syntactic complexity and grammatical accuracy, while Johnson et al (2012) reported no effect for either. Another study (Ong & Zhang, 2010) even found a negative effect for PTP on one aspect of complexity (i.e. lexical variation). Thus, the interference of the effect of different planning strategies may not be useful in explaining the results.

A more complex picture of the trade-off effect

Another possible explanation is that the trade-off effect among aspects of language production may be more complex than what is proposed by the theories. Skehan (1998, 2003) suggests that either accuracy or complexity will be traded-off when learners are pushed to focus more on fluency by time pressure, while Robinson (2005) predicts a decrease in both aspects of performance.

The examination of the scores of difference revealed some evidence for both proposals. On one hand, there were cases where the scores witnessed large decreases on complexity alone (e.g. No.19 and 21); on the other hand, changes in accuracy usually went with at least one aspect of complexity in the same direction (e.g. No. 6 and 23). Meanwhile, the fact that scores on syntactic complexity, lexical variation and lexical sophistication seldom increased or decreased together suggests a possible trade-off effect among different aspects of complexity. The findings suggest that when participants were forced to allocate more attention to fluency, some aspect of the performance may have been neglected or “traded off”: it could have been an aspect(s) of complexity alone or one combined with accuracy. However, there seems to be no regularity in terms of which aspect was neglected, nor is there much information from this data on factors that might influence such a choice. Was it affected by factors such as the nature of the task (e.g. task type and topic), the learners' individual ways of approaching the task (e.g. planning and writing strategies) and/or individual characters (e.g. level of anxiety and personality)? Was it a conscious choice in the first place, or just an unconscious tendency? From the current data, we can only observe that the choice (if consciousness was involved) seems to be individual to learners.

The data showed that when the time limitation resulted in decrease on some measures, there was a major increase on others (e.g. No.17 and 23). This meant that for a single variable (e.g. syntactic complexity), there could be changes in both directions represented by both positive and negative difference scores. Then, the mean score could be affected by the proportion of learners who happen to neglect or focus on this variable in the shorter time condition. That is to say, even the same study may generate different results with a different group of participants, which provides a possible explanation for the conflicting findings across different studies on the effect of time factors, and maybe also those on planning conditions.

Conclusion

The study found that the effect of the timed testing condition was only statistically significant in terms of the length of the essay and content quality (task achievement). The results showed that even when the time was controlled to be proportionally consistent to the time needed for every participant, the timed condition did not affect other aspects of writing quality for the group as a whole. However, an examination of individual changes across time conditions indicated a more complex picture of the trade-off effect (Skehan & Forster, 2001). It revealed considerable differences among learners in terms of which aspects of language were affected by the same level of time pressure. It also showed considerable variation in whether aspects of language were impacted positively or negatively. Such individual differences may have contributed to the variation in findings that exists between this study and other related studies.

Having said that, it has to be conceded that the size of this study was very small (n=23), and the evidence of the trade-off effect was not found with every participant. Besides, because of the limited time and resources available, single measures were used for accuracy and syntactic complexity, which did not account for their multidimensional nature (Norris & Ortega, 2009). Therefore, the interpretation and argument given here are mainly propositional. Further evidence is needed from larger-size studies with multiple and probably more sensitive measures of writing quality.

This study revealed individual differences in learners' reaction to time pressure, but did not investigate factors that might contribute to such differences; and the quantitative methods used did not allow a further exploration of this issue either. Future studies could make use of both quantitative and qualitative methods and examine the relationship between the impact of time pressure and individual strategies and personal traits.

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Appendix A

Question A

Write about the following topic:

Some people say that **intellectually gifted children** (very clever children) should be given special assistance and extra opportunities in school.

What do you think? Do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write 250 to 300 words.

Question B

Write about the following topic:

Some people believe that every citizen has a duty to do some sort of voluntary work.

What do you think? Do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write 250 to 300 words.

Appendix B

Id	Syntactic complexity	Error-free clauses	Lexical variation	Lexical sophistication
1	0.14	0.03	[P] 13.9	-0.05
2	[N] -0.57	0.06	3.8	0.11
3	0.25	[P] 0.16	0	[N] -0.72
4	-0.24	-0.02	9.9	0.25
5	-0.40	[P] 0.13	1.3	[P] 0.33
6	[P] 2.65	[P] 0.10	-7.9	0
7	[N] -0.62	-0.04	[P] 12.8	-0.04
8	0.06	0.05	5.4	-0.08
9	0.38	0.03	6.9	[P] 0.39
10	0.89	[P] 0.14	[N] -37.8	-0.03
11	-0.16	0.03	17.8	0.14
12	-0.03	[N] -0.11	[N] -34.6	[N] -0.35
13	0.19	-0.05	-4.8	0.19
14	-0.23	-0.08	[P] 24.5	0.25
15	-0.06	0	[N] -32	0.23
16	0.18	-0.02	6.8	[P] 0.40
17	[N] -1.09	[N] -0.10	[P] 15.7	-0.18
18	0.12	0.01	7.3	-0.1
19	-0.14	-0.04	0	[P] 0.78
20	0.14	0.08	-0.7	0.19
21	-0.48	[N] -0.22	[P] 20	-0.04
22	0.16	0.04	7.3	[P] 0.49
23	[P] 0.84	[P] 0.11	[P] 28	[N] -0.46

[P] = Relatively high positive value

[N] = Relatively high negative value

TEACHER NARRATIVES AS THEORIZATION OF TEACHING: A CHINESE TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT)

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Abstract

Teaching as a profession is unique in that all the people who enter the profession have had extensive experience of it, which was built up over many years in classrooms as students. However, the pre-existing set of beliefs about teaching and learning, which were based on, and reinforced by, their own experiences, might cause perplexity for teachers who work in different cultural contexts. How to balance pedagogical principles becomes one of the important considerations for these teachers when faced with the perplexity. This study, therefore, was taken to explore the beliefs of a Chinese language teacher, who was educated in a traditional teaching system (three-centeredness) in Mainland China (MC) and was teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages (TCSOL) in New Zealand (NZ). It was aimed to unveil how a TCSOL teacher coped with such challenges. Narrative inquiry and thematic analysis were adopted in examining this teacher's experience. Results show that composite factors impacted this teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning. The research process and findings are expected to offer some implications for fostering effective TCSOL teachers' professional development.

Key words: TCSOL; teachers' beliefs; pedagogical principles; narrative inquiry; thematic analysis

Introduction

Teaching as a profession is unique in that all the people who enter the profession have had extensive prior learning experience, which was built up over many years in classrooms as students. Hence, they already have a pre-existing set of beliefs about teaching and learning, which is based on, and reinforced by, their own experiences. In the field of language teaching, our understanding of language teaching methods is usually based on the assumption that communicative competence takes the mastery of linguistic form as its prerequisite (Littlewood, 1981) and that traditional language teaching methods stresses teaching language structure by means of "three-centeredness" (teacher-centeredness, textbook-centeredness and grammar-centeredness) (Tian, 2014, p. 1) for developing language learners' basic linguistic knowledge and language skills (H. Ross, 1992; Tian, 2014). In Mainland China, such

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language teaching methods have been utilized in English classrooms for the past thirty years (1980–2010) (Tian, 2014) and remain entrenched in language teachers' and learners' approaches. These methods have been criticized for not taking into account the purpose and goal of language learning and teaching – namely, to use it in a target-language context. Therefore these methods are considered insufficient to cultivate fluent second/foreign-language (L2) speakers. However, in classrooms of teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages (TCSOL), these methods still dominate. Teachers mainly focus on learning language codes, such as Chinese characters, words, pronunciation, tones and grammar (Lü, 1990, 1993; Lu, 2005; Xu, 2010). As stressed by Li (2010), in New Zealand, many Chinese teachers dispatched from Mainland China do not adapt well to New Zealand learner-centered classrooms, although communicative language teaching (CLT) has already been adopted in TCSOL classrooms (Liu, 2000). The reason for such difficulty is that traditional teaching methods are deep-rooted in these TCSOL teachers' minds, influencing their beliefs about language teaching and classroom practices.

In recent years, the popularity of TCSOL has been on the increase, and the number of students who study Chinese as a foreign/second language (CSL) has also significantly increased. Such trends may shape or reshape TCSOL teachers' beliefs about how to teach Chinese to non-native speakers, especially the beliefs of teachers who have learnt an L2 through traditional language teaching methods and are working in different first-language contexts. To discover the beliefs of this type of teachers, the present study focuses on a front-line TCSOL teacher in New Zealand by analyzing her life history narratives and classroom practices.

Literature Review

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Unlike traditional language teaching methods, which tend to over-emphasize “single aspects as the central issue of teaching and learning” (Yu, 2001, p. 196), CLT aims to develop language learners' communicative competence (Littlewood, 2011) and has been broadly accepted since it first appeared in the late 1970s (Savignon, 1987, 1991, 2007; Zhang, 2010). However, CLT still faces dilemmas (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1997; Said & Zhang, 2014; Spada, 1987, 2007; Whong, 2013), especially in countries where traditional teaching methods are deeply ingrained, such as Mainland China. These dilemmas range from the disagreement of the importance of grammar teaching and language accuracy to the issues of language teachers' roles (see e.g., Zhang, 2015). In response to these dilemmas, Zhang (2010) once offered a solution:

CLT classroom activities can be organized to develop students' communicative competence by learning grammar in context, due to a need arising in a particular communicative task. Activities can also focus on the creation of the need for communication, interaction and negotiation of meaning. (p. 39)

Zhang's (2010) solution provides L2 teachers with three essential suggestions: 1) cultivating students' communicative competence is not contradictory to teaching grammar; 2) teaching grammar can be embedded in communicative tasks; and 3) L2 teachers should design classroom activities according to their own as well as their students' particular needs in the language classroom any beyond.

Teachers' beliefs

Rather than an individual belief, teachers' beliefs, in this research, refer to a belief system involving teachers' content-specific beliefs (i.e., epistemological and pedagogical beliefs) and self-efficacy beliefs (i.e., efficacy expectation and outcome expectation). These two are further explained below.

Content-specific beliefs

Teachers' content-specific beliefs are their beliefs the subject matter (content) (Levin, 2015), including their epistemological and pedagogical beliefs. Their epistemological beliefs concern the nature and process of knowledge acquisition of the field in which they teach (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997), which includes the source of knowledge to be taught, and the control and speed of their teaching (Hoffman & Seidel, 2015). Such pedagogical beliefs involve teachers' judgments about setting appropriate teaching goals, implementing instructional activities, choosing the forms of evaluation, and understanding the nature of student learning (Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989; Kagan, 1992; Levin, 2015). Usually, these epistemological beliefs have an impact on teachers' pedagogical beliefs. As such, in traditional language teaching contexts (e.g., English teaching in Mainland China), those non-native English teachers with low-level English proficiency may avoid teaching in English, the target language; those teachers with limited knowledge of the field they teach might prefer to control their classroom with certainty; those teachers, who believe students' learning abilities are fixed at birth, might not try diverse paths to help students make progress; and those teachers, who believe language should be acquired in a target-language context, might be more dependent on context and more passive when teaching in non-target-language countries than those who believe language can be learnt in classrooms.

Such teachers' content-specific beliefs filter and evolve with their actual teaching practices, which might be a reflection of their own mastery/performance experience (Bandura, 1995) or of other fellow teachers' vicarious experience (Bandura, 1995; Kagan, 1992; Zahorik, 1987), especially when teachers face classrooms beyond their control (Kagan, 1992; Lieberman, 1982). Although such evolution of beliefs is inherently self-defined, self-directed, and private in teachers' professional development (Kagan, 1992), it is recommended that it should conform to some external professional standards when necessary (Kagan, 1992; Liston & Zeichner, 1989). For example, Yung (2001, 2002) once depicted the causality between

teachers' content-specific beliefs about what it meant to be a teacher and how their approaches to learning and assessment from four aspects: 1) teachers' beliefs about their roles in helping students' learning; 2) students' roles in and responsibility for learning; 3) the nature of the teacher-student relationship; and 4) how the teacher-student relationship should be manifest in classroom interactions. Also, He, Levin, and Li (2011) highlighted the impact of cultural contexts (e.g., collectivism in MC, individualism in the USA, etc.) on teachers' pedagogical beliefs by comparing the content and sources of pedagogical beliefs of 106 pre-service teachers from Mainland China and the USA. In their research, He et al. (2011) emphasized that cultural contexts affected social expectations of teachers' roles. For example, in Mainland China teachers were viewed as role models who deserved "absolute authority", while teachers in the USA sometimes developed friendship with students; and such different teachers' roles could influence teachers' pedagogical judgments.

Teachers' content-specific beliefs are influenced by nine factors (see Table 1).

Table 1. Eight Factors Influencing Teachers' Content-specific Beliefs

(1) family values (Levin, 2015; Levin, He, & Allen, 2013)
(2) personal learning experiences during schooling (K-12) (Levin, 2015; Levin et al., 2013)
(3) teacher education program (Levin, 2015; Levin & He, 2008; Levin et al., 2013)
(4) teaching experiences (Kagan, 1992; Levin, 2015; Levin et al., 2013)
(5) observations of other teachers (Levin, 2015; Levin & He, 2008; Levin et al., 2013)
(6) exposure to readings, theories, videos, or professors' ideas (Levin, 2015; Levin et al., 2013)
(7) the particular class of students they face (Kagan, 1992; Leinhardt, 1988)
(8) the academic materials to be taught (Kagan, 1992; Leinhardt, 1988)
(9) pre-existing beliefs about models of good or poor teaching, shaped by years in classrooms as students (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; Kagan, 1992; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984)

These eight factors potentially contribute to teachers' specific beliefs (pedagogical beliefs) about pedagogy (e.g., CLT in this research); and such specific beliefs of teachers' significantly shape their classroom processes (Fives & Buehl, 2012) and matter in varied ways in particular contexts (Gill & Fives, 2015; Pajares, 1992) (e.g., Mainland China and New Zealand in this research). Teachers' content-specific beliefs, in this sense, act as an explanatory principle for teachers' classroom practices (Skott, 2009), which has undergone both refutation and confirmation (Skott, 2015).

Self-efficacy beliefs

Within the context of teaching, self-efficacy refers to the generalized expectancy a teacher has in regard to his/her ability to influence students as well as beliefs about his/her ability to perform the professional tasks that constitute teaching (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy consists of an efficacy expectation and an outcome expectation. An efficacy expectation is a person's belief that he/she has the knowledge and skill to attain a particular goal (Bandura, 1977); and an

outcome expectation is the person's belief that the goal to be achieved is one worth achieving (Bandura, 1977) – that it will be beneficial to either teachers themselves or, in the case of teachers, to students. In addition, self-efficacy beliefs usually come from four sources: Mastery/performance experiences (personal authentic experience); vicarious experiences (other people's authentic experience); social persuasion; and an individual's physiological and emotional state (Bandura, 1995). Of the four, mastery/performance is considered as the most influential one (Bandura, 1995).

Indeed, the strength of a teacher's efficacy beliefs will affect the magnitude of the goals set and the amount of effort expended to reach those goals. Additionally, efficacy beliefs will influence degrees of persistence and resiliency and whether or not coping behaviours are initiated in the face of setbacks (Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2002; Poulou, 2007; Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy are more open to new ideas and more willing to experiment with new practices (Dixon, 2011). Furthermore, teachers with stronger outcome expectations are more likely to believe that a change in their behaviour will have beneficial effects for their students (Evers et al., 2002; J. A. Ross, 1998; Wheatley, 2005).

Currently, while there have been general calls to investigate internal factors, such as the impact of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs on curriculum and instruction, research evidence about such factors is mostly absent in relation to CLT and TCSOL teachers. To fill in this gap, this research was set up to explore one front-line TCSOL teacher's beliefs about CLT through her narrative experiences and observed classroom activities, aiming to unveil the potential factors that shape or reshape this teacher's beliefs about language teaching. Three research questions are addressed:

What are the participant's content-specific beliefs about CLT?

What are the participant's self-efficacy beliefs about CLT?

What are the factors shaping or reshaping these beliefs?

Research Methodology

Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry, as both a phenomenon and a methodology, was adopted in this case study, following an interpretive paradigm (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2013). First, this paradigm focuses on and analyzes phenomena occurring in small cases, which is fit for this research, as our study is one such case. Second, this paradigm adopts Dewey's (1938) principles of experience – continuity and interaction, which emphasizes that experience “does not occur in a vacuum; instead there are sources outside an individual which give rise to experience” (p. 40). Accordingly, a person's beliefs or actions at a specific point must connect a past experiential base with an experiential future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Similar to Dewey's (1938) principle of experience, Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) "three-dimensional narrative inquiry space" (p. 54), the essence of narrative inquiry, is constituted of a spatial dimension, a temporal dimension and a sociopersonal dimension (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2013). These three dimensions require that the researchers travel with participants "inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within place" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 49).

Participant: the first author

The participant in this study was the first author. Our decision to conduct this study also related directly to the first author's two roles – language learner and teacher, and her rich and diverse first-hand experiences in the perplexity of traditional and modern language learning and teaching methods in different cultural contexts.

As a long-term English learner, she was once constrained by and lost in the conflict between what she had learnt, what she expected to learn, and what she should learn in a (non)English-speaking context, especially when she confronted the perplexity in the changes of contexts – from Mainland China (a non-native English-speaking context) to New Zealand (a native English-speaking context).

As a TCSOL teacher in New Zealand, she once came to grips with the differences of teaching methods in Mainland China and New Zealand, the complexity of students' cultural backgrounds within one classroom, and the conflict between her expected teaching methods and educational mandates. Such a challenging situation forced her to rethink what should be the proper methods for TCSOL teachers' engagement with their students, including language teaching methods, teaching contents and teachers' roles. It concurrently confirmed and reconstructed her beliefs about teaching. In these experiences, she also developed her interest in using narratives as a tool to explore TCSOL teachers' beliefs in various contexts.

As Chen (2004) said, in qualitative research, researchers are also research tools; and researchers' interpretation of data also reflects their own worldviews. Therefore, the interpretation of the data in this study was also the process of making the inner voice of the first author and research participant visible to the largest extent.

Data collection and sources

This study drew on the first author's life history narratives (e.g., diaries), teaching plans, memos, field notes, and classroom tape-recordings (Sakui & Gaies, 2003). The life history narratives focused on the period from the year 2011 when she arrived in New Zealand until the study was conducted, whereas the teaching plans, memos, field notes, and classroom tape-recordings were from a six-week Chinese course (2 hours a day, 5 days a week) with 23 elementary-level CSL students offered in 2013.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted both inductively and deductively. With deductive analysis, four topics were established according to the existing concepts regarding CLT: 1) the participant's perceptions of creating a teaching environment, 2) selecting the teaching content, 3) teaching grammar, and 4) playing different roles in the classroom (see Beliefs One to Five). These four topics were also a guideline to compare with the traditional "three-centeredness". With inductive analysis, themes arose from the data with constant contrast and comparison (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). For example, drawing on Zhong's (2012) five forms of identifying language learners' beliefs, the participant's statements in these forms could also be identified as her beliefs (see Table 2); the identified beliefs were summarized into one of the four topics. Later, these themes were discussed with the supportive evidence from the data and relevant theories (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012).

Table 2. Five Statement Forms of Identifying Teacher's Beliefs

Forms	Examples
General statements relating to language learning that expressed opinions	I believe/think...; In my opinion...; to my view...; it is important to...
Statements that contained modal verbs	You/I need...; you/I must/have to...; Students should...
Definitions about language learning and teaching	Learning English is mainly about learning the grammar rules.
Hypothetical statement	If I were younger, I would learn English faster.
Statements that included superlatives or comparatives	The best way to learn/teach is...

Note: Adapted from Zhong (2012, p. 114)

Findings and Discussion

The participant's content-specific beliefs about CLT

Belief One: Teachers should create authentic scenarios and speak at a normal speed. The participant firmly believed that teachers should provide authentic target language, especially for students in non-target-language contexts (such as New Zealand in this research). Rather than focus on "standard" texts, the participant believed that TCSOL teachers could create authentic scenarios by three means. First, teachers should speak authentic language at a normal speed both in and out the class, so that students could have more opportunities to practice what they had learnt. Second, teachers should relate the knowledge in textbooks to diverse topics in daily life, so as to enhance students' ability in free expression. Third, teachers should bring diverse resources into classrooms, such as Chinese songs, magazines, movies, and dramas, so as to stimulate students' interest in and enthusiasm for language learning.

This belief and the three suggestions were initiated by her first experience in a New Zealand library as well as her reflection on her past learning and teaching experience, which was recorded in her diaries (see Appendix 1). This shocking experience reminded her that overemphasizing “standard” might lose the essential goals of language teaching – to use the language in target-language contexts for real communication. Therefore, in her own language classes, she endeavored to create authentic scenarios for her students, for which Story One was an example.

Story One

Before the first class, I said “Nǐ hǎo” (“hello” in Mandarin Chinese (MC)) to each student coming into the classroom, and all of them could reply correctly. Following “Nǐ hǎo”, I asked a second question “Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?” (“What’s your name?” in MC), few of them could answer it. I repeated and explained that questions word by word, and then taught that expression formally. During the break, I played a song named “Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?” without any explanation. The next day, I acted as a stranger and asked “Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?”, everyone could reply correctly but not fluently. After this question was asked in every class, the students were capable of replying like a native Chinese speaker. (Excerpt from the first author’s field notes: Feb, 2015)

Belief Two: Attention to the influence of the students’ native languages is essential. This belief puzzled the first author for many years, and developed over three main periods (see Appendix 2). In her mind, the interference of learners’ native languages was like the phenomenon that Mishler (1986) described, that any verbal account is mediated by language, so different people may not share the same meaning of the same communicative event. Therefore, any account of an interaction is a mediated reality. Although Mishler’s description depicts the potential differences between interviewers and interviewees, it may also extend to differences between people from different cultures, such as L2 learners and native-speaker target-language teachers.

Therefore, to reduce misunderstandings to the minimum, when the first author taught her students, she tried to study her students’ native languages. For example, she learnt Korean with her South Korean students (see Story Two), and the content she learnt was the same as the Chinese taught that day. In her view, on the one hand, this process forced the students to master what they had learnt; and on the other hand, the teacher could find out the difficulties Korean students might encounter, such as their pronunciation of “l” and “r”.

Story Two

I studied Korean with my students after class, because most of the students were from South Korean. At least I should learn how to read their names and know their potential problems in studying...They helped me with the limited Chinese they had learnt. For example, one day, they taught me how to pronounce “ㄹ”, it is “r”, not “l”. In spite of many times they repeated, I still could not sense the difference, but I realized they had already mastered the differences between the two consonants and the reason why they could not pronounce Pinyin “l” and “r” clearly.

(Excerpt from the first author’s diary: Jan, 2015)

Belief Three: Grammar should not be neglected, but how to teach grammar is of great importance. Grammar teaching was the one emphasized in traditional teaching methods, and was also the one the participant supported. Grammar-translation and CLT were assumed not to be opposite ends of a continuum that might meet or overlap in the middle. Grammar was just a container, and what it contained was much more important. Teaching grammar was not a simple presentation of a grammatical point, nor a bare sentence structure. Regardless of methods of teaching grammar, it was the content that could make grammar teaching more informative. As some researchers said, grammar teaching should not be neglected; rather, communicative ability should be developed without the loss of accuracy (Savignon, 1991; Zhang, 2004, 2010; Zhang & Ben Said, 2014). Actually, the participant's teaching process in Story Three was consistent with the suggestions in Zhang (2010) exactly.

Story Three

When I taught the grammar "Tag questions", I asked one South Korean student two questions in English as below to indicate that as, tag questions are used to confirm that a certain fact or urge someone to accept certain suggestions.

"You can speak Korean, can you?" (To confirm a fact)

"Let me study Korean with you, OK?" (To urge someone to accept the suggestion)

Confirming the students understood the meanings of "tag questions", I asked the two questions again in Chinese, using "duì bu duì?" ("right?") and "hǎo bu hǎo?" ("OK?"). Following this way, the students mastered it immediately.

After that, a scenario was created:

A girl tries to persuade her boyfriend to buy a gift for her, which might be very expensive. The boyfriend could choose to buy or not to buy, but must state a reason.

Consequently, all the students were able to use the tag questions properly.

(Excerpt from the first author's field notes: Jan, 2015)

Belief Four: Language teachers should have multilingual awareness and knowledge, especially in multicultural teaching contexts. The participant advocated that it would be better if a teacher had some basic knowledge of more languages, because language learning and teaching was, in fact, a negotiation of the cultures teachers and students bring into the classroom. In addition to the official working language (English in New Zealand), teachers and students should have one or more common languages, especially in the context where the working language was an L2 for both teachers and students (e.g., TCSOL classroom in New Zealand). This belief was manifested in Story Four. Through the participant's practice, she successfully helped an Indian student with another language, Japanese. Although both the teacher and the student were not fluent in Japanese, their limited knowledge of Japanese did play a facilitating role at that moment.

Story Four

"An Indian student told me he found Chinese so hard for him. But I remembered a fact that he could speak Japanese according to the questionnaires of the first class. I asked him to recollect how to pronounce 'telephone' in Japanese, he told me 'denwa' (電話), which was

correct. I used the Japanese 'denwa' to help him pronounce Chinese Pinyin 'diànhuà' (电话) and then explained the difference between the Chinese character and Japanese Kanzi, it is just like something coming to him in a flash..."
 (Excerpt from the first author's diary: Feb, 2015)

This belief was summarized from the data inductively. In order to test this belief, in the first class, the first author investigated her students' language backgrounds with a questionnaire, which was used for collecting information about where students came from and the languages they had learnt. The investigated results in Table 3 indicated that: 1) All of the 23 students were able to speak English, but only two of them were native English speakers (New Zealanders of a non-Chinese heritage background). That is to say English was the L2 of 91% (21/23) of the students, also of the participant, the teacher in this class. 2) The number of languages (56 in total) these students had learnt indicated that each student could speak 2.4 languages on average and Mandarin Chinese was the third or the fourth language for most students. 3) Next to English, Korean and Japanese were the two most popular languages; therefore it could be hypothesized that if the teacher had some knowledge of Korean and Japanese, she could get through to about 78% (18/23) of the class when necessary.

This hypothesis was tested in the participant's practice introduced in Story Four. In effect, the participant had learnt Japanese for five years but had never used it before. Never had she thought that one day she could successfully help an Indian student to pronounce Chinese with her limited knowledge of Japanese. This successful experience told her that it was not necessary for teachers to attain high levels of proficiency in different languages, as it is difficult; instead, they should have some basic knowledge of those languages, especially the languages in different language families, so that they could have a better understanding of the potential learning difficulties students might encounter.

Table 3. Information on the 23 Students in the 6-week Course

Countries Students Came from						
Countries	South Korea	Vietnam	Japan	Indonesia	India	Malaysia
No.	10	3	3	1	1	1
Countries	NZ (with Chinese heritage)			NZ (without Chinese heritage)		
No.	2			2		
Languages the Students Reported Speaking						
Languages	English	Korean	Japanese	Vietnam	Cantonese	French
No.	23 (100%)	12 (52.2%)	6 (26.1%)	3 (13%)	3 (13%)	2 (8.7%)
Languages	Spanish	Malay	Indonesian	Hindi	Italian	Afrikaans
No.	2 (8.7%)	1 (4.3%)	1 (4.3%)	1 (4.3%)	1 (4.3%)	1 (4.3%)

Belief Five: Teachers can act as different roles that are common in daily life. The stories in the first four beliefs, in effect, unveiled the participant's attitude towards teachers' roles. In addition to being a serious knowledge transmitter or a teacher with "absolute authority", which are typical of the traditional teacher image, teachers could act in different roles that are common in daily life. For example, in Story One she acted as a stranger; in Story Two she was the students' student; and in Story Three she was an activity organizer. There were many other potential roles teachers could play, such as customers, taxi drivers, doctors, and bosses, so that they could create more authentic scenarios for students to use the newly learnt language.

The participant's self-efficacy beliefs about CLT

The five identified content-specific beliefs and their supportive stories also revealed the participant's positive and robust self-efficacy beliefs. For example, in Belief One, she firmly believed that students could learn Chinese well in New Zealand, a non-target-language context (outcome expectation); therefore, she made endeavors to create authentic language environment for her students, because of her disagreement with her previous learning and teaching methods (efficacy expectation). In Belief Four, she tried diverse paths to understand students and help students to make progress (efficacy expectation).

In the process of her experiencing changes in the teaching and learning context (see Appendix 1 and 2), her positive and robust self-efficacy beliefs influenced her persistence and resiliency when setbacks occurred, despite her being trapped in confusion and sadness sometimes. As she said,

In the past, when I encountered with setbacks, my family, friends and teachers always positively provided me with support. With these supports, I successfully overcame difficulties one after another. Having these successful experiences, I know what I can do and have enough confidence to face the coming setbacks.
(Excerpt from the first author's diary, October, 2012)

The participant's words were unconsciously consistent with two of the four sources of self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1995): social persuasion (support from family, friends and teachers) and mastery/performance experience (personal successful experiences).

The influential factors shaping or reshaping these beliefs

Table 4 summarized the participant's beliefs and influential factors/sources. As is clear, personal experience (of learning and teaching), personal confusion, personal knowledge, and contexts (including context changes and multilingual teaching context) were perceived as crucial factors in shaping or reshaping all of the participant's beliefs; and the first three were the participant's internal factors. From

the supportive evidence (stories in texts and appendices), it could be summarized that, usually, it was the participant's traumatic experience or context changes that forced her to self-reflect, and then she confirmed or differentiated her perceived beliefs in her future practices. This summary also resonates with Bandura's (1995) conclusion that mastery/performance experience is the more important than social persuasion. However, a person's determination and behavior on the traumatic occasion can be influenced by his/her habitus formed in his/her living environment (e.g., family, friends, teachers, etc.) in his/her early age (Bourdieu, 1990).

Table 4. Summary of the Participant's Beliefs about CLT

		The Participant's Beliefs about CLT	Influential Factors/Sources
Content-specific beliefs		Teachers should create authentic scenarios and speak at an authentic speed.	Personal learning/teaching experience Context changes Personal confusion Self-reflection
		Attention to the influence of the students' native languages is essential.	Personal learning/teaching experience Personal confusion Self-reflection Friend's reminding Supervisor's instructions Interactions with students
		Grammar should not be neglected, but how to teach grammar is of great importance.	Personal teaching/learning experience Personal knowledge of L2 learning and teaching
		Language teachers should have multilingual awareness and knowledge, especially in multicultural teaching contexts.	Multilingual teaching context Personal learning/teaching experience Students' support
		Teachers can act in different roles that are common in daily life.	Personal teaching/learning experience Imaginary images of "ideal teachers"
Self-efficacy beliefs	Efficacy expectation	She had confidence in her teaching methods and applied these methods into practices. She firmly believed that she could help students with various languages.	Personal learning/teaching experience Self-reflection Personality Family's support Students' satisfaction; Multilingual teaching context
	Outcome expectation	If teachers adopted proper teaching methods and resources, students could learn the target language in and for use, even if they were in non-native-target-language contexts.	Personal learning experience Self-reflection Personal knowledge about L2 learning and teaching

Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has suggested that participant's content-specific beliefs and self-efficacy beliefs were mainly shaped or reshaped by her mastery/performance experiences, especially traumatic experiences (e.g., confusion in language teaching and learning).

According to this case, a person's traumatic occasion might become a turning point, on which positive social persuasion (e.g., support from family, friends, teachers, and students) acted as a crucial factor to cultivate his/her robust self-efficacy beliefs, which might bring him/her a new mastery/performance experience. With a successful mastery/performance experience, he/she can have confidence in coping with future setbacks positively.

As a single case study, this study cannot be generalized. However, the findings have implications for language teacher education and language teachers' practices, and the research process also provides a model of teacher reflection. Our next step is to analyze the data in order to uncover the influence of the participant's identities and habitus on her beliefs about CLT when she encountered the change in contexts.

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Appendix 1

The Story of the Development of Belief One

...When I said “thank you” to a staff, her “no worries” surprised me. “Why she did not say ‘you are welcome’?” I wondered. The standard answers, like the roots of a big tree, grew deep into my mind, even making me believe that it was the truth, never doubted about them. Having been an English teacher in a China’s senior high school, I ‘helped’ the students to memorize “‘you are welcome’ is used to answer ‘thank you’; ‘not to worry’ is used for ‘sorry’”. That moment I could not help being sad that if National College Entrance Examination were a competition, how many students had suffered such undeserved lost? In the process of overemphasizing standard language, standard accent, standard grammar, standard answers, but where is the authentic language?
(Excerpt from the first author’s diary: July, 2011)

Appendix 2

Stories of the Development of Belief Two

Period 1 “... I could not get satisfactory grade for my papers because of language...sometimes, for example, when I read academic papers, I thought I had understood, but it was not the authentic meaning; sometimes, I thought I had expressed well, but the listener made a different sense...”
(Excerpt from the first author’s diary: Nov, 2011)

Period 2 “One of my Kiwi (local New Zealand) friends “if you are my language teacher, you should tell me how I am thinking, and then the differences between the two languages...”
(Excerpt from the first author’s diary: Aug, 2012)

Period 3 “When my supervisor read my papers, he told me ‘I can understand what you want to say, but you should speak in another way...’ That moment, I felt the world not grey any more... I realized how important for a teacher to understand both English and the students’ native language” (Because my supervisor knows both English and Chinese well).
(Excerpt from the first author’s diary: March, 2014)

REVIEWS

De Costa, P. I. (Ed.). (2016). *Ethics in applied linguistics research: Language researcher narratives*. New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-73906-1 (pbk.) 248 pp.

Research ethics policies and procedures have become so ubiquitous that it is easy to forget that the expectation of ethical rigour is a relatively recent phenomenon in our field. The present volume is therefore timely in bringing together a range of researcher narratives exploring ways in which the authors have negotiated ethical issues in applied linguistics and critically engaged in wider debates.

The first section – *Laying the groundwork* – begins with a chapter by Scott Sterling, Paula Winke and Susan Gass, and reports on a survey in which researchers responded to eight ethical scenarios and to questions about ethical training. Of particular interest are responses to the ethical scenarios in which there was enough variation to suggest that some important discussions are required about what constitutes ethical research practice in applied linguistics. The following chapter, by Brian Paltridge, focuses on the treatment of outlier data, and the motivations and consequences for their inclusion and exclusion.

The second section contains three chapters focusing on ethical issues arising from particular research contexts and participant groups. Sue Starfield's chapter is a critique of important issues of fairness in the treatment of international students under neoliberal ideology. In the following chapter, Martha Bigelow and Nicole Pettitt draw on two studies to illustrate ethical dilemmas in conducting research with participants with limited formal schooling. They provide a very useful account of research ethics as an “interpersonal, intercultural, and in the moment” *process* (p. 68), rather than simply a matter of adhering to guidelines. Joseph Lo Bianco's chapter describes his ethical processes and dilemmas in his work as a dialogue facilitator on language planning issues in which he steadfastly refrains from advocacy.

In the third section – *Ethics, voice and multilingualism* – Sam Kirkham and Alison Mackey's chapter illustrates some important issues with regard to researcher-participant dynamics and reflexivity, drawing on two case studies examining dialect variation and identity. Patricia Duff and Klara Abdi present an interesting account of the ethical considerations and difficulties encountered in negotiating approval for Abdi's ambitious ethnographic doctoral project. As the authors state, ethics board protocols “were originally based on a positivist biomedical paradigm where the study design is predetermined and necessarily static” and thus may be incongruous with the emergent designs and contingencies required of ethnographic studies (p. 128). After initial ethics approval, each new development in Abdi's project also required approval, “often dragging on for weeks” (p. 129); such narratives raise important questions for overseeing bodies, and also offer encouragement to other ethnographers facing obstacles, particularly doctoral candidates. Chapter 8, by Steven Thorne, Sabine Siekmann and Walkie Charles, considers ethical issues in working with

indigenous minority communities, drawn from an evaluation of materials produced for Yup'ik-medium instruction in Alaska. Chapter 9 by Fiona Copland and Angela Creese is of particular interest, since it elaborates on the distinction between *macroethics* (institutional procedural requirements) and the arguably more important *microethics* (dilemmas in acting ethically). As the authors illustrate, some courses of action may be compliant at a macroethical level, yet be regarded as unethical at the micro level.

The final section of the book is *Ethics and the media*. Xuesong Gao and Jian Tao's chapter focuses on text sourced from the Internet, raising the issue of what counts as being "in the public domain", and what this entails (e.g. in terms of consent and reciprocity). Suresh Canagarajah's chapter relates to an online platform (similar to Moodle) with a closed, person-to-person messaging option (private only until the end of the course), which provides a safe option for off-task discussion. This chapter is one of the most insightful, and Canagarajah's narrative is a revealing account of how he addressed ethical dilemmas, as well as how these dilemmas shaped the project. In the final chapter, Sandra Silberstein reflects on an advocacy project involving media analysis, raising issues in activist scholarship. Silberstein focuses on what happens at the conclusion of a study, and whether there are on-going researcher responsibilities.

Prior to reading this book, I prepared four questions or concerns to guide my evaluation of this book. I was interested to see to what extent chapters (1) enlighten on how to respond ethically to a diverse range of research scenarios, (2) presented ethics as an ongoing, reflexive process, rather than simply a matter of overcoming hurdles, and (3) presented ethics considerations as values upon which projects are built and driven, rather than as imposed constraints. Taking the volume as a whole, these perspectives all come across well, and therefore represent a useful, up-to-date consideration of ethics in applied linguistics. My fourth question (whether chapters critically examined foundational ethical principles) was apparently beyond the book's scope, but is more than compensated for by the range of unexpected insights and thoughtful discussion. Despite an occasional sense of earnest hand-wringing, the volume is a very strong one overall and may come to be considered an important landmark in the field. It will be of wide interest among emerging and established researchers, and several chapters (e.g. Copland & Creese) seem likely to become standard readings on research methodology courses.

JONATHON RYAN, Wintec

Sert, O. (2015). *Social interaction and L2 classroom discourse*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. ISBN 978-07-486-926-44 (208 pp.)

The central argument presented in this volume is that interaction is a fundamental aspect of classroom life. Teachers and learners interact with each other in and through language, and it is in the details of interaction that teaching and learning can be explicated. Sert examines classroom interaction in a variety of contexts, and presents the thesis that epistemic and pedagogical events can be described and understood through the analytic lens of Conversation Analysis. The findings generated through such an examination provide insights into classroom interactive practices that will serve to further teacher education and development.

The book is divided into three areas – a survey of literature related to classroom interaction, detailed analysis of classroom extracts, and a final section devoted to how the findings offered here can aid reflective classroom practitioners in utilizing language to greater effect in the service of teaching and learning. The introduction to this book makes clear its purpose; this text takes a social interaction perspective on classroom discourse, and a belief that the notion of L2 is open to interpretation, depending on the context under discussion. The opening chapter, *Social interaction and L2 classroom discourse*, examines methods for analyzing classroom discourse, and makes the case that Conversation Analysis reveals the organizational details of talk, and how turns at talk are allocated and distributed in L2 classrooms. The third chapter, *Co-construction of understanding in L2 classroom interaction*, argues that social relations are predicated on how interactants achieve mutual understanding.

The middle sections of this book are given over to looking at sources and resolutions for interactional trouble in L2 classrooms. Sert focuses attention on how temporary misalignment between interactants (such as teachers and learners) affects the unfolding and development of pedagogical activity. Claims of Insufficient Knowledge (CIKs) are examined, with Conversation Analysis utilized to show how learners initiate CIKs, and how the language employed by teachers can exacerbate such interactional trouble or aid in making such events opportunities for L2 learning. Sert argues that CIKs are an under-researched area of L2 classroom interaction and are deserving of further attention. He further develops this theme by devoting the following chapter to ‘Use of Multimodal Resources in L2 Classroom Interaction’. This chapter examines a particular area of classroom interaction; namely, how gaze and gesture support language use and are inextricably entwined with language. Sert shows how these resources are fundamental parts of language use and must be examined as part of spoken discourse rather than as a distinct subset of spoken interaction. It is in this section that Conversation Analysis’s idea of examining interaction from an emic or participant-relevant perspective is most clear. Sert provides photo-stills of the participants involved in the written transcripts of classroom interaction. The next chapter, *Use of multilingual resources in L2 classroom interaction*, shows how code-switching is manifest in different classroom settings.

The final chapters of this text examine the implications for language teaching (Chapter Seven) and teacher education (Chapter Eight). Sert makes several recommendations in this regard. Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC) can be developed by teachers. Managing interactional trouble, using gestures effectively, managing unwillingness to speak, and effective use of code-switching are areas that practitioners can focus on improving. To do so, Sert proposes use of IDMAT. This stands for Introducing CIC, Dialogic reflection, Micro-teaching, Actual teaching, and Teacher collaboration and critical reflection. Sert suggests that adoption of such practices will develop teacher awareness, and lead to changes in practice.

Several texts on Applied Linguistics take a highly theoretical approach to their subject matter, which may leave the classroom practitioner feeling that the issues discussed have little relevance to, or use for the classroom. However, by providing detailed transcripts of classroom interaction, along with visual data to support the transcripts, Sert has produced a monograph that focuses on the application of theory derived from research to the real-world L2 classroom. He has produced a text that is accessible to teachers with little knowledge of Conversation Analysis who wish to develop better interaction with learners. This is a book written with teachers in mind, and it would be a highly useful guide for instructors wishing to have interaction with learners that is informed by pedagogical goals, rather than the notion that any language produced by teachers is effective in promoting learner output. One possible caveat is that the data shown here is taken from classrooms that appear to be small in size, unlike in parts of Asia for example, and with largely homogenous groups of students. I would argue, however, that the issues addressed in this book are universal to language teaching and learning. The reader will gain insight into his or her classroom practice which may lead to changes in that practice that will benefit learners.

SHANE DONALD, Feng Chia University, Taiwan

VanPatten, B., & Benati, A. (2015). Key terms in second language acquisition. London: Bloomsbury. ISBN 978-1-4742-2750-6 (pbk.) 219pp.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a young, interdisciplinary, and vibrant field of research that concerns primarily how a second/foreign language is learned in naturalistic and instructed settings. The fact that it is in its infancy and draws on theories from multiple disciplines (such as psychology, linguistics, and sociology) has posed a great challenge for researchers, especially rookies, to accurately understand the theoretical principles, and in particular how they are applicable to SLA. Furthermore, while the past few decades have witnessed a rapid burgeoning of SLA research, researchers have tended to work, often times on similar topics, within their respective theoretical frameworks, using methods unique to the particular

domains. Consequently, there arises the need for a book of encyclopaedic nature that clarifies the conundrums and myths and informs the field in a straightforward, accessible manner about what has been found about the key issues.

VanPatten and Benati's book responds to such a need by providing a clear, succinct overview of the key issues, theories and concepts in SLA. The book exceeds the reader's expectation in that it is not a mere list of terms and their explanations; rather it provides an integrated, bird's-eye view of current theories and related research. The book consists of five parts, starting with a brief introduction and ending with a list of key readings, with the three middle parts making up the bulk of the book.

In Part 2 of the book, the authors seek to answer nine key questions relating to the initial and end states of SLA, the sequence and characteristics of second language development, the nature of the learning process, and the roles of various learner-internal and learner-external factors. When answering each question, the authors first explain the nature of the related issue, then present the different perspectives and supporting evidence, and close by making evaluative comments regarding what to make of the evidence to date, what conclusions can be drawn, and what remains controversial or unresolved.

Part 3 presents nine current theories that dominate SLA research, including the Universal Grammar Theory, Emergentism, the Declarative/Procedural Model, the Dynamic Systems Theory, the Input Processing Theory, the Interaction Hypothesis, the Processability Theory, the Sociocultural Theory, and the Skill Acquisition Theory. For each theory, the authors explain the basics, list the most important claims of the theory, and make some conclusive remarks on its values and limitations. At the end of each section, the authors also provide the most noteworthy names who have either proposed the theory, or introduced the theory into SLA, or made significant contributions to its development.

Part 4 is entitled Key Terms in Second Language Acquisition; however, each entry is a short essay providing fairly detailed information on the issues surrounding the topic rather than a simple explanation or definition of the concept. The coverage of this part is comprehensive, if not exhaustive, encompassing a wide range of topics including minor theoretical models not included in the previous part (on key theories), components and hypotheses of theories, aspects of the interlanguage system (aspect, syntax, etc.), variables affecting learning outcomes, research methods, and so on. Similar to the sections on key theories, the authors identify the most prominent scholars associated with the concepts in certain entries.

This volume has a number of strengths. First, targeting novice readers and aiming to touch on the basics of SLA, the book is written in plain, unambiguous language which enables the reader to understand the ideas easily and quickly. Second, it provides an overview of SLA research and theories and may serve as a miniature

encyclopaedia; it is not a simple list of terms, even though the title of the book may suggest this. Third, the organization of the book is clear and logical, with the different parts building on and complementing each other. The three major parts are integrated and coherently structured: Part 1 brings up the key issues in SLA, Part 2 shows how different theories account for the raised issues and the mechanisms of SLA, and Part 3 provides further elaboration on the theoretical constructs and research findings. Third, the authors take a neutral position throughout the book: they present different or opposing perspectives, report disparate evidences, and acknowledge controversies without making arbitrary, unfounded claims. Accordingly, the reader is able to obtain an objective view of the status quo of SLA research.

The book also has several limitations. One is the lack of an index, which is particularly important for an encyclopaedia-type book that covers a large number of topics; this issue is exacerbated by the lack of details in the brief table of contents (with only four subheadings listed, barring the Introduction). Another aspect that can be improved is the recommended reading list, which could have been compiled topically rather than alphabetically. A third limitation concerns the trade-off between breadth and depth, that is, due to the effort to include as many topics as possible, the authors are unable to delve deeply into any of them. However, as the authors acknowledge, the primary purpose of the book is to discuss the basics of the research and theories on SLA, and it does not seek to provide an exhaustive review on every topic. Despite the minor issues, the book is a must-have for all rookie researchers, or anyone who wants a quick overview of the field of SLA.

SHAOFENG LI, University of Auckland

Richards, J.C. (2015). *Key issues in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (826 pp). ISBN 978-1-107-45610-5 (pbk); 978-1-107-66906-2 (ebook).

This especially wide-ranging text adds to the many other valuable book publications authored by Jack Richards over the past forty years. The “key issues” referred to in the title have arisen through recent changes and developments in L2 teaching as well as perennial topics of discussion and debate, and the contexts, teachers and learners that feature in the text are both numerous and diverse. As Richards points out in the Introduction, the past few decades have seen not only a significant expansion in the use of English in fields such as business and trade, media, tele-communications, media and pop culture, but also in graduate-level programmes that use English as the medium of instruction - both in English-speaking and non-English speaking countries. The knowledge base now required of teachers is one that is broad and responsive to change. Since L2 teachers are a group with varied qualifications and

experience, with varying degrees of commitment to professional learning, Richards states an intention to present content in broadly accessible way, and to provide overviews, summaries, case studies, reflective questions, and descriptive accounts by teachers.

The book is divided into four long, theme-based parts: *English language teaching today*, *Facilitating student learning*, *Language and the four skills*, and *The teacher's environment*. The first part (104 pp) provides introductory content through four chapters on the scope of ELT, theories of second language learning, approaches and methods, and developing knowledge, skills and awareness in teaching. The second main section of the book (120 pp. approx.) focuses on the second language learner, the language lesson, managing classroom learning, and age-appropriate pedagogy. The third main section (300 pp) covers grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, writing, discourse and pragmatics. In the fourth and final part of the book (150 pp), the language course, textbooks, technology, assessment and professional development are discussed. The book is also available as an eBook, and this version adds video interviews with teachers on a variety of classroom teaching-related topics.

Each chapter begins with a brief overview, followed by paragraph-length information on a number of key topics. The main content of each chapter features quotations from authoritative texts, a number of questions for reflection, and short texts presenting the views of experienced and inexperienced teachers from a range of English-speaking and non-English speaking countries. Each chapter ends with a list of discussion questions and a short bibliography for further reading. Teachers will find additional value in the Appendices that close each of the chapters. To cite some examples, the chapter on *Approaches and Methods* includes a sample lesson plan, the chapter on *The language lesson* provides a sample lesson-plan template and a lesson observation form, the *Grammar* chapter gives a sample lesson plan for teaching the passive, *Vocabulary* provides two lesson plans for teaching affixes and word families, and *Managing classroom learning* includes a list of classroom management techniques. The following chapter features an interview with an Iranian EFL teacher about his personal principles of practice. An inventory of learning styles and case studies of three successful language learners (who are also teachers) can be found in the chapter that focuses on second language learners. Appendices present sample extracts from commercial textbooks for analysis and evaluation.

The book concludes with a general glossary (22 pp), brief profiles of the 40 teachers whose vignettes have appeared in the book, and a reference list for the print texts and weblinks that have been cited. Overall, the most striking features of this book would have to be its comprehensiveness, the clarity and accessibility of its content (both in terms of actual content and layout), and the bridge it establishes between practice-based theory and theory-based practice. Richards and his scholarly sources provide the former, while the teacher and learner vignettes provide accounts of principled

classroom teaching. Overall, the text has much in common with Penny Ur's invaluable text (2012), although in size and scope the Richards volume is more like a handbook. Classroom teachers and language teacher educators alike will find this book reliable, readable and highly informative. It will appeal as a "one-stop shop" for teachers wanting basic information about essential topics such as planning, methodologies, materials and assessment, or extended definitions of core concepts such as *blended learning*, *constructivism*, *global teaching approaches*, *pragmatics*, *strategy training*, *willingness to communicate*, or *the zone of proximal development*. The book would be an invaluable library resource for use by staff or graduate students in any kind of L2 teaching institution, and I am happy to recommend it without reservation.

Reference

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ROSEMARY WETTE, University of Auckland

Chomsky, N. (2016). *What kind of creatures are we?* New York, NY: Columbia University Press. ISBN 978-0-231-17596-8 (hbk.) 167 pp.

Berwick, R. C., & Chomsky, N. (2016). *Why only us: Language and evolution*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. ISBN 978-0262034241 (hbk.) 215 pp.

Sixty years after *Syntactic Structures*, Noam Chomsky remains highly influential and astonishingly productive. But with most of his recent publishing in political analysis, these represent his first book-length works in linguistics since 2012. And they are classic Chomsky: ambitious, authoritative, frequently surprising, at times demanding, and undoubtedly genuine contributions to the field.

What kind of creatures are we? addresses four philosophical issues. For applied linguists, the first chapter may be the most relevant: a valuable, up-to-date account of Chomsky's central views on the nature of language and reflections on their wide ranging implications. He outlines what he calls the Basic Property of language: hierarchically structured expressions that are interpreted at both the external interface and the internal, conceptual interface (p. 4). He argues that the main function of language is to enable thought, while the view that it is to enable communication is "virtual dogma that has no serious support" (p. 14). Particularly interesting are areas in the study of language that Chomsky identifies as being under-explored, and what he considers to be appropriate research agendas. Also presented are brief summaries of the minimalist program in syntax and its crucial operation *Merge*.

The second chapter concerns the scope and limits of human understanding imposed by the biological properties of the brain. He points out that certain questions, and even the ability to formulate them, may be beyond human cognitive capacity. Language is again a key concern and there is extended discussion – and rejection – of referential semantics. Also discussed are the atomic elements of thought, which appear not to be possessed by other animals. The third chapter shifts to issues of social justice, and it is here that Chomsky's writing is at its most accessible and engaging. Leaving aside the complex argumentation of Chapters 1 and 2, he weaves together various threads of anarcho-socialist thought and social and political history in a stirring, powerful attack on hypocrisy and the liberal American establishment's "shriveled conception of democracy" (p. 76). The lengthy fourth chapter discusses directions within the study of mind, considered alongside key moments in the history of science. The latter highlight the value of pursuing research agendas outside established frameworks and of resisting the fear of explanatory gaps.

This book is a testament to the breadth and depth of Chomsky's work, and the first half in particular will be of considerable appeal to those with a linguistics background. Apparent throughout are Chomsky's formidable intellect, his deep knowledge of relevant literature, and the directness of his writing: there is no hiding behind vagueness or ambiguity, and his critiques of some contemporary work – though restrained – can still be searing.

Why only us, co-written with computational linguist Robert C. Berwick, is one of a number of recent books on the evolution of language, yet draws very different conclusions from much of the competition. In particular, it rejects the views that language evolved gradually over long periods of time, that communicative needs were a key driver, and that it occurred through repeated use of a proto-language (cf. for instance Bickerton, 2014, Tallerman, 2005).

The authors lay out very explicitly the foundational arguments from which they build their case, including their view of the nature of language (consistent with but not restricted to the Minimalist Program), and detailed explanations of modern theories of biological evolution; these, they convincingly argue, are not adequately addressed in most of the competing literature. In Berwick and Chomsky's account, our capacity for language arose somewhere between 60,000 and 200,000 years ago with the sudden development of *Merge* – the bio-computational operation allowing recursive, hierarchical syntactic combinations – as a result of a minor mutation building on existing 'wetware'. This bestowed early cognitive (rather than communication) benefits for natural selection; only later was language externalized for communication. The authors even offer a suggestion on the specific (and apparently minor) neural rewiring that may have been enough to allow *Merge* to appear. Likely already in place prior to *Merge* were other cognitive abilities to form word-like concepts, and certainly the ability to produce vocal sound, though it was likely some time later before the interface between the internal and external was developed.

Berwick and Chomsky have high expectations of readers: arguments are thorough, sometimes demanding, and the detail can be heavy. Technical language is explained but can become difficult to follow thereafter. However, this collaboration is a major contribution to the study of language evolution and readers are likely to find it both enlightening and compelling. Although certain to be controversial, no one with a serious interest in language evolution will be able to ignore it, and it seems destined to loom large over the field for many years to come.

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JONATHON RYAN, Wintec

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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

1. Submission of Manuscripts (All types)

1.1 Articles should be double-spaced in A4 format with generous margins at head, foot and both sides. Pages should be numbered consecutively. Do not use templates, styles, and hyperlinks (including programmes such as Endnote) that will affect editorial changes and print formatting. Submission of a manuscript of any type implies that it has not been published previously and that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

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- affiliations of all authors
- full postal address and telephone, e-mail and fax numbers of all authors
- a brief autobiographical sketch of the authors(s) (50-80 words)
- any references removed for the review process

1.3 Copies should be submitted as a Word attachment to the Editor, Dr Anne Feryok.

anne.feryok@otago.ac.nz

1.4 All relevant submissions will be reviewed by members of the Editorial Board or other referees.

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2.1 Sections should be headed but not numbered.

2.2 All figures and tables should be provided in camera-ready form, suitable for reproduction (which includes reduction) and should require no changes, but should be in a format suited to editorial changes and print formatting. Because all material is

reduced, use no smaller than size 12 font. Figures (e.g. charts and diagrams) and tables should be numbered consecutively in the order to which they are referred. They should not be included within the text, but submitted each on a separate page. All figures and tables should have a number and a caption, above for tables and below for figures. Use APA (American Psychological Association) style conventions.

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

2.4 Use APA style for in-text citations. Please note, this requires double quotation marks. References within the text should contain the name of the author, the year of publication, and, if necessary, the relevant page number(s), as in these examples:

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

Where the work of the authors of the article is cited, to avoid identification during the review process the reference within the text should be ‘(Author, [date])’, but there should be no entry in the list of references. Provide these references on the title page.

2.5 Use APA style for references. The list of references at the end of the article should be arranged alphabetically by authors’ names. References should be given in the following form (including hanging indents and no lines between entries):

References

Books

- Lillis, T. M. (2001). *Student writing: Access, regulation, desire*. London: Routledge.
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Retrieved from

<http://www.innovateonline.info/index.php?view=article&id=232>

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

If articles are not submitted in APA style, they will be returned during the review process for authors to revise.

3. Articles

3.1 Articles should normally be between 3000 and 5000 words in length, exclusive of references, figures and tables, and appendices; please be reasonable. Articles over 6000 words will be returned without review unless prior arrangements have been made with the editor.

3.2 Each article should include, on a separate page, an abstract of between 150 and 200 words, which is capable of standing alone as a descriptor of the article. Include the title on the abstract page. Include three to five key words on a separate line at the end of the abstract.

4. Short reports and summaries

NZSAL invites short reports on any aspect of theory and practice in Applied Linguistics. Manuscripts could also present preliminary research findings or focus on some aspect of a larger study. Short reports should be no longer than 2500 words, exclusive of references, figures and tables, and appendices; please be reasonable. Short reports do not include an abstract or key words. Submissions to this section follow the submission and presentation guidelines. Those interested in contributing to this section should contact the Editor.

5. Reviews

NZSAL welcomes reviews of professional books, classroom texts, and other instructional materials. Reviews should provide a descriptive and evaluative summary and a brief discussion of the work in the context of current theory and practice. Submissions should generally be no longer than 1000 words. Submissions to this section follow the submission and presentation guidelines. Those interested in contributing reviews should contact the Reviews Editor, Dr Rosemary Wette.

r.wette@auckland.ac.nz

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2. Research and ethics. Submission implies all data reported in the article are real and authentic; no fraudulent data is used; all data is correctly reported; research involving human subjects has received ethical approval from relevant institutional authorities and informed consent from participants.

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7. Other matters

Contact the Editor, Dr Anne Feryok.

anne.feryok@otago.ac.nz

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2. Research and ethics

Submission implies all data reported in the article are real and authentic; no fraudulent data is used; all data is correctly reported; research involving human subjects has received ethical approval from relevant institutional authorities and informed consent from participants.

3. Editorship and peer review

The editor has the authority to make the final decision in considering articles for publication; decisions to accept articles deemed to be within the aims and scope of the journal will be based on review; confidentiality of reviewers and authors will be respected; reviewing will be double-blind; if substantial errors are detected a correction or retraction will be printed; the editor and editorial board will monitor ethics. Agreeing to review implies reviewers are qualified to review; will be fair and impartial; will not use abusive language; do not have conflicts of interest or they will recuse themselves.

Note: Views expressed in articles and reviews published in *New Zealand Studies in Applied Linguistics* are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of ALANZ.

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The Applied Linguistics Association of New Zealand (ALANZ) is the New Zealand affiliate of AILA (The International Association of Applied Linguistics). Membership of the association provides access to a network of individuals interested and active in applied linguistics research. ALANZ also provides an outlet for publications in applied linguistics through the journal *New Zealand Studies in Applied Linguistics*. Areas of research which are of interest to ALANZ members include foreign and second language education, Maori language, cross-cultural pragmatics, speech and language disorders, language policy and planning, and community languages.

Further information about ALANZ can be obtained by writing to the ALANZ secretary:

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