TNTESOL Journal

volume 6 2013

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TNTESOL Journal
Volume Six

ISSN 1941-5761

The TNTESOL Journal is published each fall, is a publication of TNTESOL, an affiliate of TESOL. Subscription is included in annual membership dues. See http://www.tntesol.org for membership information. Views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the TNTESOL organization.

Call for Papers

TNTESOL Journal
Volume 7, Fall 2014

The Editorial Board of the TNTESOL Journal seeks articles of general interest on any aspect of the teaching of English as a second or foreign language in elementary, middle high school, college/university, or adult/immigrant education. The topics can be varied and wide-ranging.

Articles should be no longer than twelve pages, double-spaced, or no more than 4000 words. A section entitled "Classroom Practices" will allow a maximum of 1500 words. Articles should follow APA style format, use nonsexist language, and have bibliographic references for all citations or works referred to in the body of the article.

Important note: All articles must be submitted electronically.

To submit your article electronically, please do the following:

1. Write and save the article as a Microsoft Word document.
2. Submit your paper as an attachment to an email in which you provide the following in the body of the email: your name, address, home phone number, school affiliation, email address, and title of the paper. Include a statement that your work has not been printed elsewhere and is not currently submitted elsewhere.
3. Email to paraisoj@rcschools.net and include the words "TNTESOL-J Submission" in the subject heading. You will be notified immediately by return email once the article is received.

Note: We accept articles year-round. Deadline for submission for fall publication: July 1, 2014.

Editor's Notes, Dr. Johnna Paraiso, TNTESOL Journal Editor

It is with great pleasure that I present the sixth volume of the Journal of the Tennessee Teachers to Speaker of Other Languages. I consider being the editor of this Journal to an honor and a privilege. As our membership continues to grow, our outreach and our scholarship as an organization continue to expand as well.

This journal contains a variety of topics that are pertinent to the topic of language acquisition and English language development. As I read and edited the accepted articles, I observed that the articles fell into three broad categories: higher education and teaching English as a foreign language, classroom practices and strategies, and practical linguistics.

Dr. Patricia Davis-Wiley from University of Tennessee at Knoxville offers her qualitative study of six South Asian students who came to the United States to pursue their degrees in English as a Second Language. Dr. Davis-Wiley provides a thick, descriptive study of the lived experiences of these students as they adjust to their new environment as well as a new educational paradigm.

In a similar vein, Dr. Susan Barone and Dr. Lisa Pray of Vanderbilt University in Nashville discuss the growth of foreign students who have come to the United States to take part in a Teaching English as a Foreign Language program. These students plan to return to their native countries to teach English using instructional practices developed in the United States. Dr. Barone and Dr. Pray describe a collaborative effort between one university's department of Teaching and Learning and the university's English Language Center. This collaboration seeks to fulfill the academic needs of the teacher candidates as well as to assist them and their families in developing their English language proficiency.

The second category, classroom practices and strategies, includes a study by Ms. Erin Cathey on adding instructional accommodations for English learners to the middle school general education classroom. Ms. Cathey examines data from an action research study that involved training middle school teachers in the use of accommodations and gathering their perceptions regarding what educational practices would make mainstream instruction more accessible for English learners.

Mr. Mogbil AlMogbil, of Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, offers his action research study on the use of vocabulary strategies to improve language acquisition and retention among graduate level English learners. Through the use of qualitative coding to examine data, Mr. Almogbil identifies strategies and practices that were effective for the graduate students in his study.

Ms. Michelle Smith addresses the steady growth of English learners in the state of Tennessee and the subsequent need for appropriate professional development for mainstream classroom teachers. Her action research study scrutinizes the effectiveness of current professional development programs in one school district and examines recommendations to increase teacher knowledge and effectiveness through improved teacher education practices.

Applied linguistics is the final category that emerged in the articles offered in this edition. Ms. Andrea Bontempi, of Rutherford County Schools in Murfreesboro, discusses the practice of code-switching. Her article discusses the relationship between code-switching and second language acquisition, as well as attitudes regarding code-switching.

Mr. Ahmad Altaleb examines second language acquisition from another angle in his article. Mr. Altaleb conducted an action research study involving undergraduate level students who were native English speakers learning Arabic. This study used qualitative techniques to look at the experiences of these Arabic language learners and the difficulties they experience in learning a second language.

The tradition of scholarship and research begun by the Tennessee Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages in previous Journals is continued in this current edition. Aspects of second language acquisition are examined from the K-12 area as well as from a higher education perspective. This Journal offers research regarding strategies and practice, linguistics issues and lived experiences of those involved in the teaching and learning of a second language. I am pleased and proud to present the sixth volume of the TNTESOL to the membership of this organization.

South Asia Meets East Tennessee: Bridging Two Languages, Cultures *and* Educational Arenas

Pattie Davis-Wiley

University of Tennessee

Knoxville, Tennessee

This article describes the personal journeys undertaken by six South Asian international graduate students who moved to East Tennessee to pursue graduate degrees in English as a Second Language at a large public university. Their rich personal perspectives of how they were able to meet the challenges of adapting to an entirely new language, culture and educational paradigm were captured in this qualitative research study.

The early part of the new millennium witnessed an increase in international student enrollment in the U.S. (Bollag, 2006, A45), and, just a decade later, the Institute for International Education[1] (2013) reports that during the 2011-2012 academic year, there were 764,495 international students who studied in public and private higher educational institutions in the United States with their top countries of origin (representing 56% of all international scholars) being: China, India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Canada (IIEa).[2] This is good news, indeed, as expressed by the keynote speaker at a conference plenary session, "International students have become a hot global commodity. Governments and institutions of higher education worldwide have begun putting in place policies and programs to draw the very brightest international students" (Pandit, 2007, p.156).

How can these students be best identified and recruited? How can their entry as *sojourners,* that is "…people who visit or reside temporarily in another country" (Chaney & Martin, 2000, p. 63), be facilitated? How can their adjustment to their new host country be made as seamlessly as possible to ensure their successful stay? What challenges does this population meet in their new environment, on and off-campus? Finally, how can the domestic student population at the host country's post-secondary institutions benefit from interacting with these academic sojourners in the U.S.? These were some of the underlying questions that guided this research endeavor.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the personal experiences of six Korean teacher-scholars in an effort to discover how they perceived their new learning and living environments in the U.S. and to explore the challenges they met, and the strategies they employed to adjust to and manage their new living and learning situations. In order to accomplish this, a qualitative focus group interview methodology (Hatch, 2002) was used in the collection of data for this research study, a review of relevant published literature on the topic was conducted, and the data were qualitatively analyzed to address the research questions.

Significance of the Study

Whereby there exists a rich corpus of literature that has well documented the experiences that American students have and the benefits they glean from their living/study abroad sojourns (Douglas & Jones-Rikkers, 2001; Kiely & Nielson, 2003; Sowa, 2002), and the socio-cultural and psychological impact that this experience has on the overseas sojourner (Bitsika, Sharpley & Holmes, 2010; Ward & Kennedy, 2001), there is a paucity of published research chronicling these same experiences that international students, and in particular, international teacher scholars, encounter when studying in the U.S. Thus, it is hoped by the researcher that the results of this present study will serve as a resource for others committed to the goals of internationalization in U.S. higher education.

Limitations of the Study

There are several inherent limitations to this study. There were only 6 participants, 5 females and 1 male. All were seasoned teacher-scholars from the same country who chose to matriculate in the same graduate degree-seeking program. Additionally, all participants were interviewed in two semi-structured group settings, during one afternoon, using one set of open-ended guide questions. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to a greater population. However, due to the rich nature of qualitative inquiry, the results may contribute to the relevant literature on the focus guiding the present study.

Research Setting and Background

This paper was written in order to document the personal journey of six teacher-scholars from South Korea and chronicles their rationale for selecting a specific master's program at a particular U.S. university; the challenges that they encountered during their stay in the host country; the support systems that they identified and utilized; and the new information that they would take back with them upon their return home, and ultimately implement in their classrooms upon their return to Korea. Their comments and perspectives will be reported under the Results section of this article, which follows a brief review of pertinent literature and the Methodology section of this manuscript. Discussion and Implications follow Findings.

Issues Related to International Students Who Study Abroad: What the Literature Says

Recruitment of International Students to the U.S.

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 (9-11), when "the workload of the international student service professionals significantly increased in order to comply with the new federal policy and regulations, many [institutions] did not receive additional human resources" (Starobin, 2006, p. 66) to deal with international students then on their campuses and to concurrently continue recruitment efforts for new students. Thus, given these constraints, it stands to reason that successful recruitment of the best and the brightest international students to U.S. post-secondary institutions, along with the facilitation of their successful transition from their home countries to a new cultural and linguistic environment, were critical issues that needed to be met. Following 9-11, there have been numerous changes which have impacted the ease with which international scholars can gain access to higher education studies in the U.S. (Starobin, 2006).

Homeland Security and SEVIS

With the creation of DHS (the Department of Homeland Security), and the implementation of SEVIS (the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System), which is a "Web-based data collection and reporting system that monitors how colleges and universities comply with federal regulations" (Starobin, 2006, p.63), international students have been more carefully scrutinized prior to being allowed access to non-immigrant student visas. As a result, the number of international students enrolled in U.S. higher education understandably dropped during the academic year 2003-2004, according to data collected by the Institute of International Education (Chin & Gallup-Black, 2004) at that time, yet, as reported earlier in this article, the numbers have been on the rise in recent years (IIEa).   Why is a decline in international student visitors significant and why should the U.S. strive to attract students from abroad?

The Importance of International Students on U.S. Campuses

Major findings from a study called the International Initiatives Program (sponsored by the American Council on Education, 2001), reports that,

> Knowledge about international issues is important in our ever more global society, especially for future generations….Colleges and universities should provide students with international skills and knowledge…. [and] International education is an important consideration when selecting a college or university. (¶ 1;3;4)

What a better way to ensure the above than by having a globally- and culturally-diverse student body matriculating in U.S. higher education institutions? Some reasons for recruiting talented international students to the States include:

> …the advancement of scientific research and technology [which has heretofore relied on]…foreign-born talent;….the feeling that international students [upon their return to their native countries]…will become excellent ambassadors of American culture [which, as an extension]…is an important step in enhancing the image of the U.S. overseas and…[impacts]…U.S. security. (Pandit, 2007, p. 156)

Other reasons for attracting these students to the U.S. include the desire of American research universities to enhance their “global competency” (Pandit, 2007, p. 156), by establishing research linkages with higher education institutions in other countries. Thus, having a robust population of international scholars serves to benefit the countries of the visiting scholars and the host countries. However, in order to ensure that these international academic sojourners experience success in their new environment, certain factors must be addressed.

Preparing International Students for Success in Higher Education

Despite having diverse linguistic, cultural, political and social backgrounds, international students may share certain characteristics (Thomas & Althens, 1989). They are a special population in transition, separated from their family, cultural, and social support networks, who are visiting a host country for a relatively short period of time, and in the U.S. to pursue higher education which will advance them in their careers upon return home (Sakurako, 2000). Additionally, a 2011 report from the Institute for International Education also reported that "the U.S. is the destination of choice for the vast majority… [76% of international students]" and that they selected the U.S. due to "the high quality of [its] higher education and the fact that they felt that "the U.S. welcomes international students" (p. 3). Quality of academic programs and perceptions of friendly campuses aside, the fact remains that these international student sojourners are essentially out of their familiar home environment, they must, by necessity, learn to establish an entirely new personal support system while adjusting to a new way of life, often to a new language and a new culture in a country other than their own.

Cross-Cultural Adjustment Theories

There is a rich variety of theories concerning the stages and types of cultural adjustment (Giordano & Giordano, 1976; Goldlust & Richmond, 1974; Hoffman, Dana, & Bolton, 1985; Knight & Kagan, 1977; Mendoza & Martinez, 1981; Olmedo, 1979; Rosenthal & Hrynevich, 1985) that international visitors tend to experience in a new country. These research theories deal with various issues which may impede the acculturation process and may include, but are not restricted to the following: proficiency in the host country's main language; length of residency in the new country; personal, social and ethnic values; and psychological readiness. Most visitors or sojourners to a new host country, however, do tend to experience a phenomenon known as *cultural shock* which is "the trauma you experience when you move into a culture different from your home culture" (Chaney & Martin, 2000, p. 62).

According to the aforementioned researchers, there are five stages of cultural shock: "excitement or initial euphoria, crisis or disenchantment, adjustment, acceptance, and reentry" (p. 65).

Essentially, the *initial excitement or first stage* occurs for a brief period of time and may last from a few days to a few months. During this stage, all new experiences are wonderful and the sojourner is in a state of euphoria.

The *second stage, the disenchantment or crisis period*, also called the *"honeymoon"* (Chaney & Martin, 2000, p. 65), has ended and the visitor's level of excitement may turn into disillusionment/disappointment with the new environment as exponentially more differences between the home and host country's culture are encountered. Included in this period are challenges dealing with language, customs, foods, transportation, and general living conditions. during which the visitor may find the new culture a "constant source of irritation" (p. 66). Some deal with the new culture in a confrontational way by making "disparaging remarks about the culture" and exercising a "'fight back' technique" (Chaney & Martin, p. 66). Still others, report the researchers, decide to return home and retreat physically; others may remove themselves psychologically. Not uncommon during this stage is for the newcomer to "refuse to learn the language" (p. 66) and possibly develop unfavorable behaviors (i.e., drinking or drug use) to cope with elements in the new culture. “Some individuals [however]…actually deny differences and will speak in glowing terms” (p. 66) about the culture encountered in the new culture.

The *third stage*, also known as *the adjustment phase*, is a time during which the sojourner starts to actually embrace the new culture and learns to make behavioral adjustments to it. He/she may “see humor in situations,” which were previously a source of irritation, and “realize that a change in attitude toward the host culture will make the stay abroad more rewarding” (Chaney & Martin, 2000, p. 66).

The *acceptance or adaptation phase, the fourth stage*, is a time during which all is well with the world and the international visitor learns the language, and may adopt and regale in the host country’s new customs.

The *fifth and final state is reentry shock*, and “is experienced upon returning to the home country” (Chaney & Martin, 2000, p. 66) when the sojourner returns to his/her home country and experience the same stages as initial cultural shock.

Methodology

Participants

In the U.S., the state of Tennessee is ranked in 30th place for its number of international students (7,004 in 2012), and UT (The University of Tennessee, Knoxville) holds second place in the state for its enrollment (996 in 2012) of this population, according to *Open Doors 2012* data (Institute of International Education, 2013). In the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences, there has been a steady increase over the years in the population of international scholars (from Asian countries), who have chosen to study in the Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education, and pursue a master’s degree in Teacher Education, with a concentration in Foreign Languages and English as a Second Language (FL/ESL) Education.

Participants in the present study consisted of six South Korean teacher-scholars whose identities will remain confidential in this paper by the use of pseudonyms personally selected by each scholar. One participant (Sue) matriculated at The University of Tennessee with her own personal financial resources. The other 5 participants (Patty, Kristen, Lydia, Cat and Larry) are recipients of a national competitive fellowship in South Korea and were granted a 2-year fellowship from their government's Ministry of Education to pursue a master's degree at UT with an ESL Education focus. All 6 participants completed their 2-year sojourn and earned their M.S. Five of the 6 participants were female and all but 1 participant (Sue) had children living in the states with them while studying at UT. In addition, 5 of the 6 participants (all but Sue) were living in the U.S. without their spouses, who remained in Korea.

All of the teacher-scholars had a wealth of teaching experiences in their home countries. Cat taught 10 different subjects including English in elementary schools for 15 years; Patty taught on the same level for 20 years, including teaching English for 9 of those years. Kristen taught middle school English for more than 21 years, while Sue taught English grammar, reading and conversation to first and second year university students for 8 years. Finally, Lydia and Larry taught English (as a Foreign Language) for 10 and 18 years, respectively on the high school level.

Due to their immediate involvement in the academic program area of the study's principal investigator, it was easy to recruit the six teacher-scholars for participation in the present research.

Research Focus Objectives

The interview protocol (see Appendix A) was developed by the author and was based on the following research objectives:

To have Korean teacher-scholars share:

- their perceptions of their past and present lives.
- their experiences as newcomers to the U.S.
- their experiences as graduate students in the U.S., and,
- their ideas regarding how they may implement what they learned in their graduate programs back home in Korea.

Procedures

After developing a list of research questions for the study, constructing the protocol for the qualitative focus group, and identifying its potential participants, permission to conduct the research was requested by and granted to the researcher from UT's committee for the Review of Research Involving Human Subjects. The questions to be used in the group interview were then emailed to the 6 participants 1 week ahead of the actual interview date to ensure that all the non-native-English speaking interviewees would have time to prepare for the group interview that was to be conducted in English. Even though all the participants have a superior level of English proficiency (ACTFL, 2007), the highest level on this scale, the researcher felt that allowing the participants to view the interview protocol ahead of time would yield more valid results than if the interview were conducted without the teacher-scholars being able to collect their thoughts

The interview room was a seminar-style, private conference room in the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences, and the participants gathered a few minutes ahead of the scheduled commencement of the first interview period in order to get settled-in and feel comfortable. After the digital recorder was tested and the omni-directional mike adjusted, *phase one* of the interview began and continued, uninterrupted for approximately 1 hour and 40 minutes. The group then moved to a second room, following a brief break, for *phase two*. Since one of the interviewees (Patty) had to leave to pick up a young child from school, the remaining questions on the interview protocol were asked of her so that she would have the opportunity to complete all of the questions. After Patty left the room, the researcher resumed asking questions on the interview protocol of the remaining 5 teacher-scholars, at the place where the group had previously left off prior to Patty's departure. The completion of *phase tw*o of the group interview lasted approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Data Analysis

The recordings from the focus interview were duplicated and the original set was stored and locked in a file cabinet in the interviewer's office. The second set was given to transcribers who typed the contents of the tapes and subsequently gave a hard and soft copy to the researcher for analysis. The transcribed interview was subsequently analyzed qualitatively by the researcher to identify commonalities and themes.

Findings

The six Korean teacher-scholar graduate students participating in the focus group interview articulated a variety of feelings and ideas about the process of being an international student at The University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee. They described critical resources associated with their housing and personal affairs and others that were essential to their academic work. They also defined challenges they encountered, both personally and academically. The students could identify specific ways in which they had changed, the memories they had created while engaging in international study, and advice they have for future international students.

The data are presented below in two formats. First are the findings organized into 6 themes found within the data. Second are five guiding principles that reflect broader ideas and concepts that cut across the themes.

Themes

A total of six themes emerged from the data. Each of these themes is listed and described below. Supporting quotes from the Korean graduate students are provided for each theme.

Program selection criteria. The students identified the criteria they used in selecting The University of Tennessee as their destination for international study. They mentioned the nature of the academic program as one that emphasized practicality for the practicing classroom teacher and offered a good balance between theory and practice. They identified the sources of this information as from personal recommendations from friends and acquaintances as well as program descriptions found on the web. Several mentioned the fact that they knew people living in Knoxville or had relatives already living in the community. Weather was another favorable factor mentioned several times. The following quote from Cat provides a nice summary of participant perspectives regarding the selection of the program.

Cat: While I was searching for a university to apply to, I found the UT website where a teacher had posted an article about UT and I became interested. Another reason was one of my previous teachers said that UT had a very practical program especially good for elementary teachers. Another reason I came is because of the living conditions and weather.

Useful resources. Websites were a consistent resource for the students. They relied heavily on the UT Housing website as well as the Korean Student Association website before and after they arrived. Several relied on critical people with whom they were already acquainted who were already in the community or people who had lived in the community in the past and were now back in Korea. They identified the church as a strong resource that they relied upon. Some also mentioned the help they received from strangers in the community, including neighbors and other *Good Samaritans* they encountered in the community. Resources on-campus that were critical included professors, the International House, the American host family assigned to them by the International House, major language partners that were assigned to them in a class, classmates, and the UT website. The participants also mentioned opportunities to visit ESL classes in metropolitan area schools as a resource for their use in developing their own knowledge and understanding of second language instruction. The selected quotes below reflect the various ways in which they relied on these resources, ranging from the selection of schools for their own children to attend, to sorting out housing matters, to working out their academic affairs.

Cat: Relied on Kristen who gave me all the info for schools.

Lydia: Friend gave me information and schools were located close to apartment.

Patty: When I moved to a private apartment, some neighbors approached me to offer help. I was impressed.

Kristen: I got so much help from friends that my transition was easier. Even my church helped me so much spiritually.

Unidentified: The professors are so kind. They answer questions and repeat them again and again—not just English but computer questions.

Patty: The International House match up international students with American families, which helped me a lot. I had an American host family here and they have made the transition easier.

Kristen:. . .The professors are really nice and supportive and they are really willing to help us. It seems that the professors are considerate of the ESL students and the English language barriers and are really trying to help us.

Challenges. The interview participants described the challenges that they experienced while engaged in international study. Some of these challenges were temporary and transitional in nature, while others were more persistent. Some were an inevitable part of moving to a new location, such as needing to learn one's way around town, while others included unanticipated cultural adjustments, such as the unexpected addition of taxes to the cost of a purchase or the expectation of tipping in restaurants. Some relate exclusively to their personal affairs while others were just associated with their academic work.

Personal Challenges. Specific challenges mentioned by the participants included the fact that the housing provided by The University of Tennessee was inadequate and required relocating after the initial move into university housing. They found policies about car repair and other services confusing, time consuming and costly. Phrases such as *cash back* held different meanings. They had to accept an emotional dependence on others that had not been necessary in Korea. They mentioned encountering rude clerks, having to pump their own gas, small signs and difficulty understanding directions and reading maps. The lack of public transportation was also a challenge for them. For those with children in school, they found it challenging to complete shopping and cooking. The children experienced trouble with some teachers and making friends in the US public schools. The lunches provided by the schools were not up to the standard they expected and were accustomed to in Korea. The following quotes from the group interview provide documentation of these findings.

Kristen: I was shocked because apartment did not look like photo. I came without my husband and it was difficult to hang things, etc. I had to replace run-down furniture and ask maintenance to do things. It was difficult for me.

Lydia: Reading directions and getting lost was the biggest problem to me.

Lydia: I am very independent in Korea but became emotionally dependent on other people here.

Sue: In Korea there is no tipping—it is already included. Also, Americans charge more for car repairs and service. All extra services are free in Korea and included in the retail price such as cars. Here everything is charged separately.

Lydia: Street signs are too small and it took a long time to find my way around.

Sue: Grocery shopping and self-checkout counters were challenging. The Korean 'cash back' system means something entirely different than the U.S. The pumps at gas stations are all different and are very nerve wracking. First semester fees were a challenge.

Cat: No big trouble but personal challenges had to do with my children. My son and daughter had trouble with schools and teachers and making friends. School lunches were not up to standard.

Lydia: I had to give my children a ride everywhere rather than the easy use of public transportation in Korea.

Academic Challenges. Challenges associated with their academic lives included making arrangements for the payment of first semester fees. They had to make adjustments when changes were made to the timetable after their schedules were already set. They had to learn how to use the *Vol Card* (a campus-specific debit card available to all registered UT students) for on-campus expenses. Within their classes they were challenged to keep up with discussions by "fast- speaking Americans" as well as understanding speakers with southern accents. They also mentioned the challenge of reading textbooks and searching for publications in the library. At the beginning of their studies they had no American friends with whom to create a social network. The quotes below provide specific illustrations of these challenges.

Lydia: I could not understand Southerners.

Sue: Searching for published articles in the library was hard. At the first of the semester, I had no American friends for a social network.

Larry: Had the same personal challenges such as discussions, fast-speaking students. Another thing—when I speak English to Americans they think I can understand everything they say back but that is not true.

Memories. The participants reported that they have many memories associated with their international study in the U.S. They mentioned special events, such as holidays and nice dinners prepared by friends. The unique international experiences they had at both their churches and in their student housing arrangements broadened their experience far beyond U.S. culture as they became friends with persons from around the globe. They also mentioned travel to many other states. Experiences studying have also produced good memories as has time with their host families. Some mentioned that they had been able to spend more time with their own children here. Below are supporting quotes for this theme.

Lydia: I would like to add something else. I felt a little bit lonely staying here. Even though there are a lot of people around me, it is quite different from Korea. I was busy there. But even though I am busy here, everything was up to me. I felt very lonely so I started to *attend ESL at church. There I started to meet people from other countries. I made a lot of friends from China, even India and Africa. Now I feel I am internationalized. This has been a big benefit for coming to America. In Korea I cannot have those kinds of experience, but here I can meet everybody from other countries. Americans stay here but every country comes to America. I really like that experience*.

Lydia: I have visited 21 states. I spent a lot of money, but I don't think it was wasted. We visited lots of cities because my husband is a teacher and most of the time we visited historical places. We learned a lot—how America became a country and how people react to certain things. Another good experience is that I have made a lot of church friends. They gave me unconditional love and have helped me emotionally and spiritually. We email and I ask them to pray for me. They invite me to their house for dinner and to their events. I think Knoxville is a spiritual city and it has been a very good experience to me.

Lydia: When I was in Korea I was always busy. I went to work at 7:00 in the morning and came home sometimes at 11:00 at night. Once my daughter said to me, "Mommy, we only see you on Sunday." During the week days, they did not see me. When I came home, my daughter was already sleeping. This year, I have more time with my kids and my husband. I realize how I did not know my kids or my family. I now know their habits and the kinds of things they like and want to do. This is one of the most precious memories.

Personal Change. The 6 participants in the study noted how they had changed in several ways during their sojourn in the U.S. Most spoke of their improved skills in writing, reading and understanding spoken English. Many realized that their English speaking skills were not as strong as they thought they were before coming to the U.S. They mentioned specific academic content that they had learned, including research methodology, teaching methodologies, and computer technology. One noted that she had developed a self-awareness of teaching style and the ability to critique her own teaching based on methods she observed in use by U.S. teachers. They mentioned changing attitudes toward Americans.

Patty: I have learned a lot, for example research methodology, quantitative research. I can use it when I go back to Korea and do research by myself. Also, teaching methodology is practical and hands-on things. I learned content- based, theme-based, and task-based. I can integrate all these things to make my own teaching method and apply them in the classroom.

Lydia: Before coming here I actually have a lot of foreign friends at church and they were around and were ready to listen to me. I thought my English was really good. I came here and realized my English needed to improve a lot. I am still working on it, but I think my English has improved a lot.

Cat: My English has improved a lot but I still have a problem with my speaking ability. When I first came here I couldn't speak very well. But, whenever Americans understood me, I was satisfied. But the more I improved, the worse I felt about my mistakes when I speak. I think it has to do with my anxiety. It is very difficult to overcome those feelings. One of my goals is to overcome these negative feelings.

Larry: In my case, my speaking, writing, reading and listening skills have all improved quite a bit. In America I have to write, I have to speak, I have to read, I have to listen.

Kristen: I was really excited to study in the U.S. At first, the classroom was quite different from Korea. Many students showed a very relaxed behavior. Students put their legs on the table, ate in the classroom. I was really shocked at first, but now I am accustomed to it.

Sue: I can say three things. AT UT, I learned how to accommodate students' needs differently. For instance, in one class there are students from low level to high level. Before studying here I just tried to focus on the average level. But here I learned how to accommodate slow learners and also high performing students. I learned manageability. And I like that idea. I learned to give students lots of flexibility to follow their own interest. Choose some article that they really want to read.

*Sue: I learned how to make lesson plans for my students and not just to use one textbook. I published a textbook, so I learned how to make lesson plans and I learned a lot of technology. Before I came here I didn't know PowerPoint [*and other technology tools}. *I am computer illiterate. But now I feel more confident about computers. All this is new information to me. I like all the individual activities. I learned a lot.*

Sue: I have been lucky to study here because I met wonderful classmates and professors. I heard lots of bad comments about American students by a senior colleague who studied abroad. They said that Americans treat international students like they are dumb or stupid. If internationals did not participate in class that much, they think we are not very intelligent. But here, the atmosphere was very caring and I liked that. Meeting my host family was also very special to me.

Unidentified: The people in Knoxville are really friendly and nice. I changed my opinion about American people while I was here. I met so many nice people. My attitude toward Americans has totally changed and the program is really good.

Patty: I have learned a lot—research methodology, quantitative research. I can use it when I go back to Korea and do research by myself. Also, teaching methodology is practical and hands-on things. I learned content-based, theme-based, and task-based. I can integrate all these things to make my own teaching method and apply them in the classroom.

Lydia: I learned a lot from professors. I have been a teacher for a long time. Reflecting on my experiences as a teacher, I realized that I was very authoritative and perhaps very boring. Most of the time I think that I re-read everything. Now I will follow the example of my professors when I go back to Korea and will try to approach my students like the professors do here. I like the attitude that professors approach students first and not students first approach professors.

Advice for future scholars from abroad. When asked what advice they had for future international students, the study participants focused equally on relationships and attitude. They recommended being happy, being active, being positive and being brave. They suggested volunteering, interacting more with local people and being less hesitant to speak.

Patty: What you get is totally in your attitude. Be active, positive, brave to try new adventures. Try as many new experiences as you can. Speak English as much as you can. Be happy while [you are] *here.*

Unidentified: I like to say to the future visiting scholars—make friends with the local people and then take opportunities to interact with them.

Kristen: I volunteered so many times. It is required for my younger daughter because she is in kindergarten. I met so many people and learned how children behave there and how teachers treat the children here. It was a very good experience.

Cat: I would like to tell them to be more confident in their English abilities. One of the main goals is to improve their English ability. Koreans think that they are not as good at speaking English, but I observed that other international students are not as good as we expected. They also made mistakes.

Guiding Principles Derived from the Findings

Discussion

In general, the themes identified above and the guiding principles that follow, derived from the findings of the data analysis, appear to corroborate the published literature on the topic.

The match between the teacher-scholar-students' interests and goals and the selected program is a key to satisfaction with the program. *This is essential for successful recruitment efforts by U.S. higher education institutions.*

There must be attention provided to both personal and academic matters in order for the international student to succeed in academic matters. This is both a recruitment and a retention tool.

Previous connections create a powerful link for new international students coming into a community. *This principle and the one above ensure a successful post-secondary academic experience.*

Personal guidance and assistance is needed in matters ranging from car repair to directions from one location to another to planning course schedules. *This is a testimony to the Chaney and Martin (2000) cultural adjustment model.*

Interest in the international student and sensitivity to his or her perspectives, as demonstrated by professors and classmates alike, enhances the learning experience for these students. *This guideline, when followed, can attract potential students, assist in their successful matriculation and retention in both a new academic and cultural environment, and serve as a conduit to support linkages for recruiting new students.*

Implications

There are many implications that can be drawn from this study and include the following.

Benefits to the University and Community From Hosting International Scholars

There are numerous positive outcomes associated with the invitation to campus and the hosting of scholars from universities around the world. In particular, the opportunity to learn from one another the cultural underpinnings of each culture's educational programs and how one goes about preparing students for success in the global economy is of great import in this era of internationalization.

Learning about ideas and educational philosophies from international partners informs both sides about how one goes about the preparation of educators (i.e., teachers and administrators).

The Exposure of Domestic Students to Their International Peers

Perhaps the most exciting and important activity that underlies educational partnerships between overseas institutions of higher learning is the opportunity to expose students to each other and their philosophies *vis-à-vis* culture, society and education.

All those involved in the educational arena have much to learn from each other, and the exposure to people from other countries around the world aids in expanding global understanding, and ultimately serves as a conduit to attaining *global competency*.

In addition to the above, there are also discipline-specific benefits to be accrued by these relationships. In the primary field of education, one learns about best teaching and learning practices from others, while developing a richer understanding of the importance each respective society's places on the education of their youth.

Challenges Associated with Hosting International Students and Scholars

While it would be preferable to focus on *opportunities* afforded by the hosting of international students and scholars, there are some challenges that must be addressed in order to provide for a successful experience on both sides.

Certainly, language barriers present challenges for the productive exchange of ideas. The fact remains, however, that most international educators are global citizens themselves, and thus speak one of the world Englishes.[3]

Another challenge is that of building a *culture of cooperation* along both fronts of the relationship. This may be impeded by team members that are not as facile in the art of relationship building and cultural understanding as others.

In summary, there are indeed more benefits than challenges involved in the engagement of international colleagues in the important business of educating tomorrow's youth, and every effort must be made to bring both sides together.

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Instructional Innovations: Serving the Needs of Many through Thoughtful Institutional Collaboration

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Universities continue to experience growth in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) programs, with international students who wish to return to their home country to teach English using instructional practices developed in the US. This paper describes a collaboration between a university's Department of Teaching and Learning (DTL) and the university's English Language Center (ELC). This innovative collaboration satisfied two challenging campus needs: 1) serving the practicum needs of teacher candidates seeking TESOL EFL coursework; and 2) assisting international employees and affiliated spouses who need to improve their English language proficiency.

Colleges and universities in the US are experiencing rapid growth of students, faculty, and employees originating from international destinations. Universities are also experiencing rapid growth in enrollment to Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) programs, especially with international students who wish to return to their home country to teach English using instructional practices developed in the US. Developing programs to meet these needs require collaborations between departments to provide coursework and practicum experiences for international students. This paper describes such collaborations between departments in a university in the southeastern United States.

The program described below is a collaboration between a university's Department of

Teaching and Learning (DTL) and the university's English Language Center (ELC). This innovative collaboration satisfied two challenging campus needs: 1) serving the practicum needs of teacher candidates seeking TESOL EFL coursework; and 2) assisting international employees and affiliated spouses who need to improve their English language proficiency. The collaboration benefited the DTL, the university, and the surrounding community. This program takes place in a city that has seen exponential growth in the immigrant community in the last 10 years. It is a *new destination city*, an important center of international refugee resettlement. Many different ethnic groups have immigrated or sought refuge in the city, most being Arabic, Hispanic, Kurdish, Laotian, Somali, and Vietnamese immigrants and refugees.

Instructional innovation includes providing real-life experiences for students to practice teaching. Effective practicum experiences are the heart and soul of effective teacher education programs and an essential element of instructional excellence. Empirical evidence in the field of teacher education of teachers of English language learners (ELLs) is unequivocal about the critical need to infuse field experiences into existing methods and assessment courses (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Cadiero-Kaplan & Rodriguez 2008; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Gandara, Maxell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005; Menken & Atunez, 2001). Novice teachers require carefully developed opportunities in instructional settings to practice teaching ELLs using the methods, strategies and assessments introduced to them in their methods and assessment courses currently offered in our Teaching English Learners program. The need for such an innovation in developing practicum experiences is critical and addresses several pressing demands that are stated below:

- It has become more difficult to place ELL teacher candidates in quality practicum settings.   The state in which this program was initiated has drastically changed their teacher evaluation system to receive Race-to-the-Top funding. Measurements of teacher effectiveness, which determine teacher retention and merit pay increases, are now largely based upon student scores of academic achievement. This presents three barriers to place students in practicum settings. First, teachers are reluctant to turn classes over to a novice teacher for fear that teachers-in-training will adversely affect students' ability to achieve test scores in the proficient range. Second, given the climate of high-stakes testing, teachers may teach to the test, focusing on discrete test-taking skills, limiting our teacher candidates' ability to observe and employ empirically-based ELL instructional practices in a classroom setting. This conflicts with the instructional practices taught and practiced in the DTL ELL Methods and ELL Assessment coursework. Third, it is difficult to place ELL teacher candidates in classrooms due to scheduling conflicts with the schools. Currently the local school district spends roughly 9 weeks in the fall and spring semesters testing ELLs on a variety of language, reading, and achievement assessments leaving little time for teacher candidates to practice teach.

- DTL has difficulty placing a growing number of international students into practicum settings. These students need to practice teaching English as a foreign language. Several local educational entities will not accept international students in practicum settings. Their faculty and students demand instruction from native speakers of English and our students, although English proficient are undeniably second language speakers of English. Also, their placement is not possible in other settings such as those offered at the ELC, which provides English language instruction to international graduate students, scholars, faculty, and staff. The international students in the ELL M.Ed. program often take classes at the ELC.

- Aside from international faculty and students, universities now employ a growing number of immigrants many of whom require additional English language instruction but are unable to afford formal classes. In the past the ELC has offered classes to these employees but due to budget constraints, funding is sporadic. We envision the benefits to these individuals to include increased job satisfaction (Cooke, Brown, & Zhu, 2007; Roberts, 2010), and possibly increased job performance among VU employees.

Goals of the program

We constructed a practicum experience in which our DTL teacher candidates assess ELLs, monitor their learning, and provide appropriate instruction under the supervision of the DTL and ELC. Thus, our practicum served three interrelated purposes:

- We provided practicum experiences to DTL teacher candidates who are pursuing an ELL degree or licensure.
- We served the university employees and affiliated spouses who need but may be unable to afford English classes.
- We used data gathered from the practicum experience to inform our each of the ELL Methods and ELL Assessment courses.

Integration with Curriculum

The project is consistent with TESOL/NCATE/CAEP requirements and departmental curriculum. The curriculum used in the program is based on the ELC's prior experience with the targeted population. The proficiency range of the ELLs is from beginner, with possible pre-literacy issues, to high intermediate. A number of textbook series would accommodate the proficiency range, but the series selected, *Ventures* (Cambridge University Press), affords the flexibility necessary for a class population with varying language proficiency and needs. High-interest topics related to family, health, and employment are addressed.

The practicum setting is assessed in the following ways providing opportunities to evaluate the program through multiple lenses.

- Consistent with the requirements of Assessment of English Language Leaners coursework, DTL students assess ELLs using a standardized language assessment, the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM).
- Consistent with the requirements Methods and Materials of ELL instruction coursework, we evaluate DTL students' ability to work effectively using established NCATE ELL practica assessments and the Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP) protocol, a commonly used assessment to measure teachers' ability to modify instruction for ELLs.
- We measure Ells satisfaction with the program using a survey developed by the ELC.

During the Spring, 2012 semester, we piloted the program. Faculty from DTL and the ELC met regularly during the preceding December to finalize curriculum choices for students at the beginning, and intermediate levels of English oral language proficiency and recruit university employees and affiliated spouses. During the spring semester, the practicum began, scheduled concurrently with the ELL Methods and ELL Assessment courses. During the month of January, DTL students spent 10 hours observing instruction performed at the ELC. During the first week of February, DTL teacher candidates administered standardized written language assessments, made formal observational assessments of the students' oral language proficiency, and made decisions about students' level of English language proficiency. From February to April, DTL teacher candidates under the supervision of an ELC instructor and DTL practicum supervisor, planned and implemented small group and whole class instruction, and continued to assess student language growth through the use of observational protocols.

Based on the SOLOM assessments during a structured oral language activity at the beginning and end of the spring semester, we documented growth in oral language development of 9 of 12 students who enrolled in the program, two students' oral language remained unchanged, and one student measured less proficient at the beginning of the program. All students tested in the proficient range according to the curriculum's reading assessment. All students expressed satisfaction with the program. The only common complaint was that the students wished that we offered the classes more than once a week and for a longer duration than 3 hours per week. Our teacher candidates had similarly positive feedback. The DTL faculty found that this practicum was a great improvement over prior practicum experiences, especially with regard to assessment.

Significance of the work

Quality practicum experiences are the heart of any teacher education program, but especially one in which teacher candidates must assess, monitor, and instruct students from widely varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Teacher candidates often understand *what* must be done and *why* it must be done, but may lack confidence and experience about *how to* assess, instruct, and monitor the progress of their ELL students.   Quality practicum experiences are designed to provide teacher candidates with these *how to* experiences. Unfortunately, we find it increasingly difficult to place teacher candidates in practicum experiences in the local public schools. Given the growing population of immigrants and refugees it was a natural fit to construct a practicum experience that would benefit both our students and the surrounding immigrant and refugee community. The results of our work show that a deliberately constructed practicum experience benefits the immigrant employees of the university, the larger immigrant community and ELL teacher candidates. Funding remains the largest barrier in implementing such programs.

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Adding Instructional Accommodations to Increase Comprehensible Input

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For teachers in today's age of diversity, it is more important than ever that we tailor our teaching styles to the many different learning styles that exist and try to reach as many students as possible. This is not a new idea and is actually based in the 1974 Supreme Court ruling Lau vs. Nichols, which states that, "Equality of educational opportunity is not achieved by merely providing all students with "the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (TN.gov, 2011). Much research has been conducted upon what are the most effective ways to achieve this "equality of education." Stephen Krashen's (1998) theory of Comprehensible Input and language acquisition for English learners is one such set of principles that helps to guide furthering research in the field and is therefore the main premise for this study. The study examined the following questions: 1). What are the most effective instructional accommodation strategies teachers can add to enhance their lessons and make the content more comprehensible to English Language Learners (ELLs)? 2). What information may be gathered from the study that will assist other teachers in improving instructional practice? The population for this group was a handful of first year teachers employed at a middle school. Data was collected in the form of a pre and post study questionnaire, from researcher observations, and from teachercreated lesson plans

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What is Comprehensible Input?

Our classrooms continue to represent a diverse population of students with varying needs from the struggling learner to the English language learner. Research shows the need for differentiated instruction in order to reach as many students as possible. One Second Language Acquisition Theorist, Dr. Stephen Krashen, suggests that content can be made comprehensible through the addition of instructional accommodations (1998). This study focused on two overarching questions: 1). What are the most effective instructional accommodation strategies teachers can add to enhance their lessons and make the content more comprehensible to English Language Learners (ELLs)? 2). What information may be gathered from the study that will assist other teachers in improving instructional practice? The researcher aimed to gain insight into how much knowledge first year teachers have in differentiating instruction to make lesson content comprehensible for English language learners. The researcher also intended to provide a general overview of different strategies that could be used to accommodate lessons for ELLs by providing a brief in-service presentation to the new teachers. The overall goal of the study was to provide teachers with the knowledge of many different instructional accommodations they could use to make lessons more comprehensible to struggling learners and provide guidance about how to implement them in their classes. The data collected from the research will be used to improve the in-service to be later presented faculty-wide.

Comprehensible Input requires the content to be presented through the use of consistent language, frequent use of visuals, and by providing frequent opportunities for students to express their ideas. Comprehensible instruction requires that teachers carefully control their vocabulary and use graphic organizers, concrete objects, and gestures whenever possible to promote understanding (Teachervision.com, 2013). Providing relevant background knowledge and instruction that draws upon the students' own experiences are also key components of a lesson accommodated for increasing comprehensible input. Krashen's theory of comprehensible input serves to aid teachers in complying with the federal guidelines of Lau vs. Nichols (1974). Krashen (1998) maintains that enhanced input must be in sufficient quantity, but he finds it difficult to say how much input is necessary to achieve a given level of proficiency in L2 acquisition due to a lack of data. It appears, however, that all lessons should be devoted to supplying as much comprehensible input as possible to stimulate more rapid second language acquisition in the form that the acquirer may be exposed to more of the target language (Hasan, 2008). To make lessons comprehensible, teachers may apply accommodations by changing speech patterns, classroom arrangements or by applying instructional strategies to lessons. Any of these accommodations may serve to facilitate comprehension for an English language learner.

Lesson Accommodations

The term "accommodations" encompasses any action or arrangement that can be applied to make a lesson more accessible to students (Gribbons, Krashen, & Rodrigoa, 2004). The term may also be referred to as modifications, scaffolding, and/or differentiation of instructionalstrategies. These accommodations may be as complex and as varied as providing differing levels of activities for different levels of proficiency and understanding or may be as simple as classroom arrangement or student placement and various uses of speech modifications. In conjunction with NCLB (2002), Lau vs. Nichols (1974) secures the need for differentiated instruction with a focus on all students being proficient in reading and mathematics by the year 2014. This goal places extra stress on the teacher to create lessons that all students can comprehend to close the achievement gap between high performing and low performing students that they serve. In order to comply with federal regulations and maximize achievement scores, teachers need to administer lessons that are accessible and comprehensible to all learners, including ELLs. The most effective way to do this is through strategic application of a variety of speech, classroom, or instructional accommodations embedded into instruction.

Speech Modifications

Although simple to implement, speech modifications can be extremely effective in helping make lessons more comprehensible to ELLs. This type of accommodation can be characterized by input that has been modified or simplified in some way before the learner sees or hears it. This can be repetitions, paraphrase of words or sentences, and reduction of sentence length and complexity, among others (Park, 2005). Many believe that linguistic adjustments made in speech serve to facilitate comprehension. Researchers "Loschky (1994), and Ellis, Tanaka, and Yamazaki (1994) have distinguished three different kinds of input conditions:

1. Baseline input where the learners were given unmodified input,
2. Pre-modified input where the learners were given simplified (and elaborated) input, and
3. Interactionally modified input where the learners were given baseline input, along with the opportunity to ask for clarification if they did not understand the input (i.e., they could negotiate for comprehensible input).

It was found in all of these studies that the third type of input – the interactionally modified input – led to the highest levels of comprehension" (Park, 2005). Teachers may also choose to modify their speech by speaking more slowly or articulately or they may use more nonverbal cues and animated speech. English language learners have more opportunities to ask for clarification for understanding through the use of speech modifications and therefore have a better chance of comprehending lessons using any of these simple accommodations.

Classroom Accommodations

Another area where educators should examine their methods of instruction is in the classroom environment or in the way the classroom is arranged to facilitate comprehension during instruction. Krashen's theory of comprehensible input is rooted in his Natural approach. The Natural approach examines the differences between language learning and language acquisition. Acquisition seems to happen unconsciously through comprehensible input and lowered affective filters (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Social-Affective filters explain levels of anxiety in human actions. Students with higher affective filters have difficulty learning because of external factors that are causing their anxiety. Teachers may use different methods to help lower the social affective filters in their classrooms to increase understanding. These include providing a safe and comfortable learning environment free from bullying and disrespect, use of peer mentors, seating the student near the teacher, utilizing activities that are fun, interesting, and intriguing, relating materials to real life situations from the students' lives whenever possible, (Krogh, 2011), using humor, and allowing time for relaxed conversation at certain times. If the student is comfortable and his or her basic needs are met first, then the student will be available to receive comprehensible input and instruction.

Instructional Strategies

Combined with speech and classroom modifications, instructional strategies will add the final element to a lesson to make it memorable and meaningful to the student. Many notable researchers have integrated knowledge of how the brain functions with standard educational practices to create intriguing strategies to accommodate and enhance lessons to create accessibility to more students. Because an enormous gap exists between what a teacher explains and what a teacher understands, teachers need to engage students for deeper understanding and feedback with implicit and explicit learning strategies to reduce this gap (Jensen, 2000). Brain based learning strategies are more engaging to the students and will help students receive memorable instruction to understand and retain vast amounts of content. Dr. Marcia Tate is one such researcher who has explicitly research various brain based strategies that engage the learner. She has also published various publications about which strategies are the most effective. “Exemplary teachers have always known that active engagement of students is not a luxury but a necessity if students are to truly acquire and retain content, not only for tests, but for life (Tate, 2003). Dr. Tate has compiled 20 brain-compatible strategies for teachers to use to make lessons comprehensible and brain compatible. Amongst these strategies are the use of humor, storytelling, game playing, mnemonic devices, graphic organizers, illustrations and drawings, technology, role-playing, music, journal writing, and more. “Years of research confirm that certain teaching tools awaken the desire to learn in students by engaging their brains. And once their brains are engaged, synthesis and retention of information will soar” (Tate, 2003). Instructional strategies are the essential scaffoldings and supports that ELLs require to truly have access to the content being presented.

Making Lessons Comprehensible

Teacher training programs today are geared toward helping prepare the new teacher to work with various learning styles but many still emerge unprepared to work with English language learners. Krashen's (1998) theory of comprehensible input supports federal policies such as the 1974 Supreme Court ruling Lau vs. Nichols (1974) , which states that, "Equality of educational opportunity is not achieved by merely providing all students with "the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (TN.gov, 2011). There needs to be more programs in place to provide training to new teachers that focus on strategies that are effective to use while working with ELLs. Of course, more research needs to be conducted as far as to which are the most successful accommodations and strategies to use for reaching English language learners and making the content the most comprehensible to diverse learning styles.

Researchers agree that students have more diverse learner needs today than ever. Providing the most effective instruction to English language learners is still an area that needs more research and practice. One way that has been found to be effective in reaching our diverse learners is by applying of a variety of speech, classroom, or instructional accommodations to lessons. The use of these strategies should make lessons more comprehensible to English language learners and other struggling students.

The Study

Often, a first year teacher may be overwhelmed by the number of ELLs that they may be serving in their classes. Many of these teachers may not have the knowledge or confidence needed to serve some of these students in their classes. In an effort to pursue such inquiry, I have chosen to conduct an action research study about improving instructional practices through the application of instructional accommodations to lessons to reach more diverse learner needs. The study was designed to help first year teachers have access to a variety of instructional accommodations that they could use to make lessons more comprehensible to ELLs. The overarching questions provided a focus for the study. These were:

1. What are the most effective instructional accommodation strategies teachers can add to enhance their lessons and make the content more comprehensible to English Language Learners (ELLs)?

2. What information may be gathered from the study that will assist other teachers in improving instructional practice? The researcher wanted to gain a sense of what kinds of accommodations were currently being used by first year teachers as well as which other methods these teachers liked to use in their lessons to enhance learning. By focusing on these two questions, the researcher was able to collect valuable information about the knowledge base that many first year teachers possess for being able to effectively serve the ELL population.

The Participants

The participants in the study were 5 first year teachers for grades 6-8 in a variety of subjects including Math, Science, and Reading/Language Arts. All of the teachers were also recent graduates from a teaching program of study. The participants were selected because they each serve a large number of English language learners in their classes. All the participants just happen to be female but this was not done on purpose.

Table 1: Participants

New Teacher Code	Grade Level	Subject Taught
NT1	6th Grade	Reading/Language Arts
NT2	7th Grade	Mathematics
NT3	7th Grade	Reading/Language Arts
NT4	7th Grade	Science
NT5	8th Grade	Reading/Language Arts

Table 2: Overview of the Research Site

Grade Level/ Classification	Inner city Middle school grades 6-8/ Public
Population Demographics	Very diverse student population with a high number of ELLs 46% Caucasian 38% Hispanic 14% African American 2% Other
Economics	The city is a busy urban center surrounded by an impoverished rural setting

Methodology

This action research study employed a qualitative approach to examine new teacher lesson plans, promote instructional accommodations, and gain feedback from the teachers about ease of application of the strategies as well as which strategies they may select for upcoming lessons. A Narrative Inquiry design required the researcher to gather information from participants in order to present their experiences. Procedures included analyzing the data sets, developing themes, and creating a chronology regarding the participant's experiences.

The study took place on site, in the group's natural environment, and was non-manipulative of group behaviors. The purpose was to observe with objectivity, while taking into account the views of the participants. I used both Situation and Strategy Codes to analyze the pre and post study interviews, observations, and teacher created lesson plans. Situation codes emphasize information that demonstrates how the participants interact within the action research setting. Strategy Codes feature the strategies, techniques, and processes a participant follows when interacting within a practitioner based environment (Craig, 2009). The combined use of both strategies provided insight into the patterns that emerged from the different data sets used in the study. A variety of data sets were identified, aligned, and collected. These included:

1. Pre-study Observations
2. Pre-study Interviews
3. Artifacts: Example Lesson Plans, Example Accommodations, and related materials
4. Post-study Interviews

The researcher conducted pre-study observations of the participants' classrooms as part of the data sets. In addition, an interview protocol for the pre- and post-interviews was utilized. After the pre-study interview, participants took part in training which focused on possible accommodations that regular education classroom teachers may employ to meet the needs of their ESL students.

Conclusions

The most unexpected conclusion that the researcher has drawn from conducting this study is that many recently graduated first year teachers are quite well equipped and trained at the university level to help prepare them to work with a diverse learner population's needs. The researcher decided that this study would be most effective to use with a group of veteran teachers who have been teaching for at least 7-10 years. It appears that more teacher education programs are geared towards using differentiated instruction than they were 7-10 years ago. The researcher also gained some interesting insight into classroom seating arrangements through observing the other teacher's classes. Several of them had their own philosophies about how to most effectively arrange their classrooms and seemed to be genuinely interested in how the other teachers arranged their rooms for effective teaching as well. This might make for an interesting study of its own.

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About the Author

Erin Cathey grew up in Asheville, NC and graduated from Appalachian State University with ESL certification and a BA in Spanish in 2000. She started teaching ESL right after college in several rural mountain counties in NC. She and her husband later moved to Murfreesboro, TN where she began teaching ESL in nearby Bedford County. She obtained her master's degree from Middle Tennessee State University in 2013. She is absolutely passionate about working with other cultures and helping struggling learners.

The Study of Vocabulary: Teaching and Learning at ELS

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This action research study examined current strategies for vocabulary teaching and will provide suggestions to participants in order to strengthen their foundations of language. In addition, the goal of the study was to gather data regarding best practice in an attempt to offer suggestions for effective instructional strategies to support the development of language skills. Through the use of interviewing, the study examined: a) main problems in learning vocabulary, b) additional steps to help retain vocabulary, c) use of academic vocabulary in speaking and writing, d) perceptions of how the instructors at the ELS can better assist students, and e) methods that were most effective as viewed by students. In addition, the study involved interviews conducted with instructor participants to further explore: a) main concerns in teaching vocabulary, b) current methods used to teach vocabulary in the classroom, c) external factors that negatively affect student learning, d) structure and content of vocabulary lessons, and e) perceptions of best practices for student learning. The interview data will assist in identifying the main problems with vocabulary teaching and learning as well as identifying the teaching styles and factors that influence vocabulary learning and use outside of the classroom. Analysis included qualitative coding. Findings offer suggestions, techniques, and instructional methods that have been proven effective when teaching vocabulary to students learning English as a second language.

Introduction

The more active the learner, the more the teacher needs to recognize and be aware of effective methods that lead to language development and vocabulary acquisition. This study utilized interview data to identify best practices. Research shows that vocabulary is acquired through teaching in context. To improve participants' skills focus on how words are learned as well as how they are taught is critical. Due to the inquiry, a qualitative case was needed. Overarching questions were designed and aligned with data sets to address triangulation. The study took place over a period of three months. In that time: a) the researcher interview the participant, b) interacted with the participants, and c), discussed with them about learning and teaching vocabulary.

The researcher examined suggestions, techniques and instructional methods that have been confirmed when teaching and learning vocabulary. The overarching questions supported and provided a focus for the study. These include:

What are reasons the students are not using the academic vocabulary in speaking and writing?

a) How can instructor be better teaching the student in vocabulary class?
b) How to study vocabulary inside and outside the class?
c) What is the main problem in teaching and learning vocabulary?
d) What are methods instructors are to teach vocabulary in the classroom?

Introduction to Teaching English Vocabulary: The Basis for the Study

Abdul Kareem Igbaria (1996) explains that "Teaching English vocabulary is an important area worthy of effort and investigation. Recently methodologies and linguists emphasize and recommend teaching vocabulary because of its importance in language teaching" (p.49). Learning vocabulary gives students a strong foundation of the language, which allows them to both use and understand the given language. Expressing meaning through the use of vocabulary enables students to become successful in acquiring receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) skills in the second language. As linguists know vocabulary instruction is not a just a syllabus to be covered. Rather, it consists of curriculum with function words and academic vocabulary selected by teachers for learners to specifically use and memorize. In the case of international students, instruction must consist of vocabulary knowledge, acquisition, and use in context. Therefore, teaching vocabulary is the most important aspect of learning a language, with some teachers placing emphasis on how they can incorporate vocabulary into lists and highlight the words in text for better comprehension.
As Pikulski and Tempelton (2004) explain,

> If students do not know the meaning of many of the words that they encounter in a text, their comprehension of that selection is likely to be compromised. When the purpose of vocabulary instruction is to facilitate the comprehension of a selection, it is obvious that this instruction must take place as an introduction before the reading of the selection. (pp.1-10).

Therefore, vocabulary should be introduced before reading any new texts—especially in cases where the instructor identifies weaknesses in students such as not knowing how to determine new words or if students experience continued difficulties with comprehension. One important reason for the second language learners to expand their knowledge of words is that with vocabulary knowledge, students are better able to comprehend a wide range of texts. As a result, teachers should encourage English language learners to focus on vocabulary as a component of reading and reading instruction. However, it's a great challenge to teach large numbers of new words each day. By integrating vocabulary emphasis in reading instruction, students begin to build word knowledge that assists with challenging reading tasks. Not only is vocabulary necessary for reading comprehension, but it helps students to build a working vocabulary consisting of many words, which can lead to mastering strategies such as context clues in order to understand new information.

In fact, through reading, students can better identify new words and figure out the meaning of the word even if the text or word seems unimportant. In addition, some students' interest and curiosity to know new words helps them develop the ability to explore and think about words. Instructors can further encourage the development of this ability through presenting a word-day and by focusing on interesting and challenging words that are meaningful to students.

On the other hand, there are some methods in teaching vocabulary that are not only interesting but also fun. For example, one teacher in ELS at Ohio Dominican University is currently using several effective strategies in teaching vocabulary that are engaging and fun. This teacher begins by delivering new words clearly and smoothly. He then divides the class into two groups and encourages them to compete in a learning game. The teacher writes the word on the board. Students from each group examine the word and then explain the word using body language. The game encourages all of the students to think about the word and to figure out the meaning. These strategies have had significant effect in teaching vocabulary (ELS, 2013).

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (2011) outlines the following sequence of steps for effective vocabulary instruction: a) teaching student's words that are critical to comprehension, b) teaching words with general utility likely to be encountered many times, and c) difficult words that need interpretation. Several steps are included in order to ensure that effective instructional methods are used.

The first step is to select the text and materials that the students will be reading. The next step is to list all words that the students will probably not be familiar with. The third step is to analyze the unrecognizable word list using different measures, such as which words should be considered Tier Two words. According to English professor, Thaashida L. Hutton (2008), Tier Two words consist of high frequency words that occur in many different areas. These words strongly influence reading and speaking because they often occur in intermediate and advanced literature and conversation. Tier Two words will be used in many different scenarios and help develop reading comprehension. One should analyze which of the Tier Two words are most necessary to comprehend the reading. Finally, it should be noted which other words are needed in order to comprehend the reading material. This sequence continues to step four—which involves deciding which words will actually be taught and the level of attention each word will require.

In addition, teachers should discuss the importance of academic vocabulary words in context by: a) reading the context and focus on the unfamiliar words, b) creating meaning from the context c) asking students to questions to encourage comprehension, d) providing students with clues to word meaning, e) encouraging students to generate other possible meanings, and f) providing information regarding the dialog that takes place about unfamiliar words. According to the website Colorín Colorado (n.d.), building vocabulary as well as understanding and using specific strategies assists second language learners in developing abilities and skills to:

1. Define and create meaning from new words,
2. Recognize and memorize vocabulary,
3. Use new vocabulary,
4. Derive multiple meanings, and
5. Write and spell words.

The West Virginia Department of Education (n.d.) offers effective strategies that allow students to learn an extensive amount of vocabulary when they encounter words in meaningful contexts. Repeated meaningful encounters with words including working with different scenarios, read-alouds conversations, personal reading, discussions, or in media viewing can lead students to build vocabulary over time. Teachers should model effective word learning strategies for students, which can include the following:

1. Thinking aloud for vocabulary is an effective tool that teachers use because it can help them to understand what the learner is thinking. This is a great tool for modeling word attack skills.

2. Vocabulary Self Selection Strategy (Haggard, 1986), called VSS for short, is a small group activity for word learning. Students read a text selection and each student lists two words that he or she has heard before, but the definition is still unclear.
3. Contextual Redefinition (Cunningham, Cunningham & Arthur, 1981) helps students to use context clues to help students identify unfamiliar terms and associate the meaning of that term inside the text. After students think about what the term means, it is discussed in class. The teacher will note the suggested definitions on a chalkboard or whiteboard. Students then read the text, making note of the vocabulary in context. The initial suggested definition is then discussed again and revised. An area of discussion can also include how context can affect words that have multiple meanings.

Another effective strategy is the PAVE Procedure (Bannon, Fisher, Pozzi & Wessel, 1990), which was developed as a way for students to check the definition in the dictionary against the context in which the word was actually used. This strategy has been proven to help students remember definitions by associating each word with a visual image.

List-Group-Label (Taba, 1967), is a strategy in which students are asked to generate a word list, group the similarities, and then label each group. This helps students to understand vocabulary, see associations that various words have with each other, and categorize the words accordingly.

Language Collection sheet is a paper that includes the labels and the words must be documented. It is similar to List-Group-Label, however it already has the label. The students use the vocabulary list in order to complete the chart. This task also helps with comprehension and noting similarities with words and definitions.

The Student VOC Strategy seeks to develop specific content vocabulary. Students work together in order to determine the deeper meaning of a vocabulary word.

The final strategy, Word Banks, is used to serve as a reference to students. Students create a list of words that they have learned in a journal or flash cards. Referring to this list frequently will help students to memorize vocabulary.

Although these are all effective strategies, there is not one specific way to teach academic vocabulary—rather—effective instructors typically use a variety of methods. Researchers have explained the complexity of word knowledge. They have demonstrated that most words are learned in stages. All words are different. There are different levels at which the words are learned. Some words are learned very quickly, while others need more elaboration, thus taking a longer time. Some words have multiple meanings and can be confusing to the students who are learning them. Other words that will be encountered are considered to be low-frequency words, which are not used or heard very often. Some words maybe have associations with other words, while some do not and are considered difficult to understand (Nagy and Scott, 2000).

Some specialists mentioned that learning and teaching vocabulary is related to reading any articles, books or others sources. Educational consultant Beverlee Jobrack (2009) described this idea in her study, Developing Academic Vocabulary, “The attention drawn to the important role of vocabulary in reading also unveils the importance of academic vocabulary and the most effective ways to teach vocabulary. Academic vocabulary is a critical element in concept understanding."

The Study

On the basis of learning and teaching vocabulary skills and providing practice, the study examined suggestions, techniques and instructional methods that have been confirmed as effective when teaching and learning vocabulary. Participants included five adult English language students and four instructors employed at the ELS (English Language Center). The overarching questions supported the study and provided a focus on learning and teaching vocabulary in ELS (English Language Center). These include:

a) What are reasons the students are not using the academic vocabulary in speaking and writing?
b) How can instructor effectively meet the needs of student in developing English vocabulary?
c) What suggestions can be gathered to assist students in studying and using vocabulary inside and outside the class?
d) What are the main challenges in teaching and learning vocabulary?
e) What are methods instructors are to teach vocabulary in the classroom?

Five students and four instructors took part in interviews in ELS (English Language Center). Five participants were students in the Master's level at the ELS and four instructors were currently employed at the Center.

Participants

Participants included five students and four instructors at the ELS (English Language Center). Participants signed an interview consent form and agreed to take part in suggestions, technical, instructional methods and conducted action research. All student participants were enrolled in English classes for academic purposes. Table1 provides information about participants.

Table1. Overview of Participants

Participant	Gender	Status
Instructor	Female	ELS Teacher
Instructor	Male	ELS Teacher
Instructor	Male	ELS Teacher
Instructor	Male	ESL Teacher
Student	Female	Level- 111
Student	Male	Level- 110
Student	Male	Level-112
Student	Male	Level-111
Student	Male	Level-112

Methodology

Craig (2009) defines action research as an approach conducted by teachers for teachers and practitioners for practitioners. The process focuses on practice in order to improve practice. Action research may result in positive change on the form of action. The process is practical in that the analysis of data leads to improvement and change. Within the framework of action research, the study adopted a Narrative design. Creswell (2007) describes Narrative design as a variety of analytic practices related to the humanities and social disciplines. The researcher identified this design based on the following characteristics:

1. Narrative research reflects the events of the stories, lives of individuals, and life experiences.
2. Narrative design enables the researcher to select one or more individuals who have life experiences essential to the inquiry. The researcher can then spend time gathering information of the stories. The researcher can be also record and observe participants' stories and collect letters, documents—which are later assembled into detailed stories.
3. The design also allows the researcher to collect information from the story context. In addition, the design encourages the researcher to examine the situated individual's stories regarding: a) culture, b) personal experience, and c) historical context.
4. Narrative research design requires the researcher to build a framework. The framework contains gathering information, analyzing, rewriting the stories to place them within chronological sequences.

5. Last, the design allows the researcher to collaborate with participants by involving them in action research. When the researcher collect the stories, a good relationship between the researcher and researched leads to learning and change or improvement.

The researcher used the following matrix to guide the research process. Data sets were aligned with each question and consisted of interviews with instructor and student participants, field notes, observations, collections of writing samples, vocabulary notes, and discussions.

Research Procedures

Research procedures included interviewing four instructors and five students at ELS. The study began with a set of overarching questions and progressed to data collection and analysis that led toward findings that will help in improving the practice. The steps followed by the researcher included:

Step 1) Conducted interviews instructors and students—Structured interview questions (Interview Protocol) focused on teaching and learning vocabulary at ELS (Figure 1).

Step 2) Conducted discussions with participants in order to find out about academic vocabulary use in speaking and writing.

Step 3) Interviewers were involved in discussion in order to generate solutions.

Step 4) Conducted data analysis to determine and identify the main problems in learning and teaching vocabulary at ELS.

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Instructors Interview Protocol	Student Interview Protocol
1) What is the main concern in teaching vocabulary at ELS? 2) What are three methods you are to teach vocabulary in the classroom? 3) What are some external factors that negatively affect the student's learning? 4) How do you structure/conduct your vocabulary lesson? 5) Based upon your experience, how do you students learn vocabulary best?	1) What are the main problems in learning vocabulary? 2) Outside of the classroom, what additional steps do you take to retain the vocabulary? 3) Are you using academic vocabulary in speaking and writing? If yes: How are you using the vocabulary and do you feel it helps with remembering? If no: What are some reasons you are not using the academic vocabulary in speaking and writing? 4) How do you think your instructor can better teach vocabulary? 5) Which ways do you feel work best when learning vocabulary?

Figure 1. Interview Protocol

Data Analysis

Creswell describes (2007) narrative analysis as collecting data and providing a description of events through stories. The researcher then configures the data into a story by using a plot line. The story line contains information about context, setting, and experience of the participants. Also, the line of story includes three- dimensional narrative inquiry space which includes: a) interaction, b) continuity, and c) situation. The researcher followed methods outlined by Creswell (2007):

Step 1: determine the problem or questions that require narrative research.

Step 2: Select one or more individual participants who have a story or problems as the basis for the inquiry.

Step 3: Collect data and information from the participants' stories or problems.

Step 4: Conduct a thorough analysis all data.

Step 5: Collaborate with the participants and create some activities involving them in action research.

Data analysis required the researcher to collect and examine interview responses as well as all other data sets. Referring back to the overarching questions, the process involved examining each story presented through interviews, observations, artifacts, and field notes.

Findings

In this study, the researcher organized and analyzed the data in order to establish understanding about the context of each participant's life. The coding that researcher used as part of data analysis aligned with the narrative design within the framework of action research. This type of coding isolated materials pertinent to research. Methods codes were used to describe experiences, problems, joys, challenges, and dilemmas involved in teaching and learning academic vocabulary. Furthermore, the researcher discussed the study with student and instructor participants during the first week of the spring 2013 semester. Overall, student participants were comfortable and happy about the study because learning vocabulary was cited as a challenge. The participants responded in an interesting manner and shared openly with the researcher. Findings are presented and organized based on the overarching questions:

Research Questions #1 and #2: The researcher found some repeated responses regarding strategies that participants felt worked best when learning vocabulary Several participants mentioned that engaging in conversations, creating sentences, telling stories, and taking part in activities to learn and recognize the most important words worked best (JG,MA, Interview, 2013). Other participants agreed that the main problems in learning vocabulary are memorizing, practicing and using the vocabulary in examples (Interviews, 2013). All student participants expressed concern regarding the stories used for memorizing vocabulary. In addition, the researcher found that students who were using note books worked to retain the vocabulary (Artifacts, 2013; Observations, 2013; Interviews, 2013).

Research Question #4 and #5: On the other hand, instructor participants expressed that they were uncomfortable because students cannot understand the vocabulary terms. Also, instructors shared that students do not use the vocabulary correctly. Instructor participants felt that the lack of use was due to external factors such as haziness, lighting, temperature, noise, sleep deprivation, cultural shock, classroom social dynamic, and unsupported classroom culture. Major concerns expressed by the instructors include: a) lack of use of words in students' daily speech, b) understanding, and c) explicitly explaining definitions of vocabulary (Interviews, 2013; Observations, 2013). Therefore, instructors identified telling stories, eliciting examples from students; actively involving students and role play are the best ways to teach students vocabulary terms.

Conclusions

Findings show that students need to use and learn the vocabulary in several ways such as keeping small note-books, providing a good amount of examples, telling very short stories using synonyms of the targeted vocabulary, engaging in conversations, practice, and using the vocabulary in examples. The researcher also found most of instructor participants want to show students in their own words examples how to use the words, present vocabulary in context, retention, pronunciation, giving all parts of speech, telling a story with role-play, and repeating words.

Academic vocabulary is essential to learning the English language. There are various instructional methods and ways for international students to learn at ELS. Creative instructional methods should be used so that teachers do not face the obstacle of becoming bored by continuously repeating their lessons and also so that students remain engaged in learning.

Teachers should be aware of all obstacles that they face in order to correct any problems that might arise, such as boredom, which can lead to more complicated problems such as wasting time and having misunderstandings. Using creative and effective teaching methods will not only help the teacher to be successful and enjoy his or her job, but also help the international student to be successful in learning English as a second language.

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Mogbil Almogbil is currently an international graduate student pursuing the Masters degree with concentration in ESL at MTSU. Before enrolling at MTSU, Mr. AlMogbil graduated from King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia as an English language major. Mogbil was an English teacher at King Fahd Security College in Saudi Arabia. Mr. AlMogbil was chairman of the Languages and Translations of Research and Studies Center of King Fahd Security College for four years. He has completed coursework in English languages and translations. His research interests include vocabulary acquisition and language terminology.

The First Two Years are the Most Important: Helping Teachers Cope with the Needs of ELLs in a School Experiencing a Sudden Increase in ELL Population.

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The English Language Learner (ELL) population in many states is growing at a high rate. According to Lazarin (2012), "Southeastern states such as Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee have experienced a 200 percent ELL-population growth rate in the past decade" (p. 2). The growth Tennessee has experienced in this field has left many districts and schools with many problems. One of the biggest problems encountered is related to the training and instruction teachers have had in preparation to meet the specific educational needs of ELLs in their classrooms. Zehler et al. (2008) stated, "Whether there are 5 or 50 students, the teachers and staff must understand how to effectively involve the students in instruction and promote each student's development of English proficiency and achievement of academic content standards" (13). By no means should this statement be misinterpreted to mean that ELL teachers should solely be responsible for this knowledge; this statement applies to the entire faculty of any individual school with ELLs on their rosters. According to Collins and Samson (2012), "To date, there has been relatively little attention paid to the essential standards, knowledge, and skills that general education teachers ought to possess in order to provide effective instruction to ELLs placed in their classroom" (2). Not only is this problematic in the broad sense because there has been no hard and fast data on what teachers *must* know, but the issue of exposure to ELL issues comes in to play as well. According to Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy, (2008), "There are seventeen states in which the standards for approved teacher preparation programs mandate that teachers should be experienced with, familiar with, or competent in addressing the special needs of ELL students" (124). Tennessee is one of those seventeen states. While it is encouraging that the state does include some requirement of familiarity with ELL needs in the curriculum, the definition is incredibly vague. It is hard to quantify familiarity and competency when it has been previously mentioned that there is not much research into specifically what general education teachers need to know about this. Schools are left to make their own definition of familiarity and competency in regards to ELL needs. Explosive growth, combined with state-level ill-defined standards of educator competency in meeting ELL needs is a recipe for a dire situation in the state. Teachers experience a lack of preparation for the challenge that awaits them in the classroom. Due to much more rigorous teacher evaluation standards, according to Carrier (2005), "Teachers not only have to make informed pedagogical decisions about teaching their ELLs, they have to be ready to justify their decisions to administrators, parents, and teacher colleagues as well" (5). When faced with this challenge, unfortunately, educators try to do what they can and turn to what resources they can find in an honest effort to attempt best practice. As Carrier stated (2005), "Extracting strategies from books without an understanding of ELLs' unique language and learning needs is like building a house without understanding the basic principles of construction" (5). All of these elements combine into a recipe for disaster in which ELLs are the victims with potential for collateral damage to the evaluation, reputation, and employability of educators all over the state. With such low and undefined standards from the state in regards to preparing teachers to meet the educational needs of ELLs, it is up to districts, or even the individual schools within, to exact the change that is necessary to divert this potential disaster from becoming a reality. The issue then becomes a question of what can be done to improve these conditions for teachers and ELLs from district and school perspective. This research report seeks to find the answers.

Overarching Questions and Research Statement

The researcher asked three overarching questions and used them to guide the research study:

1. Is there a need for training and education regarding ELL issues (laws, practice, needs) in this school?

Although Tennessee has a vague definition of what teacher education coursework must include in regards to the educational needs of ELLs and how to meet them, it is entirely possible that the faculty of this school has had extensive training or other preparation to meet the needs of their growing ELL population. The ELL population at this school has been growing rapidly, but consistently for more than 5 years. The researcher could reasonably assume that the need for further training has already been identified and that the school or district implemented changes and training requirements that have aided and assisted the faculty in becoming adequate at working with ELLs. To assume at the outset of the research process that the faculty is not adequate in meeting the needs of the ELLs would be irresponsible. It is important to first identify the need for training.

2. What does the faculty know about working with ELLs?

In order to properly assess the specific needs of the faculty, it was important to identify their strengths and weaknesses. There were two main purposes for this question. First, the researcher needed to pinpoint areas that needed to be reinforced during the in-service. It would be unnecessary to design and deliver a training session that was just a review of topics that the faculty was already familiar with. The second purpoe for this question was to provide a baseline confidence level to compare with the results of the in-service.

3. Will an inservice be effective at improving teacher knowledge of laws, appropriate practice, and needs in regards to the education of ELLs?

The researcher, through careful study of preliminary data sets, was able to identify these three key areas of need for the faculty and design an in-service that sought to directly address these issues. This question was designed to help evaluate the effectiveness of the in-service. The question specifically addresses the issue of *knowledge* and does not take into consideration the degree to which the in-service affects *practice*. To evaluate the effectiveness of the in-service on affecting teacher practice would have required a much larger study.

Literature Review

The researcher identified three overarching questions to guide this study. These questions were developed on the pretense that the location for research was experiencing rapid growth in ELL population and that the teachers in the school were unprepared to meet the educational needs of the ELL population of the school. This conclusion was not developed through guesswork, but was interpreted through overheard comments in the hallway, conversations, meetings, and other comments directed at the researcher regarding the number of ELLs in the school. As a source familiar to the school, it was obvious that there were issues regarding the students as well as what needed to be done to improve conditions such as how they were being served in their regular classroom. To ensure that this situation was not one that was unique to the school, it was necessary for the researcher to review the available literature surrounding the overarching questions.

Overarching Question 1 - Is there a need for training and education regarding ELL issues (laws, practice, needs) in this school?

While the question deals specifically to the school, it was important to determine what factors could have led to it. It became apparent that Tennessee has experienced explosive growth in ELL population across the state from 9,191 K-12 ELLs in the state during the 1998/99 school year to 19,355 K-12 ELLs in the state during the 2004/05 school year; more than doubling in 6 years (Zehler et al., 2008, p. 8). Further evidence of ELL population growth as an issue came with the fact that during the 2004/05 school year, the county where the school is located was one of 11 counties in the state where the ELL population was more than 5% of total number of students enrolled (p. 10). Not only had the state experienced rapid growth in ELL popultion, but the county was also experiencing heavy growth, bring the total population of ELLs to one of the highest in the state.

Further, the researched investigated the requirements the state had for educating teachers in regards to the educational needs of ELLs. A report prepared by Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy (2008) stated that Tennessee is one of “seventeen states in which the standards for approved teacher preparation programs mandate that teachers should be experienced with, familiar with, or competent in addressing the special needs of ELL students” (p. 123). The researcher did not view this as promising because the definitions of *experience, familiar,* and *competent* are unclear. Had there been a specific plan in place not only for familarizing future teachers with the needs of ELLs, or even a method for ensuring that competency had been reached, the research may have been steered in another direction. However, the researcher was able to determine that this lack of a clear definition was enough to proceed with the idea that the issue could have been created at the teacher education level and not due to lack of competency amongst teachers at the school.

Overarching Question 2 - What does the faculty know about working with ELLs?

The literature supporting Overarching Question 1 suggested that there were broader issues in regards to teacher preparation in the state at large. It became necessary for the researcher to try to quantify what specific needs teachers may have had in regards to meeting the needs of their ELLs. Ballantyne, Collins, and Samson (2012) explained that all teachers need to be taught to support oral language development, have an understanding of the language acquisition process, explicitly teach academic English, value cultural diversity, and stated that this process should not stop with a teaching certificate, but should be ongoing within schools and districts (p. 11). Lazarin (2012) similary explained that teachers need to incorporate strategies to improve vocabulary and other reading literacy skills, integrate content area and English language instruction, and give students more time to learn (p. 6-8). Carrier (2005) stated that there are, “three key issues that underlie the education of ELLs. They are (a) the amount of time required for second language acquisition, (b) the two jobs that ELLs are doing in the classroom, and (c) the use of multiple modes of input and output” (p. 6). Essentially, the researcher was able to determine that any given faculty would need to have knowledge of Federal laws that govern the education of ELLs, knowledge of the language acquisition process, how to support oral language development, how to integrate English language instruction into content areas, how to give appropriate time and expectations for ELL goals, and how to directly focus on academic language.

In conclusion, the researcher was able to use the available literature on this topic to identify that there was a strong chance that the issue of teacher knowledge of ELL needs and instruction methods was due to lack of overall preparation at a state and school level as opposed to unprepared teachers. At the same time, the researcher was able to identify criteria for evaluation during the research process. The criteria for evaluation during the research process were also a guideline for determining preliminary topics for coverage during the in-service process toward the end of the study.

Location and Participants

This research project was conducted at a Pre-Kindergarten through First Grade school. The school is located in a suburb on the outskirts of a metropolitan city in Tennessee. There are 467 students enrolled in the school. Of those students roughly 33% qualified for and received services from the ESL program. Within the city, there are several elementary schools. For the sake of comparison, this school in particular had the highest percentage of students qualifying for the free and reduced lunch program with 61%. While a few of the ELLs speak Lao, Arabic, and Gujarati as a first language, the vast majority of ELLs at this school come from a Spanish-speaking background. The ELL program at this school consists of a pull-out program. Students are placed in a regular education classroom for the majority of the day. Within these classrooms, the teachers are responsible for teaching all subjects to all of the students. The regular education teacher is responsible for teaching English Language Arts and Reading to all of their students. ELLs are pulled out of the regular classroom during a part of the school day called Intervention and Enrichment. Intervention and Enrichment time is considered to be a time for teachers to complete their Tier II interventions for the RTI (Response to Intervention) Model used in this school. Students who do not receive this intervention go to a Related Arts class for enrichment. The basic idea is that ELL classes are offered as support for the English Language Arts and Reading portion of the day. This practice is commonly referred to in this particular school system as a *double dose*. ELL students are placed with the ESL teachers for a varying amount of time. Time spent with the ESL teacher is based on their language abilities as determined by the TELPA (Tennessee English Language Placement Assessment) or the ELDA (English Language Development Assessment). First grade ELLs with an ELDA composite score of 3 receive 30 minutes of ESL services. All other First grade ELLs receive 1 hour. Kindergarten ELLs receive an hour because they are assessed for ability with the TELPA, which is less comprehensive.

Participants in this study were defined as Kindergarten, First Grade, and Related Arts teachers. There were 23 potential participants in this study. The potential participants included 22 females and 1 male. Age was not treated as a factor in this study, but the range was 21-56. Years of teaching experience was also not treated as a factor in this study, but the range was less than one year through 23 years. Of the 23 potential participants, 14 participated in some form. Of those 14, the age and experience range remained the same, however all 14 were female. From this point forward, the term “participants” will refer to these 14. None of the participants were endorsed or certified to teach English as a Second Language. Of all participants, the smallest number of ELLs in any of their given classrooms was 7. The highest number of ELLs in any of their given classrooms was 11. The ideal class size at the school was 20.

Methodology

According to Craig (2009), "the critical factor in selecting action research is that the researcher is also the practitioner operating in the work-based environment in which the study will take place" (21). As the researcher is a teacher of ELLs, it was an obvious choice to use this method. The researcher used the qualitative approach of grounded theory for this study. The combination of collected data and extensive analysis provided the researcher with the opportunity to be immersed in not only answers to questions, but into the fabric of the environment as well. Interactions with participants beyond simply asking and answering questions allowed the researcher to build trust and familiarity with them. The on-going qualitative collection process, as opposed to the simple collection of anonymous quantitative data, also allowed the researcher to remember that the study was focused on improving practice, not just for the teachers, but more importantly, for the benefit of students.

In order to complete this study, several steps were followed. First, a proposal was drafted for consideration. Once this was approved it became necessary to complete human subjects training in order to be prepared for working with the participants in this study. The next step involved in this process was to prepare a proposal to the IRB. To complete this, it was necessary to create consent forms for the eventual participants, interview instruments, questionnaires, and surveys. The researcher also had to gain approval to conduct this research from the Assistant Superintendent of the school district, as well as the Principal of the school where the research took place. The proposal was completed and submitted to the Institutional

Review Board (IRB) for approval. Once the project was met with approval from the IRB, the researcher contacted potential participants and collected signed consent forms. At this point, the research process began.

The first step in this process was the distribution of the Pre In-Service Questionnaire. The questionnaire allowed the researcher to find a baseline for many of the issues involved with Overarching Questions 1 and 2. At the same time, the researcher also distributed the Survey instrument to help round out the data provided from the Questionnaire. Informal interviews with several participants also took place around the same time. The researcher was then able to code the data and begin analyzing for the emergence of themes. Once the researcher had enough information, it was determined that the in-service was necessary. Based on the data, the researcher began to create and organize the information that needed to be addressed during the in-service. The researcher proposed the in-service. Once it was accepted, the researcher scheduled the in-service and advertised it directly to the participants. The researcher held the in-service at the school. Once completed, the participants filled out the Post In-Service Questionnaire.

The data from the Post In-Service Questionnaire was analyzed and compared against the data from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire in order to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the in-service at addressing each of the specific issues identified through the analysis of the other data sets. With all of the data complete, the researcher completed a full analysis of all data, coded and identified themes in order to reach conclusions. The final step was to prepare a report of findings and make decisions about the best way to share and distribute the results.

Pre In-Service Questionnaire

The Questionnaire contained 14 statements to which participants could respond using a Likert scale. Participants were asked to indicate the level to which they agreed with the statement. They had five options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. Each option had a numerical value assigned to it. *Strongly Agree* was assigned a value of 5. The values descended to *Strongly Disagree* with a value of 1. The statements involved the number of ELLs in their classes, ELL training they had received in college, ELL training they had received from the district and school, awareness of laws, knowledge of accommodations, student ability levels, differentiation, and other similar issues. The Likert scale data were averaged in order to determine an overall value for each statement. The data from this source was split after the in-service to see the variation in averages of two subgroups: participants who attended the in-service and participants who did not attend the in-service.

Interviews

The researcher conducted brief interviews with participants that dealt specifically with thoughts and feelings about the ELLs in their classrooms and the job they were doing as far as meeting their needs educationally. This gave the participants a chance to open up expressively about their students. This data was transcribed and then analyzed for emerging themes that coincided with and backed up the data from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire as well as the Survey.

Survey

The researcher also gave participants a survey that allowed them to answer open-ended questions about their feelings in regards to improvements they felt would be beneficial to them in regards to improving their ability to meet the educational needs of their ELLs. By allowing participants to write these answers, the researcher hoped to alleviate the fear of openly expressing the need for improvement. This data was analyzed for emerging themes that coincided with and backed up the data from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire as well as the Survey.

Post In-Service Questionnaire

This Questionnaire was the same as the Pre In-Service Questionnaire. The data was treated in the same way and the results were compared to the results of Pre In-Service Questionnaire in order to determine the effectiveness of the in-service at addressing issues as well as improving participants' awareness and knowledge.

Findings

This study was conducted using three overarching questions. Findings will be discussed using these questions as a framework.

Overarching Question 1- Is there a need for training and education regarding ELL issues (laws, practice, needs) in this school?

This Question was designed to have a simple answer. While it was easy to arrive at a simple answer, this question has actually produced much more information than the researcher had planned for. In short, the researcher found that there was a need for training and education regarding ELL issues in this school.

First, it was important to identify if the participants felt that ELL student population in the school was an issue to begin with. The number of ELLs at the school was growing. Not only was this acknowledged on a school level, but on a classroom level as well. Item 01 from the Pre

In-Service Questionnaire: “I have a strong population of ELLs in my classroom,” resulted in an intital average measure of 4.1, which is rated as, “Agree”. Item 02 from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire: “I have had an increasing number of ELLs in my class since I have been a teacher at this school,” resulted in an intial average measure of 3.8, slightly below “Agree”. Some of the participants had only been teaching at the school for less than a year and may not have experienced the growth that the other participants have experienced. An increase in “Neutral” responses can account for the slightly lower average. Sample responses to the Survey item: “Have you noticed a change in the number of ELLs at this school since you’be been here?” include:

“There have always been a lot, but even in the short time I have been here (4 years) I have noticed an increase.”

“Yes, it has grown tremendously.”

“It has always been a high number.”

However, the simple acknowledgement of a large population of ELLs does not necessesarily identify a need for training. By and large, the participants feel that their teacher education coursework failed to include any relevant information related to the otpic of working with ELLs in an educational setting. This demonstrates very clearly that, when combined with the current ELL population at the school, participants are stepping into their classroms unprepared for their jobs. Of course, if the school had a very small population of ELLs, this may be less true, but still an issue. This also demonstrates the need for extensive training on a district, or even school, level. A composite of Pre In-Service Questionnaire Item 03, “My college coursework prepared me for teaching ELLs in my regular classroom,” and Item 04, “I feel like my college training prepared me to meet the needs of my ELLs," produced a measure of 1.57. This fell between "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree".

Sample responses to the Interview question: "Was the time spent on ELL issues in your college coursework adequate?" included:

"I can't remember any classes that addressed ESL."

"Absolutely not!"

"I don't remember any."

"I honestly don't remember any college coursework for ELL students, except maybe a research paper."

Lack of preparation from a college standpoint also does not demonstrate a necessity for further training. It was entirely possible that the district, or school, had already identified and addressed this issue. The participants believe the district and the school have done a slightly better job at training them to meet the educational needs of ELLs than their college coursework did. However, the difference was very slight. Item 05 from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire: "I feel like I have had adequate training from my district and school on meeting the needs of my ELLs," produced an average measure of 2.14, a very firm, "Disagree".

Beyond the lack of training from outside sources, it was also necessary to determine if the participants themselves felt that they were able to meet the needs of their ELLs. Sample responses to Interview question: "Do you feel like you meet their needs educationally?" included:

"Not always."

"Somewhat."

"I believe I try the best I can."

"No."

Overall, there was a categoric lack of effective preparation for meeting the needs of the ELLs in this school. At the same time, there was a fundamental lack of confidence in the training that the participants had received was effective at helping them meet their students' needs. The participants themselves felt like were not meeting the needs of their students. To guide the researcher in choosing the most effective and desirable method of delivering this training, the researcher looked to responses to the Survey question: "What would make you feel the most comfortable when working with ELLs?" Some sample responses were:

"In-services, pointers, trainings."

"More in-service."

"Extra training on working with ELLs."

The researcher decided to offer an after-school in-service. In-services were specifically mentioned and it was also noted that teachers in this district are required to attend twelve hours of inservice per year. To encourage attendance, the reseracher completed the necessary application and documentation to receive approval for offering the training as an after-school in-service worth two hours of credit for those who attended.

Overarching Question 2 - What does the faculty know about working with ELLs?

This question was initially designed to inform the researcher about the topics that needed to be included in the in-service. Again, this question produced much more information than the researcher had anticipated. The first issue that emerged regarded the Federal laws that apply to the education of ELLs in public schools. The participants are not sure about the laws that apply to their ELLs. Item 09 from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire: “I am aware of the Federal laws that apply to my ELLs,” yielded an average measure of 2.71. This measure falls toward “Neutral” between “Neutral” and “Disagree”. Responses to the Interview question: “Are you ever afraid tht you’re doing something wrong when you are working with your ELLs or when you are preparing lessons for them?” include:

“I don’t know how to modify.”

“Not wrong, but perhaps not in the best or most effective way.”

“Yes.” This was repeated five times.

Due to the strict guidelines that determine Federal funding as well as implications for educational malpractice, it is important to inform teachers of ELLs about the laws that govern their education.

The next issue that emerged was the idea of best practice. The participants were not sure if they were doing the right things with their ELLs, as referenced above. In fact, many were afraid that they were doing something wrong when they worked with the ELLs in their classrooms. However, what started to emerge was a much larger problem than the researcher had been prepared to find within the scope of this study: the participants had a fundamental misunderstanding of what it takes to successfully work with and meet the educational needs of an ELL in their classroom. There are several instances of teachers mentioning that learning Spanish, specifically, or other native languages is what leads to successfully meeting the needs of ELLs. Sample responses to the Interview question: “Do you feel like you meet their needs educationally?” include:

“I feel I could meet their needs better if I spoke their language.”

"I believe I try the best I can, but when it comes to language barriers and environment, there's only so much a Gen. Ed. Teacher can do."

Responses to Interview question: "Was the time spent on ELL issues in your college coursework adequate?"

"I think teachers should be required to take some Spanish in college."

Responses to the Survey question: "Do you think there are teachers in the school who do a better job with ELLs than you do?"

"Yes, some speak a little Spanish, but I know no Spanish."

"Yes, the ones who speak Spanish definitely have an advantage with our Hispanic ELLs."

"I'm not sure. Maybe a teacher who understands or speaks the specific language."

"Yes-sometimes they can speak the language."

Responses to the Survey question: "What would make you feel the most comfortable when working with ELLs?"

"I wish I knew their language better to help them."

"If I had the experience of learning another language so I can put myself directly 'in their shoes.'"

"To get as much translated as possible, just to have consistent, support between the regular classroom and the ESL classroom."

"Having a translator."

While many of these answers were surprising, it is to be expected that the total lack of preparation and training would lead to either an outcry for help, or, in this case, a fundamental misunderstanding of how to teach ELLs. The researcher quickly realized that the in-service would not just need to focus on a few key issues, but also needed a heavy focus on the basics of the ESL program as well as the fundamental goals and practices of the language acquisition process.

The researcher then realized that the response of the participants to an environment void of helpful training and lacking in knowledge and awareness of how to best help 33% of their population was entirely predictable. In effect, what had happened was the participants had tried their best to meet the needs of their students, gleaned what they could from the internet and workbooks and the result was exactly as Carrier stated (2005), “Extracting strategies from books without an understanding of ELLs' unique language and learning needs is like building a house without understanding the basic principles of construction” (5). The result would be a house that collapses under the first sign of pressure. In this specific environment, the vast majority of the ELLs are only there for two years. After first grade, they move on to an elementary school. The participants are not present for the collapse when it happens during 2nd or 3rd grade, when state testing begins. Without witnessing the collapses, the participants were rather overconfident in their ability to work with their ELLs despite staggering evidence to the contrary. Along with the severely negative view of the preparation received in college and the low reviews of the training they had received from the district and the school, participants gave a very surprising response to Item 10 from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire: “I know what accommodations to make for ELLs in the classroom.” The initial average measure was 3.43. This fell near the midpoint between “Neutral” and “Agree”. This was astoundingly higher than the researcher had expected, given the corresponding data. However, the overconfidence had also created other interesting conflicts in data. A comparison of Item10 from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire and Item 11 from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire follows:

Item 10: “I know what accommodations to make for ELLs in the classroom.”

Item 11: “I make accommodations for ELLs in my classroom.”

The average measure for Item 10 was 3.43. The average measure for Item 11 was 4. This shows that even though participants may not have known what accommodations to make, they were making accommodations anyway. This is a clear indication that teachers are making their own decisions about what is and is not an accommodation and doing as they see fit. If teachers registered a 3.43 on Item 10, the value for Item 11 should have been equal or lower unless.

The researcher resolved to focus the in-service on multiple issues. First, the participants would experience a lesson as one of their ELLs would experience it. A lesson was given using make-believe words in place of English academic vocabulary words. Then, participants participated in a reflection of how the lesson felt to them as learners. This gave them a chance to be in the shoes of their ELLs. With those ideas in mind, the researcher presented an overview of the districts ESL program and shared the specific goals of the program as well. The researcher went on to discuss the language acquisition process, describing specific stages, as well as appropriate practices for developing language through content at each stage. Then, the researcher discussed Federal laws that govern the education of ELLs and gave a definition and list of accommodations that participants could use to improve their classroom practice. The end of the in-service was a question and answer session in which participants were free to ask questions.

Overarching Question 3 - Will an inservice be effective at improving teacher knowledge of laws, appropriate practice, and needs in regards to the education of ELLs?

The in-service was attended by half of the participants. At this point it became necessary to revisit the data from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire in order to divide the data into subgroups. For the sake of determining in-service effectiveness, the Post In-Service Questionnaire data was compared against the Pre In-Service Questionnaire data for the subgroup of In-Service Attending Participants. Overall, the in-service was effective at improving participant knowledge of laws, appropriate practice, and needs in regards to the education of ELLs. Item 09 from the Post In-Service Questionnaire: "I am aware of the federal laws that apply to my ELLs," had an average measure of 4.14. Compared against the data from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire, the measure increased by 1.28. This took the value from below "Neutral" to slightly above "Agree".

Knowledge of accommodations increased as well. Item 10 from the Post In-Service Questionnaire: "I know what accommodations to make for ELLs in the classroom," had an average measure of 3.86. An increase of .72. The measure increased from "Neutral" to a near "Agree".

Participants also felt much better about their abilities to differentiate. Item 13 from the Post In-Service Questionnaire: "I know how to differentiate my instruction to meet their needs based on their language abilities," had an average measure of 3.86. This had improved by .86. The measure went from "Neutral" to slightly below "Agree".

However, there was a very interesting change dealing with Item 12 from the Post In-Service Questionnaire: "I am aware of all my ELLs language level abilities." After the in-service, the measure was 3.29 which was a decrease of .28. For this number to drop, it means one of two things happened. Either the subjects lost awareness, or their new score reflected the realization that they didn't know as much as they had previously thought they knew. The goal, of course, was not to bring down awareness, but to raise awareness. This change is interesting and it is entirely possible that the new value reflects a more informed view on the idea of language ability levels.

The in-service also changed the view the participants had of the training they had received from the district and school. Item 05 from the Post In-Service Questionnaire: "I feel like I have had adequate training from my district and school on meeting the needs of my ELLs," had an average measure of 2.71. This was an increase of .57 from the Pre In-Service Questionnaire attending participants' measure of 2.14. One of the residual effects of this in-service was not just that it improved awareness of issues, but that it also improved the participants' views on how well the district and school were doing in regards to training them to meet the needs of their ELLs.

The researcher noticed this trend and then created a "School Confidence Measure" composed of the composite value of Items 05, 06, 08 from the Post In-Service Questionniare. The level was based on these items due to their reflection of the confidence the subjects had in their school and district to train them to meet the needs of their ELLs as well as their beliefs as to whether or not students were being adequately served by their ESL teachers.

Item 05: "I feel like I have had adequate training from my district and school on meeting the needs of my ELLs."

Item 06: "I feel like I have had support in my building when I have questions about teaching ELLs in my regular classroom."

Item 08: "I feel that my ELLs receive adequate time with the ELL teachers."

Initially, the overall level average was 2.90, which shows a less than favorable confidence level. After the in-service, the average for those who attended increased to 3.28. This was an improvement of .38. While this was not a dramatic gain, it is important to note that this did raise the overall confidence in the school.

Finally, the researcher created an "Overall In-Service Effectiveness Measure" composed of the composite value of Items 09, 10, 11, and 13 from the Post In-Service Questionnaire due to their specific relation to the issues addressed in the in-service.

Item 09: "I am aware of the federal laws that apply to my ELLs."

Item 10: "I know what accommodations to make for ELLs in the classroom."

Item 12: "I am aware of all my ELLs language level abilities."

Item 13: "I know how to differentiate my instruction to meet their needs based on their language abilities."

The initial overall value was 3.23. The attending subgroup's pre in-service value was 3.14. The value after the in-service increased by .65 to a much higher 3.79. It is the opinion of the researcher that this demonstrates that the in-service was highly effective at improving teacher knowledge of laws, appropriate practice, and needs in regards to the education of ELLs.

Suggestions

The participants in this research study were not confident that they had been trained effectively at any level in order to meet the educational needs of ELLs. Improvement must start at the top. It is the recommendation of the researcher that the state of Tennessee must bring clarity to the requirements placed on universities in regards to the coverage of ELL issues in their teacher education coursework. Schools districts must also identify schools that need further training in order to meet the needs of their ELLs and implement well-designed trainings that meet the specific needs of their faculties. These trainings must be made mandatory in order to provide the strongest chance for overall improvement in confidence, awareness, and knowledge required to meet the needs of ELLs. ELLs will receive the majority of the benefit of this focused and improved training system. Teachers will feel more confident in their own abilities as well as improve their own views of the jobs their schools and districts are doing in regards to training them on these pressing matter. What is most important to remember is that all of these steps benefit the English Language Learners in our schools and our state.

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Code Switching in Second Language Acquisition: Embarrassment or Effective Tool?

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Code switching, interchanging one language for another, raises questions as to the speakers' competence, intelligence, and social status. Affirming attitudes toward code switching view it as an effective tool while pejorative attitudes consider it an embarrassment. Through an examination of the research, this paper will illuminate the connection between code switching and second language acquisition. The relationship should be seen in a positive light as a strategic element of the acquisition process.

INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition, the natural 'process of learning a language', usually refers to a first language (Crystal, 1997). When considering multilingualism, however, it has additional significance. Factors, such as code switching, language mixing, and interference must be discussed with reference to the languages being used. These terms, often used interchangeably, are examined along with their subtle differences and their effects with regard to sociolinguistics. A multidisciplinary approach is taken as the discussion relates to psycholinguistics and applied linguistics, i.e. acquisition of a first language and second or foreign language, respectively.

While volumes of literature exist pertaining to bilingualism, research with respect to code switching has been lacking until recently (Grosjean, 1982, p. 145). Fuller (1999, p. 426) maintains that researchers have not been able to agree on the necessary questions to ask regarding this important topic. They have come to consensus, however, in that the two main areas of research pertaining to code switching involve social factors and structural constraints (Pfaff, 1979; Baetens Beardsmore, 1982; Fantini, 1985; Romaine, 1989; Scates, 1996; Crystal, 1997). Discrepancies remain with regard to the attitude towards code switching; the traditional attitude, now challenged, has had negative implications. Furthermore, much of the past research has failed to consider the relationship between code switching and language acquisition.

This paper will illuminate the connection between code switching and second language acquisition. Background information will include a discussion of the terms mentioned above. In addition, the attitudes towards code switching, along with its uses, will be uncovered. The theories of language acquisition in both monolinguals and multilinguals will be examined. After analyzing the material presented in the research literature reviews, the connection between code switching and second language acquisition should be apparent. The relationship should be seen in a positive light, i.e. as an effective tool or strategy rather than an embarrassment.

TERMS, ATTITUDES, USES AND THEORIES

For the purpose of this paper, the term 'bilingual' will be used to include any person who uses two or more languages receptively and/or expressively. Varying degrees of linguistic competence may be evident in such a bilingual. Baetens Beardsmore (1982) distinguishes between such levels of competence with specific categories, such as 'ambilingual': one who uses both languages equally well with no evidence of one language while using the other (p. 7). On the opposite end of this bilingual continuum is the 'semilingual': one who lacks linguistic competence and is unable to function in either language (p. 12). Both types of bilingual are quite rare. Most bilinguals are 'functional' in that they can minimally use the second language for specific tasks, maximally communicate effectively in the second language, or function at some level between these extremes (p. 13).

While Crystal (1997, p. 364) considers 'code switching', 'language switching', and 'language mixing' synonymous terms, Paulston (1988) differentiates them. 'Code switching' is the 'process of changing from one variety of language … to another'; 'code mixing' is defined as 'a form of speech in which the speaker will mix two codes within the same utterance' (p. 579). Troike (1988, p. 343) prefers to eliminate the use of 'code mixing' for its pejorative meaning as a 'grammarless mixture'; instead, he suggests the term 'intra-sentential code-switching' (see also Pfaff, 1979). More recently, code mixing has referred to the use of two languages that result in a third, distinct code with elements from each language incorporated into a 'structurally definable pattern' (Maschler, 1998, p. 125). Interference takes on a broader meaning as it refers to the 'transference of elements of one language to another' (Skiba, 1997) and includes phonological, morphological, syntactical, lexical and orthographical levels (Baetens Beardsmore, 1982, p. 40). Further distinctions will be considered as the reasons for code switching, and attitudes toward it, are examined.

Bilinguals have a choice in the language they use in any particular situation (Scotton, 1976, p. 920; Grosjean, 1982, p. 116). This premise directly affects the use of code switching as it pertains to sociolinguistics. Crystal (1997, p. 365) and Skiba (1997) summarize the reasons for code switching. It can be used as a means of expressing solidarity with a group where the language is used to establish rapport; it can also be used as a tool of exclusion as bilingual parents often do with monolingual children. The latter can be embarrassing as seen in Grosjean's example (1982, p. 155) of two adolescents who change their seats on a bus and switch from English to Russian saying, 'We'd better make room for the fat cow', when a large woman enters. The woman replies in Russian, 'The fat cow thanks you!' Another reason for switching involves the speaker's attitude toward the listener – pleased, annoyed, distant, sarcastic. Crystal (1997, p. 365) gives the example of a mother switching languages in order to emphasize her displeasure when the child disobeys. Scotton (1976) refers to code switching as a strategy for remaining neutral in a sociolinguistic situation.

Code Switching is also used when speakers are unable to find the word or phrase to support their intended meaning. The switch may 'trigger' continued use of the other language (Crystal, 1997, p. 365). This type of switch often occurs when the speaker is stressed, distracted, or tired. When such a deficiency is handled through code switching, it is sometimes considered as linguistic interference (Skiba, 1997). Grosjean (1982, p. 150) remarks that some 'notions are just better expressed in one language than another'. He adds that occasionally a topic will trigger the switch; at times, specialized vocabulary may only be acquired in one language.

This type of interference has given code switching 'pejorative labels' (Grosjean, 1982, p. 146; Crystal, 1997, p. 365) such as 'Spanglish', 'Franglais', and 'Tex-Mex'. Grosjean (1982, p. 147) states that those who code switch extensively are often referred to as being 'semilingual'. Such a critical attitude causes many speakers to become self-conscious or fearful that they may be tempted to code switch during a formal conversation. One result can be an awkward silence in order to avoid the stigma. Many bilinguals comment that their code switching is due to laziness, or that they are embarrassed by it (Grosjean, 1982, p. 147).

Code switching, regardless of the reason, may affect a word, a phrase, or a group of sentences. Unlike 'borrowing' – the phonological or morphological adaptation of a word or short expression to the language being spoken (Grosjean, 1982, p. 308), code switching involves a total shift to the other language. It obeys linguistic constraints such as switching at certain word boundaries but not at others (p. 320). Refer to Table 1 in the Appendix for examples of code switching.

Furthermore, 'Code switching is a verbal skill requiring a large degree of competence in more than one language, rather than a defect arising from insufficient knowledge of one or the other' (Poplack, 1979, p. 72; see also Grosjean, 1982, p. 320). This refutes the previous notion that code switching is haphazard. In fact, more recently, the research suggests that code switching requires 'highly developed skills and a deep knowledge of both languages' (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003, p. 143). It provides opportunities for further communicative expression among bilinguals, and it is always meaningful (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003, p. 63).

How are these languages acquired? Much of the literature pertains to first language acquisition or simultaneous acquisition of two languages in a bilingual child. Skiba (1997) and Crystal (1977, p. 376) discuss the language acquisition theories of Chomsky and Skinner. The first, a cognitive model, suggests that appropriate exposure to the language is required along with maturity of the brain. This is referred to as a biological theory due to the use of universal, unconscious strategies and the focus on the mind (Chomsky, 2000). An intermediary stage of acquisition, 'interlanguage' occurs where errors are analyzed to assist in the acquisition of the language. The second, a behaviorist model, is based on operant conditioning. This model requires imitation and conscious reinforcement of language patterns. Both of these models require exposure to 'appropriate samples of the language' (Skiba, 1997).

Second language acquisition also follows these models. DelliCarpini (2003, p. 62) provides insights into the developmental stages of language acquisition. She has found that adult L2 'second language' learners exhibit the same types of errors as children learning their first language. L1 and L2 learners access universal principles in the same way. Second language acquisition is affected by factors including the age, experience, motivation, and education of the learner (Crystal, 1997, p. 377). In addition, the emotional needs, time constraints, and attitudes of the learner are significant to the rate and level of competence attained in the second language.

Thus far, the definitions and basic background of this controversial topic have been reviewed. In order to consider the ramifications of code switching in second language acquisition, specific cases will be examined in the following section.

CODE SWITCHING IN RELATION TO LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Sixteen-year-old English language learner (ELL) Saul, describes a picture with these words: *y the teacher dice* 'and … says'. This casually-spoken, fluent utterance is compared to that of another ELL, Mari, whose uncomfortably long silence is followed by unintelligible moans and finally, *yes, uh, como se dice ' …* how do you say'. These examples of code switching, observed by this author, have occurred during the process of acquiring a second language. They both fall under the category of interference because they demonstrate a deficiency in the second language and resort to the first language to communicate. Saul's speech is fluent as he is unconcerned with the social criticisms towards code switching. However, Mari hesitates before finally responding; she is more concerned with the social ramifications of her switch.

Fantini (1985) presents a case study of Mario, a bilingual child, during the first ten years of his life. He examines the linguistic, as well as, social development that occurs during language acquisition and finds that these are integrated throughout the process of communicative competence (see also Romaine, 1989). Code switching is a normal occurrence in the child's acquisition of a second language (MacSwan, 1999). Inserting single items from one language to another is used to 'resolve ambiguities and clarify statements' (McClure, 1977). MacSwan (1999, p. 249) maintains that the pejorative implications of code switching as relating to semilingualism, and therefore the lack of cognitive ability, are unfounded and harmful to the development of the child.

Mario began code switching, 'the beginning of bilingual behavior', at age 2.6 'two years, six months'. By the age of 3.0, he was able to make appropriate rapid and natural switches based on the situational setting at the phonological and sentential levels (Fantini, 1985, p. 78). Mario's linguistic development revealed all the uses of code switching as stated in the previous section. Of particular note is its use as a metalinguistic device allowing the speaker to 'step out of one language system and to consider it from the vantage point of a second system' (Fantini, 1985, p. 68). This device provides opportunities to analyze and explain the words or other aspects of the language. At age 7.6, the following conversation was documented (Fantini, 1985, p. 238):

> Papá: *Termina tu sandwich*. 'Finish your sandwich'.
> Mario: *Yo estoy "allergic". I'm allergic to these seeds on the bread.* 'I'm '

Mario demonstrated his use of language choice, in this case triggered by the word, ‘allergic’. By age 10, he began to code switch with regard to topics such as experiences in school. Although considered by some as interference (Fantini, 1985, p. 76), it provided further opportunity to master the languages (p. 196).

Harding-Esch and Riley (2003, p. 56) make reference to the interdependence of the two languages being acquired implying that the acquisition is simultaneous. They question the attitude towards whether the languages are considered to be two separate systems or one code to be differentiated at a later time (p. 55). Regarding ‘mixing’, they note the following (p. 56):

- Some children never mix, or only very rarely.
- Most children mix very early on and then gradually get things sorted out.
- ‘Mixing’ is part of the process of getting things sorted out.

The mixed utterance should not be interpreted as confusion; subtle contrasts between the two sets of patterns are made and the rules are applied to each structure. A further distinction is made between code switching and borrowing (p. 63):

(1) *Je vais faire* checker *ma voiture.*
‘I’m going to have my car checked’.

(2) *On est parti en* hovercraft.
‘We went by hovercraft’.

In example (1), instead of using the French word ‘*verifier*’, the English word ‘to check’ is given the French infinitive marker -er. Example (2) is a case of the English word for *aéroglisseur* being pronounced *à la française*: ‘ovaircraft’ (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003, p. 63).

Pfaff (1979, p. 297) maintains that both social and linguistic variations must be considered when discussing ‘mixing’. Hesitation, as observed above in Mari; asides, such as ‘as they say'; translations and paraphrases are all indicators of the actual point of mixing. In each of these situations, the borrowing, mixing, and switching are not random. Each has an internal structure and operates within functional, structural, semantic, and discourse constraints (Pfaff, 1979, p. 314).

CONCLUSION

Code switching has traditionally been considered 'deviant', 'strange', 'confusing', or 'broken' language. Recently, however, linguists, psycholinguists, and sociolinguists consider it to be 'part of the total natural language development and acquisition process' (Duran, 1994, p.69). As the use of two languages simultaneously or interchangeably, code switching implies some 'degree of competence in the two languages even if bilingual fluency is not yet stable' (p. 71). Duran (1994) states that code switching is perceived as 'fluid, unmarked, and uneventful' where it is the norm, but as 'marked, purposeful, emphasis-oriented, and strange' where it is the exception (p. 72). In many communities, a stigma is attached to its use in spite of the important communicative and cognitive functions it serves (p. 75). Code switching is often seen as a notion of semilingualism, confusion, or interference. These pejorative attitudes do not dismiss the fact that code switching has its own internal linguistic consistency and is an important strategy of bilingual communication.

Language acquisition in bilinguals is based on that of monolinguals. Further, second language learners, those who previously acquired their first language, develop under the same acquisition models with the consideration of additional constraints and factors. Most of the research on code switching and language acquisition pertains to those simultaneously acquiring their two languages. Definitions of bilingualism, however, are various and can be placed on a continuum. The most common type of bilingual seems to be ‘functional’ in that the speaker is not equally fluent in both languages, but uses each for a specific purpose and in a specific context.

Bilinguals who code switch tend to do so for reasons of solidarity, privacy, choice, and other sociolinguistic reasons or linguistic reasons such as preference or lack of an expression in one of the languages. Second language learners, or those acquiring a level of bilingualism, do so primarily for linguistic reasons. They are often at a loss for a new word, or they may integrate the phonology of the two languages while acquisition occurs. Code switching in second language acquisition is not an embarrassment, but rather a strategy for working through the new language. Regardless of the outward appearance, it has a function of supporting and facilitating thinking and communication (Duran, 1994, p.76).

The implications of this research suggest specific studies in adult second language learners. If code switching did not have the pejorative connotations, would the L2 learners be fluent at an earlier stage? The affective filters involved in acquiring a second language should also be considered. Another area that would shed light on this subject includes brain research. Is there any significance regarding the use of code switching, and for that matter, language translation, in second language acquisition? Research of this type would help to dispel the stigma associated with code switching. The psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic domains would provide support to what is already known linguistically – that code switching involves its own set of internal structures, is not haphazard, and requires competence in one or both languages.

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An Examination of Pronunciation Problems Among University Students Learning Arabic

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Abstract

This study examined the difficulties English speaking university students encounter when pronouncing certain Arabic words. The study involved English and Arabic rules to demonstrate some of the differences between the two languages. All participants in the study were undergraduates enrolled at a state university. Following an action research design, the study engaged participants in interviews. In addition, data also consisted of classroom observations as well as discussions and informal interviews conducted with the participants' Arabic professor. Findings help to provide insight and assist Arabic teachers with some helpful suggestions and teaching strategies that will reduce future problems regarding Arabic words among non- Arab learners.

Introduction

People often say that linguistics is a scientific study of language or a science that uses language as an object of the research. It is not one language but the universal language or the language in general. The language itself can be viewed as everything that can be used to facilitate communication or socialization. Language is a means of communication, due to its important role for socialization in all of humans' societies and cultures, without communication people cannot explain what they want to do, say, or express ideas and thoughts.

Linguistics or language science is a science that studies language widely and generally. In addition linguistics involves all aspects and components of language. This means that linguistics analyzes not only one language but also languages in general.

There are many languages in the world such as English, Arabic, Indonesian, Japanese, and French. Every language has some similarities and some differences. The similarities and the differences deal with grammar, phonology, and morphology. Due to differences, language learning and teaching requires instructional variety in order to assist students with acquisition and understanding.

This study investigated pronunciation problems among university students who were learning Arabic. The content examines fluency and use of Arabic. The research identifies fluency difficulties that occurred in conversation in which the students engage in. In addition, the study examined instructional strategies and methods that were used to encourage the development of fluency. Research procedures included: a) interviewing participants—students who were enrolled in Arabic classes, b) conducting observations of Arabic classes to identify effective instructional strategies and teaching methods, and c) conducting informal interviews with the Arabic professor.

The Arabic language has many dialects and because of this variety—students of Arabic may encounter communication and pronunciation problems. These problems are especially evident when talking with Arabs. Therefore, the research also examined some of the Arabic and English rules. Furthermore, the study examined some of the grammar rule applications that occurred during communication as well as the similarities and differences between Arabic as a second language and as the first language.

Using a qualitative stance, this action research used a set of overarching questions to frame the study. The overarching questions provided a focus. These included:

a. What are the main problems and challenges in learning Arabic dialogue?

b. What prevents use, engagement, and improved communication and speaking skills?

c. What are some external factors that negatively affect the student's learning?

Learning a Second Language

Learning a foreign language is important if one wants to travel or do business around the globe. It is mandatory in many universities now to take a foreign language course. However, learning a new language comes with its own set of problems. Even the brightest of students can find the new language to be difficult and hard to understand. Each language has its own set of grammatical rules, and they can be quite different from what a student would normally expect. In one language, the verb must come before the subject, and in another language, it is reversed. In some languages the verb does not change with the pronoun. Although translation, drills and conversation skills are necessary in learning a foreign language, convenient and frequent grammar study is paramount to success. Without proper knowledge of the grammar, a person will surely make unintentional errors.

All cultures are different—as are their respective traditions. These traditions can influence the native language and cause some confusion for non-native speakers. While learning another language, it is important to have a basic understanding of second language culture. This will help students to understand the use of idioms and phrases specific to a language and its culture. Without learning the culture behind the language he/she won't be able to master it with the fluency of a native speaker.

Understanding the nature of the relationship between language and culture is central to the process of learning another language. In actual language use, it is not the case that it is only the forms of language that convey meaning. It is language in its cultural context that creates meaning: creating and interpreting meaning is done within a cultural framework. In language learning classrooms, learners need to engage with the ways in which context affects what is communicated and how. Both the learner's culture and the culture in which meaning is created or communicated have an influence on the ways in which possible meanings are understood. This context is not a single culture as both the target language and culture and the learner's own language and culture are simultaneously present and can be simultaneously engaged. Learning to communicate in an additional language involves developing an awareness of the ways in which culture interrelates with language whenever it is used (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Kohler, 2003; UNISA, n. d.).

Obstacles in Language Learning

Pronunciation problems are one of the biggest hurdles a student faces when learning a new language. Students from different backgrounds are accustomed to their local accents, and learning a new language fluently can seem like a challenge. Students must listen carefully to the tone and way in which native speakers pronounce letters and words. Surrounding with the language by speaking to natives, listening to music and watching movies will help students to hear how words should be pronounced.

According to a Pronunciation Problems Study at Najran University (Saudi Arabia), students who learn a second language, usually face some overlaps because of the very different phoneme systems of both languages. So, when students try to speak a second language, they produce the sounds which are closest to the sounds and also exist in their mother tongue, (Ahmad, 2011).

Trubetzkoy (1939), suggests that the phonological system of a language is like a sieve through which everything that is said passes. Each person acquires the system of his/her mother tongue. But when he/she hears another language spoken he/she intuitively uses the familiar "phonological sieve" of his mother tongue to analyze what has been said. However, since this sieve is not suited for the foreign language, numerous mistakes and mispronunciations are the result. The sounds of the foreign language receive an incorrect phonological interpretation since they are strained through the "phonological sieve" of one's own mother tongue.

Learning Arabic

Arabic has many regional dialects, and if students want to master one of these the only really effective way is to spend a few years in the place of his/her choice. For general purposes – such as reading or listening to radio - it's best to concentrate on Modern Standard Arabic as there are numerous courses and textbooks are available. The Arabic language contains 28 letters, 10 of which do not exist in the English language. Arabic does not contain the sounds: “P, V, X, Ch, G” (except in certain dialects). These sounds are substituted by the Arabic sounds “B, F, and KS” (the letter K followed by the letter S). In addition, Arabic borrows sounds and letters from the Farsi language which is comprehensible among all Arabs.

The Arabic language is written from right-to-left, opposite that of the English writing system. When written, Arabic is done in cursive, the letter form changes when occurring alone, in the beginning, middle, or end of a word. Contains its own set of numbers (originally borrowed from India) but still used its original set of numbers as well (The English numbers are borrowed from Arabic originally, i.e. 1, 2, 3...). Arabic differentiates between male and female in pronouns, verbs, words, and sentence structure. Pronouns like "they" and "you" have specifications for male and female, singular and plural.

Conjugation is different compared to English. All verbs stem from a root verb (usually the past form of that verb) and conjugates depending on number and gender. The root verbs conjugate to make different meanings as well, if one knows the root word, one can usually guess what the conjugated verb means. The grammar structure is very complex, but systematic and contains few exceptions. When being spelled, it's almost always written as you hear it. In English, hearing what you think is spelled "neybur" is spelled, “neighbor.” There aren't really any silent letters except in a few rare cases.

Another concern deals with dialectical differences. Arabic contains hundreds of different dialects depending on which city, country, or town you come from in the Middle East. Though, all dialects are commonly understood among all Arabs, with the exception of the Franco-Arabic dialect of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. Learning Arabic certainly takes time and practice, but there are not many irregularities in the grammar. It's much less complicated than Latin, and probably simpler than German, too.

Vocabulary

If the learner speaks a European language, the root system of Arabic is an unfamiliar concept. Arabic words are constructed from three-letter "roots" which convey a basic idea. For example, k-t-b conveys the idea of writing. Addition of other letters before, between and after the root letters produces many associated words: not only "write" but also "book", "office", "library", and "author". Learning vocabulary may cause problems at first. In most European languages ther e are many words, which resemble those in English. Arabic has very few, but it becomes easier once a student has memorized a few roots.

There are 28 consonants and three vowels – A, I, U – which can be short or long. Some of the sounds are unique to Arabic and difficult for foreigners to pronounce exactly, though you should be able to make yourself understood. The normal word order of a sentence is verb/subject/object. The function of nouns in a sentence can also be distinguished by case-endings (marks above the last letter of a word) but these are usually found only in the Qur'an or school textbooks. Feminine nouns add the suffix “aat” to form the plural but masculine nouns generally have a "broken" plural which involves changing vowels in the middle of the word: “kitaab” ("book"); “kutub” ("books").

Arabic has very few irregular verbs and does not use "is" or "are" at all in the present tense: "the king good" means "the king is good". Subtle alterations in the basic meaning of a verb are made by adding to the root. These changes follow regular rules, giving ten possible "verb forms" (though in practice only three or four exist for most verbs. The root k-s-r produces: Form I “kasara”, "he broke", Form II “kassara”, "he smashed to bits", Form VII “inkasara”, "it was broken up. Nizar, H. (2005). Watt (1982) suggests that the influence of Arabic has been most important in Islamic countries. Arabic is also an important source of vocabulary for languages, including a large number of English words (Watt, 1982).

The Process of Arabic Acquisition

The linguist Noam Chomsky (1975) provided a major critique of behaviorism and its view of second language learning as imitation and habit formation. He developed a theory of first language learning that suggests that language learning is an innate capacity – that children are programmed to acquire language thanks to their in-built knowledge of a Universal Grammar. He called this knowledge 'competence', to distinguish it from what might actually be said on a particular occasion.

If students want to learn Arabic, the classroom is not the best place to pick up the language. Think about when children are learning how to talk. Typically the parents or guardians of the child teach this by acquisition. James Paul Gee (1987) defines acquisition in his short story, *What is Literacy*, as "a process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models and a process of trial and error, without a process of formal teaching". It happens in natural settings which are meaningful and functional in the sense that the acquirer knows that he/she needs to acquire the way he/she is exposed to in order to function and the acquirer in fact want to so function. This is how people come control their first language" (p.106). A child's first word is usually Mommy or Daddy. More than likely, this was not because he or she decided at toddler stage to pick up a book and read the word Mom or Dad. Generally parents reinforce that they are Mommy or Daddy. This sets up the natural subconscious setting that Gee (1987) said is where most learning takes place, eventually the child associates the word with the meaning. Even when a person grows old enough to venture off to school, it is the teacher's job to teach reading and writing. Arabic acquisition, however, more than strictly reading and writing. In order to fully understand the Arabic language a learner needs to engage in explicit instruction as well as meaningful practice. Through practice, not only would the student learn Arabic more efficiently—he or she would also be introduced to social rules of Arabic that are not talked about in the classroom.

James Paul Gee (1987) feels that practice in acquiring secondary language is crucial. He suggests that most people aren't very good at attaining a second language in any very functional way through formal instruction in a classroom (p.107). That's why teaching grammar is not a very good way of getting people to control a language. However, people who have acquired a second language in a natural setting don't thereby make good linguists, and some good linguists can't speak the languages they learned in a classroom. What is said here about second languages is true.

If language is a social practice of meaning-making and interpretation, then it is not enough for language learners just to know grammar and vocabulary. They also need to know how that language is used to create and represent meanings and how to communicate with others and to engage with the communication of others. This requires the development of awareness of the nature of language and its impact on the world. (Svalberg, 2007**).**

The Study

Research Location and Participants

This study took place at a large, state university located in the southeastern United States and spanned one semester. Undergraduate students enrolled in Arabic classes during the Fall 2013 semester were invited to participate. A total of five students agreed to take part in the study. In addition, one professor—who taught the Arabic classes—also participated .

Number of students	Male / Female	Approximate age
Arabic Professor	Female	35
P 1	Female	20
P 2	Female	20
P 3	Female	19
P 4	Male	19
P 5	Male	20

Figure 1. Participants

Methodology

Under the framework of Action Research, the case study research design involved the study of an issue explored through one case within a bounded system. Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes. For example, a single program (a within-site study) had selected for the study. The case study approach is familiar to social scientists because of its popularity in psychology, medicine (case analysis of a problem), law (case law), and political science (case reports) (Creswell 2007).

The researcher followed two procedures in applying the case study design. First, the researcher determined if the case study approach was appropriate to the research problem. Secondly, the researcher needed to identify the case. The case involved several individuals. The date collection in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on a multiple sources of information, such as observation, interviews, books, and online recourses. In the final interpretive clarifying, the researcher reported the findings of the research, and a conclusion that determines the solutions that related to the problem.

Research Procedures

Action Research is a common methodology employed for improving conditions and practice in classroom and in other practitioner- based environments such as administrative, leadership, social, and community settings. Through action research, teachers and others working in a practitioner-based environment use their expertise and knowledge to conduct systematic inquiry that helps improve conditions and solve problems. As practitioners interact in the environment, they gain experience. They use the experience to inform practice. However, experience must be matched with evaluation of a program, situation, or condition-which is in essence based in systematic analysis—can be facilitated through action research.

Action research encourages the researcher to consider the interconnectedness of the environment and everyone in it, the conditions present in the environment, and the interactions among the individuals in the environment. Action research is typically community-based. Community-based research is usually conducted in the practicing environment, individually or in teams. It involves the parties who naturally interact in that environment and is routinely conducted to improve the community as a whole. The community may be the individual classroom, a grade level of classroom, the school, or the entire school system. In addition, action research is considered a field-intensive process. A field-intensive process is one that requires the research to take an active part in the environment being studied. The researcher is expected to be a participant observer as well as a researcher-as-instrument involved in the research process (Craig, 2009).

After determining the overarching questions, the researcher aligned the questions with specific data sets as noted below (Figure 2).

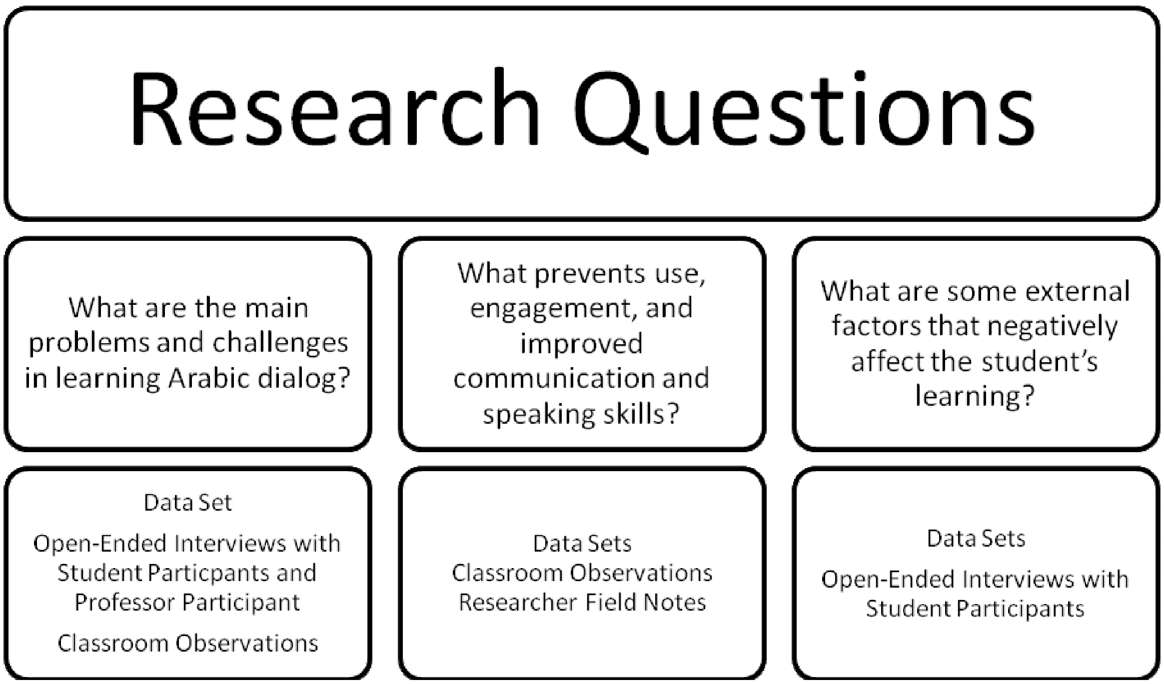

Figure 2. Overarching questions that framed the study and data sets collected.

The researcher followed an Interview Protocol in conducting interviews with student participants (*Figure 3*). However, follow-up questions were added as needed in order to reflect a more open-ended format. A second Interview Protocol was used in conducting interviews with the professor of Arabic who participated (*Figure 4*).

Interview Protocol for Student Participants

Date:

1. What are some of the problems you experience with learning the Arabic dialog?
2. What steps are you taking to retain the language and also in using the language inside the classroom and outside of the classroom?
3. What are you doing to improve your speaking skills?
4. In your opinion—what are the best instructional methods for learning and speaking Arabic?
5. What feedback can you offer your professor to assist you with learning and speaking Arabic?

Figure 3. Interview Protocol used for open-ended interviews with student participants.

Interview Protocol for Professor of Arabic

Date:

Location:

1. What are three primary instructional methods you are to using to teach Arabic in the classroom? Please include methods for encouraging speaking as well as acquisition.
2. What are some external factors that you feel negatively affect the student's learning?
3. How do you structure your vocabulary lessons?
4. What is the main concern in teaching speaking in the classroom?
5. Based upon your experience, how do students best learn to speak fluently?

Figure 4. Interview Protocol used for open-ended interview with the Professor of Arabic.

Data Analysis

As part of the analysis process, the researcher followed methods suggested by Creswell (2007):

1. Collect the information from the participant's stories or problem.
2. Analyze all participant's problems or stories.

3. Collaborate with the participants and create some activities involving them action research.

The researcher examined all interview responses in order to determine and recreate participants' stories. The researcher then re-examined each story and identified problems, concerns, and challenges that participants were experiencing when learning Arabic. Findings are organized based on each of the overarching research questions.

- Research Question #1: What are the main problems and challenges in learning the Arabic dialog?

  Findings indicate that contacting and connecting with native Arab speakers is difficult in the small towns. Participants shared that the lack of interactions with native speakers did not impact the successful learning of grammar and vocabulary. However, the lack of interactions greatly influenced using and speaking the language as there were little opportunities to observe modeling. The data gathered from the participating professor mirrored the student participants' data.
- Research Question #2: What prevents use, engagement, and improved communication and speaking skills?

  Findings indicate that participants worked full time or part time in addition to attending classes. Participants shared that schedules did not allow enough time to practice the language in settings other than the classroom. Therefore, there weren't opportunities to practice and engage.
- Research Question #3: What are some external factors that negatively affect the student's learning?

Findings reflect Question #1 and Question #2 and indicate that participants' lack of interaction with native Arabic speakers did not afford them opportunities to observe modeling. In addition, time constraints and schedules outside of the classroom interfered with time to practice and engage, therefore, resulting in lack of practice.

General Findings and Conclusions

Creswell (2007) mentions that the researcher needs to collect all the information about the participants in case study in order to present information based on experiences. In this study, the researcher established an understanding of obstacles in learning Arabic within the context of participants' lives.

Based on the overarching questions that framed the study, the researcher found that contacting native speakers in small towns is difficult. Therefore, students did not have opportunities to communicate or to engage in authentic and meaningful language use. The researcher also found that the student participants held full time or part time jobs at time of the study, therefore they did not have extra time to practice the language. Findings also indicate that studying in addition to working effects the amount of opportunities for communication and practice. In addition, students who are trying to practice Arabic in towns that do not have large populations of Arabic speakers continue to encounter challenges. In delving into the best methods, all participants—students as well as the professor—conveyed the importance of practice and use combined with grammar and vocabulary instruction.

The findings from interviews indicate that the students who are learning a second language—whether Arabic or any other language need to engage in interactions with native speakers as well as meaningful use. For those learning Arabic, the study results lean toward the need to spend some time in one of the Arabic countries since there is low population of native speakers available for students to observe modeling and engage in interactions.

Based on the observations conducted, the participating professor employed several sound methods of instruction that encouraged acquisition and language use. For example, there were three boards in the classroom. The professor used one board for the past tense, the second for the present tense, and the last one for the future tense. The beginning of one lesson started with a greeting to encourage language use. Then the professor asked the students questions that were based on familiar subjects such as family members. Students were encouraged to use newly acquired vocabulary to create their own sentences using the new words. Classroom tasks also engaged students in reading aloud—which promoted increased vocabulary, listening, and reading skills. In addition, students wrote each new word 15-20 times in order to remember how to spell the word. However, when it came to error correction, the students focused on the same types of errors and those are the errors that can ultimately cause problems in communication. Errors included pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.

Conclusions, Challenges, and Suggestions

Findings from the study research may help to improve practice—especially for those who are interested in the study of applied linguistics as related to use of pronouns in English and Arabic. The findings could also be useful to PreK-12 educators and professionals who are interested in literacy practice, promoting reading, developing writing, and conducting further research in the second language classroom. First, the educators and professionals who are interested in reading English and Arabic might use the findings for reading material in order to improve their knowledge. Secondly, findings may assist in gaining more information about

English and Arabic pronunciation on a deeper level—which would result in true acquisition. Finally, the research findings offer information to other researchers who are interested in English and Arabic pronunciation, especially those who seek information on related or similar topics. There is no better way to learn the language than being in a country where people are speaking the language all around the learner and where he/she is forced to practice his/her skills.

The English and Arabic languages phonological systems differ in many ways, and the biggest problem for American learners of Arabic is orally interpreting a written piece of Arabic. This is due to spelling. Another challenge is the differing number of vowels, diphthongs and consonants in each language. Intonation, rhythm, stress and connected speech also need to be discussed.

When students learn to read Arabic they have to work out which letters are which, and which ones go with which sounds. It is the ability to tell letters apart that seems to work differently in Arabic - because telling the characters apart involves looking at very small details such as the placement of dots.

Finally, the researcher offers the following suggestions for teachers, professors, and students learning Arabic:

1. Consider requiring students to speak only Arabic in the classroom in order to practice and develop fluency.
2. Encourage students to read Arabic books aloud to further build vocabulary and fluency.

3. Encourage students to watch Arabic channels for at least one hour a day as part of class requirements as this will assist with providing opportunities for modeling.

4. Seek out plays or other events (talks, presentations) in Arabic organized by Arabic language organizations, and chat online with native speakers. Keep in mind, however, that if online resources are used, in many cases Internet that internet users do not always use “correct” Arabic.

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